



The Referee's Crease

A Newsletter for ALLIANCE Hockey Officials

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GAME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR LINESMEN – DURING PLAY

Obviously, the most important game management issue for linesmen during play is to keep your head in the game. Things such as being in position to make correct line calls or reacting to a delayed penalty call by watching for premature substitution of the goalie are important, but there is so much more that you can do to improve the safety and fairness of the game.

Face the Play – Nothing drives players, coaches or supervisors up the wall more than a linesman who parks his butt up against the boards and stays like that come hell, high water, players or pucks. We can fix that.

The easiest way to avoid interfering with the play is to continuously rotate your hips so that you are always facing the puck. How does this help? Picture how much of your skate blade the puck sees as it moves up the boards when you have your butt against the boards. There are two solid, back to back steel barriers nearly a foot in length blocking its progress (remember that we NEVER CLIMB THE BOARDS to get out of the way). By turning so that you are facing the puck, the only obstacles to the puck's progress are two side by side 1/8th inch blade edges. A simple leg lift and the puck will slide uneventfully past you.

Be Heard – Whistles, by their nature, stop play. Avoiding whistles keeps the play going, keeps the clock running, keeps the players' focused on their responsibilities and generally creates a more interesting game. Help avoid having to blow down the play by making sure that everybody clearly

knows about potential line calls or their wave off. Be loud when you yell out "Offside" "OK", "Ice" and "No Ice". If the supervisor sitting in the top row of the stands can hear you, nobody on the ice has grounds to complain if you ding them for an intentional offside.

Cover, cover, cover – Most linesman are fairly aggressive about covering for the ref on fast break scoring chances. The front linesman skates in ahead of the play, going down to the goal line to be in a position to signal a goal and to be beyond the ref's proper end zone positioning once he gets there. The back linesman moves up and covers his partner's blueline until the front linesman has safely moved back to position.

Linesmen don't just cover for the ref. They also need to cover for each other. For safety and game flow, each linesman has to be able to rely on his partner to move up and take his line if the front linesman has to back off because of an oncoming scrum of players. Rather than interfere with play, the front lines backs off and switches roles with his partner until they can safely switch back.

You are a team out there. Work as one.

COMMENTS / QUESTIONS

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