



# The Ref's Point of View: Calling a Penalty

The most effective penalty call is one that the entire arena can see, hear and understand. Not being clear in your signal, and not using your voice effectively, can create frustration among players, coaches and fans. It is essential that you communicate clearly and confidently when a penalty is assessed.

Let's look at the penalty call from the Point of View of an official assessing a penalty.

## Making the call

It is the third period of a close game between Team Black and Team White. Two players are battling for the puck in the corner of the White zone. Suddenly, a Black player escapes the corner with the puck and drives the net – the White player in pursuit tries to sweep the puck away from behind but is out of position and trips the Black player instead. Definite trip, impact penalty, denied black a scoring chance.

What do I do next?

1. I mentally record the team, number and infraction. I raise my non-whistle arm to let everyone know I have seen a penalty. I wait for the offending team to gain possession of the puck.
2. Once the offending team gains possession, I stop play with a short and sharp whistle. I come to a complete stop before assessing the penalty. I am also looking for scrums or other infractions that might occur after I blew the whistle.
3. After blowing my whistle, I leave my non-whistle arm up in the air, count to three, and give people a chance to find me on the ice and focus their attention on my call.
4. I lower my non-whistle arm and point at the offending player. I announce the team, number, and infraction, and then perform the signal for the penalty in question. I do this in a loud, clear and calm voice.
5. When I know the offending player has seen me make my call, I skate backwards to penalty bench, keeping all players in view.
6. At the penalty box, I come to a complete stop – never do a fly-by as you report a penalty. I wait until I have made eye contact with the timekeeper and repeat my call – team, number, infraction and signal.

## **Special Circumstances**

### ***Why coming to a complete stop and counting to three are best practices:***

When it's time to make a penalty call, the most important concern is communication. If you are moving around, ducking in and out of players, it is harder for people to see and hear you. Coming to a complete stop, and waiting a few second, gives everyone a good chance to hear and see your call.

### ***Make sure you don't embarrass or startle players with your call:***

If the offending player is standing right beside you when you stop play, you need to adjust your penalty calling procedure. It is no longer appropriate to point aggressively at the player. Announce the penalty while making eye contact with the offending player and then direct him/her to the penalty box.

### ***Sorting out a scrum:***

A scrum can be a confusing, frantic situation where players, particularly younger ones, do not necessarily know what's going on. In these situations, do not worry about announcing and signalling a penalty; take care of the players and make sure you have the situation under control. Do your best to identify players receiving penalties, and direct them to the penalty box. Once they are in the box, and you are confident you have control of the situation, report the penalties clearly to the timekeeper.

### ***Why loud is good:***

No one should be left wondering what call you just made. Be loud but calm – use an appropriate level so that players on the ice can hear you. Don't whisper the call and rush the signal. A clear, loud call with a firm signal communicates confidence and authority, two things all referees want to establish in any game.

### ***Why a little repetition is a good thing:***

Sometimes, even when you perform the penalty procedure properly at the site of the infraction, coaches may still be confused about the call. Take the opportunity when you approach the timekeeper to repeat the team, number, and infraction and perform the penalty signal again so that both benches understand the call.

### ***Never, ever sound or look angry:***

When a referee assesses a penalty, it is essential that the penalty is announced and signalled without any hint of anger or emotion. Exaggerating the penalty signals, or using an angry tone, will only inflame players, coaches and fans. Be loud and assertive, but also calm and confident.