



## How to Write a Press Release

### **An attention grabbing title**

Every press release you write should have a strong title. Focus on 'firsts' (is one of your club members first to qualify for a national event?), on large sums of money, or on whatever else in your story that has impact and therefore headline potential. As always, avoid jargon.

### **First paragraph**

Don't waffle or try to set the scene, but get straight into your story. Summarise who's involved, what's happened or is about to happen, where and when the action/opening/news took place or will take place, how events have unfolded so far, and why this is important.

### **The details**

Follow up the first paragraph by filling in the details. The main things are to make sure you give the journalists all they need, and to make it as interesting as you can. Keep the sentence structure simple, explain complicated terms, and don't use jargon. Avoid hype and selfcongratulation, and never make a claim you can't back up. Remember, too, that the local media want a local angle. So how does the story affect local people?

### **Quotes**

Give interesting quotes from the people involved. When quoting someone, use the style: He/she said: "This is great news for the whole community." Avoid lofty terms like "he commented". Always provide full names and job titles, and explain what the person quoted does, if it's not clear.

Photography breathes life into a story. But publications receive lots of photographs, so it's essential that pictures submitted with press releases (a) stand out from the crowd, and (b) conform to the publication's own style.

For maximum impact, consider spending some money on a photographer with media experience.

Then there's the layout of the release itself. Many people opt for 1.5 to 2 line spacing, but single line is fine. Releases should also be typed on one side only and should be between one or two pages long - anything longer is probably full of 'padding'. Use a font size of 11 or 12, and avoid fancy fonts. Instead, stick to something simple, such as Arial.

In terms of style, don't start sentences with numerals (so, for example, "Twenty-three members will . . .") and always spell out numbers below 10 (one, two, three . . .). Also spell words such as 'degrees' and 'percent', which are sometimes written as symbols. Use capital letters sparingly.

Finally, at the foot of each full page put "More . . .", and at the end of the article put "Ends".

### **Contact details**

Make sure the journalists can reach you, by including here your name, address and e-mail address.

### **Background information**

If you expect the journalists to hunt for the background detail they want for their story, you'll be lucky to get any coverage at all. So be sure to include information on your organisation and sources for additional information (e.g. websites, governing bodies, etc.)