



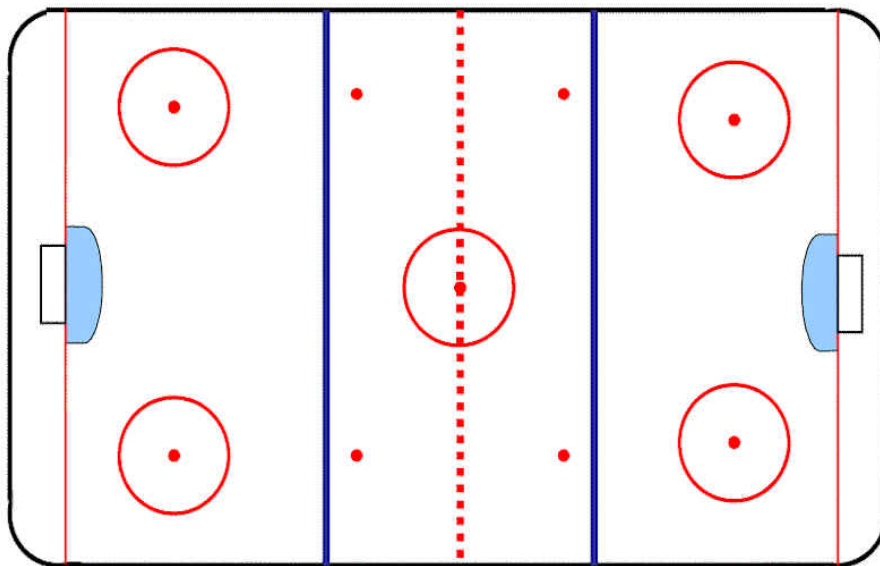
YESHIVA HOCKEY

The Basics of Hockey

The Rink

Ice hockey is played on standard size rink which measures 200 feet by 85 feet. Some colleges and sports facilities are now installing Olympic sized rinks which are 100 feet wide and have additional room behind the net. Figure 4-1 shows a standard size rink. If you have the opportunity to play on an Olympic sized rink, you will notice that the passing lanes open up. A good passing team will have an advantage on a bigger rink.

4 - 1 Standard Ice Hockey Rink



The rink is surrounded by boards that are 4 feet tall and usually have Plexiglas that extends another 4 feet above the boards. The boards should all be joined together smoothly and the doors to the rink should close securely. Poorly maintained boards can be dangerous and you should think twice about playing on this type of rink.

The ice surface on indoor rinks is usually maintained with a special vehicle - predominantly made by the Zamboni company. The Zamboni machine has blades that remove about 1/4 of an inch of ice and then applies an even coat of water to resurface the ice.

Rinks will have the players benches, penalty boxes and the scorer's tables located in a variety of locations around the rink. Be aware of their location as this can be used to a team's advantage when a penalized player returns to the rink.

Rink Markings

The ice rink has a number of permanent markings that are painted on the base of the rink (usually painted concrete) below the ice surface. Most rinks have three layers. The bottom layer is painted white, the next layer has the blue lines, red lines and circles, and the top is what you skate on. The base is usually covered with 2 to 3 inches of ice.

The blue lines separate the rink into thirds. The center line is dashed and colored red. The goal line is red and extends across the front of the goal to both boards. To score, the puck must completely clear the goal line inside the goal.

The crease is a semi circle in front of the goal. Older rinks may still have the crease as a rectangle, but most rinks now have the semi circle. A goal will not count if an offensive player is in the crease (unless an offensive player is pushed into the crease by a defender.)

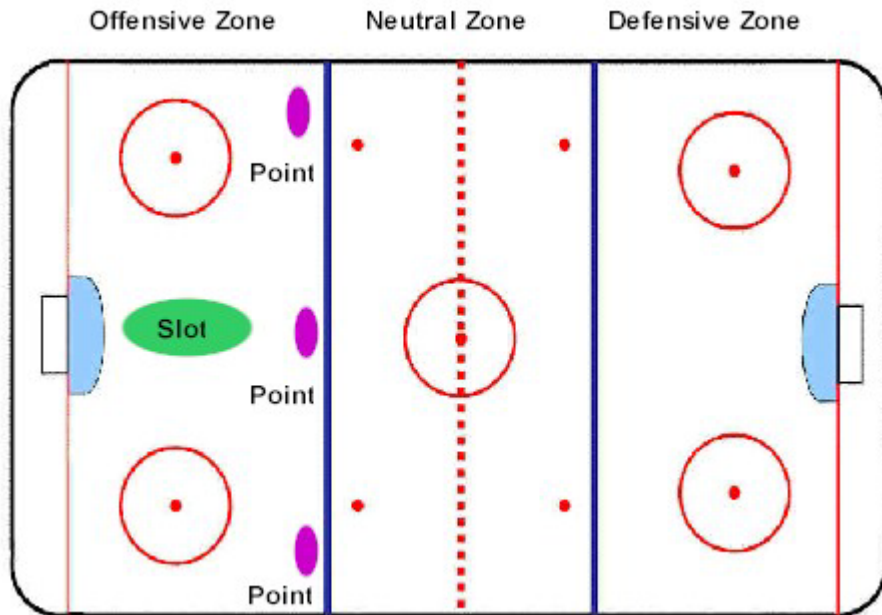
There is one face-off circle in the center of the rink and two at each end. They are all 15 feet in diameter. During a face-off all players, other than those facing off, must keep their skates outside of the circle. The face-off circles at each end contain small lines (known as "hash marks"). During a face-off, opposing players must keep their skates out of the circle and behind the hash marks. The hash marks are useful markers for team strategy discussions, as a defensive player may tell a wing to stay at the hash mark by the boards to await a break out pass.

There are also four face-off dots outside the blue lines. These are used for off sides calls (see below) and other stoppages in the games. The referees position the players when these face-off dots are used.

Rink Zones

There are also areas on a rink that are not marked but are part of the language of hockey. They are indicated on Figure 4-2.

4 - 2 Rink Zones



The three portions of the rink are known as the offensive zone, the neutral zone (also called center ice), and the defensive zone. Although most hockey coaching focuses on offensive or defensive zone play, there has been considerable attention paid lately to the neutral zone. The best teams - pro, college or amateur - have strategies developed and well executed for play in the neutral zone.

The best place to shoot from in the offensive zone is the "slot". The slot extends from in front the goal for about 20 feet. Defensive players will try to keep the offense out of the slot or at least have the offense players tied up.

Defensive players are positioned at the "points" when their team is on offense. As the puck moves from one side of the rink to the other, the defense moves along the blue line. One defender should always be close to the boards while the other is more towards the center. There is always debate about how close to the blue line the defensive player should stay when they are on the point. If they move closer to the goal they are "pinching in." Chapter 9 provides more information on defensive positioning.

Players positions are sometimes referred to as "high or low." If a player is high they are usually between the face-off dot and the blue line. If they are low they are between the face-off dot and the goal line.

Goal

The goal (or "net") is made of metal and is four feet tall and six feet wide. It extends backwards approximately three feet (see Figure 4-3). When a shot hits the metal on a goal it is known as "hitting the pipe." Most goals today are secured to the rink with magnetic posts or some other means so that if player runs into it, it will move and avoid injuring the player. If the net comes off its posts a goal cannot be scored and play is stopped for a face-off.

4 - 3 Ice Hockey Goal and Net



Most new goals have the netting strung very tightly. This can cause a very hard shot to enter the goal and pop back out as though the goalie stopped it.

Periods

A period is 15 to 20 minutes long and the time stops when the whistle is blown by the referee. Stop time lets a team strategize more carefully. It also allows for line changes in an orderly manner.

Players

An ice hockey team is made up of six players - a goalie, two defense, two wings and one center. The goalie normally plays the whole game, while the defense and forwards (wings and center) will play in shifts. A team should have no more than 20 players to make sure everyone has a chance to play. Three offensive lines, three defensive lines and a goalie is a common adult team size.

Players normally skate a shift of 30 seconds to 2 minutes, with a 60 second shift as the optimal target for most adults players. Teams need to pay attention to the shift time on the rink as the tendency is for players to stay out too long. A good practice is for the next line on the rink to keep track of the current line's time on the rink. As this time approaches 60 seconds, they should start to shout to their team mates to get off. Even if the forwards think they have a good rush going, it is almost always better to dump the puck into the corner and get "fresh legs" onto the rink.

Hockey has the unique rule of allowing players to "change on the fly." For a one player to replace another while the game continues, they must skate to the bench. Both players can be on the rink surface together, but the player leaving the rink cannot play a puck that may come within their area. If a player leaves the bench and another player does not get off, the team has "too many players" and the referees can invoke a two minute penalty.

A team's ability to effectively change on the fly is a team skill that can make a big difference in winning games. To do this requires discipline from the next set of players onto the rink. Every player should know if they are the next player on the rink and what position they are to take. As a player leaves the rink and heads toward the bench they should shout out their position - "right wing". The new right wing should then enter. The next line needs to watch and anticipate line changes and not get caught up in watching the game.

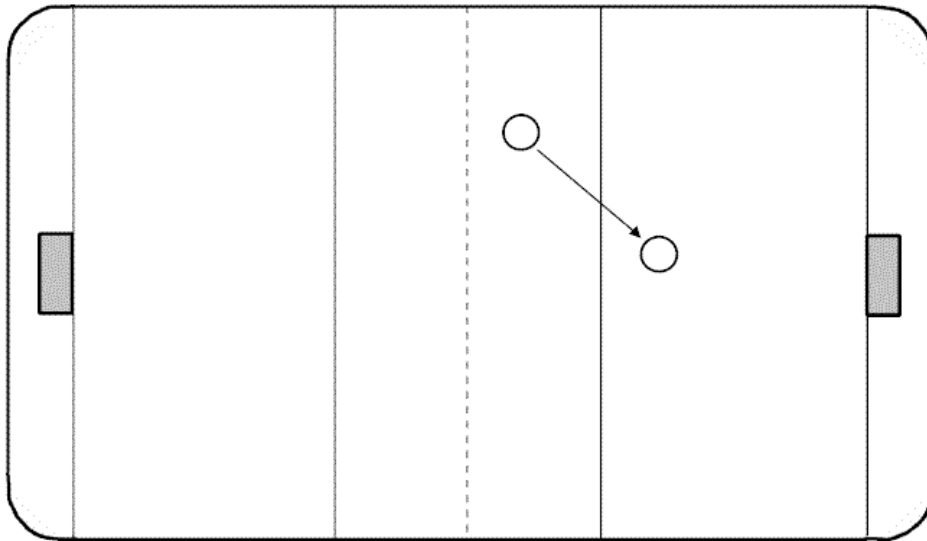
Some teams make it a practice for the players coming to the bench to use the doors into the team bench. The players entering the rink go over the boards. When you are coming off the rink make sure to swing wide so your teammates can enter directly into play. Another practice is to seat defensive players on the bench closest to their goal and the forwards farthest from the goal. This helps both positions get into the play more quickly. These techniques are very useful as there is nothing more embarrassing (or painful) than colliding with your teammate on a change.

The best time to change on the fly is when you are on the attack. If you can bring the puck into the neutral zone and make a slow shot into the corner, all players can change. Never change on the fly when you are in your own defensive zone. Teammates should pay special attention if a player on the rink looks like they are tiring. They may be very involved in the game and not notice how long they have been on the rink. A friendly holler to get off will probably be appreciated - especially by their legs!

Off sides

Play will be stopped if a team enters the offensive zone off sides. To be off sides a player on the attacking team must precede the puck over the blue line as they enter the zone. This normally happens when an offensive player without the puck gets into the zone before the puck carrier. When the referee sees an offside, the whistle is blown and a face-off occurs outside the blue line at one of the dots in the neutral zone. Figure 4 - 4 illustrates a common offside situation.

4 - 4 Off sides



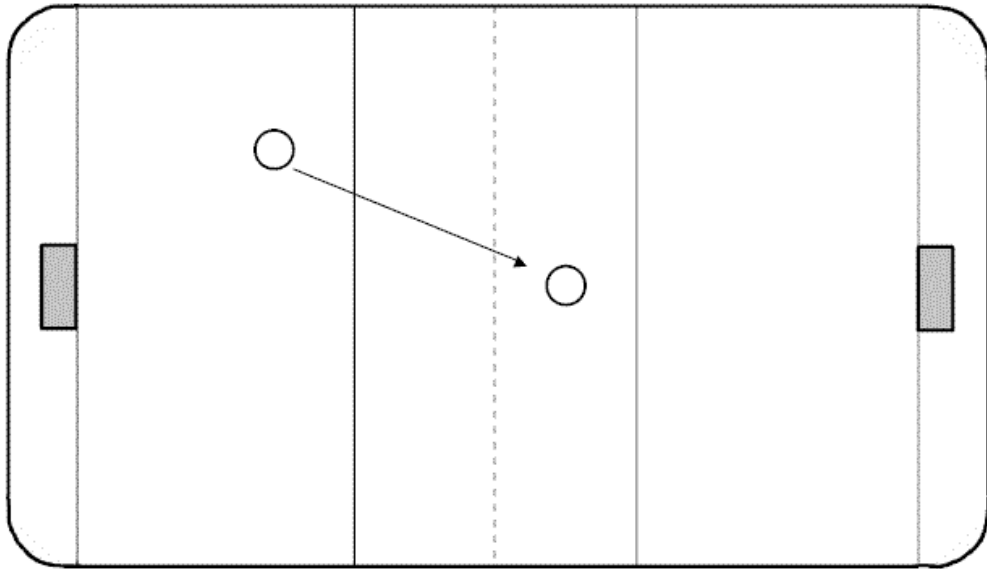
A player is in the zone when both of their skates are inside the outside edge of the blue line. This rule allows a skater that is ahead of the puck carrier to skate along the blue line with one skate in the neutral zone until the puck carrier enters the zone. This technique is helpful because it allows the attacker to maintain speed rather than pulling up and stopping at the blue line.

If an attacking player is off side but the puck is picked up and controlled by the defending team a delayed off side is indicated by the referee with one arm held vertically. Play will only stop if an attacking player touches the puck inside the defensive zone. If all the attackers leave the offensive zone, the delayed offside is canceled.

Delayed offside can be of strategic advantage to the defending team. It allows the defense to move the puck up ice with no risk until they reach the neutral zone. A good defensive player will move carefully out of the zone and hit a wing or center with an accurate pass as they break quickly across the neutral zone.

Another type of offside is the two line pass. If an attacking player passes to another teammate and the passes crosses two lines (blue lines and the center line) the team is ruled offside and play is stopped. Figure 4-5 illustrates this type of offside. The two line pass rule is intended to keep players from slipping behind the defense for a long break out pass. Many adult leagues do not use the two line offside rule. If so, watch out for wings sneaking behind the defense for easy break away situations.

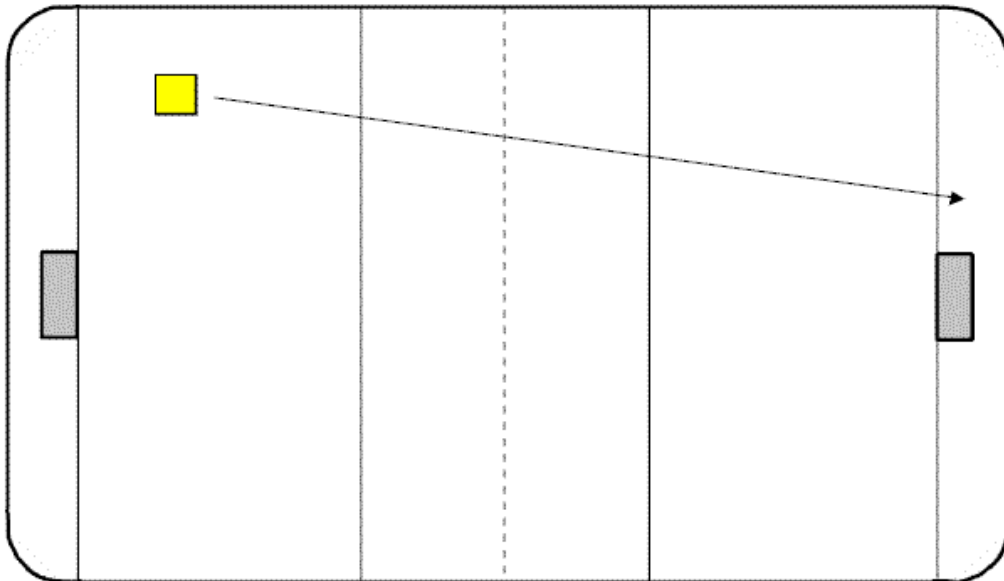
4 - 5 Two Line Offside



Icing

Another common infraction in a hockey game is icing. Icing occurs when a defensive team shoots the puck from their defensive zone into the other team's defensive zone, it crosses the goal line, and is not touched by any player. Figure 4-6 illustrates this rule.

4 - 6 Icing



Different leagues have variations on icing. In some cases, the puck needs only be shot from behind the center red line. In some leagues a defender must touch the puck after it crosses the goal line for the play to be stopped. If this is your leagues rule, your defensive players will have the opportunity to stay in shape by having a race to the puck every time icing occurs!

If an iced puck is either handled by the goalie or enters the crease, icing is not called.

Icing (or clearing) can be used to strategic advantage to get a stoppage of play in order to make a line change. If your team is getting trapped in your defensive zone for too long and you cannot effectively break out, icing is a reasonable tactic. Although the puck will come back to your end, your team will have fresh players on the rink.

Other Stoppages of Play

The most frequent stoppage of play after the offsides and icing is caused by the goalie. If the goalie catches a shot in their glove or falls on the puck, play is stopped. The referees will usually wait a few moments after a goalie catches the puck in case the goalie wants to drop it back onto the rink in order for play to continue.

If the puck leaves the rink during play the referees will face-off the puck in the area close to where it left the rink. Players should always keep their helmets on even when they are on the bench, as a puck may leave the rink there.

When two players go for a loose puck against the boards, it may take some time for the puck to be worked free (This activity is informally known by the wonderful hockey term - "grinding.") The referees don't like to stop play in this situation, but will do so if they cannot see the puck for an extended period of time.

If the puck is shot or passed in the air and a player knocks it down with their stick they must be careful to keep their stick below their waist. If not, the referee will stop play because of "puck played with a high stick." The play will be restarted with a face-off in the area where the puck was hit. This is not the same offense as high sticking which is described below and results in a two minute penalty.

You can play a puck in the air with your hand. However, you must bat the puck down with an open hand and not hit it toward a team mate. If you do, it is a "hand pass" and the referees will stop play for a face-off. Referees will sometimes allow a player a short distance in their hand. The one exception is in the defensive zone where a defender can hit the puck with their hand and direct it to a teammate and no stoppage will occur.

Although hockey is basically a continuous game, most leagues allow a team to call at least one "time out." This is normally allowed only when play is stopped for another reason. A good use of a time out is to plan how you will pull your goalie at the end of a close game.

Face-offs

The face-off starts the play after a stoppage and at the beginning of each period. Players not involved in the face-off must stay outside the face-off circle. Players must also stay at least 10 feet away from the face-off even if the face-off occurs where there is no circle.

The two players facing off must face each other squarely and remain approximately one stick length apart. The visiting team player must put their stick on the rink first. The players must be still and "set" before the puck is dropped. Any violation of these rules and the referee will remove the offending player and require a teammate to take the face-off.