Ask the Official - Week 14

December 9 - 15, 2011

The USA Hockey Rulebook and Playing Rules Casebook can be found on the Officials page atwww.usahockey.com.

Answers to other questions may be found at the Officials page atwww.usahockey.com.

Thank you for all your submissions.If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us atasktheofficial@usahockey.org.

QUESTION: In Bantams and higher, does a player who body-checks an opponent have to also have to make an effort to play the puck? The rule book preface under checking only says: The purpose of a body check is to separate the opponent from the puck. The problem is that I am getting told differently by coaches, other referees, and by the videos shown at my referee seminar last month. I am being told to call a penalty (Bantams and higher) on any check where the player does not try to play the puck while he is making the check. I have heard of the same thing being taught at other seminars also. Is the rule book wrong, or am I missing something? I believe that the seminar instructors are confusing body-contact (Peewees and under) with body-checking (Bantams and higher).

ANSWER: The playing rules that govern body-checking at the 14 & Under Level and higher have not changed for the 2011-12 Season. The purpose of a body-check is to separate an opponent from the puck, and any check that the Referee judges is late (avoidable) or overly aggressive should be penalized.

Your statement about the coaches and officials in your area confusing the Body-Contact Standards at the 12 & Under Level and below is likely correct. The Body-Checking Video Guideline Document that is posted with the videos at the Seminar Teaching Materials section of the Officiating section of USAHockey.com makes it clear that the Body-Contact Guidelines that USA Hockey endorses is for Pee-Wee (and below), Girls, and Adult hockey only.

QUESTION:Where do I find instructions for sewing the official’s crest in the right location on my son’s uniform?

ANSWER: The USA Hockey Officiating Crest should be sewn on the left-chest of the sweater. The Rulebook provides a good picture of this in the Signals section.

QUESTION: Team A is shorthanded. The Team A player properly serves his penaltly and returns to neutral zone ice with the puck in play in his defending zone. The puck comes out of his defending zone untouched to him. He has not made contact with his defending zone.Is rule 629e in effect in this situation?

ANSWER: USA Hockey Rule 629(e) only applies when a player enters the game due to the official accidentally starting play with too few players on the ice. If a team begins play with only four players, but is entitled to five, the team may send an additional player from the bench during play and that player is restricted by Rule 629(e) when entering the play.This rule does not apply to any player returning to play from the penalty bench.

QUESTION: I'm an attacking player. When I take a wrist shot, the defender pokes his stick out during my process of shooting and my stick deflects up and hits his face. Is that a High Stick? What rights do I have on my follow though?

ANSWER: All USA Hockey players are responsible for controlling their sticks at all times. Therefore, a player who strikes an opponent with a high stick on a “follow-through” of a pass or shot should be penalized for high-sticking.

QUESTION: If you have a player who deflects the puck with his stick which is below his shoulders but above the cross-bar and it goes in the net is it a goal? I keep hearing that during a scoring attempt it is the height of the cross-bar (4 feet) that determines high sticking the puck. I can only find as long as the stick is not above the normal height of the shoulders.

ANSWER: Under USA Hockey Youth & Adult Playing Rules the puck may only be played up to the normal height of the player’s shoulders. While other leagues and rulebooks set the maximum height at four feet (height of the cross-bar) during a scoring opportunity, USA Hockey does not use this rule.