

How to structure your match report

No matter what the age group or level our teams play at, we are always keen to let people know how we are getting on the pitch – win, lose or draw. But how do we tell people how we are doing - especially when not everyone considers themselves a sporting wordsmith? We have created a short guide to make things bit easier for you.

A simple formula for writing is **4WH**:

- Who [Which teams were playing]
- What [What competition were they playing in?]
- Where [Where was the match played?]
- When [When did it take place?]
- How [How did the game go?]

Now, let's delve a little deeper. We might want to include some details in order to expand on the story. Have the teams met before? ("Enniscorthy went into this match hoping to avenge September's 2-0 defeat at the hands of their hosts"). If it's a league match, where are the two sides? ("Table-toppers Enniscorthy entertained fifth-placed Genesis at the Astro Active Centre on Saturday..."). Which team had the better form going into the game? ("Enniscorthy were hoping to rebound from a run of two defeats and a draw, while Navan came to county Wexford off a recent drubbing at the hands of Corinthians."). How do we get these details? Research. League tables and cup draws are easily available on the Leinster Hockey website, while many clubs use social media and websites (like ourselves) to tell their story.

What do we include in a match report? Think of your match report like a highlights reel: what were the stand-out moments in the match? These could be goals, penalty flicks, penalty corners, injuries, a series of pin-point passes, great saves, et cetera. Include as many players' names as possible (refer to them by second name where possible, except where there is two with the same second name, then you can add their first name also). If you know the names of opposition players, even better.

Example: "Hill, in the Enniscorthy goal, made a series of dramatic saves to keep his side in the match, most notably when Wicklow's Sean Murphy had his looping effort tipped over the bar midway through a fractious second half."

The report should also be written in the past tense as people will be reading this hopefully in the following weeks newspaper or during the week on the Enniscorthy Hockey Club website. Eg "Last Saturday.... Or Last weekend...."

Once the body of the report is completed, write a conclusion summing up the teams performance. Make sure to finish by promoting upcoming games. Where has this result left you in the league standings? Who are you playing next and where?

Finally, include the list of squad and coaches involved, eg:

Squad: Graham Hill; David Simmons; Clive Rothwell; Martyn Veitch; Andrew Rothwell; Glenn Chapman; Liam Jowett; Daithi Medcalf; Niall Maguire; Roy Chapman; John McWey; Edmundas Liuikimas; Jason Rothwell. **Coach:** Donal Doyle; **Manager:** Fraser Rothwell

While writing a match report, always remember:

Avoid repetition; Don't always use 'Enniscorthy' or 'Enniscorthy Hockey Club'. Instead occasionally you can use 'the South East side', 'Slaneysiders', 'the Cathedral Town side', 'the county Wexford team' et cetera. The English language is blessed with many ways to describe a wide variety of events.

Use your knowledge; Instead of a "lovely" pass, why not a "pinpoint" pass, or a "deadly accurate" one? There are many excellent sportswriters out there – why not see their work for examples.

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Write as a reporter; Write as an outsider of the club, don't refer to the team as 'We', but always think of the team as Enniscorthy Hockey Club.

Check over your work; Have somebody read over your submission before it is sent to the PRO- they may pick up on something you have missed due to over-familiarity with your article. The PRO will check for spelling and grammar, but please make their job easier!

Ask for help; It's hard to catch it all and know exactly what's going on in the game; ask other spectators or players if you missed something. If your team has a WhatsApp group, ask a spectator to type in highlights into it. Members who aren't at the match can keep themselves updated in live time, and you can look over their notes when reading the report.

Example:

"Shot on goal us saved. James." 13:17

"Save Sean." 13:18

"Sean had to kick ball away under pressure from their forwards." 13:19

In a match report this could read:

"James Murphy had an effort for Enniscorthy saved just after the interval, and Suttonians swiftly counter-attacked, Sean Reilly in the host's goal having to kick the ball away under pressure from the Dublin side's attackers."

Points to note:

Deadlines: Our deadline for submission to the newspapers is 6pm on Sunday evening, so allow for plenty of time when writing your report up.

Photographs: Newspapers love these. If you have access to good-quality images, attach them to your report, and include a caption. The newspaper photograph editor won't know who is in the photograph, even if you do.