

AP Style 101

(The Sports Reporter's Version)

Sports Journalism in the Internet Age

Tufts - Ex-College - Fall 2012

Week 2

AP Style

- Considered the Bible of journalism. The industry standard.
- If you have any interest in becoming a journalist, buy and learn the AP Stylebook.

Numbers

- Spell out one through nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and up.

Number Exceptions

- Games in a series
 - (Game 1, Game 2, Game 3)
- Numbers with decimal points
 - 4.2 points per game, 2.45 ERA
- Football yardage
 - Brady threw a 5-yard pass.
 - Bush rushed for 3 yards.

Number Exceptions

- Made vs. Attempted
 - *Paul Pierce was 3-of-6 at the free throw line.*
 - *Joe Mauer went 2-for-5 against Cleveland.*
- Records
 - *The Raiders fell to 0-8 on the season.*
 - *After going 3-0 in July, Johan Santana went 2-4 in August.*

Number Exceptions

- Scores and series records are always numbers.
 - *Spain beat the Netherlands 1-0.*
 - *The Saints beat the Vikings 14-9.*
 - *The Lakers lead the season series with the Celtics 3-2.*
 - *Toronto FC sits in third place in the Eastern Conference standings with a 7-9-7 record.*
 - *Novak Djokovic defeated Roger Federer 5-7, 6-1, 5-7, 6-2, 7-5 in the US Open semifinal.*

Other Style and Usage Notes

- Alternate city and team names in a story.
- Give team name and city on first reference.
 - *The Boston Celtics signed Shaquille O’Neal in August.*
- Spell out positions.
 - Shortstop (not SS). Running back (not RB).

Grammar Basics

Common Grammar Mistakes

- Use a hyphen when a figure is used as an modifier.
 - *Brees threw a 5-yard pass. (modifying pass)*
 - *Brees threw for 5 yards. (giving a distance)*

 - *Ramirez hit a 420-foot home run.*
 - *Ramirez home run went for 420 feet.*

Plural vs. Singular

- Cities are singular.
 - *New York leads the AL East.*
 - *Many feel Miami is the team to beat in the NBA.*
- Teams are plural.
 - *The Yankees lead the AL East.*
 - *Many feel the Heat are the team to be in the NBA.*

Note: Even when a team has a singular name – Jazz, Avalanche, etc. – it is used as a plural noun.

Plural vs. Singular

- Differentiate between its and their.
 - *Cincinnati headed back to its locker room at the half, trailing 7-0.*
 - *The Bengals headed back to their locker room at the half, trailing 7-0.*
- A team is an its. A club is an its.

CORRECT: *Is a team responsible for the behavior of its players?*

INCORRECT: *Is a team responsible for the behavior of their players?*

Other Common Mistakes

- its (possessive)
- it's (it is)

- their (possessive)
- there (location)
- they're (they are)

One Word vs. Two Words

Noun: One Word, Verb: Two

Noun	Verb
shutout	shut out
strikeout	strike out, struck out
knockout	knock out
lineup	line up
playoff	play off
kickoff	kick off

Commonly Misspelled Words

One Word	Two Words
ballpark	home run
ballgame	free throw
fastball	ball carrier
doubleheader	double play
quarterback	running back

(When in doubt, do a Google search to see what AP uses.)

AP Style

- Comes from the Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law.
- Style and usage guide used by newspapers and in the news industry in the United States. It is the basis for virtually every news publication's style – when to capitalize, use numerals, preferred spellings and abbreviation.
- Some papers/sites have their own additional style guides. But the basis for those is going to be AP.