

= Fighting in ice hockey =

Fighting in ice hockey is an established tradition of the sport in North America , with a long history that involves many levels of amateur and professional play and includes some notable individual fights . Fighting is usually performed by enforcers , or " goons " ? players whose role it is to fight and intimidate ? on a given team , and is governed by a complex system of unwritten rules that players , coaches , officials , and the media refer to as " the code " . Some fights are spontaneous , while others are premeditated by the participants . While officials tolerate fighting during hockey games , they impose a variety of penalties on players who engage in fights .

Unique among North American professional team sports , the National Hockey League (NHL) and most minor professional leagues in North America do not eject players outright for fighting (although they may eject players for more flagrant violations as part of a fight) but major European and collegiate hockey leagues do , and multi @-@ game suspensions may be added on top of the ejection . Therefore , the vast majority of fights occur in the NHL and other North American professional leagues .

Physical play in hockey , consisting of allowed techniques such as checking and prohibited techniques such as elbowing , high @-@ sticking , and cross @-@ checking , is inextricably linked to fighting . Although often a target of criticism , it is a considerable draw for the sport , and some fans attend games primarily to see fights . Those who defend fighting in hockey say that it helps deter other types of rough play , allows teams to protect their star players , and creates a sense of solidarity among teammates . The debate over allowing fighting in ice hockey games is ongoing . Despite its potentially negative consequences , such as heavier enforcers (or " heavyweights ") knocking each other out , administrators at the professional level are not considering eliminating fighting from the game , as some players consider it essential . Additionally , the majority of fans , as well as players , oppose eliminating fights from professional hockey games . However , considerable opposition to fighting exists and efforts to eliminate it continue .

= = History = =

Fighting has been a part of ice hockey since the sport 's rise in popularity in 19th century Canada . There are a number of theories behind the integration of fighting into the game ; the most common of which is that the relative lack of rules in the early history of hockey encouraged physical intimidation and control . Other theories include the poverty and high crime rates of rural Canada in the 19th century . The implementation of some features , such as the blue lines in 1918 , actually encouraged fighting due to the increased level of physical play . Creation of the blue lines allowed forward passing , but only in the neutral zone . Therefore , puck handlers played at close quarters and were subject to a great deal of physical play . The emergence of enforcers , who protected the puck handlers and fought when necessary , followed shortly thereafter .

In 1922 , the NHL introduced Rule 56 , which formally regulated fighting , or " fisticuffs " as it was called in the official NHL rulebook . Rather than ejecting players from the game , as was the practice in amateur and collegiate hockey , players would be given a five @-@ minute major penalty . Rule 56 and its language also filtered down to the minor professional and junior leagues in North America . Promoters such as Tex Rickard of Madison Square Garden , who also promoted boxing events , saw financial opportunities in hockey fights and devised marketing campaigns around the rivalries between various team enforcers .

In the current NHL rulebook , the archaic reference to " fisticuffs " has been removed ; fighting is now governed under Rule 46 in the NHL rulebook . Referees are given considerable latitude in determining what exactly constitutes a fight and what penalties are applicable to the participants . Significant modifications from the original rule involve penalties which can be assessed to a fight participant deemed to have instigated the fight and additional penalties resulting from instigating a fight while wearing a face @-@ shield .

Although fighting was rarer from the 1920s through the 1960s , it was often brutal in nature ; author Ross Bernstein said of the game 's early years that it " was probably more like rugby on skates than

it was modern hockey . " Star players were also known to fight for themselves during the Original Six era , when fewer teams existed than in later years . However , as the NHL 's expansion in the late 1960s created more roster spots and spread star players more widely throughout the league , enforcers (who usually possess limited overall skill sets) became more common . Multiple fights during the era received significant media attention . In an NHL preseason game between the Bruins and St. Louis Blues in 1969 , Bruins defenceman Ted Green and Blues left wing Wayne Maki , attacking Green , engaged in a bloody stick @-@ swinging fight that resulted in Green sustaining a skull fracture . That year , World Hockey Association Birmingham Bulls enforcer Dave Hanson , known for his 11 @-@ year professional career and role in the movie Slap Shot , fought Hall of Famer Bobby Hull and in the process got Hull 's wig caught in his knuckles . The incident landed Hanson in the news , and irate Winnipeg fans attempted to assault him on his way out of the arena .

In addition , the rise of the " Broad Street Bullies " in the 1973 ? 74 and 1974 ? 75 Philadelphia Flyers served as an example for future NHL enforcers . The average number of fights per game rose above 1 @.@ 0 during the 1980s , rising as high as 1 @.@ 17 in 1983 ? 84 . Many teams signed enforcers to protect and fight for smaller offensive stars . By 2009 ? 10 , however , the amount of fights in the NHL declined to .58 per game . A further decrease in the frequency of fighting happened over the next five seasons . The 2014 ? 15 season had 0 @.@ 32 fights per game , as teams placed a greater emphasis on skating ability and fewer young players became enforcers .

Since the 1970s , three rules have curtailed the number and scope of fights in the NHL . In 1971 , the league created the " Third Man In " rule which attempts to eliminate the bench @-@ clearing brawl by providing for the ejection of the first player that joins a fight already in progress . Another rule automatically suspends the first player from each team that leaves the bench to join a fight when it is not their shift . In 1992 , the " Instigator " rule , which adds an additional two @-@ minute minor penalty to the player who starts a fight , was introduced .

= = Rules and penalties = =

Rules of the NHL , the North American junior leagues , and other North American professional minor leagues punish fighting with a five @-@ minute major penalty . What separates these leagues from other major North American sports leagues is that they do not eject players simply for participating in a fight . However , fighting is frequently punishable by ejection in European leagues , and in Olympic competition .

The rulebooks of the NHL and other professional leagues contain specific rules for fighting . These rules state that at the initiation of a fight , both players must drop their sticks so as not to use them as a weapon . Players must also " drop " or shake off their protective gloves in order to fight bare @-@ knuckled , as the hard leather and plastic of hockey gloves would increase the effect of landed blows . Players must also heed a referee warning to end a fight once the opponents have been separated . Failure to adhere to any of these rules results in an immediate game misconduct penalty and the possibility of fines and suspension from future games . In the NHL , when a player is fined , his lost pay goes towards the NHL emergency assistance fund . A fined coach 's lost pay goes to the NHL Foundation .

= = = North American professional leagues = = =

In the NHL , American Hockey League (AHL) , ECHL , Southern Professional Hockey League , and other notable minor leagues , officials punish combatants with five @-@ minute major penalties for fighting (hence the phrase " five for fighting ") . A player is automatically ejected and suspended if the player tries to leave the bench to join a fight , or for using weapons of any kind (such as using a skate to kick an opponent , using a stick to hit an opponent , wrapping tape around one 's hands , or spitting) , as they can cause serious injury . A player who receives two instigator penalties or participates in three fights in a single game is also ejected automatically . Furthermore , his coach can be suspended up to ten games for allowing players to leave the bench to join a fight .

A player who commits three major penalties (including fighting) during a game is automatically ejected , suspended , and fined . A player ejected for three major penalties in a game , or for use of weapons , cannot be replaced for five minutes . In 2003 , the ECHL added an ejection , fine , and suspension of an additional game for any player charged as an instigator of a fight during the final five minutes of the third period or any overtime . The NHL and AHL adopted the rule in 2005 ? 06 , and the NHL includes a fine against the ejected player 's head coach .

= = = Collegiate , European , and Olympic = = =

In Division I and Division III National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) hockey , the fighters are given a Game Disqualification , which is an ejection from the game and a suspension for as many games as the player has accrued Game Disqualifications during the course of a season . For example , if a player engages in a fight having already received a Game Disqualification earlier in the season , he is ejected from that game and suspended for his team 's next two games . This automatic suspension has made fighting in college hockey relatively rare .

Fighting is strictly prohibited in European professional hockey leagues and in Olympic ice hockey . The international rules (by the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF)) specify in rule 141 ? Fighting the following penalties (among others) :

Match penalty (the player is ejected from the game and another player serves 5 minutes in addition to any other penalties imposed in the penalty box) for a player who starts fisticuffs .

Minor penalty (2 minutes) for a player who retaliates with a blow or attempted blow .

Game misconduct penalty (ejection from the game) in addition to any other penalties for any player who is the first to intervene in fisticuffs which are already in progress .

Double minor penalty (4 minutes) , major penalty and game misconduct penalty (5 minutes and ejection from the game) , or match penalty (at the discretion of the referee) for a player who continues fisticuffs after being told by officials to stop .

Misconduct penalty (10 minutes ; second misconduct penalty in one game means automatic ejection) for a player who intentionally takes off his gloves in fisticuffs .

Despite the bans , there have been fights in European leagues . In 2001 , a game between the Nottingham Panthers and the Sheffield Steelers in the British Superleague saw " one of the worst scenes of violence seen at a British ice hockey rink " . When Sheffield enforcer Dennis Vial crosschecked Nottingham forward Greg Hadden , Panthers enforcer Barry Nieckar subsequently fought with Vial , which eventually escalated into a 36 @-@ man bench @-@ clearing brawl . Referee Moray Hanson sent both teams to their locker rooms and delayed the game for 45 minutes while tempers cooled and the officials sorted out the penalties . Eight players and both coaches were ejected , and a British record total of 404 penalty minutes were incurred during the second period . The league handed out 30 games in suspensions to four players and Steelers ' coach Mike Blaisdell and a total of £ 8 @,@ 400 in fines . Russia 's Kontinental Hockey League (KHL) had a bench @-@ clearing brawl between Vityaz Chekhov and Avangard Omsk in 2010 . Officials were forced to abandon the game as there were only four players left . Thirty @-@ three players and both teams ' coaches were ejected , and a world record total of 707 penalty minutes were incurred during the game . The KHL imposed fines totaling 5 @.@ 7 million rubles (\$ 191 @,@ 000) , suspended seven players , and counted the game as a 5 ? 0 defeat for both teams , with no points being awarded .

= = Enforcers = =

The role of " enforcer " on a hockey team is unofficial . Enforcers occasionally play regular shifts like other players , but their primary role is deterring opposing players from rough play . Coaches often send enforcers out when opposing enforcers are on the ice or any time when it is necessary to check excessively physical play by the opposing team . Enforcers , particularly those with questionable playing skills , can be colloquially referred to as goons .

= = Causes = =

There are many reasons for fights during a hockey game . Some reasons are related to game play , such as retaliation , momentum @-@ building , intimidation , deterrence , attempting to draw " reaction penalties " , and protecting star players . There are also some personal reasons such as retribution for past incidents , bad blood between players , and simple job security for enforcers . Fights often start in response to an opponent 's rough play .

= = = Game @-@ related reasons = = =

Of the many reasons for fighting , the foremost is retaliation . When players engage in play that members of the opposing team consider unscrupulous , a fight can ensue . The fight may be between the assailant and the victim , between the assailant and an enforcer from the victim 's team , or between opposing enforcers . Fights that occur for retaliation purposes can be in immediate response to an on @-@ ice incident , to incidents from earlier in the game , or to actions from past games . Enforcers who intend to start a fight have to consider their timing due to the Instigator rule . For example , putting the opposing team on a power play due to penalties incurred from fighting is less advisable when the game is close .

Enforcers sometimes start fights to build game momentum and provide a psychological advantage over the opposing team . These fights usually involve two enforcers , but may involve any player who is agitating the opposition . This type of fight raises morale on the team of the player who wins , and often gets the home crowd into the game as well . For that reason , it can also be a gamble to start a fight for momentum ; if an enforcer loses the fight , the momentum can swing the wrong way .

Intimidation is an important element of a hockey game and some enforcers start fights just to intimidate opposing players in hopes that they will refrain from agitating skilled players . For example , in the late 1950s , Gordie Howe helped establish himself as an enforcer by defeating Lou Fontinato , a notable tough guy who tallied over 1 @,@ 200 penalty minutes in his career . Fontinato suffered a broken nose from the fight . After that incident , Howe got a lot more space on the ice and was able to score many goals over the span of his career because he intimidated other players . Conversely , games in European professional leagues are known to be less violent than North American games because fighting is discouraged in Europe by ejection and heavy fines . Since the penalties for fighting are so severe , the enforcers are less able to intimidate opposing players with fighting and said players take more liberties on the ice .

For teams that face each other frequently , players may fight just to send the message to the opposing players that they will be the target of agitation or aggression in future games . Teams that are losing by a considerable margin often start these fights near the end of the game when they have nothing to lose . Enforcers may start fights with more skilled players to draw what is called a " reaction penalty " , an undisciplined reaction to aggressive play on the part of the enforcer . This practice is also known to be difficult due to the Instigator rule .

Another reason is the protection of star players . Fighting within the game can also send a message to players and coaches from other teams that cheap shots , dirty plays , and targeting specific players will not be tolerated and there will be consequences involved . Fighting can provide retribution for a team 's player getting targeted or injured . Overall , fighting is known to be a beneficial policing that the game needs to keep players in line . Over the history of hockey , many enforcers have been signed simply to protect players like Gretzky , who was protected by Dave Semenko , Marty McSorley , and others , and Brett Hull , who was protected by Kelly Chase and others . Many believe that without players protecting each other , referees would affect the game play by having to call more penalties , and the league would have to suspend players for longer periods .

= = = Personal reasons = = =

Many young enforcers need to establish their role early in their career to avoid losing their jobs . Due to the farm systems that most professional hockey leagues use , enforcers who get a chance to play at the level above their current one (for example , an American Hockey League player getting a chance to play in an NHL game) need to show other players , coaches , and fans that they are worthy of the enforcer role on the team . Players and coaches enjoy being with enforcers who fight for their teams , not for themselves .

There are also times when players and even entire teams carry on personal rivalries that have little to do with individual games ; fights frequently occur for no other reason . An infamous rivalry that produced many fights was between the Detroit Red Wings and the Colorado Avalanche during the 1990s .

= = Effect on game = =

Statistics indicate that fights are detrimental to teams ' play , or have inconsequential benefits . Since the 1979 ? 80 season , teams in the bottom three of fighting @-@ related major penalties have finished at the top of the regular @-@ season standings 10 times and have won the Stanley Cup 11 times , while teams in the top three have won the regular season and Stanley Cup only twice each . One statistical analysis calculated that winning a fight benefited a team by about 1 / 80th of a win in the standings . Two others showed that fights increase scoring , but does so evenly for both teams so do not significantly affect wins .

= = Efforts to ban fighting = =

The Canadian Academy of Sport Medicine announced in Position Statement in 1988 that " Fighting does cause injuries , which range from fractures of the hands and face to lacerations and eye injuries . At present , it is an endemic and ritualized blot on the reputation of the North American game . "

Criticism often arises after single acts of violence committed during fights . For example , on March 21 , 2007 , Colton Orr of the New York Rangers fought with Todd Fedoruk of the Philadelphia Flyers and ended up knocking Fedoruk unconscious . Fedoruk already had titanium plates in his face from a fight earlier in the season with Derek Boogaard . The resulting media coverage of the incident renewed calls for a fighting ban . Some players acknowledge that there is no harm in discussing the issue ; however , most players and administrators continue to insist that fighting stay as a permanent element of organized ice hockey . Some league administrators , such as former NHL senior vice @-@ president and director of hockey operations Colin Campbell , have been circulating the idea of banning fighting in response to incidents such as the Fedoruk ? Orr fight .

Sports journalists have articulated the idea with increasing frequency that fighting adds nothing to the sport and should be banned . Among the reasons they cite are that it is unsportsmanlike , is a " knee @-@ jerk " reaction that detracts from the skillful aspects of the game , and that it is simply a waste of time . The Journal of Sport and Social Issues ' Ryan T. Lewinson and Oscar E. Palma believe that fighting shows a lack of discipline on the part of participants , as well as a lack of fairness in certain cases , including when fighters have a size disparity . However , supporters of fighting say it provides a means of security for players , that fighting is a tool players use to keep opposing players in check ; essentially allowing players to police which hits and dirty plays are unacceptable .

Various politicians and hockey figures have expressed opposition to fighting . In 2012 , David Johnston , the Governor General of Canada , said that fighting should not be part of the sport . IIHF president Rene Fasel has protested against fighting , deeming it " Neanderthal behavior . " Wayne Gretzky , considered by many to be the greatest hockey player of all time , has often spoken out against fisticuffs , although he expressed support for fighting in 2004 .

NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman , at a 2007 press conference broadcast on CBC Sports , said , " Fighting has always had a role in the game ... from a player safety standpoint , what happens in fighting is something we need to look at just as we need to look at hits to the head . But we 're not

looking to have a debate on whether fighting is good or bad or should be part of the game . "

Community members often become involved in the debate over banning fighting . In December 2006 , a school board trustee in London , Ontario attended a London Knights game and was shocked by the fighting and by the crowd 's positive reaction to it . This experience led him to organize an ongoing effort to ban fighting in the Ontario Hockey League , where the Knights compete , by attempting to gain the support of other school boards and by writing letters to OHL administrators . On the advice of its Medical Health Officer , the Middlesex @-@ London Health board has supported recommendations to ban fighting across amateur hockey and to increase disciplinary measures to ensure deterrence .

The first known death directly related to a hockey fight occurred when Don Sanderson of the Whitby Dunlops , a top @-@ tier senior amateur team in Ontario 's Major League Hockey , died in January 2009 , a month after sustaining a head injury during a fight : Sanderson 's helmet came off during the fight , and when he fell to the ice , he hit his head . His death renewed calls to ban fighting among critics . In reaction , the league has stated that they are reviewing the players ' use of helmets .

Fighters such as Bob Probert and Boogaard have been posthumously diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy , a degenerative disease of the brain caused by repeated brain trauma . While the NHL took steps to limit head trauma from blindside hits , it was criticized for doing nothing to reduce fighting , which consists of repeated deliberate blows to the head . It is unknown if Boogaard 's death was mainly attributed from his repeated head trauma from fighting and hits or from a possible addiction to painkillers while simultaneously abusing alcohol . His brain has been sent to Boston University for further testing .

Beginning in the 2016 ? 17 season , the American Hockey League will impose a fighting major counter , similar to the National Basketball Association 's unsportsmanlike technical foul counter and soccer 's accumulated cards . A player who collects ten major penalties for fighting during the season will be suspended one game , and will be suspended one game for each fighting major for the next three penalties (the 11th , 12th , and 13th fighting majors) . A player is suspended two games for his 14th and subsequent major penalty for fighting . If one player involved in the fight is charged with an instigator penalty , the opponent will not have the fighting major count towards suspension .

= = Etiquette = =

There are several informal rules governing fighting in ice hockey that players rarely discuss but take quite seriously . The most important aspect of this etiquette is that opposing enforcers must agree to a fight , usually via a verbal or physical exchange on the ice . This agreement helps both players avoid being given an instigator penalty , and helps keep unwilling participants out of fights .

Enforcers typically only fight each other , with only the occasional spontaneous fight breaking out between one or two opponents who do not usually fight . There is a high degree of respect among enforcers as well ; they will respect a rival who declines a fight because he is playing with injuries , a frequent occurrence , because enforcers consider winning a fight with an injured opponent to be an empty victory . This is also known as granting a " free pass " . Enforcer Darren McCarty described fighters as being divided into " heavyweights " and " light heavyweights " , and said that players in the former category " end up dancing with some guys who could end (their) career with a single punch . "

Long @-@ standing rivalries result in numerous rematches , especially if one of the enforcers has to decline an invitation to fight during a given game . This is one of the reasons that enforcers may fight at the beginning of a game , when nothing obvious has happened to agitate the opponents . On the other hand , it is bad etiquette to try to initiate a fight with an enforcer who is near the end of his shift , since the more rested player will have an obvious advantage .

Another important aspect of etiquette is simply fighting fairly and cleanly . Fairness is maintained by not wearing equipment that could injure the opposing fighter , such as face shields , gloves , or masks , and not assaulting referees or linesmen . Finally , whatever the outcome of the fight ,

etiquette dictates that players who choose to fight win and lose those fights gracefully . Otherwise , they risk losing the respect of their teammates and fans .

= = Tactics = =

Fighting tactics are governed by several actual rules and enforcers will also adopt informal tactics particular to their style and personality . One tactic adopted by players is known as " going for it " , in which the player puts his head down and just throws as many punches as he can , as fast as he can . In the process , that player takes as many punches as he delivers , although some of them are to the hard forehead . Fighters usually must keep one hand on their opponent 's jersey since the ice surface makes maintaining balance very difficult . For this reason , the majority of a hockey fight consists of the players holding on with one hand and punching with the other .

Other examples include Gordie Howe 's tactic of holding the sweater of his opponent right around the armpit of his preferred punching arm so as to impede his movement . Probert , of the Detroit Red Wings and Chicago Blackhawks , was known to allow his opponents to punch until they showed signs of tiring , at which time he would take over and usually dominate the fight . Some consider long @-@ time Buffalo Sabres enforcer Rob Ray to be the reason that hockey jerseys are now equipped with tie @-@ down straps (" fight straps ") that prevent their removal ; he would always remove his jersey during fights so his opponents would have nothing to grab on to . This is commonly referred to as the " Rob Ray Rule " .

= = Officials ' role = =

Throughout a game , the referee and linesmen have a role in preventing fights through the way they are managing the game ? calling penalties , breaking up scuffles before they escalate , etc . Despite an official 's best efforts , though , fights do occur and once they do , the referee and linesmen have a certain set of responsibilities to follow in order to safely break up the fight . None of these responsibilities are written in the NHL 's rule book , but often are guided by " common sense " , according to officials .

In a single fight situation the linesmen will communicate with each other as to which player they will take during the fight , clear out any sticks , gloves , or other equipment that has been dropped and wait for a safe time to enter the fight , which they will do together . If both players are still standing while the linesmen enter , the linesmen will approach from each side (never from behind) , bring their arms over the combatants ' arms and wrap them around , pushing downwards and breaking the players apart . If the players have fallen , the linesmen will approach from the side (never over the skates) , getting in between the two players . One linesman will use his body to shield the player on the bottom from the other player while his partner will remove the top player from the fight . Most linesmen will allow a fight to run its course for their own safety , but will enter a fight regardless if one player has gained a significant advantage over his opponent . Once the players have been broken up , the linesmen then escort the players off the ice . During this time the referee will keep other players from entering the fight by sending them to a neutral area on the ice and then watching the fight and assessing any other penalties that occur .

In a multiple fight situation the linesmen will normally break up fights together , one fight at a time using the same procedures for a single fight . The linesmen will communicate with each other which fight to break up . In a multiple fight situation the referee will stand in an area of the ice where he / she can have a full view of all the players and will write down ? on a pad of paper commonly known as a " riot pad " ? the numbers of the players that are involved in the fights , watching for situations that warrant additional penalties , such as players removing opponents ' helmets , players participating in a second fight , players leaving a bench to participate in a fight , or third players into a fight . The referee will not normally break up a fight unless the linesmen need assistance , or a fight is occurring where a player has gained a significant advantage over the other player , leading to concerns of significant injury .

= = Notable fights and brawls = =

Some fights have attracted significant media attention due to injuries sustained by one or both participants and other factors .

On December 23 , 1979 , at the end of a 4 ? 3 Boston Bruins victory over the New York Rangers , an altercation led to most of the Bruins scaling the plexiglass and fighting several fans at Madison Square Garden . Terry O 'Reilly , Mike Milbury , and Peter McNab were fined and suspended several games . The incident led to higher plexiglass in the arena , and has entered sports lore .

April 20 , 1984 ? A bench @-@ clearing brawl broke out at the end of the second period of a second @-@ round playoff matchup between the Quebec Nordiques and the Montreal Canadiens . A second bench @-@ clearing brawl erupted before the third period began , provoked by the announcement of penalties ; a total of 252 penalty minutes were incurred and 11 players were ejected . This game is commonly referred to as the Good Friday Massacre .

January 4 , 1987 ? The Punch @-@ up in Piastany : A World Junior Ice Hockey Championships game between Canada and the Soviet Union was the scene of a bench @-@ clearing brawl that lasted 20 minutes and prompted officials to turn off the arena lights in an attempt to stop it , forcing the IIHF to declare the game null and void . The fighting was particularly dangerous as fighting was a surprise and a custom unknown to the Soviet players , some of whom escalated the fighting beyond what was considered acceptable in North America . Both teams were ejected from the tournament , costing Canada an assured medal , and the Soviet team was barred from the end @-@ of @-@ tournament dinner . A book by Gare Joyce was written regarding the event .

March 26 , 1997 , Brawl in Hockeytown ? The Avalanche and the Red Wings engaged in nine fights , including bouts between Darren McCarty and Claude Lemieux and goalies Patrick Roy and Mike Vernon .

April 1 , 1998 ? A game between the Avalanche and Red Wings involved a fight between goaltenders Chris Osgood and Roy in which both goaltenders received minor , major , and game misconduct penalties .

March 5 , 2004 ? A Philadelphia Flyers ? Ottawa Senators game resulted in five consecutive brawls in the closing minutes of the game , including fights between many players who are not known as enforcers and a fight between Flyers goalie Robert Esche and Senators goalie Patrick Lalime . The game ended with an NHL record 419 penalty minutes , and an NHL record 20 players were ejected , leaving five players on the team benches . The officials took 90 minutes to sort out the penalties that each team had received .

January 18 , 2014 ? A game between the Vancouver Canucks and the Calgary Flames erupted into a line brawl from the opening face @-@ off . Vancouver had just returned from a one @-@ goal , no @-@ win road trip . Calgary then inflamed the Canucks further by starting with their fourth line . Vancouver line @-@ matched , and Calgary instigated the fight . Significant penalties and more than a few ejections were assessed , but since the incident did not involve the goalies or the star players , play eventually resumed although sporadic fights erupted throughout the game .

April 18 , 2015 ? The Flames and Canucks engaged in another line brawl , this time near the end of the third period of Game 2 of their Western Conference quarterfinal series .

October 7 , 2015 ? Yet another Canucks ? Flames incident saw opposing enforcers Derek Dorsett (Canucks) and Micheal Ferland (Flames) fight immediately after the opening face @-@ off of the season . Eight minutes after play resumed , the Flames ' Brandon Bollig and Canucks ' Brandon Prust squared off .

January 2 , 2016 ? During an ECHL game between the Tulsa Oilers and the Rapid City Rush , two consecutive brawls broke out in the final seconds of the game . The first brawl occurred with 27 seconds left in the third period , and resulted in significant penalties and some ejections as players on both teams attempted to leave their benches to join an altercation . However , once the third period expired , a more violent brawl erupted between the two teams , as more players fought each other on the ice for more than three minutes . In all , 216 penalty minutes were assessed (132 of them for the brawl that occurred following the game) , and a total of eight players from both teams were ejected . The day after the game , the league suspended five players for a combined total of

22 games and fined both organizations for their roles in the brawl .