

JOURNAL OF SPORTS SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

NOTES FOR REFEREES

Introduction and Timescale

The Journal is a non-profit making scientific electronic journal for experimental reports, case studies and review articles in the fields of sports medicine and exercise sciences. Only a minority of the papers submitted can be accepted and it is necessary that a paper make a substantial contribution to knowledge before it will be published. Essentially descriptive studies or data reports that do not extend beyond a descriptive level will not usually fulfil this requirement.

We particularly wish that this journal achieves a reputation for the care, incisiveness and promptness of its Refereeing. Please do not accept a paper for refereeing if you cannot commit yourself to completing a review within four weeks of receiving it. The deadline date for your report is contained in the enclosed letter. Despite the obvious need to avoid unreasonable delay, never sacrifice thoroughness for a swift response.

Please note that the Journal uses blind refereeing. Please send only your review (preferably by Email or Fax). Keep the copy of the manuscript, as you may be asked to review any revised versions, until the final decision on the paper has been made.

Your Report

On occasions it may not be necessary to dwell in detail in framing a report. These are generally cases where the paper is so badly prepared as to be virtually incomprehensible. There may also be cases where the experimental design is irretrievably flawed. Where a contribution is too slight for acceptance but does hold some interest, it may be worth gently encouraging the author to do further work towards a more substantial paper. Alternatively it may be useful to report some material in a short paper.

Probably all manuscripts will be improved by some revision before publication. Even when you wish to recommend acceptance there will probably be various specific proposals that you can make towards improving the paper.

Please make sure that your critical comments and your recommendation about publication agree: authors are sometimes puzzled to receive largely friendly comments or apparently mild criticism associated with a recommendation to reject. If you recommend rejection, please try to indicate sufficient grounds. Rejection of a paper is bound to disappoint the authors and no purpose is served by added offence or personal abuse from an anonymous Referee. Rejection is most tolerable when it is clear that the reviewers have considered the paper with a thoroughness compatible with the authors' investment of time in their work

It is not necessary for Referees to give their attention to the conformity of a paper with the Journal's conventions on style. Nevertheless, minor alterations may be suggested by pencilled annotation of the manuscript.

Please type your comments on a sheet or sheets of paper with the title of the paper and manuscript number at the top of each sheet. You may differentiate in your report between General and Specific Comments. Please point out in your report, which will be sent to the authors, the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. You should consider the overall assessment points on the summary sheet before framing your report.

Please do not make a recommendation as to acceptance or rejection within your report. Instead, please make your summary recommendation on the accompanying summary sheet, which should be completed and returned with your report.

We are very aware that Referees perform a vital service without extrinsic reward: the least we can do is provide them with feedback of the other Referees' reports. Clearly this material is provided in strict confidence.

Please consider the following questions before framing your written report.

1. Does the paper sufficiently advance knowledge to merit publication?
2. Is the content of the paper within the scope of this journal?
3. Is the presentation sufficiently clear and precise?
4. Could the experiment(s) be repeated from the descriptions and references given?
5. Are the illustrations necessary and adequate?
6. Are the aims clearly defined and followed?
7. Are the statistical analyses appropriate and clear?
8. Are the conclusions justified by the experimental evidence?
9. Are the references adequate? (Use of Harvard Reference System?)
10. Does the abstract accurately describe the work performed and the conclusions drawn?

Modified from guidelines to referees of the Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology by Leslie Henderson (July, 1983) and Philip Smith (February, 1985).