

## USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Policy

- **Verbal and Physical Abuse of Officials**
- **Inappropriate Spectator Behavior**

Recently, several negative aspects of today's society have crept into all competitive youth sports. The increasing number of direct physical confrontations from either a player, coach, or spectator against officials has reached staggering proportions.



### Why Zero Tolerance?

The USA Hockey Board of Directors has developed a Zero Tolerance Policy regarding the verbal abuse of officials. Verbal abuse is the first step leading to physical abuse of officials. This Zero Tolerance Policy has been unanimously endorsed by the youth, junior and senior councils, the district referees-in-chief and the coaching achievement program directors for immediate implementation.

To make ice hockey a more desirable and rewarding experience for all participants, the USA Hockey Board of Directors has instructed the Officiating Program to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. These points were written and implemented to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games.

## PLAYERS

A **MINOR PENALTY** for **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT** Shall Be Assessed Whenever a Player:

- Visually demonstrates ANY sign of dissatisfaction with ANY Official's decision, in a manner that openly embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his or her judgment
- Shoots the puck after the whistle has been blown.
- Uses obscene or vulgar language, including swearing, in a boisterous manner to ANYONE at ANY time.

The **TEAM** will be assessed a **BENCH MINOR** if a player:

- In the vicinity of the players' bench, uses profane, obscene or abusive language to ANY person or uses the name of ANY Official coupled with vociferous remarks.
- In the vicinity of the players' bench or penalty bench, throws anything into the playing area during the progress of the game or during a stoppage of play.

If **ANY PLAYER** Is Guilty Of The Following, He or She Shall Be Assessed A **MISCONDUCT PENALTY**:

- Uses profane, obscene or abusive language to any person on the ice or anywhere in the rink before, during or after the game.
- During stoppage of the game, intentionally knocks, throws or shoots the puck out of the reach of the Official who is retrieving it.
- Deliberately throws the stick or any other equipment out of the playing area.
- After being penalized, does not proceed directly and immediately to the penalty bench or dressing room when ordered by the Referee.
- Enters or remains in the Referee's crease while the Referee is reporting to or consulting with any Game Official including, Linesmen, Timekeepers, Penalty Timekeeper, Official Scorer or Announcer, except for the purpose of taking the penalty bench.
- Interferes in any nonphysical manner with any Game Official including Referees, Linesmen, Timekeepers or Goal Judges in the performance of their duties.

If **ANY PLAYER** is Guilty of the Following, He or She Shall be Assessed a **MISCONDUCT** or **GAME MISCONDUCT PENALTY**:

- Touching or holding the Referee, Linesman or any other Game Official with his/her hand or stick.
- Continuing or attempting to continue a fight or altercation after he or she has been ordered by the Referee to stop, or resisting the Linesman in the discharge of his duties.
- Intentionally bangs the boards, protective glass, dasher boards or goal with a stick or any other instrument.

If **ANY PLAYER** is Guilty of the Following, He or She Shall be Assessed a **GAME MISCONDUCT PENALTY**:

- Persists in ANY course of conduct for which he or she has previously been assessed a misconduct penalty by the Official.
- Uses obscene gestures or racial/ethnic slurs on the ice or ANYWHERE in the rink before, during or after the game.

A **MATCH PENALTY** Shall be Assessed Whenever a Player:

- Deliberately inflicts physical harm to a Game Official in ANY manner or attempts to do so.
- Deliberately injures an opposing Team Official in ANY manner or attempts to do so.
- Behaves in ANY manner that is critically detrimental to the conduction of the game, including spitting at an opponent, spectator, Game or Team Official, or verbally threatening a Game Official with physical harm.

## **TEAM OFFICIALS**

A **BENCH MINOR** shall be assessed whenever a Team Official:

- Uses obscene, abusive or profane language or abusive gestures to ANY person or uses the name of the Official coupled with any vociferous remarks.
- Visually displays ANY sign of dissatisfaction with an Official's decision, in a manner that openly embarrasses the Official and/or challenges his or her judgment.
- Bangs the boards with any instrument at any time.
- Throws anything into the playing area from the vicinity of the players' bench during the game or stoppage of the game.
- Interferes in a nonphysical manner with ANY Game Official including Referees, Linesmen, Timekeepers or Goal Judges.

If **ANY TEAM OFFICIAL** is Guilty of the Following, He or She Shall be Assessed a **GAME MISCONDUCT PENALTY**:

- Uses obscene gestures or racial/ethnic slurs on the ice or anywhere in the rink before, during or after the game.
- Persists in any course of conduct for which he or she has previously been assessed a bench minor penalty.

A **TEAM OFFICIAL** shall be Assessed a **MATCH PENALTY** for the Following:

- Deliberately inflicting physical harm to a Game Official in ANY manner or attempting to do so.
- Deliberately injuring a Player or Team Official in ANY manner or attempting to do so.
- Behaving in ANY manner that is critically detrimental to the conduction of the game, including spitting at an opponent, spectator, game or team Official, or verbally threatening a Game Official with physical harm.

## **MINOR PENALTIES**

- For a "Minor Penalty", any player, other than the goalkeeper, shall be ruled off the ice for two minutes during which time no substitute shall be permitted.
- For a "Bench Minor" penalty, one player of the team against which the penalty is imposed shall be ruled off the ice for a period of two minutes, during which time no substitute shall be permitted.

## **MAJOR PENALTIES**

- For the first “Major Penalty” in any one game, the offender, except the goalkeeper, shall be ruled off the ice for five minutes, during which time no substitute shall be permitted.

## **MISCONDUCT PENALTIES**

- A “Misconduct” penalty involves the removal of a player, other than a goalkeeper, from the game for a period of 10 minutes, but another player is permitted to immediately replace a player so removed. A player whose misconduct penalty has expired shall remain in the penalty bench until the next stoppage of play.
- A “Game Misconduct” penalty involves the suspension of a player or Team Official for the balance of the game, but another player is permitted to immediately replace a player removed.
- A player or Team Official incurring a game misconduct penalty shall be suspended for the next one game of that team. (See rule 403b in USAH official rules of Ice Hockey for exceptions.)

## **MATCH PENALTIES**

- A “Match” penalty involves the suspension of a player or Team Official for the balance of the game, and the offender shall be removed from the game immediately.
- A match penalty also includes a 5 minute time portion, with no on-ice substitution, that will be served by a member of that team.
- A player or Team Official incurring a match penalty shall be suspended from participating in any USA Hockey games and practices until his case has been dealt with by the proper authorities.

## **SPECTATORS**

Inappropriate & Destructive Behavior Shall Include:

- Using obscene, racial or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to ANYONE at ANY time.
- Taunting Players, Coaches, Officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threatening physical violence, or physical violence.
- Throwing ANY object in the spectators viewing area, players’ bench, penalty box, or on-ice surface, that in ANY manner creates a safety hazard.

The on-ice Official will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of REMOVING parents/spectators from the spectators viewing and game area. Once removed, play will resume. Lost time WILL NOT be replaced and violators may be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body.

## **OFFICIALS**

Officials must apply these guidelines in a realistic manner and MUST be careful not to get overly technical in their enforcement. This ZERO TOLERANCE policy is designed to eliminate direct confrontations with Officials while still allowing players and coaches an avenue to communicate in a CALM and REASONABLE manner.

Officials are required to conduct themselves in a BUSINESSLIKE, SPORTSMANLIKE, and NON-VINDICTIVE manner at ALL times. The actions of an Official MUST be above reproach. Actions such as “baiting” or inciting players or coaches is STRICTLY prohibited.

## **ENJOY THE GAME**

Support the Referees and Coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.  
Respect Players, Coaches and Officials.  
Refrain from any offensive behavior.