



Rule Changes 2026-2028





Rule Changes 2026-28

Rule 4.2 (b) – Minor Penalties

Rule Change

If the opposing team scores a goal while a team is shorthanded because of (1) or more Minor or Bench Minor penalties **or when a team would otherwise become shorthanded due to a delayed Minor or Bench Minor penalty**, the Minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining will automatically terminate. In the case of a player who has received a double Minor penalty, their first Minor penalty will be terminated.

Note 1: For the purposes of terminating penalties under this rule, a delayed Minor or Bench Minor penalty is treated as a penalty with two minutes remaining.

If a team scores a goal while playing shorthanded and a delayed time penalty is signaled against the opposing team, the delayed penalty is still assessed because the team that is scored upon is not shorthanded.



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Rule 4.2 (b) – Minor Penalties (continued...)

Interpretation 1 - Rule 4.2 (b)

When a goal is scored **(excluding on a Penalty Shot)** and time penalties are being served **or signaled on delay**, the Referee **must** ask the following questions:

1. Is the team scored on playing shorthanded **or to become shorthanded due to a delayed time penalty?**
2. Is it because of a Minor or Bench Minor penalty?

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Rule 4.2 (b) – Minor Penalties (continued...)

ACTION:

1. Is the team scored on playing shorthanded **or to become shorthanded due to a delayed time penalty?**
2. Is it because of a Minor or Bench Minor penalty?

If the Referee answers YES to both questions, then the Minor or Bench Minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining would be terminated. The only exception would be if the goal was scored during a Penalty Shot, in which case no **penalty would terminate**.

Note 1: In situations where time penalties are already being served, while an additional time penalty or penalties are on delay, officials must factor that time penalty into their evaluation as to whether the team being scored on is shorthanded. When a delayed penalty is signaled on the stoppage of play where a goal is scored by the non-offending team, officials should envision the delayed penalty time being placed on the time clock. This will assist officials in identifying the minor penalty with the least amount of time remaining for termination.

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Interpretation 4 - Rule 4.2 (b)



2 minutes @ 5:00



2 minutes @ 4:30



2 minutes @ 4:00
Delayed penalty



Goal (scores) @ 4:00



Yes, **TEAM BLUE** is to be
shorthanded by a **MINOR**.
Therefore, the **MINOR** to **TEAM
BLUE #92** is terminated because it
has the least amount of time
remaining. Play will resume 4 on 4

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Rule 4.14 – ~~Delayed~~ Deferred Penalties

DEFERRED PENALTY: A deferred penalty is a time penalty that cannot be served immediately upon the resumption of play because the offending team is already shorthanded in a manner that they have been reduced to playing with the minimum of three (3) skaters, due to previously assessed and still active time penalties.

Only two **(2)** players from the same team can serve time penalties at the same time. A team cannot play with fewer than three **(3)** players (plus a goaltender) on the ice. A third penalty to the same team would be considered a **'deferred' penalty**.

A deferred penalty must still be served and may only commence upon the expiration or termination (opposing team goal) of a preceding time penalty that has resulted in the offending team playing with the minimum three (3) skaters.

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Rule 4.14 – ~~Delayed~~ **Deferred** Penalties



2-minute Minor assessed @ 8:00
 Start Time: @ 8:00
 End Time: @ 6:00
 Return to Ice: @ 5:20

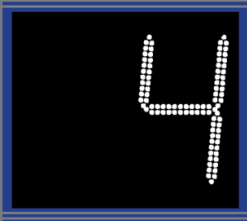
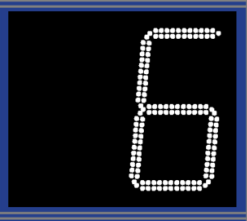


2-minute Minor assessed @ 7:20
 Start Time: @ 7:20
 End Time: @ 5:20
 Return to Ice: @ 4:00



2-minute Minor assessed @ 7:20
Deferred Start Time: @ 6:00
 End Time: @ 4:00
 Return to Ice: @ 1st stoppage after 4:00

Deferred Penalty

			
HOME		GUEST	
			
PERIOD		PERIOD	
			
PLAYER	PENALTY	PENALTY	PLAYER
			
			

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Rule 10.8 – Refusing to Start Play

Rule Clarification

Teams – team officials and players – are not permitted to suspend or conclude a game for any reason. The Head Coach is responsible for all actions of their team, including in a situation of refusal to start play.

A team is determined to be ‘refusing to start play’ when one (1) of the three (3) following occurs:

- 1. A Team refuses to place the correct number of players on the ice, after being warned by the Referee;**
- 2. A player or team official refuses to leave the Players’ bench, penalty bench or general playing area after being assessed a Game Ejection, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct, Match penalty or Misconduct; or**
- 3. It is apparent that a team has either withdrawn from the ice (e.g. leaves the players’ bench) or has refused to appear for the start of a game or period.**

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Rule 10.8 – Refusing to Start Play (continued...)

New Procedure

- i. After being directed to resume play by the Referee (warning) and an incident of 'refusing to start play' has occurred, the Referee will assess a Bench Minor penalty for Delay of Game. If this occurs in the last two (2) minutes of regulation time or any time in overtime, a Penalty Shot shall be awarded in lieu of the Bench Minor penalty.
- ii. After the Bench Minor penalty is assessed, the offending team must resume play without any unnecessary delay.
- iii. If the offending team does not resume play promptly after the Bench Minor penalty is assessed, the Head Coach will be assessed a Game Misconduct penalty, and the game will be 'forfeited'.

Where the Head Coach has been assessed a Game Misconduct penalty under this rule and the game has been forfeited, the Referee will report the individual(s) by completing a Game Incident Report, including full details and submitting the report to the appropriate Member or league delegate.

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Rule 10.8 – Refusing to Start Play (continued...)

Summary

- 1. Warn the team to resume play. Be patient, polite & un confrontational*
- 2. Upon instruction to resume play, if the team [player(s) or coach] refuse, then assess **Bench Minor** for delay of game.*
- 3. Upon assessing a bench minor, if the team does not promptly resume play, assess the Head Coach a **Game Misconduct** and the game is forfeited.*



Penalty Shot if in the last 2 minutes of regulation or overtime.



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Rule 10.8 – Refusing to Start Play (continued...)

Team Staff Reminders

Teams should not refuse to start play for any reason, particularly;

- As a matter of protest to any game occurrence or outcome as a result of officiating judgement*
- Due to a discrepancy in skill, score or competitiveness of a game.*
- Due to perceived concerns of player safety. Coaches should consult with the Referee and the opposing team coaches, should concerns arise regarding player safety to address it in a manner that does not prohibit the ability to continue or complete the game.*

The Referee or facility (arena) staff are the only individuals that have the authority to determine if a game is to be concluded before the expiration of game time.



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Rule 6.18 (a) - Goaltender Safety

New Rule

In categories of U13 and below should a Goaltender be struck in the head by the puck the Referee shall stop play as soon as it is safe to do so, unless the puck deflects directly into the goal, in which case the goal shall be allowed. If no goal has been scored by an immediate deflection off the goaltender, play will be stopped, and the resulting face-off shall take place at the nearest end-zone face- off location to where the shot was taken.

Officials should always allow team staff to evaluate the goaltender during a stoppage under this rule (if necessary) to allow for concussion protocols be applied.





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Rule 6.18 (a) - Goaltender Safety INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 6.18 (a)

To determine if a goal is allowed when the puck 'deflects' into the goal after striking the goaltender's head, it is best for the Referee to abstain from blowing the whistle immediately. The puck may deflect off the goaltender's head directly into the goal or subsequently the goal frame and then directly into the goal, granted the puck has not been contacted by any other player of either team, prior to entering the goal. As soon as a player from either team contacts the puck after it has struck the goaltender's head, the whistle may be blown and any goal scored after such contact shall be disallowed.

Interpretation 2 Rule 6.18 (a)

For the purpose of this rule the reference to the goaltender's head refers to the protective mask / helmet and does NOT include any throat protectors that may be affixed to or hanging from the mask or helmet.



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Rule 6.2 (a) – Face-off Conduct (interpretation 1)

Rule Clarification

When positioning players for end zone face-offs **(other than the players taking the face-off, i.e. centres)**, the attacking team must be first to take their positions; the defending team has the right to set up its defence.

For all face-offs, the Visiting Team face-off player must place their stick down first for the face-off regardless of whether they are the attacking or defending team. For a violation of this rule, a warning will be issued to that team. A subsequent violation during the same stoppage of play may result in a Minor penalty for Rule 10.1 (a) – Delay of Game. If the Home Team player wishes to put their stick down first, they are allowed to do so, if it does not cause a problem. If there is a problem, then apply the rule strictly.

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Signal Change

SLEW-FOOTING

Striking the leg with either hand below the knee **in a backward to forward motion**, keeping both skates on the ice.



TRIPPING / CLIPPING

Striking the leg with either hand below the knee in a **forward to backward motion**, keeping both skates on the ice.





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Rule 5.2 (k) – Referee(s) and Linespersons

Rule Change

If for whatever reason, the appointed Referee(s) or Linesperson(s) are prevented from appearing, the Managers or Coaches of the two competing teams will agree on temporary Referee(s) and Linesperson(s). **The temporary officials may include any Hockey Canada certified officials including players, team officials or spectators that may be present at the game or arena. Should no certified officials be present then the teams may appoint one (1) team official or player from each team who will act as temporary officials.**

Note: Temporary officials must wear the minimum equipment of skates, helmet, and facial protector (visor).



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Rule 6.1 (d)(f) – Change of Players (Interpretation 2)

Rule Clarification

Each team is only entitled to one complete change of players per stoppage. There are two exceptions where a team will be permitted to make an additional change:

- i. Following the change of players but prior to the resumption of play, a team is assessed a penalty that causes them to become shorthanded. In this case, both teams will be permitted to make an additional change of players on that stoppage.**
- ii. If a line change is made and then a timeout is called, further changes can be made.**

When a team attempts to make a player change after their allotted time during a stoppage of play the Referee will send the player back to their bench, thereby giving a warning that any subsequent violation will result in a Bench Minor penalty

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Rule 6.7- Icing the Puck

Procedure Change for Linespersons

Should icing be called, the Linesperson that stops play should blow the whistle and then raise their non-whistle arm to signal icing.





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Rule 6.9 – High-Sticking the Puck

Rule Clarification & Change

Players **and goaltenders** may not contact the puck with their stick, above the normal height of the shoulders during the regular course of play.

(b) No goal may be scored as the result of High-Sticking the puck, unless a player of the offending team bats the puck into their own goal, in which case, the goal will be allowed.

The determining factor for a goal scored by a high stick is the height of the stick relative to the height of the crossbar. If the puck contacts a portion of the stick that is below the level of the crossbar (despite some other portion of the stick being above the crossbar) and directly enters the goal, the goal will be allowed.



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Rule 10.1 (a) – Delay of Game (Interpretation 11)

Rule Clarification

On a stoppage of play, the Referee notices that the goaltender is at the Players' Bench. The Referee must then notify the team that they must **do one of the following**: replace the goaltender with the alternate goaltender, **keep the original goaltender in the net and be assessed a Minor penalty, play with six players, or take their time-out, if allowed.**

NOTE: This applies to situations where the goaltender has gone to the bench without permission from the Referee. If the goaltender is at the bench as part of a legal line change for an extra attacker (e.g. delayed penalty or late in a game), then the goaltender may return to the net.

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Rule 10.4 (d) – Leaving the Players’ or Penalty Bench (Interpretation 6)

Rule Change

Where the first player to leave a bench ~~and participate in~~ **during** a fight comes from the Penalty Bench, they will be assessed three minor penalties, plus a Game Misconduct penalty, plus any other penalties they may be assessed under the rules.

They receive a double Minor penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for being the first player to leave the Penalty Bench **(during a fight)**, plus another Minor penalty for leaving the Penalty Bench before their penalty expires.



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Rule 2.1 (b) – Composition of Team

Rule Clarification

A team will have no more than five team officials on the Players' Bench at any time, including at least one Hockey Canada Safety Person (HTCP in Ontario).

Should a team not have a 'qualified' Hockey Canada Safety Program / HTCP individual of their team staff present at any time during the game, they may leverage the qualified individual of the opposing team to carry out duties for them, if necessary, and if agreed to by the opposing team. When utilizing the qualified individual of the opposing team the game sheet notes must clearly reflect this circumstance.

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 2.1 (b)

In verifying the Official Game Report, officials are not to make any decision regarding the certification of team officials, or any lack thereof. Any irregularities will be reported by the Referee to the appropriate Member or league delegate for further action.

