



2018-19 Edition

USA Hockey Playing Rules Committee
NFHS Playing Rules Committee

(updated 10/01/2018 with 2017-21 USA Hockey, 2018-19 NFHS and 2018-20 NCAA Rules)

Rule (Situation)	Dif	USA Hockey (HS & Below)	N F H S	N C A A
SECTION 1 - RINK				
Goalkeeper warm-up area defined	U	Expanded Privileged Area	No rule	No rule
Player Warm-up area defined	U	No rule	Confined to own end of ice	Confined to own end of ice
Maximum non-players on bench	X	Four (4)	Five (5)	Eight (8) [Bench Minor after warning]
Goal Crease shape	U	6 ft. semi-circle	Truncated semi-circle	Truncated semi-circle
Face-Off Circle Hash Mark Distance	N	4 Feet	4 Feet	Recommended 5'-7"
Goal Peg Requirement	N	Recommended to be anchored	Recommended to be anchored	8-10" in Depth (limited waiver)
No Tobacco/Alcohol on ice or bench	X	Bench minor	Game Misconduct	Ejection from game (tobacco)
Flexible Goal Pegs	N	Recommended	Recommended	Mandated
SECTION 2 - COMPOSITION OF TEAMS				
Maximum players in uniform	X	Maximum 20 total, maximum 18 players	Maximum 20, including goalkeepers	Maximum 19 players; 2 or 3 goalkeepers (non-exhibition games)
Captains and Alternates	X	Captain + 2 Alternates (max.)	Max. 3 (any combination)	Captain and Designated Alt.
Visiting team must wear dark uniforms	X	No rule	Required	"Lights" permitted
Logo limitations on uniform	U	None	Yes (logos, flags, memorial patch)	Yes (logo restrictions only)
Captain coming off bench to complain	X	All- Minor	(1) - Minor; (2) - Misconduct; (3) - Game Misconduct; (4) - Game Disqualification	(1) - Misconduct (2) - Game Misconduct
Captains and Referees meet before game	U	No rule	Required	Required
More than 19 Players + 3 Goalkeepers on the ice in the pre-game	X	No rule - implied only rostered players may be on the ice	Permitted	Bench minor penalty



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Coach Meets Officials Before game	F	Not required	Required and verifies proper equipment	Not Required
Roster correction after game begins	X	Allowed - Bench minor penalty	OK if inadvertent only; minor penalty assessed	Not permitted; bench minor penalty assessed
Jersey number in addition to back	X	No rule	Both sleeves	Front or both sleeves
Spare goalkeeper required on bench	N	No rule; recommended in Tournaments	Recommended	Yes, at start of game, or bench minor
“Temporary” goalkeeper	U	Permitted	No rule	No rule
Goalkeeper substitution during stoppage	N	Return after next stoppage	Return after next stoppage	No rule
Not starting with announced lineup	N	Permitted	Permitted	Bench minor penalty
Retiring player location for legal change	N	At the bench	At the bench	Within 5 ft. of the bench
Pucks on ice before start of second or third periods	N	No rule	No rule	Charged with time-out; bench minor if time-out already used
Recovery time for injured goalkeeper	U	None	“Reasonable amount of time”	“Reasonable time”
Team huddles before 2 nd or 3 rd period	U	No rule	Minor	Bench minor
Concussion/Unconscious player rule (requires written physician OK to resume play)	F	No rule	Required	No rule
Stoppage for injured player	F	Immediate when his team has possession	Immediate (regardless of possession)	Immediate when his team has possession
SECTION 3 – EQUIPMENT				
Hollow end of stick must be covered	N	Yes	Yes	No rule
Maximum stick length	N	63 inches	63 inches	65 inches
Max. widened portion of GK stick shaft	N	26 inches	26 inches	28 inches
Skates not conforming to rules	F	Not permitted to play	(1) Warn; (2) Game Misc.	Not permitted to play
Throat protector – Goalkeeper	F	Recommended	Required	Recommended
Throat protector - Player	F	Not required	Recommended	Not required



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Required Protective Equipment – Player	X	Helmet/Facemask Skates Mouthguard (12&U and Older) Player Personally responsible for all other recommended protective equipment	Helmet/Facemask Skates Gloves Padded Hockey Pants Protective Cup /Pelvic Protector Shin Guards Elbow Pads Shoulder Pads Tooth and Mouth Protector 1 st Offense - Misconduct Return – Game Misconduct	Helmet/Facemask Skates Player personally responsible for all other protective equipment. 1 st offense - Not permitted to participate. 2 nd offense – Misconduct . 3 rd offense – Game Misconduct
Player’s helmet comes off during play	N	Immediate stoppage. Cannot return until play resumes	Immediate stoppage. Cannot return until play resumes	Immediate stoppage.
HECC-approved helmet	N	Required	Required	Players - Required Goalkeepers- Recommended
Wearing helmet on players’ and penalty bench	N	Required. Violation - Misc.	Required. Violation - Misc.	Required. Violation-Ben. Minor
Helmet chinstrap length restriction	N	Implied	Implied	Two fingers
Torn, ripped, unzipped pants	U	No rule	Not permitted	Not permitted
Mouthguard - non-clear color	N	Required	Required	No Rule
Goalkeeper Glove Falls Off-During Play	N	Play Stopped if vulnerable and no imminent scoring opportunity	Play Stopped Immediately	No Rule
Warning prior to equipment violation	N	Yes (except stick)	Yes	No
Casts / splints	N	OK if adequately covered and physician approved	OK if adequately covered and physician approved	No rule
Wearing exposed jewelry	U	Not permitted	(1) Misc. (2) Game Misc.	(1) Misc. (2) Game Misc.
Equipment request limitation	U	Anything in Section 3 which has specifications	Sticks	Sticks



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Location of logos on puck	N	No rule	No rule	Limited position
Electronic Equipment – Dispute Ruling	U	Bench minor	No rule	No rule
Electronic Equipment - player on the ice	X	Bench minor; equip. removed	1 st Offense - Misconduct 2 nd Offense- Game Misconduct	No rule
SECTION 4 - PENALTIES				
Bench minor penalty defined	F	Yes	No rule (Captain's Choice of players on the ice at stoppage on penalties)	Yes
Who serves "Bench Minor" (NFHS equivalent)	X	Player on ice at infraction	Player on ice at stoppage	Any non-penalized player
Coincident minor penalty rule	N	Equal number of minors offset	Equal number of minors offset	Equal number of minors offset unless teams at full strength
Minor penalty termination when scored upon	N	First minor being served	First minor being served	Minor causing short-handed at time of goal
Player/GK ejected after second Major	N	Yes (plus 2 game suspension)	Yes	No
Game suspension for Game Misconduct	U	Yes	No	No
2 nd Misconduct by Player in Game	U	Game Misconduct	No rule	No rule
5-penalty maximum/game (player/GK); 15-penalty maximum/game (coach)	N U	Yes (Game Misc.) Yes (Next game suspension)	Yes (Game Misc.) No	No No
Progressive suspension	U	Yes (Fighting and aggressive major penalties)	Yes (Disqualification Penalty)	Yes (Disqualification & Game Misconduct Penalties)
Match penalty provision	U	Yes	No	No
Match (DQ) penalty to non-player	N	Applies	Applies	No rule
Maximum Disqualifications per player per game	F	No limit	One	No limit
Goalkeeper must remain in Privileged Area throughout Penalty Shot attempt	N	Not required	Not required	Yes
Who takes Penalty Shot if player selected is injured or ejected	X	Teammate on the ice at the time of infraction	Any teammate on the ice when play stopped	Any teammate not then serving a penalty



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Goalkeeper must serve his own major and/or misconduct penalties	U	No	Yes	Yes
Requires the recording of any delayed penalty nullified by a goal being scored	N	Yes	Yes	No
SECTION 5 - OFFICIALS				
Approved Officiating systems	X	RR, RLL or 2R-2L (not RRL)	RR, RRL, or 2R-2L	2R-2L RRL (Women's Hockey Only)
Adjustment when one official is unable to continue	X	(4 to 3) 2R-2L to RLL (3 to 2) RLL to RL or 2R (2 to 1) 2R - Emergency Official Rule	(4 to 3) 2R-2L to RRL (3 to 2) RRL to 2R (2 to 1) 2R to R	(4 to 3) if R: 2R-2L to RLL (4 to 3) if L: 2R-2L to RRL (3 to 2) RRL – Conference Rule
Linesman report unobserved MINOR pen. to Ref.	U	"Injury Potential" minors only	Yes	Yes
Face-offs - Start of periods and after goals (who conducts)	X	Referee	Referee; Linesman option	Linesman
HECC approved hockey helmet required	F	No	Yes	No
Access to Rule Book during game	U	No Requirement	Required	Required
Half-shield facemask required for Officials	N	Yes	Yes	No
SECTION 6 - PLAYING RULES				
Awarded goal for certain Penalty Shot situations if goalkeeper is not on the ice: - Fall on or pick up puck in crease - Thrown stick (Defending Zone) - Fouled from behind (breakaway) - GK leaves any portion of stick in crease	X	Awarded goal (all situations) if preventing obvious/imminent goal	Awarded goal allowed in certain situations where a goal is imminent	Awarded goal allowed in certain situations where a goal is imminent
Verbally abusing Official after game – player	X	Misconduct or Game Misconduct.	Disqualification	Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification



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Foul language on players' bench – player	X	Misconduct or Bench Minor	Minor + Misconduct	Minor, Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification
Continuing altercation	U	Misconduct or Game Miscond.	Disqualification	Disqualification
Touching/Holding Game Official – player	U	Misconduct or Game Miscond.	Disqualification	Disqualification
Banging boards with stick – player	U	Misconduct or Game Miscond.	Minor	Minor
Obscene Gesture – player	X	Game Misconduct	Minor + Game Misconduct. or Disqualification	Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification
Racial or ethnic slur	F	Game Misconduct (language that is offensive, hateful or discriminatory in nature)	Disqualification (Includes gender slur)	Game Misconduct
“Detrimental Conduct” – player or Team Official who spits at a game participant	N	Match	Disqualification	Game Misconduct
Verbal abuse to Game Official after game by Team Official	X	(1) Bench Minor, (2) Game Misc.; Match if threat	Disqualification	Game Misconduct or Supplementary Discipline
Obscene Gesture by Team Official	X	Game Misconduct	Minor + Game Misconduct	Bench Minor
Thrown object onto the ice	N	Bench Minor	Minor	Player: Minor + Game Misc. Coach: Bench Minor + G.Misc.
Non-physical interference with On-Ice Officials	N	Misconduct	Misconduct	Player: Misc. or Game Misc.
Touching/Holding Game Official by Team Official	U	Game Misconduct	Disqualification	Disqualification
Physically harming Game Official by Team Official	N	Match	Disqualification	Game Misconduct or Supplementary Discipline
Boarding	X	Minor + misconduct, Major + game misconduct. or Match	Major, Major + misconduct or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Body Checking (Body Contact Classifications)	U	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major or DQ
Goalkeeper playing with a broken stick	N	Not permitted - Minor	Not permitted - Minor	OK until next stoppage
Butt-Ending	X	Major + Game Misconduct or Match	DQ	Major + Game Misc. or DQ



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Charging	X	Minor + misconduct, Major + game misconduct. or Match	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Checking from Behind	X	Minor + Misconduct, Major + Game Misconduct, or Match; 5+GM or Match req'd if head-first into boards or goal	Major - Open ice Major + misconduct or DQ if into boards or goal	Minor or Major (open ice) Major + Game Misconduct or DQ req'd if into boards or goal
Contact to the Head / Head Contact	X	Minor + misconduct, Major + game misconduct. or Match	Minor, Major or DQ (Indirect) Major or DQ (Direct)	(Direct) Major + Game Misc. or DQ
Cross-Checking	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major of DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Elbowing	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major of DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Players must be stationary for face-off	U	No	Yes	Yes
Player/Line change at stoppage	N	5 seconds each for visitor and home team	5 seconds each for visitor and home team	5 seconds for visiting team and 8 seconds for home team
Player change after accidental goal dislodged by defending team	N	Permitted	Permitted	Not Permitted
Player change after team shoots puck over glass and out of play	N	Permitted	Permitted	Not Permitted
Player change after team ices the puck	N	Permitted	Permitted	Not Permitted
Face-off location after non-coincident penalty	U	Last play or Neutral Zone spot	Offending team's defending zone	Offending team's defending zone
Face-off location for carrying /throwing or illegal hand passing puck	X	Neutral zone or last play	Defending zone	One zone closer to own goal
Face-off location for playing puck above shoulders	N	Defending zone (offending team)	Defending zone (offending team)	One zone closer to own goal
Face-offs procedure – who places stick first?	N	Attacking center first (Visiting team center ice)	Attacking center first (Visiting team center ice)	Defending center first in defending zone; otherwise Visiting team



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Hand pass permitted	N	Defending zone only	Defending zone only	No
Player Change after Hand Pass Stoppage	N	No Rule	No Rule	Not permitted
Hand pass by face-off player	N	No Rule	No Rule	Not permitted – minor penalty
Face-off location for closing hand on puck (non-hand pass or delay of game)	X	Last Play – no territorial advantage	Defending Zone Face-Off Spot	One zone closer to own goal
Immediate whistle for hand pass directly on goal	F	No	Yes	No
Goalkeeper freezes puck on ice when out of crease, puck in front of goal line (in Priv. Area)	N	No penalty if pressured	No penalty	Minor (interpretation)
Goalkeeper shoots puck out of rink over glass	U	Minor - Always	Minor – If deliberate	Minor – If deliberate
Goalkeeper checks opponent in Priv. Area	N	No rule	No rule	Minor or Major
Instigating Fisticuffs	F	Minor	No special rule	Minor
Fisticuffs, including player struck during altercation who continues by retaliating	U	Minor, Double Minor, or Major + Game Misconduct	Disqualification	Disqualification
Subsequent player enters altercation (fight)	X	First in - Game Misconduct; Others - no automatic penalty	Disqualification	No automatic penalty
Deliberately removing helmet/facemask prior to or during altercation	U	Match	No rule	No rule
Unintentionally removing opponent helmet/facemask during altercation	U	Game Misconduct (2-game suspension)	No rule	No rule
Own helmet/facemask comes off head during altercation (improper wearing)	U	Game Misconduct	No rule	No rule
High Stick definition	U	Above normal shoulder height of checking player	Above 4 feet	Above 4 feet
Goal scored from Puck striking portion of stick below HS definition, but part of stick is above	U	No Goal	Goal is allowed	Goal is allowed
Immediate whistle for HS puck directly on goal	F	No	Yes	No
Goalkeeper play puck with high stick	N	No	No	Permitted



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Grabbing Facemask	X	Major + Game Misconduct or Match	Major, Major + Misconduct or DQ	Major + Game Misconduct or DQ.
Head-Butting	X	Major + Game Misconduct. or Match	Major, Major + Misconduct or DQ	Major + Game Misconduct. or DQ
High Sticking	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Holding	F	Minor	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor
Hooking	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor
Shorthanded Team can ice puck	U	15U and older Only	Allowed	Allowed
Interference	F	Minor Penalty	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor
Directing puck into goal with skate	N	Disallowed	Disallowed	Goal unless distinct kicking motion
Attacking player in crease when goal scored (goalkeeper is in the crease)	U	No goal	Allowed – No goal if interfering with the goalkeeper	Allowed – No goal if interfering with the goalkeeper
Kicking	U	Major + Game Misconduct (Push-Off) or Match (Kick)	DQ	DQ
Kick shot (skate kicks stick blade)	U	Stoppage of Play	Misconduct	Misconduct
Kneeing	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Player leaves players' bench or penalty bench during altercation	U	Major + Game Misconduct	DQ	DQ
Extra player prevents breakaway	X	Penalty Shot	Penalty Shot + Misconduct	Bench Minor, Misconduct, and Penalty Shot
Delayed off-sides permitted	U	No – (Except 14U and above teams)	Yes	Yes
Tag-up to nullify delayed off-side	U	No – (Except 14U and above teams)	Yes	Yes



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Off-Sides – Puck deflecting from Neutral Zone off of defending player back into Defending zone with attacking player in zone.	N	Delayed Off-sides	Delayed Off-sides	No Off-sides
Immediate whistle for puck shot on goal during delayed off-sides	U	Yes	No	No
Icing is nullified if goalkeeper leaves crease or feigns playing the puck	N	No	No	Yes
Stoppage of play for icing violation	N	Immediate when puck crosses goal line	Immediate when puck crosses goal line	Hybrid Icing
Icing error	U	End zone spot where occurred	Center spot	Center spot
Off-side error	N	Neutral zone spot	Neutral zone spot	Center spot
Carrying puck behind net more than once per period (not being checked)	N	No rule	No rule	Minor
Additional puck on ice	N	Stop only if interferes with play	Stop only if interferes with play	Stop at change of possession
Team refuses to start play when ordered to do so by Referee	X	(1) 15 seconds, (2) Bench minor, (3) 15 seconds, (4) Suspend game	(1) Warn, (2) 3-min. to comply, (3) Major if comply or forfeit if no comply	(1) Warn, (2) Minor, (3) Major, (4) Forfeit
Slashing	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Slew-footing	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misc.	Minor, Major or DQ	Major + Game Misc. or DQ.
Spearing	X	Major + Game Misconduct or Match	DQ	Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Thrown stick	U	At puck in Def. Zone: Pen. Shot, Otherwise: minor	Preventing a goal: Pen. Shot Otherwise: minor	Preventing a goal: Pen. Shot Otherwise: minor
“Mercy Rule” (ending game early)	F	No	Permitted	No
Time of period	X	20 minutes maximum	15 (up to 17 min. by State)	20 minutes (15-18 minute Intermission)



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Time-out permitted	U	Before conclusion of line change procedure	Anytime during a stoppage	Anytime during a stoppage
Max. period length, sudden-death overtime	X	10 min. (no resurface)	8 min. (no resurface)	5 min. (no resurface)
Teams change ends for first overtime	U	No Rule	Yes	Yes
Video review	X	No rule	By State Assoc. adoption only	Yes
Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking	X	Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Unnecessary Roughness	X	Minor or Double Minor	Minor, Major or Disqualification	Minor
Unnecessary Roughness – avoidable check to vulnerable player or after whistle	N	Minor, Major or Major + GM	Minor, Major or DQ	Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ
Diving Rule (Embellishment)	U	No rule	Minor	Minor
SIGNALS and PROCEDURES				
Goal scored - blowing the whistle	N	Yes	Yes	No
Icing signal, non-whistle arm, back official	F	Vertical	60° above horizontal	Vertical
Delayed off-side	U	Non-whistle arm vertical (14U teams and above only)	Non-whistle arm vertical; whistle arm angled toward line	Non-whistle arm vertical; whistle arm angled toward line

"For purposes of this document, a Match Penalty (USAH) and a Disqualification (NFHS & NCAA) are considered identical. Both consist of a 5-minute penalty, immediate ejection from the game, and additional suspension."



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