Ask the Official - Week 17

January 11-17, 2013

QUESTION #1: At the 10 & Under (Squirt) level, when does the goalkeeper knocking the net loose become a penalty?

ANSWER #1: Rule 610(e) in the USA Hockey Playing Rules states,

“Play shall be stopped immediately when the goal frame has been displaced from its normal position. A minor penalty shall be assessed to any player (including a goalkeeper) who deliberately displaces the goal frame.”

The referee must be certain the goalkeeper is displacing the goal frame to obtain a stoppage in order to assess a penalty for delay of game.

QUESTION #2: What can be done when a player is speared by an opposing player at end of the game and the officials miss the spear.

ANSWER #2: A team may forward any serious offence to the local governing body (association, league, affiliate, etc.) for the offending team to review and consider Supplementary Discipline under USA Hockey Playing Rule 410(a).

QUESTION #3: Is it tripping if a player has the puck on a break-a-way and a defending player makes contact from behind knocking him to the ice BUT strikes the puck first with his stick?

ANSWER #3: Situation #3 on Page 308 of the Playing Rules Casebook states,

“A defending player leaves his feet and slides into the puck carrier. The defending player gains possession of the puck and the attacking player falls to the ice after being hit by the defending player’s body. Should a penalty be assessed?

Yes. Rule References 639(a.2).

When a player leaves his feet and slides into an opponent, thereby causing him to fall, a penalty for tripping must be called regardless of who gains possession of the puck. The only exception is when a player drops to his knees to block a shot and his momentum carries him into the player shooting the puck, causing him to fall. In that event, no penalty is to be assessed.”

QUESTION #4: During a recent game, an opposing player's stick ended up around the neck of one of my players. What do you recommend be done to address calls in a non-confrontational manner with officials?

ANSWER #4: All USA Hockey Officials are expected to call a minor, major, or major plus game misconduct any time a player makes stick contact with an opponent above the shoulders. Consistent application of Rule 621 and complete accountability (with proper support and instruction from coaches) is the only way to keep sticks down during the game.

Addressing missed calls with an official can be difficult for a coach since the subject immediately puts the official on the defensive. Therefore, asking the official to come over to the bench at the next stoppage (“Can we talk at the next whistle sir?”) generally works better than yelling from the bench (“Hey ref, where’s the call?”). Once the official approaches the bench, the coach should step forward to the boards to create a one-on-one discussion situation (instead of yelling from behind his army of players on the bench). This is the best situation to discuss the game. From there it’s as simple as discussing what occurred,

For Example:

Coach: “I just wanted to ask about the stick around my players neck.”

Referee: “From what I saw, I didn’t think it made contact”

Coach: “It did, and it almost cut my player”

Referee: “I’m sorry coach, I’ll make sure to improve my sight lines and awareness”

Coach: “Thank you”

By the simple act of the coach showing respect towards the official and the official showing empathy towards the player, the situation comes to its best conclusion and everyone moves on with the game. However, emotions and egos must always be kept in check.

QUESTION #5: With less than two minutes to go in a one goal game, off-sides is called. The team that is trailing has six skaters and a goalie on the ice and the officials dropped the puck. Is this "Too Many Players"?

ANSWER #5: Due to the fact that the officials are responsible for making sure that the proper number of players are on the ice prior to dropping the puck the officials cannot assess a penalty for “too many players” in the situation you present.