

Guidelines to completing Send-Off Report Forms

Background

- ◆ In the majority of cases reports are made available to the player/club prior to the judicial hearing.
- ◆ Where there is ambiguity, missing facts or contradictions these are used in planning a defence by the player/club.
- ◆ Players/clubs have been known to solicit reports/statements from the opposition player(s)/club to support their cases, which can often contradict a referee's report.
- ◆ Players and clubs have the right of legal representation, whereas the referee is represented by his report and the Laws of the Game to the extent that they are applicable. Referees will be supplied with legal counsel if required.
- ◆ In some States referees are encouraged to attend Judiciary hearings to assist the Judiciary in clarifying issues relating to the send-off.
- ◆ Most Unions have appeal rights relating to Judiciary decisions. These rights are often exercised, particularly in relation to severe or contentious cases.

The Report.

- ◆ The following are general comments about the send off report itself: -
 - Reports on Send-offs must be written on the official form or they will not be accepted. A referee does not have to justify his send-off decision to any player or club official, either on the field or after the game. You should not discuss the matter with players and club officials, except to advise on the offence for which the player will be charged.
 - Care should be exercised as comments made in public forums (e.g. club house after the match) naming the nature of the offence can lead to arguments/disagreements or be used in defence by the player
 - If a player is sent off a report **MUST** be lodged within the specified timeframe set by the Union. In some instances players can travel great distances to attend hearings only to find that there is no report. A player is generally free to continue playing if no report is lodged, meaning that an offence goes unheard.
 - The report must be legible as it often goes through several fax machines and photocopiers before it reaches the judiciary. It must therefore be printed in black ink.
 - A player cannot be dismissed from the field based on the report of an unqualified/unofficial touch judge.
 - Do not feel constrained by the questions/space on the send off form. You can provide and attach additional comments if you feel it is warranted. Conversely, do not write an 'epic story' if the seriousness of the offence is not evident.

Some general "Do's" and "Don'ts" about the report.

Do's:

- Restrict your report to the facts as you witnessed them;
- Be specific in your description, after consideration of the events as you saw them;
- Include additional material if you believe that it is relevant;
- Be positive and consistent and ensure there are no contradictions or inconsistencies;
- Act on official touch judge report(s);
- Be accurate and clear in quoting the Law reference;
- Seek assistance from the Referee Manager (RDO) or senior referee if you are unsure of any aspect of the report.

Don't:

- Become emotionally involved in an incident on the field, after the match or in your report, although this may be difficult in some cases (especially abuse);
- Make any recommendations on penalties - this is the judiciary's responsibility based on your report and any evidence presented to them by the player;
- Guess or presume the facts.

Specific Comments

These specific comments relate to the relevant sections of the Report Form.

1. It is the duty of the Match Officials to obtain the name of the player(s) sent from the field. Players full name and Number of the Jumper he / she wore at the time of the send off.
2. Indicate on the form the Club name date and Ground at which the game was held.
3. Indicate the two teams involved in the game and the grade.
4. Provide the score of both the home team and the opposition.
5. Indicate the condition of the ground and the weather conditions as this can help set the scene for all concerned. It can give the judiciary an idea of the conditions under which the was played.
6. It is critical to provide the time and period in game when the incident occurred
7. Match Officials needs to be careful when issuing a caution. A caution is an automatic Yellow card and 10 minutes in the sin bin. A second Yellow card is a Red card (send-off), regardless of whether the second Yellow card offence was related to the first Yellow card offence. When speaking to players who have committed a breach of the Law that does not constitute a sin bin or send off, referees should not use the word '**Caution**' but rather admonish the player(s) by warning them of the consequences of their actions and continuing these actions.
8. Match Officials are to indicate the offence that the player(s) was cautioned for resulting in 10 minutes in the Sin Bin.

9. Reason For Send Off

The form has been simplified in this section to make it easier for the referee to indicate the offence for which the player was sent off and for the Judiciary to read.

Each of the headings with the boxes alongside are found in the 'The Laws of the game made easier'. Foul play is found under Law 10 with its subsections relating to each of the foul play offences. Referees are asked to indicate in the box provided which category of offence had been committed, and then in the space below detail the relevant Law and offence in accordance with the Law book.

For example: If a player has been sent off for punching or striking an opponent, you would write:

Law 10 4 (a) Punching or striking. Number ? Punched an opposing player, number? in the head.

- 10 The Match Official needs to be clear as to whether the offence was dangerous or severe as this may be important for the Judiciary when hearing the case. The awarding of a second Yellow card to a player who

had already been Cautioned (Yellow card) during the game is an automatic Red card (Send Off). If a player is sent off after receiving a second yellow card this should be indicated in the box provided.

- 11 Match officials need to be clear as to which phase of play the offence took place, whether it was at a scrum, tackle, or general play, etc. When completing the form the match official need only indicate where the incident occurred by filling in the box provided.
- 12 This section provides some comments relating to the more common types of offences. The use of general terms such as 'punching', 'kicking', etc can often be misleading. There are many types of punches and kicks. To assist the Judiciary it may be possible for you to describe the degree of force e.g., full swing of arm/leg. It is also important to indicate (if possible) the number of blows landed and their contact point e.g., two punches to the face.

Trample/Kick

- Where was the ball in relation to the non-offending player e.g., near his head, two metres away etc.?
- What part of the foot was used by the offender - toe, heel etc.?
- Where did the foot come into contact with the non-offender?
- How many times was contact made?

High Tackle

- Was there a degree of premeditation e.g., lining the non-offender up for the high tackle?
- Explain why it was not a reflex action e.g. steadiness of the offender's feet/position?
- Detail the point of contact - neck, chin, etc.
- The running direction of the offending player e.g., he came from behind/side on etc.
- The state of the ground which may have contributed to an accidental (reckless) high tackle, especially if it was wet.
- The offender's actions leading up to the tackle.

Punching

- Describe the ferocity, the number of blows landed, area(s) of contact, and if possible the degree of intent to injure.
- Comment on whether the recipient was unprotected/undefended/unaware of the punch (i.e. punch came from behind).
- Describe the punch e.g., closed fist, slap, 'king hit' etc.
- When did it occur in relation to the whistle being blown?
- When applicable - did it occur off the field?

Verbal Abuse (of the referee)

- What exactly was said - the offender nearly always recalls differently.
- Did the offender ignore warnings from you to stop?
- Include, where appropriate, touch judge abuse.
- Include off the field/after match abuse, although this may warrant an incident rather than a send off report.

Late Tackle

- The primary issue is whether the tackler could have averted the tackle. This is evidenced by the clearance of the ball by a kick/pass and time elapsed between contact and clearance.
- What was the intention of the tackler based on what you saw e.g., to purposely injure, merely impede, an act of retribution?
- Where was the point of contact?

Repeated infringements

- What was the nature of the previous infringement(s)? (These should also be detailed in Section 8).
- Was a previous caution(s) issued (see earlier comments in Section 8 regarding cautions)?
- Was the player sinbinned previously?
- Where a player was sent off for a second yellow card (caution), it is critical that this be clearly stated in the report, together with details of each offence.

13. It is important to be aware of where the incident took place on the field and where the match official was in relation to the incident. For example: if the incident took place near the 22 metre line 10 metres from touch, in the space provided you would write

" The incident took place on the offenders 22 metre line 10 metres from the touch line. I was standing 3 metres from the incident and had a clear view of the offence".

14. When a player is dismissed if he reacts with dissent, reluctance (slow in complying with your order to leave the field, or in leaving the field) or is abusive then these are potential grounds for penalties. Once you have made your decision you do not have to justify it to anyone or enter into discussion or argument. The Captain is responsible for his player's behaviour and any send off should be made in front of the Captain. Any dissent by the Captain that undermines the Match Official's authority should be also noted on the send off form.
15. It is important that the Match Official(s) PRINT his/her name(s) so that it is legible.
16. It is a requirement for Match Official(s) to sign the report and date it as requested on the send off form.

Notes:

- These notes are to be used as a guide for match officials when filling out the send off report form.
- Not all offences are alike and that there may be circumstances during individual games where other information might need to be added. In those cases it is up to the match official to decide if this additional information needs to be included. Where this is the case a separate sheet should be added to the report.
- The rationale behind this revised report is to simplify the process of completing the send off report and reduce the ambiguity that may arise from forms that are lengthy and may confuse those filling them out and those reading them.
- All that is asked of the referee is that he / she states the facts as they witnessed so that there is no doubt as to the offence for which the player(s) were sent off.