

## Sport reporting masterclass with Sonali Shah, BBC Sport and Newsround presenter: transcript

Hi, I'm Sonali Shah and you may have seen me presenting on Newsround, Match of the Day Kickabout and for BBC Sport. I've been all around the world covering different sporting events, like the Beijing Olympics, the Commonwealth Games in Delhi and the Cricket World Cup.

Back here in the UK I've been very busy too with stuff like Wimbledon, the Epsom Derby and the London Marathon.

Here are my sport reporting tips:

(clips of Sonali on location at various sporting events)

### **TIP 1: Do your homework.**

I think the most important thing is do your homework, do your preparation. And it can be done in three bits. First of all read up on the athlete, the participant, the competitor; then you've got to read up about the sport. So when I went to the Cricket World Cup I did my research not only in how all the teams did in one-day cricket, but Test cricket too just so that you've got a good rounded picture.

And then the third thing is you've got to read up on the event, so with the Cricket World Cup I reminded myself of how well everyone did at the previous event four years ago. Now you don't have to know everything but make little notes on cards about interesting facts and then you'll be well prepared.

### **TIP 2: Know your audience**

Know your audience, know who's going to be watching your reports so if it's going to be your local football club, you don't need to explain the rules to them. They already know them – but if it's for your grandma's coffee club and they're not that into their sport, you might need to go into a few more details.

And also be fair with your reporting, just because I'm an Arsenal fan, it doesn't mean that when I go to Old Trafford that I'm not fair with my reporting. If Manchester United have played a great game, I'm going to say it even though in my head I might not want to say it!

### **TIP 3: Think about how to tell the story**

Think about how you're going to tell your story. You need to pick out the best bits of action but you might want other bits too. You might want to speak to the players, or the parents of the players – speak to that dad who always shouts on the sidelines at the football match on a Saturday or try to speak to the ref.

Also think about where your reports going to be so if it's for radio or a web piece then you might have to be a bit more descriptive, because people aren't seeing what you're seeing. And one of the things I like to do is 'behind-the-scenes' stuff.

(clip of Sonali in Beijing at 2008 Olympics)

I think people want to know stuff around the action as well.

### **TIP 4: It's not just about the sport**

(clip of Sonali reporting at the Derby)

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Sport reporting isn't just about the sport you're covering. When I was at the Epsom Derby my main role was talking to people about what they were wearing, because going to the races also means dressing up for the day.

But you don't even need to be at the event itself. Before the Beijing Games, I got this swimsuit that athletes were wearing and did a report about whether it really makes you swim faster just down my local pool. I didn't speak to any athletes, I didn't even see the action.

(clip of Sonali swimming at her local pool)

So you really can find a story anywhere.

If you are at an event there's lots of other things going on too. When I was in Delhi I went with all the athletes to the Taj Mahal and we went and had a fun day out so you don't always need to be talking about the action. There's so much going on. The hard part will be figuring out what to talk about.

(clip of London being awarded the 2012 Olympics)

London 2012 isn't just about having a ticket to one of the venues, it's about stuff going on, up and down the country: the torch relay could be coming through your city, there could be a training camp just down the road from you, the school might be putting up a big screen – when it comes to the Olympics and the Paralympics, my advice is to report on whatever 2012 means to you.