



## NEWS RELEASE

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### USA Hockey Board of Directors Approves All Points of Progressive Checking Skill Development Program Curriculum Includes Body Contact at Younger Ages; Pushes Body Checking in Games to Bantam Level

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - USA Hockey's Board of Directors passed all aspects of the Progressive Checking Skill Development Program today during its 2011 Annual Congress.

The program includes the following elements:

- It encourages more body **contact** in the pre-body **checking** age categories by providing more training and support for coaches and referees; and encouraging more legal body **contact** in the pre-body **checking** age categories through “Point of Emphasis” rule #1 passed by the Board.
- It tightens the standard of play for intimidation hits in the legal body checking age categories. Beginning in the 2011-12 season, legal body checking in games will begin at the Bantam age level (ages 13-14).
- Beginning in 2011-12, each USA Hockey coach will be required to take an age-specific training module which will provide training information consistent with long-term athlete and childhood development principles for the age category the coach will be engaged with. Each module will include training information for body contact and checking.
- Each season, USA Hockey officials attend clinics that review points of emphasis relating to the standard of play. These 2011-12 clinics will focus on allowing more body contact consistent with the rules in pre-checking age categories and a tighter

standard of play for roughing, cross-checking, boarding, charging, high-sticking and other intimidation hits in the legal body checking divisions.

- USA Hockey will monitor the on-ice management of games with regular reports from local referee-in-chiefs, coach-in-chiefs and Association Coaching and Education (ACE) administrators to USA Hockey's national office staff in Colorado Springs.
- USA Hockey will conduct research on the effect of the Progressive Checking Skill Development Program on risk reduction and skill development. The results of the research will be published when completed.
- The Board also passed rules that prohibit any check that comes in contact with the head or neck. The goal of this rule is to make the player more responsible for actions that make contact to the head or neck similar to rules now in place for stick infractions to the head.

A goal of the Progressive Checking Skill Development Program is to enhance skill development consistent with the American Development Model and its long-term athlete development principles.

Another goal of the program is to improve on-ice management of the game to help reduce potential risks in the sport.

"This program has taken several years of research and discussion to formulate," said **Ron DeGregorio**, president of USA Hockey. "USA Hockey has the training and support elements in place for our coaches and referees. Parents should know that this program will better prepare their children for the physical part of the game. It should produce less risk since we will be training players in body contact at an earlier age in a progressive manner. We'll also be tightening up the standard of play for intimidation hits in the youth checking divisions.

"There's a lot to like about USA Hockey and particularly today, as our Board has taken a bold step forward in doing what is right for children. We are, at our core, a youth sports organization and doing what's right for children must always be at the heart of our decisions."

"The big winner today is our children," said **Tom Chorske**, former NHL player and current member of USA Hockey's Board of Directors. "I support all facets of the Progressive Checking Skill Development Program."

"With the knowledge base we have on child development, this is without question the right way forward," said **Bret Hedican**, former NHL player and two-time Olympian. "Today is a significant one for our sport."

For more information on USA Hockey's Progressive Checking Skill Development Program, visit [usahockey.com/bodychecking](https://usahockey.com/bodychecking).