



VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

MEMORANDUM

August 12, 2015

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TO: Commissioners, Head Coaches, Coordinators of Officials and On-Ice Officials at Institutions that Sponsor Ice Hockey.

FROM: Tom Anastos, chair
NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: 2015-16 Preseason Guidance.

This communication is intended to assist with preparations for the 2015-16 NCAA ice hockey season. Several important pieces of information are included here to assist with the understanding and application of the rules.

I. 2015-16 RULES CHANGE: Goalkeeper/Offensive Player Interaction.

In response to significant feedback from the collegiate ice hockey community at all levels, the rules committee voted to clarify several areas of these rules. Most significantly, the committee voted to alter or eliminate several portions of Rule 73 and the guidance in this document supersedes that rule.

Overall Rationale.

The overriding rationale of this rule is that the goalkeeper should have the ability to defend the goal particularly while in the goal crease. At the same time, attacking players attempting to score a goal also have rights. The rules committee is providing discretion and judgment to officials when making determinations on these plays. Officials must take into account the nature of any contact that occurs and the impact of such contact or positioning on the goalkeeper's ability to defend the goal. Finally, when video replay is available to review such plays, evidence to overturn a goal must be clear and conclusive.

The committee, in its responsibility to maintain a balance between offense and defense, focused on three issues related to this area:

1. The goaltender's right to be able to defend the goal, inside or outside of the crease, without being impeded by an attacking player.
2. The rights of an attacking player who remains outside the crease.
3. The role of the official in determining the effect of the interaction between the two players.

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•**Rights of the Goaltender** – The committee reaffirmed that playing rules must protect the goaltender and allow him or her to defend the goal, within the goal crease, without interference from an attacking player. This includes allowing a goaltender to move effectively and efficiently within the crease, as well as being able to see the puck unimpeded by a player who has established a position in the crease.

•**Rights of the Attacking Player** – The committee discussed situations where an attacking player remains outside of the crease but makes contact with goaltender’s equipment that extends outside the plane of the crease (e.g., glove, blocker, stick, etc.) while the goaltender’s feet remain in the crease. The committee amended an earlier interpretation by establishing the rights of the attacking player to that space outside the crease, provided that the attacking player does not initiate distinct and deliberate actions aimed at impeding the goaltender’s use of their equipment (e.g., slashing the goaltender’s glove). Incidental contact shall be allowed in these situations and goals scored on such plays shall be allowed.

If an attacking player establishes a significant position within the goal crease, so as to obstruct the goalkeeper’s vision and impair his ability to defend his goal, and a goal is scored, the goal will be disallowed. For this purpose, a player establishes a significant position within the crease when, in the referee’s judgment, his/her body, or a substantial portion thereof, is within the goal crease for more than an instantaneous period of time.

•**The Role of the Official** – Officials are encouraged to use their discretion in determining the effect of an attacking player making contact with a goaltender or with goaltender equipment. Referees are instructed to give more significant consideration to the degree and nature of the contact than to the exact location of the goalkeeper at the time of the contact. If, in the opinion of the official, the incidental contact had no effect on the goaltender’s ability to defend the goal, a goal may be allowed in such situations.

Officiating Options. Officials have three options when administering play involving an attacking player and the goalkeeper:

1. **Contact with Goaltender – Penalty:** If, in the opinion of the referee, there is contact that violates the any portion of Rule 73, a penalty may be enforced.
2. **Incidental Contact or Visual Screening In Crease.** Whistle, faceoff outside the zone.
3. **Goal Scored, Video Review.** Officials may use video to determine if there was a misapplication of Rule 73. In these cases, the call on the ice may be reversed with conclusive evidence, but no penalty may be assessed through the use of video review.



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Overall Philosophy.

Officials must use a philosophy of “when in doubt, the goal must count.” Unless the official is certain that a goal was scored through an illegal action (e.g., physically hindering the goalkeeper’s ability to move freely while in the crease and defend the goal), the goal must count. Games that have video replay available may correct egregious errors, but the standard of evidence required to disallow a goal is significant.

II. Experimental review of ejection penalties – extended to conference postseason tournaments. The committee has extended the experimental rule last season to allow video to be reviewed when a student-athlete may be ejected from a game. Conference tournaments that have video replay capability may utilize this option, which was used successfully in the ncaa championship last season. Additionally, officials will have all penalty options at their disposal. Last year, the experiment required at least a major penalty to be enforced if officials utilized the video to review a penalty that included a potential ejection. This year, officials may opt for a minor penalty if the video conclusively indicates a minor is the proper call.

III. Points of emphasis. In its overall review of the game, the committee believes generally the rules in place are effective. There are, however, a few points the committee believes require emphasis heading into the season.

- a. Player safety rules.** Continued diligence is needed with regard to player safety rules, particularly contact to the head, contact against defenseless or unsuspecting players and hitting from behind. The rules are very clear in each of these areas and officials must continue to err on the side of safety.
- b. Standard of enforcement.** Officials are encouraged to continually review the standard of enforcement. Establishing and maintaining a reasonable standard continues to be important to ensure players that have legally gained an advantage are not impeded.
- c. Pace of play.** Adherence to the faceoff procedures and attention to the overall pace of play are areas that require continued enforcement and diligence. Efficient line changes and eliminating unneeded delays or discussions will help keep the game moving and encourage more continuing action.

Thank you for your attention to this information as you prepare for the coming year. Additional information will be supplied in the near future at the preseason conference clinics and meetings. Please go to www.ncaa.org/playingrules to review all information (e.g., rules book, video, etc.).

TA:gk