

NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee

FINAL CHANGES (Approved July 2, 2008)

Points of Emphasis

The rules committee identified two points of emphasis for the upcoming season:

■ **Protection of the puck carrier.**

The committee believes game officials have held a strong standard of obstruction fouls away from the puck carrier in recent seasons as requested. In reviewing how the game is being called at other levels, it has become apparent that more emphasis needs to be placed on the puck carrier and allowing players to showcase offensive creativity and skill.

By moving to the two-referee, two-linesman system, the committee believes referees will be in proper position to more strictly enforce rules in this area. Officials are instructed to call fouls when the puck carrier's hands or arms are impeded or held and not require the puck carrier to fight through such actions to continue an advantage gained.

■ **Faceoff protocol and interference.**

There are two major faceoff issues the committee believes require additional focus. The first area of concern is the faceoff protocol itself. When put in place for the 2004-05, the faceoff protocol was intended to keep the game moving and to discourage unfair tactics from delaying the game. As a reminder, at a stoppage of play, the visiting team has five seconds to make personnel changes after the referee identified the faceoff location. The home team then has eight seconds to change players. When the referee signals the end of the change, the linesman blows the whistle and must drop the puck in no more than five seconds. This standard has slipped in recent seasons and the committee believes a renewed emphasis here is important.

The second area the committee believes must be addressed is interference and obstruction that occurs immediately after a faceoff restarts play. This interference is sometimes subtle and difficult to detect, but often leads to scoring chances by the offense or easy zone clears by the defense. With the two-referee, two-linesman system, the committee again believes this is an area of focus that will benefit by the second referee having responsibility for these fouls.

Major Rules Change Proposals

Rule 1-3 and 1-5. Rink Dimensions. The committee approved:

“It is preferred that the goal line be 11 feet from the end boards. Additionally, the preferred size of the offensive zone is 64 feet.”

Rationale: The committee believes the NHL standard dimensions are best for NCAA play. However, the committee also realizes the variety in current ice sizes and that some institutions do not control the facility in which they play. Therefore, these are the preferred dimensions, not requirements. USA Hockey also is adopting these preferred dimensions.

Rule 3, Equipment.

Remove “including goalkeepers” from this section, because they are players, which are covered.

Rationale: Editorial change.

Rule 3. Equipment. To assist in dealing with equipment issues, the committee approved this statement:

“Equipment shall not be modified from its original, manufactured state and shall be worn in the manner the manufacturer intended it to be worn.”

Rationale: This language mirrors the National Federation of State High School Associations and the committee believes it is important to address altered equipment.

Rule 3-4. Pants. The committee approved:

“Pants with zippers on the leg opening must be zippered during play. PENALTY – Warning and minor penalty if not corrected.”

Rationale: Clarity and for protection. Some student-athletes leave zippers on the hockey pants unzipped, which is not how these items are intended to be worn.

Rule 3-3. Goalkeeper Equipment – Thigh Boards. In the goalkeeper equipment section, the following wording was voted: **“All inner knee/thigh protection, whether attached to the leg pad or not, must be tightly wrapped around the leg. Thigh boards are illegal.”**

Rationale: When the committee approved new goalkeeper equipment dimensions to coincide with the National Hockey League standards two years ago, thigh boards were not included. The NHL has since determined these attachments to be illegal and the committee believes this is appropriate. In all cases, there is a difference between protection of the student-athlete, which this rule maintains and an advantage in blocking pucks, which thigh boards allow. Additionally, this piece of equipment is an attachment and is easily removed from the leg pad.

Rule 3-5, Helmet. The committee voted: **“All players, including backup goalkeepers, must properly wear a HECC-approved helmet and HECC-approved facemask to be in the bench area.”**

PENALTY—Warning and bench minor if not corrected.”

Rationale: The committee believes all student-athletes in the bench area must wear a helmet and facemask for protection. Backup goalkeepers, in most cases, do not wear a helmet currently.

Rule 3-5, Helmet. The committee voted: “A goalkeeper’s helmet must be HECC approved. A goalkeeper’s cage (wire shield) must be HECC approved.”

Rationale: The committee believes, for the safety of all student-athletes, requiring approval of both the helmet and mask is in the best interest of the sport. The Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC), recognized as the industry standard bearer with regards to hockey equipment and testing, has maintained and revised its standard since its establishment in the 1970s.

Rule 5-2. Officiating Systems. The committee voted:

“To remove the one-referee, two-assistant referee system from the rules book.”

Rationale: After several years of study, it was determined that the two-referee, two-linesman system is the best system to put officials in the best position to positively enforce the committee’s rules and points of emphasis. The committee also believes the system will allow for additional development of new officials and mentoring opportunities. Division III institutions will continue to use the two-referee, one-linesman system due to financial considerations.

Rule 6-15. Blowing the Whistle. Proposal to better define this rule:

“As there is a human factor involved in blowing the whistle to stop play, the referee may intend the play to be stopped slightly prior to the whistle actually being blown. (For example, the fact that the puck may come loose or cross the goal line prior to the sound of the whistle has no bearing if the referee determined that the play had stopped.)”

Rationale: Several situations have occurred where the referee has determined play to have stopped, but the human factor of blowing the whistle resulted in a difficult situation. This solution is consistent with the NHL rule and is supported by conference officiating coordinators and referees.

Rule 6-15. Faceoff locations. The committee adjusted two rules relating to faceoffs:

“After a stoppage of play to administer a penalty, the faceoff will be located in the defending zone of the offending team.”

“All faceoffs will take place at one of the nine faceoff locations.”

Rationale: The first proposal is intended to provide a team that has earned a power play the advantage of starting with an attacking zone faceoff. The second proposal is intended to eliminate inconsistencies in determining faceoff locations and to allow each faceoff to take place at an established location.

Rule 6-15-e. Net Dislodged by Defensive Team. The committee added:

“If the net is dislodged by a defending player without a penalty being assessed, the defensive team is not allowed to change players.”

Rationale: Keeping with the committee’s philosophy to reward the offensive team when forcing the defense into tactics that stop play, the committee is attempting to address a common issue in the game.

Rule 6-19-a. Handling the Puck. This rule was edited for clarity:

“A player may use the hand to play the puck when the puck is on or off the ice. The puck may be batted by the open hand, but the player who batted it must be the first to recover it for that team. Play shall not be stopped for any batted puck or hand pass by players in their respective defensive zones provided that play is initiated and completed in that defensive zone.

If the puck is caught and dropped immediately, play shall continue. If the puck is caught and held, carried or thrown, play shall be stopped.

FACE-OFF—At one of the end-zone faceoff spots adjacent to the goal of the team causing the stoppage of play.”

Delete the last paragraph of this rule. “If, in the opinion...”

Rationale: This rule is being rewritten to assist in the adjudication of this rule. Previously, when a player closed the hand on the puck, it was a whistle, but throwing the puck was a penalty. Now, these plays are consistent and both acts will result in a faceoff.

Rule 6-11-a. Diving. Add wording to clarify this rule:

“A player shall not attempt to draw a penalty by any deceitful action. **A diving penalty is a stand alone penalty.**
PENALTY—Minor for diving.”

New Rule, Embellishment. Add a new penalty:

“NEW SECTION. b. A player that has been fouled shall not exaggerate the impact of the foul. An embellishment penalty is called in conjunction with an opponent’s penalty. PENALTY—Minor for embellishment.”

Rationale (diving and embellishment): The committee is adding clarification that diving is a penalty to be called alone. The new penalty for embellishment will allow officials to correctly identify to players, coaches and fans what action caused a penalty call. This penalty will only be called when an opponent has fouled, but the player fouled exaggerates the penalty.

Rule 6-17-a, Fighting. Add to this rule: “A punch thrown may be considered fighting.”

Rationale: This rule has often been misidentified and difficult, at times, to adjudicate. This wording replaces several sentences and is more editorial than a major change, but the committee hopes this helps clarify this rule.

Rule 6-18-a and 6-18-c, Goals and Assists (Deflecting/Directing/Kicking). The committee approved a reorganization of this rule to read:

“SECTION 18. a. A goal is scored when the puck, initially propelled legally by a stick of a player of the attacking team, passes between the goal posts, entering from the front and below the top of the net, and completely crosses the goal line, with the goal frame in its proper position. If the puck was last touched by a defending player before it entered the cage, the goal is allowed, unless otherwise identified in Rule 6-18-c-10.

A goal shall not be allowed if the puck has been kicked or directed into the goal off an attacking player’s skate that is moving toward the goal line. When in doubt, the goal shall be disallowed. When administering this rule, the puck must initially be legally propelled by a stick.

If the puck deflects into the goal from the shot of an attacking player by striking any part of a player on the same team, the goal shall be allowed. The player who deflected the puck shall be credited with the goal. **A goal shall be allowed if a puck deflects off an attacking player who is in the act of stopping, provided neither skate is used to direct the puck into the net.**

c. A goal shall not be allowed in any of the following cases:

2. If the puck has been thrown or batted into the goal.

10. If an attacking player propels the puck illegally with the stick, and it deflects off any player into the net.”

Rationale: This rule had much debate during the committee meetings. Ultimately, the committee is proposing this clarified language to remove all references to a “distinct kicking motion”

which has been difficult to understand. The committee is defining the use of the skate to score a goal only when the puck deflects off of the skate and is not controlled, guided or kicked into the net. When in doubt, the goal will be disallowed in this proposal.

New Rule, Privileged Area. Add new rule to identify what special privileges the goalkeeper is afforded in this area:

“The privileged area (defined in Rule 1-12) includes the goal crease. The goalkeeper may not be body checked in this area (Rule 6-6-b). Incidental contact, at the discretion of the referee, may be permitted while the goalkeeper is in the act of playing the puck outside the goal crease. The goalkeeper is allowed to freeze the puck in this area to prevent a goal.”

Rationale: This rule is being added to clarify what privileges the goalkeeper has in the defined privileged area. Previously, no privileges were identified.

Rule 6-27, Icings. The committee approved a rule dealing with the change of players after an icing:

“The offending team is not allowed to alter its personnel when icing is called.”

Rationale: In keeping with the committee’s philosophy to encourage speed and skill in the game, icing the puck was identified as a defensive tactic that slows play. Not allowing the defensive team to change its personnel will be managed well with the two-referee system and it will provide the offensive team an advantage it has gained by forcing the defense into an icing.

Rule 6-27-f, Icing. In the icing rule, the committee decided to allow icing to be nullified when a pass is deemed to be **“obtainable. An obtainable pass is defined as one that is: 1) On the ice; 2) Within a player’s stick length on all sides of the player to whom it is passed; 3) On the attacking side of the center red line; and 4) Onside.”**

Rationale: While this rule did not have the intended impact when it was added two seasons ago, the committee continues to believe this rule has merit if adjudicated correctly. Again, with the two-referee, two-linesman system, the committee believes this rule will be managed better and has provided additional guidance to assist.

New rule, Slew-footing. The committee approved a new penalty to address this issue:

**“Slew-footing is the act of a player or goalkeeper using his leg or foot to knock or kick an opponent’s feet from under him, or pushes an opponent’s upper body backward with an arm or elbow, and at the same time with a forward motion of his leg, knocks or kicks the opponent’s feet from under him, causing him to fall violently to the ice.
PENALTY—Major and Game Misconduct or Disqualification at discretion of the referee.”**

Rationale: This penalty does not occur often, but when it does it is addressed as excessive roughness or unsportsmanlike conduct. In the interest of properly identifying and tracking fouls appropriately, the committee believes this needed to be defined.

Rule 6-36-d. Offside. Remove: “If a puck is shot on goal, however, play shall be stopped immediately for the offside violation.”

Rationale: This eliminates an unneeded whistle in the game. If a goal was somehow scored during a delayed offside, there are other rules that clarify such a goal would not be allowed.

Rule 6-56-b. Shootout. The committee voted:

“A shootout may be conducted at the end of the five-minute overtime period for advancement purposes, **in conference games or by mutual consent of both teams.**”

Rationale: The committee received several requests from conferences to experiment with a shootout in regular season contests as a means to enhance the excitement of the game. The committee proposes this allowance in the hope that conferences will use a shootout and provide feedback for future consideration.

Appendix B, Shootout Protocol. The committee approved several adjustments in the shootout protocol:

- Add to this rule: **“It is recommended that the ice surface be dry scraped in the middle of the ice through both creases.”**
- The number of shooters was reduced from five to **three**.
- Adjustment to No. 5: “If Team A’s first **two** players score, while none of Team B’s players score, the shootout is over and Team A wins the shootout.”
- Adjustment to No. 6: “If the shootout remains tied at the end of **this** round, **each coach will select a different shooter,** this time in a sudden death situation. **The first three shooters are ineligible until all other bench players have attempted a shot, if necessary.** Each team will have an equal number of chances to shoot before a winner is declared.”

Adjustment to Notes:

- Delete second note.
- Replace fourth note with: **“All players not actively participating in the shootout must remain on their bench.”**

Future Considerations

The committee approved the following future considerations, to be seriously considered during the next two-year period:

1. Five faceoff locations. To better manage the faceoff process, the committee believes holding all faceoffs at one of the locations with established markings might assist officials to manage encroachment. This would increase the fairness of the faceoff.

2. Modifications to the goal. The committee believes that improved equipment and the increased skill of players and coaches have created a downturn in the number of goals scored per game. Modifications to the goal should be a consideration to encourage scoring chances and keep the game at an exciting level to play and watch.

3. Hybrid touch-up icing. The committee was presented with an interesting icing rule, which would protect the safety of student-athletes, but add an element of touch-up icing to the game. In the approved model, the linesman would determine which player would reach the face-off dot first. If it is determined to be the attacking player, icing is waved off. If it is the defending player, icing is blown when puck crosses line. Tie goes to defender.

TYH:nkb