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# INSIDE WOMEN'S TENNIS

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## Special Feature

## Players, Press Benefit From Media Training

By Elise Burgin

There have been more times than I would like to admit when I have left a post-match press conference feeling like a reporter has gotten the best of me. Although we tend to always blame the reporter, perhaps if we were better prepared to deal with interview situations, the end result would probably be more to our liking

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**A Media Training session with Joyce Newman will be held from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt in New York City 15 November and 16 November**

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Photo by Carol L. Newsom

Joyce Newman, right, leads a discussion during a Media Training session in which players learn various methods of expressing their thoughts and feelings during interviews.

Just think back to those countless times when a journalist has stated prior to an interview, "Well, the county courthouse is my usual beat but this week I'm covering tennis for the very, very first time."

Now recall your horror when he or she proceeded to ask that first inane and irrelevant question that forced you into speechlessness. You tried to say something, to come up with some witty response, but nothing came out. Soon enough, embarrassment set in, first with the sweaty palms, then the twitching eye.

When the Elvis-like quiver developed on your upper lip, you thought things couldn't get worse. But then, uncontrollably, the final blow occurred. Out of nowhere came the "grunt." It was probably not a loud or overbearing grunt. Just a noise audible enough to leave both you and the interviewer a bit bewildered.

"Oh God," you thought. "How could I have done that? Now this idiot thinks I'm the idiot."

Not everyone grunts in response to a flustering question. But this exaggeration serves as a good reminder that quite often we are caught unprepared when giving interviews or when making public appearances. And whether we like it or not, how we portray ourselves in these instances reflects both on ourselves and the game of professional tennis.

While most of us will never earn a living off of our great oratory skills, it is still no crime to become as educated as possible in the area of media training.

We, in women's tennis, are fortunate to have **one of the foremost media trainers in the country, Joyce Newman**, available to help develop these skills.

Newman has worked with such notable personalities as country music's Randy Travis, Indy car champion Danny Sullivan and jazz artist Herbie Hancock. Through her affiliation with Virginia Slims, she will be available to conduct both seminars and one-on-one training sessions with players at several Virginia Slims events this year.

Now, I'm not one to try to beg or use undue influence in convincing you to try to do something. But media training is an enlightening learning process that should not be missed by anyone. It does not require an overabundance of time, but the rewards are evident.

One never knows when difficult situations will arise when dealing with the media. They can take you by surprise, yet from personal experience, I can say that being prepared to deal with those surprises can sometimes make life a whole lot easier.

ELISE BURGIN is a member of the WITA's Board of Directors