



## NCAA Ice Hockey Rules Committee

### 2011 ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

This report was developed during the committee's June 2011 by the Ice Hockey Rules Committee in Indianapolis.

1. **Introduction – Non-rules change year.** The committee spent a considerable amount of time reviewing its current rules and interpretations and viewing numerous video examples of plays that may create some future considerations. The group developed several clarification items and points of emphasis for the 2011-12 season and was particularly pleased with the execution of the rules survey process, which included a late-season survey and a follow-up survey after the American Hockey Coaches Association annual meetings in April.
2. **Points of Emphasis/Officiating Guidance.** The committee continues to believe that all rules in place are important and need to be enforced as written. However, there are several elements of the game that the committee requests additional attention:
  - a. **Contact to the Head (Point of Emphasis).** Overall, the committee believes this rule has started to have the intended impact of reducing the number of dangerous plays involving the head and neck area. It is critical that the college hockey community continue to be vigilant with this rule and the committee firmly believes additional enforcement will assist.

Therefore, the committee approved several items of additional guidance for teams and officials to use when considering this rule.

- i. **Targeting.** In some cases, it was misunderstood that “targeting” the head and neck was only to be reserved for a player who intentionally delivered contact in this area. That is not the case. Targeting and directly contacting the head and neck area should clearly be a major penalty and at least a game misconduct. **But targeting is not a requirement for this rule to be enforced.** In fact, this concept was not included in this rule because it is nearly impossible for an official to judge intent.
- ii. **Blindside/unsuspecting players.** The committee notes the following existing language in the rules book, which it believes is important: ***“A player delivering a check to an unsuspecting and vulnerable player puts themselves in jeopardy of being penalized under this rule.”*** This rule exists in the book currently and the committee views this portion of the rule as similar to the hitting from behind standard. The responsibility lies with the player delivering the contact.

- iii. *Additional guidance situations.* Currently, there are several points in the rules intended to illustrate situations where players are vulnerable or types of contact may lead to a penalty under this rule. As additional guidance, the committee approved the following situations to add to the list, which is on page HR-62 of the 2011-12 rules book:
- *A player that is reckless.*
  - *A player that is about to receive a pass.*
  - *Direct contact with the head or neck from any direction.*
- iv. *Overall enforcement.* The committee believes the 2010-11 season was a good start with the understanding and enforcement of this rule. As with any safety-related rule, the intended result is to change player behavior. The committee understands how difficult it can be to make this call in the moment at full speed and continues to instruct officials to gather and communicate before making the penalty determination. While the penalty is severe for this foul, the long-term impact of changing the standard of acceptable contact should not be discounted. If officials have any of the ingredients listed in the rules book, the contact to the head penalty must be enforced.
- b. ***Embellishment/Diving.*** According to the results of the rules survey data, this issue is clearly a concern of coaches. The committee decided to make these actions a point of emphasis, instructing officials to stringently enforce this penalty on any player who blatantly dives, embellishes a fall or feigns an injury. These penalties may be enforced independently, together or in conjunction with another penalty (e.g., hooking on Team A, embellishment on Team B). It is also important to note that the rules that deal with obstruction and protection of the puck carrier remain in full effect. Any deviation from a strict enforcement standard in these areas can contribute to embellishment and diving by players who are fouled but no penalty is called. This is also an ethical issue that the committee expects coaches to reinforce with players for the betterment of the game.
- c. ***Obstruction along the Boards.*** Players are allowed to “press and release” along the boards, and use the free hand to guide an opponent for this purpose. A player that holds or impedes in any manner must be called for obstruction, but the initial press and release is a legal play.
- d. ***Facewashing Reminder.*** Rule 6-14-a on page HR-64 clearly defines facewashing, which occurs most often after a stoppage of play. The committee continues to see the need for stringent enforcement and notes this action deals directly with respect and sportsmanship. The rule and penalties are listed below as a reminder:
- Accidental/Incidental contact with the hand on an opponent’s facemask: **NO penalty.**
  - Placing a hand on the opponent’s facemask: **MINOR penalty.**
  - Placing and moving the hand back and forth (facewashing): **MAJOR penalty.**
  - Grasping and pulling/twisting the opponent’s facemask: **DISQUALIFICATION penalty.**

- 3. Exhibition Game Clarification.** In its review of current rules, NCAA staff noted that exhibition games do not fall in the rules committee's authority. Therefore, the committee believes the limitations on the number of players that are allowed during exhibition games is an institutional decision, effective immediately.
- 4. Future Considerations.** The committee reviewed several requests from the ice hockey community and approved the following items for consideration in the next rules cycle:

  - a. Overtime.** The committee is strongly considering the use of 4-on-4 in overtime and is also evaluating additional options (e.g., longer overtime periods). The committee will continue to allow the use of shootouts by conference policy or mutual consent of the competing teams, but support for mandating a shootout to decide contests is currently limited.
  - b. Awarding Goals – Net Dislodged by Defensive Team.** In many cases, the net is knocked off – often unintentionally – by the defending team right before a goal is scored. Current rules do not allow an official to award a goal unless it is obvious and imminent AND an egregious act occurs by the defensive team. The committee believes there are some goals that should count in these situations and plans to adjust these rules accordingly.
  - c. Use of Visors in Men's Ice Hockey.** The men's members of the committee have been asked by the coaches association to investigate the potential use of partial face shields in NCAA hockey. A subcommittee was formed to work with the NCAA Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspects of Sport to research the feasibility. In many cases, NCAA men's student-athletes have participated in developmental leagues where partial protection is allowed before starting NCAA careers. The subcommittee plans to follow-up at several points in the coming year with its findings.
  - d. Use of Video on the Bench.** In recent seasons, the use of video at the bench during live play has become more prevalent. In many NCAA sports, including football, the use of such video is strictly prohibited. The committee is not necessarily considering this approach, but does believe some limits need to be placed on the use of video.
  - e. Hand Passes.** The committee discussed the options of allowing a hand pass in all three zones (offensive, neutral and defensive) along with the possibility of disallowing hand passes in any zone. While the committee does not have a strong opinion to change the rule in either direction, the issue deserves more discussion as a potential increase to scoring and eliminating whistles. As it currently stands, this rule provides the defensive team an advantage.
  - f. Goal Judges.** Current rules require that goal judges be used in NCAA competitions. The committee believes, with the increasing use of video replay during contests, that this rule should be optional in the future and conferences/institutions may determine if goal judges need to be utilized.

**g. Teamwork in Officiating.** In some cases, officials may instinctively signal for a penalty based on the reactions of players and sightlines of the official. Officials have been encouraged to use all information available before making the final determination on calls and this should continue. The committee would like to find ways to help officials to properly make determinations and potentially alter on-ice calls to enhance the fairness of the game.