

Ball Hockey rules within the NSMBHL - updated Feb 2025

All leagues within the NSMBHL will follow a similar structure and rules. Exception may be granted by the NSMBHL Managing Director or their delegate.

The NSMBHL Managing Director or their delegate will have the final decision on all matters regarding the NSMBHL.

Playing surface: The U8, U10, U12 and U15 divisions will play cross rink, 4 x4. The ref can decide to play 3x3 if it makes sense based on the number of players.

The U15 division and older may play cross rink 3x3 or 5x5 on the full arena surface.

The classic orange ball will be used.

The NSMBHL will follow standard hockey rules.

As always, the decision of the ref will be final.

Respect the Referee

The NSMBHL considers sportsmanship a strong priority. It is essential that all participants, including spectators act with the utmost respect to our referees. There will be a zero tolerance for any unsportsmanlike conduct towards the referee. In fact, we will deal with unsportsmanlike conduct very firmly. Please do not expect a warning relating to unsportsmanlike behavior. Coaches are asked to help ensure their players are aware of this.

Goalie Stopping the Ball

The ref will promote continuous play. If the goalie stops the ball they will be encouraged to "play on" if not under pressure.

If they are under pressure by the other team, they can cover the ball to stop play. If the goalie covers the ball and a whistle blows the ball will be placed behind the goal and a defensive player will quickly take possession. All other players must be above the crease. The game resumes when the referee blows the whistle.

If there is no pressure from opposing players and the ref yells "play on" the goalie must move the ball. If they do not do so quickly the ref will blow the whistle and give the offensive team possession in the nearest corner.

Ball Leaving the Playing Surface

If the ball is going off the playing surface people are encouraged to stop it so that the play can continue. In this case the ref will yell "Play On".

If the ball goes off the playing surface the referee will blow the whistle to stop play. No undue advantage is to be gained by a ball going out of play. If there is an unfair bounce caused when a ball was leaving the playing surface the ref will blow the whistle and restart the play from where the ball was leaving the playing area.

A goal cannot be scored directly from stopped play on the sidelines. The play must be a pass, or the ball must deflect off of an offensive player before entering the net.

Length of Game

U8-U10 Divisions will begin with a Skills and Drills session for the first 30 minutes. This will be followed by a 25-minute game. The emphasis will be on continuous play, fun and learning the game. This will continue for the first 6 sessions of the season. After 6 sessions, skills and drills will stop and teams will play 2x25 minute games.

The shifts will be 2 minutes long. Every two minutes, the whistle will blow, and a new shift will take to the playing surface. The ref will begin play by throwing a new ball to a neutral spot on the playing surface. Please be ready so shift can be made quickly.

Coaches can go on the playing surface if they need to do so to help teach a player. Coaches are encouraged to limit this direct contact and promote independence by our young players.

U12 and U15– Will play 2 x 25-minute games of running time.

Shifts will be made on the fly.

Making a penalty call – a penalty call is made as soon as it happens. **No delayed penalties.**

All penalties will result in a penalty shot.

The Penalty shot - The ball is placed at centre, the ref blows whistle, the player takes the shot. All other players are behind the centre line. The shooter must remain in forward motion, no backward motion or rebounds are permitted. If a goal is scored there is a faceoff at centre. If no goal, the ball is quickly placed behind the net. One defender goes behind the net with the ball. The ref blows the whistle to resume play.

Ref will ensure the offending player understands why the call is being made. The goal will be to teach each player the correct rules.

The player who was “offended” will take the shot. If the offended player cannot take the shot or for penalties where no one was directly offended, the coach will select who will take the penalty shot. The coaches are to mix it up and ensure all players have a chance to take penalty shots.

Minor Penalties

The following infractions will result in a penalty shot:

- Body contact. This is a non-contact league. We understand that some incidental contact will take place. Any play for which is ruled that the player is “playing the player” and not the ball will be called.
- High sticking - contacting another player with a high stick (above the shoulders) or causing danger to another player. It is a penalty shot.
- High sticking -contacting the ball over the shoulder -Keep sticks below the shoulder. If a player touches the ball with their stick above the shoulders, it is a penalty shot.
- Any dangerous play when a player has their stick above the shoulders will result in a penalty shot.
- The refs will call this 100%, no leeway! Please keep the sticks down!
- Tripping - Hooking - Elbowing Sometimes we know a trip, hook or elbow might be a mistake. It is still a penalty as players are responsible to always control their body and stick.
- Contacting the goalie – players are not permitted to enter the crease with either foot. If an offensive player touches the crease with their foot - it is a penalty shot.
- Any unnecessary roughness can be considered roughing. It is a penalty shot.
- Catching, holding or carrying the ball. If a player catches the ball or closes their hand on the ball at any time. It is a penalty shot.
- Delay of game - If a player intentionally shoots the ball from the playing surface it is a delay of game penalty, and a penalty shot.
- Delay of game by the goalie – If the goalie leaves their crease with both feet and covers the ball. This will result in a penalty shot.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct – any conduct deemed unsportsmanlike by the ref will result in a penalty shot.

3 minor penalties and you are out for the game.

Misconduct Penalties

A stick infraction, slashing or cross checking that is deemed dangerous by the ref will result in a penalty shot and the offending player may receive a game misconduct. The team will NOT be short-handed. There will be no tolerance for dangerous stick play.

Note that a coach may also sit a player at their discretion if they are playing outside of the rules. Coaches are encouraged to manage their own players in effort to teach and to keep the game safe and fun. If a player is getting too aggressive, their coach will be encouraged to find a way to settle the aggressive behavior down.

Fighting and even the talk of fighting will be absolutely forbidden. A penalty shot will be awarded and the offending player will receive a game misconduct. Coaches are asked to strictly enforce this rule and help if a player gets out control.

All misconduct incidences must be reported by the Referee to the NSMBHL Managing Director. Such misconduct may result in further discipline, up to and including suspension from the league. If a player is suspended from the league, they will not be intitled to any amount of refund. The NSMBHL will not tolerate any player or coach who acts inappropriately. **Do not expect a warning regarding bad conduct.**

Swearing is also not tolerated. This will result in the opposing team being awarded a penalty shot and the offending player being shifted off for 5 minutes. A second offence and the player will receive a game misconduct penalty. Swearing, name calling or taunting are not welcome and will be dealt with firmly.

The league officials reserve the right to deal with all misconduct as they see fit. We will do all that we feel is necessary to ensure the NSMBHL remains a fun and safe place for all participants.

The Flow of the Cross Rink Game

Play will be 4 v4 plus a goalie. The ref may opt to play 3v3 if the number of players make this sensible. The ref will consult with both coaches before making a change to 3 v3. It will be the ref's final decision to make such a change.

All face offs are at centre.

Face off at CENTRE to:

- Start of the game, start of each period
- After goals
- Coincidental minor penalties (after the two penalty shots)
- When the ref needs to reset the game

Whistle blows for:

- Penalties
- Ball out of play
- Ball frozen by goalie
- A goal.
- The ref may also blow the whistle at any time if they feel the need to restart the game.

Play only resumes after the ref blows the whistle to restart play.

When the goalie stops the ball. The ball is placed behind net. A defensive player takes the ball directly behind the net. All offensive players must be behind the top of the crease. The defensive player takes control of ball and looks forward. When the players are set, and this should be done quickly, the Ref blows the whistle and the game resumes.

Ball goes out of bounds - the team that did not shoot the ball out gets the ball where the ball left the playing surface. After they fetch the ball, the ref will point to where the ball is to be placed. Everyone gives the offensive player 5 feet. Once set, the ref blows the whistle and play resumes.

If the ref has any uncertainty, they can opt to restart the play with a face off at centre.

Referees and coaches are encouraged to work together to help ensure each game is fun, moves with a good flow and that each player has a great experience.

Do your best to make it fun for everyone!