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Face-Off Locations

When Hockey Canada changed the structure of the Hockey Canada Rule Book in 2022, the rules covering Face-Off locations were mostly centralized in Rule 6.3. This article summarizes and explains Rule 6.3, along with any other Rules that deal with Face-Off location.

SUMMARY OF FACE-OFF LOCATION RULES AND THEIR APPLICATION

1. Face-offs shall only occur at the 9 face-off spots marked on the rink.
2. The centre ice face-off spot is only used at the start of periods, after goals, after an erroneous icing call and, unless otherwise stated in Rule 10.7, when a premature substitution of the goaltender foul occurs.
3. When icing or intentional off-side is called the face-off shall occur at one of the offending team's defending zone face-off spots.
4. When a time penalty or multiple time penalties being placed on the penalty time clock to one team, making that team shorthanded, the ensuing faceoff will be conducted at one of the two end zone face-off locations in the offending team's defending zone. There are five exceptions:
 - i. When a penalty is assessed after a goal, the face-off will take place at centre ice.
 - ii. When a penalty is assessed at the end (or before the start) of a period, the faceoff will take place at centre ice.
 - iii. When a gathering occurs and a penalty is being assessed to the defending team, and any players of the attacking team that were beyond the top of the end-zone circles upon the stoppage of play, enter deeply into the attacking zone, the ensuing face-off will take place in the neutral zone at one of the face-off spots outside the offending team's defending zone (see Rule 6.3 (e)).
 - iv. When the non-offending team commits an icing infraction, the ensuing face-off will take place at one of the face-off spots outside the zone of the team that iced the puck.
 - v. When play has been stopped due to a premature substitution of the goaltender. In this case, the face-off will take place at centre ice, except in cases where the offending team would gain a territorial advantage, in which case the face-off would take place at the nearest face-off location that does not provide that advantage.
5. When a defending player causes a stoppage of play in their defending zone the face-off shall occur at the end zone face-off spot nearest to where possession of the puck last occurred (see Figures 1 through 6).





6. When neither team is solely responsible for a stoppage of play in an end zone the face-off shall occur at the end zone face-off spot nearest to where possession of the puck last occurred (unless otherwise covered in the rules) (see Figure 7).
7. When an attacking player causes a stoppage of play in the attacking zone the face-off shall occur at the nearest neutral zone face-off spot (see Figures 8 through 12). Additionally, as per Rule 6.3(e)(vi), when an attacking player enters into the end zone than the top of the face-off circles when a gathering occurs after the whistle the face-off shall occur at the nearest neutral zone face-off spot (unless otherwise covered in the rules).
8. When play is stopped due to an offside infraction (other than those considered intentional) the face-off shall normally occur at one of the neutral zone face-off spots adjacent to the offending team's defending blue line (see Figures 13 & 14). However, if an off-side call is the result of a pass that originates in the offending team's defending zone, then the ensuing face-off occurs at the end-zone face-off spot nearest to the origin of the pass (see Figure 15). *Additionally, if the offending team has control of the puck in line with or beyond the neutral zone face-off dots adjacent to their attacking blue line immediately prior to an off-side violation, the face-off shall occur at one of the neutral zone face-off dots adjacent to the offending team's attacking blue line* (see Figures 16, 17 & 18).
9. When play is stopped due to an off-side that occurs because, after having been cleared out of an end zone, the puck deflects off an attacking player, defending player or official back into the same end zone, the face-off shall occur at a neutral zone face-off spot (excluding centre ice) adjacent to the offending team's attacking blue line (see Figures 19, 20 & 21).
10. When neither team is solely responsible for causing a stoppage of play in the neutral zone, the face-off shall take place at the neutral zone face-off spot (excluding centre ice) nearest to the place where possession last occurred (see Figure 22).
11. When one team is solely responsible for a stoppage of play in the neutral zone for a reason other than off-side, the face-off shall occur at one of the two face-off spots nearest to the offending team's blue line (unless otherwise covered in the rules) (see Figures 23 through 27).
12. When the puck goes out of bounds off an official positioned in the neutral zone, the face-off shall occur at the neutral zone face-off spot (excluding centre ice) nearest to the place where the official was struck by the puck (see Figures 28 & 29). Similarly, when the puck goes out of bounds off an official positioned in an end zone the face-off shall occur at the end zone face-off spot nearest to the place where the official was struck by the puck (see Figure 30).





Figure 1 Rules 6.3(i) and interpretation 7

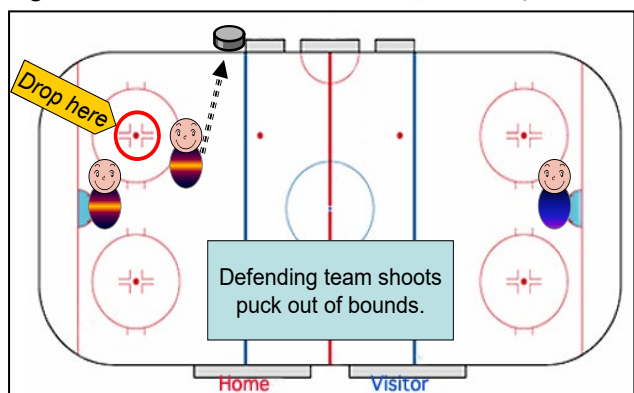


Figure 2 Rules 6.3(i) and interpretation 7

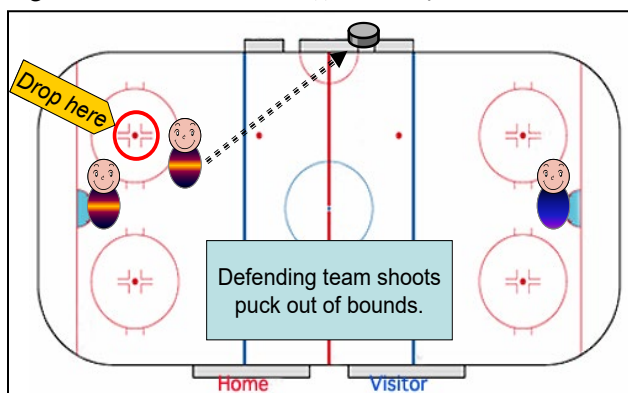


Figure 3 Rule 6.3(i)

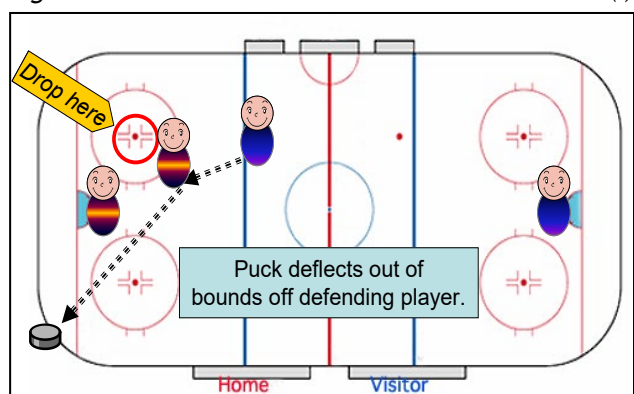


Figure 4 Rules 6.9(a) and 6.3(i)

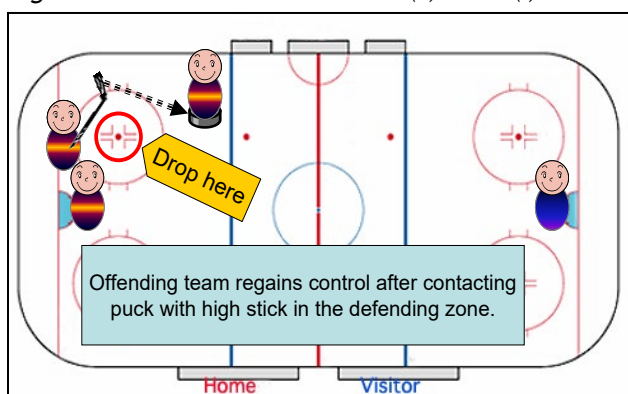


Figure 5 Rule 10.2(a)(i) & Interpretation 1 and Rule 6.3 (i)

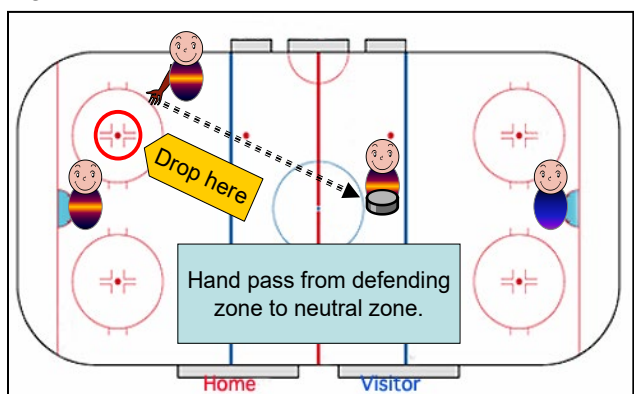


Figure 6 Rules 6.9(a) and 6.3(i)

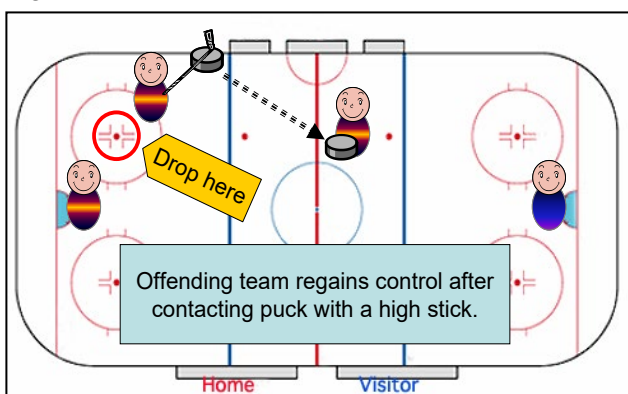




Figure 7

Rule 6.3 (b)

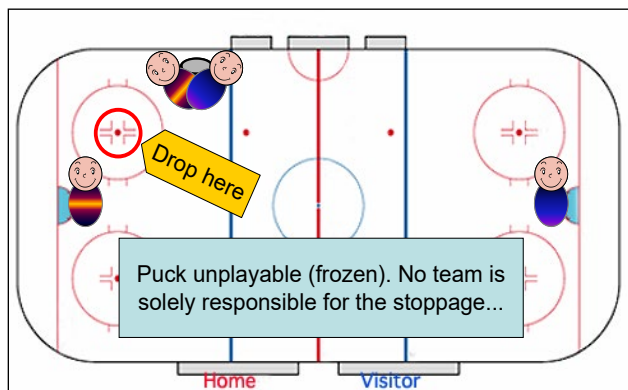


Figure 8

Rules 6.13(a) & 6.3(e)(iv)

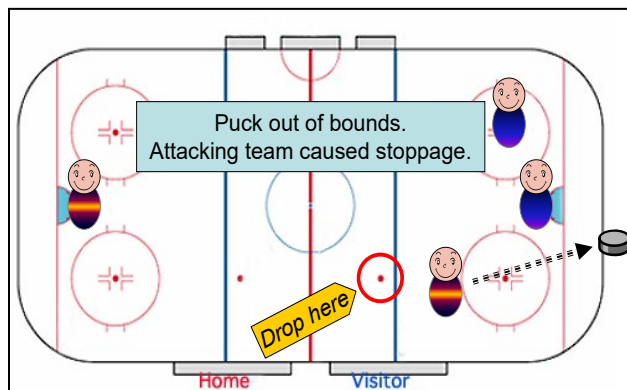


Figure 9

Rules 6.9(a) and 6.3(e)(iv)

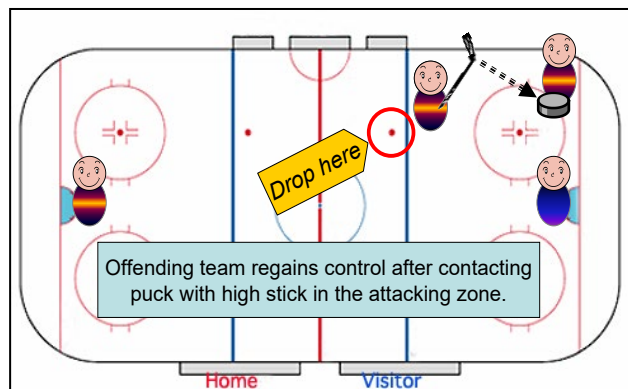


Figure 10

Rules 10.2(a) and 6.3(e)(iv)

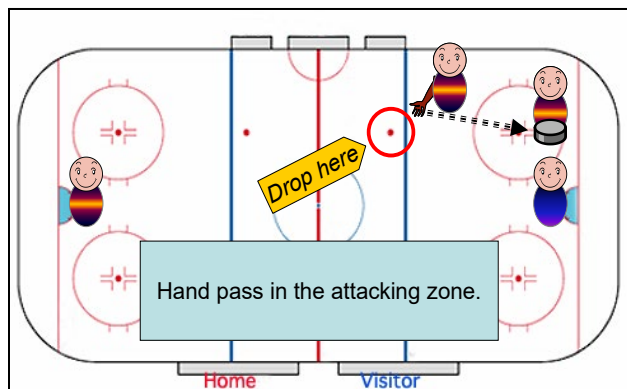


Figure 11

Rules 6.3(e)(iv) and 6.13(c)

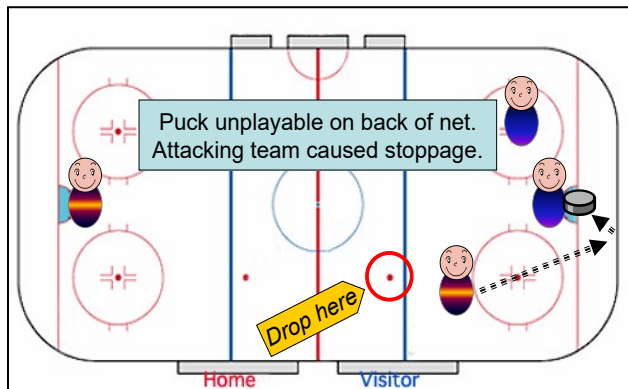


Figure 12

Rules 6.3(e)(iv) and 6.13(c)

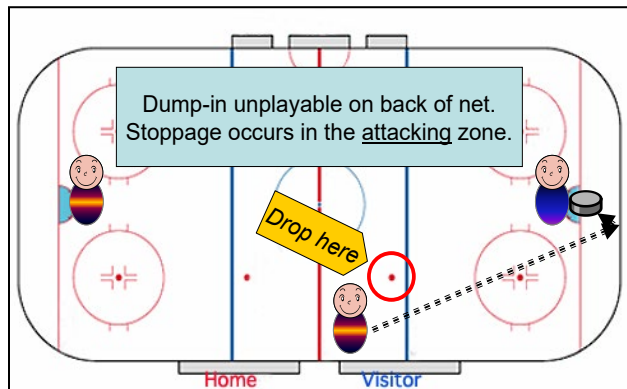




Figure 13

Rule 6.3 (e)(ii)

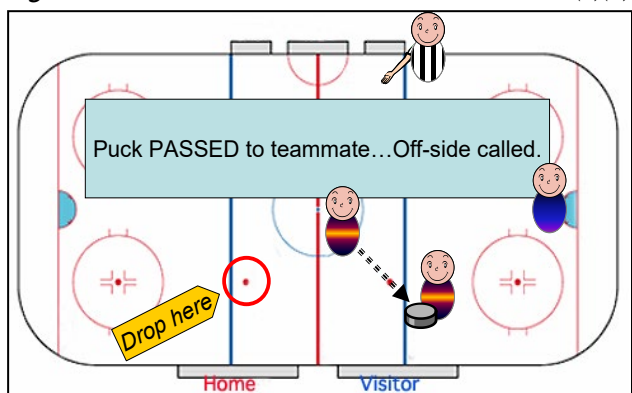


Figure 14

Rule 6.3 (e)(ii)

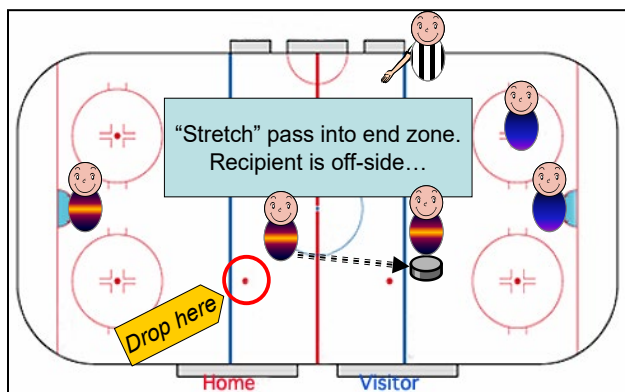


Figure 15

Rule 6.3 (e)(ii)

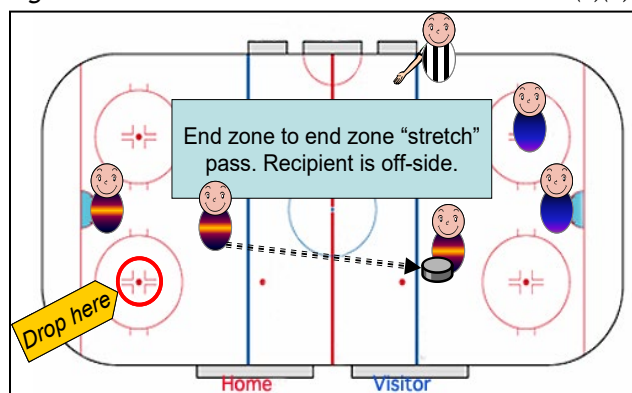


Figure 16

Rule 6.3 (e)(i)

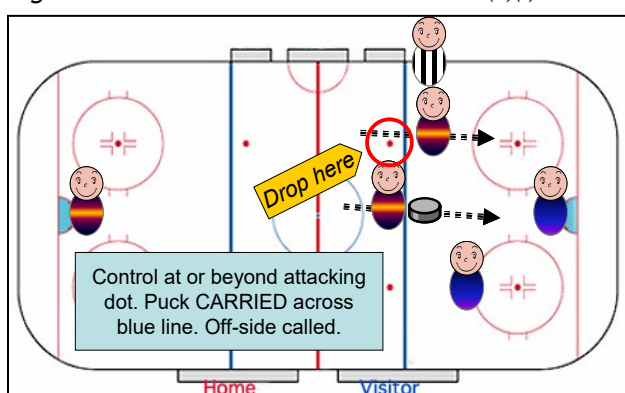


Figure 17

Rule 6.3 (e)(i)

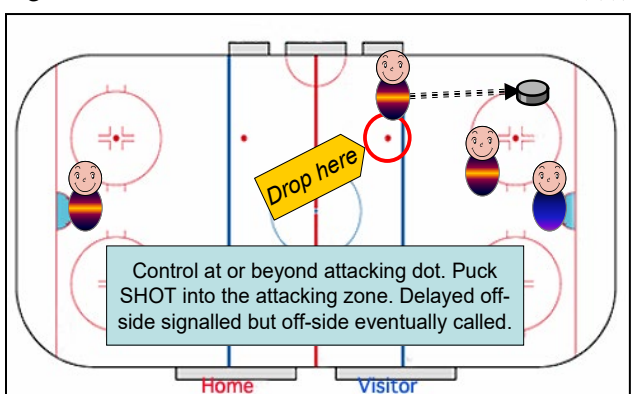


Figure 18

Rule 6.3(e)(i)

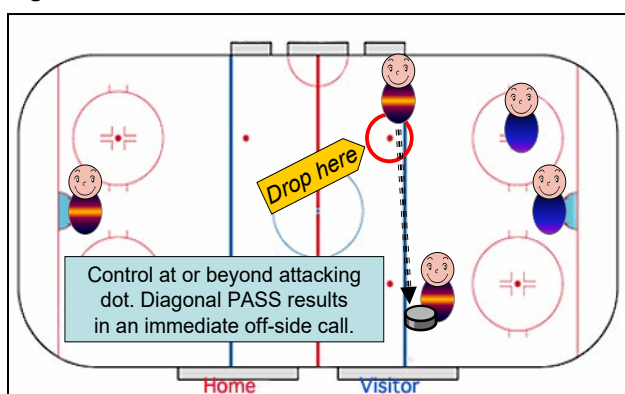




Figure 19 Rule 6.3(e)(i) and Rules 6.12(a)

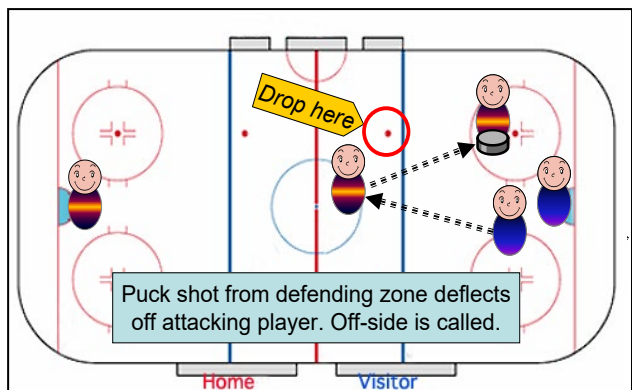


Figure 20 Rule 6.3(e)(i) and Rules 6.12(a)

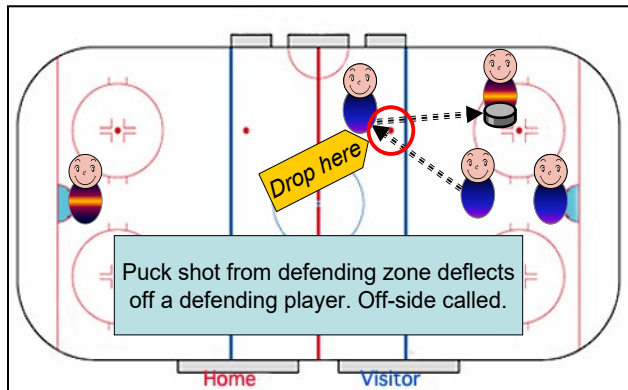


Figure 21 Rule 6.3(e)(i) and Rules 6.12(a)

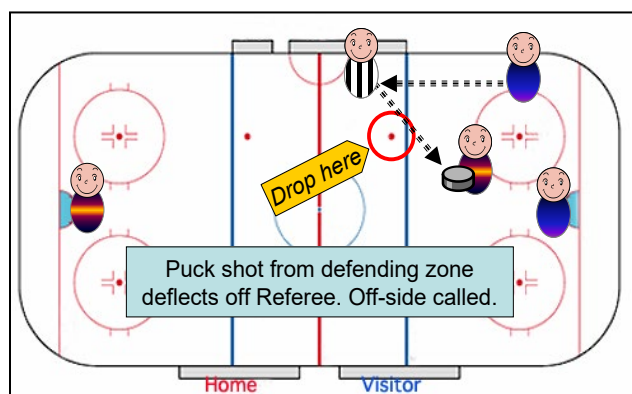


Figure 22 Rule 6.3 (b)

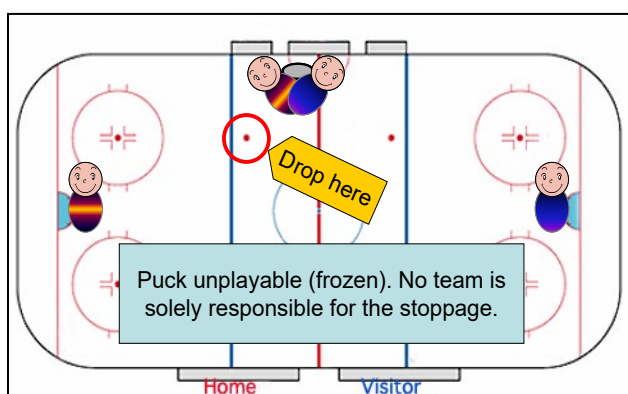


Figure 23 Rule 6.3(e) and Rule 10.2(a)(i)

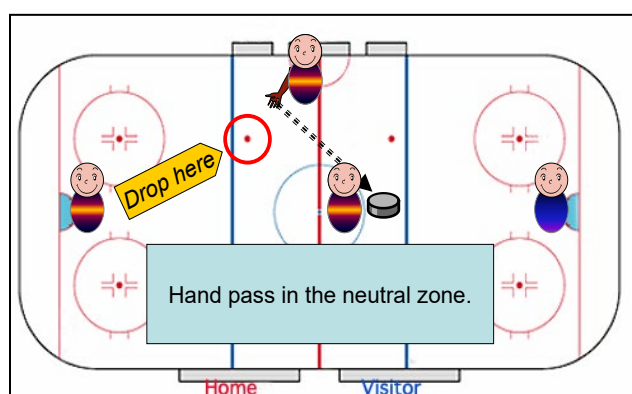


Figure 24 Rules 6.3(e)(d)

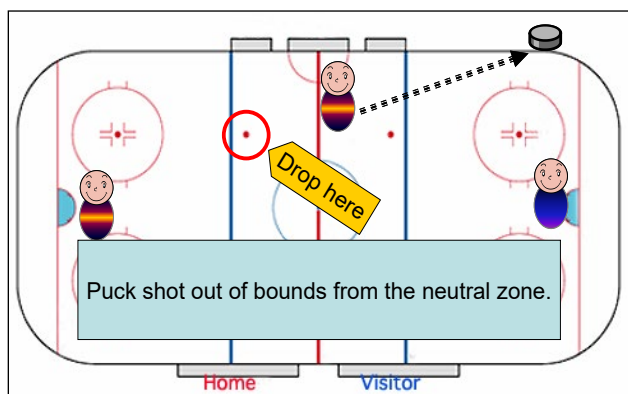




Figure 25

Rules 6.3(e)(d)

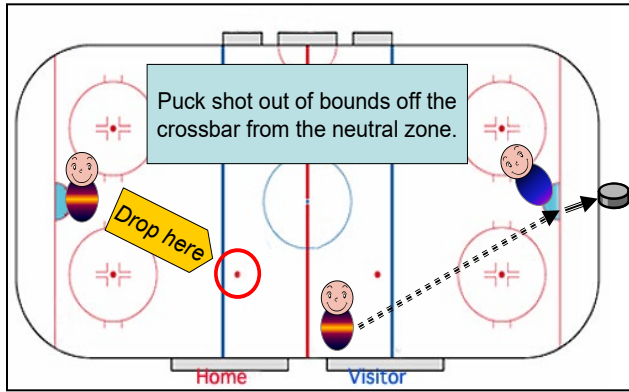


Figure 26

Rules 6.3(e)(d)

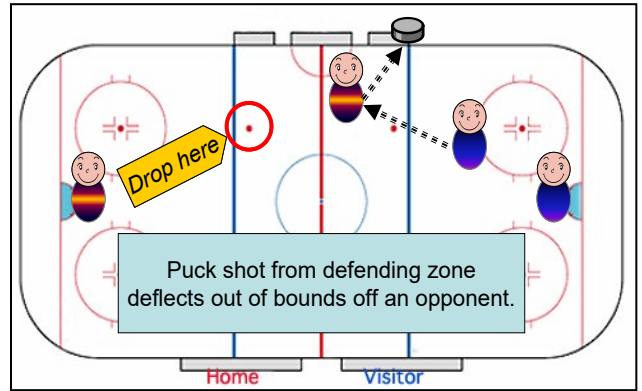


Figure 27

Rule 6.3(e)(iv)

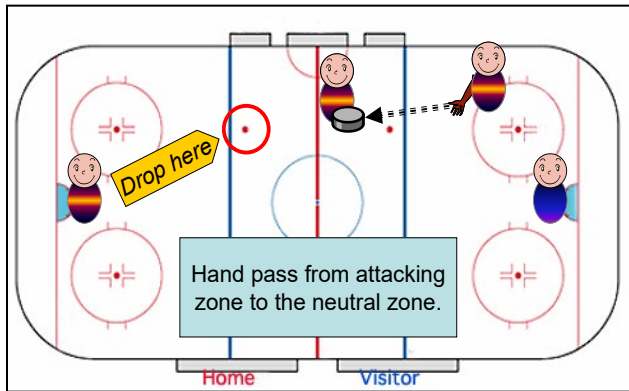


Figure 28

Rule 6.3(d)

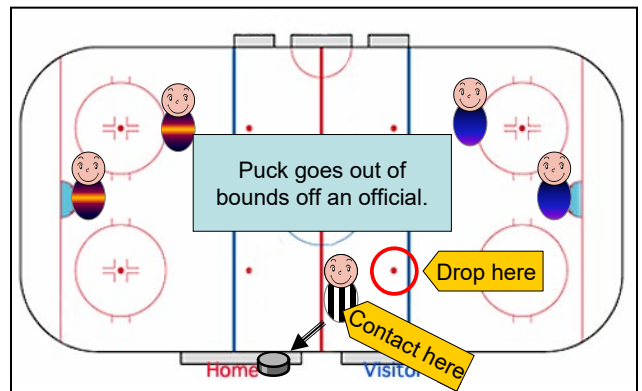


Figure 29

Rule 6.3(d)

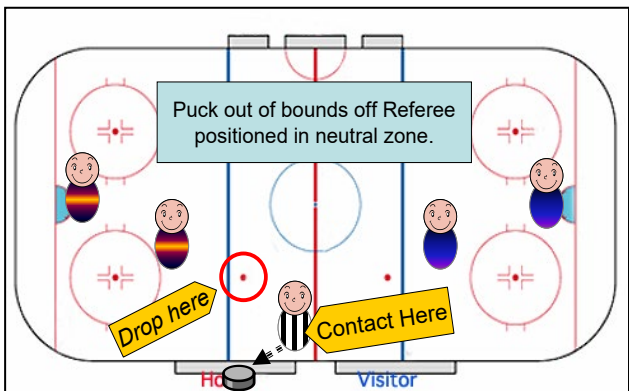


Figure 30

Rule 6.3(d)

