

This is a rule change year for USA Hockey and it therefore becomes necessary to try as best I can to briefly communicate to everyone what the new rules are, their interpretation and what to expect over all.

The standards of play initiative began four seasons ago and expect the officials to continue to enforce this direction. That means if the players keep two hands on their stick, the stick on the ice and their feet moving, they will stay out of penalty trouble. Any restraint of a player made with the stick, hands etc is subject to a penalty. The key is **DIG, Disrupt, Impede, Gain an unfair advantage**. For more descriptive information on this, please go to www.usahockey.com and watch the videos.

Specific major rule changes are –

Rule 301 –Sticks: Cleans up language regarding the dimensions of a stick and identifies the penalties to be called for violations under this rule. Also, please note the requirement to have the butt end of hollow sticks covered.

Rule 302a – Skates: Modernizes the description “fancy” skates by changing to “figure” skates as being prohibited in ice hockey.

Rule 303 –Goalkeeper’s Equipment: This is a significant change. New goalkeeper’s equipment standards that were identified in the 2007-09 Rule book have been adopted. The sizes of the protective equipment have been changed. Leg pads are limited to 11” x 38”, the blocker is now 8” x 15”, the trapper is limited to a 45” circumference, 16” length, 18” from heel to web length, and 8” in the cuff. There are other minor changes, but I would encourage everyone to read the standard and make sure the equipment is in compliance. The referees will measure a piece of equipment when asked. If the equipment is illegal, a minor penalty is imposed and the equipment must be removed from the game. If the equipment is found to be legal, a minor penalty for delay of game to the team asking for the measurement will be assessed. This rule is enforceable at all levels of play.

Rule 304e –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. This means that **ALL** recommended protective equipment is covered under this change. Breezers (pants) can no longer be open in the inseam. That means breezers with zippers must be zipped closed, undone (torn open) inseams must be taped closed in some manner. Minor tears in the inseam are not what the officials will be looking for. It will be for the ability of the breezer, in the opinion of the official, to do its job. Short (3/4 sleeve sweaters must cover the elbow pad. Most importantly, mouth guards will be more closely scrutinized. CUBAR (Chew up beyond all recognition), cut up, etc mouth guards are not permissible. The rule requires that mouth guards must be **NON CLEAR** (i.e. pigmented), cover all the remaining teeth of one jaw and be in place during play. This will be strictly enforced. Custom mouth guards made by dentists can be pigmented. Further helmets with ear protection, properly fastened chin straps and face shields fall under this rule change. Do not expect the officials to look the other way. It is every player’s responsibility to wear the protective equipment in the manner in which it was intended and the coach’s responsibility to insure their players comply.

403a and 405a – Major and Match Penalties: For a player that is assessed a non-coincident major penalty and game misconduct or 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. This means that you do not have to

immediate place a player in the penalty box for a player who is assessed game ejection type penalties. However, you must place a player in the penalty box prior to the penalty expiration and you must do that during a stoppage of play prior to the expiration. If you fail to do so, you may not substitute from the player's bench. You will play short handed until a stoppage of play and then place a player on the ice. Please note that you will be considered as playing at full strength once the penalty expires. If you substitute from the players bench at the expiration, a bench minor will be assessed.

Rule 409b –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 counts towards the 5/15 penalty. Game misconduct (Rule 404d) rule. No more free ride on this one.

Rule 601i2 – Abuse of Officials: Allows for a game misconduct to be assessed to any Team Official for any course of conduct for which the team has been previously assessed a bench minor penalty. This means that if the head coach is assessed a bench minor penalty and then the assistant coach begins abuse, he can be assessed a game misconduct penalty. This is enforceable during the same occurrence and "same occurrence" is defined as being when the bench minor has been assessed and while it still remains on the penalty clock.

Rule 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.

As always, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Have a great season.

Ken Reinhard
President, MHOA
Local Area Supervisor of Officials, North Texas
USA Hockey