

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



NEWS RELEASE

High School Ice Hockey Rules Changes Focus on Penalties for Hits from Behind

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dan Schuster

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (May 14, 2012) – In an effort to promote safer play and minimize the risk of injury, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Ice Hockey Rules Committee approved changes that will strengthen the language for checking from behind.

Rule 6-7-1 states, “No player shall push, charge, cross-check or body-check an opponent from behind in open ice,” and a violation would result in a minor and misconduct penalty. Rule 6-7-2 also states, “Hitting from behind into the boards or goal frame is a flagrant violation,” and a violation calls for a game disqualification.

The checking-from-behind change was one of five rules revisions approved by the rules committee at its April 23-24 meeting in Indianapolis. The changes were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

Dan Schuster, NFHS staff liaison to the Ice Hockey Rules Committee, said that player safety was the main factor in the rules change.

“Because of the attention being given to dangerous play, the committee really took a hard look at the severity of injuries caused by these hits,” he said. “The reason behind the rule is more about addressing a change of culture in high school hockey, and players, coaches, officials and fans need to understand the consequences of these hits.”

Two additional rules changes will affect the goal crease. First, the high school goal crease will now have a different look, matching the crease used by both the National Hockey League and National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Also, Rule 6-23-4 now states, “no attacking player shall stand on the goal-crease line or in the goal crease if, in the opinion of the official, the player physically prevents the goalkeeper from defending the goal.”

According to Schuster, this rule is meant to eliminate unnecessary whistles that stop play when a player is in the crease but has no effect on the goalkeeper.

“As long as a player isn’t physically disrupting or visually impeding the goalkeeper, he or she can stand in the crease,” he said.

Additional rules changes were:

Rule 5-2-3: Officials will now be required to wear a half face shield on their helmets, effective in the 2013-14 season. All other official uniform requirements remain the same.

Rule 3-3-4: If a team challenges the opposing goalkeeper’s equipment, the official should not stop play to measure but should report the challenge to the state association. This rule was amended to limit stoppages of play.

According to the NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, ice hockey is the 14th-most popular boys sport at the high school level with 36,912 participants in 1,612 schools. An additional 9,022 girls participated in the sport at 578 schools.

This press release was written by Alex Swenson, who served an internship this spring in the NFHS Publications/Communications department. He attends Franklin (IN) College and is majoring in broadcast journalism and public relations.

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About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 11 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.6 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org.

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