



2026 HOCKEY CANADA RULE UPDATES

Referee's Signals – Clipping/Tripping

Striking the leg with either hand below the knee in a **front-to-back motion**, keeping both skates on the ice.

What this means for you: The direction is now specified for how to move your arm to signal Tripping.

Referee's Signals – Slew-Footing

Striking the leg with either hand below the knee in a **back-to-front** motion, keeping both skates on the ice.

What this means for you: The direction is now specified for how to move your arm to signal Slew-Footing.

Rule 4.2 (b) – Minor Penalties

If the opposing team scores a goal while a team is shorthanded because of one (1) or more Minor or Bench Minor penalties **or when a team would otherwise become shorthanded due to a delayed Minor or Bench Minor penalty**, the Minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining will automatically terminate. In the case of a player who has received a double Minor penalty, their first Minor penalty will be terminated.

Note 1: For the purposes of terminating penalties under this rule, a delayed Minor or Bench Minor penalty is treated as a penalty with two minutes remaining.

If a team scores a goal while playing shorthanded and a delayed time penalty is signaled against the opposing team, the delayed penalty is still assessed because the team that is scored upon is not shorthanded.

When a goal is scored on a Penalty Shot against a team that is shorthanded, as outlined above, no player of the shorthanded team will return to the ice upon the scoring of the goal.

What this means for you: This significantly alters the impact the scoring of a goal has on terminating penalties. A delayed penalty is now treated the same as a time penalty being served.

Rule 4.2 (b) Interpretation 1 – Minor Penalties

When a goal is scored **(excluding on a Penalty Shot) and time penalties are being served or signaled on delay**, the Referee must ask the following questions:

1. Is the team scored on playing **shorthanded or to become shorthanded due to a delayed time penalty?**
2. Is it because of a Minor or Bench Minor penalty?



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ACTION:

If the Referee answers YES to both questions, then the Minor or Bench Minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining would be terminated. The only exception would be if the goal was scored during a Penalty Shot, in which case no penalty would terminate.

Note 1: In situations where time penalties are already being served, while an additional time penalty or penalties are on delay, officials must factor that time penalty into their evaluation as to whether the team being scored on is shorthanded. When a delayed penalty is signaled on the stoppage of play where a goal is scored by the non-offending team, officials should envision the delayed penalty time being placed on the time clock. This will assist officials in identifying the minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining for termination.

What this means for you: This significantly alters the impact the scoring of a goal has on terminating penalties. A delayed penalty is now treated the same as a time penalty being served.

Rule 4.14 – Deferred Penalties

Only two (2) players from the same team can serve time penalties at the same time. A team cannot play with fewer than three (3) players (plus a goaltender) on the ice. A third penalty to the same team would be considered a 'deferred' penalty.

A deferred penalty must still be served and may only commence upon the expiration or termination (opposing team goal) of a preceding time penalty that has resulted in the offending team playing with the minimum three (3) skaters.

What this means for you: Only a change in terminology, no change to how this handled in game.

Rule 6.1 (g) – Change of Players

In categories of U18 AAA, Junior and at the option of the Member in Senior, when the goal frame has been accidentally dislodged by any defending player, including the goaltender, causing a stoppage of play, this will result in a 'no-change' situation. The defending team will be subject to the same restrictions as outlined in Rule 6.7 (d)(i).

What this means for you: Officials need to determine who was at fault for dislodging the goal. If it was the attacking team the face-off will go outside. If the defending team accidentally dislodged the goal, then they will not be permitted to make a line change. This is only for U18 AAA.

Rule 6.7 Icing the Puck

Icing the puck is the action of a player shooting, batting, kicking, or deflecting the puck from their own half of the ice, as divided by the centre red line, down and across the goal line in the opposing team's defending zone. If the puck enters the net on such a play, then it is not icing. Should icing be called, the Linesperson that stops play should blow the whistle and then raise their non-whistle arm to signal icing.



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What this means for you: When you blow the whistle to call an icing you will raise your non-whistle arm to signal icing.

Rule 6.9 – High-Sticking the Puck

Players and goaltenders may not contact the puck with their stick, above the normal height of the shoulders during the regular course of play.

6.9 (b) No goal may be scored as the result of High-Sticking the Puck, unless a player of the offending team bats the puck into their own goal, in which case the goal will be allowed.

The determining factor for a goal scored by a high stick is the height of the stick relative to the height of the crossbar. If the puck contacts a portion of the stick that is below the level of the crossbar (despite some other portion of the stick being above the crossbar) and directly enters the goal, the goal will be allowed.

What this means for you: There is now a different criteria for determining if a goal was scored as a result of a high stick.

Rule 6.18 – Goaltender Safety

In categories of U13 and below should a Goaltender be struck in the head by the puck the Referee shall stop play as soon as it is safe to do so, unless the puck deflects directly into the goal, in which case the goal shall be allowed. If no goal has been scored by an immediate deflection off the goaltender, play will be stopped, and the resulting face-off shall take place at the nearest end-zone face-off location to where the shot was taken.

Officials should always allow team staff to evaluate the goaltender during a stoppage under this rule (if necessary) to allow for concussion protocols be applied.

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 6.18 (a)

To determine if a goal is allowed when the puck 'deflects' into the goal after striking the goaltender's head, it is best for the Referee to abstain from blowing the whistle immediately. The puck may deflect off the goaltender's head directly into the goal or subsequently the goal frame and then directly into the goal, granted the puck has not been contacted by any other player of either team, prior to entering the goal. As soon as a player from either team contacts the puck after it has struck the goaltender's head, the whistle may be blown and any goal scored after such contact shall be disallowed.

Interpretation 2 Rule 6.18 (a)

For the purpose of this rule the reference to the goaltender's head refers to the protective mask / helmet and does NOT include any throat protectors that may be affixed to or hanging from the mask or helmet.

What this means for you: You must now stop play if a goaltender in a U13 or below game is struck in the head by the puck, unless the puck deflects directly off the goaltender's head into



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the net. Officials must discern whether puck strikes the goaltenders protective mask/helmet or a throat protector that is affixed or hanging from the mask or helmet.

Rule 10.1 (a) Interpretation 11 – Delay of Game

On a stoppage of play, the Referee notices that the goaltender is at the Players' Bench. The Referee must then notify the team that they must do one of the following: replace the goaltender with the alternate goaltender, keep the original goaltender in the net and be assessed a Minor penalty, **play with six players, or take their time-out, if allowed.**

What this means for you: There is a new option when a goaltender goes to their Players' Bench on a stoppage of the play.

Rule 10.8 – Refusing to Start Play

Teams – team officials and players – are not permitted to suspend or conclude a game for any reason. The Head Coach is responsible for all actions of their team, including in a situation of refusal to start play.

A team is "refusing to start play" when:

- **A Team refuses** to place the correct number of players on the ice, after being warned by the Referee;
- A player or team official refuses to leave the Players' bench, penalty bench or general playing area after being assessed a Game Ejection, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct, Match penalty or Misconduct; or
- **It is apparent that a team has either withdrawn from the ice (e.g. leaves the players' bench) or has refused to appear for the start of a game or period.**

PROCEDURE

- When an incident of 'refusing to start play' has occurred, the Referee will assess a Bench Minor penalty for Delay of Game. If this occurs in the last two (2) minutes of regulation time or any time in overtime, a Penalty Shot shall be awarded in lieu of the Bench Minor penalty.**
- After the Bench Minor penalty is assessed, the offending team must resume play without any unnecessary delay.**
- If the offending team does not resume play promptly after the Bench Minor penalty is assessed, the Head Coach will be assessed a Game Misconduct penalty, and the game will be 'forfeited'.**

Where the Head Coach has been assessed a Game Misconduct penalty under this rule and the game has been forfeited, the Referee will report the individual(s) by completing a Game Incident Report, including full details and submitting the report to the appropriate Member or league delegate.

What this means for you: The applicable penalties and procedures for Refusing to Start Play have been substantially altered.