

DATE: November 11, 2015

HOCKEY RULE INTERPRETATIONS

Fighting

QUESTION: I see hockey players are suspended for three games if they receive a game disqualification penalty for fighting. How are officials to determine whether or not a player is fighting?

INTERPRETATION: On page 40 of the NFHS Rule book, the rule for Fighting can be found. Officials determine whether or not inappropriate behavior is Fighting. Fighting, as far as NFHS regulations have been determined, is identified in the following manner:

When a player drops his/her gloves and makes contact or attempts to contact an opponent in an aggressive manner, that player should be called for fighting.

When a player, still wearing gloves, makes contact or attempts to contact an opponent in a manner that is more aggressive than roughing, that player should be called for fighting.

QUESTION: Is a player leaving the bench to join a penalty considered a fighting penalty?

INTERPRETATION: Hockey players are taught from early on that they are not allowed to join in a fight. This is a highly dangerous act. If the player joins in the scrum area in any way, they are considered to be “fighting” and should be assessed a GAME DISQUALIFICATION penalty and a three-game suspension. If the player leaves the bench area during a fight without getting involved in fighting, then the game disqualification is issued for a violation of NFHS Rule 7-24, page 40. The player receives a one game disqualification suspension.

Contact with an Official

QUESTION: On the way to the penalty box, a player jabs his elbow into the side of linesman assisting the player to the penalty box. What is the penalty to the player?

INTERPRETATION: WIAA Winter Season Regulations, Hockey, page 23, 8., c., “Any player who in the judgment of the official, intentionally spits on, strikes, slaps, kicks, pushes or aggressively physically contacts an official at any time shall be immediately ineligible for competition a minimum of 90 calendar days from the date of the confrontation. In addition, the player is ineligible to compete for the first 25% of the next season in that same sport.”

Jabbing an elbow into an official can only be identified as “aggressive physical contact.” This results in assessment of a GAME DISQUALIFICATION with the NFHS penalty applied along with the additional penalties added on as well.

Cash Flow Issues

QUESTION: We would like to have a fundraiser where parents sell ads in the program and then receive back 50% of the ad to go towards a team trip to a tournament during the regular season?

INTERPRETATION: The 50% going towards a player’s fees for a team trip would cause an Amateur Status violation for the student(s) involved. Because this is a school program, trips taken during the regular and tournament series seasons must be funded through the school. All funds provided through sponsorship and/or

fundraising need to be donated to the school/school administration and then accepted via a school district's Gift Acceptance Policy. Once the funds are accepted via a school district's Gift Acceptance Policy, a School Board/school administration can then reduce the student fees for the trip for all participants of that team EQUALLY.

QUESTION: **I just returned from our team hockey meeting. There was a discussion about corporate sponsorship to help keep the overall cost of hockey down. One plan was to have 25% go to the team pot and 75% of any money donated go to the asking player to offset his own fee. Will this type solicitation and dispersal create a problem for a player or a program? If so, is there any type of solicitation of funds that does not create a problem?**

INTERPRETATION: The 75% going towards a player's student fees, would cause an Amateur Status violation for the student(s) involved. All funds provided through sponsorship and/or fundraising need to be donated to the school administration and then accepted via a school district's Gift Acceptance Policy. Once the funds are accepted, a School Board/school administration can then reduce the student fees for all the participants of that team EQUALLY.

QUESTION: **We have a \$50 student fee for all athletic sport participants. Can our Hockey Booster Club require parents to pay a \$500 fee to join their Club then, donate that fee to the school?**

INTERPRETATION: No, this sounds like the additional \$500 student fee is being collected by the Hockey Booster Club. This is not a required payment by students or their family. Your School Board needs to be approving of a \$550 student fee. School administration needs to be collecting all of these fees.

Athletic Booster Clubs are support programs that can raise funds for an athletic program. They are not Clubs that require a student/family to join in order to be on a school team. Any funds a Booster Club raises can be donated to the school district using the district's Gift Acceptance policy and then the School Board can reduce student fees if desired. This places responsibility for all student fees with the school administration.

Playing Two Games in One Day

QUESTION: **We're in a hockey tournament and the format has us playing two games in one day. My coach was wondering if the WIAA approves of playing two games in one day?**

INTERPRETATION: WIAA and NFHS language remains silent regarding two games in one day. This means it is allowed. However, with the following reservations:

We are concerned about student-athletes being overexposed by playing in two or more games in one day. In the WIAA Individual Participation Limitations we do indicate "it is the responsibility of a coach to be particularly concerned about overexposing students to the point of adversely affecting their health and safety."

Student-athletes should not be overexposed to the point where they might lose emotional/behavioral control or be physically drained from too many games in too short a period of time (i.e., two or more games in one day, games played on consecutive days, etc.) without adequate recovery time.

Recruiting

QUESTION: Can a student sign with a Junior hockey team agreeing to play with them in the future, and still be eligible to play on our team this season?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, this is allowed and eligibility is maintained unless a player competes in a non-school competition during the school season.

QUESTION: Can a hockey player be listed on the roster of non-school team and still remain eligible to compete on his/her school team?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, so long as the player does not “compete” with a non-school program once the WIAA hockey season has begun, they are able to remain on the “roster” of that non-school team. Once the player’s WIAA season has concluded, with permission from school coaches and school administration, the player can then return to competition with the non-school program.

QUESTION: I was told about a player from Town A that had played his club hockey in Town B. I talked to him and his parents about coming to School C for school and playing hockey. He is an 8th grader now. He is in the Town A School District.
My question is, can he come and play with our team this summer (in June) for our five days of contact? He has not made up his mind yet as to which High School he will be attending. I would appreciate any help.

INTERPRETATION: First, we need to address the situation of parents/potential student-athletes talking with you, as coach, prior to enrolling at School C High School. These situations seem to happen often in ice hockey and I do this whenever these situations develop to protect the eligibility of the student-athlete and to protect yourself as coach. Any time a parent or potential student-athlete asks you about attending School C High School, you can acknowledge that you are glad to know they are interested in attending School C. However, since they have not enrolled in your school, you are not able to discuss athletic opportunities since WIAA regulations prevent attendance at a WIAA member school where the result of undue influence (special consideration due to athletic ability or potential) on the part of any person, whether or not connected with the school can jeopardize a student’s eligibility. This regulation is found on page 31 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, Rules of Eligibility, Article I, Section 3.

This student has no status at your high school until he/she officially enrolls. Once the student enrolls through your admissions office, then you can begin to have discussions with him/her and their family. Until that enrollment process is complete, you do not want to have any conversations with them or their parents. I am attaching a copy of the WIAA Recruiting Guidelines for your review.

Then, regarding your question about 8th graders from another school district working out with or competing with another school's team during the summertime contact period—you can now see where the answer to this question is simply, no. This is not allowed. Student-athletes who work out or compete with their school team during the five unrestricted summertime contact days is not allowed. Students involved in these workouts/competitions can only be full-time students enrolled at that high school so long as participation is voluntary and available to all interested students.

In addition, I will also identify that students from other schools may not participate in "Open Skates/Gyms" as well. Per WIAA Rules at a Glance, "The open gym is open to any student in the designated population of that school that is interested in attending."

Open Skating

QUESTION:

I have a question about the preseason high school open hockey sessions. Can a coach of the team be the adult supervisor for these sessions as long as they do not coach any of the sessions, provide instructions on how the sessions should run or have any ice related role? The reason I ask is the rink needs to have adult supervisors for these open ice sessions and we are trying to determine who can help the rink complete this supervision. I do know that team coaches can't be involved on the ice or provide any coaching to the players but I am unclear on whether they can supervise.

INTERPRETATION:

Coaches are allowed to "recreate" with student-athletes in out-of-season open gym settings that are purely recreational, i.e., there is no instruction, sport skill demonstration, organized drills, or resemblance of a practice being conducted.

Coaches are not allowed to compete with or against players they will be coaching in hockey games organized while school is still in session.

First, remember that Open Gyms are 'school sponsored' programming made known, open and available to any interested student in your school's student population. Open Gyms may include members of the community.

*Coaches can skate, outside of the season with students, including members of the team [even during the school year - out side of the season] during open skates.

*Coaches should be advised that this [must] be casual [recreational] connected to the school's open gym, conditioning for [any interested student], e.g.,

* The opportunity must be voluntary and may not be restricted to hockey athletes, only. Include any interested student – same as required in all open-gyms. Do not include athletes from other schools.

*Opportunity may not resemble a "practice"; e.g., coach with a watch & clipboard, interval running, taking attendance, posting a specific/required work out, e.g. Review Rule At A Glance Text regarding Open Gym for additional/specifcs about Open Gyms..

Nothing has changed with respect to a coach's inability to organize, mandate attendance, coach/instruct, demonstrate and/or direct a practice, e.g., in an open gym setting. Nothing has changed with respect to the stated philosophy

for Open Gyms.

Really, the only element which has changed is that prior to this, coaches could only supervise Open Gyms. Now, coaches “playing” along with the students – in open gyms - will not be considered a violation of Open Gym provisions.

That notion and image - of ‘pure play’ - has been a central one in the deliberations leading to this new interpretation. The new, added text we think is very clear: “Coaches may be allowed to recreate with students and other faculty in open gym settings, provided they are purely recreational in nature”.

Look over the existing text of open gyms and in particular the philosophy...then consider the new text.

The new interpretation as approved by the Board, now allows coaches to participate with students in an Open-Gym - in a recreational climate/activity/manner.

Can you take a few shots with the puck, can you throw and play catch, can you take some turns pitching – sure/perhaps; in a climate of “play and recreation”... and not one which will easily be described only as preseason hockey practice.

It is advisable to think carefully of what you will and/or won’t take part in within your particular open gym environment.. What actions will make you, your kids or program vulnerable to the assertions – later on, when parents or students become disgruntled – and will then be described to us as simply, “mandatory, out of season practice with the coach directing, providing instruction and feedback”?

We think it’s important to recognize that not every Open Gym might be conducive to a coach ‘playing’ along with students.

In addition to the above, it is appropriate to remind coaches as well as school administration that:

Schools will continue to hold all responsibility and liability – for a coach participating with students in this setting – should school administration choose to allow it..

Also, the original Rules A/A Glance and text for Open Gyms (Art. II D) are attached .

Again, keep in mind that the Member’s Bylaw (Article II, Handbook p 26), the fundamental rules and fundamental philosophy of/for Open Gyms – in order to be in compliance with the Bylaw and Rules of Eligibility, have not changed – at all.

Coaching Contact

QUESTION:

I am working to hire my coaching staff that will help coach this season. One person that I have communicated with has been hired to be an assistant with the before/after season Phoenix Hockey organization. Since we have two players on his before/after program that will be playing on

our high school hockey team I wanted to research the rules on this and see if he would have an opportunity to work with the high school team as well. Someone mentioned to me there might be a waiver that we could get to allow him to help coach with us this season as long as he does not coach with the Before/After program next year. Is that true? This coach has a lot of experience and would really help our program grow but I wanted to make sure that I follow the proper procedure in this. Any advice you can provide for me would be helpful.

INTERPRETATION : The response to this inquiry is generally, 'no, not an eligible candidate' - given recent coaching contact...

Typically the 'emergency coach contact waiver' is provided if/when - a given candidate can not be hired and the school is confronted with having NO coach.

It has not been provided for JV coaches, assistant coaches and the like.

My understanding from your note then, is that this prospective coach has not yet had out-of-season contact with your schools players. But WILL have - by virtue of his contract with the club team.

If this understanding is accurate, best possible solution might be to see if there are any alternatives available to the coach and/or players, i.e., either the coach get assigned a different team or age group...that does not include players from your school – **OR** – players get assigned a different club team.

If my understanding is accurate – and if either of these two possible out-of-season disconnects was able to be activated, then there would be no peril in hiring this coach...

Otherwise, given what's known, it would be a difficult and unlikely, waiver appeal.

Uniforms & Equipment

QUESTION: **There is concern within our hockey association that hockey helmets must be HECC certified every five years. Since I am new to this position for only a couple of weeks, I said I would check into the ruling. I assume W.I.A.A. rules fall under the Federation of High School Hockey. We are under the impression hockey helmets must be certified every five years. I am looking for clarification so I can one go back to our association and two, if necessary, take a look at our helmets and plan now for any replacement or reconditioning of helmets that may need to be done before the season starts.**

INTERPRETATON: I also received a note asking about helmets being HECC certified every five years. The NFHS Rule book indicates there is a requirement for helmets and face masks to meet current HECC/ATM Standards at the time of manufacture (NFHS Rule 3-4-5, page 21). Since there is no language from either the NFHS or the WIAA regarding the recertification of ice hockey helmets, it is the responsibility of the school to monitor the condition of the helmets after

purchase. In order to assist schools with liability issues pertaining to concussions and other head trauma, the WIAA has encouraged WIAA Ice Hockey school programs to develop an inventory profile program/system to monitor ice hockey helmets. There are ice hockey programs where the players own their own helmet and others where the school owns the helmets, schools need to identify a program/system for replacing ice hockey helmets. There is no specific number of years when replacements need to be made. Five years seems like a very reasonable length of time. I would encourage discussing this matter with your helmet sales representative.

QUESTION: **Can teams wear sweaters with laces under the chin and do teams have to wear the same uniform?**

INTERPRETATON: NFHS Rule 2-1-2a, page 14, indicates . . ."All members of a team shall wear identical uniforms relative to color of helmets (excluding goalkeepers), jerseys, socks, pants and length of pants." Neither NFHS nor WIAA regulations speak to the issue of laces. This means they can be allowed on jerseys. Gloves do not have to be the same color.

QUESTION: **I am ordering new girls hockey jerseys this year but I cannot find anything on regulations for numbers. I know basketball has all kinds of uniform restrictions. Do you have anything you can send me on hockey uniform specs?**

INTERPRETATON: Uniform specs are found in the NFHS Rule book, Rule 2-1-2, page 14. Some key points include:

1. It is required that all players be numbered with at least 10-inch (25.4 cm) high Gothic, colored numbers on the back of their jerseys and the same numbers at least 4 inches (10.16 cm) in height on both sleeves of the jersey.
2. The color of the numbers shall contrast with the color of the jersey.
3. Visiting teams are required to wear dark-colored uniforms while hometeams shall wear white-/light-colored jerseys.

Hockey has not gotten into some of the issues basketball has.

Practice Sessions

QUESTION: **Now after more closely reading the handbook, girl's hockey must practice a minimum of 10 practices before the first game. At this point they only have 7 practices on ice. Can three dry land practices count toward the 10?**

INTERPRETATON: Yes, dry land practices can be counted toward the 10 minimum practices required. Also keep in mind that another school team may not be involved in the first seven days of practice.

QUESTION: **Can WIAA ice hockey teams play WAHA teams or other non-school teams?**

INTERPRETATON: WIAA school teams are allowed to compete against non-school teams. There are three things that must be included:

1. WIAA Licensed officials have to be used.
2. WIAA/NFHS playing regulations have to be used--not USA.
3. School administration has to approve of the contest.

QUESTION: **Is there a rule that prohibits a JV hockey team from playing a varsity hockey team?**

INTERPETATION: WIAA regulations remain silent regarding the prohibition of JV hockey programs competing against varsity hockey programs should the school administration of both schools wish to allow. The contest, if scheduled and played, would count as one game on the JV schedule for your program and one game on the varsity schedule for the other school team.

Scoresheets

QUESTION: **I am a WIAA Hockey official, I also run the score clock for WIAA games. Who do I contact to get a set of WIAA score sheets?**

INTERPRETATON: The WIAA is able to provide member hockey schools with 25 score sheets for \$5. My best advice is to contact the Athletic Director at the school you are affiliated with. The AD can contact our office and we are glad to provide the school with the requested number of score sheets.

Co-op Programs

QUESTION: **Can Co-op hockey programs run a "JV" level?**

INTERPRETATON: Co-op programs are not allowed to cut anyone. Any student-athlete that tries out for a co-op program makes the team. This does not prevent coaches from placing student-athletes who do try out on a JV team. Yes, a JV level team is allowed, with governing body approval.

QUESTION: **Can you clarify the WIAA stance on JV Hockey programs for Co-op hockey programs? We want to schedule 10-12 "JV" games to assure some of our younger/less skilled players get some game action. I guess I am unclear if this is acceptable.**

INTERPRETATON: So long as a program is considered to be a "JV" program, the WIAA has allowed local schools to determine co-op programs. As an association, we have not had "JV" co-op teams apply or be approved through any type of protocol. Schools are able to organize these teams as they wish.