

Hockey Canada Officiating Program



USPORTS Procedures Manual

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is intended as a supplemental guide for procedures that are to be used only in USPORTS leagues, in partnership with Hockey Canada. As USPORTS is an elite level of competition, it is recognized that certain procedures, which are not appropriate for all levels of play, are beneficial at this level. If a procedure is not specifically covered in this document, officials should refer to the Hockey Canada Officiating Procedures for Referees and Linespersons, available on the Hockey Canada website.

Individual Members or leagues are not to issue additional procedural guidelines that are not included in this document. Procedural changes must be reviewed and approved by the Hockey Canada Officiating Program to ensure uniformity and adequate education for officials from across the country.

These guidelines apply to both men's and women's leagues, except where noted.

2.0 FACE-OFFS

2.1 Face-off Conduct

Once the referee lowers their arm to indicate that the line change procedure is complete, the official conducting the face-off will blow the whistle. The whistle is to signal to both teams that they will have no more than five seconds to line up for the face-off. Once players are in position for the face-off, the official conducting the face-off will enter into a crouch and present the puck. In doing so, officials should abide by the following guidelines:

- a. Officials will crouch so that their knees form an angle no more acute than 90° while keeping their chest and head up.
- b. Officials must avoid bending at the waist, such that their upper body or head is over the face-off dot, as this is unsafe.
- c. Officials will present the puck by extending their arm so that the puck is held below the eye-level of the players taking the face-off. The objective is that the players should not be craning their necks to see the puck. However, officials should only hold the puck as low as necessary to achieve this objective.
- d. Communication is crucial for a safe and fair presentation of the puck during a face-off:
 - The majority of communication with players participating in the face-off must occur prior to the officials entering their crouch. The longer officials spend in a crouched position without dropping the puck, the greater the likelihood of the players accidentally making contact with the officials.
 - However, it is crucial that, as they enter their crouched position, officials are communicating with the centers, to avoid “jumping” and a face-off violation.
- e. Officials must take the first opportunity to drop the puck fairly.

2.2 Face-off Violations

In the event that a player commits a face-off violation, linespersons will do the following:

- a. The linesperson will rise from their crouched position and extend their arm out to the side to indicate that the offending team’s center has been ejected from the face-off.
- b. The linesperson will quickly ensure that all players are lined up appropriately and will then re-enter their crouch to complete the face-off.

Where Rule 6.4 (a) is in effect and a player commits a face-off violation immediately following an icing, linespersons will do the following:

- c. The linesperson will arise from their crouched position and raise their arm upwards, to indicate that a violation has occurred and a warning has been issued. The offending team’s center will not be ejected from the face-off.
 - If the linesperson not conducting the face-off is the one identifying the violation, they will blow the whistle to prevent the face-off from occurring, and

extend their arm out to the side to indicate that a violation has occurred.

Following this, the linesperson conducting the face-off will raise their arm, bent at the elbow, to signal the violation to the players taking the face-off.

- d. At this time, the linesperson conducting the face-off must ensure that the players have re-set appropriately.
- e. Once they have done this, the linesperson will re-enter their crouched position to complete the face-off.

If the offending team commits a second violation on the same face-off, the linesperson will follow the same procedure detailed in (d) above. At this time, the referee will assess a Minor penalty for Rule 10.1 – Delay of Game.

3.0 ICING

3.1 Hybrid Icing

The hybrid icing rule is intended to maintain competitiveness, by allowing a “race” for the puck without compromising the safety of players. In order to enforce hybrid icing effectively, officials will follow this procedure:

- a. When the back linesperson raises their arm to signal a potential icing, the front linesperson must determine whether there will be a ‘race’ for the puck. In order to do this, they must skate into the end-zone, so that they are in position to judge a close call, if it occurs.
- b. The front linesperson must make the judgement as to who will win the race to the puck no later than when the first of the players chasing the puck reaches the end-zone face-off spots.
 - It is crucial that linespersons understand that this is not a race to the face-off spots. It is a race to the puck, but the *judgement* will be made at the face-off spots.
 - At the time that the first player reaches the end-zone face-off spots, the linesperson must judge who would reach the puck first.
- c. In order to do this, the linesperson should work to reach the best possible position. This is important because, in the event of a close race, the linesperson should be able to clearly see across the ice to judge who has won the race. This is difficult to do if the linesperson is behind the play.
- d. As the linesperson is preparing to judge a hybrid icing situation, they must be aware of the following factors:
 - In the event that the puck travels around the boards, this will change the judgement regarding who would reach the puck first. The linesperson must be aware of the path of the puck, as well as the position and momentum of the players.
 - If the puck bounces off the end boards to a position above the goal line, the linesperson must now judge who will actually touch the puck first. This is a difficult decision that cannot be made accurately if the linesperson is behind the play.
 - If the goaltender leaves their crease with both skates, whether or not they actually play the puck, the icing will be washed out. As goaltenders will frequently waver in their decision to play the puck or not, linespersons must be in a position to see if they leave the crease with both skates. (*NOTE: This does not apply if the goaltender that is going to the Players’ Bench to be substituted*)
- e. The front linesperson should communicate verbally with players to ensure they are aware of how the play is developing.
 - If the icing will be called, the front linesperson should communicate with the players that the icing is coming so that they do not put themselves in an unsafe position.

- If the icing is likely to be waved off, the front linesperson should communicate with the players that the play will continue, so that they can prepare themselves to make a safe play on the puck.
 - If there is a close race, linespersons should put themselves in a position to communicate with the players as soon as the whistle is blown and, when in doubt, err on the side of player safety and call icing.
- f. It is crucial that referees strictly penalize any unnecessary contact on hybrid icing situations, including when the icing is waved off. The race cannot compromise the safety of the players.

3.2 No-Change on Icing

The no-change on icing rule is intended to maintain competitiveness, by not allowing teams to ice the puck for the sole purpose of making a change of players. In order to enforce no-change icing effectively, officials should implement the following procedure:

- a. The offending team is prohibited from making a change of players from the moment the puck is shot down the ice.
 - Irrespective of any delay in the back linesperson actually raising their arm to signal the potential icing, all players of the offending team who are on the ice at the moment the puck is shot must remain on the ice for the ensuing face-off.
- b. When the back linesperson raises their arm to signal a potential icing, they should mentally record the players who are on the ice. If the offending team attempts a change of players before the icing is called, the linesperson will need to call the players back onto the ice.
- c. If the icing is washed out, the offending team may change players freely.

Referees also play a role in enforcing no-change on icing rules and should be prepared to assist their linespersons.

- d. In a four-official system, if the back referee determines that there are no potential foul situations requiring their attention, they may shift their focus to tracking players of the offending team who may be attempting a change of players.
- e. Referees should be alert to teams deliberately engaging in a change of players on an icing violation, with the intent of circumventing this rule.
- f. Referees and linespersons should work together to identify potential situations, as described in (e). Referees should take every opportunity to advise the offending team that continuation of this action will result in a Minor penalty under Rule 10.1 – Delay of Game. *(NOTE: Referees should not be overzealously applying this direction to penalize teams that attempt a change of players as the delayed icing goes into effect or in the honest belief that the icing will be washed out.)*

Officials should use good judgement and communication to enforce Rule 6.7 (d) in a fair and consistent manner.

4.0 LINEPERSON RESPONSIBILITIES (MEN'S DIVISIONS ONLY)

4.1 Centre Ice Face-offs

Linespersons will conduct all face-offs at centre ice, except for those at the beginning of periods, which will be conducted by the referee (excluding overtime).

For centre-ice face-offs conducted by the linespersons, officials will position themselves as follows:

- a. The linesperson not dropping the puck will position themselves in front of the penalty benches. The linesperson dropping the puck will face their partner to conduct the face-off.
- b. The referees will position themselves diagonally-opposite from each other at or near the blue lines.
- c. When the puck is dropped, the linesperson not dropping the puck must go in the direction of the puck to reach the blue line before the puck crosses. (NOTE: Given the speed of the game, it may not be possible for the linesperson to reach the blue line before the puck. In this case, the referee should be prepared to assist in making the offside call.)
- d. The linesperson dropping the puck will exit the face-off location as soon as it is safe to do so.

4.2 Designated Half of the Ice Surface

In men's divisions of USPORTS hockey, the linespersons will each take primary responsibility for one half of the ice surface. They will be responsible for judgements at the blueline and face-offs at the locations that correspond to their half of the ice surface. The linespersons will switch at the halfway point of the game.

4.3 Switching Bluelines During Play

This procedure does not mean that the linesperson cannot switch bluelines with their partner or cover for their partner when required. The overall objective is always that the call is made by the official in the best position to see the play. If the linespersons switch bluelines during play, they will wait until an appropriate moment to switch back, either during the play or at a stoppage of play.

Following face-offs, linespersons must use their best judgement to ensure the bluelines are covered appropriately. The linesperson not conducting the face-off should be prepared to follow the play to ensure they are in position to judge a potential offside play, even if this means taking responsibility for their partner's blueline for a short period of time. Communication is critical in these situations as a blueline cannot be left unattended due to confusion between the linespersons.

4.4 Handing Off the Puck

Notwithstanding the above, on stoppages of play, there may be a situation wherein a linesperson has the puck and is closest to the face-off location, even if they are not the designated linesperson for that half of the ice surface. In this situation, the linesperson should prioritize the flow of the game and conduct the face-off, before returning to the procedure outlined in this section.

Following an icing call, it is the responsibility of the back linesperson to supervise the line change procedure and then proceed to the face-off location in the end-zone. The front linesperson will pick up the puck, skate to the face-off location, and hand off the puck to the linesperson in charge of the face-off in that half of the ice surface. The linesperson will then proceed to the blueline prior to the face-off procedure.