



USA HOCKEY

RULES CHANGES

What's new?

USA Hockey Announces Legislative And Rules Changes Passed During 2001 Annual Congress

Age Classification, Playing Rules and Internet Initiative Affected

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (June 12, 2001) - USA Hockey today announced significant legislative and rules changes approved during the Board of Directors meeting, held here June 9 as part of the 2001 USA Hockey Annual Congress. Co-sponsored by AIG Life Insurance Company and The Talbot Agency, Inc., the USA Hockey Annual Congress is the yearly gathering of USA Hockey's volunteer leadership, including members of the organization's board of directors, councils, committees and sections.

One major proposal under consideration was a change in age classification for youth ice hockey members. The Board of Directors adopted this proposal, which aligned age classification with the calendar year for registration purposes. This makes each age category six months "younger," provides consistency with Canadian youth ice hockey age groupings, and synchronizes the youth program with USA Hockey's other programs, all of which operate on the calendar year.

- No charge for 1996 and younger
- Youth age classifications become six (6) months younger, except the end date for Midgets remains the same.

The change will go into effect September of next year for the 2002-03 playing season.

The current age classifications will be used for the 2001-02 playing season.

The Board of Directors also considered the 180 rule-change proposals that were submitted following review by the various committees and councils of USA Hockey. Key playing-rules changes, which will go into effect in 2001-02, are as follows:

- Tag-up at the defensive blue line for a player returning to the game from the penalty bench (Youth and Girls/Women) is no longer required.
- Mouthpiece attachment to the helmet/face mask is no longer required.
- The gross misconduct penalty was eliminated. All such infractions become match penalties.
- The goaltender may no longer play with a stick defined as broken.
- The use of electronic devices to communicate with players and goaltenders is prohibited.
- Teams may now have a captain and up to two alternate captains.
- A minor penalty will now be assessed to the goaltender for not playing the puck when unpressured.

A new rule will also go into effect preventing head checking, which will be more specifically defined at a later date. The proposal to ban body checking at the Pee Wee level was defeated.

In addition, the Board of Directors voted to move forward with the re-launch initiative of the official Web site of USA Hockey, <http://www.usahockey.com>. The ongoing project is designed to create a site that is more dynamic, interactive, and user-friendly. The first phase of the project is scheduled to go online by the end of September.