



Focus on Impact Penalties-Contact With Goaltenders

A General Reminder about Impact Penalties and Non-Calls

The goal of each of these “Focus on Impact Penalties” is to illustrate how officials can use both penalties and non-calls to clearly communicate what is allowed and what is not allowed.

Here are the two questions that defines impact penalties from non-calls:

- 1. Would this penalty send a very clear message to the players, coaches and the entire arena about the type of play that will be permitted?**
- 2. Would this penalty provide teachable information about how the “guilty player” can change their play to avoid a penalty in the future?**

If the answer to both of these is “Yes” then the referee has an opportunity to make an impact penalty call. Ultimately, every penalty should be an impact penalty.

If the answer to both of these questions is “No” then the referee does not call a penalty; if one of the questions is “No” then the referee needs to decide if calling the penalty makes sense (it probably does not make sense if the answer is “No” to either question).

The referee then needs to decide if this is a standard no-call or if it needs to become an impact non-call. Generally, to create an impact non-call, the referee will add a verbal statement that has three goals: (1) draws attention to a non-call (2) is phrased to tell the players what was done to avoid a penalty, and (3) encourage more of this behaviour based on not receiving a penalty and the officials’ praise of the player.

What the Rule Book Says

Rule 8.5 Highlights:

- A goaltender is never fair game inside or outside the crease.
- An attacking player pushed into the goaltender by a defending player is still responsible to make every effort to avoid the goaltender.
- There is never a legal reason to purposefully contact the opposing goaltender whether with the body or with the stick.
- Officials are reminded to strictly penalize goaltenders who trip, slash, or spear players around the goal.

Why “Protecting the Goaltender” Matters

Goaltenders are vulnerable to injuries for several reasons. First, their equipment is not designed to protect for impact with other bodies. Similarly, the mask easily flies off during collisions. Second, goaltenders are consistently in positions that make them easy to knock over or injure; they are lower to the ice (making their heads at

the same level as elbows and sticks) and the goaltender crouch does not offer the same type of balance as the skater's athletic stance.

To extend this thinking, teams will escalate rough play after goaltender contact especially if they feel officials are not doing enough to protect their goalie. Protecting the goaltender is a good impact penalty for both these reasons: protecting the goaltender and discouraging rough play.

Example of an Impact Call and Non-Call

- 1) Impact Penalty: In the course of the play A87 skates close to Goalie B's crease as Goalie B is cutting down the angle. A87 clearly makes contact with the goaltender without making clear effort to avoid the collision-Call a penalty.
- 2) Impact Penalty: The blue team is consistently making small contact with red's goaltender. The referee has chosen to warn the blue captain (a warning is not required, but an option), but the behavior continues. Call a penalty.
- 3) Impact Penalty: The puck is loose and the goalie B places her glove on the puck so that the referee decides to blow her whistle. A6 comes in and pokes at the goaltender's glove. Call a penalty. As soon as you have lost sight of the puck, there is no reason why a player should be looking for the puck. "No puck, no poke"
- 4) No Call: The puck is sitting loose in front of Goalie A. B7 tries to poke the puck at the same time as Goalie A is in the process of covering it. Goalie A gets to the puck just before B7 but has her glove poked due to B7's attempt at the loose puck. Since the poke occurred incidentally to playing a loose puck rather than B7 intentionally trying to foul the goaltender...no penalty.

How to make this an impact penalty

In examples 1 & 2 above, the referee can say that calling a penalty sets a clear message to the entire arena about what is not allowed as well as telling the offending player what to do differently next time. In Example 1, the arena is told "you may not make contact with the goalie" and the player can learn "make every attempt possible to avoid the goalie." In example 3, the arena again knows "you may not touch the goalie" and the player learns "if you do not see puck then you do not get to poke for the puck."

Example of making a non-call into an impact non-call

If the referee chooses to make a non-call into an impact non-call, then she should use the following strategy:

- 1) As she blows her whistle she finishes at the net. At this point she identifies a poke on the goaltender that was incidental to the puck being loose.
- 2) When appropriate she says (in a loud and assertive voice) something like "nothing there...the puck was loose, goalie and forward tried for the puck at the same time and the goalie won."