



USA HOCKEY OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES

Points of Emphasis

2013-14 through 2016-17 Playing Seasons

The goal of USA Hockey is to promote a safe and positive playing environment for all participants while continuing to focus on skill development and enjoyment of the sport. All officials, coaches, players, parents, spectators and volunteers are strongly encouraged to observe these “Points of Emphasis” when participating in the sport of ice hockey.

Fair Play and Respect

Fair play and respect are the backbone of any successful amateur sports program. In order for a positive environment to be created, it is imperative that all participants and spectators have respect for all players, coaches, officials, administrators, spectators and the sport of hockey. Hockey is a game demanding high levels of concentration and skill. Taunting or unsportsmanlike conduct directed at opponents or officials will not be tolerated.

Intimidation tactics have no place in ice hockey. These tactics include any contact to the head of the opponent, checking from behind and late avoidable body checks to an opponent who is no longer in possession and control of the puck. Officials are instructed to enforce these rules to a high standard and assess the appropriate penalty when these actions occur. In addition, officials are expected to strictly enforce any avoidable contact occurring after the whistle – including during scrum situations around the goal.

In non-check classifications, legal body contact shall be allowed and players allowed to compete using proper body position skills. However, any deliberate body checks shall be penalized accordingly. If a body check is delivered for the purpose of intimidation, a major penalty should be assessed to the offending player.

In classifications where body checking is allowed, the purpose of the check shall be to separate the opponent from the puck and officials should strictly penalize any illegal actions such as boarding, charging and a late avoidable body check to a player who is no longer in possession and control of the puck.

Players are encouraged to develop a deep sense of respect for all (opponents and officials) while endeavoring to enjoy the sport and improve their playing ability. Each player is expected to use proper skill and technique when engaging in any type of body contact.

Coaches are responsible for instructing their players to play the sport in a safe and sportsmanlike manner. To that end, coaches are directed to teach only those skills necessary to allow for proper and legal body contact.

Officials should be diligent and confident when officiating the sport. Each official shall enforce all playing rules fairly and respectfully with the safety of the players and the best interest of the game in mind. Players must be held accountable for dangerous and illegal actions with the proper enforcement of the rules at all times.

Spectators are encouraged to support their teams while showing respect for all players, coaches, officials and other spectators.

Standard of Play and Rule Emphasis

USA Hockey will continue to observe the Standard of Play and Rule Emphasis for restraining fouls adopted in June 2006. The goal is to reduce restraining infractions in the game, allowing the skill level of the participants to determine the outcome of a game and to increase participant enjoyment.

In addition, USA Hockey has adopted a Body Checking Standard of Play and Rule Emphasis for immediate implementation at all levels of play. This goal is to enhance player skill development by reducing intimidating infractions designed to punish the opponent. Proper enforcement of this standard will improve the skill of legal body contact or legal body checking at all levels of play.

Conclusion

Hockey should be enjoyed by all participants. To that end, all participants and spectators shall observe a level of personal behavior that demonstrates respect for all. The USA Hockey Officiating and Coaching Education programs will continue to increase awareness among all officials and coaches with regard to these Points of Emphasis and the Standard of Play and Rule Enforcement.

Standard of Play and Rules Emphasis – Body Checking

Through the standard of rules enforcement, our game will continue to allow the opportunity for improved skill development and a more positive hockey environment for all participants. The mission of USA Hockey is clear; through this new initiative a greater emphasis will be placed on skating, puck possession and the proper use of the body to establish position and legally gain a competitive advantage.

The goal of this enforcement standard is to create an environment that enhances player skill development by reducing intimidating infractions designed to punish the opponent. This standard is designed to improve the proper skill of legal body checking or contact at all levels of play while not removing the physical component from the game. A hard body check or using body contact/position (non-checking classifications) to gain a competitive advantage over the opponent should not be penalized as long as it is performed within the rules. The focus of the body check shall be to separate the opponent from the puck.

The principles of this body checking enforcement standard include the following:

- The purpose of a body check is to separate the opponent from the puck.
- Only the trunk (hips to shoulders) of the body shall be used to deliver a body check.
- The check must be delivered to the trunk (hips to shoulders) and directly from in front or the side of the opponent.
- Players who use their physical skills and/or anticipation and have a positional advantage shall not lose that advantage provided they use their body to check the opponent within the rules.
- Players will be held accountable for acts of an intimidating or dangerous nature.

Enforcement Standard – The following penalties are to be called with very strict enforcement.

BODY CHECKING (Non-Checking Classifications)

A player cannot deliver a body check to any player while participating in a non-checking classification.

Examples include:

- makes deliberate physical contact with an opponent with no effort to legally play the puck
- uses overt hip, shoulder or arm contact with the opponent to physically force them off the puck
- physically impedes the progress of the opponent with hips, shoulders or torso without establishing legal body contact and having no intent of playing the puck

BOARDING

A player cannot commit any infraction, including body checking, for the purpose of intimidation or punishment that causes their opponent to go violently or excessively into the boards. Examples include:

- accelerating through the check to a player who is in a vulnerable position off of the boards that causes them to be thrown violently into the boards
- driving an opponent excessively into the boards with no focus on or intent to play the puck
- any other infraction (tripping, cross-checking, charging etc.) that causes the opponent to be thrown violently and excessively into the boards

CHARGING

A player cannot take more than two fast strides or travel an excessive distance to accelerate through a body check for the purpose of punishing the opponent. Examples include:

- running or jumping into the opponent to deliver a check
- accelerating through a check for the purpose of punishing the opponent
- skating a great distance for the purpose of delivering a check with excessive force

CHECKING FROM BEHIND

A player cannot deliver a body check to an opponent directly from behind, or diagonally from behind. The onus is on the player delivering the check to not hit from behind. Examples include:

- body checking or pushing an opponent from behind directly into the boards or goal frame or in open ice

HEAD CONTACT

A player cannot contact an opponent in the head, face or neck, including with the stick or any part of the player's body or equipment. The onus is on the player delivering the check, regardless of size differential, to not make contact in the head/neck area of the opponent. Examples include:

- a body check delivered with any part of the body that makes contact with the head or neck area
- the use of the forearm or hands to deliver a check to the head or neck area of the opponent

ROUGHING

A player cannot use the hands, stick or extension of the arms to body check an opponent or deliver an avoidable body check to a player who is not in possession and control of the puck. Examples include:

- intentionally playing the body of an opponent who does not have possession and control of the puck
- delivering an avoidable check to a player who has already relinquished control of the puck by a pass or shot. This is oftentimes referred to as "finishing" the check
- any avoidable contact after the whistle shall be penalized strictly, including scrum situations around the goal or along the boards. Officials are instructed to assess an additional penalty to those players acting as the aggressor or who instigate any avoidable contact after the whistle

SUMMARY

All USA Hockey members must demonstrate awareness and support for the application, spirit and the respect of the rules in order for continued improvement of the game of hockey. At the same time, it is important to remember that:

- a player is entitled to use proper body position and body contact in all age classifications in order to gain a competitive advantage
- players are allowed to compete for body position using their strength and balance in front of the goal or along the boards
- in classifications where body checking is allowed, the focus of the body check must be to separate the opponent from the puck

Standard of Play and Rules Emphasis – Restraining Fouls

Through the standard of rules enforcement, our game will continue to allow the opportunity for improved skill development and a more positive hockey environment for all participants. The mission of USA Hockey is clear; through this new initiative a greater emphasis will be placed on skating, puck possession and the proper use of the body to establish position and a competitive advantage.

The goal of this enforcement standard is to reduce restraining infractions in the game and not to remove legal body checking or body contact. A hard body check or using body contact/position (non-checking classifications) to gain a competitive advantage over the opponent should not be penalized as long as it is performed within the rules.

The principles of this continued enforcement standard include the following:

- The use of the stick will be limited to only playing the puck.
- The stick will not be allowed to in any way impede a player's progress.
- The use of a free hand/arm will not be allowed to grab or impede a player's progress.
- Players who use their physical skills and/or anticipation and have a positional advantage shall not lose that advantage as a result of illegal acts by the opponent.
- Players will be held accountable for acts of an intimidating or dangerous nature.

Enforcement Standard – The following penalties are to be called with very strict enforcement.

HOOKING

A player cannot use his/her stick against an opponent's body (puck carrier or non-puck carrier) to gain a positional advantage. Examples include:

- tugs or pulls on the body, arms or hands of the opponent which allows for the space between the players to diminish
- placing the stick in front of the opponent's body and locking on – impeding the opponent's progress or causing a loss of balance.
- stick on the hand/arm that takes away the ability for the opponent to pass or shoot the puck with a normal amount of force

TRIPPING

A player cannot use his/her stick on the legs or feet of an opponent in a manner that would cause a loss of balance or for them to trip or fall. Examples include:

- placing the stick in front of the opponent's legs for the purpose of impeding progress, even if on the ice, with no effort to legally play the puck
- placing the stick between the legs of the opponent (can opener/corkscrew) that causes a loss of balance or impedes the progress of the opponent.

HOLDING

A player cannot wrap his/her arms around an opponent or use a free hand to clutch, grab or hold the stick, jersey or body on the opponent in a manner that impedes their progress. Examples include:

- wrapping one or both arms around the opponent along the boards in a manner that pins them against the boards and prevents them from playing the puck or skating
- grabbing the opponent's body, stick or sweater with one or both hands
- using a free arm/hand to restrain or impede the opponent's progress

INTERFERENCE

A player cannot use his/her body ("pick" or "block") to impede the progress of an opponent with no effort to play the puck, maintain normal foot speed or established skating lane. Examples include:

- intentionally playing the body of an opponent who does not have possession or possession and control of the puck.
- using the body to establish a "pick" or "block" that prevents an opponent from being able to pursue a puck carrier
- reducing foot speed or changing an established skating lane for the purpose of impeding an opponent from being able to pursue a puck carrier

SLASHING

The use of the stick will be limited to only playing the puck. Any stick contact, as a result of a slashing motion, to the hands/ arms or body of the opponent will be strictly penalized. In addition, hard slashes to the upper portion of the stick (just below the hands) of an opponent, with no attempt to legally play the puck, shall also be penalized.

SUMMARY

All USA Hockey members must demonstrate awareness and support for the application, spirit and the respect of the rules in order for continued improvement of the game of hockey. At the same time, it is important to remember that:

- a player is entitled to the ice he/she occupies as long as they are able to maintain their own foot speed and body position between opponent and puck
- players are allowed to compete for body position using their strength and balance in front of the goal or along the boards

CONCLUSION

Coaches are expected to teach proper skills and hold their players accountable for illegal and dangerous actions, regardless as to whether they are properly penalized, or not.

Parents are expected to support the decisions of the officials and support the coaches in teaching the proper skills in a safe and positive environment.

Officials shall enforce a strict penalty standard according to the guidelines that have been established.

Players are expected to compete within the playing rules.

Administrators are expected to hold players, coaches, officials and parents accountable for their actions in an effort to promote a safe and positive environment for all participants.

All members of USA Hockey share an equal responsibility to ensure the integrity of the game is upheld. The onus to incorporate adopted change is not only on the officials, but also on administrators, coaches, parents and players, as well.



RULE CHANGE SUMMARY

For Youth, Girls'/Women's and Adult Classifications

For the 2013-14 through 2016-17 Seasons

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
Preface	"Points of Emphasis" including Standard of Play and Rules Enforcement	Continues language that addresses legal body checking and legal body contact, including a Body Checking and Restraining Foul Standards of Play
Preface	Philosophy of Youth Hockey	Updates wording to coincide with language appearing in Annual Guide referencing the ADM and establishes consistency of message with other educational documents.
All	Section One	Simplifies language pertaining to rink requirements as needed to play the game. Makes reference to STAR's USA Hockey Facility Guide as the resource to obtain detailed information and more specific requirements for rink standards and ice markings.
201	Composition of Team	Moves language pertaining to who can occupy the players' bench during a game.
304	Protective Equipment	Adds Note to Section (c) acknowledging the expiration date on HECC helmet stickers and places the responsibility on the player to wear a certified helmet.
308	Electronic Devices	Adds language that prohibits a Team Official from using electronic devices to question, challenge or dispute a game official's decision while the game is in progress.
404 & 601(e)	Misconduct Penalties	Calls for a Game Misconduct penalty to be assessed in lieu of the second misconduct penalty assessed to the same player during the same game.
411	Progressive Suspensions	Adds new rule (recommended for 2013-14) effective for the 2014-15 season that will add additional suspensions to a player who receives their 3 rd or subsequent major penalty for a dangerous action in the same season. Also adds suspension to the head Coach for a team receiving three major penalties in the same game.

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
501	Appointment of Officials	Moves all language pertaining to an officials equipment to this rule and also mandates that all officials wear ½ shield visor effective with the start of the 2013-14 season.
503	Linesman	Deletes language that allows for a referee to call upon a linesman to conduct any face-off during the course of the game.
507	Penalty Timekeeper	Moves reference as to who may occupy the penalty bench during the course of the game.
602	Attempt To Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponent	Adds Note that specifies all incidents of attempt to injure/deliberate injury to a game official should be penalized under Rule 601(f.1).
603	Boarding	Establishes penalty options for Boarding as minor plus misconduct, major plus game misconduct or match penalty.
604	Body Checking/Body Contact Categories and Non-Check Adult Classifications	Establishes Youth “Body Contact” categories and modifies terminology to coincide with “Learn-to-Check” Initiative educational materials.
607	Charging	Establishes penalty options for Charging as minor plus misconduct, major plus game misconduct or match penalty. Adds Note(s) that moves description of goalkeeper’s “Privileged Area” to this rule and clarifies difference between Goalkeeper Interference and Charging the Goalkeeper.
612	Face-Off Locations	Clarifies location of face-off if the puck were to illegally enter the goal directly off an official.
614	Falling on Puck	Adds Note referencing the goalkeeper’s “Privileged Area” to this rule.
615	Fighting	Allows for a game misconduct penalty to be assessed to a player in the Adult Male Classifications for removing his (or opponent’s) helmet/facemask prior to or during an altercation.
620	Head Contact	Establishes penalty options for Head Contact as minor plus misconduct, major plus game misconduct or match penalty.
632	Puck in Motion or Out of Sight	Deletes outdate language referring to a player who passes the puck back into their own defensive zone for the purpose of delaying the game.

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
637	Throwing Stick/Object	Deletes reference to “deliberately” throwing a stick or object out of the rink and in the direction of spectators for a game misconduct penalty to be assessed.
639	Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking	Adds language specific to “slew-footing” to this rule.
Glossary	Goalkeeper’s Privileged Area	Moves definition from Section 1 of the rules and adds to Glossary.
Glossary	Goalkeeper’s Warm-up Area	Moves definition from Section 1 of the rules and adds to Glossary.



RULE CHANGE SUMMARY- JUNIOR EDITION

For Authorized Junior Age Classifications

For the 2013-14 through 2016-17 Seasons

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
	USA Hockey Official Playing Rules Book	Entire Rule Book has been edited for grammar and redundancy in an effort to provide for more logical flow and easier to read language.
	Standard of Play and Rules Enforcement	Continues language that addresses legal body checking and legal body contact, including a Body Checking and Restraining Foul Standards of Play.
All	Section One	Simplifies language pertaining to rink requirements as needed to play the game. Makes reference to STAR's USA Hockey Facility Guide as the resource to obtain detailed information and more specific requirements for rink standards and ice markings.
201	Composition of Team	Moves language pertaining to who can occupy the players' bench during a game.
304	Protective Equipment	Places additional responsibility on the team to ensure all players are wearing the proper protective equipment.
304	Protective Equipment	Adds Note to Section (c) acknowledging the expiration date on HECC helmet stickers and places the responsibility on the player to wear a certified helmet.
304	Protective Equipment	Establishes a player whose helmet/facemask has come off and as a result has caused a stoppage of play may not participate in play until after the completion of the ensuing face-off.
308	Electronic Devices	Adds language that prohibits a Team Official from using electronic devices to question, challenge or dispute a game official's decision while the game is in progress.
404	Misconduct Penalties	Amends rule to reflect changes in penalty options for Butt-Ending, Head-Butting and Spearing.

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
404 & 601(e)	Misconduct Penalties	Calls for a Game Ejection/Misconduct penalty to be assessed in lieu of the second misconduct penalty assessed to the same player during the same game.
407	Goalkeeper Penalties	Specifies player serving goalkeeper penalty must be a non-penalized player who was on ice at time of infraction.
410	Supplementary Discipline	Increases the per game fine assessed for a player who was unable to serve the entirety of their suspension at the end of a season and is no longer involved in Junior Hockey.
501	Appointment of Officials	Moves all language pertaining to an officials equipment to this rule and also mandates that all officials wear ½ shield visor effective with the start of the 2013-14 season.
503	Linesman	Deletes language that allows for a referee to call upon a linesman to conduct any face-off during the course of the game.
507	Penalty Timekeeper	Moves reference as to who may occupy the penalty bench during the course of the game.
601	Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct	Adds specific language pertaining to embellishment and diving calling for a minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct.
602	Attempt To Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponent	Adds Note that specifies all incidents of attempt to injure/deliberate injury to a game official should be penalized under Rule 601.
605	Butt-Ending	Establishes penalty options for Butt-ending as minor plus misconduct, double minor plus game ejection, major plus game misconduct or match penalty. Major plus game misconduct or match penalty shall be assessed if injury results.
606	Charging	Establishes penalty options for Charging as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
608	Cross-Checking	Calls for major plus game misconduct to be assessed to any players who injures and opponent by cross-checking.
609	Delaying the Game	Clarifies who takes the penalty shot, when a goal is awarded and what criteria is used to determine if the goal posts has become dislodged under this rule.
609	Delaying the Game	Deletes language calling for a warning to be issued for multiple delays for scrums after the whistle.

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
610	Elbowing	Establishes penalty options for elbowing as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
611	Face-Off Locations	Clarifies location of face-off if the puck were to illegally enter the goal directly off an official.
611	Face-Off Locations	Deletes language that provided territorial advantage to home team if unclear as to the closest face-off spot.
612	Face-Off Procedures	Calls for delay of game penalty to be assessed to offending player who deliberately causes a false face-off after an icing.
613	Falling on Puck	Adds Note referencing the goalkeeper's "Privileged Area" to this rule.
614	Fighting	Clarifies penalty for player fighting with greater facial protection. Adds language pertaining to engaging in a fight after the original altercation and clarifies rules pertaining to helmet removal.
618	Head-Butting	Establishes penalty options for Head-butting as minor plus misconduct, major plus game misconduct or match penalty.
619	Head Contact	Establishes penalty options for Head Contact as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
622	Hooking	Establishes penalty options for Hooking as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
623	Icing	Clarifies conditions for icing to be nullified as a result of a slow moving puck.
627	Kneeing	Establishes penalty options for Kneeing as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
628	Leaving the Players' Bench or Penalty Bench	Allows for game misconduct penalties to be assessed to all players who leave the bench during an altercation after the first player.
	Passes	Rule is deleted.

Rule #	Rule	Description of Change
631	Puck in Motion or Out of Sight	Deletes outdate language referring to a player who passes the puck back into their own defensive zone for the purpose of delaying the game.
632	Slashing	Establishes penalty options for Slashing as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
634	Spearing	Establishes penalty options for Spearing as minor plus misconduct, double minor plus game ejection, major plus game misconduct or match penalty. Major plus game misconduct or match penalty shall be assessed if injury results.
636	Throwing Stick/Object	Deletes reference to “deliberately” throwing a stick or object out of the rink and in the direction of spectators for a game misconduct penalty to be assessed.
637	Tied Games	Requires teams to change ends for each overtime period.
638	Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking	Adds language specific to “slew-footing” to this rule.
638	Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking	Establishes penalty options for Tripping as minor, major or major plus game ejection penalty. However, if the opponent is injured a major penalty plus game misconduct shall be assessed.
639	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds language that penalizes a player for an avoidable body check delivered to a vulnerable opponent who is no longer in possession and control of the puck.
Glossary	Goalkeeper’s Privileged Area	Moves definition from Section 1 of the rules and adds to Glossary.
Glossary	Goalkeeper’s Warm-up Area	Moves definition from Section 1 of the rules and adds to Glossary.