

An Optional Rule Change proposal for District 9 Squirts

The following rule changes could increase the amount of playing time and development for Squirts/U10 players.

Some ideas from Jack Blatherwick.

Faceoffs:

- Eliminate virtually every faceoff. One starts the period, one after each goal and one if the puck leaves the playing surface. No substitutions during face-offs, only during play.

Whistles:

- Double whistle to stop play; single whistle for penalty, off-side, icing, frozen puck, hand pass outside of defensive zone. In each case, the offending team must immediately forfeit the puck and leave the zone, tagging up as soon as the zone is cleared.
- Official will indicate the reason for every single whistle, yelling "Offsides," "Icing," "Hand Pass," "Frozen Puck," or "Penalty to ___ Team, # ___,"
- Double whistle will be followed by face-off at nearest dot (if puck leaves ice) or center ice (if a goal is scored) within five seconds.

Penalties:

- Penalized player goes to penalty box for 1:30; returns to action upon penalty's expiration.

Eliminate the icing rule until high school. When kids ice the puck, three things should happen:

- First, the defending team needs to skate the length of the ice to go back for the puck — not a bad idea for kids who need to skate more.
- Second, the goalie will come out of his crease to make a play.
- Third, the coach of the player who iced it will teach him to complete a pass rather than throw it northward with no thought.

Single whistle for a hand pass outside of the defensive zone.

Have a single whistle for offsides, but keep playing. The offensive team must give the puck immediately to the defenders and regroup back over the red line (similar to the tag-up rule) while the defense starts their attack with the puck.

When the goalie freezes the puck — and he should be encouraged to make a pass to a teammate instead of freezing it — the ref blows a single whistle, and the attacking team must regroup back to the blue line before forechecking. More skating. That's good. And there's a brief opportunity for the defending team to start a breakout with little pressure.

In case this all sounds difficult, I'd ask, "What is the price of development?"

To play 55 minutes of the 60 instead of 27 minutes would effectively double the amount of game experience for every player — every season. Just as importantly, it would increase their endurance, because of the non-stop action. Players would skate about a minute and rest two, perfect intervals for physiological development.