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NFHS Ice Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations

Welcome to week 7 of the 2025-26 NFHS Ice Hockey Weekly Rules Interpretations! If you should have any examples you would like to highlight in the weeks to come, please contact dschuster@nfhs.org.

Rule 7-17-3: No player shall deliver a check to an unsuspecting and vulnerable player. **PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.**

Rules 9-1-7 – 9-1-11 define where faceoffs shall take place depending on the reason for the stoppage of play.

Situation 1: An attacking player in the neutral zone shoots the puck which deflects off Team B's goal frame and goes directly out of the rink.

RULING: If shot from the attacking half of the neutral zone, faceoff at the nearest neutral zone faceoff spot consistent with rule 9-1-8. If shot from the defending half of the neutral zone, this could be icing if the puck crosses the goal line. If the puck does not cross the goal line or if it is not an icing the puck situation, faceoff is at the nearest neutral zone faceoff spot consistent with Rule 9-1-8.



Comment: In this situation, the faceoff shall generally take place at the nearest faceoff spot where the puck was last fairly played.

Situation 2: Opposing players A1 and B1 are attempting to gain possession of the puck. Player B2 then engages in physical contact with A1.

RULING: If A1 is in an unsuspecting or vulnerable position, a penalty must be assessed to B2. If B2 simply applies a body check and separates Player A1 and the puck, play shall continue.

Comment: This is a very common situation and many times, one player wins the puck, gains possession, and play continues. However, Rule 7-17-3 is very clear about checking an unsuspecting and vulnerable player.

