



ICE HOCKEY UK

IN-HOUSE RULES

2025-26 SEASON

These regulations are to be read and applied in conjunction
with the 2025–26 IIHF Rule Book

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Introduction

The **England Ice Hockey (EIH)**, the **Scottish Ice Hockey Association (SIHA)**, and the **British Universities Ice Hockey Association (BUIHA)** adopt the **IIHF Official Rule Book 2025–2026 (Version 1.1, published July 2025)** as the foundation for the rules of the game to be applied in England and Scotland.

Whilst the majority of IIHF rules will be enforced without amendment, certain adaptations are required to reflect local facilities and the nature of the game in England and Scotland. These adaptations are set out in this document as **in-house rules**.

Officials, coaches, and players are required to read and follow these in-house rules as the overriding interpretation of how the IIHF Rule Book is to be applied domestically. This document is to be read **alongside** the IIHF Rule Book and is not intended to serve as a standalone rule book. Unless otherwise stated, all rules will be enforced in line with the IIHF Rule Book.

All changes for the 2025–26 season are highlighted in yellow. Any further amendments will be issued in updated versions of this document, with notification sent to all club secretaries. Replacement pages will be provided as required.

The EIH and SIHA may also issue **Rule Bulletins** from time to time, covering in-house rules or interpretations of IIHF provisions.

This document also ensures that equipment requirements are clear, so that purchases and use of equipment do not prevent a player from participating in games in England or Scotland.

Section 1 – Playing Area

Rule 1 – Rink

Rink size and eligibility

Rinks with a **non-standard playing surface (below 56 m × 26 m)** are authorised by the NGB for **all levels** of hockey, **except**:

- **England: Sutton** – permitted **up to U16** only.
- **Scotland: Coatbridge and Limekilns Road** – permitted **up to U16** only.

Scope

This rule applies to **all EIH and SIHA fixtures**.

Game abandonment and suspension

- **Officials may not unilaterally abandon a game due to rink/ice conditions.** Only the **venue management** can decide to abandon on safety or operational grounds.
- The **Referee may suspend play** while the condition of the ice/rink is assessed.

Procedure if play cannot continue

A. Team(s) decline to continue (e.g., ice/rink conditions):

1. The **Head Coach or Team Manager** must provide a **signed statement** (or record this on the **game sheet** if **EGS** is not in use) stating the reason(s) for not continuing.
2. This must be completed **before the team leaves the bench area**.
3. The **Referee** then completes and signs the game sheet **as normal**.

B. Venue requests the game does not continue (e.g., ice condition or public safety):

1. The **Venue Manager** must provide a **signed statement** (or record on the **game sheet** if **EGS** is not in use) stating the reason(s).
2. The **Referee** then completes and signs the game sheet **as normal**.

*Note: “EGS” = **Electronic Game Sheet**.*

Rule 3 – Benches and Penalty Boxes

The **home club/venue operator** must provide **players’ benches** and **penalty boxes** that, within the fixed constraints of the rink, conform **as closely as reasonably practicable** to **IIHF dimensions and layout**.

Where deviations are unavoidable, they must **not compromise safety or bench control** and must be **communicated to both teams and the officials prior to warm-up**.

Section 2 – Teams

Rule 5 – Team

5.1 – Eligible Players

The **Official Team List** (EGS or paper), including player numbers and bench staff, must be submitted to the referee crew **no later than 20 minutes before the scheduled face-off**.

Non-compliance will result in a **bench minor penalty (delay of game)** to the offending team, to be served at the start of the game or at the first stoppage if identified later.

Only players listed on the submitted team sheet are eligible to participate.

5.4 – Coaches and Team Personnel

Applicability. For all EIH-sanctioned games (except where competition regs state otherwise).

Minimum bench staffing (at puck drop).

- A **Level 2 (or higher) non-playing coach, aged 18+, must be in charge of the bench.**
- Plus **one additional coach: minimum Level 1** (or a **Level 2 player-coach** listed on the team sheet).
- A **registered Team Manager** and **Medic** may be on the bench but **do not count** toward the coaching requirement.
- **Medic:** While not mandatory, the presence of a **qualified medic** on the bench is **strongly recommended.**

Player-coaches.

- Permitted in **NIHL, WEL, WPL, WD1, RECREATIONAL, BUIHA.**
- A **non-playing Level 2 coach** must still be the bench lead.
- The player-coach **must be identified** on the game sheet.
- If the non-playing Level 2 coach is ejected, the **player-coach must remain off-ice and assume bench control** for the remainder of the game; if this cannot be met, see “Loss of eligibility” below.

Off-ice officials (Bench Access)

- **Not required** to wear helmets or face protection. (IIHF equipment rules apply to players and on-ice officials; benches may adopt additional PPE via local risk assessment.)

Registration. All adults granted bench access (including coaches, managers and support staff) must be registered with EIH.

Pre-warm-up equipment check. The **coach/manager** must verify **helmet/facemask fit and chin-strap tightness** per manufacturer instructions and these rules; arrange corrective action where required.

Loss of eligibility during the game.

- If at any time a team **cannot meet the minimum coaching requirement** (i.e., no eligible **Level 2 bench lead** available), the **Referee shall suspend play.**
- If the situation **cannot be rectified without undue delay**, the game will be **forfeited** in accordance with competition regulations.

Rule 5.4 – Coaches & Team Personnel (SIHA-Sanctioned Games)

Minimum Bench Coach Requirement (at game start):

- **Junior & Senior Games** – Level 2 Coach (minimum)
- **Recreational Games** – Level 1 Coach (minimum)

Key Requirements:

- Only *qualified and registered coaches* may be in charge of a bench.
- Team Managers are **not** considered suitably qualified unless they also hold a current coaching qualification.
- A registered Level 2 (or higher) must be on the bench and in charge for all Junior and Senior games.
- The minimum age to be in charge of the bench on game day is **18**.
- If a Level 2 coach is ejected:
 - A Level 1 coach may continue in charge, but if that L1 is under 18, the referee must note this on the game sheet.

Special Provisions – Scottish National League (SNL) Player Coaches:

- Where player-coaches are used, a **non-playing Level 2 (or higher)** must be on the bench and in charge.
- If the non-playing Level 2 is ejected, the Level 2 player-coach must remain on the bench for the remainder of the game.

Enforcement:

- No dispensation will be granted for a Level 1 or unqualified coach to sign the game sheet.
- If a team does not have the required level of coach at the **start of the game**, the game will be abandoned and reported to the SIHA Discipline Committee.
- If during the game a coach ejection means requirements are no longer met, the referee will allow the game to continue but must report the matter to the SIHA Discipline Committee.

Rule 6 – Captain

- The **'C'** (Captain) or **'A'** (Alternate Captain) must be properly affixed to the jersey and **may not be applied using tape**.
- If a player has used tape, the referee must instruct them to remove it.
- If the player **refuses to comply**, a **10-minute misconduct penalty** will be assessed.

Section 3 – Equipment

Rule 9 – Uniforms

Rule 9.1 – Team Uniform

Shirt Colour Clashes

- Team Managers must liaise in advance of game day to avoid colour clashes.
- If a clash occurs, the **home team** is responsible for providing an alternative set of jerseys at the rink.
- If the game proceeds despite a clash, the **offending team** will be assessed a **Bench Minor Penalty for Unsportsmanlike Conduct**.
 - This will normally be the home team (for failing to provide alternate jerseys), unless the away team has arrived in a different colour than was previously agreed.

Player Arrival and Eligibility

- All players must be dressed and, on the bench, or ice by the start of **Period 2** in order to participate.
- On-ice officials must check rosters and cross off any players not present at this time.

Jersey Requirements (Rule 9.3 Emphasis)

- Jerseys must be worn **completely outside the pants** and secured to the pants with **tie-down straps**.
 - First offence: **Warning**.
 - Subsequent offences: **Minor Penalty**.
- Jerseys must **not be tucked into shorts**.
 - First offence: **Warning**.
 - Subsequent offences: **10-minute Misconduct Penalty**.
- Jerseys must cover all relevant protective equipment (e.g. elbow pads).
 - First offence: **Warning**.
 - Subsequent offences: **10-minute Misconduct Penalty**.

Rule 9.7 – Facial Protection

- All players competing in **SIHA Recreational** or **SIHA University Ice Hockey** must wear, at minimum, a **half visor**, regardless of their date of birth.

Rule 9.8 – Dangerous Equipment

Helmets & Chin Straps

- The gap between chin/neck and chin strap must not exceed **2.5 cm (approx. one finger)**.
- First offence: Player sent to the bench to adjust equipment (team warning).
- Second offence: **10-minute Misconduct Penalty** to the offending player.
- If a player's helmet becomes detached during play, they must immediately leave the ice (or refit it at once if safe to do so). Failure to comply will be penalised under **Rule 12 – Illegal Equipment**.

Shorts / Pants

- Shorts that are cut, torn, or modified (e.g. in the inner/back thigh area) are not permitted (**except in RECREATIONAL** – see RECREATIONAL section).
- Shorts with built-in zips are permitted **only if the zip is closed** and secured with Velcro or a button.
- First offence: Player removed from ice (team warning).
- Second offence: **Misconduct Penalty for Dangerous Equipment**.

Rule 9.12 – Neck Laceration Protectors

- A **neck laceration protector** is **mandatory** for all players in all IIHF categories and SIHA competitions.
- Protectors must be worn correctly, unaltered, and must cover as much of the neck as possible.

Enforcement

- No warning will be given for failing to wear a neck guard: an immediate **10-minute Misconduct Penalty** will be issued.
- If a neck guard comes off during play, the player must leave the ice and cannot retrieve it.
- Second violation by the same player: another **10-minute Misconduct Penalty**, which automatically escalates to a **Game Misconduct**.

Post-Game Equipment Conduct

- No player may place equipment on the ice surface after the final buzzer.
 - First instruction: Referee asks player to remove equipment.
 - Refusal: **Misconduct Penalty** assessed, and the coach issued a warning.
- Teams may place sticks and gloves on their bench only.
- All players must wear a helmet during the handshake line, regardless of age or league.

- Violation: **Misconduct Penalty** assessed, and the coach issued a warning.
- Repeat failure by the coach: referee to submit a **Match Report**.

Rule 12 – Illegal Equipment

Facial Protection (Cages & Visors)

- Players wearing a **full face cage** must have the chin cup properly fitted and in contact with the chin, within the helmet's J-clips.
- Loose/dangling cages or straps are not permitted.
- Minor fitting allowances (e.g. tight to chin but slightly out of J-clip, or slightly off chin but clipped in) are acceptable if adjustment cannot improve fit further.

Enforcement

- Referee will instruct the player to leave the ice and adjust equipment.
- If the player returns with the same violation: **Minor Penalty – Illegal Equipment**.
- Subsequent violations by the same player: **10-minute Misconducts** (the second misconduct = **Game Misconduct**).

Additional Notes

- Teams should carry spare screws, straps, clips, and at least one spare facemask/visor for in-game corrections.
- Helmet–facemask combinations must match manufacturer sizing. Mis-sized combinations are considered **Dangerous Equipment**, and the player will be removed until corrected. Repeat non-compliance follows the standard escalation above.

Section 4 – Types of Penalties

Rule 18 – Double Minor Penalties

- **18.4** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Rule 28 – Supplementary Discipline

- Supplementary discipline will be administered by the appropriate authority in line with the **Discipline Policy of the home association (EIH or SIHA)**.
- Cases may be initiated either through:
 - An **official match report**, or
 - The **defined video review process**.

Section 5 – Officials

Rule 30 – Appointment of Officials

- All officials are appointed by the **IHUK Referee Section**.

Rule 33 – Official Scorer

- **33.2** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Rule 34 – Game Timekeeper

- **34.7** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Rule 35 – Penalty Timekeeper

- **35.8** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Rule 37 – Video Review

- On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** and may not be used by referees, official scorers, timekeepers, or any other game official.

Rule 38 – Coach’s Challenge

- As on-ice video review is not available (see Rule 37), a **Coach’s Challenge** is not permitted in **EIH or SIHA competition**.

Section 6 – Physical Fouls

Applicable Leagues: NIHL (all leagues), SNL, and BUIHA Varsity

- Fighting shall be penalised with a **5-minute Major Penalty**.

Additional Provision – NIHL, NIHL1 & NIHL2

- Any fighting major assessed in the **last 5 minutes of regulation time** (including overtime) will also carry an **automatic Game Misconduct**.

Section 8 – Stick Fouls

Rule 60 – High Sticking

- **60.3** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Section 9 – Other Fouls

Rule 69 – Interference on the Goalkeeper

- **69.1** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Section 10 – Game Flow

Rule 78 – Goals

- **78.5** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).
- **78.6** – Video review is not in use in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Rule 84 – Overtime Operations

- Overtime is only played in **NIHL fixtures** and in **SNL fixtures** where specifically provided for in competition regulations.

Rule 85 – Puck Out of Bounds

- **85.7** – On-ice video review is not available in **EIH or SIHA competition** (see Rule 37).

Section 11 – Women’s Ice Hockey

Rule 100.1 – Definition of Women’s Hockey Age Categories

- **Adult**: From the player’s **14th birthday** onward.
- **Under 16**: From the player’s **10th birthday** up to their **16th birthday**.

Rule 101 – Women’s Hockey Specific Playing Rules

- For all **non-adult age categories** of Women’s Hockey, **Rule 201.1 of the IIHF Rule Book** also applies.
- Any player who commits a foul that is assessed a **Major Penalty** will, in all cases, also receive an **additional Game Misconduct Penalty** and be ejected from the game.

Rule 102 – Women’s Hockey Specific Equipment Rules

- Players may wear a **half visor** only from the start of the season following their **18th birthday**.

Section 12 – Junior Ice Hockey

Rule 200 – Junior Hockey Age Categories

- **Under 19**: Birth years **2007–2009**
- **Under 16**: Birth years **2010–2011**

- **Under 14:** Birth years **2012–2013**
- **Under 12:** Birth years **2014–2015**
- **Under 10:** Birth year **2016 and younger**

*Note: Junior age categories are **unisex** and are not classified as “Mens” within the UK.*

Rule 201 – Junior Hockey Specific Playing Rules

- These rules apply to all **junior age groups** as defined in **Rule 200** of the in-house rules.

Appendix 1

Rules Applying to Specific Leagues & Administration

NIHL, NIHL 1 & NIHL 2 – Overtime and Penalty Shot Procedure

- For all **NIHL National League** games:
 - If scores are level after regulation, games will proceed to:
 - **5 minutes of 3-on-3 overtime**, and if still tied,
 - If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:
 - Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
 - If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout continues with **one shot each (“sudden victory”)** until a winner is determined.
 - All eligible players (except those serving penalties or injured) must shoot before any player can take a second attempt.
 - The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game- Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.
 - Teams **do not change ends** for overtime.
 - Goalkeepers may go to their bench during the rest period; penalised players must remain in the penalty box.
- For all **NIHL National Group Stage playoff** games:
 - No playoff match in the group stage shall end in a tie.
 - If scores are level after regulation, games will proceed to:
 - **5 minutes of 3-on-3 overtime**, and if still tied,
 - If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:
 - Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
 - If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout continues with **one shot each (“sudden victory”)** until a winner is determined.
 - Any eligible player may take a penalty-shot attempt, and the same player may be used for multiple attempts. Eligible players are those not serving a penalty and not injured at the time of the attempt.

- The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game-Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.
- Teams **do not change ends** for overtime.
- Goalkeepers may go to their bench during the rest period; penalised players must remain in the penalty box.
- For all **NIHL National Playoff Final Weekend games**:
- If the score in the Semi Finals is level after regulation, game will proceed to:
 - **20 minutes of 5-on-5 overtime**, and if still tied,
 - If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:
 - Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
 - If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout continues with **one shot each (“sudden victory”)** until a winner is determined.
 - Any eligible player may take a penalty-shot attempt, and the same player may be used for multiple attempts. Eligible players are those not serving a penalty and not injured at the time of the attempt.
 - The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game-Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.

NIHL Playoff Final (sudden-death overtime; no GWS)

If the score in the Final is level after regulation, the game will proceed to successive 20:00 periods of 5-on-5 sudden-death overtime until a goal is scored (“golden goal”) and a winner is determined. No Game Winning Shots will be used.

- Standard stop-time rules apply.
- Penalties, player eligibility, and substitutions continue per the Playing Rules.
- Teams change ends at the start of each overtime period.
- Ice resurfacing and intermissions between overtime periods shall follow league practice as outlined in Game Times.

For all **NIHL 1 & 2, League and Playoff games** (except the first leg of quarter- or semi- final series):

- If scores are level after regulation, games will proceed to:
 - **5 minutes of 3-on-3 overtime**, and if still tied,
 - If still tied, a **Game Winning Shots (GWS) competition** will take place as follows:
 - Each team selects **three (3) shooters** to take alternate shots.
 - If the score remains tied after three rounds, the shootout

continues with **one shot each** (“**sudden victory**”) until a winner is determined.

- All eligible players (except those serving penalties or injured) must shoot before any player can take a second attempt.
- The goal credited as the winner will be recorded as the **Game- Winning Goal (GWG)**, and the final score will be increased by one goal for the winning team.
- Teams **do not change ends** for overtime.
- Goalkeepers may go to their bench during the rest period; penalised players must remain in the penalty box.

SNL & Northern League – Overtime and Penalty Shot Procedure

- For all **SNL league, cup, and playoff games**:
 - If tied at the end of regulation time, teams play a **5-minute, 3-on-3, sudden-death overtime period**.
 - If no goal is scored in overtime:
 - A **best-of-three penalty shot shootout** will take place.
 - If still tied, a **sudden-death shootout** will follow.
 - The first three designated shooters may be repeated after every full round of three.

Rules Applying Specifically to Recreational Games in England (EIH)

Coaches

- If **all players** on both teams are **18 years of age or older** on game day, there is **no requirement** for qualified EIH coaches to be present on the bench.
- If **any player under 18** is taking part, the **standard EIH Rules of Competition shall apply** (see Rule 25).

Equipment – Player Shorts

- Small rips, tears, or cuts in player shorts will **not** be penalised.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, a rip/tear is **large enough to compromise player safety**:
 - First offence: the player will receive a **warning** and must repair/replace the shorts.
 - Repeat offence by the same player: a **10-minute Misconduct Penalty** will be assessed if the player continues to participate without fixing the shorts.

Rules Applying Specifically to REC Games in Scotland

Players

- No player under the age of **18** may participate in a recreational game in Scotland.

Coaches

- In line with **Rule 25**, the minimum requirement for a recreational game in Scotland is a **Level 1 coach**.
- If a team does not have the required coach **before the game starts**, the game will be **abandoned**, and the referee must report the matter to the **SIHA Discipline Committee**.
- If, during the game, a coach ejection results in a team no longer meeting the requirement, the game will continue, but the referee must report the issue to the SIHA Discipline Committee.

Equipment

- As set out in **Rule 31**, all recreational players in Scotland are required to wear a **half visor as a minimum**.

Rules Applying Specifically to BUIHA Games in England and Scotland

Varsity OT Games

- Certain fixtures will be designated as **VARSITY OT** games on the schedule.
- These games will follow the **NIHL rules** for **Overtime and Game Winning Shots**.

Coaches

- There is **no requirement for coaches** in BUIHA ice hockey, as players under 18 are not permitted to participate.
- If a BUIHA team plays a fixture against a non-BUIHA opponent (e.g. a challenge match) and the opposing team fields an **under-18 player**, then the standard **IHUK in-house rules** apply (see Rule 25).

Equipment

- As set out in **Rule 31**, all players in BUIHA games are required to **wear a half visor as a minimum**.

Appendix 2

NIHL Only – Non-British-Trained Players (NBTP)

Definitions

- **British-Trained (BT):** A player who has been under UK jurisdiction for at least 16 consecutive months before their 18th birthday or is currently registered as U18.
- **Non-British-Trained (NBTP / Import):** All other players.

Match Day Limits

- Teams may dress a maximum of **4 NBTP** (“imports”).
- If fewer than 4 NBTP are dressed, the team may increase its number of over-25 players by the same number.

NIHL 1 & NIHL 2 – Non-British-Trained Players (NBTP)

Match Day Limits

- A maximum of 2 NBTP may be dressed per game.

Roster Classification

- All NBTP will count as over-23 players for roster size purposes, regardless of their actual age.

SNL – Non-British-Trained Players (NBTP)

- Teams may **dress a maximum of 2 NBTP** per game.
- Only **1 NBTP may be on the ice at any time**.
- If one NBTP is serving a penalty, the other **may not** be on the ice until the penalised player returns.
- All NBTP must be clearly **highlighted on the game sheet** for ease of identification by officials.

SUPPLEMENTARY DISCIPLINE

In addition to any suspensions imposed under these rules, the **EIH Department of Player Safety (DOPS)** or the **SIHA Disciplinary Committee** may, at any time following the conclusion of a game, investigate any incident. These bodies may impose **additional suspensions or sanctions** for offences committed **on or off the ice, before, during, or after a game**, regardless of whether such offences were penalised by the Referee at the time.

PREVENTION OF INFECTIONS OF BLOOD

Players may **not use any of their equipment** to scrape or remove ice contaminated with blood.

First offence: Team issued a **warning**.

Second offence (same team): The offending player will be assessed a **10-minute Misconduct Penalty**.