



SLEDGE HOCKEY

OFFICIATING GUIDELINES



SLEDGE HOCKEY – OFFICIATING GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide an introduction for existing able-bodied hockey officials to the sport of sledge hockey. Essentially, sledge hockey is the same as able-bodied hockey. However, there are some obvious differences as well as subtle differences in the way the game is played and officiated, and officials should take note of these when becoming involved in the sport. This is not a comprehensive manual - it is intended to serve as a guideline for officials who are interested in making the transition to sledge hockey from the able-bodied side of the game.

At the international level, sledge hockey is governed by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). The IPC draws information for its rule books from the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), and makes adaptations specific to sledge hockey. The IIHF rules and regulations can be found at the IIHF website, www.iihf.com. The IPC rules and regulations can be found at the IPC website, www.paralympic.org.

Levels of sledge hockey below the international level in Canada draw the information from Hockey Canada's able-bodied hockey rule book with some modifications for sledge hockey. These modifications may vary from region to region but will follow the same themes as the IPC/IIHF rules. Hockey Canada's playing rules can be found at www.hockeycanada.ca.

This document will outline the major rule differences, positioning differences, and other miscellaneous differences that an official will encounter when making the transition to sledge hockey. Most of the information provided here is found in Annex 2 of the IPC Ice Sledge Hockey Rule Book and in the IPC Introduction to Officiating Sledge Hockey DVD.



RULE DIFFERENCES

Many of these rules exist in able-bodied hockey, but some do not. The intention here is to make officials aware of certain rules which are especially applicable to sledge hockey due to the unique nature of the sport.

Rule 705 (b): Change of Players Procedure During Stoppage of Play

Because players are on sleds and line changes are slightly slower, 10 seconds is given to both the visiting team and the home team to make their player changes instead of the normal 5 seconds. The linesman conducting the face-off will still allow the normal 5 seconds before dropping the puck.

Rule 902: Offside

The determining factors for an offside are: 1. The position of the puck, and 2. The position of the player's sled blades. The player must have the blades under his sled making contact with the blue line or on the neutral zone side of the line at the moment the puck crosses the line.

Rule 902 (b): Procedure for Conducting Face-Off

The players shall be positioned squarely facing the sideboards of the rink, with their sleds outside of the face-off spot, and with the blade of their stick on the ice on the white part of the face-off spot. The centremen may face the same way as their opponent or the opposite direction.

After dropping the puck for a face-off, the official should be very aware of the wingers behind them before attempting to back out.

Rule 1007: Penalty Shot

This rule is the same as the IIHF rule book with the exception of "Note 3" which is the definition of "from behind" as it pertains to a penalty shot being called. In sledge hockey, "from behind" is determined by the position of the player's body, and not by the position of the player's sled. Even if the player's sled has come somewhat alongside his opponent's sled when the infraction takes place, if his body is still behind his opponent's, then the penalty shot will be awarded.

Rule 1015: Butt-Ending

In sledge hockey, this can be a particularly dangerous penalty due to the sharp picks on the end of the players' sticks. While they are used for propulsion, it is possible to use the picks as a weapon. Officials should ensure that they are very aware of the players' use of their sticks.

Rule 1025: Holding an Opponent

This is one of the most commonly called penalties in sledge hockey. Holding an opponent for even a moment can cause this player to lose any momentum he may have. Holding can occur on the arms, on the sled, anywhere on the body, on the head, and even on the opponent's stick.

Rule 1031: Teeing

Teeing is defined by the IPC as "a player making contact with an opponent with any part of the front radius of his sled straight into his opponent. This does not include all occurrences of contact being made, rather when contact is made at, or almost at right angles of the sleds with significant impact. This is a safety issue for the players as serious injuries can occur."

SLEDGE HOCKEY – OFFICIATING GUIDELINES



In the photo above, the Japanese player (13) “T-Bones” Canadian forward Billy Bridges.

Rule 1046 (b): Falling on the Puck by a Player

Often on face-offs, a player will intentionally fall on the puck in order to protect it from the opposing centre before passing the puck back to a teammate. This should be strictly enforced with the appropriate minor penalty.

POSITIONING & GAME MANAGEMENT

Staying on Top of the Play

Referees should not hesitate to cross behind the goal net to get closer to the play. When players are battling for a loose puck at close quarters, there are a number of things that can happen including holding (the opponent or the sled) and jabbing an opponent with the pick end of the stick.

Because the players are low to the ice surface while sitting in their sleds, hands and sticks can be hidden behind their opponents so the referee needs to be right on top of the play. This also applies to when the play progresses down the ice. For example, if you see a breakout pass from the end zone in your corner to a breaking player on the other side of the ice, feel free to cross over through the neutral zone to stay on top of the play.

Moving Out from the Boards

The referee has to find open ice during a breakout and when play is moving through the neutral zone. Players on sleds take up more room than able-bodied players so the referee should not be afraid to move away from the boards and move closer to the centre in order to get out of the zone.

Linesmen Standing Outside the Blue Line

Linesmen need to be aware that while play is in the attacking zone, defensemen sometimes curl back out into the neutral zone and come back into the attacking zone along the boards. Linesmen will have to give the defenseman room along the boards by either moving back further into the neutral zone or moving out from the boards to give him room.

Face-Offs

Officials should conduct the face-off by holding the puck out over the face-off circle at the players' eye level. We do not want the players having to look up to anticipate when the official is going to drop the puck.

Body Checks

When a player body checks an opponent as they pass each other in opposite directions, the body check must be delivered with the shoulder. Often, a player will put out an elbow or a forearm to deliver the check and this should be penalized as this has a clothesline effect on the player who was checked.

Judgment on Icing Calls

Linesmen must use a different sense of judgment when washing out an icing because they feel that a defending player (other than the goalkeeper) is able to play the puck before it crosses the goal line. A player on a sled is not able to move as quickly as an able-bodied player, so use appropriate judgment.

Skating Backwards

It is imperative that you are aware of players behind you before you proceed to back up. If you run into a player on a sled while skating backwards you will end up on top of the player and hurting that player and/or yourself.

Jumping

Officials should never jump. They should take the hit and do everything possible not to fall on top of the players. Officials should never jump up on the boards, as the skate blades would then be at the head level of the players.

SLEDGE HOCKEY – OFFICIATING GUIDELINES

Team Benches on the Ice

When a game is played at an arena that does not have accessible bench areas, the players will sit on the ice in front of the boards in front of the player benches, between the blue line and the centre red line. Penalized players are to sit on the ice in the referee's crease. If a puck is directed toward the team or the penalty benches, the players are supposed to direct the puck as if it bounced off the boards. If the puck enters the team bench or if a player has directed the puck in an unfair manner, then the play should be stopped right away. This is a safety issue - there should not be battles for loose pucks among the players on the bench.

In an arena with accessible bench areas, players will have a low entry to the bench area, plastic on the ground inside the benches and clear glass or plastic so that they can see the play while sitting in the bench areas. Hockey Canada and the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council have produced a document outlining these facility modifications which can be found at www.hockeycanada.ca/sledgehockey.



In the photo above, Team Canada players watch the play from a sledge hockey accessible bench.