



# Ontario Soccer Referees' Association (OSRA)

## **Guide to Report Writing**

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**Louis V. Braid**, *January 15, 2006*

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this guide is to assist the referee in writing reports that will later be used by leagues and authoritative bodies as they administer actions including discipline, fines, and suspensions.

A Report that is accurate, clear, concise and complete is vital to the game as it properly depicts the actions of players, team officials and outside agents (spectators). Reports are also used to describe events that have an affect on the playing of the game.

This Guide is meant to assist the referee, not every situation can be included. If you are unsure, please feel free to contact an experienced Branch referee or a member of the Branch Executive for further assistance.

### **A reminder about Game Sheets**

The collection and inspection of Game sheets is the critical first step in proper reporting. A referee cannot complete the following reports accurately without first obtaining Game sheets prior to the start of play, and then reviewing them for completeness, legibility and accuracy. If the information either isn't there, or you cannot read it, you will not be able to report it later.

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## **Caution Reports (Yellow Card)**

The Caution report is the simplest report to complete. A description of the circumstances is not required on the version which is included in the attachments. The entire report, except for your signature should be printed.

### **Required Information**

#### **League Information**

##### **Example**

Oakville Soccer Club  
South Region Soccer League  
Peel Halton Soccer League

**Game Number** copied from the Game sheet

**Date** Write in the date of the game. Use the month name, such as Jan., Aug., Sept. the day and the year

##### **Example**

Aug. 14, 2005

**Teams** Copy the Team names from the Game sheet.

The home team is always listed first. For some house leagues, several teams may have the same sponsor name, such as Tim Hortons, therefore the shirt colour should be included

##### **Example**

Teams: Tim Horton's - Sky Blue vs. Tim Horton's - Dark Green

## **Player Information**

**Team** Write in the Team name exactly as on the game sheet

### **Example**

Tim Horton's – Sky Blue

**Player Number** Copy from the Game sheet.

If the Player was the Goal Keeper and had no number, write in the shirt number from the game sheet that they would have worn had they not played goal.

**Player Name** Print the name legibly. Copy it exactly as written on the game sheet. If, you cannot read the name, then copy down what you can make out. Do not guess at the name. Be exact.

**OSA Reg. Number** Copy from the game sheet exactly. As with the name, if you cannot make out one of the numbers do not guess at it, complete what you can read.

**Caution Code** Use the number corresponding to the infraction as listed on the caution sheet, 1 thru 7.

Only one number is used per line. If a Player received a Caution (yellow) for Unsporting behavior, and then on the same play received a second Caution for arguing with the referee (dissent), then you must complete a Dismissal report (red card) outlining the events that led to both cautions.

**Time** Write in the time, in minutes, when the infraction occurred. Use total game minutes that have elapsed. As an example, the infraction occurred at the 15th minute of play in the second half, write in 60 minutes (45 minutes for the first half plus 15 minutes for the second half).

Also, you can write in 15 minutes, but would have to explain that his occurred in the second half.

At the bottom of the report, legibly Print your name, sign the report and write in your referee registration number. Include a phone number\* where you can be reached, including the area code.

### **Note**

In some instances the League(s) may copy and send your report to other individuals. Including your phone number is optional.

## **Dismissal Reports (Red card)**

The Dismissal report requires an accurate description of the infraction, so that the League Discipline body can properly decide on the penalty(s) that should be dealt to the player. These can include suspensions, fines or both combined.

Please note that a Dismissal Report is only completed on Players during the game for specific infractions listed in the Laws of the Game that occur during the game. Reporting incidents involving players before the game or after the game requires a Special Incident report. Do not use this Report for incidents involving Coaches, Team officials or Outside agents (spectators).

Write short, concise paragraphs that describe exactly what you saw and what you heard, typed reports are easier to read (and correct!) and look more professional.

### **Note**

Every Dismissal (Red card) requires its own separate report. For example, if two players get into a fight, and the referee dismissed them both, two reports are required even though the infraction was the same (violent conduct) and it occurred at the same time.

**Game Details** The Top section of the report should be printed with all sections being completed. If, you are unsure of an item, e.g. Division, then leave it blank. Copy the items exactly from the Game sheets. Follow the date format requested to be consistent e.g. - (DD/MM/YY example – 08/07/05 is equal to July 8, 2005)

**Player Details** Print legibly, and copy exactly as written on the game sheet. Do not guess at names or initials. If you cannot read it, copy what can be read and include a footnote.

**Incident Details** In this section, only check off one offence. A player cannot commit two dismissal (Red card) offences and be sent off. Check the box that pertains to the offence for which the player was dismissed. A second report, Special incident or Referee Assault may also be required.

### **Example 1**

A player receives his second Caution (Yellow card) during the game and the referee first shows him the Yellow card and then the Red card. The player while leaving the field yells foul and abusive language at the referee, using swear words and pointing his finger at the referee.

In this example, the referee would complete the Caution report and the Dismissal report and check off - Receives a Second Caution during the same game – which is the infraction that caused the Player to be dismissed (sent off). You must also check off the box – Misconduct directed at a game official.

## Example 2

A player tackles an opponent who was on a clear breakaway from behind and denies an obvious Goal scoring opportunity. The referee stops play and is about to give the Player a Red card. The Player, who knows what is coming, then punches the opponent, hoping to start a fight. The opponent does not retaliate. The Player is shown the Red Card and leaves.

In this example, the Referee would complete the Dismissal report and check off Denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the Player's goal by an offence punishable by a direct free kick or a penalty kick, and can check off the box for Violent conduct as well. A complete written description of the both incidents, including the punch is required.

**Special Note:** Check off the section — Check this box if the misconduct is directed at a game official if the offence was aimed at the Referee or their Assistant referee's. Neither one of the Denying a Goal Scoring opportunity, nor Serious Foul play can be used along with misconduct directed at a Game Official.

**Description of Incident** There are too many examples of situations to outline them all, so instead we have chosen to provide some sample Descriptions. You will have to modify them to suit the Incident exactly. Incident descriptions do not have to be lengthy. Be concise and accurate in your description of the incident(s).

In general terms, always answer the following questions when writing your Description of the Incident:

When did the Incident happen?

Where did the Incident happen?

Who were the players involved?

What happened first, then second, then third?

Keep the incident events in order.

What did you as the referee do?

Did you abandon the game?

**Example 1**  
**Uses Offensive Insulting or Abusive Language**

At the 38th minute of play in the first half play was stopped because a goal had been scored by the Blue team. Number 8 of the Hunter Green team was very upset and starting yelling at the Blue team — "You fxxxing\* players, you are all sxxt\*, I'm going to get every one of you!!"

I dismissed Number 8 of the Green Team for Foul and Abusive language by showing him the Red card. He left the field of play.

\* Note: while the author chose to "X" out the foul words, an actual report would require them to be written out exactly as spoken by the player.

**Example 2**  
**Spits at an opponent or any other person.**

At the 25th minute of play of the second half. Two players, Number 5 of the Blue team and Number 8 of the Green team were challenging for the ball. Without any warning, Number 5 of the Blue team Spit in the face of Number 8 of the Green team. Number 8 of the Green team stopped and moved away from Number 5 of the Blue team.

Play was stopped and Number 5 of the Blue team was shown the Red card and dismissed for Spitting at an opponent. He left the field of play.

Note: If, the spitting incident is directed at a Game official, (referee or their assistant referee's) then a referee assault form is required.

**Example 3**  
**Receives a Second Caution in the same game.**

***Note***

Describe the incidents in chronological order, first caution, then second caution.

At the 20th minute of play in the first half Player number 5 of the Green team received a caution for dissent.

At the 15th minute of play in the second half, the Blue team had been awarded a Direct free kick in the attacking end of the field. Number 5 of the Green team ran over and stood in front of the ball, failing to respect the required distance at a free kick and obviously not allowing the Blue team to take a quick kick. Play was stopped.

Player number 5 of the Green Team was cautioned and shown the Yellow card for failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted. As, this was his second caution, he was also shown the Red card and dismissed. He left the field of play.

**Example 4**  
**Denies an opponent a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball.**

At the 20th minute of play in the first half, Number 5 of the Green team stopped the ball from crossing the goal line by deliberately handling the ball and knocking it away.

Play was stopped. Number 5 of the Green Team was shown the red card and dismissed for denying an opponent a goal. He left the field of play.

**Example 5**  
**Denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.**

At the 35th minute of play in the first half, Number 5 of the Blue team has the ball in the Green team penalty area and a clear open net to shoot at. The Green team goalkeeper, number 1, having no chance to stop the shot, grabs the shirt of Number 5 of the Blue team with both hands and pulls him away from the ball. There were no other defenders between the goalkeeper and the goal.

Play was stopped and the Green team goal keeper, number 1, was shown the Red card and dismissed for denying an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity by an offence punishable by a penalty kick. He left the field of play, and was replaced by another Green Team player.

**Example 6**  
**Serious Foul Play**

Note: The definition of Serious Foul Play is that the incident must occur "on the ball", during active play, on the field and towards an opponent. Also, always include the following words in your description as appropriate: excessive, reckless or careless, to describe the kind of force and amount of force used. Usually a careless action is punished as a foul, a reckless action is punished by a caution and when excessive force is used, it is punished with a dismissal. Reckless actions include carelessness. When excessive force is used by a player towards an opponent, it is always reckless and careless.

At the 25th minute of play in the second half, Number 5 of the Blue team has possession of the ball and is dribbling with it in the attacking zone. Number 8 of the Green team came running in and with excessive force carelessly tackles Number 5 of the Blue team from behind.

Play was stopped and Number 8 of the Green team was shown the Red card and dismissed for serious foul play. He left the field of play.



### **Example 7**

#### **Violent conduct**

Note: The definition of Violent conduct is when the incident occurs by a player "away from the ball" against anybody (opponent, teammate, coach, spectator), at anytime (before, during or after the game) and anywhere (on or off the field). If the Violent conduct is directed at a Game official, (referee or their assistant referee's) then a referee assault form is required.

At the 40th minute of play in the second half, the Blue team had just scored a goal. Number 5 of the Green team was arguing with Number 7 of the Green team and punched him in the face. Number 7 of the Green team fell down and did not retaliate. Number 5 of the Green team was shown the Red card and dismissed for Violent conduct. He left the field of play.

## Special Incident Reports (Blue form)

Special Incident reports are used to describe any Incident that is not covered by one of the other reports.

### Examples

- Canceling a game because the field is unplayable.
- Canceling a game because one team doesn't have enough players to start play.
- Abandoning a game because of lightning or heavy rain during play.
- Coaches being asked to leave the field.
- Spectators being asked to leave the field.
- Abandoning the game because spectators throw things onto the field.
- Abandoning the game because a player who has been dismissed will not leave the field of play.
- Fights or an incident between the players after the game is finished.
- Incidents between coaches or team officials before, during or after a game.
- Incidents between spectators before, during or after a game.

***Always submit the game sheets, even if the game is cancelled.***

### General

In general terms, always answer the following questions when writing your Description of the Incident:

- When did the Incident happen?
- Where did the Incident happen?
- Who were the people involved, players, coaches, team officials, spectators?

What happened first, then second, then third? Keep the incident events in order. What did you as the referee do?

Did you abandon the game?

### **Example 1**

Before the game was able to start, an inspection of the field revealed that it was unplayable because of numerous large puddles of standing water throughout. The game was abandoned.

### **Example 2**

At the 15th minute of play during the first half, play was stopped and suspended because of lightning approaching the field.

After, 30 minutes had passed; the lightning was still too close so the game was abandoned. The coaches were informed.. The game sheets are included with this report.

### **Example 3**

At the 25th minute of play in the second half, a spectator was yelling at my assistant referee. I was signaled to come over by my assistant referee.

Play was stopped and I asked the Home Team coach to remove the spectator from the field.

The coach spoke to the spectator and he left the field of play. I did not get the spectator's name but he was known to the Home team coach, Mr. Smith. The game was restarted.

Note: A Report from Assistant referee must be included.

was the Assistant referee on the spectator side of the field. At the 23rd minute of play in the second half I had raised my flag to signal an offside against the Blue team. A spectator standing behind me began calling me names. He said I was "stupid", "blind" and a "cheater". I signaled to the Referee, who came over to discuss the situation.

#### **Example 4**

After the game was over, while the players were shaking hands at centre, the two head coaches became physical with one another. They were standing close together and yelling at each other. They were pushing and shoving each other. Their assistant team coaches and trainers got between them and broke up the altercation. They continued to yell at one another from a distance.

My assistants and I were standing about 15 yards from this when it happened and while we were observing the players shaking hands. Both head coaches are named on the game sheets.

## Referee Assault (Green form)

Accepting Assault or Abuse is not part of the job of being a Referee!

The definition of Assault is:

**“Any threatening or violent conduct whether it is physical or verbal”.**

The only recourse a referee has to combat the increasing amount of referee abuse or assault is to report each and every incident to the proper league authorities.

Unfortunately, too often a referee will not report every case because they feel inhibited or unsure about the process and that referee abuse is "just part of the job".

The people who abuse or assault referee's do not change from game to game. If these people (players, coaches, spectators) get away with it at your game, they will do so at the next game as well, until they understand that this kind of behavior is unacceptable and accept the disciplinary consequences of their actions.

Instead of providing examples of reports, here we will provide a step by step procedure to be followed if you as the referee or as an assistant referee are abused or assaulted.

### Step 1

- Always get Medical attention if needed and make sure you are Safe first!
- As soon as safely possible after the incident has occurred start jotting down the facts.
- Separate Reports are required by the Referee and each Assistant Referee, if applicable,
- When did the incident occur? Before, during or after the game.
- Where did the incident occur? On the field, on the bench, in the parking lot.
- Who was involved? Players, Coaches, Spectators.
- Identify the Persons involved as best as possible. If Players, by numbers, names from the game sheets. Coaches by name on the game sheets and OSA registration numbers.
- Spectators - give a description as to which team they belonged to, what they were wearing, what they looked like etc.
- Exactly what was said?
- It is very important that you report the exact words used, including foul language and name calling.
- Were the Police called?
- By whom?
- What did the Police do when they arrived?
- Did anyone come to help you?
  
- Who was it?

- Did you get their names contact information or identities? They may be witnesses called later.

### **Step 2**

As soon as possible report the assault or abuse to an Executive Member or experienced senior Referee member of your OSRA Halton branch, or contact your DRC

### **Step 3**

With someone's assistance write and submit the Referee Assault report.

We can ensure that your report is complete, well written and properly descriptive and consistent.

As the Ontario Soccer Association (OSA) Discipline panels will call you to a hearing, it is important that you keep a copy of everything, including your notes and game records, game sheets, and your reports, as well as copies of reports submitted by your assistants and names and contact information of any possible witness.

## Final word

You need to be prepared to attend a Referee Assault hearing that will be conducted by a OSA Discipline Panel. They will contact you either by mail, e-mail or telephone. Once notice is received, immediately contact the Halton Branch member that assisted you with the report. We will make sure you have an Advisor attend the hearing with you.

Important note: Bring your copies of everything with you to the Hearing.

At the Hearing, you are not on trial. Be confident! Be prepared to answer questions with direct clear comments. Do not change your story or decide to let them off easy. You tell your story exactly as it happened, and let the Discipline Panel decide.

Normally, the process is as follows:

- The Discipline Panel introduces everyone.
- The Discipline Panel will either read, or ask you to read the report(s).
- The Discipline Panel will ask you some opening questions.
- The Discipline Panel will ask the accused person for an opening statement.
- The Discipline Panel will allow questions to be asked by the accused, but they should only be directed to you from the panel. The accused is not allowed to ask you questions or start a conversation with you direct.
- The Discipline Panel will interview any witnesses.
- The Discipline Panel will adjourn.

The Discipline Panel will not render its decision during the hearing. They will write each party with their decision after the fact.

Accepting Assault or Abuse is not part of the job of being a Referee!

## Glossary

**Abandoned:** When a game is stopped and not restarted. The game must have begun and is stopped any time prior to the final whistle including added time.

**Added Time:** Time added at the end of each half by the Referee to compensate for time lost because of injury, substitutions or stoppages in play.

**Assault:** Any act or threat of aggression towards a referee or their assistant referee's whether physical or verbal.

**Cancelled:** A cancelled game is a game that had never begun.

**Caution:** Describes the action of giving a player a Yellow card. They are being cautioned.

**Coach:** The person(s) named on the game sheets as coaches.

**Dismissal:** Describes the action of giving a player a Red card. The player is being dismissed.

**Foul:** A player commits one of ten acts described in Law 12.

**Foul Language:** Any spoken word that is considered offensive. Not limited to common swear words.

**Foul Gesture:** Any expressive motion of the body or with the hands that is considered offensive.

**Player:** Any person named on the game sheet as such.

**Spectator:** Any person not named on the game sheet. Also, called an Outside agent.

**Suspended:** A game is suspended when time is stopped for longer than usual with normal play. For example to deal with a long injury time, or because of lightning, and then the game is restarted.