



NOTICE TO REFEREES



Issued: 25 March 2007

With the season about to start it is timely for a reminder on certain aspects of our sport that we, as referees, need to pay close attention to. I wish you all the best for the coming season and hope you enjoy your officiating.

POINTS TO NOTE

Officials Incident Reports

Over the past few weeks I have received reports from the various Disciplinary Tribunal Chairpersons advising of:

1. Game sheets obviously not being checked before being signed by referees.
2. Incomplete and/or vague Incident Reports being sent to them after an incident requiring a report to be written.

It is imperative that referees:

1. Check that the score sheet has the correct penalty descriptions entered upon it.
2. That the correct identification details for the player/s involved in the incident have been recorded.
3. Present a report that is detailed and accurate otherwise it makes it so much harder for the Disciplinary Tribunals to do their job and can lead to the charges against the player/s being dismissed.
(remember the tribunal members will not have witnessed the incident and so rely upon the Officials Incident Report to convey the event at hand)

Referees must:

- Advise the correct date, venue and game number.
- Advise correct name, number and team of the charged player.
- Report what **they** saw not what someone else saw and reported to them.
- Stick to the facts and not **assume**.
- Report any comments (foul language etc) that **they personally** heard.
- Refer to the correct rule under which they assessed the penalty.
- Ensure the report is completed as soon as practicable but in all cases within 24 hours after the completion of the game in which the incident took place to ensure that details are accurately recorded.

Points to Note

- Sequence of events leading up to the incident, ie/. boarding, tripping, face-off, protecting goalie, abuse/swearing etc.
- How many players involved and their numbers.
- Was there a third player in during the incident ? - probably more applicable in the event of an altercation.
- Who swung the first punch ? - if it can be determined accurately
- Did a goalkeeper leave their crease to join in the incident – again more likely to occur in the event of an altercation.

It is permissible for the referees to obtain the following information from their fellow game officials: ie/. Scorer & Time keeper

- Did any player leave their team's bench to join in the incident.
- Did any player leave the penalty bench to join in the incident.

Younger Players Playing up a Grade

This appears to be a trend in some regions. Referees must ensure that the younger players are not given preferential treatment regarding physical contact.

ie/. An U14/U16 player who chooses to play up in the U20's but yet who is physically smaller and does not have the upper body strength nor have the skating strength of an older, larger player will no doubt come off second best when you have the 2 players contesting the puck.

Consequently it would be unfair to penalize a “big” player just because a “small” player gets knocked over when two players are actively pursuing the puck – provided that there is no illegal activity on the part of the “bigger” player.

Referees must resist calling penalties in this instance for “incidental” contact – refer to Rule 640 Roughing and in particular to (b) 2nd paragraph which reads:

It is not the intent to penalize incidental contact between two opposing players who are actively in pursuit of the puck. The act of riding an opponent off the puck shall not be considered to be roughing. However, this does not allow the player who is not in possession of the puck to throw the body into an opponent to achieve possession.

Interference on Goalkeeper

We still need to keep a close eye on this aspect. Any attacking player who:

- Skates the crease and makes contact with the opposing team’s goalkeeper, no matter how minor, is to be penalized.
- Drives hard to the net, cuts across the front of the crease either to screen a shot or take shot and makes contact with the goalkeeper either by leading with or dragging a skate, is to be penalized.
- That makes contact with the goalkeeper with their stick either after attempting a shot or trying to slap an airborne puck down, is to be penalized.
- Follows through after either taking a shot or dropping a pass for a team mate and makes contact with the goalkeeper with either, body, skates or stick is to be penalized.

Players Helmets

Players whose helmets have been dislodged from their heads or having had the helmet displaced places it back on the head without fastening the helmet strap are not allowed to take part in play in any manner.

ie/. they can not make an attempt to play the puck, they can not fore-check an opponent regardless of whether or not the opponent has possession of the puck.

Because it is a safety issue all infringements must be penalized. Any referee who allows a player to continue playing in an unsafe condition is not taking all reasonable precautions.

Referees can “*nip this problem in the bud*” by enforcing the 2 finger gap between underside of chin and the helmet strap.

Freezing The Puck

More and more this ploy is being used by both players and goalkeepers. Players use their skates against the boards and goalkeepers use their stick to trap the puck against the goal frame.

Players use this manoeuvre when they have been isolated from their teammates. They just position their skates against the puck trapping it against the boards giving their teammates time to come to their assistance. They make no attempt to play the puck either by kicking it clear or by using their stick. Rule 612 (a) & 628 are both explicit. If it is clear that one player clearly, deliberately, stopped and held the puck prior to an opponent arriving and makes no attempt to clear the puck or allow his opponent an opportunity to play the puck immediately then a Minor Penalty must be assessed for Delay of Game.

Goalkeepers use this manoeuvre when the puck goes around the side of the goal or even around the back. They place their stick over the puck trapping it against the goal frame. Quite often goalkeepers will raise one arm hoping for the referee to blow their whistle for a face-off thinking that they have the puck covered/caught as per Rule 616 (a). Rule 612 (b) & Rule 628 are both explicit.

By allowing these tactics to continue we are inviting the possibility of injuries occurring when players, either trying to kick the puck free or by attempting to make contact with the puck using their sticks – both actions being totally legal within the rules, become frustrated and perhaps overstep the mark in their pursuit of the puck.

Generally any injury occurring occurs to the perpetrator of the incident whereby the player who initially used “legal actions” in an attempt to clear the puck but unfortunately goes a little too far ends up receiving a penalty.

This aspect of the game needs to be cleaned up.

The interpretation to be used is:

A player who traps the puck and then “shuffles” along the boards is creating a Delay of Game situation. Allow them 3 seconds and then call on them to release the puck and if they don’t then blow the game down and conduct a face-off at the nearest face-off spot that does not disadvantage the non-offending team. Issue a “team” warning and if the same team offends again in the same game assess the offending player a minor penalty for Delay of Game.

Blood

Too many people think that just because “blood” is present that this automatically leads to a Major + Game Misconduct for “Injury”. **This is an unreasonable perspective to uphold.**

The appearance of blood caused by an infringement does not necessarily mean an automatic Major + Game Misconduct. A referee has wide discretion when determining culpability.

Nowhere in the NZIHA rule book does it state that the appearance of blood defines:

- (i) an injury, or
- (ii) the automatic assessment of a Major + Game Misconduct penalty.

When blood is drawn on a player (more often than not on one who is not wearing a face cage) around the cheek/mouth area when a stick has come up and caught the player in a glancing blow. Quite often the player themselves have played a considerable role in causing this to have happened.

ie/ like when a player holds their stick down hard over an opponents stick and then releases their “hold-down” pressure.

Is it fair and reasonable for a player to be removed from the game in this instance - **No it is neither fair nor reasonable.**

If you have determined that the player is either partially to blame or is wholly responsible for their own misfortune then let them know immediately at the time and do not assess a penalty at all.

However, if a player causes another player to bleed by careless use of their stick then stop the clock, inspect the bleeding player and assess the “damage” done. If it is just a graze/abrasion assess a Major. If it looks a little bit more than an abrasion talk to the player concerned to find out just what his intentions are;

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| 1. Are they going to continue in the game after “first aid” ?, or | If they say they want to continue playing advise them that the offending player will be assessed a Major penalty. |
| 2. Will they be leaving the game. | If they say they will not continue playing in the game advise them that the offending player will be assessed a Major + Game Misconduct. |

If the “Injured player” subsequently returns to the game, having advised that he would take no further part in the game, you could do one of several things:

- 1. Prior to signing the game sheet at the end of the game downgrade the previously assessed Major + Game Misconduct penalty to a Major penalty.
- 2. Assess the so called “injured” player a Minor penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct.
- 3. If the so called “injured” player argues with you having been assessed a Minor penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct assess them a Misconduct penalty.
- 4. If the so called “injured” player continues to argue with you having been assessed a Minor penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct and a Misconduct penalty then assess them a Game Misconduct penalty and remove them from the game also.

If the injury to the opponent is the result of “high sticking” and where the injured player is not wearing facial protection, at referees discretion, a minor, double minor, major or major plus game misconduct may or may not be assessed to the offending player. If however an offending player’s action was done with intent to injure assess a Match Penalty for Attempt To Injure.

Concise interpretation for Blood injury:

- Infringement causes blood; - accidentally, unintentional just carelessness = Major penalty.
- Infringement causes blood; - while action was deliberate it was not malicious = Major + Game Misconduct penalty.
- Infringement causes blood; - referee determines that infringement was malicious therefore committed with intent to cause injury = Match penalty.
- How do you determine Intent ?
- by the circumstances surrounding the event.
 - was the infringement on the puck or in back-play.
 - if the infringement was on the puck was the offending player attempting to play the puck or did they ignore the puck and go straight at the player ?
 - if the infringement occurred off the puck, did the offending player chase the opponent in order to commit the infringement
 - the degree of ferociousness in the committing of the infringement.
 - body language.
 - players demeanor leading up to the infringement - had the offending player used threatening language towards their opponents prior to the infringement ?

In the case of a stick offence; remember as a referee you have discretion regarding whether or not the lack of facial protection may have contributed to the appearance of blood. ie/. a minor, double minor, major or major plus game misconduct may or may not be assessed to the offending player.

Abuse Do not take abuse from anyone - PENALISE.

On Rink Discussions

Game time belongs to the players not the referees – stop the clock if it is necessary to conduct a discussion other than a discussion while in motion.

If an on-rink discussion is necessary, either between officials or with team captains etc use the referees crease. Do not allow a “winning” team to wind down the clock by asking frivolous questions.

Awarding a Goal

Let the referee on the goal line award the goal. If you, as the back referee, have seen the puck fully cross the goal line then by all means point at the net **but do not blow your whistle.**

By pointing at the net you are letting your fellow official know that if he happened to be unsighted and not absolutely sure that a goal has been scored, that you saw a goal scored and then he can award the goal.

Remember before making a decision regarding the awarding of a goal you can discuss with your fellow referee and the goal judge if you wish.

Mandatory Protective Equipment

If a player is aged 18 or under they must wear full facial protection.
Players aged 19 & 20 must wear as a minimum either a half visor or a half cage until they turn 21 years of age.

There are to be no dispensations granted regardless of circumstances. No protection = No Game.

Too Many Players

The determining factor is **DELIBERATELY.**

Player In the Crease

If a goal is disallowed due to this a referee must go to the scorer and advise why the goal was disallowed because sometimes a scorer may have entered the goal onto the score sheet having seen the goal judges light come on.

Contact On Goalkeepers

If a player continues to skate in on the goalkeeper even after the goalkeeper has either caught the puck or obviously has it covered and makes contact with the goalkeeper they are to be penalised.

Attacking players skate in fast and screech to a halt millimeters from the goalkeeper, sometimes clipping the goalkeepers glove/blocker, this causes defending players to vigorously react to defend their goalkeeper which generally leads to an unnecessary altercation and assessment of penalties for a variety of infringements.

Players seem to think that until the referee has blown their whistle that the goalkeeper is “fair game”. The goalkeeper is **NEVER “Fair game”**.

Rule 633 (d) is explicit; *“A minor penalty shall be assessed to any player who makes stick contact with the opposing goalkeeper in the goal crease, who has covered or caught the puck, **regardless of whether or not the Referee has stopped the play.**”*

This aspect of the game needs to be controlled stringently.

Unless an attacking player can play the puck **without touching the goalkeeper** they should not attempt to play the puck.

Just because **part of the puck** may be visible **does not automatically make it playable**.

The only exception to the above is if the goalkeeper is poised over the puck but has not actually placed his glove down and covered the puck (perhaps taunting the attacking player) and an attacking player, close at hand, lunges for the puck with his stick as the goalkeepers glove goes down **do not** call a penalty - this is **simultaneous contact**, the player had **full view** of the puck when he commenced his action and it is not reasonable to expect a player to be able to break off his action once in the throes of carrying it out.

The same rationale applies where the puck is free in open rink and the goalkeeper dives and just beats the attacking players stick to the puck. The players stick will naturally slide into/under the goalkeepers glove/blocker – **no slashing penalty should be called**, unless the player deliberately strikes the goalkeeper **across the top** of the glove or arm.

If the goalkeeper is anywhere within their “privileged” area and has the puck fully or partially covered and there is an attacking player within close proximity (2m-3m) of the goalkeeper and skating in the general direction of the goalkeeper blow the play down immediately for a face-off.

Players: Just because part of the puck may be visible **does not automatically make it playable**.

Playing the puck by making contact on the goalkeeper = penalty for slashing.

Referees Discretion

A referee can only use discretion when the rules allow.

ie/. an infringement that would normally attract either a “Minor” or a “Major” penalty (depending upon circumstances - referees discretion).

If a rule dictates that an infringement automatically attracts a certain penalty then the referee can not use their discretion.

ie/. if the infringement causes an injury to the opponent. The rules state that the penalty to be assessed automatically becomes a “Major + Game Misconduct”.

There is no leeway for a referee to use discretion - discretion has been removed.
(only exception is High Stick where injured player is not wearing facial protection)

Other examples of when a referee can apply discretion are:

Butt Ending - Rule 607, Fighting – Rule 613, High Sticks - Rule 617,
Puck Hitting Goalkeepers Helmet – Rule 630 and Spearing - Rule 634.

Butt Ending or Spearing:

Either for an attempt, or if the attempt makes connection with the opponent and furthermore if the incident appeared to have been carried out to deliberately injure the opponent.

The referee has discretion as to whether or not:

- the action was accidental ie/. unintentional, or
- deliberate.

If the referees view is that the action was deliberate, then whether or not:

- the attempt missed, or
- connection was made, and
- if it was carried out with intent to injure.

Attempt - Double Minor + Misconduct
Connection - Major + Game Misconduct
Intent to Injure - Match Penalty

High Sticks:

With regards to “high sticking”; when a player injures an opponent as the result of “high sticking”, at the referees discretion, a double minor or major plus a game misconduct penalty may be assessed to the offending player.

However, where the injured player is not wearing facial protection, again at the referees discretion, a minor, double minor, major or major plus game misconduct **may or may not** be assessed to the offending player.

Fighting:

Either a Game Misconduct or a Match Penalty can be assessed.

A referee has discretion to determine the culpability of the involved players. ie/. instigator, excessive aggressiveness etc

Puck Hitting Goalkeepers Helmet:

If the puck hits the goalkeepers helmet referees are to use their discretion regarding the condition of the goalkeeper.

The interpretation to be adopted is as follows:

If the puck hits the goalkeepers helmet and it is **clearly obvious** that it has not affected the goalkeeper’s ability to perform the referees should not stop the game.

However, if the shot is **hard and direct to the goalkeepers helmet** referees are to stop the game.

If a game **is stopped** due to the puck hitting the goalkeepers helmet a Referee **must** skate to the Goalkeeper and check that the goalkeeper is unaffected by the impact of the puck.

Interference Rule 621 Interference; Clause (d) - Attacking players within goalkeepers crease

An excerpt from Rule 621 Interference; in particular clause (d)

"Unless the puck is in the goal crease area, a player of the attacking team **may not stand** on the goal crease line or **in the goal crease** or **hold their stick in the goal crease.**"

“player in the crease” To achieve consistency throughout our sport the following interpretation is to be the basis upon which decisions are made:

If the attacking team is hot on attack or there is a scramble of players in front of the goal and a “shot on goal” is imminent and one of their team mates skates the crease play will be stopped immediately.

If play happens to be in the attacking zone but there is no imminent danger of a “shot on goal” and an

attacking player skates the crease they will receive a verbal warning. If the player remains in or having left the crease re-enters the crease again play will be stopped.

If the defending team have control of the puck any opposition player who skates the crease will be given a verbal warning, however if a team's players persists in running the crease regularly (trying to antagonize the goalkeeper) they will be assessed a Minor penalty for "interference".

If any contact whatsoever is made (regardless of how minor) on the goalkeeper by a player skating the crease either a Minor penalty or a Major penalty is to be assessed, depending upon circumstances of the "contact", for either "Interference" or "Charging".

Body Contact / Body Checking

Apart from the very obvious action of one player deliberately skating into another player when the collision was avoidable. ***Did the attacking player remove the player (in possession) from the puck or the puck from the player (in possession).***

Referees must not tolerate:

1. Any player charging into another player deliberately to gain possession of the puck.
2. Body Checking; using the body/limbs to hit/check a player either in open rink or against the boards.
3. Any checking/contact that involves the stick when the stick is not in contact with the rink.
4. Any contact upon an opposing goalie within the goalkeeper's crease if the puck is not already within the crease.
5. Any deliberate and/or avoidable contact with the opposing goalkeeper anywhere else on the rink.

Referees need to judge:

1. Did the player remove the man from the puck or the puck from the man at the initial point of play.
2. Man from the puck = infringement.
3. Puck from the man = No infringement (unless there is secondary/avoidable contact in the after-play)

Helmets

Helmet chin straps must be a proper helmet manufacturers helmet strap, not a boot lace secured by tape and be no more than 2 fingers under the chin when properly fastened to each side of the helmet. **Give one team warning** if a player ignores the warning assess a Minor penalty for Unsportsmanlike conduct. If they argue immediately assess a Misconduct penalty. Any further derogatory comments you can assess them a Game Misconduct penalty.

Sticks

All hollow shafted sticks must have their ends covered.

Give one team warning if a player ignores the warning assess a Minor penalty for Dangerous Equipment. If they argue immediately assess a Misconduct penalty for Unsportsmanlike conduct. Any further derogatory comments you can assess them a Game Misconduct penalty.

Skates

Players are not allowed to play wearing skates that are missing a wheel /wheels.

Give one team warning if a player ignores the warning assess a Minor penalty for Dangerous Equipment. If they argue immediately assess a Misconduct penalty for Unsportsmanlike conduct. Any further derogatory comments you can assess them a Game Misconduct penalty.

Icing

The face-off spot for all icings is either of the 2 end zone face-off spots.

For & on behalf of the NZIHA Referees Committee
Allan Christie
NZIHA Chief Referee