

GAME FLOW

RULE 76 FACE-OFFS

76.1. FACE-OFF

The action of the Referee or Linesperson in dropping the puck between the sticks of two opposing Players to start or resume play is called a “face-off”. A “face-off” begins when the Official indicates the “location of the “face-off” and the Officials and Players take their appropriate positions. The “face-off” ends when the puck has been legally dropped.

A Goalkeeper may not participate in a “face-off”.

76.2. FACE-OFF LOCATIONS

All “face-off” must be conducted on one of the nine (9) Face-off Spots located on the Rink.

If two (2) rule violations are the reason for the stoppage of play (e.g.: “high-sticking the puck” and “intentional off-side”), the ensuing “face-off location” shall be determined as the spot that provides the least amount of “territorial advantage” to the offending Team.

When the play is stopped for any reason not specifically attributable to either Team while the puck is in the Neutral Zone, the ensuing “face-off” shall be conducted at the nearest Face-off Spot outside the Blue Line whenever possible. When it is unclear as to which of the four (4) Face-off Spots is the nearest, the spot that gives the Home Team the greatest “territorial advantage” in the Neutral Zone will be selected for the ensuing “face-off”.

When Players are penalized at a stoppage of play so as to result in penalties being placed on the penalty time clock to one Team, the ensuing “face-off” shall be conducted at one of the two (2) Face-off Spots in the offending Team’s Defending Zone.

There are only three (3) exceptions to this application:

- (I) when a penalty is assessed after the scoring of a goal – “face-off” shall be conducted at Center ice;
- (II) when a penalty is assessed at the end (or start) of a period – “face-off” shall be conducted at Center ice;
- (III) or when the defending Team is penalized, and the attacking Players enter the Attacking Zone beyond the outer edge of the End Zone Face-off Circle – “face-off” shall be conducted in the Neutral Zone.

The Team awarded the “Power-Play” will have the choice of which End Zone spot the “face-off” will take place at to start the “Power-Play”.

When an infringement of a rule has been committed by Players of both Teams in the play resulting in the stoppage, the ensuing “face-off” will be conducted at the nearest Face-off Spot in that zone.

When stoppage occurs between the end Face-off Spots and near end of the Rink, the puck shall be faced-off at the end Face-off Spot on the side where the stoppage occurs unless otherwise expressly provided by these rules.

No “face-off” shall be made within 4.50 m (15 ft) of the goal or side Boards nor anywhere other than at a Face-off Spot.

When a goal is illegally scored as a result of a puck being deflected directly off an Official, the resulting “face-off” shall be made at the nearest Face-off Spot in the zone where the puck deflected off of the Official.

When a goal is illegally scored by the attacking Team by “directing”, “batting”, “kicking” or “high-sticking” the puck into the goal, the resulting “face-off” shall take place in the Neutral Zone at the nearest Face-off Spot.

GAME FLOW

When the game is stopped for any reason not specifically covered in the official rules, the puck must be “faced-off” at a Face-off Spot in the zone nearest to where it was last played.

Following a stoppage of play, should one or both defensemen who are the “point Players” or any Player coming from the Players’ Bench of the attacking Team, enter into the Attacking Zone beyond the outer edge of the End Zone Face-off Circle during an altercation, “gathering or scrum”, the ensuing “face-off” shall take place in the Neutral Zone near the Blue Line of the defending Team. This rule also applies when an “icing”, an “intentional off-side”, or a “high-sticking the puck” violation (by the Team of greater numerical strength of its opponent) has occurred, and the ensuing “face-off” is to be in the offending Team’s Defending Zone.

Should any of the non-offending Players enter the Attacking Zone beyond the outer edge of the End Zone Face-off Circle during an altercation, “gathering or scrum”, the ensuing “face-off” shall take place in the Neutral Zone near the Blue Line of the defending Team.

For a violation of → **Rule 71 – Premature Substitution**, the resulting “face-off” will take place at the Center ice Face-off Spot when play is stopped beyond the Center red line. When play is stopped prior to the Center red line, the resulting “face-off” shall be conducted at the nearest Face-off Spot in the zone where the play was stopped.

When play is stopped for an injured Player, the ensuing “face-off” shall be conducted at the Face-off Spot in the zone nearest the location of the puck when the play was stopped. When the injured Player’s Team has “control of the puck” in the Attacking Zone, the “face-off” shall be conducted at one of the Face-off Spots outside the Blue Line in the Neutral Zone. When the injured Player is in their Defending Zone and the attacking Team is in “control of the puck” in the Attacking Zone, the “face-off” shall be conducted at one of the defending Team’s end-zone Face-off Spots.

76.3. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE

As soon as the line change procedure has been completed by the Referee and they lower their hand to indicate no further changes, the Linesperson conducting the “face-off” shall blow their whistle.

This will signal to both Teams that they have no more than five (5) seconds to line up for the ensuing “face-off”. At the end of the five (5) seconds (or sooner if both centers are ready), the Linesperson will conduct a proper “face-off”.

However if:

- (I) One or both centers are not positioned for the “face-off”,
- (II) One or both centers refrain from placing their stick on the ice,
- (III) Any Player has encroached into the Face-off Circle,
- (IV) Any Player makes physical contact with an opponent, or
- (V) Any Player who lines up for the “face-off” in an off-side position,
- (VI) One of the centers wins the face-off by the usage of the skates.

the Linesperson shall have the offending center(s) may assess a warning for a “face-off” violation prior to dropping the puck.

In the last two (2) minutes of regulation time or any time in Overtime, the Linesperson will still blow their whistle to initiate the “face-off”, but the five (5) second time limit will not be enforced. However, Players must abide by the verbal directions given by the Linesperson in their attempt to conduct a fast and fair “face-off”.

76.4. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE – CENTERS

The puck shall be faced-off by the Referee or the Linesperson dropping the puck on the ice between the sticks of the Players facing-

GAME FLOW

off. Players facing-off will stand squarely facing their opponent's end of the Rink approximately one stick length apart with the blade of their sticks on the ice.

When the "face-off" takes place at any of the nine Face-off Spots, the Players taking part shall take their position so that they will stand squarely facing their opponent's end of the Rink, and clear of the ice markings (where applicable). The sticks of both Players facing-off shall have the blade on the ice, within the designated white area. At the eight (8) Face-off Spots (excluding Center ice Face-off Spot), the defending Player shall place their stick within the designated white area first followed immediately by the attacking Player. When the "face-off" is conducted at the Center ice Face-off Spot, the visiting Player shall place their stick on the ice first.

If a Player facing-off fails to take their proper position immediately when directed by the On-ice Official, the Official may assess a warning for a "face-off" violation.

If a center is not at the designated "face-off" area once the five (5) second time limit has elapsed, the Linesperson will drop the puck immediately.

If the center is back from the Face-off Spot, is "quarterbacking" or refuses to come into the "face-off" area when instructed to do so by the Linesperson, or the center is simply slow getting to the Face-off Spot when the five (5) seconds has elapsed, the puck shall be dropped.

If the center attempts to arrive at the Face-off Spot just as the five seconds elapses in an attempt to gain an advantage to win the "face-off", the center will be warned by the Linesperson that they have committed a "face-off" violation.

If a Player received a warning for a "face-off" violation, they must come into position quickly or risk having the puck dropped by the Linesperson without the Player being set or will result in a Bench Minor Penalty for "Delay of Game" for a second "face-off" violation during the same "face-off".

76.5. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE – OTHER PLAYERS

No other Player shall be allowed to enter the Face-off Circle or come within 4.5 m (15 ft') of the Players facing-off. All Players must stand on-side on all "face-offs". During end-zone "face-offs", all other Players on the ice must position their bodies on their own side of the restraining lines marked on the outer edge of the Face-off Circles.

If a Player other than the Player taking the "face-off" moves into the Face-off Circle prior to the dropping of the puck, then the offending Team taking the "face-off" shall receive a warning for a "face-off" violation.

Players on the attacking Team (exclusive of the center) must establish their position first and then the defending Team may counter and hold its position until the puck is dropped. A violation of this procedure shall be treated as "face-off" encroachment and the Linesperson shall assess a warning for a "face-off" violation to the offending Team.

Should an attacking Player attempt to establish a new position prior to the "face-off", and the defending center steps back from the Face-off Spot in order to reposition their Teammates, the "face-off" violation shall be charged to the attacking Team as they must establish their position first.

76.6. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE – VIOLATIONS

If a center should move prematurely prior to the "face-off", or if the Referee or Linesperson shall have dropped the puck unfairly,

GAME FLOW

the “face-off” shall be considered a “face-off” violation. A warning shall be issued to the offending Team and the “face-off” must be conducted again. When two (2) “face-off” violations” have been committed by the same Team during the same “face-off”, this Team shall be penalized with a Bench Minor Penalty to the offending Team. This penalty shall be announced as a “Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game” – Face-off Violation.”

“Face-off” violations shall be summarized as follows (any of the four (4) On-ice Officials may identify a “face-off” violation):

- (I) Encroachment by any Player other than the center into the “face-off” area prior to the puck being dropped. Players on the perimeter of the Face-off Circle must keep both skates outside the Face-off Circle - skate contact with the line is permitted. If a Player’s skate crosses the line into the Face-off Circle prior to the drop of the puck, this shall be deemed as a “face-off” violation. A Player’s stick may be inside the Face-off Circle provided there is no physical contact with their opponent or their opponent’s stick.
- (II) Encroachment by any Player into the area between the hash marks on the outer edges of the Face-off Circle prior to the puck being dropped. Players must also ensure that both of their skates do not cross their respective hash marks. Contact with the line with their skate is permitted. If a Player’s skate crosses the line into the area between the hash marks prior to the drop of the puck, this shall be deemed as a “face-off” violation. A Player’s stick may be inside the area between the hash marks provided there is no physical contact with their opponent or their opponent’s stick.
- (III) Any physical contact with an opponent prior to the puck being dropped. If either Player taking the “face-off” makes helmet-to-helmet contact with their opponent, they must receive a first “face-off” violation warning. If the Linesperson cannot differentiate which Player initiated the contact, both Players must receive a first “face-off” violation warning.
- (IV) Failure by either center taking the “face-off” to “properly position themselves behind the restraining lines” or place their stick on the ice - as outlined in Rule 76.4 – Face-off Procedure - Centers.
 “Properly position themselves behind the restraining lines” shall mean that the center must place their feet on either side of the restraining lines that are parallel to the side Boards (contact with the lines is permissible), and the toe of the blade of their skates must not cross over the restraining lines that are perpendicular to the side Boards as they approach the Face-off Spot. The blade of the stick must then be placed on the ice, at least the toe of the blade of the stick, in the designated white area of the Face-off Spot and must remain there until the puck is dropped.
- (V) Failure to comply with this positioning and “face-off” procedure will result in a “face-off” violation.

Whenever a Team has committed two (2) “face-off” violations during the same “face-off”, the Referee shall immediately assess the offending Team a Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game”. This penalty shall be announced as a Bench Minor Penalty for Delay of Game – Face-off Violation.

Players who are late to the “face-off” location and therefore in an off-side position for the ensuing “face-off” will be warned once in the game by the Referee. This warning will also be given to the offending Team’s Coach. In this situation, the offending Team’s center will not receive a warning for a “face-off” violation. Any subsequent violation shall result in a Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game” being assessed to the offending Team. This penalty shall be announced as a “Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game” – Slow Proceeding to Face-off Location.

In the conduct of any “face-off” at any of the nine (9) Face-off Spots on the playing surface, no Player facing-off shall make any physical contact with their opponent’s body by means of their own body or by their stick except in the course of playing the puck after the “face-off” has been completed.

GAME FLOW

For violation of this rule, the Referee may, at their discretion impose a Minor Penalty or penalties on the Player(s) whose action(s) caused the “physical contact”.

Nonetheless, this “physical contact” prior to the dropping of the puck shall be deemed as a “face-off” violation and the center will be warned by the Linesperson that the Team has committed a “face-off” violation and any subsequent violation will result in a Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game” - “face-off” violation being assessed.

“Face-off” encroachment may be applied during “face-offs” at any of the nine (9) Face-off Spots on the playing surface. However, since no such lines are painted on the ice at the four (4) Face-off Spots adjacent to the Blue Lines, Linespersons shall use their judgment as to whether or not a violation has occurred. All Players, other than the centers, shall be uniformly back from the “face-off” location similar to being outside the Face-off Circle for “face-offs” in the End Zones.

76.7. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE – LINE CHANGES

No substitution of Players shall be permitted until the “face-off” has been completed and play has resumed except when a penalty is imposed which affects the on-ice strength of either Team.

Should an On-ice Official notice that the defending Team has not placed enough Players on the ice for the ensuing “face-off”, the Referee in the Neutral Zone shall be notified and they will instruct the offending Team to place another Player(s) on the ice. If, in the opinion of the Referee that this is being done as a “stalling tactic”, they will issue a warning to the offending Team’s Coach and any subsequent violations shall result in the assessment of a Bench Minor Penalty for “Delay of Game”.

Should an On-ice Official notice that the attacking Team has not placed enough Players on the ice for the ensuing “face-off”, the Linesperson will proceed with conducting the “face-off” in the normal manner. The attacking Team must ensure they put the appropriate number of Players on the ice at all times.

76.8. FACE-OFF PROCEDURE – VERIFICATION OF TIME

Any loss of time on the game or penalty clocks due to a false “face-off” or a “face-off” violation must be replaced. The Video Review may be consulted to ensure the time is accurately replaced. The whistle will not be blown by the Official to start play. Playing time will commence from the instant the puck is “faced-off” and will stop when the whistle is blown, or a goal is scored.

RULE 77 GAME AND INTERMISSION TIMING

77.1. GAME TIMING

The time allowed for a game shall be three (3) twenty-minute (20) periods of actual play with a rest intermission between periods.

77.2. INTERMISSION TIMING

Play shall be resumed promptly following each intermission upon the expiration of fifteen (15) minutes or a length of time designated by the IIHF from the completion of play in the preceding period. Timing of the intermission commences after termination of the period.

→ [Rule 34 – Game Timekeeper](#)

For the purpose of keeping the spectators informed as to the time remaining during intermissions, the Game Timekeeper will use the electronic clock to record length of intermissions.