



Speaking Specialists Give Athletes Media Skills

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CHICAGO (CBS) — Public speaking is a fear for most people. Athletes are hounded by the media every day. But while players may have the athletic skills, they may not necessarily have communication skills. As CBS 2's Megan Mawicke reports, a former WBBM Radio news reporter and WGN Radio sports reporter are working to change that.

Athletes compete in front of thousands of people, but you would be surprised how many are shy or tongue tied in front of the media, so for help, they turn to the Speaking Specialists.

Sue Castorino and husband Randy Minkoff started their business in 1986. They work with hundreds of professional teams and more than 200 universities helping athletes on their interview techniques and speaking skills.

"How do you make a good impression in 10 to 15 seconds? More than yes, no, I don't know, because some of them don't like to talk," said Sue Castorino.

"They all want to talk when they hit the game-winning home run; but as former reporters, we try to tell them, 'Look, sometimes you gotta talk when you lose,'" said Randy Minkoff.

"The other night Kirk Hinrich was talking after a tough loss, yet he was able to compose himself, stand with his arm against the locker room, and create space and allow himself to relax," Tim Hallam said. "Those are the types of little things they incorporate in media training that I think goes a long way."

"Sue and Randy's program enables our athletes think about answers before they answer, and give a great answer," said Jimmy Collins of the UIC Flames.

Now Castorino and Minkoff not only teach the athletes interview skills, but also warn about the dangers of new media including Facebook, MySpace and YouTube.

"There are people now who are making pages about athletes and sometimes saying they are the athletes," Castorino said.

"I learned anything on Internet can be anybody's source at any time, so be more careful," said UIC guard Spencer Stewart.

"If someone comes up after the session says learned a lot, then we'll see them do a real interview, and they do all the things we talked about, and they're gracious and poised and that makes us feel good," Castorino said.

Castorino and Minkoff also worked with every athlete in the 2000 Salt Lake City Olympic Games. They work with corporations all over the country as well.