

### The Perils of Not Making the Call

*Letting the kids decide the outcome of the game* has long been the moniker of hockey officials who believe that it is better to be less strict when calling penalties. Certainly, there is something to say for making the fouls “be there” before calling penalties. However, fouls that involve the safety of the participants can never be ignored. And the game philosophy that focuses on getting these dangerous fouls has been steadily increasing thanks to consistent MHSAA standards and criteria for penalty enforcement, an emphasis on safety concerns and an effort to grow the high school game by attempting to attract more families. Yet one aspect of administering penalties for safety violations seems to lag behind — MHSAA hockey equipment violations.

At this time of the season (more than any other), it is imperative that officials address this issue with coaches in the pregame introduction and meeting. What we do to start the season sets the tone for the remainder of the year. It is imperative to get all teams used to complying with NFHS/MHSAA equipment expectations. Officials are required to ask each head coach, “Is your team properly and legally equipped for this game?” This question is mandatory under MHSAA guidelines for all MHSAA sports.

In hockey, we see the following equipment violations most commonly:

- Neck Guards
  - Either it isn’t visible or they have been altered from the original intended manufactured state

- They are not being worn correctly
- They are not wearing one at all
- Mouth Guards
  - No mouth guard is being used
  - The mouth guard they are using has been intentionally altered or that it has been chewed so much that it doesn’t provide any protection

A good standard of practice is to look for these violations during warm-ups. Any player not wearing equipment properly should be set off until it is corrected and the coaching staff should be immediately informed of the reason.

Penalty for neck guard violation:

- First violation—Team Warning
- Subsequent violation(s)—10 Minute Misconduct Penalty

Penalty for mouth guard violation:

- First violation—Team Warning (Offender, including the goalkeeper, must leave the ice until and will not be allowed to return until a legal mouth guard is inserted)
- Subsequent violation(s)—10 Minute Misconduct Penalty

**Something to Consider:** While A1 toes the attacking blue line as the puck-handler approached the offensive zone, B1 intentionally shoves A1 into the offensive zone just before the puck is carried in. Ruling?

**Our Last Consideration:** A1 plays the puck with his stick while the puck is well over the cross bar of the net. With the puck still in the air, B1 slaps it out towards the neutral zone where A2 is the first to play the puck with his stick.

**Ruling:** Because B1 was the last to intentional play the puck, A1’s high stick violation is nullified.