



HOCKEY CANADA

Action Bulletin d'action

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To: Branch Technical Directors
Branch Referees-in-Chief(04/45)

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From: Marcel Redekop - Chair, Officiating Policy Committee / Hockey Canada
Officer

SUBJECT: 2004 / 05 RULES EMPHASIS

Please ensure that this Bulletin is given the widest possible distribution, especially at all your development clinics. The 2004 – 2005 Rules Emphasis has been approved by the Hockey Canada Board of Directors, and mandates that all Canadian Hockey officials are to emphasize these guidelines.

RULES EMPHASIS

The rules that **MUST** be emphasized are:

- **“CHECKING TO THE HEAD”** – (contact physically or with a stick to another players’ head area).

Deliberate checks to the head have become a major problem in today's game. All head injuries, specifically concussions are on the rise. Concussions not only deprive players of playing time, they end players careers and can have long term affects away from the rink.

*Checks to the Head demonstrate a lack of respect and fair play and must be penalized. Any moderate or severe blow to the head must be penalized with a Minor Penalty and a Misconduct or a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct for Checking to the Head as concussions and other head injuries are having a major impact on the game. A Match penalty could also be assessed under this rule. These are aggressive fouls and must be called at **ALL** occurrences during the hockey game, including shorthanded*

situations.

An infraction with minimal impact can still be called a Minor penalty using the most appropriate penalty infraction (high stick, elbow, rough, cross-check, etc.)

Dr. Tom Pashby, a leading proponent of increasing safety for all players, cautions all those involved in the game that checks to the head have to be penalized "in all hockey, at all levels, wherever hockey is played." Dr. Pashby continues by emphasizing that "many concussions occur because of contact to the head". Deliberate contact to the head area is also responsible for serious dental and eye injuries, injuries that are preventable. Whether it is elbowing, high sticking, roughing or cross-checking, hits to the head are an intentional act of violence and must be treated with zero tolerance on the part of the official at all times.

- **CHECKING FROM BEHIND**

*We want to continue to work to eliminate any contact from behind, as the resulting injuries, especially head and neck injuries can be catastrophic. It is a dangerous and cowardly act. If a player is ever in doubt, the player is being instructed to **STOP**. Strict application of this rule is needed to remove this foul from our game.*

It takes teamwork to bring about change. Coaches, managers, officials, owners, trainers, players, parents and administrators must take ownership to affect change regarding the rules emphasis for the 2004 / 05 season. We must all demonstrate awareness and support for the application of the rules, the spirit of the rules and the respect of the rules.

If you have any questions regarding the Rules Emphasis for this season, please contact your Branch Referee-in-Chief for further clarification.

Yours in hockey,

Marcel Redekop
Chair, Officiating Policy Committee / Hockey Canada Officer
Hockey Canada