

## **2011 Media Relations Policy** **(Bold and underlined indicates new language for 2011)**

Reasonable cooperation with the news media is essential to the continuing popularity of our game and its players and coaches. The following league policy is reviewed and updated annually and remains standard operating procedure:

- 1. POSTGAME ACCESS** – After a reasonable waiting period, defined as 10-12 minutes maximum after the completion of the game, the home and visiting team locker room areas will be opened to all accredited media with immediate access to all players and the head coach.

In order to relieve congestion in the locker room when it is opened to the media, each club must bring the head coach and at least one star player of the game to an interview area as soon as possible. This interview area should be within close proximity of the locker room, or inside the locker room itself. Each club is responsible for setting up interview areas in its home stadium for both the home and visiting team. The interview area must include a riser for the coach/player. Access to the area should be restricted to working media only. Voice amplification equipment and a second riser enabling television cameras to shoot over the reporters are suggested.

In the locker rooms, the home club must make arrangements for both teams to screen the shower areas from view without blocking access to player lockers. Also, each team must supply its players with wrap-around towels or robes in addition to the normal supply of bath towels for postgame showers. Clubs are urged as they see fit to take other measures for player privacy, such as placing shorts in each locker or building individual locker curtains. Clubs must ensure that name plates with players' names and numbers are left in position until after the locker room has emptied of media.

Each club will exert its best effort to limit access to the postgame locker room and interview areas to club officials and working media. A club PR representative should be stationed at the locker room door to ensure orderly postgame access for accredited media. **When only a few players remain in the locker room and the majority of media have concluded their interviews, a club PR representative should announce that the locker room is officially closed and that media access has concluded.** A PR representative must be in the locker room until all media have departed.

- 2. WEEKLY LOCKER ROOM ACCESS** – Beginning no later than the week prior to the opening of the regular season through the playoffs, each club will open its locker room during the normal practice week (based on a Sunday game) on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday to all accredited media for player interviews for a minimum of 45 minutes. While the actual interviews may be conducted outside the locker room at the club's or player's request, the media must be allowed to make the interview request in person to the player in the locker room. For the purposes of this policy, Tuesday is treated as the players' day off.

The minimum 45-minute daily interview time on four days of the practice week will be set at the club's discretion, but it should occur when players are available and free of other club commitments. It is the club's responsibility to deliver access to all players during this time period, and it is the player's responsibility to cooperate. It should be noted that several clubs afford access to the media both before and after practice on a daily basis.

If a club has its only daily interview session prior to practice, then the head coach should be available to answer post-practice questions, and the club should make its best effort to have players available for post-practice questions if requested. If the locker room is open to the media following practice, the club must screen the shower area from view and distribute appropriate clothing, e.g. wrap-around towels or robes for player privacy.

**A club PR staff member must be present in the locker room at all times during the open locker room period. When the open locker room period has ended, this PR staff member should announce that the locker room is officially closed and that media access has concluded**

If a team gives its players two days off after a game, meaning no team meetings or practice on Monday (in addition to the typical Tuesday off day), the team must arrange for key players to be available to local media on Monday. The purpose is to ensure player availability between Sunday and Wednesday for media that are reporting on your team every day. This will ensure compliance with the spirit of the policy requiring the locker room to be open four days during the practice week for player interviews.

The following is a summary of access requirements for Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Players:

**Head Coaches** – In addition to holding a news conference after every game, head coaches must be available on a regular basis to the media that regularly cover the team during each practice week of the season. At a minimum, the head coach must be available to the local media at least four days during each practice week from training camp through the end of the season. **The head coach should be available to local media the day after all games – including Thursday, Saturday and Monday night games – either in person or via conference call.**

**Assistant Coaches** – Through their public relations department, clubs must provide regular and reasonable access to assistant coaches for media interviews that serve the best interests of the club and league. **Clubs may not put assistant coaches off limits to the media and may not unreasonably withhold permission for coordinators or primary position coaches to speak to the media.**

Access to assistant coaches will include the availability to media that regularly cover the club of the offensive and defensive coordinators at least once **between Monday and Friday** during every practice week of the regular and postseason for a minimum of 10-15 minutes, beginning with the week leading to Week 1 of the regular season. **The scheduled availability of the offensive and defensive coordinator must be**

**communicated to media in advance each week. Media do not need to request weekly access to the offensive and defensive coordinators. Availability must occur weekly between Monday and Friday.** For clubs who do not have an offensive or defensive coordinator, or whose head coach serves in that capacity, another coach or executive that is knowledgeable about the offense or defense must fulfill this weekly obligation. Coordinators and other primary position coaches must be available on a reasonable basis during training camp and throughout the season through the team public relations department.

**Permission to interview position coaches about reasonable football issues should not be denied if the request is made through the public relations department.**

Access to assistant coaches on gameday is a club decision. For offensive and defensive coordinators, gameday access would be in addition to the mandatory access at least once during every practice week **between Monday and Friday.**

**Players** – Players must be available to the media following every game and regularly during the practice week as required under league rules and their contracts and as noted above. It is not permissible for any group of players to boycott the media. Star players with heavy media demands must be available to the media that regularly cover their teams at least once during the practice week in addition to their required post-game media availability. This generally applies to a maximum of one or two players per team only. The minimum for such players of one practice-week availability to local media does not include other required media obligations such as visiting team conference calls, network production meetings, and national media interviews arranged by the team.

All NFL players, upon request of their club public relations director, are required to participate in weekly conference calls with the media from the opposing team's city. While a player is encouraged to be available for this call every time he is requested by his club public relations director, no player is required to do more than five such opposing team/media conference calls each regular season. No player, however, can refuse to participate in the weekly media conference call during the playoffs.

3. **PRACTICE ACCESS AND INFORMATION** – Following the completion of Week 2 of the NFL preseason schedule through the regular season and playoffs, daily practice (Monday through Friday) must be open to local media (those who regularly cover the team) for at least the first 30 minutes or until the start of "team" work. It is permissible to limit the videotaping or photographing of certain portions of practice. Starting the week prior to the opening of the regular season, clubs are required to designate on the NFL Intranet site and issue to local media the names of those players who missed any portion of 11-on-11 team or individual work on the specified days noted in the NFL Injury Report policy.

Setting ground rules for news media coverage of practice – subject to the general access rules specified above – is the responsibility of the clubs. For practice sessions during training camp and minicamp that are open to the public, there should be a

balance that addresses publicity for our teams, the role of media in serving our fans, and the goals and procedures set by individual teams. **As such, we require that at least for practice sessions that are open to the public – and subject to guidelines set by clubs on the reporting of strategy – clubs must allow reporting (tweeting, blogging, etc.) of newsworthy events, such as VIP visitors to practice, exceptional catches, standout rookie performers, etc.**

4. **TRAINING CAMP ACCESS** – Beginning the first day of preseason training camp through at least the completion of Week 2 of the NFL preseason schedule, all daily practices must be open in their entirety to local media (those who regularly cover the team). It is permissible to limit the videotaping or photographing of certain portions of training camp practices.

All players and the head coach must be available to the media for interviews on a regular basis (not necessarily in the locker room) during the entire preseason period (through Week 4 of the preseason schedule). **As in the regular season, star players with heavy media demands may be made available to local media once per practice week throughout training camp and the preseason (not including preseason game days). This generally applies to a maximum of one or two players per team. All players must be available to the media following preseason games. Clubs must make several players available to media on the day the team reports to training camp, generally the day before the first practice session.**

**If a club elects to abide by regular-season access rules following Week 2 of the preseason schedule – practice open to local media for the first 30 minutes or until the start of “team” work – it must also adhere to regular-season access policies – open locker room four times per practice week for a minimum of 45 minutes.**

Coordinators and other primary position coaches must also be available on a reasonable basis throughout training camp.

5. **MANDATORY VETERAN MINICAMP ACCESS** – During a club’s mandatory veteran minicamp, all daily practices must be open in their entirety to local media (those who regularly cover the team). It is permissible to limit the videotaping or photographing of certain portions of minicamp practices. In addition, all players and the head coach must be available to the media for interviews each day during minicamp (not necessarily in the locker room). Media access to a rookie or voluntary minicamp is a club decision.
6. **OFFSEASON PROGRAM (OTAs)** – To enhance publicity during the offseason and help keep the NFL in the news on a year-round basis, clubs must open to the media at least one of every three Organized Team Activity (OTA) days. In addition, it is recommended that clubs open to the media the first OTA session of the year. The purpose of opening at least one of every three OTA days (not one-third of the total number of OTAs but one of every three) is for media to have at least one mandatory access day in each block of OTA sessions. This means that on these designated days teams must 1) make players available to the media for interviews, either in the locker room or elsewhere at the club’s

facility, and 2) open the OTA on-field session to the media in its entirety. It is permissible to limit the videotaping or photographing of certain portions of these sessions. These mandatory offseason media sessions are in addition to the veteran minicamps that must be open to the media in their entirety as described above.

7. **MEDICAL INFORMATION** – Clubs must ensure that all medical information issued to the media is credible, responsible, and specific in terms that are meaningful to teams, media, and fans. This includes the information in the weekly injury reports and the information on injuries announced to the media during games. As a reminder, please note that because the injury reporting policy relates directly to the integrity of the game, compliance with the policy is a subject governed by the annual certifications required under the Integrity of the Game initiative. These certifications are required from owners, club presidents, general managers and head coaches. Club management, in consultation with its medical staff, is responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of medical information that is distributed in response to public interest. Also in response to public interest, Super Bowl competing teams are required to submit injury report information during the week between the Championship Games and Super Bowl.
8. **ON-FIELD MEDIA COORDINATOR** – Each team is obligated to provide for each game (home and away) an on-field media coordinator whose duties include helping the televising network, sideline photographers and any other on-field media. The media coordinator should be located during games near the bench area with direct communication (walkie-talkie and telephone) to the team’s Public Relations Director in the press box.
9. **DEPTH CHARTS** – Every team must produce a credible weekly depth chart for the media beginning no later than the week of its first preseason game and then weekly through the end of its season. The depth chart must include the 11 offensive positions and the 11 defensive positions a team considers to be in its base units, and it must list expected starters and backups at each of those positions. Listing players at each position on the depth chart in alphabetical order is prohibited.
10. **EQUAL ACCESS** – Under the equal-access principle of this policy, all accredited media must be given access to player and coach interviews at designated times of the practice week, following games, and during training camp and minicamp. When a club allows media to attend daily practice, all members of the media who regularly cover the team must be admitted. Barring individual members of the regularly accredited media from any of the above sessions for what is perceived as “unfair coverage” or any similar reason is not permitted.
11. **POSTSEASON REQUIREMENTS** – The minimum standards for media access during the regular-season practice week will apply during the postseason. Due to increased postseason demands, however, it is recommended that clubs supplement their open locker-room times during the postseason practice week with specially arranged press conferences for the head coach and key players.

The normal post-game media access rules also will apply during the postseason (i.e. locker rooms must be opened to all accredited media no later than 10-12 minutes after the game). Clubs should supplement their postgame interview area operations for the head coach and star players to meet the heavier demands of postseason media coverage. Clubs that schedule off days for players during a postseason bye week should make key players available to the media that week to serve the extensive public interest in the NFL playoffs.

Clubs are required to comply with the league office press conference schedule for postseason games. This obligation includes the responsibility to have available the head coach, starting quarterback and other key players as requested by the league office based on media and fan interest.

For the Conference Championship Games, the four participating teams are required to adhere to media requirements established by the league office for Wednesday through Sunday of championship game week. This will include open locker room periods on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday plus press conference and conference call availabilities on those days at the team facility with key club personnel. The head coach must be available in the press conferences at the team facility on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The starting quarterback must be available in the press conferences at the team facility on Wednesday and either Thursday or Friday at a minimum.

For Super Bowl week, overall media arrangements differ in several respects from other postseason games. Those requirements will be communicated to the participating teams in advance of their arrival in the Super Bowl host city.

The Super Bowl teams must arrive in the Super Bowl host city by 5:00 p.m. local time on Monday, January 30, 2012. Upon arrival, the team is required to make the head coach, starting quarterback and 4-6 key players available to the media at the team hotel.

Full cooperation is necessary in order to enhance the league's premier events.

- 12. SEASON-ENDING NEWS CONFERENCE/OPEN LOCKER ROOM** – Every team is required to 1) open its locker room for player interviews the day after the season ends and 2) hold a news conference during the week following the end of its season with its head coach, and/or owner, and/or club president, and/or general manager. The purpose is to respond to fan interest in the conclusion of the team's season.
- 13. RESPONSIBILITY OF CLUB OFFICIALS** – Each club will assign the responsibility of administering the postgame and practice week media access policies to two appropriate members of its public relations staff. One – or both – of these designated officials must be present when the club's locker room is open to the media following each game and during the practice week.
- 14. TELEPHONE ACCESS** — Full cooperation is expected on weekly head coach and leading player conference calls with media in the opposing team's city, as described in the guidelines above in the section on player media responsibilities. While public

relations directors may take requests from local media as to which players will be available on a conference call, the decision on which leading player will participate will be made by the club public relations director. Each club will make arrangements for other appropriate media telephone contact with its players and coaches upon reasonable request.

15. **TEAM MEETING ON MEDIA & PUBLIC/COMMUNITY RELATIONS** — Each club is required to hold a team meeting during training camp on media and public/community relations. The club president or general manager, coaches and public relations staff should attend. The required playbook section on player public relations responsibilities, the importance of good media and community relations, plus league and club policies should be discussed. It is mandatory at this meeting that the film, "NFL Players and the Media," be shown and that instructional materials provided by the league and the club be distributed.
16. **MEDIA TRAINING** – Each club is required to conduct a media training session each year prior to the start of the regular season for all players and coaches. This can be done in one session or in separate sessions at the club's option. In addition, the club PR director must arrange for a separate media training meeting for his club's rookies each year prior to the season. The league office will assist clubs in identifying professional media trainers that can conduct the sessions or advise clubs that prefer to have their own staff handle the sessions. These mandatory training sessions will be held in addition to the annual team training camp meeting at which the club public relations director reviews league and club policies on media and public relations, described above.
17. **CLUB MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS BROCHURE** — Each club will produce for its coaches and players an annual brochure listing individual local media (with photos) and reviewing club policies on media and public/community relations. A copy of your club's brochure should be sent to your conference information manager.
18. **MEDIA ACCESS PLAN** — Each club must complete and return **prior to its first preseason game** a form provided by the league office on the club's media access plan. The form will ask each club to provide details on postgame interview areas, weekly locker room and practice access for the media, **specific details on how a club will fulfill the weekly mandatory coordinator access requirements** and related matters.

**Once the form has been received, it will be reviewed by the league office. To ensure clear understanding of these policies at multiple levels of an organization and responsibility for adherence to them, the club president or general manager, head coach and PR director signatures will be required. Failure to comply with this directive is subject to discipline.**

19. **PRESS WILL CALL/PARKING** — Each club will have a separate Press Will Call window or booth, preferably at or near the Press Entrance. There will be a phone line or other communication link between Press Will Call and the public relations director in the Press Box. Clubs are encouraged to have credentials available at Press Will Call four hours prior to kickoff for preseason, regular-season and postseason games. Clubs will

make their best effort to provide appropriate game-day parking accommodations to working members of the media, as well as including relevant maps and parking-related information on the back of parking passes.

20. **PRESS BOX SEATING** — Each club will exert its best effort to limit the number of club personnel in the press box during games.
21. **PRE-DRAFT NEWS CONFERENCE** – Every team is required to hold a pre-draft news conference with its head coach, and/or general manager, and/or player personnel director within two weeks of the draft. The purpose is to respond to fan interest in the draft and off-season squad development and to promote a key league and club off-season event.
22. **VIOLATIONS** – Violations of the above procedures will be considered conduct detrimental to the league and will be subject to disciplinary action by the commissioner.