Ask the Official - Week 7

October 26 - November 1, 2012

QUESTION #1: I was wondering if teams play more than one game in a day, how many hours break must you have between the games?

ANSWER #1: Due to the fact that this question is not directly related to the USA Hockey Playing Rules we encourage you to contact your local USA Hockey Affiliate with this question. All Affiliates are the governing body for hockey in their respective areas and make the decisions regarding start times and period lengths. Contact information can be found in the USA Hockey Annual Guidebook which is located under the AboutUSAH link at USAHockey.com.

QUESTION #2: I understand an off-ice official cannot call an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty against a coach. However, can an off-ice official enforce the zero tolerance policy by telling a coach to be quiet.

ANSWER #2: The off-ice officials may report any type of abusive or unsportsmanlike behavior directed at them to the Referee who will assess a bench minor penalty to the team.

QUESTION #3: When the period has ended and the players are at the bench, I have always walked out onto the ice, along the boards to the front of the bench for a quick strategy session prior to the start to the next period. Two officials at recent games have informed me I am not allowed on the ice. The refs insisted this was a rule. I am fully aware (or so I thought) of the rules pertaining to coaches being on the ice during play, and am aware of Rule 629 which specifically cites after the start and before the end of a period. In short, is there a rule against coach being on the ice in front of his bench, between periods?

ANSWER #3: There is no rule in the USA Hockey Playing Rules that states a coach cannot enter the ice after a period has ended. Otherwise, they may not be able to walk across the ice to the locker room during intermissions in certain rinks.

This is an issue that would be best addressed between the Local Hockey Association and the Local Officials Association. Once it agreed that the coaches may give the pep-talks from the ice, the Hockey Association may inform the coaches and the Officials Association may inform the officials.

QUESTION #4: What is the penalty and reporting procedure for a coach storming into the Officials' Room after a game, threatening an official ("should leave town")?

ANSWER #4: This type of behavior should be penalized under Rule 601(f)3 (Abuse of Officials) and a Game Report should immediately be submitted to the USA Hockey Local Supervisor of Officials who will follow-through with the Local Hockey Association.

QUESTION #5: If there is a five goal difference in the third period, is there a mercy rule and how does it work? Is there a running clock stopping for goals and penalties. Is it up to the coaches, on-ice officials, or the off-ice officials?

ANSWER #5: USA Hockey does not have any guidelines with regard to mercy rules or running clocks. These guidelines must be established by the local hockey association, league, or tournament committee that institutes them. Once they are established, the governing body is obligated to forward them to the Local Officiating Association or Local Supervisor of Officials so the game officials can be notified. The game officials and coaches should not have to make these rules up during games.