



HOCKEY CANADA'S RULES EMPHASIS FOR 2006-2007



“IT’S A NEW GAME!”

Written by Steve Wallace, GTHL Technical Director of Officiating

Hockey Canada's rules emphasis initiative for '06/'07 involves four elements which are intended to promote a safe and fun environment. Specifically, this season's rules emphasis initiative seeks to eliminate dangerous and potentially catastrophic checks to the head and checks from behind, deter restraining fouls (hooking, holding, interference, tripping) and stick fouls (specifically: cross-checking and slashing), and nurture the principle of shared respect amongst all participants.

Checking to the Head

Attempts to remove illegal contact to the head from the game will continue through strict application of the *Checking to the Head* rule. Intentional or avoidable contact to the head (helmet or facial protector) is illegal and such contact will result in a penalty.

Checking from Behind

Efforts to eliminate these dangerous fouls will continue. Accordingly, the *Checking from Behind* rule will be strictly enforced. As per the playing rules, checking from behind will be called when a player is forcefully pushed, body checked or hit from behind anywhere on the ice. The rules also indicate that a penalty must be called even when a checking from behind foul occurs because the player about to be checked turns their back to the oncoming checker just prior to contact.

Revised Penalty Standards for Restraining Fouls and Stick Fouls

“Tighter” cross-checking, hooking, holding, interference and tripping penalty standards will be adopted for the '06/'07 season. Each of these rules will be applied significantly more strictly than in previous years. The purpose of this initiative is to enhance skill development and to make the game more exciting and fun.

Team officials are expected to be good role models and to demonstrate strong leadership by helping their players, fellow team officials and their player's parents to embrace the purpose of the revised penalty standards, and to understand and adjust to these standards.

On-ice officials are expected to work diligently to see each play clearly and to apply the revised penalty standards consistently, throughout the entire game, no matter the score or the on-ice strength of the teams.

Other published penalty standards remain in effect and are unchanged. For more information about previously published penalty standards, refer to Hockey Canada information bulletin 06-04 (dated 23 August 2005).

Shared Respect

Besides respecting the roles and responsibilities of each other, team officials, players and game officials are expected to support Hockey Canada's *Rules Emphasis* initiative through positive attitudes and good conduct.

Obvious displays of discontent or disrespect by team officials or players directed towards game officials that apply the penalty standards as per Hockey Canada directives are to be penalized.



REVISED PENALTY STANDARDS FOR RESTRAINING FOULS AND STICK FOULS



Written by Steve Wallace, GTHL Technical Director of Officiating

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Note: Changes and additions since the last edition are highlighted in yellow.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

The two basic principles on which Hockey Canada's revised penalty standards is based are:

- Restraining and interference type fouls will be penalized, and
- The stick must not be used as a weapon or restraining device.

RESTRAINING FOULS: HOOKING, HOLDING, INTERFERENCE & TRIPPING

The hooking, holding, interference and tripping rules will be strictly applied throughout the entire game, no matter the score, the time of game or the on-ice strength of the teams. Specifically, a penalty shall be called if a player is interfered with or the stick or free hand/arm is used to restrain an opponent and, as a **consequence** of such action the...

- **Balance** of an opponent is adversely affected to any degree,
- **Progress** of an opponent is impeded or hindered to any degree,
- Ability of an opponent to **propel** (stickhandle, pass or shoot) the puck, or to **receive** a pass is hindered to any degree, or
- **Positional advantage** achieved by an opponent is reduced or lost.

STICK FOULS: CROSS-CHECKING & SLASHING

1. **Cross-Checking:** This rule will be enforced more strictly than in previous years. Striking an opponent or "raking" an opponent's body or arm with the portion of the stick held between the hands will result in a cross-checking penalty. As per the rules, any cross-check that contacts an opponent above the normal height of their shoulders will result in an automatic Major penalty plus a Game Misconduct penalty.
2. **Slashing:** This rule will also continue to be strictly enforced. Players that swing their stick with excessive force or swing (or threaten to swing) their stick for the purpose of intimidating an opponent will be penalized. Slashing type stick contact with any degree of force with an opponent's glove, forearm or torso is not an honest attempt to play the puck and will be penalized. Additionally, consequential or forceful stick contact with a goaltender that is attempting to freeze the puck will also result in a penalty.

CLARIFICATIONS, TACTICS & SITUATIONAL EXAMPLES

1. **Hook, Tug or Poke with the Stick:** Generally, such actions are not permitted, as the *consequence* is typically one or more of the adverse effects that now trigger a penalty call.
2. **Locking On:** Defined as the act of placing a stick and/or arm across an opponent's torso to restrict the opponent's ability to move freely. "Locking on" is not permitted and will result in a penalty.
3. **Sling Shot:** Hooking, grabbing or pulling on an opponent or the opponent's stick for the purpose of catching up with and/or accelerating ahead of an opponent is prohibited and will result in a penalty.



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4. Use of the Free Hand/Arm:

- Using the free hand or free arm to clutch, grab, restrain any opponent or to push a non-puck carrying opponent aside is prohibited
- A defending player may push the puck-carrier to an outside lane using the free hand or the stick
- A player may push an opponent using the free hand during a mutual battle for body position or for possession of the puck with a non-puck carrying opponent provided no clutching, grabbing or holding action occurs
- The puck carrier is permitted to use the free arm to “ward off” an opponent **and the opponent's stick.**

5. **Wrap:** Using one or both hands/arms to control, corral or steer a player (typically towards or along the boards) will result in a penalty in every event.

6. Slashing the Stick:

- Stick on stick contact where the intent is to play the puck is permitted provided that the contact is not violent and the force is not overly excessive
- Slashing an opponent's stick out of their hands will result in a penalty
- Slashing an opponent's stick for the purpose of intimidating the opponent will result in a penalty
- Slashing an opponent's stick on the **shaft of the stick** is not a true attempt to play the puck and such action will result in a penalty if, considering the degree of force and point of contact, the act is deemed violent or intimidating by the Referee.

7. Stick Checks:

- **Lift Check:** A *Lift Check* is a type of stick check where one temporarily lifts or knocks an opponent's stick upwards with one's own stick. Ideally, this action is followed immediately by an attempt to gain control of the puck. *Lift Checks* that are violent, that result in a prolonged “lift” (a restraining action) or that involve a clear hooking action or “locking” of the sticks will result in a penalty. *Lift Checks* may be employed against the puck-carrier or during a battle for a loose puck. See item 8 below for further information.
- **Press Check:** A *Press Check* is a type of stick check used to stop or control the movement of an opponent's stick by placing downward stick pressure on an opponent's stick. Press Checks are not to be confused with situations where players simply place their stick over top of an opponent's stick without applying downward pressure. A non-violent *Press Check* may be employed without penalty during a mutual battle for a loose puck. Non-violent *Press Checks* may also be used to prevent the reception of a pass when receipt of the pass is imminent (this is considered a battle for the puck). A *Press Check* that results in the puck-carrier losing their stick will not result in a penalty, as this is simply the outcome of a “battle” for the puck. In any case, a penalty will result if a Press Check becomes violent in nature or involves a slashing action. See item 8 below for further information.

8. **“Tying up” an Opponent's Stick:** “Tying up” the stick of an opponent by hooking or holding is not permitted. “Tying up” the stick of a non-puck carrying opponent by repeatedly lifting, knocking or placing one's own stick over top of an opponent's stick is permitted provided the act is not overly aggressive and does not involve a restraining, hooking, holding or slashing action.



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9. **Can-Opener/Corkscrew:** Placing or moving a stick between an opponent's legs is not permitted if it causes the opponent to stumble or fall, actually hinders an opponent's ability to move freely, or hinders the opponent's ability to propel, pass or shoot the puck, or to receive a pass.
10. **Battles:** "Battles" are mutual (force versus force) struggles for a place on the ice or for possession of the puck that pit opponents' strength and balance against each other. Players may challenge an opponent for a place on the ice (i.e., invite an opponent to "battle") through mild contact provided this contact does not appreciably affect the balance of the opponent (thereby providing the player initiating the battle with an initial advantage). Players may (mutually) push or lean against each other during a battle using their body, hands or stick. Stumbles or falls that result from a battle will not be penalized. Stumbles or falls that result from incidental contact as the paths of two players that are in pursuit of the puck merge will not result in a penalty, provided the contact is incidental and non-violent, and no intentional restraining action, illegal stick work, elbowing or roughing action occurs. Tripping, hooking, impeding or knocking down an opponent that has not engaged in a battle (i.e., does not respond to the invitation to battle by resisting) or that has disengaged from a battle is not permitted. Driving a resisting opponent from the front of the net (or any other strategic location) by pushing with the body, hands and/or stick is permitted, provided the act is not violent, and does not involve hooking, holding, illegal stick work, elbowing or roughing, because it is considered the outcome of a battle. However, a player that persists in pushing a non-resisting opponent away from an area well after initial contact or the initial "invitation to battle" is made or who prevents a non-resisting opponent from "rolling off" the check is guilty of interference and will be penalized. In other words, any attempt to "tie up" an opponent by continuously pushing a non-resisting opponent around or by blocking their progress is considered interference and will result in a penalty.
11. **Holding Up a Fore-Checker:** Hooking or holding an opponent, or intentionally changing direction (i.e., turning into or zigzagging in front of an opponent) to block the projected route of an opponent that is in pursuit of the puck or puck-carrier is not permitted. Any intentional change of direction that effectively forces an opponent in pursuit of the puck or puck carrier to adopt a longer route to the puck or puck carrier will be penalized. A player that has preferred body position on an opponent during a pursuit for a loose puck is not permitted to slow or stop for the express purpose of body checking or interfering with the trailing player.
12. **Pinning against the Boards:**
- A player may body check and "pin" the puck-carrier against the boards by pushing against and/or locking with a leg but may only apply the "pin" while the opponent has control of the puck. A penalty will be called if a player does not immediately release a "pin" when the opponent loses the ability to propel (stickhandle, pass or shoot) the puck with stick, skate or glove.
 - The onus is on the checker to have puck awareness when pinning an opponent. Referee's are encouraged, however, to give one quick verbal cue when the puck becomes "loose" and to penalize players that do not release their opponent immediately thereafter.
 - A penalty will be called if one uses the free arm, free hand or stick to restrict an opponent's ability to move freely or to propel the puck at any time during a "pin".
 - "Pinning" an non-puck carrying opponent is not permitted.
13. **Pick or Block:** Changing direction or location to intentionally block the projected route of a non-puck carrying opponent is prohibited and will result in a penalty.



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14. Finishing a Check:

Legal body contact with the puck-carrier is always allowed. When a puck-carrier dumps, shoots or passes the puck away in advance of being hit, any opponent intending to body check that player may legally do so if at the instant the puck is released the space between the players is less than or equal to the extended stick length (i.e., arm-length + stick-length) of the player contemplating the check AND the check is completed without undue delay after the puck is released. A penalty will result if the body check is completed by a player located further than an extended stick length away from the opponent at the instant the puck is released OR if the hit is delayed much beyond the time of puck release.

15. Face-Offs:

- Players taking the face-off are expected to use their sticks or feet to win the face-off battle for the puck. Intentionally body-checking an opposing centre during the face-off is not permitted. Incidental body contact while battling for the puck immediately after it is dropped will not be penalized provided the contact is non-violent and no intentional restraining action, illegal stick work, elbowing or roughing action occurs.
- Players are not permitted to use their stick or free-arm/hand to impede or block the progress of an opponent or to push aside an opponent after the puck is dropped.
- Players are not permitted to impede an opponent that is in pursuit of the puck or puck-carrier by turning into the opponent or by setting a "pick".
- Players may "battle" for body position as their paths merge when in pursuit of the puck immediately after a face-off. Any incidental contact that occurs during the merge and subsequent battle for the puck will not be penalized.
- Centres may not block or impede the opposing centre by intentionally driving directly forward into, or by spinning around and intentionally driving backward into the space occupied by the opposing centre.
- Centres may not block or impede the opposing centre by using the stick as a restraining device or by tripping the opponent, or by moving laterally (unless the lateral movement is a direct and honest attempt to pursue the puck).

RECOGNIZING "THE DANGER ZONE"

Certain actions have been identified that typically precede violations of the revised penalty standards. Specifically, players enter the "*danger zone*" when they:

- Raise their stick at or above the horizontal and place it on an opponent
- Place a stick between the legs of an opponent
- Take a hand off their stick and place the free hand on an opponent
- "Pin" an opponent against the boards
- Continue to "close the gap" on an opponent that has passed or shot the puck away
- Change direction towards the projected route of an opponent that is in pursuit of the puck or puck-carrier

Players must be trained to recognize when they have entered the "*danger zone*" and to react appropriately when this occurs to avoid unnecessary penalties. Everyone, especially game officials, must watch the play closely when a player enters the "*danger zone*" so that infractions can be detected if they occur.