



# HOW TO WRITE MATCH REPORTS; ARTICLES; AND INTERVIEWS

SCOTTISH HOCKEY



## **Match Day Process**

### **Pre Match**

1. Arrive at the match well ahead of push-back.
2. Immediately make yourself known to home team, and ask for team sheet if you are writing a match report.  
  
(Take a picture with your phone, it's the simplest way)
3. Repeat for away team - also make presence known to umpire, just so they know.

### **During match**

1. Take notes, or use dictaphone for match incidents (Goals, chances, saves, other match events worth noting).
2. Once the match is complete, try and grab an interview with your team.

## **How to Write a Match Report**

### **Intro**

The match report is the most common form of output in sports. It's fundamental to your organisation and is key in helping deliver coverage of hockey matches to help the sport prosper.

In your introduction you should refer to: the result; the ramifications of the result (such as a team going top of the table, or winning their fifth game in a row); the type of match; the venue; and depending on the importance, you can also make reference to some of the goals individually, either by mentioning who scored them or when/how the goal was scored.

Your intro (which can be split over two paragraphs) should also make reference to major incidents/talking points in the match i.e penalties, red cards. All this should be covered before you start recounting chances.

### Body

There are two ways of structuring the body text of your match report. You can either describe each chance chronologically, or you can mix and match. Both are acceptable. Just don't write up every single thing you noted down!

### Conclusion

Lastly, your conclusion should go into more detail on the ramifications of the match, and also provide some overall analysis. Contemplate the turning points in the match, where it was won and lost. List the areas where each team excelled; the winning team could have been "ruthless in attack" but the losers may still have "worked hard in midfield." If you are going to pick out areas where a team can improve, be careful not to be too harsh. Unlike Sky and the big papers, we aren't here to find fault and crucify people. We're trying to shed a positive light.

Finally make sure you grab an interview with a coach or a player, too.

## **Match Report Style Points**

### Names

In the first instance, mention the player's full name, and from then on in your copy just his/her surname. For example, "Alan Forsyth scored a hat-trick..." when you mention him first, and then "Forsyth almost scored again but his shot smashed the post and bounced clear" the second time you mention him.

### Numbers

In general, for numbers between one and ten, write them out in full. For numbers above ten, write 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. So you would say "three players were sent off," but that there were "19 players left on the pitch". For match reports it becomes a bit trickier when talking about the minutes in which goals were scored. There are three ways this can be done, and you can use all three.

Always write the word out in full if you are saying a minute between the first and the tenth but you can write 19th, 28th, whatever. Just NEVER superscript. - BUT, you can also say “on the 70-minute mark” - or “with 15 minutes left”. The only other occasion numbers would crop up would be mentioning a player’s number. Generally avoid this if you are tempted. The only time it’s acceptable are when making reference to the number as a type of player ie “a classic number nine’s finish” or “he found space in the hole like a true number ten”. Follow the general number rule when doing this.

### Dates

You shouldn’t need to do this much in a report, as the website you post the article on will log the date, but if you are referring to a previous match and want to use the actual date, write “June 10 2017”. NEVER superscript.

### Headlines

Try and catch the flavour of your report in a snappy one-liner. Something that will entice people to read it.

### Capital letters/miscellaneous

When making reference to a tournament and you’re using its full name, say “Indoor National League 1”. If you’re talking about a competition indirectly, say “the cup winners”. It goes without saying that team names and players should have capitals, as well as venues. Don’t try and add emphasis to a word by italicising it. Bold or underlining too.

Never use exclamation marks unless it’s a quote.

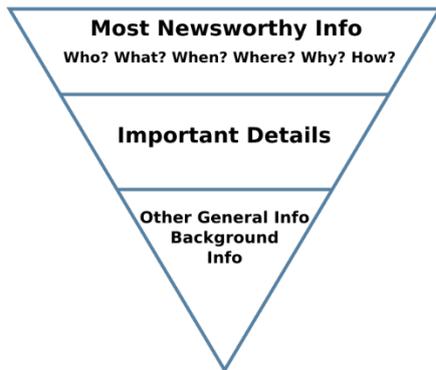
Be wary when referring to teams about your use of ‘they’ and ‘it’. Technically a team is singular so you would say “Grange done its best” but it’s perhaps more common to say “their best”. Just be consistent.

### **How to Write a Feature Article**

Feature articles can either be structured around an interview (or interviews), or can be an in-depth piece on a specific subject, either in the form of an analytical piece or an opinion piece. But each piece should be individual.

Straight news reports don't draw on opinion and won't have as much detail; maybe just a few stats and one or two interviewees max. They will be on a specific event or incident. Some general points on article writing:

Your introduction can go one of two ways. It can either follow the classic news pyramid structure, hitting the who/when/why/where/how right away, or it can be in the form of a drop-intro, and you hit the who/when/why/where/how more gradually.



*Pyramid structure (above)*

Always try to source at least one interview per piece.

### Names and titles

In the first instance, mention the player's full name, and from then on just his/her surname. Try to avoid Mr, Mrs etc but sometimes it's suitable to include it in more official or formal features. When referring to someone as a head coach or manager, don't use capitals.

### Ages

This is flexible, but the preferred way to write a person's age is either "18-year-old", or "18 year-old" or "18 year old".

### Numbers

In keeping with industry standard, for numbers between one and ten, write them out in full. For numbers above ten, write 11, 12, 13, 14, 15...50,000.

## Dates

Always write like this: “May 23 2015” or if the year isn’t necessary, “May 23”.

## Capital letters

As mentioned, all titles - that’s whether you’re talking about a first aider, a head coach or a club president - should never have capitals. For official bodies it’s more complex. Scottish Hockey should always have capitals. Use capitals when writing the full name of a league association, council or other organisation, but lower case if you refer to it using part of its name. Example: - “Edinburgh University won the Women’s Premiership last season.” - “Edinburgh University were the league champions last year.”

## Quotes

In the UK academia generally one quotation mark is preferred with double quotation marks being used for quotes within quotes. For example, ‘Have you any idea,’ he said, ‘what “a slap shot” is?’ However, in newspapers in the UK, the order is often reversed. For example, "Have you any idea," he said, "what 'a slap shot' is?"

Quotes which are full sentences should be preceded with a colon and at the end the full stop, question mark or exclamation mark should be included within the quotation, like so:

- Jamie Frail said: “Scottish Hockey has grown membership by 90%.” Always try to have the person’s name first, but as the story goes on you can put them after, like so:
- “The upward curve in membership can be seen from 2014,” said/added Paul Elliott. If the paragraph ends with a quote which continues into the next paragraph, don’t bother closing the quotes:
- Andy Tennant said: “What’s great is the overall standard is improving.
- “Our Under 16s just beat England 2-0, so we’re getting there.” Short quotes which are not full sentences need no punctuation apart from the actual quotation marks, so the full stop or comma should be outside the quotation.
- Paul Elliott said it was “a triumph” and called for celebration. – Paul Elliott said it was “a triumph” and that there was need for “a celebration”.

NEVER introduce a quote by saying something like “I caught up with John Smith of Kelburne to see what he thought.” It’s bad practice, generally, and it looks unprofessional.

### Quotation marks

A further note on quotemarks. Never “quote” yourself, whether it’s with ‘one quotation mark’ or “two quotation marks”. In journalism, the reader could think you are quoting someone but are not saying who. If it’s your opinion, then just say it. If you’re thinking of using it ‘stylistically’ - just don’t. Another occasion where this comes up is team nicknames. Don’t write ‘uddie or ‘the stagies. If people are talking about Rangers or Celtic, they don’t say ‘the hoops’ or ‘the bears’. Leave the quotation marks and write the nickname in capitals.

### Exclamation Marks

Only acceptable in direct quotes. These should never be in your copy.

### Abbreviations

Write out in full on the first mention eg: “North District Women Division 1” and then shorten from then on, “NDWD1”

### Italics

Never use them.

### One / Many?

A very common grammatical error called lack of concord occurs when you refer to a collective noun as a plural, then later in the same sentence grammatically have them as a singular entity or vice-versa:

- “The team have done its best” X - “The team have done their best” ✓ - “The team has done its best” is better - but just be consistent throughout your copy. It’s maybe more natural for people to use the plural for teams.

## **How to Write Up an Interview**

An interview with a player, coach or anyone involved in the running of a club is always a great way to engage with your audience and shine a light on the unsung heroes of the game. One way to write up interviews is in the format of a Q&A. To that effect when writing up an interview, you must do so in the format of questions and answers.

Begin your article with a small introduction to the interviewee, a small paragraph explaining who the person is and what the purpose of the interview is. What story are you trying to tell? Why is this person's story important? Try and answer these questions in your opening paragraph.

When writing the interview itself, make sure to describe the conversation as it happened. For example, the interview should be written like this:

**Interviewer:** How did you get started in hockey?

**Person of Interest:** I got started when my granddad took me to my first training session when I was six years old. From then I was hooked and never wanted to go back!

After the first question, where the names of the interviewer and the interviewee are introduced, use initials when using their names for the rest of the article:

**I:** What is your most memorable moment from your playing career

**PI:** Winning the cup when I was 13 was a great moment for me. It was great to share that moment with my teammates.

## **Mobile Journalism**

With technology advancing at the rate it is, mobile journalism has become a necessity for many across the globe. With your mobile you can film items of interest, you can record interviews and even edit footage.

With that in mind it is important to know the basics of what can be achieved with a mobile phone in the context of reporting.

## Equipment

Clip mic - A clip mic is extremely important when reporting in the field as phone microphones don't always provide the best quality. When conducting interviews always make sure that you're interviewee has a clip mic, or a suitable alternative, in order to produce the best sound possible. Clip mic's can be plugged into your phone via the headphone jack. Clip mics can be bought on Amazon for as little as £15

## Framing

Make sure your subject is framed right, with the subject framed using rule of thirds.

## Editing Apps

When editing footage taken on your mobile there are a few apps that you can take advantage of.

For iOS users, iMovie is a free app, built into the phone that can be used for free.

- Simple interface
- Can add simple text to a video
- Can fix shaky video to half decent extent
- Can easily keep audio running under cutaways e.g. Keeping interview audio going over cutaways
- Easy to use transitions

For Android users, Adobe Premiere Rush is the one to use.

- User friendly interface
- If you actually record a video through the app you can control camera settings like shutter speed, white balance and frame rate.
- Motion graphic text templates

- Useful and super easy noise reduction feature for audio.

### **Code of Conduct and Ethics**

- Never engage with the dialogue/verbals from the sideline at a match.
- If you arrange to meet at 11am, be there at 10.45am.
- Always be fair and accurate in your reporting
- Differentiate between fact and opinion
- Be conciliatory when correcting any mistakes pointed out
- Be a great ambassador for hockey.