



October 12, 2023

VIA EMAIL

TO: NCAA Ice Hockey Coordinators of Officials and Head Coaches.

FROM: Erik Martinson, chair  
NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee

Jeff Fulton, secretary-rules editor  
NCAA Men's and Women's Ice Hockey Rules Committee.

SUBJECT: Early Season Guidance.

As the season gets underway, a few items that have been raised that require clarification, in addition to some updates from our first rules committee meeting. Please share these updates with your staffs as appropriate and a reminder that all playing rules apply to both men's and women's competition, unless otherwise noted in the rules book.

1. **Icing Clarification.** First, it is important to remember the overarching principle is for officials to determine which player would have touched the puck first in a potential icing situation. This is a reminder that linesmen need to make this determination when the players reach the end zone faceoff spots. **To clarify, based on our interpretation, officials can make an icing determination before the puck crosses the goal line.** This is the part of the rule where some confusion remained. The two approved rulings from the current rules book should amplify this rule.

**A.R. 1:** During an icing situation, in a close foot race in which the official cannot clearly determine who would have touched the puck first, what is the ruling? **RULING:** If the official cannot clearly determine who would have touched the puck first, icing must be called.

**A.R. 3:** In a potential icing situation, with a slow-moving puck and one player in pursuit and retreating to the defensive zone, if the puck does not cross the goal line before the player gets to the dot, what is the call? **RULING:** Icing, provided that the defensive player in pursuit is making a reasonable effort to retrieve the puck, there are no opposition players in close proximity to the retreating defensive player and the puck is not touched by any defensive player before the puck crosses the goal line. **To be clear, the official MAY whistle the play before it crosses the goal line in this situation.**

Here is a [VIDEO EXAMPLE](#) of this rules interpretation from NCAA competition and [several examples from the](#) NHL to assist.

2. **Experimental High-Sticking Rule:** NCAA staff sent an email to all commissioners last week based on the NCAA experimental rules process. The rules committee received a request from the Central Collegiate Hockey Association to allow their conference to use the

National Hockey League's high-sticking rule for this year. The rules committee approved the request and extended the allowance for any other conference(s) that wants to use the experimental rule. The use of the experimental rule is permissive – but if it is going to be used by a conference, the conference is required to report back to the rules committee on the experience, etc. and it is for conference games only and only in the regular-season.

Here is some [VIDEO GUIDANCE](#) from the NHL to help if a conference is interested in using this experimental rule this season.

3. **Goaltender Interference:** The rules committee reviewed several goaltender interference clips, including some that deal with visual screening of a goaltender. The rules committee reinforced the definition of “establishes a significant position” to include a time element of being in the blue crease versus solely where a player is positioned in the crease.

*As a reminder, a portion of Rule 73 reads: “If an attacking player **establishes a significant position within the goal crease**, so as to obstruct the goalkeeper’s vision and impair the ability to defend the goal, and a goal is scored, such goals shall be disallowed. For this purpose, a player establishes a significant position within the crease when, in the referee’s judgment, his/her body, or a substantial portion thereof, is within the goal crease **for more than an instantaneous period of time.**”*

To assist in the understanding of this rule, the committee is sharing two video examples. In both examples, there is no contact between the attacking player and the goaltender.

**VIDEO EXAMPLE 1:** Player #27 in red enters the goal crease on his own and establishes a significant position in the crease. While in the crease, he is visually screening the goaltender. In this situation, the goal should be disallowed due to the attacking player establishing a significant position in the crease when the puck enters the net. This meets the standard of “more than an instantaneous period of time.”

**VIDEO EXAMPLE 2:** Player #22 in gold enters the goal crease on his own, but does not establish a significant position in the crease. When the puck enters the net, the player is outside the goal crease. In this situation, the goal shall be allowed.

Thank you for your attention to this important information and good luck the rest of the season.

EM/JF:th

cc: NCAA Men’s and Women’s Ice Hockey Rules Committee  
Selected NCAA Staff Members