

Adam have you ever been a source close to the situation?

Adam: Nothing for something that I shouldn't have been. There are some things you may know what the answer is but you just shouldn't go near it because if it comes back to you no matter how much confidence or trust you have in that individual on the other side it's just not your place. I've been able to comment in certain situations on a minor thing such as the Jordan Sigallett situation. One of the reporters was very on top of the story more than anybody else and knew certain things because Jordan's brother Jonathan who was also on our team was far more free-willing to give up information than we as an organization were. That's fine. That's his prerogative to a certain extent unless we feel we need to jump in and tell him what we or Boston doesn't necessarily want out there but he was wondering if Jordan was out of the hospital yet and into a rehab facility. I didn't mind, with Jordan's permission, was able to say between you and I yes he's out. You can report he's out but don't attribute it to me or Jordan but Jordan knows you know and you'll be saying it first. There are just some things that go above you that you can address in writing but you wouldn't be too good a source.

You aren't comfortable being the source within the organization?

Adam: I prefer not to be.

How much of your day is spent putting out fires?

Matt: 10% at least. It may be anything from coaches isn't happy with something somebody wrote or a player and calming them down. That is the most frequent. The most common occurrence is...usually it's a guy's wife just dropped the kids off at school and she reads a story on boston.com and sends the husband a text message just before he's due on the ice that says "Hey, so and so killed you in the paper today." They get their feathers ruffled and you have to calm them down and talk them off a ledge. A lot of times certain people think things are a lot worse than they are. These guys are criticized in public. It's not just your boss telling you you're doing a bad job or your peers, someone's writing this and now with the web they're putting it out there for the whole world to see. With guys that are in their contract year, when that happens they're really upset about it and sometimes there are things...a GM might be put out there and he's in a contract year.

Hockey seems to be reasonably free from the off ice stuff. The last one I can remember is the whole gambling scandal and that was almost two years ago and now he's supposed to be coming back. Does the climate and people of trafficking in hockey make it easier?

Matt: I think it makes it harder. When something does happen it's immediately a bigger deal. For instance when Phil Kessel was diagnosed with cancer last year—the way Phil wanted to handle it as a 19-year old kid, 1) he's nervous because he's still going to undergo treatment and 2) he's being a 19-year old male he's still a little shy about that part of his body. The way he wanted to handle it—it was a strange situation because it's about an injury that's unrelated to hockey—so though we would advise our players it's

his call. Phil was told on a Saturday morning, he played that night. Sunday he was off with his parents and Monday he had surgery.

Phil was adamant when we met on Sunday that he wanted to simply announce on Monday when he wasn't at practice that he was taking a leave of absence from the team for undisclosed reasons and that he would like to ask all the media to respect his privacy. We told him from the get go this wasn't a good idea and was an illness that could affect anyone. There's nothing wrong with this but I can understand not wanting to have that out there. About 10 o'clock that Monday morning we had announced this and the first thing everyone jumps the gun to in sports is it's got to be a drug or alcohol problem. News was spreading like wildfire that he was addicted to cocaine, he was in rehab. Little things are really blow up and overblown. When it is real the player is certainly feels more shame than in other sports because you're such an outcast.

It doesn't have to do with substance abuse but, here was a twenty year old player in Toronto who met a girl with some sort of relationship and he took not a smart move took a naked picture of himself and text messaged it on his phone and he text messaged it to this girl and then this girl sold it to one of the Toronto newspapers. The Toronto had such a difficult time dealing with this because it so rarely happens to hockey players that that there was so much more attention on him and this act and he became the black sheep. He did have a problem off the ice. In some of these other sports it isn't accepted but it's dealt with so much more that they're likely to have a peer who has gone through it. It's more personal.

Some of the students are going to call you and say they want to check something that they've hear. Should they come right out and ask you or should they phrase it in a way so that you can perhaps give them an answer that you don't really want to give but you are still answering?

Adam: If you get asked enough questions you get pretty good at eluding them. At the end of the phone convo the other person may not even pick up that you didn't answer. It depends on the question. I guess with me at least, if you have a question ask it. There is no need to beat around the bush because if I'm good at my job I'm going to know what you're getting at anyway. Matt said, looking at that crystal ball...come out and ask but use proper etiquette.

I wonder whether or not they can actually ask the questions they want to ask and get the answer they want but at the same time not put you in the position of being the person who told them.

Adam: There was a situation—and I'll be perfectly honest in saying I don't know exactly how it was dealt with because it was the year before I was with the team—but one of the guys, well all of the guys went out for New years and there ended up being a bar fight. One of the guys was hurt pretty significantly in that incident and it turned into a what's going to come out, is it going to be covered? You get to a difficult situation if you are the reporter who hears about it...they develop relationships with the players and they end up hearing things they shouldn't necessarily hear even in some instance I know there may have been reporters out that evening which is very unprofessional and

shouldn't happen. You shouldn't be hanging out with the players if you want to maintain any level of professionalism with them at all.

Ultimately it was covered but it was covered delicately and after a point where we had already decided upon how to deal with it in the organization that the reporter did cover and not just scoop it but handle it the way the organization appreciated. You don't commonly see that, maybe at the minor league level more often, that the major league level all the blogging everyone wants to scoop everyone else. If there's a story you'll be able to go out and find it. If you have a question and you experience something you want to ask about just try to go through the channels.

Matt: It depends on the relationship you have with the PR guy. There are writers that in the Boston market or in the hockey world that I have a really good relationship with if they try to BS around the issue I would give them less of an answer. They're better off shooting me an email. There are others I don't know as well that if they just came out and asked the question there is no way. With the people you report on and the people like us that can help you. PR guys can be the writers and reporters best friends or your worst enemy. We can shut you down and make sure you get no information pretty easily by telling a few guys this person you probably don't want to talk to too much. If there is a good relationship we can help you get more.

Adam: Try and develop that relationship early on. Don't wait until a situation where maybe you do want or need something and then very quickly try because it won't happen that quickly. It can help you or us in the long run or maybe you get a lifetime friendship out of it.

Does the team and perhaps you by extension feel like you're under some more scrutiny now that football season's over?

Matt: No, I don't think so. I try to make it an environment with our players, coaches that we are always under a lot of scrutiny. The moment you let your guard down chances are something bad is going to happen. We know the spotlights on us all the time because negative news is as good as positive news sometimes it's even better. You always have to know the amount and be aware of the environment. Know that we are one of the four major league professional sports teams here in Boston and that people are always looking at everything we do from our players to our equipment guys to our community relations folks. We all need to represent properly. We always have to operate that way.

Adam: Naturally while you're still young...you revert away from all professionalism when you are in a mascot uniform. You feel like you can control the world for some reason. So I did it a few times. I did it once in Providence when our regular guy had to bail last minute.

Does the NHL have media training for the players?

Matt: It's not mandated. It's mandated in the NFL and the NBA has a media-training company that they use for all players. The NFL has mandated that teach team conduct

training and there are approved trainers they can choose from. The NHL recommends it and will provide a one hour team session if they want. We handle it by...the Jacobs family and Delaware North companies have a trainer. Prior to me coming our players weren't media trained. I think it's a vital tool for all athletes. There are things that though your PR guys can go over with you because you are around them everyday it doesn't seem to sink in the same way. So having a third party media trainer is a vital tool. We do it with our top 8 players, GM, VP, VP of marketing and business ops. We sit in all the sessions. We're also in the process of reevaluating it because as much as I like the consistent voice between the Delaware North and our company the Bruins there are some things that don't translate as well to a sports team. So actually in a week and a half our GM is getting media training by a different company.

Do they put up lights and cameras?

Matt: If we're going to do our players we start with a general session where the trainer gets to know the players and it is almost like a session with a shrink. You are involved with what bothers them, their fears about the media, when have they interacted with the media at what age and what happened when they did it. Prior to the media session we provide the trainer with footage of them being interviewed after a game, before a game, at practice, so he can see their tendencies. We provide clips in print so that they can see how they respond to print interview or larger groups interviews when they are getting quoted. After that session they'll then introduce to the player for the first time the fact that they've done their homework. They engage in practice in meetings from different rooms on the phone, purposely add distractions to the player, call their cell phone. There is a video portion and some print.

How expensive if any is that to the AHL?

Adam: There isn't. Many of our players would enjoy it I think. With us we'll talk with our players about things they should and shouldn't say and how they should conduct themselves in general. I find that maybe in hockey for whatever reason more than the other sports the players just sort of get it so to speak a little better. Whether that makes them more level headed or down to earth, they have a better understanding and part of that may be because they are around it for so long. Baseball players will be on their various teams and basketball AAU teams but necessarily the scrutiny that a junior team in Canada has.

Matt: Hockey is probably the most excessive. But what they don't have the best grasp of is how to handle a situation like earlier this year when Patrice Bergeron was hit and how to handle where you're going to have all this media. When that happens all of a sudden no matter where media are they flood to the garden and third period there's a line of people coming. That's difficult because you see a player you've been with for years, one of your friends go down and he's pulled off the ice on a stretcher and you don't know the extent of his injuries. You're emotional about that. If you're a veteran player— younger players aren't speaking to the media yet at that point—so the veteran players are really the voice of the team. At the same time they have to be careful because we played

the Flyers three more times and hockey's a physical sport so you certainly don't need to supply any bulletin board material that's going to get either you or your teammates some trouble the next time you play them.

You also need to make sure you're not saying anything about the league that's going to get you fined because unfortunately the league doesn't care what situation it is if you criticize the refs or them they're going to hit you with a pretty significant fine. You also want to respect the information that the players had a little bit more information than the media had that was given to them simply because they were some of his best friends and they need to know. At that point we hadn't made that available to the media yet for internal reasons that I can't go into but it's balancing all those things.

Nobody knows how to deal with that situation until you're in it so the best thing that we can do is try to provide our athletes with the methodology and the whereabouts to get around and get out of certain things—ways to make you not seem like you're disrespecting writers and reporters but providing them as much information as you can without compromising you or your teammates.

Guests have been commenting on relationships. You mentioned not going out with the players and last week we had Howard Bryant here and he was saying go out with the players. What is your insight to that?

Adam: There's a time and place. I think some reporters are more fortunate than others to develop relationships with players that do go beyond the locker room. I wouldn't say they hang out, go to dinner, but there are going to be incidences where people keep in touch after the season and maybe do provide that extra bit of info when the story does come along. But at the same time you don't want to become so close to a story as a reporter that your own integrity is compromised. I mentioned the bar incident. If our beat reporter is there and this happens it would be considered by him his responsibility to his paper, to the people that sign his checks to report this. This is a big story for everyone else to know but if that player is a real good friend then maybe he'll lay off. The fact is he shouldn't be in the situation in the first place. If he does stumble upon it then you go through the various attitudes of dealing with that.

Matt: Take me out of my current position, but the best reporters they know how to put themselves in those situations with athletes without compromising themselves or they are able to separate themselves to the point if they are in a situation like that they can say to themselves business is more important than this relationship or vice versus and knowing how to balance that is something only you can do. From my perspective I don't want our players hanging out with any media at any point. That's something we talk to them about almost nonstop. The best journalists are the ones that have those relationships that give them access to almost anything or if some guy is an unrestricted agent and they want to rip the Boston Bruins that they feel comfortable enough with the writer that they could use that writer to his advantage. The writer gets what he wants and the player gets what he wants. But that's only formed if they are in a social situation.

With the media training, do you think it produces a more manufactured response from the athlete? Can that take a little personality away from them?

Matt: There are different kinds of writers so part of media training is to help the athletes understand what's going to help us and what is the best situation. In a press conference after a game when we're talking raw emotion yes it's going to help us sell more seats but not that much. I'm less worried about their personality at that point as making sure they're not getting themselves, the team, our GM angry at them. Making sure that they can understand that versus when the Improper Bostonian having one of our players as one of Boston's most eligible bachelors, having him understand the difference between us getting him in front of a different demographic of fans than the Boston Globe reading the sports page. Most of the people who read a game story in the Globe we feel already are customers or have made a decision one way or the other. The Improper Bostonian is an 80,000 or so publication here most of the people who read that aren't our customers right now and we want to make them our customers. SO making sure they (the athlete) understands the difference between the stock answers they give after a game that's not going to get them in trouble is different from how outgoing and personal they can be with a writer from the Improper Bostonian in a one-on-one setting.

In doing play-by-play and also being a PR person for the team, has there ever been any situation where the owner or someone is sitting next to you while you're doing play-by-play and you're being they think too critical and then they want you to adjust to fit what they want?

Adam: I've never run into that situation with a team representative sitting next to me being critical of that. I've had representatives to me saying while play is going on slipping me a note that says you should be plugging the upcoming promotions a little bit more. I've had league officials sitting next to me and giving me glares or saying things between breaks if they felt I was being too critical of the referee. In my first year I got a phone call after one of my first games basically threatening to fine me if I didn't calm it down. There is a fine line between what you can say that fans really get amped on. Fans love it when you're all over the officials doesn't matter the sport. The league don't like it too much. You do it because that's how you feel. Hopefully if I did run into that situation if I was giving whatever the opinion is then I'm just speaking honestly and he would agree with it. More than likely I won't be talking about his play for the whole year as much as a particular shift or in the period or in the game.

So never had a puck gunning for you?

Adam: In baseball during batting practice one of our coaches use to like to throw baseballs up into the press box when we weren't looking.

Do you ever blacklist people? What would it take for that to happen to a writer? What can they do to cross the line?

Matt: Nothing that they could write beyond...the only way was if they made a personal attack like a comment on something completely unrelated to sports. A big problem write now in sports PR is camera phones. Cell phones are rarely allowed in locker rooms as it is but with PDAs and Blackberries and iPhones it's common for reporters to have them

up especially with blogging there are times when for bigger games somebody is in the locker room with their cell phone emailing for text messaging stuff back to somebody else. You have guys getting changed and if a guy has an iPhone up you can't tell if someone's typing an email or taking a picture of a guy. A situation like that where someone took a picture of something that would certainly be crossing the line and blacklist someone. If they wrote a story about someone's family or kids that disparaged them unfairly that had no relevance to the game might possibly be grounds. Those are the types of things. We would never blacklist someone for saying we were the worst team in hockey and our 20 guys that night were the worst and we should all be shipped down to Providence. I might not agree with what they're saying and privately in my office I might be very upset but that would never cause me to not let them in.

Jumping in on someone else's interview is a very difficult line for us to be in. It's not a locker room rule as much as it is etiquette so you rely on the media to police themselves. You're more relying on if a guy is getting jumped in on he has to be able to be strong enough to say this is my guy right now. They're technically not breaking any rules. The rules are very clear—it's not cell phones, no cameras, and you're in from this time to this time. Barring a physical confrontation there's not much else that we do.

If the players did something that they think is going to come up will they call you up and warn you about that?

Matt: Yeah. I think part of my job is having 25 best friends from the moment they join the team till they leave those relationships with our players are critical. I know all of them, their families, their wives by their first names, their kids. That's part of my job. I need to know them and they need to trust me that I'm there to help them first and foremost and the team. If they all know they have both cell phone numbers and know how to reach me. They are told by myself and other members of the organization if a guy gets pulled over for drunk driving and they get one call from jail that call should probably be to me. I'm the guy who can help them the most at that point.

Dealing with player apologies?

Matt: usually if they get fined there is no real reason for them to apologize because they've already paid the fine. There have been incidents where players have said things. A couple of weeks ago a player was emotional because something had happened and he said some things to media that the entire group—about 8 deep that day—some things he shouldn't have said. We talked to him afterwards about some of these things you shouldn't have said, here's why. The player then said I agree with you and asked us to reassemble those guys and he readdressed those questions and it ended up that none of what he said ended up in the paper.

When you're talking about a guy's career that's their money. You never want to put yourself in a position...if they call and criticize the organization it's hard for me to help them. I can advise them but my interest lies with organization. That's a lot where they have to rely on their agents or local PR reps. Now we're talking he I can talk to this guy but I'm not going to put myself in that situation where the player has to choose

between me and his agent. My boss is the GM and the owner and that's who I report to so that's where my allegiance lies.

What are you doing right now to get more people to go to the game?

Adam: I think in minor league teams people follow the team, they appreciate the players and some people buy their jerseys but more than anything else I think fans at that level come for the given. They want to come on a night where there's a free giveaway. They want to come when there's a free post game concert or group outings. Whether that is to a particular business—100 people from Cox communications or youth hockey. Every one of our games has one or two per-game games that feature local youth hockey teams and then during each intermission with different teams and often a post game youth hockey game and that brings all the youth hockey who often get free tickets but also their friends and family who then do have to pay. Group outings are a big thing as far as getting people in the seats. You can't rely...the Red Sox, patriots, Celtics people will come out for the product by itself. It doesn't matter what if anything you're doing.

How far have you gone or willing to go in order to protect some of your big names from the media?

Matt: Anything I had to. If it takes me personally taking a hit I have done that. It's difficult because for me after spending some time in New York and coming back this is where my family's from and they read the papers and listen to the radio and there are times when you need to fall on a sword for a player and cut off an interview because of a coach or GM you have to do it. For instance last year our coach had very strict rules about after our morning skate that there was only fifteen minutes of media access for our players. That was it and that was his rule and agreed upon at the beginning of the year with our GM. Montreal was in town in January or February. One of our players, Aaron Ward, was late coming out of the showers. He came out with about 13 minutes in to the session, answered two questions in English and then went to French for the French media and the coach came around the corner and gave me the nod. He had timed it specifically that there had been 15 minutes so we had to cut off the interview and a number of French reporters thought that it was because I didn't care about the French media because we didn't have any from Boston and I was personally called to task in about 5 or 6 different Canadian newspapers there and it was picked up by one Boston newspaper that the Bruins and specifically me didn't care about the French media or how our French speaking fans could read about our players. I've also been called in the past for helping out and shielding guys when didn't want to be talked to. You deal with it.

Do you need to be single to do the job you do?

Matt: Yeah, well no...Stacey James is married and he has kids. John is married but his kids are in high school when he took the job and they stayed in Dallas for two years. You can do it you just need to have the right people. It's a business thing because I live with my girlfriend and she understands. We go sometimes weeks where I'm awake before she

wakes up and go to sleep after her. During training camp it was close to a month where that happened.But I like my job more than I like her so.....

Adam: My girlfriend doesn't understand as well but puts up with it because I'm not walking away from my job. She puts up with it for now. It's tough and complicated. It can...there are so many different angle to it. They'll thin kit's cool at times where they can sit next to me and watch as I broadcast the game. Those that you are closest to just kind of have to deal with it unless you are willing to find a new line of work.