



IIHF Officiating Program

Guidelines for Rule Enforcement

Addition to the

2023/24 IIHF Official Rule Book

These Guidelines are aimed to provide clarification regarding the new IIHF Unified Rule Book.

This Document is continuously adapted and expanded to ensure uniform implementation of the Rule Book.

These Guidelines come into effect on 1. July 2023

INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY FEDERATION

Rule Book Working Group



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1. Background

Ice hockey is a global sport, and the playing rules have historically been the strongest common base on which all hockey has tied its roots together.

Over many years, ice hockey's pace has developed in regard to player's and coach's education. What we see now is a rapid developing environment on both a grassroots and elite level and as a result, adjustments in the rules have been made with many local changes following. During the 2020-2021 season, the IIHF appointed a rule book working group to lead the work with harmonization and unifying the rule book as well as to find a good platform to work from whether it be on shorter IIHF tournaments or longer league play. This rule book working group created content for a modern and updated IIHF Unified Rule Book with many excerpts of the NHL Rule Book as the base.

This document is a step to bring the hockey family together where the modern part of elite hockey relates to the focus areas of grassroots hockey and where the long-term modern league play is given the same possibilities to develop as the short-term tournament style of hockey on international level.

This document should serve as a Guideline to the IIHF Official Rule Book, outlining the goals and objectives.

The main purpose is to help everyone from the individual game official, player and coach to the departments of officiating, player safety or development in the MNA and leagues to understand the penalty standards and its implementation. This should be an important tool to help implementation of the officiating standard in game actions as per the spirit of the new IIHF Unified Rule Book. We hope that after reading this document we have shed more light on:

- A way to explain and help to set a clear standard from which we do all the judgment and penalty assessments per the Unified Rule Book.
- Through the document, create a tool to help officials and officiating coaches to give feedback on the standard and level of penalties in individual games and over tournament and leagues.
- Give an understandable and accessible document where players and coaches can easily understand how the rules around infractions will be applied in the game.



2. Philosophie and Understanding the Standard

It is important to note that there will be a lot of focus in this document around moveability in the application, and that making a judgment call will depend on the skill level of the game and its participants. The rules are always the same but depending on how the game is played and the specific situation we are judging, it might be looking a bit different.

In the updated IIHF rule book, there have been some changes in the options for officials to call certain penalties for some infractions than in the past. Therefore, the standard will be revised and adjusted in these situations as well. In these cases, this document and its content is extra important to assure the changes are understandable and the level of consistency is the same regardless of level or game.

OBI (Obvious, Benefit, potential for Injury) is still the determining factor to sort out situations that should be penalized or not. This document provides an overview and suggestion on factors that will be used first after OBI is applied and after the game officials have decided that a penalty should be called. These factors will then determine the severity of the punishment in penalty minutes and be the tool to create an overall standard to follow.

In this document you will find that the key factors are put in columns and where the x indicates the recommendation on the penalty to be call accordingly if the situation that is penalized is having one or more off these factors and falls under OBI. If there is a marking that says NA it means that in this case the game official should not consider that category of penalty if that factor is taking place. For example, it is not correct to assess a minor penalty for checking to the head if there is an intent to hit the head in the situation.

3. Your Feedback and Questions

Gathering experience together - analyzing - adapting and implementing.

If you find any errors or have feedback regarding the content in this document, please send us the feedback via email to officiating@iihfoffice-.com.

Please use the appropriate form for your feedback or comments - you will help us to work out and distribute the answers efficiently and effectively.

Note that we would like to know in the email.

- Your contact information
- What part the feedback it is concerning
- Description on the error/question
- Suggestion for change/modification

Together moving forward - thank you for your cooperation!



4. Physical fouls

General Overview

In the category of physical fouls, there is a special selection of penalties that is similar in its nature and where key factors are in many ways similar, these types of penalties are gathered below. It is important to note that ice hockey is a contact sport and physical contact is a natural part of the game on all levels. Penalties within physical fouls are usually called for unfairly impeding the progress on an opponent or if a play was dangerous in its nature. There are a few situations added from other sections in the IIHF Rule Book but they are put in this section due to the physical aspects that are the key components to consider in the decision making.

Section	Rule	Infraction	Minor	Bench Minor	Double Minor	Misconduct	Major Penalty	Major Penalty w/ automatic GMP	Game Misconduct Penalty	Penalty Shot	Awarded Goal	Disallowed Goal
6 - Physical Fouls	41	Boarding	x				x		x			
	42	Charging	x				x		x			
	43	Che-Beh						x				
	44	Clipping	x					x				
	45	Elbowing	x				x		x			
	47	Head-butting			x			x				
	48	Illegal Check to the Head	x					x				
	49	Kicking						x				x
	50	Kneeing	x					x				
	52	Slew-footing						x				
11 - Rules for Women's Hockey	53	Throwing Equipment	x	x		x		x	x		x	
	101	Illegal Hit	x					x				



Looking into the key criteria of penalty selection under this section, the focus is on various factors that will be put in a moving scale perspective from low to high, slow to fast etc. The higher the severity is in the situation, the higher the punishment will be. The game official must make a judgment call on the severity of the situation and what the expected level is in the specific game that is played. A game played at the men's and women's senior world championship will have a higher basic level of physical play then for example in the U18 category or in the lower divisions and will affect the standard of the judgment. Regardless of level, the below table will always be the key criteria to take in consideration when assessing the proper penalty for the situation.

Key Criteria	Minor Penalty	Major Penalty	Major and GMP
Speed - Penalty increases with increase of the action	x	x	x
Force - Penalty increases with increase of the action)	x	x	x
Violence - Penalty increases with increase of the action	x	x	x
Poor Timing	x	x	NA
Opponent is in a Vulnerable Position	x	x	x
Extension of Body / Equipment	NA	x	x
Upward Motion	NA	x	x
Risk of Injury - / with Intent	NA	NA	x
Possession of Puck / Non-Puck Carrier	X	x	x
Blind Side	NA	NA	x



5. Restraining Fouls

General Overview

In the category of restraining fouls, there is a special selection of penalties that could be called gathered below. Restraining fouls are any action by a player that restrains or impedes the progress of an opposing player whether they are in possession of the puck or not; in other words, illegal tactics designed to slow down an opponent, either with or without puck. It is important to note that diving is included in this area, where the key criteria are in place in the same way but where the player is overworking/drawing advantage by creating the situation without the interaction of the opponent or exaggerating the outcome of a contact/action made by the opponent.

Section	Rule	Infraction	Minor	Bench Minor	Double Minor	Misconduct	Major Penalty	Major Penalty w/ automatic GMP	Game Misconduct Penalty	Penalty Shot	Awarded Goal	Disallowed Goal
7 - Restraining Fouls	54	Holding	x							x	x	
	55	Hooking	x					x		x	x	
	56	Interference	x	x			x		x	x	x	
	57	Tripping	x				x		x	x	x	
	64	Diving / Embellishment	x									
9 – Other Fouls	69	Interference on the Goalkeeper	x				x		x			



When identifying the key criteria for the restraining foul, it is important that the game official understands the effect the action has on the player and that the game management plays an important factor to be able to set the standard expected on that level.

Note that interference is also categorized under physical fouls. Interference is a rule with many aspects and most of the aspects to call a major penalty is to be found in the section of physical fouls.

Key Criteria	Minor Penalty	Major Penalty	Major and GMP
Decreases of Speed - Penalty increases with increase of the action	X	NA	X
Decrease of movement - Penalty increases with increase of the action)	X	NA	X
Minimized possibility to play the puck - Penalty increases with increase of the action	X	NA	X
Benefit / Change of Possession	X	NA	X
Poor Timing	X	X	NA
Risk of Injury	NA	NA	X
Non-Puck Carrier / Possession of the Puck	X	X	X
Blind Side / Vulnerable Position – Interference / Tripping	NA	NA	X
Force / Interference - Penalty increases with increase of the action	X	X	X
Vulnerable / Exposed Surface / Area of Contact	NA	NA	X



6. Stick Fouls

General Overview

In the category of stick fouls, there is a special selection of penalties where the player is using the stick in ways that are not supported by the rules, these types of infractions are gathered below. Stick fouls need to be assessed when a player is using their stick in a manner that is meant to be aggressive, intimidating, and potentially dangerous and generally not in a manner intended to play the puck.

Section	Rule	Infraction	Minor Penalty	Bench Minor	Double Minor	Misconduct Penalty	Major Penalty	Major Penalty w/ automatic GMP	Game Misconduct Penalty	Penalty Shot	Awarded Goal	Disallowed Goal
8 - Stick Fouls	58	Butt-ending			X			x				
	59	Cross-checking	x					x				
	60	High-sticking	x		X			x				
	61	Slashing	x					X		x	x	
	62	Spearing			X			X				

In short, the stick fouls relate to a bigger risk of injury than restraining fouls but also have a big effect on the puck carrier's way of playing the puck in a proper way. The difference from the physical fouls is foremost that checking is a natural part of the game and where foul play with sticks are not. There also has to be an awareness that the severity in the situation might seem bigger amongst the physical fouls then the stick fouls even if the danger and risk of injury is as big or can be even higher.

Key Criteria	Minor Penalty	Major Penalty	Major and GMP
Decreases of Speed	x	NA	NA
Decrease of Movement	x	NA	NA
Minimized Possibility to Play the Puck	x	NA	NA
Poor Timing	x	x	NA
Risk of Injury	NA	NA	x
Possession of the Puck / Non-Puck Carrier	X	X	x
Targeting of Exposed Area / Location of Impact	NA	NA	x
Force (Penalty increases with increase of the action)	X	X	x



7. Other Fouls / Officials / Game Flow

General Overview

In this category, there is a special selection of penalties that could be called and touched within this section that is gathered below. The officials have the means to penalize inappropriate behavior towards officials according to the below table. Other fouls are infractions that do not specifically fit into the other sections of the Unified Rule Book but can still result in penalties being assessed for a violation of the rules. Furthermore, game flow fouls describe infractions, where the play needs to be stopped due to an illegal action and may result in a penalty to be assessed for this rule violation.

Section	Rule	Infraction	Minor Penalty	Bench Minor	Double Minor	Misconduct Penalty	Major Penalty	Major Penalty w/ automatic GMP	Game Misconduct Penalty	Penalty Shot	Awarded Goal	Disallowed Goal
5 - Officials	39	Abuse of Officials	x	X		x			x			
	40	Physical Abuse of Officials							x			
9 - Other Fouls	63	Delaying the Game	x	X						x	x	
	64	Diving/Embellishment	x									
	65	Equipment	x									
	67	Handling Puck	x							x	x	x
	68	Illegal Substitution		X						x	x	x
	70	Leaving the Bench		X					x	x	x	x
	73	Refusing to Start Play		X					x			
	74	Too many Players on the Ice		X						x		
	75	Unsportsmanlike Conduct	x	X		x			x			
10 - Game Flow	76	Face-offs		X								
	78	Goals										x
	80	High-sticking the Puck										x
	82	Line Change		X								
	83	Off-side										x
	85	Puck Out of Bounds	x									
	86	Start of Game and Periods		X								
11 - Rules for Women's Hockey	102	Specific Equipment Rules				x						
12- Rules for Men's Junior Hockey	202	Specific Equipment Rules				x						



In this section will you find mainly so called “black/white penalties”. These situations are well documented in the rule book and have precise instruction in seconds, positions or other criteria’s to when they should be called. There are not the same requirements from the judgement of the officials to make the right calls in this section. The important part for the game officials here in this section is not to take in other factors around the game or situation as a parameter for calling a penalty such as time in the game, score etc.

Gesture, Language and Actions

In this part, we also gather the situations that is “Abuse of officials/physical abuse of officials /unsportsmanlike conduct.” Regardless of language and culture, these penalties are important to follow. Players are not allowed to use foul language or abusive behavior as an excuse for emotions or feelings in the game. Abuse is never a part of the game. Situations where game officials regardless of culture, background or level should keep a very high alert are:

- Sexually oriented
- Ethnic or racial remarks and slurs
- Gender profane or abuse
- Threats in any way
- Physical touching or abusing the game officials

In general, there is no place in our game for such behavior or actions!

8. Fighting Fouls

General Overview

Fighting” is not part of international ice hockey’s DNA. Players who willingly participate in a “brawl / fight”, so-called “willing combatants”, shall be penalized accordingly by the Referee(s) and may be ejected from the game.

A “fight” shall be deemed to have occurred when at least one (1) Player punches or attempts to punch an opponent repeatedly or when two (2) players wrestle in such a manner as to make it difficult for the Linespersons to intervene and separate the combatants.

Penalties that can be assessed under this rule:

- 5’+GMP for a player that engages in a fight as a “willing combatant” – see Rule 46.1.
- 2’ (Roughing) for the challenged player (Defender), **that is not** willing to fight and retaliates for protection or trying to get away – see Rule 46.6.



- 5' **without GMP** (fighting) for the challenged player (Defender), **that is not** willing to fight and retaliates (a few punches only) for protection or trying to get away – see Rule 46.6.
- 2' + 5' + GMP if one of the players was clearly identified as Instigator / Initiator – see Rule 46.3.
- 2' + 5' + GMP if one of the players was clearly identified as Aggressor – see Rule 46.4.
- 2' + 2' + 5' + GMP if one of the players was clearly identified as Instigator / Initiator and Aggressor – see Rules 46.3 and 46.4.
- Major Penalty with Game Misconduct for a “sucker punch”/ unexpected, dirty punch – see Rule 46.5.
- Game Misconduct + (possible other infractions) for “Third Player in” – see Rule 46.7.
- Minor Penalty (unsportsmanlike conduct) for deliberately taking the helmet off before engaging in a fight – see Rule 46.12.
- Minor Penalty (unsportsmanlike conduct) + GMP for deliberately taking the Jersey off before engaging in a fight – see Rule 46.13.
- Minor Penalty (unsportsmanlike conduct) + Misconduct Penalty (10') for deliberate taking the Jersey off but not having the chance to engage in a fight – see Rule 46.13.

Definition of: “Instigator / Initiator” according to the rule book:

An “Instigator / Initiator” of an “altercation” shall be a Player who by their actions or demeanor demonstrates any/some of the following criteria: distance traveled; gloves off first; first punch thrown; menacing attitude or posture; verbal instigation or threats; conduct in retaliation to a prior game incident; obvious retribution for a previous incident in the game.

Definition of: “Aggressor” according to the rule book:

The “Aggressor” in an altercation shall be the Player who continues to throw punches in an attempt to inflict punishment on their opponent who is in a defenseless position or who is an “unwilling combatant”.

Definition of: “Defender – Unwilling Combatant” according to the rule book:

A Player who “defends” themselves with a “few punches” against an Aggressor, an Instigator / Initiator or a fighter shall be considered as an “unwilling combatant”. This Player does not want to continue or prolong a “fight” or “let a fight get out of hand” - it is clear to the Referees that this player does not want to “fight” irregularly.