



HOW TO DESCRIBE AN INCIDENT

At some point in your refereeing career, you are going to have to write a game report.

This will happen anytime you have to explain your decision to assess a serious penalty – a major, match, gross misconduct or any penalty that involves an accompanying game misconduct.

What will you need to complete this report? A copy of the game sheet (original or a photograph taken with your phone) or notes from the game sheet that include the name of the player or team official penalized, the penalty assessed and the period and time at which the penalty was assessed.

However, that is only the basic information. You will also have to compose a description of the events leading up to the incident, the incident, and the penalty assessed.

This can be a daunting challenge, particularly for new referees. But it can be easily mastered if you take the time to plan out your report so that it has three clear sections: a beginning, middle and an end.

The Beginning. This will include details on the events or incidents that may have led up to the incident in question. Perhaps it all started with two players jawing at each other, either immediately before the incident or earlier in the game. Perhaps it was a pattern of disrespectful comments made by a coach throughout the game. Make sure you include details on the names and numbers of any players, or names of team officials, involved in the lead up to the incident.

The Middle. This is where you deal directly with the incident. Include as much detail as possible about how the incident unfolded, the penalty called, and why you assessed it. This is particularly important in situations where “the discretion of the official” is an important element in the final decision.

The End. This is where you confirm the consequences of your decision. Include all details of all penalties assessed, including names and numbers of everyone involved.

Here is an example of a game report that includes all three components:

BEGINNING: “In the first period, I called a 2 min penalty to a Blue Jackets’ player for a slash on the goalie. This upset the Blue Jackets’ coach. His exact words were “Are you really going call that tap on the goalie a slash?” I explained the call and why it was a slash. As the game went on, the coach continued to verbally dispute my calls, including offsides and icings.

MIDDLE: Later, in the 3rd period in a 1 - 1 game, a player from the Blue Jackets’

hit a Panthers' player with a high stick, knocking him to the ice. This happened at least five seconds after the Panthers player had lost possession of the puck. When the Blue Jackets regained possession near the blue line, I called the play dead and assessed a 2-minute high sticking penalty. As I was going to the timekeepers box, the Blue Jackets' coach yelled at me that it was "a bullshit call in a 1 - 1 game." As I tried to explain the call, the coach continued swearing at me.

END: I assessed the coach a 2-minute penalty for unsportsmanlike but that didn't stop him. He was then assessed a game misconduct and ejected. He left the ice without further incident.

Other considerations

When filing a game report, do not embellish or exaggerate the details of the incident. You may feel that it's necessary to use inflammatory language to describe the events. Try to resist the temptation and remain calm and detached – it's important to remember that even when a coach or player yells at you, it's not personal. You may be really angry about something that happened on the ice, but do your best to take the emotion out of your game reports.

Any official can complete a game report. Therefore, **the official that makes the call should be the one to write up the game report.** Why? The official who called the penalty is the official who can give the most detailed report. Therefore, the referee (in the three-official system) or the senior official (in the two-official system) is not automatically responsible for writing a report.