

A bench trial was held on November 22 and 23, 2006. Rather than a trial transcript, the record on appeal contains two proposed bystanders reports, one prepared by plaintiff and one by defendant.¹ On December 1, 2006, judgment was entered in favor of defendant and against plaintiff. Judge Rhine ordered defendant to tow the vehicle, which was still being stored on defendant's lot, to plaintiff's residence.

Analysis

Initially, we note that plaintiff's brief on appeal fails to comply with the requirements of Supreme Court Rule 341. For instance, the facts, rather than being "stated accurately and fairly without argument or comment, and with appropriate reference to the pages of the record on appeal" are in argumentative form with incorrect citations to the record. See Rule 341(h)(6). The rules of procedure concerning appellate briefs are rules, not mere suggestions, and it is within the appellate court's discretion to strike an appellant's brief and dismiss the appeal for failure to comply with those rules. See Niewold v. Fry, 306 Ill. App. 3d 735, 737 (1999). Plaintiff appeals *pro se*, and we will not penalize her so harshly here.

Jurisdiction

Plaintiff first contends that the trial court lacked jurisdiction to hear her case and, accordingly, the orders and judgment entered are in error. Specifically, plaintiff argues that the sum total of damages sought exceeds the jurisdictional limits of both the small claims court and the municipal division. She argues that, while she asserted actual damages of \$10,789.33, she

¹Plaintiff filed a motion which we took with the case to strike defendant's proposed bystander's report. We have reviewed both the motion and the proposed bystander's report and, accordingly, deny the motion as moot.