



SECTION 7

PHYSICAL FOULS

SECTION 7 – PHYSICAL FOULS**Rule 7.1 Attempt to Injure or Deliberate Injury**

An attempt to injure or deliberate injury is any action by a player or team official who by the use of a stick, skate or other object, or by using their body, hits or attempts to hit an opposing player, team official, or game official with the intention of causing injury. For the purposes of this rule, “intent” is determined by considering the deliberate nature of the action on the part of the offending player, as well as the reasonable expectation that this action would cause injury to another person.

- 7.1 (a) A double Minor penalty will be assessed to a player who commits any of the following acts with a minimal degree of violence and without using such an action to gain an advantage or inflict punishment or injury:
- i. pulls an opponent's hair;
 - ii. grabs the facial protector, helmet, chin strap, or throat protector of an opponent;
 - iii. head-butts or attempts to head-butt an opponent.

Note 1: If the offender is a team official, then a Gross Misconduct must also be assessed. Such infractions must be reported as Rule 7.1 (f).

- 7.1 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based upon the degree of violence, a Major and Game Misconduct may be assessed for grabbing the hair, facial protector, helmet, chin strap, or throat protector.

A Major and Game Misconduct will be assessed when a player grabs an opponent's hair, facial protector, helmet, chin strap, or throat protector and injury results from an infraction that would otherwise call for a double Minor penalty.

- 7.1 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player or team official who deliberately attempts to or deliberately injures an opponent, official, team official or spectator in any manner not otherwise covered within the playing rules. This may include, but is not limited to, the following:
- i. Head-butting an opponent with force, or injuring an opponent with this action.
 - ii. Pulling an opponent's hair or grabbing the facial protector, helmet, chin strap, or throat protector of an opponent with a moderate or high degree of violence and/or using this to gain an advantage or to inflict punishment or injury. (see Rule 7.10 (c) – Fighting)
 - iii. Attempting to kick or deliberately kicking an opponent.
 - iv. Using a helmet, facial protector, or any other piece of equipment as a weapon.

- 7.1 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for an attempt to injure.

- 7.1 (e) No Game Misconduct penalty may be assessed for an attempt to injure.

- 7.1 (f) A Gross Misconduct penalty, in addition to a double Minor penalty, will be assessed to team official who head-butts or attempts to head-butt an opponent with a minimal degree of violence. If this action is done with a high degree of violence and/or injury occurs, a Match penalty must be assessed under subsection (c) of this rule, in addition to any other penalties they may incur based on the rules.

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.1 (a)

Examples of a double Minor penalty for head-butting could include helmet-to-helmet or facial-protector-to-facial-protector contact, without the use of excessive force. The degree of force should be the determining factor to be considered by the Referee, when deciding whether a double Minor penalty or a Match penalty is assessed.

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.1 (e)

Biting is an attempt to injure. A Match penalty will be assessed any player or team official guilty of such action.

Rule 7.2 Boarding

A boarding penalty will be assessed to any Player who checks or pushes an unsuspecting opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to hit or impact the boards violently or dangerously.

The severity of the penalty will be based upon the degree of violence of the player's impact with the boards. There is a considerable amount of judgment involved in the application of this rule by the Referees. The duty is on the Player applying the check to ensure their opponent is not in a defenseless position and if so, they must avoid or minimize contact. However, in determining whether such contact could have been avoided, the circumstances of the check, including whether the opponent put themselves in a vulnerable position immediately prior to or simultaneously with the check or whether the check was unavoidable may be considered.

Any unnecessary contact with a Player playing the puck on an obvious "icing" or "off-side" play which results in that Player hitting or impacting the boards is "boarding" and must be penalized as such. In other instances where there is no contact with the boards, it should be treated as "charging."

7.2 (a) A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who checks or pushes a defenseless opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to hit or impact the boards violently or dangerously.

7.2 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for boarding.

If a player is injured, as the result of a boarding infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.

7.2 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately attempts to or deliberately injures an opponent by boarding.

7.2 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for boarding.

7.2 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for boarding, as detailed under Rule 7.2 (b).

Rule 7.3 Body-Checking

This rule applies only in divisions of U13 and below, in female hockey, and any other divisions approved by a Member of Hockey Canada.

Body contact is incidental contact of two opposing players in pursuit of the puck on the ice in the same direction. If, in the opinion of the Referee, incidental contact has occurred, no penalty will be assessed.

Body-checking is an attempt by a player to gain an advantage on their opponent with the deliberate use of the body. Body-checking results when a player makes deliberate contact with an opposing player with opposite-directional force, when a player leaves their skating lane to make contact, or when a player extends an arm, shoulder, or hip after angling an opponent.

- 7.3 (a) A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who, in the opinion of the Referee, intentionally body-checks, bumps, shoves, or pushes any opposing player, in divisions of U13 and below, female hockey, and any other divisions approved by a Member of Hockey Canada.
- 7.3 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for body-checking.
If a player is injured, as the result of a body-checking infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.
- 7.3 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately attempts to or deliberately injures an opponent by body-checking.
- 7.3 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for body-checking.
- 7.3 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for body-checking, as detailed under Rule 7.3 (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.3 (a)

A player may steer or direct an opposing player into the boards, without actually touching or body-checking them. This is acceptable. This is often seen when a player is skating down the ice with the puck and has to go around a defending player. Often, the puck carrier will try to go wide along the boards. In this case, the defender has the right to close off the boards, in order to force the puck carrier to slow down or move towards the middle of the ice. This is legal, as long as either player does not use their body to intentionally body-check, bump, push, or shove an opponent.

Rule 7.4 Charging

Charging is when a player:

- i. Jumps to check an opponent.
- ii. Builds up speed by taking two or more strides immediately prior to making contact.
- iii. Travels an excessive distance with the sole purpose of delivering a hit.
- iv. Violently and unnecessarily checks an opponent in any manner.
- v. Delivers a body check to an opponent's blind side.

A "charge" may be the result of a check into the boards, into the goal frame or in open ice.

- 7.4 (a) A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who charges an opponent.

Note 1: A blindside hit will be defined as an 'open-ice body check that is delivered from an angle of approach outside a 90° peripheral point of view of a vulnerable opponent, whether or not the player has the puck. Should an open-ice body check be delivered from within a 90° angle of approach and the check is otherwise legal in all other aspects, then no penalty would be assessed.

- 7.4 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for charging.
- If a player is injured, as the result of a charging infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.
- 7.4 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who charges an opponent in such a way that they are unable to defend themselves or who deliberately attempts to injure an opponent by charging.
- 7.4 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for charging.
- 7.4 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for Charging, as detailed under Rule 7.4 (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.4 (a)

For the purpose of this rule, a “jumping” action will be defined as when a player’s feet leave the ice prior to making body contact with their opponent. If a player’s feet come off the ice after contact is made with their opponent, during an otherwise legal check, this will NOT be considered a Charging penalty because the player’s skates were on the ice at the time of body contact.

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.4 (b)

Where a goaltender is contacted by an attacking player in their crease and that action could be described as charging, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for Interference must be assessed (see Rule 8.5 (b) – Interference with the Goaltender).

Rule 7.5 Checking from Behind

Checking from behind is an action where a player is pushed, body-checked, cross-checked or hit from behind. Referees should be aware of the tragic consequences of spinal injuries and strictly enforce the rules in situations such as the following:

- i. Where a player about to be checked turns and, as a result, creates contact with the back.
- ii. Where a player along the boards, with their head down looking for the puck or “digging the puck out,” is hit from behind and driven head-first into the boards.
- iii. Where a player in the process of checking an opponent swings the elbow and forearm into the opponent’s back with the intent of throwing the opponent into the boards.
- iv. Where a player “kicks” or “pulls” an opponent’s feet out from behind and then pushes the player into the boards.

In all circumstances the responsibility is on the player delivering the check to avoid contact to an opposing player’s back. Only through Referees being consistent in calling this type of infraction with strict enforcement will players and team officials realize the danger factor in committing such types of fouls.

- 7.5 (a) A Minor penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player who intentionally pushes, body-checks, cross-checks while in motion, or otherwise hits an opposing player from behind, anywhere on the ice.

- 7.5 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for checking from behind.

If a player is injured, as the result of a checking from behind infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.

- 7.5 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who pushes, body-checks, cross-checks, or hits an opposing player in any manner from behind into the boards or goal frame, in such a way that the player is unable to protect or defend themselves.

A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately attempts to or deliberately injures an opponent by checking them from behind.

- 7.5 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for a checking from behind infraction.

- 7.5 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Minor or Major penalty is assessed for Checking From Behind, as detailed under 7.5 (a) & (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.5 (a)

Question:

What penalty is assessed to a player who cross-checks an opponent from behind but not into the boards or goal?

Answer:

The determining factor for Checking from Behind versus Cross-checking is whether or not the player applying the check is in motion. If the player is stationary and cross-checks an opponent from behind, then a penalty for Cross-checking should be assessed. If the player is in motion and cross-checks an opponent from behind, then a penalty for Checking from Behind will be called. If a player is cross-checked from behind into the boards or the goal, then Checking from Behind will be called.

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.5 (a)

Question:

What penalty is assessed when a player, who is about to be checked, turns and, as a result, creates contact with the back?

Answer:

The appropriate penalty for Checking from Behind will be assessed to the player delivering the check. The responsibility is always on the player delivering the check to avoid making contact with the back.

Interpretation 3 Rule 7.5 (a)

The intent of this rule is not to penalize accidental contact as a result of playing the puck. Provided that contact is marginal in nature and does not endanger the safety of the opponent, no penalty may be assessed. Pinning a player to the boards at low speed and with minimal impact is permitted, even if contact is initiated from behind (except under Rule 7.3 – Body-checking, as applicable).

Interpretation 4 Rule 7.5 (a)

Question:

The Referee has signaled a delayed Minor penalty for Checking from Behind on a player of Team A. Team B scores before the play is stopped. Is the Game Misconduct still assessed to the offending player of Team A?

Answer:

Yes.

Rule 7.6 Head Contact

There is no type of legal contact to the head, face, or neck. It is the players' responsibility to avoid making contact with an opponent's head, face, or neck, at all times. Head Contact may take the form of direct contact to the head or accidental contact, where the principle point of contact is the shoulder or chest. Regardless of the circumstances, players must be penalized for contact with an opponent's head, face, or neck at all times.

Referees should be particularly sensitive when judging the degree of violence where contact is made with the head, face, or neck. While the criteria remain the same, the potential for injury is much greater on Head Contact fouls than with other infractions. Referees must not hesitate to assess serious penalties where contact is made with the head, face, or neck with an escalated degree of violence.

This rule supersedes any other rules, with the exception of Rule 7.10 – Fighting, and any foul that results in contact to the head must be penalized as Head Contact.

- 7.6 (a) A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who accidentally contacts an opponent in the head, face, or neck, in minor and female hockey.

A double Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who uses any part of their body or equipment to intentionally contact an opponent in the head, face, or neck, in minor and female hockey.

In minor and female hockey, any player incurring three Head Contact penalties under Rule 7.6 (a) will be assessed a Game Ejection penalty. (see Rule 4.8 (b) – Game Ejection & Game Misconduct penalties)

- 7.6 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for Head Contact.

If a player is injured, as the result of a Head Contact infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.

Any player who strikes an opponent above the normal height of their shoulders with a cross-check will be penalized with a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty, whether or not injury results.

- 7.6 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who hits a player in the head in such a way that the player is unable to protect or defend themselves or to any player who attempts to or deliberately injures an opponent by Head Contact.
- 7.6 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for a Head Contact infraction.
- 7.6 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for Head Contact, as detailed under Rule 7.6 (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.6 (a)

Where a player delivers a legal check to an opponent's chest or shoulder and subsequently contacts the opposing player's head, face, or neck with their stick or body, this should be considered accidental head contact and penalized according to the degree of violence of the impact.

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.6 (b)

There is some confusion regarding how to judge whether a player has struck an opponent "above the normal height of the shoulders with a cross-check". This rule is not intended to penalize players who make minimal, accidental contact with an opponent's head with their stick. This rule is intended to penalize players who make a deliberate cross-checking action and strike an opponent in the head or neck.

Rule 7.7 Head Contact – Junior/Senior

There is no legal contact to the head, face, or neck. It is the players' responsibility to avoid making contact with an opponent's head, face, or neck, at all times. In Junior and Senior divisions, Referees may penalize contact to the head with a minimal degree of violence with a minor penalty for roughing, charging, or another appropriate penalty.

In Junior and Senior divisions, this rule supersedes any other rules regarding contact to the head, with the exception of Rule 7.10 – Fighting.

- 7.7 (a) In Junior and Senior divisions, a Minor penalty and a Misconduct penalty for Head Contact will be assessed to any player who makes contact with an opponent's head with a moderate degree of violence.
- 7.7 (b) In Junior and Senior divisions, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed for any Head Contact infraction with a high degree of violence.
 Any player who strikes an opponent above the normal height of their shoulders with a cross-check will be penalized with a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty, whether or not injury results.
 In Junior and Senior divisions, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed for an infraction, whereby a player is fouled or hit illegally and, as the result of the infraction, the player hits their head on the glass, ice, or the boards in such a manner that results in a head injury.
- 7.7 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who hits a player in the head in such a way that the player is unable to protect or defend themselves or deliberately attempts to injure an opponent by Head Contact.
- 7.7 (d) In Junior and Senior divisions, a Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Minor penalty is assessed for Head Contact, as detailed under Rule 7.7 (a).
- 7.7 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for Head Contact, as detailed under Rule 7.7 (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.7 (a)

Notwithstanding degree of violence, the following actions will be considered Head Contact and must be penalized with a minimum of a Minor penalty and a Misconduct Penalty. If the following actions occur with a high degree of

violence, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct or a Match penalty will be assessed. **Where any of these criteria are met, Referees will penalize the offending player for Head Contact, rather than for roughing, charging, or another penalty:**

- i. *Direct Contact with an Opponent's Head: Where a player raises their stick, hands, forearm, shoulder, or elbow to hit an opponent in the head area, or drives their stick, hands, forearm, shoulder, or elbow into the opponent's head in any manner, it should be penalized as Head Contact, with the appropriate penalty for the degree of violence of the contact.*
- ii. *Blind-Side Hits: Where a vulnerable player is hit in the head with a blind-side check from the side.*
- iii. *Late Hits: Where a vulnerable player is hit in the head but does not have control of the puck, have passed the puck, or lost control of the puck for a sufficient amount of time that the opponent could have adjusted their course of action and avoided checking the unsuspecting player in the head.*
- iv. *Cheap Hit: Where a vulnerable player is defenseless while down on the ice and the opponent deliberately makes contact with the head or neck, in any manner.*
- v. *Leaving the Feet: Where both of the offending player's feet leave the ice prior to making a check that contacts the opponent in the head or neck.*

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.7 (a)

In Junior and Senior divisions, a Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who makes contact with an opposing player's head with a minimal degree of violence. This should not be penalized as Head Contact but under another appropriate rule (Roughing, High-Sticking, etc.).

Interpretation 3 Rule 7.7 (a)

In Junior and Senior divisions, if a player ducks to avoid a check and, as a result, is hit in the head area with an otherwise legal check, this will not be considered Head Contact and no penalty will be assessed. The referee may assess a penalty to the player who ducks to avoid a check under Rule 8.7 – Clipping, if appropriate.

This interpretation does not apply to a player who is in a vulnerable position as the result of a legitimate hockey play (e.g. shooting, making or receiving a pass, etc.).

Rule 7.8 Kneeing

Kneeing is the act of a player making contact with an opponent where the knee is the principle point of contact. This may take the form of a player making contact with an opponent's knee on an otherwise legal hit, leading into a hit with their knee, or deliberately extending their leg outwards to make contact with an opponent.

- 7.8 (a) A double Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who knees an opponent.
- 7.8 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, the Referee may assess a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for kneeing.

If a player is injured, as the result of a kneeing infraction that would otherwise call for a double Minor penalty, a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.

- 7.8 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately attempts to injure an opponent by kneeling.
- 7.8 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for kneeling.
- 7.8 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for Kneeling, as detailed under Rule 7.8 (b).

Rule 7.9 Roughing

Roughing is when a player is guilty of unnecessary rough play with an opposing player. Roughing may occur during the play or after the whistle has blown, in which case it should be penalized as Roughing After the Whistle. Roughing penalties should not be utilized in lieu of more serious penalties for Rule 7.6 – Head Contact or Rule 7.10 – Fighting. Therefore, if a player punches an opponent in the head, face or neck, then the appropriate penalty will be assessed under Rule 7.6 – Head Contact.

- 7.9 (a) A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who is guilty of unnecessary rough play.
A Minor penalty will be assessed to any player who, in the Referee's judgment, makes deliberate physical contact with an opponent after the whistle. This should be announced as "Roughing after the whistle"
- 7.9 (b) At the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact, a Major Penalty and Game Misconduct penalty may be assessed to any player who is guilty of unnecessary rough play.
A Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player who injures an opponent by a roughing infraction that would otherwise call for a Minor penalty.
- 7.9 (c) A Match penalty will be assessed to any player who deliberately attempts to injure an opponent by Roughing.
- 7.9 (d) No Misconduct penalty may be assessed for Roughing.
- 7.9 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed any time a Major penalty is assessed for Roughing, as detailed under 7.9 (b).

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.9 (a)

QUESTION:

At a stoppage of play, a Team A player pushes a Team B player who then pushes back. What is the proper procedure for the Referee?

ANSWER:

The Referee would assess the Team A player a Minor penalty for Roughing after the Whistle. Where the retaliation is too severe to be ignored and that player is penalized, then the Referee is encouraged to assess the initial player two Minor penalties for Roughing, so that a time differential exists.

Rule 7.10 Fighting

A “fight” will be deemed to have occurred when at least one player punches or attempts to punch an opponent repeatedly or when two players wrestle in such a manner as to make it difficult for the Linespersons to intervene and separate the combatants. An “altercation” is a situation involving at least two players with at least one player to be penalized.

When a “fight” occurs, all other players must immediately return to their respective Players’ Benches. Any players who do not do so, or become involved in a “secondary fight”, will receive additional penalties.

The Referees are provided very wide latitude in penalties they may impose under this rule. This is done intentionally to enable them to differentiate between the obvious degrees of responsibility of the participants either for starting or continuing the fight. This discretion should be exercised rationally.

- 7.10 (a) A Minor penalty may not be assessed for Fighting.

A Minor penalty will be assessed to a goaltender who leaves their crease during a fight. This should be recorded on the Official Game Report as “Leaving the Crease”.

- 7.10 (b) A Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player that fights an opposing player.

- 7.10 (c) In addition to any other penalties they may incur, a Match penalty will be assessed to any player wearing a ring or rings, tape or any other material on their hands, who becomes involved in a fight and who uses such to gain an advantage or to inflict punishment and/or injury. There must be a fight to apply this rule.

- 7.10 (d) A Misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player who, when a fight occurs, does not immediately return to their respective benches or to a neutral area (should the fight occur in front of a Players’ Bench) designated by the Referee and remain there until the Referee calls them back to resume play. The goaltenders must stay in their goal creases or proceed to a neutral zone designated by the Referee.

Note 1: In order to apply this rule, at least one player must be assessed a Major penalty and Game Misconduct penalty for Fighting. Referees must direct the players to their respective Players’ Bench unless the fight is in front of the bench.

- 7.10 (e) A Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed to a player who:

- i. is involved in a fight, as detailed in 7.10 (b),
- ii. joins in a fight or acts as a peacemaker, or
- iii. takes part in another or a secondary fight during the same stoppage of play.

These penalties will be assessed in addition to any other penalties the offending players may incur.

- 7.10 (f) A Gross Misconduct penalty will be assessed to any player, goaltender or team official who fights with a team official, joins in a fight involving a team official or intervenes as a peacemaker in a fight involving a team official. This does not eliminate the possibility of further penalties being assessed for such an infraction.

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.10 (a)

QUESTION:

If a fight occurs in the immediate vicinity of the goal crease, would the goaltender be allowed to go to the Players' Bench?

ANSWER:

With the permission of the Referee, the goaltender may proceed to their bench. If they do so on their own accord, they are to be assessed a Minor penalty for leaving their crease during a fight.

Interpretation 2 Rule 7.10 (a) (b)

In the event that a player makes no attempt to retaliate, other than to protect or defend themselves and in the opinion of the Referee does not engage in the fight, then their opponent will be the only player to be assessed a Major penalty and Game Misconduct for Fighting. The player protecting themselves may receive a Minor penalty for Roughing or perhaps no penalty at all. In this situation the player receiving the Major penalty and Game Misconduct for Fighting will also receive an additional Minor penalty as the instigator of the fight under Rule 7.11 (a) – Instigator & Aggressor.

Interpretation 3 Rule 7.10 (b)

What is the penalty for a player on the ice becoming involved with a player on the bench?

Where a player on the ice becomes involved in a fight with a player off the ice, assess a Major penalty for Fighting and a Game Misconduct penalty.

Interpretation 4 Rule 7.10 (b)

In a situation where two willing combatants each drop their gloves and square off to fight, the player of Team A knocks the player of Team B down with the first punch.

Assess each player five minutes for Fighting plus a Game Misconduct. There is no instigator nor aggressor penalty assessed, as both players were willing combatants. This is only applied where both combatants are willing to fight.

Interpretation 5 Rule 7.10 (b)

At no time may a Major penalty be assessed to a player for fighting with a spectator. The player will either be assessed a Gross Misconduct, a Match penalty or nothing at all, depending on the circumstances. (see also, Rule 11.2 (f) – Disrespectful & Abusive Behaviour (Interpretation 3).

Interpretation 6 Rule 7.10 (d)

The third player (and all subsequent players) to enter a fight or a player who acts as a peacemaker applies only to situations where at least one player has been assessed a fighting penalty.

Any time that a player is assessed Major penalty and Game Misconduct for Fighting, it has to be classified as a fight. Therefore, the third player to enter must receive the automatic Game Misconduct, even if the second player was not assessed a Major penalty and Game Misconduct for Fighting.

Interpretation 7 Rule 7.10 (d)

A player is involved in a fight, and then leaves that fight and starts another fight with a different player of the opposing team. What penalties are assessed?

The player involved in the two fights would get a Minor penalty for Instigating for starting the second fight under Rule 7.11 (a) – Instigator & Aggressor, two Major penalties, and three Game Misconducts. Two of the Game Misconducts are related to the Majors for Fighting. The third Game Misconduct is for taking part in another fight during the same stoppage of play under Rule 7.10 (e)(iii).

Interpretation 8 Rule 7.10 (d)

If two players are fighting on the ice, close to the Players' Bench and one of the players on the bench intervenes as a peacemaker in the fight while still on the bench, that player will be assessed a Bench Minor plus a Game Misconduct for Rule 8.4 (a) & (e) – Interference from the Bench, plus an additional Game Misconduct under Rule 7.10 (e)(ii) and any other penalties they may incur. This player is to be classified as the third player to enter a fight.

If, on the other hand, a team official intervenes as a peacemaker in the fight, that team official will be assessed a Bench Minor plus a Gross Misconduct for Interference from the Bench under Rule 8.4 (f) – Interference from the Bench.

Rule 7.11 Instigator & Aggressor

An instigator will be defined as a player who, by their demeanour or physical or verbal actions, is responsible for starting or causing a fight based on any one or more of the following criteria:

- i. Throwing or attempting to throw the first punch, thus forcing their opponent to defend themselves by engaging in an otherwise undesired fight.
- ii. Verbal invitation, instigation or threat, thus forcing their opponent to defend themselves by engaging in an otherwise undesired fight.
- iii. First player to remove gloves and throw a punch without their opponent's compliance.
- iv. Distance traveled to an altercation or travel to an altercation for the purpose of starting a fight
- v. Attempting to throw, throwing or continuing to throw punches at an opponent who has physically or verbally expressed an unwillingness to fight.
- vi. Attempting to throw, throwing or continuing to throw punches at an opponent who is in a defenseless position.
- vii. Aggressive attitude or posture towards an opponent, forcing their opponent to defend themselves by engaging in an undesired fight.
- viii. Retaliation for a legal or illegal action, thus forcing their opponent to defend themselves by engaging in an otherwise undesired fight.

An aggressor is the player who attempts to continue a fight by throwing or attempting to throw punches or by continuing the grappling action with their opponent with the intent of intimidation or punishment of that opponent, including but not limited to situations in which their opponent is no longer able to continue the fight or is in a defenseless position. The aggressor may or may not be the instigator of the fight.

- 7.11 (a) A minor penalty will be assessed to any player who is identified by the Referee as being the instigator or the aggressor in a fight, in addition to any other penalties they may incur.

- 7.11 (b) No Major penalty will be assessed for instigator or aggressor infractions.
- 7.11 (c) No Match penalty will be assessed for instigator or aggressor infractions.
- 7.11 (d) No Misconduct penalty will be assessed for instigator or aggressor infractions.
- 7.11 (e) No Game Misconduct penalty will be assessed for instigator or aggressor infractions.

INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretation 1 Rule 7.11 (c)

A Match penalty may be assessed in extreme cases, where a player attacks an unsuspecting opponent, or continues to throw punches at a player who is not retaliating or is defenseless or is being actively restrained by a Referee or Linesperson, if it is the opinion of the Referee that such action constitutes a deliberate attempt to injure or causes a deliberate injury. These actions would be penalized under Rule 7.1 (c) – Attempt to Injure or Deliberate Injury.