



## USA HOCKEY OFFICIAL PLAYING RULES

### Points of Emphasis

*2009-10 and 2010-11 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 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.

**Intimidation** or “bullying” has no place in ice hockey. Any act that includes taunting or teasing of players, coaches, officials, or spectators by means of verbal ridicule, obscene gesture, threat of physical violence, or physical violence itself will not be tolerated at USA Hockey events.

**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 encouraged 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 should enforce the playing rules fairly and respectfully.

**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 adopted in June 2006. The goal is to reduce restraining infractions in the game, allowing the skill levels of the participants to determine the outcome of a game and to increase participant enjoyment. There is no intention to remove legal body checking or body contact.

A legal body check or using body contact or position to gain a competitive advantage over an opponent should not be penalized as long as it is performed within the rules.

#### **Conclusion**

Hockey should be enjoyed by all participants. To that end, all participants and spectators should 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 Emphasis.

## **2009-11 Standard of Play and Rules Enforcement**

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 the 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 the 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.

### **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 chase a puck carrier
- reducing foot speed or changing an established skating lane for the purpose of impeding an opponent from being able to chase 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.

## **OTHER INFRACTIONS**

In addition to the above mentioned enforcement standards, all other infractions, including contact to the head, checking from behind, cross checking, high sticking and roughing (including late avoidable checks) shall be penalized to a strict enforcement standard.

Players shall body check within the rules. Any use of the hands or stick or extension of the arms to body check an opponent will be penalized as unnecessary roughness.

Any avoidable contact after the whistle shall be penalized strictly, including scrum situations around the goal. Officials are instructed to assess an additional penalty to those players acting as the aggressor or who instigates any contact after the whistle.

## **CONCLUSION**

All USA Hockey members must demonstrate awareness and support for the application, spirit and the respect of the rules in order for continued improvement in 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

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 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 2009-10 and 2010-11 Seasons**

<b>Rule #</b>	<b>Rule</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
	Standard of Play and Rules Enforcement	Adds language clarifying a legal body check and identifying avoidable contact after the whistle as being an illegal act that shall be penalized. Also adds language recognizing the ability for a player to legally use their body to compete for position or the puck.
301	Sticks	Cleans up language regarding the dimensions of a stick and identifies the penalties to be called for violations under this rule.
302(a)	Skates	Modernizes the description “fancy” skates by changing to “figure” skates as being prohibited in ice hockey.
303	Goalkeeper's Equipment	Goalkeeper's Equipment Moves Appendix V from the 2007-09 Official Playing Rules Book into the actual rule and reinforces that the new goalkeeper equipment standards are to be applied starting with the 2009-10 season.
304(e)	Protective Equipment	Adds recommended equipment to those items that must be worn in the manner in which it was intended and designed and calls for a team warning to be issued prior to the assessment of a misconduct penalty for a violation.
403(b)	Major Penalty	Major Penalty For a player that is assessed a non-coincident major penalty and game misconduct, the offending team is not required to immediately place a substitute on the penalty bench and may do so prior to the expiration of the penalty. No player may enter the game except from the penalty bench with a bench minor penalty being assessed for a violation.
405(a)	Match Penalty	For a player that is assessed a non-coincident match penalty, the offending team is not required to immediately place a substitute on the penalty bench and may do so prior to the expiration of the penalty. No player may enter the game except from the penalty bench with a bench minor penalty being assessed for a violation.
405(c)	Match Penalty	Adds language that more clearly defines the hearing process for a match penalty.
409(b)	Calling of Penalties	Requires a delayed penalty that is nullified as the result of a goal being scored to be recorded on the game sheet and count towards the 5/15 penalty rules.
505(a)	Penalty Timekeeper	Clarifies the manner in which a penalty shot is recorded on the score sheet.
601(i.2)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct	Allows for game misconduct to be assessed to a Team Official for persisting in any course of conduct for which the team has previously been assessed a bench minor penalty.
603(d and Note) AND 616	Attempt to Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponent (Head Butting) Head Contact	Removes language in Rule 603 pertaining to Head Butting and places it under Rule 616 Head Contact.
613	Fisticuffs	Cleans up language and specifies under subsection (a) that a player receiving a major penalty for Fisticuffs is also assessed a game misconduct penalty.
613	Fisticuffs	Adds new section that calls for a game misconduct penalty (excluding Adults) to be assessed for any player who removes his (or opponent's) helmet prior to or during an altercation.
622(b)	Interference by Spectators	Clarifies the game misconduct assessed for physically interfering with a spectator as being an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty