

# How To Write a Tournament Report

The goal of a Tournament Report is both self-reflection and the education of other judges. You'll have to analyse your performance and where you can improve, while also talking about that experience in a manner which will help other judges improve.

What makes a good report is good structure, interesting points and perhaps a question to the reader. This How To Guide will take you through the basics so you too can write great Tournament Reports!

## How to start

Writing a Tournament Report actually starts before the tournament even begins. Make sure to bring a notebook and write down details to help you remember events from the event. Details could include:

- Location
- Format
- Player count
- Your role in the event

When you get back from an event, either the evening of or the Monday after, sit down for an hour or two and just write out all the exciting stuff you can remember about the event. Don't be afraid that it's too much, it's easier to edit and clean up a piece of writing than it is to start a brand new one.

The more time that passes between the event and you writing down what you remember, the more details will get lost, so make sure to write down as much as you can before other tasks get to you.

## Structure is vital

When starting a new report, have the details bold in the beginning. This ensures that the reader gets the basic information on which event the tournament report is from and the role of the writer.

It is good practice to start each new segment with a bold subtitle. This makes the reader understand that you're moving to something new in the tournament report.

When writing about a situation involving players, use APNAP names. The active player should have a name that begins with an A, like Adam - while the non-active player should have a name that begins with an N, like Nancy.

Make sure everything is spelled right. For many folks, grammatical or syntax errors make writing impossible to read.

## Interesting Content

When writing a report, use your opinions to your advantage: adding how you felt about an interaction or ruling and providing your opinions on events that transpired really improves the quality of your report and the level of engagement with the reader. If, for example, you mention in your report that a certain investigation method was effective, but made you and the player extremely uncomfortable, that is very interesting!

Remember that you're trying to tell your story of the event. Your reader likely knows how a tournament is structured and run - what they don't know is your experience: your feelings, thoughts,

and mistakes. Your tournament report should reflect what you felt was important and interesting about the event, because your reader will almost certainly think those things are interesting too.

Just as important as interesting content is content that is of no use to the reader. If it's not important to the story you are telling, you can skip details like round turnover, the number of deckchecks, time extensions and other minor details.

## Mistakes are where wisdom is gained

Seeing the experiences and mistakes of other judges in tournament reports is a great educational experience for the reader. Through sharing the problems we face, we can help other judges avoid similar mistakes in future - particularly if you can provide some analysis of your decisions and how you'd improve.

Sharing mistakes can be a little difficult emotionally, but remember that every single other judge is only human, and every single other judge makes mistakes sometimes too. No one will think any less of you or your ability in admitting them, and in fact, will likely respect you even more for doing so.

## Make it amusing

Good tournament reports are really just a bunch of little stories. Most of us have had an absolutely ridiculous call that we can't wait to share. That's the kind of stuff that should be in your report!

If you didn't enjoy writing your report, it probably means you think it's boring, which means it probably is boring and no one else is going to enjoy it either. Have some fun. If you think a call was especially ridiculous or weird, make sure that comes across in your retelling of the story.

## Where to post

When you're satisfied with your report, post it in the [Tournament & Conference Reports](#)-section in JudgeApps, or in your regional forum if you have one.

## Example report

What follows is an example report that was posted on JudgeApps and which takes into account all of the information above. Try to see where the techniques we described above are used in this report.

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### **SCG Report**

**Baltimore, New Jersey | Team Trios**

**Time: Saturday February 2nd – Sunday February 3rd**

**Players: 855 (285 Teams) Winners: Will Smith, Natalie Portman and Denzel Washington**

### **Saturday – Main Event - Slips**

#### ***Now I Know My S-C-Gs***

I've never been on an SCG event before, so I was pretty excited to see what it was like! The first thing I noticed was how aggressively branded everything was. I do really like SCG's aesthetic and branding. But seeing their logo on almost every piece of tournament material was just so shocking, it was on the stage tablecloths, it was on the pairings boards, the pairings themselves, the gathering point, even the match slips said "starcitygames" on them! However, branding aside, the event felt really similar to a GP, there were 900 players in the main event, and for the most part, it ran pretty similarly. The biggest difference I noticed was the lack of the use of Purple Fox. While purple fox isn't mandatory on an event of this size, I think it would've made EOR run a little more smoothly.

#### ***Death's Vague Indeterminate Outline***

I took a call involving a player at 11 in a combat with a Death's Shadow blocking a 3/3, and a 2/1 being unblocked in combat. The player asked if the shadow would "grow" and not die to the 3/3. I instinctively shook my head but then thought better of it and read over all the cards involved and determined that the player was correct, I ruled in favor of the shadow player but the opponent was uneasy, probably because of my initial reaction, and he appealed. I think the major lesson here is that optics are very important in judging, and making any kind of inclination towards either side before properly assessing all the involved cards can really cause a lack of confidence in your ruling.

### ***Cabal Wellness Awareness Program***

I heard about this call from another judge, but felt like it was an interesting situation to think about. AP says "therapy", NAP decides to Brainstorm in response, and then casts Snapcaster Mage, flashing back Surgical Extraction on AP's Grave Titans, which were the only creature's in AP's graveyard (AP was on reanimator). AP then says "therapy myself".

This situation kind of made me uncomfortable because I feel like the initial decision to cast Cabal Therapy was with the intent to target NAP, but then AP changed his mind after losing all the reanimateable targets in his graveyard. However, I wasn't really sure how to go about calling this 'cheating'. Another judge framed it as 'illegally casting a spell (not declaring targets) to create ambiguity and gain advantage,' I felt like this was a good way of categorizing this.

### ***No Note-Taking Allowed***

Team events are always going to have a lot of odd rules about communication. As I may have discussed in a previous report, a teammate taking a move back for another teammate is pretty contentious, the official policy on this is that it's not allowed. However, I don't have a big problem with this because I feel like it falls under the MTR backup rule, and for a lot of communication stuff we consider the team a single unit. It's also pretty well known that touching your teammates cards, or otherwise "playing for them" is also not okay, so when a player asked me if it was okay to take notes for his teammate, I was a little uncertain as to what policy allowed. Inherently I felt like it was okay because it really only speeds up the event. I'd rather not force players to take their own notes if it slows things down. I decided to double check with the HJ who confirmed that he felt it was okay as well.

## **Sunday – Main Event – Coverage & Top 8**

### ***How to be Twitter Famous***

I seldom do 'coverage-related' tasks, the closest I've come is being the FJ in the coverage area, which has only happened once or twice. So when I was asked to be a "spotter" on Sunday I was pretty nervous. The designation includes remitting life totals and relaying 'invisible' information such named cards for Cavern of Souls or Dauntless Bodyguard. Bundled into this was the task of ensuring the correct tokens were distributed to the players, I was a little worried about seeing a card in a player's hand and pulling out tokens preemptively. If I was too obvious about it, it might give the opponent information they shouldn't have.

Another thing SCG did was hold matches sometimes, so if the third match in a set was going to game 3 sometimes SCG would hold it to ensure that the team match wasn't won off screen. For example, if they were streaming a game of modern, but standard and legacy both lost, the game of modern might just scoop up in the middle of the game, which I imagine is pretty awful for anyone watching the stream. Once, we ended up holding two teams for about 7 minutes because the stream game ended very early, we even moved modern in the middle of a game, only to have the modern and legacy games both wrap up in 2-3 quick turns.

### ***...In Conclusion***

I had a lot of fun at SCG Baltimore, but it was, in a way, disappointingly similar to a lot of my other GP experiences. I know beforehand a lot of SCG regulars spoke with me and seemed very excited to see my reaction to working an SCG event, and I think that caused me to believe the event would have a dramatically different feel to it, but in the end, it was just players playing magic, and judges running events. which honestly, is all I ever really want out of an event in the end.

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