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TO: USA Hockey Board of Directors, District Referees-in-Chief, Coaches-in-Chief, Risk Managers, Registrars, Affiliate Presidents

SUBJECT: Playing Rules and Protective Equipment Agreement
Hockey Canada teams playing in the U.S. & USA Hockey teams playing in Canada

Per a standing agreement between USA Hockey and Hockey Canada (HC), the following policy regarding playing rules and protective equipment is in effect.

CANADIAN TEAMS PLAYING IN THE UNITED STATES

All USA Hockey sanctioned 12-&-Under (and below) age classification games that are played in the United States are required to play under the USA Hockey Competitive Contact Category Playing Rules. This includes all invitational tournaments sanctioned by USA Hockey and non-league games involving teams from each respective country.

All U.S. based games played in 14U (and below) Youth and Girls categories and sanctioned by USA Hockey shall also play under the immediate offside rule (no delay/tag-up) and the USA Hockey shorthanded icing rule (icing is not allowed by a team that is shorthanded).

In addition, all Canadian players must wear the following Hockey Canada mandatory equipment:

1. **Hockey Skates** (approved design for hockey)
2. **CSA Certified Helmet** (All age classifications)
3. **CSA Certified Face Mask** (with color-coded CSA sticker – per following chart)

Category	Description	Type	CSA Sticker Color
Full-face protectors	Players of any age (non-goalkeeper)	B1 or 1	White
	Players 10 years of age and younger (non-goalkeeper)	B2 or 2	Orange
	Head and face protection intended for a Goalkeeper of any age	D1 or 3	Blue
Eye Protectors (visors)	A partial face protector (e.g. visor) that shields only the eyes, intended for use by a player 18 years old or older.	C or 4	Yellow

4. **BNQ Certified Throat Protector** (For players in all Female and Youth classifications)

NOTE: Hockey Canada rules do not mandate the wearing of a mouthpiece at any age classification where a full facemask is required. Therefore, Hockey Canada registered teams are not required to wear a mouthpiece while playing in the United States. A mouthpiece is required for any junior aged player wearing a visor.



USA Hockey, the national governing body for the sport of ice hockey, is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation and the United States Olympic Committee



If a player on a Canadian team is not wearing the proper equipment, as outlined above, the player shall be sent off the ice and a warning issued to the coach of that team. Any subsequent violation for the same equipment by the same team shall result in a misconduct penalty being assessed to the offending player. In all instances where a Hockey Canada team is not wearing their proper mandated equipment, a game incident report shall be submitted by the Referee through the online game reporting system and noted as an "Other Incident".

USA HOCKEY TEAMS PLAYING IN CANADA

USA Hockey registered teams playing games in Canada are authorized to play under the Hockey Canada playing rules provided they have received the proper travel authorization from their USA Hockey Registrar.

In addition, USA Hockey registered players must wear the following USA Hockey mandatory equipment:

1. **Hockey Skates of approved design for hockey**
2. **HECC-Certified Helmet** - Mandatory for all Youth, Girls and High School classifications and those players under the age of 18 in Junior classifications. HECC-certified helmets recommended for players in the Junior (18+ years old) or Adult classifications. All non-HECC-certified helmets must be designed for ice hockey.
3. **HECC-Certified Face Mask** - Required for all Youth, Girls and High School classifications and those players under the age of 18 in Junior classifications. Junior players who are 18(+) years of age may wear a HECC approved Visor.
4. **Non-Clear Internal Mouthpiece** - Required for Youth and Girls 12U and above, High School, and Junior classifications.
5. **HECC-Certified Neck Laceration Protector** - Required for all Youth, Girls, High-School and Junior age classifications with no alterations (*Note: BNQ-certified NLP's will fulfill this requirement for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons*).

Any USA Hockey player/coach committing major infractions while playing in Canada that would normally incur a suspension under USA Hockey rules, or count towards the progressive suspension rules, shall serve all suspensions according to the USA Hockey Playing Rules. This includes the 4-player/12-team penalty rule and anytime a major penalty, game misconduct or match penalty is assessed.

Summary

The standard insurance coverage will be considered to be in effect as long as the injured participant was wearing the proper protective equipment as mandated by the organization (Hockey Canada or USA Hockey) with which they are registered.

Please note that all other playing rules of the host country are in effect for games played in that country, except when U.S. teams are playing on U.S. soil in Canadian-based leagues using Hockey Canada rules under league direction, and vice versa.

For additional information on playing rules in each federation, please visit:

www.hockeycanada.ca or www.usahockey.com

cc: Associate Registrars

Local Program Registrars