



Re-Formatted Playing Rules



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Overview

Part A – For all officials

- Rule Changes (as approved at the AGM)

Part B – For all returning officials

- Philosophy of the Playing Rules
- Navigating the new Playing Rules

Part C – For Level 2 & 3 officials

- Understanding the changes
- Clarifications and updates that may affect rule interpretation



Part A

Rule Changes for 2022-24



Rule Changes

The following changes to the Playing Rules were approved by the Members at the Hockey Canada Winter Congress (AGM).

ALL DIVISIONS OF HOCKEY	
2.2 (k)	Players in Uniform
2.4 (d)	Injured Players
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JUNIOR A / SENIOR ONLY	
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6.4	Face-off Location
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Rule 2.2 (k) – Players in Uniform

What Changed: A player who is injured can be on the bench during the game, but they must be listed as a player on the game report and they must wear the minimum protective equipment.

Note: This would not apply to suspended players, who may not be on the bench or listed on the game report.

New Text: *In Minor and Female, a player that is duly registered to a team roster but unable to participate in a game due to injury may be permitted to take a position on the bench during the game, as long as they are included within the permitted players in uniform on the official game report and wearing the minimum equipment of a BNQ throat protector (minor and female), CSA approved Helmet and CSA facial protector; in accordance with the requirements for their registered category of play.*

Rule 2.4 (k) – Injured Players

What Changed: Clarification that, if a team doesn't have a goaltender dressed, a player can act as the goaltender for the penalty shot only, and then can return to acting as a skater.

New Text: *Goaltender replacement shall be subject to the rules governing goaltenders and shall be allowed the goaltender's full equipment. In divisions of U13 and below after a player has been designated as a goaltender, may return to a non-goaltender position. Only in divisions above U13, the player must remain as a goaltender once they have been designated as such. The only exception is when a team is awarded a penalty shot and the opposing team does not have a goaltender dressed.*

Rule 4.11 – Penalty Shots

What Changed: When a team is awarded a Penalty Shot, any player on that team can take the shot.

Previously, it had to be the player who was fouled, or a player who was on the ice at the time of the infraction.

New Text: *The coach/captain of the non-offending team may designate any player, other than the goaltender, to take the Penalty Shot. In the event that the coach/captain declines to select a player, the Referee will designate a player.*

Rule 6.3 (c) – Face-off Location

What Changed: When a penalty is assessed, making a team shorthanded, the face-off will take place in the offending team's defending zone, with five exceptions. This clarifies that premature substitution of the goaltender is one of those exceptions.

New Text: *When this situation leads to a time penalty or multiple time penalties being placed on the penalty time clock to one team, making that team shorthanded, the ensuing face-off will be conducted at one of the two end zone face-off locations in the offending team's defending zone. There are five exceptions:*

(v) When play has been stopped due to a premature substitution of the goaltender. In this case, the face-off will take place at centre ice, except in cases where the offending team would gain a territorial advantage, in which case the face-off would take place at the nearest face-off location that does not provide that advantage.

Rule 6.7 (d) – Icing

What Changed: Addition of the option to implement “no-change icing” in U18AAA, Junior, and Senior divisions.

Note: This change must be implemented by the Member. Individual leagues or teams are not allowed to use this rule.

New Text: *In categories of U18AAA, Junior and Senior, Members will have the option to apply the ‘no-change on icing’ rule.*

Rule 6.7 (e) – Icing

What Changed: Addition of the option to implement “hybrid icing” in U18AAA, Junior, and Senior divisions.

Note: This change must be implemented by the Member. Individual leagues or teams are not allowed to use this rule.

New Text: *In categories of U18AAA, Junior and Senior, Members will have the option to apply the ‘Hybrid Icing’ rule.*

Rule 6.18 (a) – Time of Game

What Changed: Clarification on the length of a standard game.

New Text: *Three 20-minute periods of regulation playing time, with approximately a 10-minute intermission (when the ice is flooded) between each period, will be the maximum time allowed for each game.*

Note: Members and Leagues may make their own rules regarding regulation time for games played under their jurisdiction, granted that it does not exceed the guidelines of this rule.

Rule 7.4 – Charging

What Changed: Addition of “blindside” hits as a criteria for a penalty under this rule.

New Text:

Charging is when a player:

- i. Jumps to check an opponent.*
- ii. Builds up speed by taking two or more strides immediately prior to making contact.*
- iii. Travels an excessive distance with the sole purpose of delivering such a hit.*
- iv. Violently and unnecessarily checks an opponent in any manner.*
- v. Delivers a body check to an opponent’s blind side.*

Rule 8.7 – Clipping

What Changed: Addition of Clipping as an penalty, with a separate rule reference from Tripping. Clipping is where any player lowers their body to hit an opponent at or below the knees.

Note: This action was always illegal under the Playing Rules, but would previously have been penalized as Tripping.

New Text: *Clipping, also known as a “low hit”, is where a player uses their body to make contact at or below an opponent’s knees. This may take the form of a player lowering their body prior to making a check or being checked. Players may not crouch down to avoid being bodychecked.*

Rule 9.1 (c) – Butt-Ending

What Changed: Clarification that the referee may assess a Match penalty for Butt-Ending, based on the degree of violence and force of the action, even if no injury occurs.

New Text: (b) *A Match penalty, at the discretion of the referee, based on the degree of violence of impact, may be assessed to any player who butt-ends or deliberately attempts to butt-end an opponent with force.*

A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who injures an opponent by a butt-ending infraction that would otherwise call for a double Minor penalty.

Rule 9.4 (c) – Spearing

What Changed: Clarification that the referee may assess a Match penalty for Spearing, based on the degree of violence and force of the action, even if no injury occurs.

New Text: (c) *A Match penalty will be assessed to any player or team official who deliberately spears or deliberately attempts to spear an opponent by jabbing them forcefully with the toe of the blade of the stick.*

A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who injures an opponent by a spearing infraction that would otherwise call for a double Minor penalty.

Rule 4.6 – Coincidental Minor Penalties JUNIOR A ONLY

What Changed: In Junior A only, when a single penalty is assessed to a player on each team (coincidental), the teams will play 4-on-4.

New Text: *In Junior A divisions, when a single Minor penalty is assessed to a single player on each team during the same stoppage of play, those penalties will **not** be considered coincidental and will be served as time penalties. Both teams will play below full numerical strength for the duration of the penalties.*

Unless the offending players have been removed from the game, the penalized players will take their place on the Penalty Bench and remain there until the expiry of their penalty, at which time they will immediately return to the ice.

Note 1: This rule applies only to situations where there is no differential in penalty time assessed to the offending players on each team. See 4.6 (b) – Coincidental Penalties for further clarification.

Note 2: This rule only applies where a single Minor penalty is assessed to a single player on each team. If multiple Minor penalties are assessed to a single player on each team or a single Minor penalty is assessed to multiple players on each team, these penalties will be considered coincidental and served in accordance with Rule 4.5 (b) – Coincidental Penalties.

Rule 6.4 – Face-Off Location JUNIOR A ONLY

What Changed: In Junior A only, the following rules will apply to face-off locations in the end-zone:

1. When the puck goes out of play in the end-zone, the face-off will remain in the end-zone, regardless of who was responsible for the stoppage of play.
2. If a player of the defending team (except the goaltender) shoots the puck out of play, the defending team will not be allowed to make a line change.
3. Following an icing or a time penalty, the attacking team (the non-offending team) will be allowed to choose on which side of the ice the face-off will take place.

Rule 6.5 – Face-Off Violation JUNIOR A ONLY

What Changed: In Junior A only, and only following an icing, a face-off violation will be penalized with a warning, rather than an ejection. If a team receives two warnings on the same face-off, they will be assessed a Minor penalty for Delay of Game.

New Text:

(a) In Junior A divisions, on a face-off following an icing, any face-off violation, including but not limited to late arrival, encroachment, or early movement, will result in a warning. The warning will be delivered by the Lineperson blowing their whistle and raising their arm in the air with their index finger extended, to indicate a violation has occurred and a warning has been issued.

(b) Any subsequent violation by the same team on the same stoppage of play will result in a minor penalty under Rule 10.1 (vii) – Delay of Game.



Part B

Using the Playing Rules



Philosophy of the Playing Rules

- The Playing Rules are intended as a guide to safe and fair hockey from coast to coast to coast
- In order to achieve this, the Playing Rules must:
 - Use consistent language throughout
 - Be well-organized
 - Avoid repetition, contradiction, or ambiguity
- The Playing Rules are a guide. They are not intended to cover every possible situation. Officials who properly understand the rules, can apply the rules in any situation they might encounter.

Navigating the Playing Rules

The Playing Rules are split into two parts.

- "Gameplay Fouls" are rules where a penalty is assessed.
- "Technical Rules" are everything else.

Part I: Technical Rules

Section 1: Playing Area

Section 2: Teams

Section 3: Equipment

Section 4: Types of Penalties

Section 5: Officials

Section 6: Game Flow

Part II: Gameplay Fouls

Section 7: Physical Fouls

Section 8: Restraining Fouls

Section 9: Stick Fouls

Section 10: Other Fouls

Section 11: Maltreatment

Navigating the Playing Rules

The first thing that experienced officials will notice is that, beginning with Section 6 – Game Flow, the rule numbers have shifted.

- Game Flow, is now Section 6, instead of Section 10
 - Certain rules that were previously considered “Game Flow” are now categorized under “Other Fouls”, as a penalty is assessed (e.g. Delay of Game, Handling or Falling on the Puck, etc.)
- Other Fouls includes several new rule references that are not rule changes but “centralize” information. (e.g. Illegal Equipment, Too Many Players)

Navigating the Playing Rules

Example 1: An “illegal stick”

- If you want to know what makes a stick legal or illegal, you would look in Part I, Section 3, Rule 3.3.
- But if you want to know the penalty options for a player with an illegal stick, you would look in Part II, Section 10, Rule 10.6

Example 2: “Too Many Players”

- If you want an explanation of the criteria for legal line change, you would look in Part I, Section 6, Rule 6.1.
- But if you want to see the penalty options for Too Many Players, you would look in Part II, Section 10, Rule 10.7

Navigating the Playing Rules

All “Gameplay Fouls” follow a consistent structure.

Rule # **Rule Name**

Definition of the infraction and/or relevant terminology

- (a) *Minor penalty*
- (b) *Major penalty*
- (c) *Match penalty*
- (d) *Misconduct penalty*
- (e) *Game Misconduct penalty*
- (f) *Gross Misconduct penalty (if applicable)*

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1

Using the Playing Rules

So, how do you use the Playing Rules?

- Study the rules and understand what is allowed and what should be penalized.
- If you encounter an unusual situation, that isn't covered in the Playing Rules, think about the purpose of the rule.
 - Ask yourself why the rule exists and what it's trying to accomplish.
 - Ask yourself whether the situation you've observed is counter to "safe and fair".
 - Make the best choice possible, based on the rules and the direction from your Referee-in-Chief.



Part C

Understanding the Reformat



Why did we do it?

It was the opinion of Hockey Canada and the Members that the Playing Rules:

- did not have a consistent structure.
- had many repetitive, unclear, or contradictory elements.
- were too long and complex, overall.

These issues created other challenges including that:

- officials struggled to fully understand the Playing Rules.
- players and team officials were discouraged from trying to understand the Playing Rules.
- the Playing Rules continued to get grow in length.

Actions

So what has changed in the Playing Rules?

1. Re-organized each rule with standard format and consistent wording
2. Added of definitions/terminology to the beginning of each rule
3. Created new rule references (*e.g. Rule 10.6 – Illegal Equipment*) to ‘centralize’ information that was spread across multiple rules
4. Created separate rule references for rules that only apply in Junior A/Senior hockey (*e.g. Rule 7.7 – Head Contact – Junior A/Senior*)
5. Condensed redundant situations and clarified contradictory or ambiguous situations

Please note that most of the rules are exactly the same as they were in 2021-22.

1. Organization

All “Gameplay Fouls” (where a penalty is assessed) follow a consistent structure.

Rule # **Rule Name**

Definition of the infraction and/or relevant terminology

- (a) *Minor penalty*
- (b) *Major penalty*
- (c) *Match penalty*
- (d) *Misconduct penalty*
- (e) *Game Misconduct penalty*
- (f) *Gross Misconduct penalty (if applicable)*

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1

2. Definitions

- The glossary still exists at the front of the Playing Rules.
- However, we cannot expect novice officials, players, or team officials to examine the Playing Rules with that level of detail.
- The new format provides the key definitions or explanation in the same place as the details of the rule.
- *E.x. “Charging” is a word that is used in our everyday lives but in a hockey context, it has a very specific, technical meaning.*
- **This will help guide interpretation.**

3. New Rule References

- Please note that these are not new rules (unless covered in Part A of this presentation). This simply aims to make all penalty options very clear. For example, the “Too Many Players” infraction was buried in Rule 2.5 – Change of Players.
- Now it is clearly listed as it’s own rule.

Rule 10.8 Too Many Players

When a team has more than six players (including a goaltender) on the ice, or otherwise violates the provisions of Rule 2.5, that team will be penalized for Too Many Players.

10.8 (a) A Bench Minor penalty will be assessed to any team who is guilty of Too Many Players on the ice.

Where a team commits “Deliberate Illegal Substitution”, purposefully placing too many players on the ice to gain a stoppage of play, in the last two minutes of regular playing time or any time in overtime, a Penalty Shot will be awarded to the non-offending team.

10.8 (b) No Major penalty may be assessed under this rule.

10.8 (c) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed under this rule.

10.8 (d) No Game Misconduct penalty may be assessed under this rule.

10.8 (e) No Match penalty may be assessed under this rule.

4. Rules for Junior A/Senior

- Previously, rules for Junior A/Senior were included in the same place as rules for Minor and Female hockey. Or they were included in the appendix “Clarifications for Junior A/Senior Hockey”.
- This made it difficult to find the appropriate information and was potentially confusing for less-experienced officials.
- Now, all rules that pertain only to Junior A or Senior hockey, have their own rule reference and are clearly marked as such.
 - Rule 3.9 – Jersey Tie-Down – Junior A/Senior
 - Rule 6.4 – Face-off Location – Junior A
 - Rule 6.5 – Face-off Violation – Junior A
 - Rule 7.7 – Head Contact – Junior A/Senior
 - Rule 9.5 – High-Sticking – Junior A/Senior

6. Condensed & Clarified

- Part of the growth in the length of the Playing Rules was the addition of dozens of situations that were highly specific and unnecessary.
 - Additionally, the rules were too difficult to navigate because of their length (e.g. the previous “Fighting and Roughing” rule had 22 situations)
- Additionally, officials were relying on the existence of specific situations, rather than applying the concept of the rule.
- Finally, some situations were contradictory or drew distinctions that were not necessary for a safe and fair game.

In most cases, these edits should not affect interpretation. However, we will review some that may affect rule interpretation.

Clarifications

Rule 3.6 (d) / Rule 10.6

- Clarification that not wearing helmet, facial protector, or neck guard is penalized with a Minor penalty.
 - But the play should only be immediately stopped if the player participates in the play while not wearing a helmet or facial protector.
 - If a player participates in the play while not wearing a neck guard, it is a delayed penalty.
- Improperly wearing a helmet, facial protector, or neck guard is a Misconduct penalty, which would be a delayed penalty.

Clarifications

Rule 3.7

- Clarification that the Referee has the authority to remove any piece of non-standard equipment from the game that “provides an undue advantage to the user in playing of the game or that poses a danger to the user or other participants.”
- This would follow the same procedure for any other piece of equipment deemed “dangerous”.

Clarifications

Rule 4.8 / 4.9 / 4.10

- Clarification that when a player is removed from the game because of a Game Ejection, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct, or Match penalty, they do not have to stay physically in the dressing room, provided that they do not interact with the game or the participants in any matter.

Clarifications

Rule 4.12

- Simplification of the text of the rule, regarding when a goal may be awarded, in reference to Rule 4.11 – Penalty Shots.
- Removal of distinction on the awarding of a goal based on possession of the puck versus after the puck has been shot. This distinction was creating confusion and was deemed unnecessary and counter to the spirit of the rule.

Clarifications

Rule 6.2

- Clarification that all players on the ice must be standing still while a face-off is occurring.
- 6.2 is a new rule reference that specifically deals with actually conducting a face-off. However, there are not any meaningful changes to the rule.

Clarifications

Rule 6.3

- A new rule reference that addresses everything to do with the location of a face-off. However, there are not any meaningful changes to the rule.

Clarifications

Rule 6.9 / 6.10

- Clarification that the height of the crossbar (as it pertains to high-sticking the puck) on a goal or no-goal situation applies **ONLY** in Junior A (Rule 6.10)
- In Minor and Female hockey, the only criteria for high-sticking the puck is the normal height of the shoulders (Rule 6.9)

Clarifications

Rule 7.7

- A new rule reference for Head Contact in Junior A and Senior divisions only.
- This rule incorporates guidance that was previously found in the appendix, “Clarifications for Junior A & Senior Hockey”.
- Officials who work Junior A or Senior divisions should review this information to ensure they are accurately applying this rule.

Clarifications

Rule 7.9 / 7.10 / 7.11

- The former rule “Fighting and Roughing” is now three separate rule references:
 - Rule 7.9 – Roughing
 - Rule 7.10 – Fighting
 - Rule 7.11 – Instigator & Aggressor
- There should not be any rule changes, but this is an opportunity for officials to review, to ensure they understand and are correctly applying the rule.

Clarifications

Rule 8.3 / 8.4 / 8.5

- The former rule “Interference” is now three separate rule references:
 - Rule 8.3 – Interference
 - Rule 8.4 – Interference from the Bench
 - Rule 8.5 – Interference with the Goaltender
 - This includes clarified language on players in the crease and goal/no-goal situations

Clarifications

Rule 10.3

- Additional language and definitions around diving and embellishment (both of which should be penalized) but no rule changes.

Clarifications

Rule 10.6

- New rule reference for “Illegal Equipment”
- Please note that this rule reference replaces certain ‘one-off’ infractions that were previously referenced:
 - E.g. “Ineligible Player” for participating in the play without protective equipment, “Carrying Two Hockey Sticks”, “Illegally Receiving a Stick”
- This rule also covers undoing a chinstrap or removing a helmet to fight