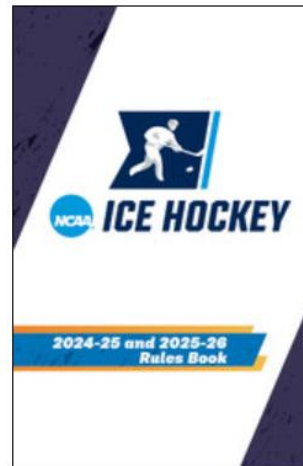


ACHA Rules Update

NCAA 2024-25 to 2025-26 Rules Book

Rules

- The ACHA uses the *NCAA Ice Hockey Rules Book*, the current edition is 2024-25 and 2025-26
- The rules books is downloadable at [NCAA Publications](#)



Major Rule Change

11.1 GOALKEEPER'S EQUIPMENT

- “Skate blade” has been added to the rule and joins items such as glove, blocker, leg pad(s), and helmet/facemask straps.
- If any of these items become dislodged, play shall continue if the offensive team has a scoring opportunity. Once the scoring opportunity is complete, play shall be stopped.



Major Rule Change

15.2 MINOR PENALTY - GOAL SCORED

- If during the calling of a delayed minor penalty a goal is scored by the non-offending team, the penalty shall NOT be imposed. This does not impact major penalties; major penalties will be imposed in the normal manner.
- Rule now aligns with professional hockey as well as USA Hockey.



Major Rule Change

15.3 MINOR PENALTY – SHORT-HANDED – GOAL SCORED

- When a team is playing short-handed, and the referee signals a delayed minor penalty on the short-handed team and a goal is scored by the non-offending team.
- The minor will be assessed, and the first minor penalty shall automatically terminate. If more than one minors are being served it is - first in, first out.



Major Rule Change

15.4 FACE-OFF LOCATION FOR NON-COINCIDENTAL PENALTIES

- When a non-coincidental penalty is called the face-off will occur in the non-offending team's offensive zone. They will always pick the end zone dot for the face-off to take place.
- 3 Exceptions:
 1. Penalty assessed after a goal.
 2. Penalty assessed at the end of a period.
 3. Defending team is penalized and attacking players enter attacking zone beyond outer edge of the end zone face-off circle (neutral zone face-off)



Major Rule Change

40.1 ABUSE OF OFFICIALS

- A minor penalty has been added for situations where there is abuse of officials by a player.
- Progression is now:
 1. Minor, 2:00
 2. Misconduct, 10:00
 3. Game Misconduct, Removal

(Previously: Misconduct or GM were the options)



Major Rule Change

45.1 CONTACT TO THE HEAD

- Standalone major option has been removed.
- New Options:
 1. Minor, 2:00
 2. Major and Game Misconduct, 5:00 plus Removal from game
 3. Disqualification, Removal



1

Major Rule Change

CONTACT TO HEAD: MINOR CRITERIA

In determining whether contact with an opponent's head was avoidable, the circumstances of the hit including the following shall be considered:

1. Whether the player attempted to hit squarely through the opponent's body and the head was not "picked" as a result of poor timing, poor angle of approach, or unnecessary extension of the body upward or outward.
2. Whether the opponent put him or herself in a vulnerable position by assuming a posture that made head contact on an otherwise full body check unavoidable.
3. Whether the opponent materially changed the position of his or her body or head immediately prior to or simultaneously with the hit in a way that significantly contributed to the head contact.



2

Major Rule Change

CONTACT TO HEAD: MAJOR & GM/DQ

- The referee has the discretion to assess a **MAJOR PLUS GAME MISCONDUCT**, based on the severity of the infraction, to a player that makes direct contact to the head of an opponent.
- The referee has the discretion to assess a **DISQUALIFICATION** penalty if the player attempted to or deliberately injured an opponent with an illegal check to the head.

3



Major Rule Change

50 HITTING/CHECKING FROM BEHIND

- First Option/Decision/Question:
 - Was the hit/check from behind in open ice? This includes a push, charge, cross-check, or body check – if yes...
 - Penalty: MINOR or MAJOR



1

Major Rule Change

50 HITTING/CHECKING FROM BEHIND

To consider a MINOR penalty:

- A minor penalty may be assessed when the opponent materially changes body position immediately prior to or simultaneously with the hit in a way that significantly contributed to the check from behind into the side boards, end boards or goal cage. A minor penalty may be considered provided the player delivering the check does NOT:
 - Extend or and direct the arm, elbow, forearm or shoulder to contact to the back of an opponent.
 - Extends the body and targets the opponent's back.
 - Leaves their skates or launches to deliver a blow to the back.
 - Uses the stick in any way to target a player's back (e.g., cross checking, butt-ending, etc.).
 - Check or push a defenseless opponent from behind in such a manner that causes the opponent to hit or impact the boards in an excessive or forceful manner.

2

Major Rule Change

50 HITTING/CHECKING FROM BEHIND

To consider a MAJOR penalty:

- A major penalty maybe assessed when the opponent materially changes body position immediately prior to or simultaneously with the hit in a way that significantly contributed to the check from behind into the side boards, end boards or goal cage. A major penalty maybe considered provided the player delivering the check does:
 - Delivers a late hit.
 - Extends and directs the arm, elbow, forearm or shoulder to contact to the back of an opponent.
 - Extends the body and targets the opponent's back.
 - Leaves their skates or launches to deliver a blow to the back.
 - Uses the stick in any way to target a player's back (e.g., cross checking, butt-ending, etc.).
 - Any player who checks or pushes a defenseless opponent from behind in such a manner that causes the opponent to hit or impact the boards in an excessive or forceful manner.

3

Major Rule Change

4

50 HITTING/CHECKING FROM BEHIND

- These situations, based on the severity of the contact, shall be assessed either a major and game misconduct or major and disqualification penalty:
 - A player that is reckless.
 - A player that delivers a late hit.
 - A player that extends and directs the arm, elbow, forearm or shoulder to contact to the back of an opponent.
 - A player that extends the body and targets the opponent's back.
 - A player that leaves their skates or launches to deliver a blow to the back.
 - A player that uses the stick in any way to target a player's back (e.g., cross checking, butt-ending, etc.).

MAJOR and Game Misconduct:

- Any player who cross-checks, pushes or charges an opponent who is in a vulnerable position from behind into the side boards, end boards or goal cage, may be assessed a major penalty and game misconduct.

MAJOR and Disqualification:

- The referee has discretion to assess a disqualification penalty if the attacking player delivers contact to an opponent by checking from behind into the side boards, end boards or goal cage that is severe and/or reckless.

Major Rule Change

81.3 FACE-OFF PROCEDURE

1. One or both centers are not positioned for the face-off,
2. One or both centers refrain from placing their stick on the ice,
3. Any player has encroached into the face-off circle,
4. Any player makes physical contact with an opponent, or
5. Any player who lines up for the face-off in an off-side position,

the linesperson shall have the offending center(s) replaced immediately prior to dropping the puck. Centers will receive one (1) warning during “no change” situations.



Major Rule Change

87.2 HIGH-STICKING THE PUCK

- Height of an illegal action of high-sticking the puck has changed from 4' to "above the shoulder."
- The cross-bar is no longer used as reference.



Major Rule Change

89.6 PUCK OUT OF BOUNDS

- Should any player cause the puck to go out of play or become unplayable in any zone, the face-off shall take place at the face-off spot in the zone from which the puck was shot. If deflected out of play, at the nearest face-off spot in the zone where it deflected out of play. If the zone happens to be the neutral zone, the face-off spot selected shall be the one that gives the offending team the least amount of territorial advantage.



Major Rule Change

93.4 CONTINUOUS PLAY CONCEPT

- For clarity, the ACHA does NOT use video replay rules...
- The continuous play concept from NCAA Rule 93.4(a)(10) can be applied when appropriate, it states:
 - Puck entering the net as the culmination of a continuous play where the result of the play was unaffected by any whistle blown by the referee upon his or her losing sight of the puck.

