



To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

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Subject: **Match Reports Involving Discipline**

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A Circular (No. 1137) recently received from FIFA's General Secretary emphasized the importance of referee match reports in properly evaluating acts of misconduct for any further response by FIFA's Disciplinary Committee. The issues raised by the Circular are equally important for the professional leagues, high level youth and amateur leagues, and major tournaments in this country. The same concerns are also felt in the regional and state associations.

Although all aspects of the referee's match report must meet high standards of clarity, accuracy, brevity, and pertinence, those sections involving misconduct require special attention, and reporting on acts of misconduct leading to a send off merit the highest concern. The need for effective match reporting starts at the lowest competitive level and becomes ever more critical as the competitive level of the match increases. State Referee Administrators and State Directors of Instruction are strongly urged to ensure that effective match reporting is incorporated in their training of senior referees.

In order for Disciplinary Committees to evaluate serious misconduct, match reports must start with:

- The name of (and additional identifying information for) the player who was sent off
- The time of the send off
- The specific reason in the Laws of the Game for the send off (Law 12)

In addition, however, the referee must supply sufficient detail regarding the circumstances of the misconduct to aid in evaluating its level of seriousness. Among the factors that should be addressed, where relevant, are:

- Whether the action occurred during a challenge for the ball
- Whether the misconduct occurred at a stoppage of play or during play
- If anyone was injured as a consequence of the misconduct

- Whether there was any prior incident that may have led to the player's actions
- The demeanor of the player during the send off (including any difficulties in implementing the player's removal from the field)
- The location of the action in relation to the goal line and penalty area being attacked at the time
- The subsequent intrusion of any other players (teammates or opponents) during the time the referee is managing the send off
- The specific words or gestures which were determined to be insulting, offensive, or abusive
- The identity of the opponent or official toward whom the misconduct was directed
- A summary of the prior misconduct (or a reference to the section of the report which detailed the prior caution) preceding the second caution for which the player was sent off
- The identity of the assistant referee, fourth official, or reserve assistant referee who provided independently observed facts to the referee regarding the misconduct
- All other details of the action which materially shaped the decision to send the player off

Any other facts which a Disciplinary Committee might decide it needs as a result of its review of the match report can be supplied by the referee on request of the Committee, but the most useful information will come from a properly completed, accurate, detailed, and clear match report. Match reports provided independently by assistant referees, fourth officials, or reserve assistant referees should follow these guidelines as well.