



**NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S ICE HOCKEY RULES SUBCOMMITTEE
MAY 19-21, 2026, ANNUAL MEETING REPORT**

ACTION ITEMS.

1. Legislative items.

- None.

2. Nonlegislative items. The NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee approved the following rules change proposal. The subcommittee requests approval from the NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Oversight Committee for the following item:

a. Player's Benches (Rule 3.1)

- (1) Recommendation. The accommodations provided, including bench height and number of doors must be similar for both teams.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. Uniform bench and access-door accommodations for both teams preserve the principles of fairness, neutrality, and consistent game operations.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. For teams not already in compliance, there will be a small budget impact to ensure benches are at the same height.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

b. Starting Lineups (Rule 7.2)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. The combination of disallowing the goal and assessing a bench minor restores competitive fairness while emphasizing the importance of proper pregame procedures.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

c. Protective Equipment (Rule 9.3)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. The adoption of mandatory cut-resistant protection standards reflects the continued emphasis on student-athlete safety and injury prevention.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. The cost to obtain required equipment is significant, the longer rollout hopes to provide relief to budget cycles.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

d. Helmets (Rule 9.4)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. This rule reinforces the importance of mandatory protective equipment and promotes player safety by prohibiting the intentional removal of helmets during live play. In addition, the automatic goal provision for goalkeepers who deliberately remove their helmet and/or facemask during an opposing breakaway preserves competitive fairness by eliminating the opportunity to intentionally create a stoppage of play to negate a clear scoring opportunity.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

e. Coincidental Penalties (Rule 19)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. During the final five minutes of regulation and at any time in overtime, the immediate serving of the differential between coincidental penalties ensures that the penalized team does not gain an unintended advantage through penalty timing administration.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

f. Major Penalties (Rule 20)

(1) Recommendation. A second major penalty in the same game is an automatic game misconduct.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Major penalties are reserved for serious infractions. When a player commits a second major foul in the same game, the automatic game misconduct reflects the seriousness of repeated dangerous actions and helps protect player safety.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

g. Major or Misconduct Penalty to Goalkeeper (Rule 28.2)

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

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Goalkeepers occupy a unique role with specialized equipment and substitution requirements. Having another player serve the major penalty maintains the full penalty consequence without unnecessarily disrupting game flow or creating avoidable safety and administrative issues.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

h. Goalkeeper's Privileged Area (Rule 28.4)

(1) Recommendation. Remove the Goalkeeper's Privileged Area.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Obsolete rule in most other levels of hockey.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

i. Trapezoid (New Rule 28.4)

(1) Recommendation. Establish the Goalkeeper's Trapezoid

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. The trapezoid is designed to create more contested puck situations and encourage offensive pressure. Restricting where goalkeepers can handle the puck behind the net prevents teams from neutralizing forechecks too easily and helps generate more sustained offensive-zone play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. There will be a financial piece to adding new lines to the ice.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

j. Fighting (Rule 48.1)

(1) Recommendation. Edit the definition of fighting to be "one player punches or attempts to punch an opponent repeatedly". Singular punches to be penalized as roughing.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

k. Head Butting (Rule 49)

(1) Recommendation. 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.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This change creates a clearer penalty scale for head-butting. Minor penalties apply to attempts or non-forceful contact, while more severe, intentional head-butting actions continue to carry major and game misconduct penalties. The goal is more consistent enforcement and better alignment between the severity of the act and the penalty assessed.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

l. Checking From Behind (Rule 50)

(1) Recommendation. Remove “in open ice” from the checking from behind rule.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. The revision simplifies penalty application for officials by eliminating discretion between a minor and major standard on checking-from-behind fouls. Officials can utilize other fouls such as “charging” for open ice hits from behind when warranted.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

m. Hitting After the Whistle (Rule 53.3)

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

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Contact occurring after the whistle is typically retaliatory, unnecessary, or confrontational in nature and more appropriately fits within existing categories that already address avoidable physical altercations and player behavior.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

n. Throwing the Stick (Rule 55.5)

(1) Recommendation. Change the penalty for throwing the stick outside the playing area from a Misconduct to a Game Misconduct.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Reinforces the emphasis on player safety and sportsmanship by addressing behavior that presents unnecessary risk to participants, fans and officials.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

o. Goalkeeper Leaving Stick (Rule 55)

(1) Recommendation. 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.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Similar to existing awarded-goal provisions for fouls committed during clear scoring opportunities, this revision restores equity when an imminent goal is prevented through illegal tactics rather than legal play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

p. Interference (Rule 59.1)

(1) Recommendation. When any member of the defending team, including the Coach or any non-playing person, throws or shoots any part of a stick or any other object or piece of equipment at the puck or puck carrier in his defending zone, a penalty shot shall be awarded.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This rule addresses deliberate actions involving the use of abandoned or broken equipment, or other debris, to interfere with the puck or puck carrier. Assessing a penalty shot provides a strong deterrent against this behavior and ensures that a clear scoring opportunity is restored when an infraction directly impacts play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

q. Delay of Game (New Rule)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.

- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

- (3) Rationale. This rule is designed to keep the game moving and prevent teams from using a goalie freeze as a way to slow play or gain a line change advantage. The face-off location rewards territorial pressure, and limiting substitutions ensures the defending team cannot use the stoppage for strategic rest unless it's for injury or penalties.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

r. Spitting (Rule 79.5)

- (1) Recommendation. Spitting to be penalized as a Game Disqualification.

- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

- (3) Rationale. Spitting is treated as an immediate removal offense because it presents both a health risk and a serious sportsmanship issue. The penalty reflects zero tolerance for conduct that endangers others and is considered fundamentally unacceptable in the game.

- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.

- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

s. Faceoffs (Rule 81)

- (1) Recommendation. Require that the blade of the stick is flat on the ice during faceoffs.

- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This creates a consistent standard for all faceoffs and removes tactics like angling or lifting the blade to gain an advantage. It makes enforcement clearer for officials and ensures a fair, repeatable faceoff procedure in every situation.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

t. Offside (Rule 86.1)

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

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. The goal is to make zone entries more controlled and less based on skating through a loose puck. Players must clearly possess the puck with their stick before entering the offensive zone, which helps reduce offside confusion and encourages more structured offensive play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

u. Hand Pass (Rule 84.2)

(1) Recommendation. Permit hand passes that are initiated and completed in the defensive zone.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. The rule is designed to reduce stoppages for technical infractions that do not create a competitive advantage in dangerous areas, while improving flow and defensive-zone problem-solving.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

v. High Stick (Rule 84.2)

(1) Recommendation. When a high-sticking the puck violation by the defensive team in the defensive zone, a change of players will be permitted by the offending team.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Prevent the defense from stopping long attacking zone possessions by playing the stick with a high puck, in order to change lines.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

w. Faceoff Location following hand pass or high stick (Rule 84.3/84.4)

(1) Recommendation. 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.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This approach minimizes disproportionate territorial penalties for non-penalty infractions, improves consistency in officiating decisions, and supports continuous play.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

x. Timeout (Rule 92.2)

(1) Recommendation. You may not use your timeout if your team is not allowed to change players due to an infraction.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Allowing a timeout in such situations would undermine the competitive consequence of the infraction by enabling a reset of lineup conditions.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

y. Timeout (Rule 92.2)

(1) Recommendation. Eliminate the additional timeout in overtime during the regular season.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This change keeps overtime moving by reducing stoppages. Teams still retain their regulation timeout, but no extra timeout is added in overtime, encouraging quicker resolution and more continuous play during the extra period.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

z. Timeout (Rule 92.2)

(1) Recommendation. Only one timeout will be permitted per stoppage, regardless of which team has called the timeout.

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. This prevents both teams from using multiple timeouts during the same stoppage to extend delays. It keeps the game moving while still allowing each team reasonable opportunity to use timeouts strategically within separate stoppages.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

aa. Coaches Challenge (Rule 93.4)

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

(2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.

(3) Rationale. Permitting a coach's challenge for disallowed goals due to goalkeeper interference introduces an additional layer of review for one of the most subjective goal review categories. The provision is designed to improve accuracy in determining whether interference materially affected the goalkeeper's ability to play their position.

(4) Estimated budget impact. None.

(5) Student-athlete impact. None.

bb. Coaches Challenge (Rule 93.4.c)

- (1) Recommendation. Require a coaches challenge for an unobserved act that would lead to a major penalty of a player.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. This change ensures that if an act was not directly observed by officials, it must be initiated through a coach's challenge and confirmed via video before a player is removed.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

cc. Coaches Challenge (Rule 93.4)

- (1) Recommendation. Permit only one coaches challenge per stoppage by the same team.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. Reduces the potential for compounded delays arising from sequential reviews initiated by the same team during a single stoppage, while still allowing meaningful access to video review for eligible situations.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

dd. Shootout (Appendix B)

- (1) Recommendation. 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.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. This change makes shootouts more about the full roster available at the end of the game. Players are only excluded if they are serving a major disciplinary penalty or have been removed from the game, ensuring coaches can use their best available players for this deciding format.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None.

ee. Exhibition Games

- (1) Recommendation. Define exhibition games and require that all NCAA Ice Hockey Rules will be followed in these formats.
- (2) Effective date. August 1, 2026.
- (3) Rationale. Exhibition games are still NCAA games in terms of rules. Even though they don't count toward standings, they must be played under the full NCAA rulebook so that players, coaches, and officials are operating under the same standards as regular-season and tournament competition.
- (4) Estimated budget impact. None.
- (5) Student-athlete impact. None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS.

- 1. **Welcome and announcements.** Members and invited guests were welcomed and thanked for their time.
- 2. **Secretary-rules editor report.** The secretary-rules editor provided a presentation of rules proposals to prepare the committee for this week's discussion.
- 3. **National coordinators of officials reports.** The national coordinator led a discussion on points of emphasis for the 2026-2027.
- 4. **2026-27 playing rules timeline.** The committee discussed adjustments to the meeting timeline for 2026.
- 5. **Adjournment.** The annual meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m. Eastern time on May 21, 2026.

Report of the NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee

May 19-21, 2026, Annual Meeting

Page No. 13

Committee Chair: Trevor Large, Canisius University, Atlantic Hockey America

Staff Liaison(s): Ty Halpin, Championships and Alliances

NCAA Division I Men's Ice Hockey Rules Subcommittee May 19-21, 2026	
Attendees:	
Trevor Large, Canisius University.	
Steve Chouinard, Colgate University.	
Erik Martinson, North Dakota State University	
Dennis Williams, Bowling Green State University	
Brian Murphy, Hockey East.	
Chris Leavitt, active official.	
Frank Cole, National Coordinator of Men's Ice Hockey Officials.	
Jeff Fulton, Secretary-Rules Editor.	
Absentees:	
Nick Siergiej, University of Notre Dame.	
Luke Strand, Minnesota State University.	
Thomas Weis, The Ohio State University.	
Guests in Attendance:	
Josh Richlew, University of Michigan.	
Michelle Morgan, Commissioner, Atlantic Hockey America.	
Doug Christensen, Commissioner, ECAC Hockey.	
NCAA Staff Liaison in Attendance:	
Ty Halpin.	
Other NCAA Staff Members in Attendance:	
Paden Alie and Greg Johnson.	