

| Rule (Situation) | Dif | USA Hockey (HS & Below) | NFHS | NCAA |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SECTION 1 - RINK | | | | |
| Goalkeeper warm-up area defined | U | Expanded Privileged Area | No rule | No rule |
| Maximum non-players on bench | Х | 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/Vaping on ice or bench | N | Game Misconduct | Game Misconduct | Ejection from game (tobacco) |
| Flexible Goal Pegs | N | Recommended | Recommended | Mandated |
| SECTION 2 - COMPOSITION OF TEAMS | | | | |
| Maximum players in uniform | Х | Maximum 20 total, maximum 18 skaters | Maximum 20, including goalkeepers | Maximum 19 players; 2 or 3 goalkeepers (non- exhibition games) |
| Captains and Alternates | Х | Captain + 2 Alternates (max.) | Max. 3 (any combination) | Captain and Designated Alt. |
| Visiting team wears dark uniforms | U | No rule | Yes | Yes |
| Logo limitations on uniform | U | None | Yes (logos, flags, memorial patch) | Yes (logo restrictions only) |
| Captain coming off bench to complain | х | 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 game roster limit on the ice during the pre-game warm-up | х | No rule - implied only rostered players may be on the ice | Permitted | Maximum 20 players plus 3 goalkeepers |



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| Coach meets officials before game | F | Not required | Required and verifies proper equipment | Not required |
| Roster correction after game begins | х | Allowed - Bench Minor penalty | OK if inadvertent only; minor penalty assessed | Not permitted; Bench Minor penalty assessed |
| Jersey number in addition to back | Х | No rule | Both sleeves | Front or both sleeves |
| "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 health care professional OK to resume play) | U | See USAH Concussion Return to Play Policy | Required | Required |
| Stoppage for injured player | F | Immediate when their team has possession | Immediate (regardless of possession) | Immediate when their team has possession |
| SECTION 3 – EQUIPMENT | | | | |
| Hollow end of stick must be covered | N | Yes | Yes | No rule |
| Max. widened portion of GK stick shaft | U | 26 inches | 28 inches | 28 inches |
| Throat protector – Goalkeeper Throat protector – Player | F N | Recommended Recommended | Required Recommended | Recommended Not required |
| 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 |



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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 1st Offense - Misconduct Return – Game Misconduct | Helmet/Facemask Skates Player personally responsible for all other protective equipment. 1st offense - Not permitted to participate. 2nd offense - Misconduct . 3rd offense - Game Misconduct |
| Torn, ripped, unzipped pants | U | No rule | Not permitted | Not permitted |
| Mouthguard - non-clear color | N | Required | Required | No rule |
| Goalkeeper may play with broken stick | N | Not permitted | Not permitted | OK until next stoppage |
| Goalkeeper glove falls off during play | х | Play stopped if vulnerable and no imminent scoring opportunity | Play stopped immediately | No rule |
| 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 |
| Location of logos on puck | N | No rule | No rule | Limited position |
| Electronic equipment – dispute ruling | F | Bench Minor | Not permitted (no penalty) | Bench Minor |
| Electronic equipment - player on the ice | Х | Bench Minor; equip. removed | 1 st Offense - Misconduct 2 nd Offense- Game Misconduct | No rule |
| Video usage on bench (coaching purposes) | N | Permitted | Permitted | Bench Minor |



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| SECTION 4 - PENALTIES | | | | |
| Bench Minor penalty defined | F | Yes | No rule (Captain's Choice of players on the ice at stoppage for serving penalties) | Yes |
| Penalty Length – minor, major, misconduct | U | May be shortened based on length of period | Standard length | Standard length |
| Who serves "Bench Minor" (NFHS equivalent) | Х | 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 |
| Goal scored during delayed minor penalty to a team at even strength or on power play | N | Delayed penalty not served | Delayed penalty not served | Penalty is assessed |
| Major penalties | U | All majors carry game misconduct | Stand-alone major penalty option | Stand-along major penalty option |
| 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 |
| Penalty maximum/game (player/GK); Penalty maximum/game (coach) | X U | Yes-4 (Game Misconduct) Yes-12 (Next game suspension) | Yes-5 (Game Misconduct) No | No No |
| Suspended Coach/Player behavior | U | Outlined with specific limitations | No rule | No rule |
| Progressive suspension | Х | Yes (Fighting and aggressive major penalties) | Yes (Disqualification Penalty) | Yes (Disqualification & Game Misconduct Penalties) |
| Standardized discipline for Match Penalties | U | Recommended | DQ-Minimum one game | DQ-Minimum one game |



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| Match (DQ) penalty to non-player | N | Applies | Applies | No rule |
| Maximum Match/DQ 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 | Х | Any teammate on the ice at the time of infraction | Any teammate on the ice when play stopped | (Ejection) Any teammate not then serving a penalty (Injury) Any teammate on the ice at time of infraction |
| Goalkeeper must serve their 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 | Х | 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 | Х | (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. | Х | "Injury Potential" minors only | Yes | No |
| Face-offs - Start of periods and after goals (who conducts the face-off) | Х | Referee | Referee; Linesman option | Linesman |
| Half-shield facemask required for Officials | N | Yes | Yes | No |



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| SECTION 6 - PLAYING RULES | | | | |
| Awarded goal for certain Penalty Shot situation if goalkeeper is not on the ice: - Falling on or picking up puck in crease | U | Awarded Goal | Penalty Shot only | Penalty Shot only |
| Verbally abusing Official after game – player | Х | Misconduct or Game Misconduct. | Disqualification | Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification |
| Foul language on players' bench – player | Х | Bench Minor; Misconduct if player is identifiable | Minor + Misconduct | Minor, Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification |
| Banging boards from players' bench | U | Bench Minor if done as means to celebrate body check | No rule | No rule |
| Continuing altercation | Х | Misconduct or Game Miscond. | Disqualification | Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification |
| Touching/Holding Game Official – player | U | Misconduct or Game Miscond. | Disqualification | Disqualification |
| Obscene Gesture – player | Х | Game Misconduct | Minor + Game Misconduct. or Disqualification | Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Disqualification |
| Hateful or Discriminatory Language | N | Match Penalty | Disqualification | Game Misconduct |
| "Detrimental Conduct" – player or Team Official | N | Match | Disqualification | Game Misconduct |
| Verbal abuse to Game Official after game by Team Official | Х | (1) Bench Minor, (2) Game Misc.; Match if threat | Disqualification | Game Misconduct or Supplementary Discipline |
| Obscene Gesture by Team Official | Χ | 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 | Х | Game Misconduct | Disqualification | Bench Minor or Game Misconduct |



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| Boarding | Х | Minor + Misconduct, Major + Game Misconduct. or Match | Major, Major + Misconduct or Disqualification | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Body Checking (Competitive Contact Classifications) | U | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | 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 | Х | Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Disqualification | Major + Game Misc. or DQ |
| Charging | Х | 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 | Х | Minor + Misconduct, Major + Game Misconduct. or Match | Minor, Major or DQ (Indirect) Major or DQ (Direct) | (Direct) Major + Game Misc. or DQ |
| Cross-Checking | Х | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Delay of Game | U | GK must be in "act of playing goal" to freeze the puck | GK allowed to freeze puck in privileged area / above goal line | GK allowed to freeze puck in privileged area / above goal line |
| Elbowing | Х | Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or 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 in defending zone | N | Permitted | Permitted | Not permitted |



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| Player change after team ices the puck | N | Permitted | Permitted | Not permitted |
| Face-off location after non-coincident penalty | U | Offending team's defending zone unless stoppage caused by non-offending team. | Offending team's defending zone | Offending team's defending zone |
| Face-off location for carrying /throwing or illegal hand passing puck | Х | 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 |
| End zone face-off after icing or after penalty creating a shorthanded situation | N | Officials determine spot | Officials determine spot | Non-offending team may choose which spot |
| Face-offs procedure – who places stick first? | N | Attacking center; Visiting team center ice | Attacking center; Visiting team center ice | Defending center in defending zone; otherwise Visiting team |
| First violation at a face-off | N | Center ejected | Center ejected | Warning only |
| Hand pass permitted | N | Defending zone only | Defending zone only | No |
| Player change after hand pass stoppage | N | Permitted | Permitted | Not permitted in defending zone |
| Hand pass by face-off player | N | No rule | No rule | Not permitted – minor penalty |
| Immediate whistle for hand pass directly on goal | F | No | Yes | No |
| Goalkeeper shoots puck out of rink over glass | U | Minor - Always | Minor – If deliberate | Minor – If deliberate |
| 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) | Х | 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 |



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| Deliberately removing helmet/facemask: (a) during normal play (b) during breakaway or last 2 minutes or OT | Х | (a) Minor (b) Penalty Shot | (a) Minor plus Misconduct (b) Misconduct + Penalty Shot | (a) Minor (b) Pen. Shot or Awarded Goal |
| High Stick definition | U | Above normal shoulder height of checking player | Above 4 feet | Above 4 feet |
| Goal scored - puck strikes stick below High Stick definition, but part of stick is above that height | 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 |
| Grabbing Facemask | Х | Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Major, Major + Misconduct or Disqualification | Major + Game Misconduct or Disqualification. |
| Head-Butting | Х | Major + Game Misconduct. or Match | Major, Major + Misconduct or Disqualification | Major + Game Misconduct. or Disqualification |
| High Sticking | Х | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Holding | N | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor |
| Hooking | Х | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor |
| Shorthanded Team can ice puck | U | HS - Yes 18U & younger - No | 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) | Disqualification | Disqualification |



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| Kick shot (skate kicks stick blade) | U | Stoppage of play | Misconduct | Misconduct |
| Kneeing | N | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Player leaves players' bench or penalty bench during altercation | U | Major + Game Misconduct | Disqualification | Disqualification |
| Extra player prevents breakaway | Х | Penalty Shot | Penalty Shot + Misconduct | Bench Minor, Misconduct, and Penalty Shot |
| Delayed offside permitted | U | HS & Adults – Yes 18U and Younger - No | Yes | Yes |
| Tag-up to nullify delayed off-side | U | HS & Adults – Yes 18U and Younger - No | Yes | Yes |
| Offside – Puck deflecting from Neutral Zone off defending player back into Defending zone with attacking player in zone. | N | Delayed offside | Delayed offside | No offside |
| Immediate whistle for puck shot on goal during delayed offside | U | Yes | No | No |
| Icing is nullified if goalkeeper leaves crease or feigns playing the puck | Ν | No | No | Yes |
| Stoppage of play for icing violation | Ν | 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 |
| 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, after warning | Х | After 15 seconds, Bench Minor; After 15 more seconds, Suspend game plus Match Pen. | 3 minutes to comply. Major if complying or forfeit if not complying | Progression if continuing: Bench Minor, Major, Forfeiture |
| Slashing | Х | Minor, Major or Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |



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| Slew-footing | F | Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Major + Game Misc. or DQ. |
| Spearing | Х | Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Disqualification | Major + Game Misconduct or Disqualification |
| Thrown stick | U | At puck in Def. Zone or during breakaway: Pen. Shot, | 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 | Х | 20 minutes maximum | 15 (up to 17 min. by State) | 20 minutes |
| Time-out permitted | U | Before conclusion of line change procedure | Anytime during a stoppage | Anytime during a stoppage |
| Max. period length, sudden-death overtime | Χ | 10 min. (no resurface) | 8 min. (no resurface) | 5 min. (no resurface) |
| Teams change ends for first overtime | U | No rule | Yes | Yes |
| Overtime player count | Х | 5v5, 4v4, 3v3 permitted | No rule (state associations set their own rules) | One 3v3 required |
| Shootout tiebreaker | F | Local League/Tournament Governance with guidelines | No rule | Ok'd for conference games or in-season tournament games after 3v3 overtime |
| Video review | Χ | No rule | By State Assoc. adoption only | Yes |
| Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking | Х | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Unnecessary Roughness | Χ | Minor or Double Minor | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor |
| Unnecessary Roughness – avoidable check to vulnerable or defenseless player or after whistle | N | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | Minor, Major or DQ | Minor, Major, Major + Game Misconduct or DQ |
| Unnecessary Roughness – delivering check with no effort to gain possession of puck and stick is above knees | U | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | No rule | No rule |



(updated 9/13/2021 with 2021-25 USA Hockey, 2021-22 NFHS and 2020-22 NCAA Rules)

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| Unnecessary Roughness – delivering a check to an opponent who is physically engaged for possession of the puck. | U | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | No rule | No rule |
| Unnecessary Roughness – GK delivering a body check to an opponent | U | Minor, Major + Game Misconduct or Match | No rule | No rule |
| Diving rule (Embellishment) | J | No rule | Minor | Minor |
| GLOSSARY | | | | |
| Act of playing goal (GK freezing puck | U | Defined | No rule | No rule |
| Body Checking | U | Focus is on gaining puck possession, thus the stick must be below the knees of the player delivering the check | Defined as using body to separate opponent from the puck | Defined as using body to separate opponent from the puck |
| Competitive Contact vs. Body Contact | U | Competitive Contact | Body Contact | Body Contact |
| Involvement with the puck defined | U | Contact with the puck Possession of the puck Control of the puck | Possession Possession and Control | Possession Possession and Control |
| SIGNALS and PROCEDURES | | | | |
| Goal scored - blowing the whistle | Ν | Yes | Yes | No |
| Icing signal, non-whistle arm, back official | F | Vertical | 60° above horizontal | Vertical |
| Delayed offside | J | Non-whistle arm vertical (HS and Adult teams 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.

