



Ontario Women's Hockey Association Mandatory Modified 4-on-4 Playing Rules

PHYSICAL CONTACT

The Government Laws state, "Team sports may only be practiced or played within the facility if they do not allow for physical contact between players or if they have been modified to avoid physical contact between the players." It is important to recognize that the Ontario Government has permitted competition with the express understanding that rules have been modified to eliminate intentional physical contact. Playing the game of hockey without intentional physical contact represents a significant shift from traditional hockey and, as such, it is the equal and collective responsibility of all participants (players, team staff, officials) to create and adhere to the gameplay structure that eliminates intentional physical contact.

OWHA REQUIREMENTS

Intentional physical contact is not permitted and must be avoided.

- Accidental/incidental contact may occur
- No body checking. All body checking will be strictly penalized
- When a scrum or gathering (2 or more participants occurs with prolonged contact, the puck will be given to the defending team and the attacking team must retreat. A whistle will be blown to separate the players and another whistle to signal the resumption of play once the official is satisfied the attacking team has retreated and the defending team has gain puck possession.
- Lifting a player's stick to obtain the puck does not constitute physical contact.
- There shall not be any handshakes either with or without gloves.
- There shall not be any traditional celebration of goals where players have come together or tapped gloves. Social distancing must be followed.

PENALTIES

The Hockey Canada rulebook applies for all infractions. OWHA Discipline Procedures and Minimum Suspensions are in place. Players and participants are reminded of their responsibilities for the health and safety of all in the game. The OWHA reserves the right to increase suspensions and/or remove participants from participation as deemed appropriate by it.

GAME SHEETS

- OWHA Game sheets should be handled as little as possible with hands sanitized after touching
- Pens should NOT be shared
- OWHA Players are NOT to sign game sheets. One team staff member is to sign for the team with their own pen. They need to ensure all health and safety procedures are being followed.
- One on-ice official is to write the names and numbers of all on-ice officials on the game sheet and sign it following the game, using their own pen and sanitizing hand afterwards
- On-ice officials who have called a penalty requiring a write up are to go to the link on the OWHA web site and complete the Major Penalty report or Incident Report as soon as possible after the infraction.
- Home team to take picture of game sheet and upload on PGHA website (under Game Play 2020/2021 tab)



EQUIPMENT

- If a player loses a glove, she must immediately retrieve the glove or leave the ice.
- If a player loses any equipment on the ice and does not immediately retrieve it, she shall retrieve her own equipment at the next stoppage of play. If play is stopped, specifically for the individual to retrieve her own equipment, the non-offending team shall take possession of the puck. If a team is in scoring position, play will be permitted to continue as per Hockey Canada playing rules.

SUGGESTED MODIFIED GAME TIMING

- 3 min warm up
- 2 x 22 min periods (run time)
- 1 min intermission between 1st and 2nd period
- No overtime / no shootout for tied games
- No faceoffs
 - Period 1 – visiting team has first possession
 - Period 2 – home team has first possession

LINE CHANGES

Teams change on the fly.

OWHA 4-on-4 MODIFIED GAME SCENARIOS

Start of the Period: For the start of the 1st period, the Visiting team will be granted possession of the puck. For the start of the 2nd period, the home team will start with the puck. The puck will be placed on the center dot. The opposing team must line up behind their own blue line. The referee will blow the whistle to start the game. The team with possession of the puck may either shoot the puck into the opposing zone or choose to carry or pass it.

Goals: When a goal is scored, the team that scored the goal must all retreat from the attacking zone. All players from the team that scored the goal must retreat behind the near blue line before they can proceed to apply pressure to the team that was scored upon. The defending team shall begin from inside their defending zone. Once the team is behind the blue line the official will blow their whistle to start play.

Icing: Icing will result in a change of possession. The official will blow the whistle and also verbally identify the icing infraction (yell icing only if physically distanced from others). The team that iced the puck must all retreat simultaneously to the blue line before they can apply pressure. The defending team shall begin from inside their defending zone. Once the team is behind the blue line, the official will blow their whistle to start play.

Offsides: Delayed offside consistent with current Hockey Canada rules will be permitted. Should offside occur, it will result in a change of possession. The official will blow the whistle and also verbally identify the offside infraction (yell offside if physically distanced from others). All players from the team that was offside must retreat to the center red line simultaneously. The defending team shall begin from inside their defending zone. Once the team is behind the red line the official will blow their whistle to start play.



Goaltender Freezes the Puck: Officials will do their best to encourage the goaltenders to keep the puck moving. If the Official is required to stop the play for the goaltender freezing the puck then the whistle will be blown. The attacking team must exit the attacking zone and simultaneously make contact with the blue line. The defending team shall begin from inside their defending zone. Once the team is behind the blue line, the official will blow their whistle to start play.

Penalties:

4-on-4 Games – Minor penalties will be assessed and served consistent with Hockey Canada rules. Should the same team be assessed a second Minor while the first penalty is served, the non-offending team will be awarded a penalty shot in lieu of a second Minor penalty. Should a team be assessed a Major penalty, while they are already serving a Minor penalty, the non-offending team shall be assessed two penalty shots in lieu of the Major penalty. Any player is permitted to take the penalty shot. All Hockey Canada rules that result in a Misconduct, Game Misconduct, Gross Misconduct or Math penalty will result in the immediate ejection of the player from the game. The non-offending team shall start with possession of the puck and play shall start as per the start of period procure in this document.

NOTE: If no penalty box is available, all penalties shall be penalty shots.

Penalty Shot Procedure: The Hockey Canada penalty shot procedure shall be followed with the following exception. Players who were on the ice at the time of the infraction will retreat behind the blue line on the opposite side of the ice until the conclusion of the penalty shot. Players will remain stationary and group as a team on each side of the ice, maintaining physical distancing. Should a goal be scored, the procedure as reference in this document for starting play after a goal will be followed. Should a goal not be scored, the team who was awarded the penalty shot shall start play consistent with the start of periods procedure in this document with the team taking the penalty shot having possession.

Intentionally Entering the Goaltender's Crease: No attacking player is permitted to skate through or stop in the goaltender's crease unless the puck first entered the crease. Should a player illegally enter the crease, play shall be stopped and result in a change of possession. The attacking team must exit the attacking zone and simultaneously make contact with the blue line. The defending team shall begin from inside their defending zone. Once the team is behind the blue line the official will blow the whistle to start play.

Puck Gathering or Scrum: When 3 or more players are in the vicinity of the puck and begin to battle for the puck the official will blow the whistle, the defensive team will be awarded possession of the puck and the attacking tam will be forced to retreat. The Official will blow the whistle a 2nd time when it is determined that the attacking team has sufficiently retreated by a minimum of 2 meters. The attacking team will NOT be required to leave the zone. They will be required to back away from the puck and allow the defensive team to fully gain possession. If a puck gathering or scrum occurs in the neutral zone the defensive versus attacking team will be determined by the position of the puck relative to the center red line (center ice).

ADDITIONAL PGHA GAME PLAY RULES

- The PGHA has organized teams so there are enough players to execute 4-on-4 game play. If a team is expecting absences, coaches will reach out to players on teams (not playing and in their tier) and ask for substitutes. Coaches should be contacting different players every time they are in need of players. Coaches are not to call up more players than the number of players rostered to their 4-on-4 team.
- COVID-19 procedures – the same arena rules/procedures for practices must be followed for games



- Change rooms – due to the numbers of players allowed in each change room, there will not be assigned dressing rooms for each team
- Coaches pep talks – coaches can briefly meet with players outside (socially distanced) before games, but won't be able to go into change rooms to go over game play prior to games
- PGHA Return to Hockey COVID-19 Plan:
[https://pgha.net/Public/Documents/PGHA Education and Training - Edited Sept 24.pdf](https://pgha.net/Public/Documents/PGHA_Education_and_Training_-_Edited_Sept_24.pdf)

ON-ICE OFFICIALS INFORMATION

Similar to players, team staff and administrators, on-ice Officials for the 2020-2021 hockey season are working through the various changes in this challenging season of Covid-19 as we collectively work together to provide safe and fun hockey opportunities. Please be advised of the information below that is taken from Hockey Canada's officiating materials as it should assist teams and officials support each other.

OFFICIALS DRESSING ROOM

- Only game officials should be in the Dressing Room – No Visitors
- It is prohibited for officials to drink from water bottles belonging to skaters or goaltenders. If officials require water during a game, they should have their own water bottle at the penalty bench.
- Officials should verbally greet coaches as they generally do, but with physical distancing. No handshakes.

PENALIZED PLAYERS

When escorting players to the penalty bench, the official should physically distance themselves from the player(s) at all times. If this is not possible, officials may require being closer to players to separate them but should refrain from touching players where possible.

SCRUMS AND ALTERCATIONS

Often officials will find themselves in a situation of separating players in scrums and/or altercations. The officials have a job to do, and one of their responsibilities is to protect the players and maintain a safe environment for all participants during such situations. Awareness and hustle by the officials are more important than ever, as doing so will help prevent scrums/altercations and/or de-escalate heated moments. When an altercation occurs, officials should exercise proper techniques to quickly and efficiently separate the players. Once separated, officials should minimize contact with the players and position themselves to maintain physical distancing while escorting the player(s) to the penalty bench, if necessary. Following proper procedures in separating players quickly and re-establishing physical distancing between the official and players provides minimal risk. If desired, the stoppage of play can be used to disinfect with hand sanitizer. Officials should also be proactive in advising player(s) and teams that scrums/altercations will not be tolerated, and players may be penalized accordingly. Gatherings amongst players should be discouraged to protect players and officials and provide a safe and healthy playing environment.



POSITIONING NEAR PLAYERS' BENCHES

Positioning during play will often have an official alongside the players' benches. Officials are encouraged to position themselves a minimum of six feet away from the bench where possible; however, there may be situations where this is unavoidable. Officials should stay off the benches as much as possible. It is recommended that officials refrain from jumping on the boards to avoid the play. The primary focus is always the safety of the officials when close to the play.

PRE-GAME FAIR PLAY PROCEDURE

Hockey Canada procedure is for officials to approach each bench and meet the coaches, while at the same time practicing physical distancing. Officials should not shake hands with coaches. Officials are encouraged to skate in front of both benches and make eye contact with the coaches. This is an excellent opportunity to establish expectations regarding communication with the coaches during the game.

COMMUNICATION WITH BENCHES

Officials are encouraged to limit visits to the benches where possible. However, if an official needs to visit a bench to communicate with a coach, they should maintain physical distancing and not be in contact with the bench area.

COMMUNICATION WITH TIMEKEEPERS AND SCOREKEEPERS

When reporting penalties at the penalty bench, officials should avoid speaking through the hole in the glass. They are encouraged to report penalties while maintaining physical distancing. If an official is required to verbally communicate with an off-ice official, the off-ice official is encouraged to open the penalty bench door, where required, and the official can then report infractions from a distance. This practice should only be used when necessary. It is recommended where possible that officials not touch game sheets prior to or after a game. If required, the off-ice officials can write the names of the game officials on the game sheets. Associations should explore options for use of electronic game sheets.

REFEREE'S CREASE

Regarding captains and players, this is an excellent opportunity to re-establish the importance of the referee's crease in front of the penalty bench. For any longer conversations, officials should position themselves in the crease and ask players to maintain physical distancing outside the crease. For quicker conversations, officials should simply remind players to maintain physical distancing when necessary.

COVID-19 SCREENING

Referee's and Timekeepers are required to complete and submit Covid-19 screening through the PGHA website prior to entering the arena. The following Health Screen link can be accessed under the Referees/Time Keepers tab on the PGHA website:

https://pgha.net/Forms/4205/Health_Screen_-_Refs_timekeepers/



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Do officials need to wear a cloth mask while on the ice?
The wearing of a cloth mask during a game is the choice of the official. Like players, the mask may hamper breathing during exercise and may also become sweaty. However, if the official feels more comfortable wearing a cloth mask, they should choose to do so. A cloth mask should be worn by all officials anywhere in the facility prior to and just after leaving the ice when physical distancing cannot be practiced. Wearing a cloth mask alone will not prevent the spread of COVID-19. Officials must consistently and strictly adhere to good hygiene and public health authority guidelines, including frequent hand washing and physical distancing. Continue to monitor public health authority guidelines specific to the wearing of cloth masks.

2. Should officials be required to wear gloves while on the ice?
Hockey Canada does not recommend that officials wear gloves. The concern is if the official's hands come in contact with the virus while wearing the gloves, the virus will remain on the gloves until changed. If the official then touches their face, the virus would be transferred and there is a greater risk of contracting the virus. Therefore, unless the official plans on changing gloves after every face-off, gloves would not be an effective way to prevent transmission. More important for officials is to:
 - a. *Bring hand sanitizer to the game and utilize it during stoppages of play when possible and at the end of each period.*
 - b. *Avoid touching their face, nose, mouth and eyes with unclean hands.*
 - c. *Immediately address any injuries, such as an exposed cut, before returning to the game.*

3. Should officials consider using electronic whistles?
Electronic whistles are an acceptable option for on-ice officials. Using a standard finger- grip whistle could propel moisture droplets into the air and potentially expose other officials, players and coaches to the virus. Electronic whistles are a personal choice that each official can make. Regardless of the type whistle used, however, it is important that the official cleans/disinfects the whistle between periods and after each game. Officials should make every effort to avoid blowing their whistle when in close proximity to other players or officials. When necessary, officials should blow their whistle in a different direction.

4. How do officials handle pre-game handshakes with coaches?
The Hockey Canada procedure is for officials to approach each bench and meet the coaches. Officials should not shake hands with coaches, and should maintain proper physical distancing six feet from the bench. Official(s) are encouraged to make eye contact with the coaches. This is an excellent opportunity to establish expectations regarding communication with the coaches, or captains, during the game. This should also be the standard practice/position if it is necessary to communicate with a coach during the game.



5. What is Hockey Canada's recommendation regarding pre-game or post-game handshakes for players and team officials?

Hockey Canada has eliminated the practice of pre- and post-game handshakes between players and team officials as a result of COVID-19. This will remain in effect until otherwise directed. Officials should not shake hands, or bump fists, with players or coaches. If coaches approach the officials on the ice after the game with the intent of shaking hands, a quick wave and thank you as the official maintains physical distancing would be appropriate

6. Many officials' dressing rooms can be small. How are officials going to be able to practice physical distancing when there may be limited space for officials?

Officials must follow public health authority guidelines, and those of the facility, and respect physical distancing where required. There are times when physical distancing may not be possible and the recommendation in those situations is to wear a cloth mask. If physical distancing is required in a designated officials' dressing room, officials should work with facility staff to see if more rooms may be available. If the officials' dressing room is small, a rotation system could be considered. This may also require a little extra teamwork as the next game crew can arrive and get dressed a little earlier so the crew coming off the ice has some space, or the crew coming off the ice can wait a few minutes until the next crew is dressed and can step out. The bottom line is good teamwork may be necessary to respect everyone's space. In some cases, there may be situations where access to the officials' dressing room is not permitted. It may require officials arrive at the rink fully dressed except skates, helmet and sweater – just like the players. It is important to work with the local association to understand facility restrictions and protocols so officials can be prepared upon arrival at the facility.

7. What protocol should officials follow if a player is spitting/blowing their nose without a tissue on the ice or in the bench area?

Officials should encourage and promote proper hygiene habits with players, as outlined in the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines. Officials may provide reminders and, if necessary, communicate warnings to players and coaches regarding this improper conduct.

8. How should officials handle the management of player equipment on the ice? (e.g. broken/dropped sticks, neck guards, mouthguards, gloves, etc.)

Officials are directed not to pick up any equipment that may be on the ice. At the first stoppage of play, officials shall direct the player to retrieve their own equipment. When players are being escorted to the penalty bench and equipment is left on the ice, officials should follow the Hockey Canada Officiating Procedures and direct one player from the same team to collect any equipment.

9. Should officials disinfect their gear after each game?

It is recommended by Hockey Canada that officials wash their equipment (jersey, pants, etc.) after each day of assignments, following manufacturer guidelines. It is also good practice to disinfect the helmet/visor and whistle. It is important that officials ensure equipment is kept clean.



10. Do officials have access to water bottles during a game?

It is suggested that officials should have their own pre-filled water bottle at the penalty bench. Water bottles should be washed after each game. Officials are prohibited from drinking water from bottles belonging to goaltenders or players.

11. Should pucks be disinfected prior to use?

It is not a requirement of Hockey Canada that pucks are disinfected prior to use. However, where possible, and in cooperation with teams and associations, it is suggested that all game pucks could be disinfected with an alcohol-based wipe prior to being used. Also, any pucks that go out of play should be disinfected prior to being used again for game play. Will in-person clinics be permitted for officials?

Members will determine how clinics will be delivered in their jurisdiction and must adhere to public health authority guidelines. Members may be permitted to conduct face-to-face clinics, following guidelines, if desired. If there are restrictions, Members may have to host virtual clinics.

12. What should officials do if they feel ill or sick?

If an official feels ill or sick, they are directed to stay home and follow the direction of their physician and public health authority. Officials should refer to the protocols outlined in the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines and their Member's Return to Hockey plan.

13. If a player contracts COVID-19, that player's team must self-isolate as per public health authority guidelines. Would the self-isolation also apply to any on-ice officials that may have come in contact?

Officials should refer to their public health authority guidelines and the information in Section 7 of the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines.

14. If an official falls ill from an infection that can be shown to have come from contact during a game, and if any lost salary is not covered by the official's regular employer, what compensation for this lost salary, if any, could be available through Hockey Canada's insurance program?

If an official should contract COVID-19 or become ill because of contact in a game and this results in lost salary from their employer, there is not a policy under the Hockey Canada program that would provide this type of coverage.

15. Is there any special training that officials should take related to COVID-19?

Hockey Canada has established a set of minimum requirements for officials training for the 2020-21 season. This includes information related to COVID-19 and will be provided to all officials for review. In addition, Hockey Canada, through the guidance of the Health and Safety Task Team and developed by Respect in Sport, has created an eLearning module: Planning a Safe Return to Hockey. The module, which will be hosted on Hockey University and available at no cost to membership, offers a concise overview of Hockey Canada's Return to Hockey Safety Guidelines. The program looks at key information to help reduce the risk of COVID-19



in the hockey environment. Throughout the module, membership will be pointed towards detailed information on specific prevention topics. All Members are encouraged to become familiar with public health authority guidelines and the Hockey Canada Safety Guidelines. The Officiating Task Team recommends that all officiating instructors, officiating coaches/supervisors and all Level III/IV/V/VI officials complete the COVID-19 eLearning module.

16. How should officiating coaches or supervisors communicate with game officials in cases where restrictions are in place for physical distancing?

Officiating coaches/supervisors must respect public health authority guidelines regarding physical distancing within facilities. If officiating coaches/supervisors are prohibited from visiting the officials' dressing room, they should consider other means to communicate with officials following a game, which may include by phone, virtual meetings or by email. Associations are permitted to utilize on-ice coach/mentor officials, but also must respect and follow public health authority and facility guidelines.