

## Reflective Essay - Refereeing Experience

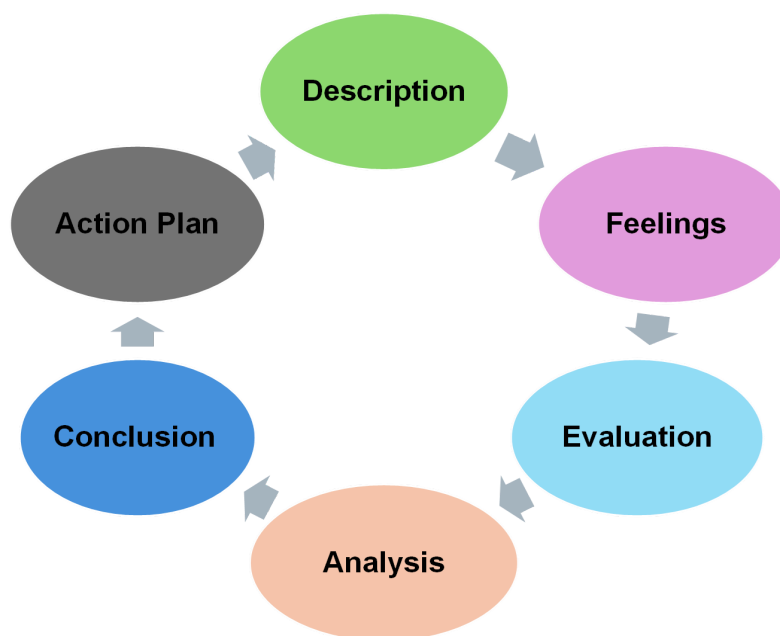
### What is Gibbs' Reflective Learning?

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle is a structured framework for reflecting on experiences. Developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988, it provides a systematic method to learn from experiences and improve future practice. The cycle includes six stages:

1. **Description** – What happened?
2. **Feelings** – What were you thinking and feeling?
3. **Evaluation** – What was good and bad about the experience?
4. **Analysis** – What sense can you make of the situation?
5. **Conclusion** – What else could you have done?
6. **Action Plan** – If it happened again, what would you do differently?

Each stage encourages deep thinking and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

### Gibbs Reflective Cycle



## Why is it Used in This Referee Course?

As a pickleball referee, your role is crucial in ensuring fair play and maintaining the integrity of the game. Reflective learning is used in this course to help you:

1. **Understand Your Actions and Decisions:** by reflecting on your experiences, you gain clarity on how you performed and how your actions influenced the game and players.
2. **Develop Emotional Intelligence:** examining your feelings and reactions helps you manage stress and **maintain composure during high-pressure situations.**
3. **Improve Decision-Making Skills:** analyzing your actions allows you to identify patterns, address mistakes, and build confidence in applying the rules.
4. **Enhance Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** reflection helps you consider how you interact with players, spectators, and other referees.
5. **Foster Continuous Improvement:** by creating an action plan, you can set clear goals for your development as a referee.

## How to Structure Your Reflective Essay

You should write **one essay** after refereeing **at least six matches**. You should reflect on your overall experience across all six matches, whether they were officiated in a single continuous session or on separate days.

*Optional 1: If you prefer, you are welcome to submit separate essays (up to three essays) if the six matches were refereed at different times or on different days.*

*Optional 2: If your on-court session involved few impactful but distinct experiences and you feel you might not be able to reflect on all of them sufficiently within one essay, you are welcome to submit separate reflective essays (up to three essays). Each one should still adhere to the steps and requirements outlined in this guidance.*

Below is an outline to guide you:

### 1. Description

- Provide some information about the players, location, time and the environment.
- Provide an account of a specific experience you had during the course or while refereeing.
- Include key facts such as what happened, who was involved and the context of the situation.

### 2. Feelings

- Reflect on your thoughts and emotions during the experience.
- Be honest about how you felt - confident, nervous, frustrated, or anything else.
- Consider questions such as: how did you feel at the time? What did you think? What do you think other people were feeling?

### 3. Evaluation

- Assess what went well and what could have been better.
- Highlight any aspects of your performance or decision-making that you were proud of or that caused challenges.

### 4. Analysis

- Dig deeper into why certain things happened.
- Why did things go well? Or why badly?
- Could things have been resolved in a different way? What might have helped?
- Did controversial points arise that made you stop and think? When things did not go well, did you get flustered or stay calm with the players?
- Consider your knowledge of pickleball rules, communication skills, or environmental factors that influenced the outcome.

### 5. Conclusion

- Summarize what you learned from the experience.
- Can you do things better next time?

- Should you have done anything differently?
- Do you think you might need to improve a particular skill?
- Discuss alternative actions or strategies you could have employed to achieve a better outcome.

#### 6. Action Plan

- Outline specific steps you will take to improve in future refereeing situations.
- Include goals such as improving your knowledge of the rules, practicing assertive communication, or managing time more effectively during matches

### Tips for Writing Your Essay

- **Be Honest and Specific:** Authenticity makes your reflection meaningful and insightful.
- **Focus on Learning:** The goal is not to dwell on mistakes but to learn from them.
- **Use Examples:** Concrete examples make your reflection relatable and actionable.
- **Write Clearly and Concisely:** Avoid overly complex language—your essay should be easy to understand.
- **Recommended Word count:** between 600 and 900 words.

### References:

This document was inspired by Pickleball Scotland's Reflective Essay Template for pickleball referees. To learn more about the reflective toolkit, the essay format and Gibb's model please visit: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle>