



**REPORT OF THE
NCAA WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY COMMITTEE
JUNE 22-23, 2026, VIDEOCONFERENCE**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. **NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee – Athletics Personnel and Recruiting - Limitation on the Number of Coaches and Off-Campus Recruiters – Women's Ice Hockey.**
 - (1) Recommendation. The NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee requests the Division I Cabinet to introduce legislation, in women's ice hockey, to permit any institutional staff member to provide technical and tactical instruction to student-athletes and/or be designated as one of the four off-campus recruiters on an annual basis (Aug. 1 to July 31).
 - (2) Effective date. Immediate.
 - (3) Rationale. Permitting all institutional staff members to provide instruction to student-athletes during practice and competition promotes student-athlete support and development, encourages local-level decision making, and balances the priorities of current student-athlete development and growth with the realities of recruiting. Further, the proposal maintains the limit of four staff members who may permissibly recruit off campus.
 - (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
 - (5) Student-athlete impact. The recommendation provides additional discretion and flexibility to best support a student-athlete's athletic development.
2. **NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee – Recruiting – Time Period for Telephone Calls, First Opportunity to Visit, and Off-Campus Evaluations – Women's Ice Hockey.**
 - (1) Recommendation. The NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee requests the Division I Cabinet introduce legislation into the October legislative cycle to modify recruiting legislation to:
 - a. Permit an institution to make telephone calls to a prospective student-athlete beginning the first Tuesday following Labor Day of the prospective student-athlete's junior year of high school;
 - b. Permit an institution to provide an official visit to a prospective student-athlete beginning the third Monday in September of the prospective student-athlete's junior year of high school; and
 - c. Permit an institution to conduct unlimited off-campus evaluations of a prospective student-athlete.

- (2) Effective date. Immediate
- (3) Rationale. The current recruiting structure creates challenges for prospective student-athletes, families, and coaches by concentrating key recruiting activities during the summer months when players are participating in national camps, families are traveling and coaches are balancing recruiting responsibilities with various professional development opportunities. Further, the proposal seeks to establish a more practical and relationship-focused recruiting timeline while providing coaches with greater flexibility to evaluate prospects throughout the year.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. The proposal supports prospective student-athlete well-being by reducing recruiting pressure, improving decision-making time, and creating healthier recruiting interactions.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

1. Governance and Member Service updates.

- a. **Division I Championship Status.** The committee discussed key points of consideration and potential impacts of proposing legislation to transition the Women's Ice Hockey Championship from a National Collegiate to a Division I Championship. The committee will continue discussions at future meetings throughout the 2026-27 academic year.
- b. **Division I Women's Ice Hockey Roster Limit.** The committee reviewed feedback from the AHCA Convention on current roster limits imposed by the approval of the House Settlement.
- c. **National Collegiate Committee Review.** The committee was provided an update on recommendations from the Division I Cabinet to modify the composition of National Collegiate sport committees to include nonvoting members as determined by the committee (e.g., secretary-rules editor, coaches association representative), and nonvoting Division I student-athlete. The committee will receive an update on the intended implementation of these recommendations pending Division I Cabinet introduction into the October legislative cycle during its June 23-24 videoconference.

2. Championship updates.

- a. **Automatic qualification.** The committee discussed submissions from the following five conferences for automatic qualification to the 2027 National Collegiate Women's Ice Hockey Championship: Atlantic Hockey America, ECAC Hockey, Hockey East Association, New England Women's Hockey Alliance, and Western Collegiate Hockey Association and approved the 5 AQs.

- b. NPI dial review.** The committee met with Tim Danehy to review NPI dials after year one of it being the sole selection criterion for the championship. The committee thanked Mr. Danehy for his work and detailed explanation of the dials. The committee will continue to review all dials and welcomes discussion for future dial changes but elected to not request any dial changes for the 2026-27 playing season.
- c. ESPN.** ESPN provided feedback from this past year's championship and highlighted the growth of the championship. The committee also asked ESPN to consider opportunities to have the semifinal games on linear television for the 2027 Women's Frozen Four, and the committee will discuss the topic at its next scheduled meeting.
- d. Date formula.** The committee continued discussing the championship date formula in conjunction with the start of the playing season. The committee is aware the women's ice hockey membership is considering proposals around the date formula and looks forward to reviewing a proposal at a future meeting. The committee also engaged ESPN on the topic to be sure they could weigh in for broadcast opportunities on potential dates.
- e. Bracketing principles.** The committee asked NCAA staff to make editorial changes to the bracketing principles in the pre-championships manual to clarify the bracketing process after teams are selected.
- f. National Coordinator of Officials Report.** The committee heard from Krissy Langley, the NCAA women's ice hockey national coordinator of officials, who provided an overview of the 2025-26 season, including new initiatives. The committee also reviewed the officiating policies and procedures document included in the pre-championships manual and was pleased with the guidance provided within that document. The committee requested editorial changes in the document to continue to help clarify the guiding principles to the membership.
- g. Bid cycle timeline.** The committee was provided an update about the upcoming bid cycle timeline.
- h. 2026 championship review.** The committee reviewed policies and procedures around the 2026 championship, including regional rounds and the Women's Frozen Four. The committee requested continued communication to prospective regional hosts about hosting expectations around broadcast, hotels, and dashers. The committee also asked staff to add language around staggering game times during regionals when possible. The committee asked to continue with student-athlete lounges at the Women's Frozen Four and thanked staff for their work on the championship.

- i. **Sport sponsorship and access ratio.** The committee reviewed the current sport sponsorship and expected sport sponsorship for 2026-27. The committee understands the current access ratio and the reasoning behind the bracket size.
- j. **Committee roster and chair.** The committee reviewed the committee roster for 2026-27 and welcomed Michelle McAteer, Celeste Brown and Charlie Dowd to the committee. The committee also elected a new chair, Brittany Kane from Boston University, effective July 1, 2026, with Janine Oman's retirement. The committee thanked Ms. Oman for her dedicated service to the sport throughout her career.
- k. **Clearing goals during the 2027 Women's Frozen Four** The committee approved the Division I Women's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee's recommendation to clear all goals via video replay during the 2027 Women's Frozen Four. The proposal was initially a rules proposal, but the committee asked that the language be placed into the pre-championships manual and not in the playing rules book.

3. **Playing rules updates.**

- a. **Playing Rules Proposals.** The committee reviewed and adopted 24 playing rules proposals developed by the Division I Women's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee. Proposal No. 15 – Unlimited High-Sticking, was withdrawn by the subcommittee based on the lack of support in the comment period survey. Additional information related to the proposals and committee actions can be found in Attachment A.
- b. **Secretary-Rules Editor.** The committee was provided an update on the hiring timeline for the NCAA Ice Hockey Secretary-Rules Editor.
- c. **Division I Women's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee Roster.** The committee reappointed Emma Pais, student-athlete at Colgate University, to the Division I Women's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee.

Committee Chair: Janine Oman, Ohio State University, Western Collegiate Hockey Association.
Staff Liaisons: Travis Johnston, Governance and Member Services
Caleb Kolby, Championships and Alliances.

NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Committee June 22-23, 2026, Videoconference	
Attendees:	
Celeste Brown, Rochester Institute of Technology, Atlantic Hockey America.	
Brittany Kane, Boston University, Hockey East Association.	
Dean O'Keefe, Stonehill College, New England Women's Hockey Alliance.	
Janine Oman, Ohio State University, Western Collegiate Hockey Association.	
Melanie Ruzzi, Brown University, ECAC Hockey.	
Absentees:	
None.	
Guests in Attendance:	

Tim Danehy, Bob DeGregorio, Charlie Dowd, Ian Dunning, Jeff Fulton, Brett Jackson, Mallory Kenny, Krissy Langley, Michelle McAteer, Kate McAfee, Michelle Morgan, Nick Sczerbinski, Linda Schulz
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NCAA Staff Liaisons in Attendance:

Caleb Kolby and Travis Johnston.

Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance for Portions of the Meeting:
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Paden Alie, Tommy Barrett, and Markell Staton.
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**NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
DIVISION I WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY RULES SUBCOMMITTEE
2026 RULES PROPOSALS**

Proposal #1: Player's Benches (*Adopted*)

Rule 3.1

The accommodations provided, including bench height and number of doors must be similar for both teams.

Proposal #2: Starting Lineups (*Adopted*)

Rule 7.2

If the team that scores a goal on the first shift of the game challenges the starting line-up of the opposing team and the opposing team did not have the correct starting line-up, the scoring of the goal would nullify the bench minor penalty, and no further penalties would be assessed.

Proposal #3: Protective Equipment (*Adopted*)

Rule 9.3

Require that all players wear cut-resistant protection on the neck, wrist, and socks beginning with the 27-28 season for Division I and 28-29 for Division III.

Proposal #4: Helmets (*Adopted*)

Rule 9.4

A player who intentionally removes their helmet during play will be assessed a minor penalty. If a goalkeeper intentionally removes their helmet and/or facemask when the opposing team is on a breakaway, a goal will be awarded to the non-offending team.

Proposal #5: Coincidental Penalties (*Adopted*)

Rule 19

During the last five minutes of regulation or at any time in overtime, when a minor penalty is assessed to a player of Team A, and a major penalty is assessed to one player of Team B at the same stoppage of play, the three minute (or one minute, if A is serving a double minor) differential shall be served immediately.

Proposal #6: Major Penalties (*Adopted*)

Rule 20

A second major penalty in the same game is an automatic game misconduct.

Proposal #7: Major or Misconduct Penalty to Goalkeeper (Adopted)

Rule 28.2

A goalkeeper shall not be sent to the penalty bench for an offense which incurs a major penalty.

Proposal #8: Face Masks (Adopted)

Rule 47.1

Add other helmet openings to the foul of Face Mask.

Proposal #9: Fighting (Adopted)

Rule 48.1

Edit the definition of fighting to be “one player punches or attempts to punch an opponent repeatedly”. Singular punches to be penalized as roughing.

A major penalty of roughing to be permissive for a “sucker punch”.

Proposal #10: Head Butting (Adopted)

Rule 49

Allow a minor penalty to be called for an attempted head-butt or a head-butt that is not done forcibly. Reserve the Major and Game Misconduct penalty for a forcible or egregious head-butt.

Proposal #11: Checking From Behind (Adopted)

Rule 50

Remove “in open ice” from the checking from behind rule.

Proposal #12: Hitting After the Whistle (Adopted)

Rule 53.3

Eliminate “hitting after the whistle”, classify this contact as roughing or unsportsmanlike conduct, when it occurs.

Proposal #13: Throwing the Stick *(Adopted)*

Rule 55.5

Change the penalty for throwing the stick outside the playing area from a Misconduct to a Game Misconduct.

Proposal #14: Goalkeeper Leaving Stick *(Adopted)*

Rule 55

If a goalkeeper, upon leaving the ice, leaves the stick or other equipment, or piles snow that stops an imminent goal, a goal shall be awarded.

Proposal #15: High Sticking *(Withdrawn by Rules Subcommittee)*

Rule 64.4. Permit high sticking the puck anywhere on the ice.

Proposal #16: Delay of Game *(Adopted)*

New Rule

In the event that the puck is shot into the end zone by the attacking team from their own side of the center red line, and the opposing goalkeeper freezes the puck resulting in a stoppage of play, the ensuing face-off shall be conducted at one of the end zone face-off spots in the goalkeeper's defending zone.

The defending team shall not be permitted to make any player substitutions prior to the face-off. However, a team shall be permitted to make a player substitution to replace an injured player, or when a penalty has been assessed which affects the on-ice strength of either team.

Proposal #17: Spitting *(Adopted)*

Rule 79.5

Spitting to be penalized as a Game Disqualification.

Proposal #18: Offside *(Adopted)*

Rule 86.1

A player must control the puck with their stick prior to their skates going into the offensive zone.

Proposal #19: Hand Pass (Rule 84.2)

Rule 84.2

Permit hand passes that are initiated and completed in the defensive zone.

Proposal #20: Faceoff Location following hand pass or high stick (Adopted)

Rules 84.2-84.4

The faceoff location following a hand pass or high stick violation will take place at the faceoff dot nearest the point of the infraction with the least territorial advantage gained.

Proposal #21: Shootout (Adopted)

Rule 91.2

Eliminate the mandatory shootout at the end of extra periods. Defer procedure to conference policy. In non-conference games, the policy of the home team's conference will be followed. In neutral site games, the policy of the designated home team or in-season tournament will be followed.

Proposal #22: Coaches Challenge (Adopted)

Rule 93.4

Allow a coach to challenge when a minor penalty for goalkeeper interference and the goal is disallowed.

Proposal #23: Coaches Challenge (Adopted)

Rule 93.4.c

Require a coaches challenge for an unobserved act that would lead to a major penalty of a player.

Proposal #24: Video Review (Not approved by Women's Ice Hockey Committee)

Rule 93.7

Require all goals be cleared in NCAA Frozen Four games.

Note: While this was not approved as a rule change, the Women's Ice Hockey Committee will seek to implement through championship protocols.

Proposal #25: Body Checking (Adopted)

Rule 94

Restructure Rule 94 to provide clarity on legal body contact and illegal body checking. Guidance will be provided to allow legal contact on parallel pursuits, end-wall pursuits, forward angling, corner defense, and 50/50 puck battles. Illegal methods continue to include overt extension of the shoulder, arm or torso, opposite direction hits, and driving through opponents. The full write up of the new rule is below:

Body Checking - Body checking is not permitted in any area of the ice. Body checking occurs when a player delivers a distinct and definable moment of impact using overt (blatant) hip, shoulder, arm or torso action attempts to separate the puck carrier from the puck.

PENALTY—A minor, major and game misconduct or major and disqualification, at the discretion of the referee.

2026-27 NCAA Women's Ice Hockey Point of Emphasis: Modernizing the Application of Rule 94 (Body Contact)

The NCAA Division I Women's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee and the NCAA Divisions II and III Ice Hockey Rules Committee wish to promote a fast, physical, and skilled game by providing clear distinctions between legal tactical contact and illegal body checking. The focus is on rewarding players who use superior angling and positioning to win puck possession and to further prepare the puck carrier to expect body contact.

Body Contact – Women's ice hockey permits competitive body contact that results naturally from angling, puck pursuit, and lane control in the course of legally playing the puck. Players may use body position to impede or contain opponents; however, forceful body checking intended primarily to separate the opponent from the puck through impact remains prohibited.

Legal Body Contact Mechanics – To be considered legal body contact, the initiating player must:

- Maintain a skating lane or angle consistent with the puck's location.

- Shoulder-to shoulder contact from a position even or ahead of an opponent is to be expected.
- Contact initiated from a position behind an opponent and where it is reasonable to believe they cannot expect contact (vulnerable) may be deemed a penalty.
- Keep the stick on the ice or in a position to immediately play the puck.
- Avoid any distinct and definable moment of impact using overt (blatant) hip, shoulder, arm or torso extension to deliver force (opposite direction hit).
- Avoid any "explosive" upward or outward motion (driving through the opponent).

Interpretations and Scenarios

To ensure consistency among officials and players, the following scenarios are classified as Legal Body Contact:

Scenario 1: Parallel Possession Pursuit

The Play: Two players are skating in the same direction while one has possession. The defending player is even with or ahead of the puck carrier and initiates shoulder-to-shoulder contact to lean the opponent off the puck. The Ruling: Legal. Provided there is no extension or "opposite direction" hitting motion, using body weight to separate an opponent from the puck while moving in the same direction is a fundamental defensive skill. (Note: this holds true anytime players are moving in the same direction including when one player is skating forward and the other is skating backward.)

Note: Creating contact from a body position behind the puck carrier should be called a body check due to the blind-side nature of the hit as the puck carrier is deemed vulnerable/defenseless.

Scenario 2: The End-Wall Pursuit

The Play: During a pursuit below the goal line, the second player into the zone maintains one hand on their stick and the other guides the puck carrier with a hand on their hip. The pursuing player makes contact to guide the opponent into the boards, keeping their stick on the ice and releasing immediately once the opponent's momentum is neutralized. The Ruling: Legal. This is considered "steering" rather than "boarding" or "checking," provided the player does not extend to shove the opponent excessively.

Scenario 3: The Forward Angle & The "Cut-Back"

The Play: A defender has established a forward angle on a puck carrier. As the puck is released, the defender finishes the angle, resulting in contact. Alternatively, the puck carrier "cuts back" into the space already occupied by the angling defender, causing a collision. The Ruling: Legal. A player is entitled to their skating lane. If the defender is committed to a legal angling route, they are not required to vacate that space if the puck carrier creates the collision by changing direction into them or tries to continue a route through ice that is not available.

Scenario 4: The 50/50 Puck Battle

The Play: Two players approach a loose puck. Both players engage in body contact to "win the lane" or create a "bubble" of space to protect the puck once it is gathered. The Ruling: Legal. Players entering a 50/50 battle must expect body contact. As long as the contact is a byproduct of winning the lane and does not involve an opposite direction hit with extension, no penalty shall be assessed.

Guidance to Officials: When evaluating contact that results in a player going to the ice, the official must judge the action, not the outcome. If the action was a legal attempt to win a lane or maintain puck possession, the play shall continue. The deciding factor between a Minor Penalty for Body Checking and Legal Body Contact is the delivery. A player may position their body to impede, but they may not propel their body to impact.

Note: Body contact that occurs without puck possession falls under the guidance of Rule 59: Interference to determine a penalty.

Proposal #25: Shootout (Adopted)

Appendix B

All players are eligible to participate in the shootout unless they are serving a 10-minute misconduct or have been assessed a game-misconduct or Disqualification penalty.

Proposal #26: Exhibition Games (Adopted)

Require that exhibition games follow all NCAA Ice Hockey Rules, with the exception of the number of dressed players.