



2021-25 PLAYING RULE CHANGE SUMMARY

The following is a summary of rule changes adopted by the USA Hockey Board of Directors on June 12, 2021. These changes will go into effect starting with the 2021-22 playing season through the 2024-25 playing season.

YOUTH EDITION RULE CHANGES

Rule #	Rule	Description
All	All	Transitioned all gender specific references to gender neutral language.
Preface	Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect	Added the Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect. Updates have been made to reflect changes made in the rules for consistency and accuracy.
Preface	Code of Conduct	Rename “On-Ice Officials Code of Conduct” to “Game Officials Code of Conduct.”
Preface	Zero Tolerance	Update “Zero Tolerance” Policy to version adopted June 2020.
Preface	Preface	Adds New Standardized Discipline Policy that establishes procedure and recommended penalty standards for match penalties.
102(b)	Dimensions of Rink	Recommends boards to be white in color to better establish advertising guidelines.
102(c & d)	Dimensions of Rink	Better defines the material and location of the shielding enclosing the rink.
106(a)	Player’s Bench	Better defines the use of shielding to protect spectators around the players’ bench area.
107(a)	Penalty Bench	Better defines the use of shielding to protect spectators around the penalty bench area.
108(a)	Timekeepers Bench	Adds new Rule 108 “Timekeepers Bench” to establish specifications for the area where the Timekeeper sits.
109	Signal and Timing Devices	Moves to Rule 109.
201(b)	Composition of Teams	Adds language from Glossary “Team Personnel” pertaining to players who are unable to play into this rule.
201(c)	Composition of Teams	Specifies prohibited actions for a suspended Team Official.
204	Playing Line-Up and Substitution of Players	Change title to “Playing Line-up and Substitution of Players.” Includes language pertaining to substitution of players to more clearly distinguish between player substitutions and goalkeeper substitutions.
204(c)	Playing Line-Up and Substitution of Players	Eliminates requirement of having to place a substitute player on the penalty bench for Major and Match penalties in Adult classifications ONLY. Allows player from the bench to return to the ice when the penalty expires.
205	Substitution of Goalkeepers	Change title to “Substitution of Goalkeepers” and more clearly defines rules specific to goalkeeper substitutions.
206(d)	Injured Players	Deletes old language that no longer applies and clarifies placement of substitute player on penalty bench.
301(b)	Sticks	Provides for taller players to use longer stick (65”).
304(a)	Protective Equipment	Changes “players” to “skaters to be consistent with Rule 201. Skaters plus goalkeepers = players.
304(e)	Protective Equipment	Cleans up language to more clearly distinguish between skaters and goalkeepers and eliminates the Adult exception that allows them to replace helmet and continue play. Stoppage now required at all levels for removed helmet.
304(g)	Protective Equipment	Adds new (g) that recommends all players wear a neck laceration protector that covers as much of neck area as possible.

Rule #	Rule	Description
401(b)	Penalties	Calls for a player to be assessed a game misconduct after 4 penalties in the same game and a coach receiving a game suspension when team accumulates 12 penalties during same game.
401(c)	Penalties	Establishes guidelines for what is allowable in interacting with their team for a player or coach who has been suspended.
402 (Note)	Minor Penalties	Establishes shorter minor penalty recommendations for periods less than 20 minutes in length (Excluding Adults). For periods 12-minutes or less the minor penalty length shall be 1:00. The minor penalty time shall be 1:30 for more than 12 and less than 17-minute periods and 2:00 for periods 17-minutes in length or greater.
403	Major Penalties	Updates major penalty language to reflect changes that require a game misconduct penalty to be assessed with major penalties.
403(a)	Major Penalties	Provides Affiliates or local governing bodies the option to pro-rate length of major penalties based on length of period (Excluding Adults).
403(d)	Major Penalties	Establishes that Adults do not need to place an additional player on penalty bench for a major penalty and that they can add a player from the bench when penalty expires.
404(Note)	Misconduct Penalties	Provides Affiliates or local governing bodies the option to pro-rate length of misconduct penalties based on length of period (Excluding Adults).
404(c)	Misconduct Penalties	Adds language that more clearly defines the unacceptable actions of a coach/player who has been assessed a game misconduct.
405(d)	Match Penalties	Adds language that more clearly defines the unacceptable actions of a coach/player who has been assessed a match penalty.
405(a)	Match Penalties	Provides Affiliates or local governing bodies the option to pro-rate length of match penalties based on length of period (Excluding Adults).
405(a)	Match Penalties	Establishes that Adults do not need to place an additional player on penalty bench for a match penalty and that they can add a player from the bench when penalty expires.
405(c) Note	Match Penalties	Clarifies the timing required for submission of a game report to establish consistency with other rules.
405(c)	Match Penalties	Establishes the minimum suspension for a match penalty as one full game and that the next game on the schedule of that team must be included in any suspension.
405(c)	Match Penalties	Updates language to reflect the Standardized Discipline Policy included in Preface.
407(b)	Goalkeeper Penalties	Clarifies the guidelines for a “Temporary” Goalkeeper and specifies who must replace a goalkeeper if removed from the game by penalty.
409(a)	Calling of Penalties	Calls for a face-off to take place in end zone of offending team when a penalty is assessed that results in time being placed on the penalty clock. Exceptions to this rule is covered in Rule 612(b).
410(c)	Supplementary Discipline	Updates language to reflect the Standardized Discipline Policy included in Preface.
411(b) Note	Progressive Suspensions	Clarifies the timing required for submission of a game report to establish consistency with other rules.
411(c)	Progressive Suspensions	Adds new (c) that establishes progressive suspensions for coaches who receive their 2 nd game misconduct for Abuse of Officials in same season (3 games) and 3 rd game misconduct for Abuse of Officials in same season (suspended until hearing).
501(a)	Appointment of Officials	Allows 4-Official system to be used at the 14 & Under age classification.
501(c)	Appointment of Officials	Allows local leagues/areas to assign numbers to officials and that required visors cannot be altered.

Rule #	Rule	Description
503(c.11)	Linesman	Adds new (11) that clarifies any official is allowed to stop play if helmet comes off player or goalkeeper.
601(b)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Adds in specific language pertaining to banging the boards on the bench that identifies doing so to celebrate a legal or illegal body check is deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct.
601(c,d,e)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	More clearly identifies specific actions and places them into Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Match penalty option categories.
601(d.1)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Allows the official to assess a game misconduct for 2 nd incident involving verbal abuse by team official without assessing another bench minor provided the abuse is clearly a continuation of initial incident.
601(e.2)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Clarifies actions considered to be critically detrimental.
601(e.3)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Removes term “offensive” from hateful, discriminatory language.
601(e,3)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Incorporates the President’s Directive on Hateful/Discriminatory Language under the Match Penalty rule.
601(e)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Clarifies the timing required for submission of a game report to establish consistency with other rules.
601(f)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Adds vaping to actions deemed prohibited under this rule and replaces bench minor with a game misconduct penalty for violation.
602	Attempt to Injure or Recklessly Endangers an Opponent	Changes references to “deliberate injury” to “recklessly endangers” to better allow officials to judge the action that occurs instead of trying to determine whether an injury has occurred. Removed similar language from old Rule 601(f.2) to avoid duplication.
603	Boarding	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Boarding rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties.
604	Body Checking (Competitive Contact Categories)	Removes references to “Non-Check Adult Classifications” in the title and the rule.
604	Body Checking (Competitive Contact Categories)	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into this rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
606	Butt-Ending	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment”.
607	Charging	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Charging rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties.
608	Checking from Behind	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Check from Behind rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties.
609	Cross-Checking	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
610(b)	Delaying the Game	Adds note that specifies the goalkeeper can only cover the puck while in the “act of playing goal” (see Glossary).
611	Elbowing	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
612(b)	Face-Off Locations	Calls for an end zone face-off in defending zone of penalized team except for when the stoppage of play is caused by the non-offending team.

Rule #	Rule	Description
612(c)	Face-off Locations	Allows for attack zone face-off any time an attacking team attempts a shot on goal and puck goes out of play off of the posts, boards or glass.
617(c)	Goals and Assists	Adds language that clarifies a goal shall be disallowed as a result of actions by an attacking team that propels the puck into the goal by any means other than the stick.
617(c)	Goals and Assists	Adds language from Casebook regarding a goal cannot be scored if the scoring team has an illegal player on the ice or the puck entered the zone illegally.
618(a) Note	Handling the Puck with the Hands	Adds note that establishes the goal crease extends to the top of the cross-bar.
619	Head-Butting	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
620	Head Contact	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Charging rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties.
621	High Sticks	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
621(d)	High Sticks	Eliminates restriction on slapshots at 10 & under age classification and below.
622(c)	Holding an Opponent	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties.
623	Hooking	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
624(b)	Icing the Puck	Prohibits all Youth levels of play to legally ice the puck during shorthanded situations. Only exceptions are High School and Adult classifications.
624(d)	Icing the Puck	Removes language referencing boarding, charging or roughing as to not limit penalty options.
626	Interference By or With Spectators	Change title to: “Interference By or With Spectators.”
626	Interference By or With Spectators	Moves sub-section (c) to Rule 601(d.6) for physically interfering with a spectator.
627	Kicking Opponent or Puck	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
628	Kneeing	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
630	Offside	Corrects proper grammar for terms “offside” and “onside.”
630(d)	Offside	Eliminates tag-up offside at all Youth levels of play. Immediate offside is now applied at all levels except High School and Adult classifications.
634	Slashing	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
634(c)	Slashing	Clarifies the penalty options to be assessed for a player who swings their stick during an altercation.
636(f)	Start of Games and Time of Match/Time-Outs	Changes “players” to “skaters to be consistent with Rule 201. Skaters + goalkeeper = players.
637(a)	Throwing Stick/Object	Clarifies penalty options for throwing objects in the direction of the puck.
638	Tied Games	Adds reference and guidance for management of shoot-outs.
639	Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking/Slew Footing	Incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Establishes minimum penalty for Slew Footing as major plus game misconduct. Adds Match penalty option.

Rule #	Rule	Description
640	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Incorporate language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
640(a) Note	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds note that mandates that officials strictly enforce contact after the whistle, and especially scrum situations, and to assess additional penalties for aggressors in these situations.
640(d)	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds new sub-section (d) from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect that establishes a penalty for delivering a body check with no effort to gain possession of the puck and the stick is above the knees.
640(e)	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds new sub-section (e) from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect that establishes a penalty for delivering a body check to an opponent who is already physically engaged.
640(f)	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds new sub-section (f) that specifies a goalkeeper shall be penalized for body checking an opponent.
Glossary	Act of Playing Goal	Adds Glossary definition for “Act of Playing Goal” and is defined as: Any action by the goalkeeper that prevents the puck from entering the goal, or prevents an immediate scoring opportunity within the goalkeeper’s privileged area.
Glossary	Age Classifications	Removes description of each age group (i.e. Squirt) and adds in 15 Only Tier I age classification.
Glossary	Angling	Adds new Glossary definition for “Angling” and is defined as: A legal defensive skill used to direct/control the puck carrier to an area that closes the gap and/or creates an opening that is too small for the puck carrier to advance.
Glossary	Body Checking	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect to more completely define legal body checking.
Glossary	Collision	Adds new Glossary definition for “Collision” and is defined as: Occurs when players maintain their established position on the ice. A player shall not be penalized if the intention is to play the puck and in so doing collides with an opponent. No player is required to move out of the way of an oncoming player to avoid contact.
Glossary	Competitive Contact	Changes “Body Contact” to “Competitive Contact” and incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect to more completely define competitive contact.
Glossary	Contact with the Puck	Establishes first level of involvement with the puck as “Contact with the Puck” and is defined as: The last skater or goalkeeper to have touched the puck (puck touch). This includes a puck that is deflected off a player or any part of their equipment.
Glossary	Control of the Puck	Establishes 3 rd level of involvement with the puck as “Control of the Puck” and is defined as: The skater or goalkeeper that, in the opinion of the official, has “possession of the puck” and is guiding the puck in any desired direction. “Contact with the puck” is not considered “control of the puck.” A player in “possession of the puck” may also immediately establish “control of the puck”. A skater considered to be in “control of the puck” is eligible to be body checked and/or engage in competitive contact.

Rule #	Rule	Description
Glossary	Late Body Check	<p>Adds new Glossary definition for “Late Body Check” and is defined as: A late check is when a player delivering the check has an opportunity to avoid contact, or minimize contact, once it is realized the opponent no longer has control of the puck.</p> <p>The concept of “finishing the check” is an unacceptable action as it is one that is meant to intimidate or punish the opponent with no intent, or possibility, to gain possession of the puck. The responsibility is on the player delivering the check to avoid forceful contact (minimize impact) to a vulnerable or defenseless player who is no longer in control of the puck.</p>
Glossary	Physical Engagement	<p>Adds new Glossary definition for “Physical Engagement” and is defined as: Two players who are in pursuit of the puck are allowed to use competitive contact provided that possession of the puck remains the sole objective of the two players. This includes opposing players competing for the puck in front of the goal or along the boards.</p>
Glossary	Possession of the Puck	<p>Establishes 2nd level of involvement with the puck as “Possession of the Puck” and defined as: Placing your stick on the puck in an effort to establish control or to deliberately direct the puck with any part of the body. The last player to have intentionally played the puck is considered to have “possession of the puck.” A player may be in “possession of the puck” without establishing “control of the puck.” However, a player must first gain “possession of the puck” prior to being considered in “control of the puck.” A player considered to be in “possession of the puck” is NOT eligible to be body checked and/or engage in competitive contact.</p> <p>A skater attempts to gain “possession of the puck” by using the stick, and then body, in an effort to establish “control of the puck” or prevent an opponent from maintaining or gaining “control of the puck.”</p> <p>A skater considered to be “attempting to gain possession of the puck” is eligible to body check an opponent in “control of the puck” and/or engage in competitive contact.</p>
Glossary	Recklessly Endangers (Reckless Endangerment)	<p>Adds Glossary definition for “Recklessly Endangers” to be used as criteria for assessing major or match penalties instead of injury. Defined as: Engaging in conduct, without regard to the consequences, which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury to an opponent.</p>
Glossary	Team Official	<p>Changes to “Team Official” and removes language pertaining to players who are unable to play.</p>
Glossary	Vulnerable or Defenseless	<p>Adds Glossary definition for “Vulnerable or Defenseless” and is defined as: A skater is considered to be in a vulnerable or defenseless position when they are unaware, unprepared or unsuspecting of an impending body check and/or competitive contact.</p>

Note: This document is a brief summary of playing rule changes and does not reflect the actual language used in the official rules. The purpose of this document is to provide a quick reference to the rule changes. For specific language related to each rule, please see the 2021-25 USA Hockey Official Playing Rules Book.



2021-25 PLAYING RULE CHANGE SUMMARY – JUNIOR EDITION

The following is a summary of rule changes adopted by the USA Hockey Board of Directors on June 12, 2021. These changes will go into effect starting with the 2021-22 playing season through the 2024-25 playing season.

JUNIOR EDITION RULE CHANGES

Rule #	Rule	Description
All	All	Transition all gender specific references to gender neutral language.
Preface	Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect	Added the updated Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect. Updates have been made to reflect changes made in the rules for consistency and accuracy.
Preface	General Information	Adds language that directs users to the Youth/Adult Edition of the rule book for situations that are not covered in the JR Edition.
102(b)	Dimensions of Rink	Recommends boards to be white in color to better establish advertising guidelines.
102(c & d)	Dimensions of Rink	Better defines the material and location of the shielding enclosing the rink.
106(a)	Player’s Bench	Better defines the use of shielding to protect spectators around the players’ bench area.
107(a)	Penalty Bench	Better defines the use of shielding to protect spectators around the penalty bench area.
108(a)	Timekeepers Bench	Adds new Rule 108 “Timekeepers Bench” to establish specifications for the area where the Timekeeper sits.
109	Signal and Timing Devices	Moves to Rule 109.
203(e)	Players in Uniform	Adds new (e) that specifies a goal would not be allowed if found to have an ineligible player on the ice.
204	Playing Line-Up and Substitution of Players	Change title to “Playing Line-up and Substitution of Players.” Includes language pertaining to substitution of players to more clearly distinguish between player substitutions and goalkeeper substitutions.
205	Substitution of Goalkeepers	Change title to “Substitution of Goalkeepers” and more clearly defines rules specific to goalkeeper substitutions.
301(b)	Sticks	Provides for taller players to use longer stick (65”).
304(a)	Protective Equipment	Changes “players” to “skaters to be consistent with Rule 201. Skaters plus goalkeepers = players.
404(c)	Misconduct Penalties	Eliminates the Gross Misconduct II Penalty option.
409(a)	Calling of Penalties	Allows the attacking team to determine the location of the face-off after a penalty is assessed.
503(c.12)	Linesman	Adds (c.12) that allows a linesman to stop play if they determine a penalized player illegally enters the ice.
601(b)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct	Adds in specific language pertaining to banging the boards on the bench that identifies doing so to celebrate a legal or illegal body check is deemed to be unsportsmanlike conduct.
601(c,d,e)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	More clearly identifies specific actions and places them into Misconduct, Game Misconduct or Match penalty option categories.
601(e.3)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Clarifies actions considered to be critically detrimental.
601(e.4)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Incorporates the President’s Directive on Hateful Language into the proper location of the rules.
601(e.4)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Removes term “offensive” from hateful, discriminatory language.

Rule #	Rule	Description
601(f)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Eliminates the Gross Misconduct II penalty option.
601(f)	Abuse of Officials and Other Misc.	Adds vaping to actions deemed prohibited under this rule and replaces bench minor with a game misconduct penalty for violation.
602	Attempt to Injure/Deliberate Injury of an Opponent	Changes references to “deliberate injury” to “recklessly endangers” to better allow officials to judge the action that occurs instead of trying to determine whether an injury has occurred.
603	Boarding	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Boarding rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
604	Body Checking	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect to establish consistency with Glossary.
606	Butt-Ending	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
607	Charging	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Charging rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
608	Checking from Behind	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Check from Behind rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
609	Cross-Checking	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
610	Delaying the Game	Clarifies the position of the posts/pegs for determination of the goal being displaced.
610(b)	Delaying the Game	Adds note that specifies the goalkeeper can only cover the puck while in the “act of playing goal” (see Glossary).
611	Elbowing	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
612(c)	Face-off Locations	Allows for an end zone face-off if the attacking team has shot the puck out of play off of the post, glass or boards.
612(h)	Face-off Locations	Allows the non-offending team to determine the location of the face-off after a penalty is assessed.
613	Face-off Procedures	Allows for a center to win face-off by using the skate and incorporates warning for face-off violation in place of ejection of center.
615(c)	Fighting	Clarifies and more clearly defines a “fight” versus an “altercation.”
615	Fighting	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
615(h)	Fighting	Corrects omission that did not assess game ejection to player who instigates a fight at Tier III level.
617(c)	Goals and Assists	Adds language that clarifies a goal shall be disallowed as a result of actions by an attacking team that propels the puck into the goal by any means other than the stick.
617(c)	Goals and Assists	Adds language from Casebook regarding a goal cannot be scored if the scoring team has an illegal player on the ice or the puck entered the zone illegally.
618(a)	Handling the Puck with the Hands	Adds note that establishes the goal crease extends to the top of the cross-bar.

Rule #	Rule	Description
619	Head-Butting	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
620	Head Contact	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect into Check from Behind rule and incorporates “reckless endangerment” terminology for assessment of major plus game misconduct or match penalties. Adds Match penalty option.
621	High Sticks	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
622(b)	Holding an Opponent or Opponent’s Facemask	Deletes duplicate language. Adds Match penalty option.
623	Hooking	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
624(a)	Icing the Puck	Allows non-offending team to choose face-off location after an icing.
626	Interference By or With Spectators	Changes title to: “Interference By or with Spectators.”
626	Interference By or With Spectators	Moves sub-section (c) to Rule 601(d.6) for physically interfering with a spectator.
627	Kicking Opponent or Puck	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
628	Kneeing	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
629	Leaving the Player’s Bench/Penalty Bench	Specify “Officials” instead of “Referee.”
630	Offside	Corrects proper grammar for terms “offside” and “onside.”
630(d)	Offside	Allows for shot on goal during delayed off-sides to have play continue as long as puck does not enter the goal.
634	Slashing	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
634(c)	Slashing	Clarifies the penalty options to be assessed for a player who swings their stick during an altercation.
635	Spearing	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.”
636(f)	Start of Games and Time of Match/Time-Outs	Changes “players” to “skaters to be consistent with Rule 201. Skaters + goalkeeper = players.
637(a)	Throwing Stick/Object	Clarifies penalty options for throwing objects in the direction of the puck.
638	Tied Games	Allows each league to determine number of players to be involved in shootout.
639	Tripping/Clipping/Leg Checking/Slew Footing	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
640	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Replaces reference to “injury” with “recklessly endangers” or “reckless endangerment.” Adds Match penalty option.
640(a) Note	Unnecessary Roughness (Roughing)	Adds new (d) that specifies a goalkeeper shall be penalized for body checking an opponent.
Glossary	Act of Playing Goal	Adds Glossary definition for “Act of Playing Goal” and is defined as: Any action by the goalkeeper that prevents the puck from entering the goal, or prevents an immediate scoring opportunity within the goalkeeper’s privileged area.

Rule #	Rule	Description
Glossary	Angling	Adds new Glossary definition for “Angling” and is defined as: A legal defensive skill used to direct/control the puck carrier to an area that closes the gap and/or creates an opening that is too small for the puck carrier to advance.
Glossary	Body Checking	Incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect to more completely define legal body checking.
Glossary	Collision	Adds new Glossary definition for “Collision” and is defined as: Occurs when players maintain their established position on the ice. A player shall not be penalized if the intention is to play the puck and in so doing collides with an opponent. No player is required to move out of the way of an oncoming player to avoid contact.
Glossary	Competitive Contact	Changes “Body Contact” to “Competitive Contact” and incorporates language from Declaration of Player Safety, Fair Play and Respect to more completely define competitive contact.
Glossary	Contact with the Puck	Establishes first level of involvement with the puck as “Contact with the Puck” and is defined as: The last skater or goalkeeper to have touched the puck (puck touch). This includes a puck that is deflected off a player or any part of their equipment.
Glossary	Control of the Puck	Establishes 3 rd level of involvement with the puck as “Control of the Puck” and is defined as: The skater or goalkeeper that, in the opinion of the official, has “possession of the puck” and is guiding the puck in any desired direction. “Contact with the puck” is not considered “control of the puck.” A player in “possession of the puck” may also immediately establish “control of the puck.” A skater considered to be in “control of the puck” is eligible to be body checked and/or engage in competitive contact.
Glossary	Late Body Check	Adds new Glossary definition for “Late Body Check” and is defined as: A late check is when a player delivering the check has an opportunity to avoid contact, or minimize contact, once it is realized the opponent no longer has “control of the puck.” The concept of “finishing the check” is an unacceptable action as it is one that is meant to intimidate or punish the opponent with no intent, or possibility, to gain possession of the puck. The responsibility is on the player delivering the check to avoid forceful contact (minimize impact) to a vulnerable or defenseless player who is no longer in control of the puck.
Glossary	Physical Engagement	Adds new Glossary definition for “Physical Engagement” and is defined as: Two players who are in pursuit of the puck are allowed to use competitive contact provided that possession of the puck remains the sole objective of the two players. This includes opposing players competing for the puck in front of the goal or along the boards.

Rule #	Rule	Description
Glossary	Possession of the Puck	Establishes 2 nd level of involvement with the puck as “Possession of the Puck” and defines as: Placing your stick on the puck in an effort to establish control or to deliberately direct the puck with any part of the body. The last player to have intentionally played the puck is considered to have “possession of the puck.” A player may be in “possession of the puck” without establishing “control of the puck.” However, a player must first gain “possession of the puck” prior to being considered in “control of the puck.” A player considered to be in “possession of the puck” is NOT eligible to be body checked and/or engage in competitive contact. A skater attempts to gain “possession of the puck” by using the stick, and then body, in an effort to establish “control of the puck” or prevent an opponent from maintaining or gaining “control of the puck.” A skater considered to be “attempting to gain possession of the puck” is eligible to body check an opponent in “control of the puck” and/or engage in competitive contact.
Glossary	Recklessly Endangers (Reckless Endangerment)	Adds Glossary definition for “Recklessly Endangers” to be used as criteria for assessing major or match penalties instead of injury. Defined as: Engaging in conduct, without regard to the consequences, which creates a substantial risk of serious physical injury to an opponent.
Glossary	Team Personnel	Changes to “Team Official” and removes language pertaining to players who are unable to play.
Glossary	Vulnerable or Defenseless	Adds Glossary definition for “Vulnerable or Defenseless” and is defined as: A skater is considered to be in a vulnerable or defenseless position when they are unaware, unprepared or unsuspecting of an impending body check and/or competitive contact.

Note: This document is a brief summary of playing rule changes and does not reflect the actual language used in the official rules. The purpose of this document is to provide a quick reference to the rule changes. For specific language related to each rule, please see the 2021-25 USA Hockey Official Playing Rules Book – Junior Edition.