

Five common post-match interview tasks

While post-match media interview questions may come in many different forms, they do tend to probe recurring themes and topics. Below is a list of five common question tasks professional athletes can expect to encounter in interviews after a match. I've also provided a few tips that might help guide your preparation in the minutes before being interviewed.

How do you feel?

This is perhaps the most common question in post-match interviews, and for good reasons. These interviews are primarily concerned with eliciting an athlete's emotional reactions immediately after a sports event, so expect your feelings to be probed! It will often be the first question of the interview as well.

Preparation tip: if you're going to be interviewed and you have a minute to prepare, actually think about how you feel. Are you happy? Pleased? Disappointed? What word best sums it up? Also try to think about *why* you feel this way (i.e. what aspects of match, performance, result are pleasing, disappointing, or have made you happy). This will give you a few additional details to help fill out your answers.

What were the reasons for the result?

Interviewers will also be interested in the reasons for the result. Interviewers may ask for your thoughts or present their own theories to you for confirmation. For example, was it the team talk at half time? Were you able to get on top of your opponent psychologically? Was the start crucial?

Preparation tip: This can be quite a difficult question to answer, especially if you have just walked off the pitch. It's easier to answer if you've won, as it gives you a chance to dish out praise to team mates who've played well, or to highlight an area of your game that was working really well on the night. Tread carefully if you've lost, though. Answering this question after a loss can potentially lead you into a blame game.

What did you do in the match (personally)?

Whether you're an individual athlete or a team athlete, in post-match interviews, *you* are the subject of the interview. For that reason, interviewers will be keen, especially in player-of-the-match interviews to get your thoughts and feelings about *your own* performance and *your own* contributions to the match or spectacle.

Preparation tip: Be prepared to be praised if you're doing a winning interview! Dealing with interviewer praise can be awkward, but aiming to be modest is always a good strategy. However, false modesty can be off-putting. This doesn't mean you need to go out and tell the world how great you are. There are other ways to negotiate these questions. For example, you're allowed to be glad to contribute to a positive result, or happy to beat a player as good as your opponent is, so express that.

What does this result mean (going forward)?

Interviewers may also be keen to explore what the result or performance means for you and your team more broadly, often in relation to previous matches, the season or your continuing development as a team or athlete.

Preparation tip: Can you put your result or performance into the bigger picture? For example, was tonight's win a turning point? A watershed moment? A signal of your continuing or emerging dominance in the field? A sign that things are coming right? Or perhaps a signal of the team maturing? It may be none of these things, but if there is something to say, answering these questions well can be quite engaging for audiences.

What's next?

Almost inevitably, interviewers will finish post-match interviews with an eye to the future. Your next match, tournament, opponent or your off-season or holiday plans can be the target of these questions.

Preparation tip: What's coming up next for you? Who are you playing? Are you looking forward to the match? Why? Are they perhaps a fierce rival? A benchmark team or player? Is it a course, circuit, venue or tournament you've been training specifically for? There are lots of options for elaboration here. What might your fans like to hear from you about the next game? Can you contribute to the hype?

Example questions from real post-match interviews

Example questions from post-match interviews	
How do you feel?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How's the feeling in the changing room after a performance like that?• Kim you're through to the semi-finals. How do you feel?• Well Andrew, taking over the captaincy. That's a great way to start the season.• Tell us how it feels to shoot a course record to win the Dubai World Championship.
What were the reasons for the result?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What went wrong tonight then?• Did experience get you through that match in the end?• Did you just struggle tonight because you had so little ball from the scrum?• What did you think made the difference in the second half, because in the first half it looked to be more Munster than you?
What did you do in the match (personally)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How pleasing was it for you personally to come on and kill the game off?• Were you nervous on the kick? The whole game was riding on it.• Tell us a bit about that try, because it was a bit of a gift, they just moved off you didn't they?• Was it purely a mental lapse on your part for the restart?• Can you play any better than that final set? That was pretty awesome even by your standards.
What does this result mean (going forward)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does this do for you going forwards?• Is fourth place a priority now?• What does the result and the score line do for your mind-set going into Sunday's game?• How much is this a turning point for Bath's season?
What's next?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are you going to do tomorrow, go out and play really aggressively?• Very important clash against Brisbane coming up. Are you fired up for that one?• Will Chelsea have to improve to beat United at the weekend?• Second round you've got Benjamin Becker who I don't think you've played before.• How many notches do you need to raise your game if you're going to go and take Biarritz away next week?