



USA Hockey is committed to creating a safe and fair environment for all participants. Respect for the game, the opponents, coaches and officials is a critical part of the environment that is created and it covers several different aspects of sportsmanship and fair play.

As such, USA Hockey's "Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect" was ratified by USA Hockey's Board of Directors encourage a change in culture as to what is considered to be acceptable/unacceptable body checking and competitive contact at all levels of play. The Declaration is not designed to replace current rules/definitions, but instead intended to clarify and update existing rules and definitions, some of which have been in existence for more than 40 years.

The following statement is a clarification from USA Hockey's officiating department on the unsportsmanlike conduct (Banging the boards) detailed in the Declaration.

UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT (BANGING THE BOARDS)

A bench minor penalty for unsportsmanlike behavior shall be assessed to any team whose player(s) or team officials bang the boards with a stick or any other object, including skates or arms, at any time, including after a body check regardless as to whether the check was penalized or not.

The spirit and intent of this rule is to eliminate unsportsmanlike behavior that is designed to "taunt" or "intimidate" an opponent through the celebration of unnecessary or illegal body check. Simply banging the stick, or other object, against the boards while on the player's bench is not a penalty. However, it is deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct and should be penalized when done as a means of escalating dangerous and/or unnecessary physical play where there is no intent to legally gain possession of the puck.

The correct procedure to apply this interpretation is to first warn the offending team once after the first violation. Any further violation of this policy by the same team should be penalized by assessing a bench minor to the team under Rule 601(b)1 & 5. This bench minor is to be served by a player on the ice at the time of the infraction. Once this bench minor has been served, any further violations by the same team shall be penalized by assessing a bench minor penalty.

If a bench minor penalty for a violation of this policy is being served and before that bench minor expires another violation by the same team occurs that teams head coach shall be assessed a game misconduct under Rule 601(e)1.