



# **GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE REPORT WRITING**

**SEASON 2005/06**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE REPORT WRITING**

Referees have to earn respect both on and off the field. Part of earning respect off the field can be affected by the manner and accuracy of report writing when you issue a yellow and red card. If your reports are not accurate, and correctly completed, you may lose some hard earned respect which you have achieved whilst on the field. Regrettably, the standard of report writing, at all levels, is causing the RFU National Disciplinary Committees and Constituent Body Disciplinary Committees concern. The following guidelines are therefore intended to assist referees and touch judges when prepare their reports.

A step-by- step approach has been adopted to guide you through completing the different sections of the disciplinary report form successfully. It is important to remember, particularly at the higher levels of the game, that there is a tendency for the reports submitted to be scrutinised by experienced lawyers. At National levels, in particular, many players are represented by experienced Solicitors or Barristers. Inaccuracies in the form or in the report of the detail of the incident can affect the Referee's/Touch Judge's credibility, and may create doubt in the minds of the Disciplinary Committee, where really there should be none. Considerations of this nature are of growing importance throughout the game and thus these guidelines.

For Season 2005/2006, new sentencing guidelines have been introduced by the IRB (Regulation 17) and the need for detailed and accurate reports becomes even more important as the sentence imposed upon a player will depend upon the circumstances surrounding the incident and the seriousness of it. Your reports, therefore, must be accurate and complete. Within the last 12 months, the following are examples of inadequate reports which have resulted in either the player being found not guilty, or have created difficulties where there should have been none or possible incorrect decision making:-

- 1) Yellow cards issued when they should have been red. (e.g. stamping and punches from the side or behind).
- 2) Errors made in the completion of the form - for example the incident allegedly happening in the first half and not the second half, other apparently minor details being incorrectly completed but which affect the credibility of the Referee's report when it comes to the substance of the report, and which is seized on by lawyers representing the players, e.g. timing, weather conditions, players positions etc.
- 3) Incorrect identification of players - that is the wrong player being sent off / incorrect identification of other participants.
- 4) Alleged offences which never happened - for example stamping on the body and when compared with the video the stamping never actually took place. The player's foot never came into contact with the body. With this type of problem the golden rule of "am I 100% certain that the offence was committed" should be applied. In this case, the Referee could not have been certain because what he says happened, never happened. If you are 100% certain as to the offence and the circumstances, it is unlikely that your report will ever be successfully challenged.

The primary object of any report is to provide an accurate factual record of what took place. It should not be opinionated. It should provide the player and the Disciplinary Panel with a clear and accurate picture of the facts leading up to, during and post incident. If you are 100% certain, then it is easier to state that which is clear in your mind and then present that clarity to the Disciplinary Panel. The Disciplinary Panel need to have a clear picture of the incident, the temper of the game, whether this was an isolated incident or the culmination of previous minor incidents, or an incident arising from the ongoing warfare between the teams.

## Completing the Form

The hard copies of the report forms are available from your local society secretary. It is essential that all the necessary parts of the form are completed fully and legibly. If you complete the form by hand, please do so carefully so that it can be read easily. It also helps to use a black pen as this makes photocopying easier.

Ideally, word processing the form electronically is the best way of completing the report. The forms can be downloaded from the RFU website – [www.rfu.com](http://www.rfu.com) You will need to go into the Community Rugby section by clicking on the red bar at the top of the home page. Once into the Community Rugby section of the site, click on ‘Officiating’ which is one of the headings on the maroon bar on the left of your screen. Once in the refereeing section there is heading called ‘Forms to download’. Click here and you can select the Discipline Form.

[http://www.rfu.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/RFUHome.Refereeing\\_Detail/StoryID/455](http://www.rfu.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/RFUHome.Refereeing_Detail/StoryID/455)

Alternatively, your society secretary can email you a copy of the form or you can download one from the Federation website.

## First side of the Form

**A: Headings:** Make sure you complete these four headings:

The player’s name and Club. His playing position and the date of the match

Ignore this bit of the heading.

**RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION  
DISCIPLINE REPORT**

**PLAYER SENT OFF THE PLAYING ENCLOSURE – 2003/04**

To be completed and sent by the Referee/Touch Judge WITHIN 48 hours. PLEASE USE BLACK INK

<p>Player's Full Name</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Players Club</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	<p>Playing Position</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Date of Dismissal</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">d</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">d</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">m</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">m</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">y</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">y</td> </tr> </table>	d	d	m	m	y	y
d	d	m	m	y	y		

Report Reference

C.B.	Season	Reference no.			

**NB:** Do not presume that the number on the players’ shirt corresponds to his name on the team sheet or in the Programme. It is the Officials duty to confirm his/her identity before the player is sent from the field of play and to confirm this again after the match.

**B. Tick-in-the-box details about the type of game, the incident and your details**

- i. In this section give all the necessary details about the type and level of the match – don't forget to include the result and whether the game was videoed (Clubs are obligated to send any video they took or commissioned as soon as they can and no later than 5 days before the hearing - 9.6.2 RFU Disciplinary Procedures)

COMPLETE WHERE APPLICABLE			
<b>Type of Match</b>		<b>Was a match video made?</b>	<b>Team</b>
League		No	1st
Cup		Yes	2nd
Merit Table			3rd
Other			Lower
Competition Title		Level	U20
<b>Match Result</b>			
Home Club		pts	U18
Away Club		pts	U17
			Younger
			School

**Nature of Offence – Tick all applicable – Specific details overleaf**

6A.6 10(4)k Dissent/abuse official	10(4)g Dangerous charging
10(1) Obstruction	10(4)h Tackling jumper in the air
10(2) Unfair play	10(4)i Dangerous play in scrum etc.
10(3) Repeated infringement	10(4)j Retaliation
10(4)a Punch or strike	10(4)k Bad sportsmanship
10(4)b Stamp or trample	10(4)k 2 cautions (yellow cards)
10(4)c Kick	10(4)l Misconduct while ball out of play
10(4)d Trip	10(4)m Late charge the kicker
10(4)e Dangerous tackling	10(4)n Flying Wedge/Cavalry Charge
10(4)f Play opponent without ball	

Officials	Name	Address	Tel.No.	Society
Referee				
Touch Judge 1				
Touch Judge 2				

- ii In the 'Nature of the Offence' section, tick all the boxes that are applicable and make sure that if you've indicated more than one that these are described fully on the reserve side of the form.
- iii Finally, on the front of the form make sure you complete your name, address, telephone contact number and the name of your society.

## Reverse side of the Form

First and foremost when completing the reverse side of the form that please bear in mind that the report must supply the County Disciplinary Committee with a clear picture of what took place. Three areas should be considered, giving the full facts for each:

- what lead up to the incident,
- what happened during the incident
- what happened post incident.

You might have a very clear picture in your own mind of what took place. Try therefore to present that clarity to the Committee in the way you write your report. It is therefore essential that the Panel have a clear understanding of the nature of the match. Was the incident a complete one off or was 'the' incident an accumulation of previous minor incidents? You do this in the first two boxes as shown below by describing the weather conditions and the state of the pitch in the first box and the general pattern of play or temper of the game in the second box.

**NB:** It is important in this second box that you indicate the nature of the injuries sustained by those involved in the incident, including whether they carried on during the match or had to leave the field of play

Weather Conditions and state of pitch			
General pattern of play (temper of game) and details of any injuries sustained to person(s) involved in the incident.			
Cautions issued	This player	Other players individually	General

## Detailed report of the incident

The next, and final section of the form, is perhaps the most important. In the top section of this last box you must indicate how far you were from the incident and whether your view was obstructed. Be careful to explain if your view was obstructed in any way how you were able to make your decision. You will also need to state the exact time of the incident and what the score was (having a prompt card on the back of your score card with these points is good practice.)

OFFICIALS DETAILED REPORT OF INCIDENT			
Proximity of Ref/TJ to offence	<input type="text"/> metres	View of incident obstructed	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Time of incident	<input type="text"/> mins	in	<input type="checkbox"/> FH <input type="checkbox"/> SH <input type="checkbox"/> ET
Score at time H	<input type="text"/>	A	<input type="text"/>

Now for the incident itself!

***“I saw Smith, the Number 7, throw a punch violently at their Number 9. I had no hesitation in sending him off”.***

Unfortunately this genuine example didn't give the Disciplinary Committee Members nearly enough information. Always remember that, in many respects, you will be acting as the 'chief witness for the prosecution' and, as such, the clarity of your information is vital. To elaborate on the above example, and as a model for similar foul play incidents, in the box below are some bullet points that would have helped to describe the incident in more detail:

OFFICIALS DETAILED REPORT OF INCIDENT						
Proximity of Ref/TJ to offence	<input type="text"/>	metres	View of incident obstructed	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Time of incident	<input type="text"/> mins
						in FH SH ET
					Score at time H	<input type="text"/> A <input type="text"/>
<hr/>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did the punch connect, if so exactly what part of the body? This is particularly important – please describe for instance if it was a blow to the head what part e.g. the punch landed on the left eye of the Number 9</li><li>• Did the force of the punch knock the person to the ground?</li><li>• Did the 'victim' require medical treatment?</li><li>• Did the 'victim' resume playing?</li><li>• Did the intended 'victim' take avoiding action?</li><li>• Was there provocation?</li><li>• Was it in retaliation?</li><li>• Had the offender run some distance to get involved?</li><li>• Did the player apologise at the time, or subsequently for example in the Club House? If so, then mention it.</li></ul>						

Signature of Referee (in all cases)	<input type="text"/>	date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Signature of Touch Judge (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>	date	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Report sent to: (a) Disciplinary Sec.	<input type="text"/>	RFU/CB	(b) Sec.	<input type="text"/>	Referee Society				

**NB:** Don't forget to sign and date the form. The Touch Judge should sign, if officially appointed, and was the one whose report resulted in the player being sent off. Finally, state who the report is copied to. Forms sent to the Disciplinary Committee Secretary by email (preferred) should state "sent by email" in the signature space to explain to readers the absence of an actual signature. It might well be requested at later stage that you provide a copy with your written signature.

## **Other general points about describing the incident**

When describing the incident please avoid using phrases such as “I thought I saw the punch landing on .....

” You must be sure of what actually happened. Whilst as indicated above it is advisable to mention whether a player was apologetic or not, is not your role at the conclusion of a report to write words such as “in my opinion the sending off is sufficient punishment” or to make any recommendation about sentencing. This is a decision for the members of the Disciplinary Committee and as such your opinion is not material

## **Sending in the report**

Submission time is no later than 48 hours. Delaying submission beyond that is unacceptable. If there are genuine reasons for late submission then a courtesy telephone call to the County Disciplinary Secretary should be made. If the report has been instigated by an appointed Touch Judge from the Society, then he/she must complete and sign the form, which must also be countersigned by the referee.

Referees are encouraged to consult their Society Secretary and or their Discipline Officer before submitting their report, especially if there are complex, legal or sensitive issues to consider. The Secretary/Discipline Officer may use his experience of the process to advise on presentation (phrasing, spelling, grammar etc) in order to ensure that the report meets all the Disciplinary Committee’s requirements. However, *the report remains the referee’s and he has final responsibility for its content and accuracy.*

## **Video evidence**

It is becoming more common practice for Clubs to video their matches. Following any red card incident you must decline any invitation to view any material unless sanctioned by the Disciplinary Secretary. If video evidence is to be used at the hearing you will be advised accordingly.

## **The Hearing**

You will only be asked to attend the hearing if the player/club requests this. This does not happen often. If it does, you are encouraged to attend and your expenses will be met by the player concerned. If you cannot attend, the Disciplinary Committee may request a telephone conference call to you from the hearing.

The outcomes of all hearings are usually communicated to Society Secretaries on a monthly basis. You will not therefore be informed directly but the minutes of meetings are available at the following Society monthly meeting for all to peruse.

## **Contact details**

*(In this section it is recommended that Societies add there own details)*



## IRB Sentencing Guidelines

Extracts from the new regulations are included below. All offences will now be designated as Lower End, Mid Range or Top End in terms of their seriousness, with different sentencing entry points applying. Sanctions applied will then depend on whether the recommended entry point should be increased because of aggravating factors, or decreased to take account of mitigation.

In terms of the importance of accuracy on the report, please note the sentencing tariffs if you fail to differentiate in your report between a kick and a stamp.

DESCRIPTION AND LAW	ENTRY POINT BASED ON Scale of Seriousness of the Player's conduct, which constitutes the offending. Lower End (LE), Mid Range (MR), Top End (TE).	MAXIMUM SANCTION
10(4)(a) Striking another Player with the hand, arm, fist including the elbow	LE – 2 weeks; MR – 3 months; TE – 6 months	12 Months
10(4)(a) Striking an opponent with the head	LE – 6 weeks MR – 6 months TE – 12 months	24 months
10(4)(a) Striking an opponent with the knee	LE – 2 weeks MR – 3 months TE – 6 months	12 months
10(4)(b) Stamping or Trampling an opponent	LE – 1 month MR – 3 months TE – 9 months	12 months
10(4)(c) Kicking an opponent	LE – 3 months MR – 9 months TE – 12 months	18 months
10(4)(d) Tripping an opponent with the foot/leg	LE – 1 week MR – 4 weeks TE – 6 weeks	3 months
10(4)(e) Dangerous tackling an opponent, including early or late and including the action known as the “stiff arm tackle”	LE – 2 weeks MR – 6 weeks TE – 3 months	6 months
10(4)(f) Dangerous charging or obstructing or grabbing the opponent without the ball, including shouldering	LE – 2 weeks MR – 3 months TE – 6 months	12 months
10(4)(f) Playing an opponent without the ball. To hold, push, charge, obstruct an opponent not carrying the ball, except in a scrum, ruck or maul	LE – 1 week MR – 3 weeks TE – 4 weeks	6 weeks
10(4)(g) Dangerous charging or obstructing or grabbing of opponent carrying the ball, including shouldering, without trying to grasp the player	LE – 2 weeks MR – 3 months TE – 6 months	12 months
10(4)(i) To cause a scrum, ruck or maul to collapse	LE – 1 week MR – 3 weeks TE – 6 weeks	3 months
10(4)(k) Biting an opponent	LE – 6 months MR – 12 months TE – 24 months	36 months
10(4)(k) Contact with eyes or eye area	LE – 3 months MR – 9 months TE – 18 months	24 months
10(4)(k) Testicle Grabbing or twisting or squeezing	LE – 3 months MR – 9 months TE – 12 months	24 months
10(4)(k) Illegal rucking of an Opponent	LE – 2 weeks MR – 6 weeks TE – 3 months	6 months
10(4)(k) Threatening words or actions at match officials	LE – 3 months MR – 12 months TE – 24 months	36 months
10(4)(k) Physical abuse of match officials	LE – 6 months	Life

	MR – 24 months TE – 5 years	
10(4)(k) Verbal abuse of opponents whether based on race, creed, colour or otherwise	LE – 2 weeks MR – 2 months TE – 4 months	6 months
10(4)(k) Spitting at players	LE – 1 month MR – 3 months TE – 6 months	6 months
10(4)(k) 2 yellow in one match	LE – SOS TE – the lower end of the range for the more serious of the yellow card offences	
10(4)(k) Totting up of 3 foul play yellow cards within season – applies only to Levels 1-4	LE – 1 week TE – the lower end of the range for the most serious of the yellow card offences	