



**HEAD CONTACT  
TRAINING COURSE**

# DESCRIPTION



This course focuses on Hockey Canada's Head Contact playing rule as it applies to Minor and Female hockey divisions, and is for officials of all HCOP levels. It is a self paced training course that can easily be accomplished in the comfort of one's home or office.



# INTRODUCTION



Research reveals that multiple exposures to concussions (which is a form of brain injury) can have devastating long term effects on an individual's health. Research also shows that youth have no special ability to absorb or recover from blows to the head due to their age. In fact, youth are more susceptible to debilitating, career-ending brain injuries than adults.

Prevention of head contact as a way of reducing the number and severity of brain, head, facial and neck injuries has been emphasized every season beginning with the 2011-2012 hockey season.



# LEARNING OUTCOMES



On completion of this training course you will be very knowledgeable about Hockey Canada's Head Contact playing rule. Specifically, you will:

- Be knowledgeable about the penalties that are assessed in Minor & Female division hockey under the Head Contact rule, and
- Know how to apply the Head Contact rules correctly in all situations in Minor and Female hockey games.



# COURSE OVERVIEW



- Part 1: The Head Contact Rule
- Part 2: Special Instructions from the Board of Directors
- Part 3: Clarifications about the Application of the Head Contact Rules in Minor or Female Hockey
- Part 4: Head Contact Rule Application Quiz



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



In the Hockey Canada Rule Book, rule 7.6 covers Head Contact.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



The signal for Head Contact is patting flat (open palm) of the non-whistle hand on the side of the head.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Hockey Canada has two different sets of criteria and penalties for head contact fouls. The first set applies to Minor and Female hockey only; the second set applies to Junior and Senior hockey only.

This course only focuses on the Minor and Female hockey criteria and penalties.





# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Rule 7.6

There is no type of legal contact to the head, face, or neck. It is the players' responsibility to avoid making contact with an opponent's head, face, or neck, at all times. Head contact may take the form of direct contact to the head or accidental contact, where the principle point of contact is the shoulder or chest. Regardless of the circumstances, players must be penalized for contact with an opponent's head, face, or neck at all times.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Rule 7.6(a)

Accidental contact with stick, body or equipment to an opponent's head, face or neck = Minor penalty for Head Contact.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Rule 7.6 (a and b)

Intentional contact with stick, body or equipment to an opponent's head, face or neck =  
Double Minor (2 + 2) or Major + Game Misconduct (5 + GM) for Head Contact.

Penalties assessed are based on the degree of violence of impact.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Hockey Canada has not provided specific information about the point at which the degree of violence of impact should result in a Major + Game Misconduct penalties as opposed to double Minors.

In the absence of such information the GTHL Board of Directors has directed that the referee's opinion about whether the force of the impact is or is not totally absorbed by the affected player's protective equipment shall determine which classes of penalties should be assessed.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Double Minors or Major + GM ??

If the force of impact is such that the protective equipment totally absorbs the force of contact with the head, face or neck then it is assumed that NO real risk of injury exists. When this is the case, double Minors shall be assessed for a head contact infraction.

Stated another way, if the nature of the contact is "lame" then double Minors shall be assessed. Otherwise, a Major + GM shall be assessed.

If the force of impact is such that the protective equipment is **UNABLE** to totally absorb the force of contact with the head, face or neck then it is assumed that there IS some risk of injury. When this is the case, a Major + Game Misconduct penalties for head contact should be assessed.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Intentional Head Contact Penalties

Force of impact is totally absorbed by protective equipment (hence NO real risk of injury exists)

=

**Double Minors  
(2 + 2)**

Force of the impact is NOT totally absorbed by protective equipment (hence some risk of injury exists)

=

**Major + Game  
Misconduct  
(5 + GM)**

# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Rule 4.8 (b)

Any player who incurs three head contact infraction penalties that do not meet the criteria of a Major and Game Misconduct or Match penalty shall be assessed a Game Ejection.

Note: A double minor penalty is to be considered as one infraction towards the accumulation of head contact infractions for the purpose of this rule.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Rule 7.6 (b and c)

**Head Contact that results in Injury** = Major + Game Misconduct (if injury was unintentional) or Match (if injury was intentional).





# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Some Signs & Symptoms of Injury \*

- Loss of consciousness
- Loss of coordination
- Inability to focus
- Cut lip
- Bleeding nose
- Loss of equilibrium
- Slow or slurred speech
- Dazed or stunned demeanor
- Delayed response to questions
- Broken teeth

\* Reference: Hockey Canada Concussion In Sport reference card.

# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Some Signs & Symptoms of Injury

- Loss of consciousness
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- Bleeding nose
- Loss of equilibrium
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- Delayed response to questions
- Broken teeth

Referees should check players who are struck in the head for these indicators. An injury has occurred if one or more indicators exist.

# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



## Signs & Symptoms of Injury

Many of the signs and symptoms are well below the injury threshold used in previous years. The lower injury standard will require a significant adjustment on the part of most officials. If in doubt or conflicted in your assessment, assume injury.

## Assessing Potentially Injured Players

Referee's must make an injury assessment in cases where the injury may not be obvious. This assessment should be made without interacting or interfering with the trainer. Consultation with other on-ice officials before making a final decision about injury is a good practice that is encouraged.



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Rule 7.6 (c)

Head Contact that is a **Deliberate Attempt to Injure or Results in a Deliberate Injury = Match**



# PART ONE - THE HEAD CONTACT RULE



Minor	Double Minors	Major + GM	Match
Accidental contact without injury	Intentional contact with NO real risk of injury	Intentional contact with real risk of injury --- or --- Accidental or intentional contact that results in unintentional injury	Deliberate attempt to injure --- or --- Deliberate injury

# PART TWO - SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS



## **Special Instruction from the GTHL Board of Directors**

*Situations involving head contact are often difficult to evaluate without the benefit of video replay. In border-line cases where the Referee is conflicted as to which penalties to assess, Referees are to issue the strictest set penalties that may apply.*



# PART THREE - CLARIFICATIONS



Clarifications about the Application of the Head Contact Rule in Minor Hockey



[WWW.GTHLCANADA.COM](http://WWW.GTHLCANADA.COM)

# PART THREE - CLARIFICATIONS



Call *Head Contact* in place of other rules when contact to the head, face or neck occurs.\*

\* Exception: Head contact that occurs between combatants during a fight is NOT penalized under the Head Contact rule.





# PART THREE - CLARIFICATIONS



## **High Sticking**

Contact to the head, face or neck is signaled & reported as Head Contact.

## **Elbowing**

Elbow to the head, face or neck signaled & reported as Head Contact.

## **Cross Checking**

Any cross check above the normal height of the shoulders shall result in a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct for Head Contact, whether or not injury results. See Rule 7.6 (b).

## **Roughing After The Whistle**

Penalize deliberate physical contact after the whistle under the Head Contact rule if contact with head, face or neck is involved.

In instances where Head Contact occurs as part of an altercation after the whistle **IGNORE** the requirement to penalize the team that initiates deliberate physical contact after the whistle.\*

\* This directive was issued verbally by the Referee-in-Chief of Hockey Canada during a presentation to Branch Technical Directors of Officiating and Referee-in-Chiefs in Ottawa on July 23, 2011.



# PART THREE - CLARIFICATIONS



## Fighting

Head contact that occurs between combatants as part of a fight is **NOT** penalized under the Head Contact rule.

This is the **ONLY** exception to the directive to penalize all instances of head contact under the Head Contact rule.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Instructions

Review the situations in sequence. Each situation involves two slides: A “situation” slide and an “answer” slide.

Treat this part of the course as a quiz. Before advancing to the answer slide, write your decision down on paper. When done, look at the suggested solution on the answer slide.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 1

Two players are totally focused on battling for a loose puck along the boards. During the battle Player A moves laterally to bump Player B away from the puck. Due to a height differential Player A's shoulder pad accidentally contacts Player B's helmet. No injury occurs. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 1

Two players are totally focused on battling for a loose puck along the boards. During the battle Player A moves laterally to bump Player B away from the puck. Due to a height differential Player A's shoulder pad accidentally contacts Player B's helmet. No injury occurs. SRD.

*Minor (accidental) Head Contact.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



Situation 2

A3 shoots the puck and on the follow through their stick contacts B6's facial protector. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 2

A3 shoots the puck and on the follow through their stick contacts B6's facial protector. SRD.

*Minor Head Contact - Rule 7.6(a).*

*If injury results: Major + GM Head Contact - Rule 7.6(b).*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 3

A3 stick checks B6 using a lift check. However, B6 lets go of their stick during the check and, due to lack of resistance and over enthusiasm, A3's stick grazes B6's helmet. No injury occurs. SRD.





# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 3

A3 stick checks B6 using a lift check. However, B6 lets go of their stick during the check and, due to lack of resistance and over enthusiasm, A3's stick grazes B6's helmet. No injury occurs. SRD.

*Minor Head Contact - The incident is considered accidental.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 4

A3 checks B6 in the chest with both gloves. A3's poor checking technique and inertia are such that their gloves ride up and make firm contact with B6's facial protector. This action results in a B6 getting a bleeding nose. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 4

A3 checks B6 in the chest with both gloves. A3's poor checking technique and inertia are such that their gloves ride up and make firm contact with B6's facial protector. This action results in a B6 getting a bleeding nose. SRD.

*A3: Major + GM Head Contact Rule 7.6(b)*

*A bleeding nose is a sign of injury.*

*A Match penalty is not assessed because the injury was not deliberate.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 5

A3 checks B6 from behind into the end boards. Contact to B6's head occurs as part of the play. B6 is unable to defend against the check from behind. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 5

A3 checks B6 from behind into the end boards. Contact to B6's head occurs as part of the play. B6 is unable to defend against the check from behind. SRD.

*A3: Match penalty Head Contact - Rule 7.6 (c).*

*When Head Contact occurs during a Checking from Behind infraction, penalize the foul under the Head Contact rule.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 6

After it is clear that the infraction was not seen by the Referee, a Linesperson reports that A3 intentionally punched an opponent in the face with sufficient force that there was a definite risk of injury even though none actually occurred. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 6

After it is clear that the infraction was not seen by the Referee, a Linesperson reports that A3 intentionally punched an opponent in the face with sufficient force that there was a definite risk of injury even though none actually occurred. SRD.

*A3: Major + GM Head Contact - Rule 7.6(b)*

*Rule 5.3(c) allows Linespersons to report incidents that call for a Major penalty.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 7

The whistles sounds. Shortly thereafter A3 slashes goaltender B1 in the glove. B1 retaliates by punching A3 in the head with their blocker. The force of the punch is such that A3's helmet is NOT capable of absorbing all of its force and there IS real risk of injury. Luckily, however, NO injury actually occurs. SRD.





# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 7

The whistles sounds. Shortly thereafter A3 slashes goaltender B1 in the glove. B1 retaliates by punching A3 in the head with their blocker. The force of the punch is such that A3's helmet is NOT capable of absorbing all of its force and there IS real risk of injury. Luckily, however, NO injury actually occurs. SRD.

*A3: Minor Slashing*

*B1: Major + GM Head Contact*

*In instances where Head Contact occurs as part of an altercation after the whistle **IGNORE** the requirement to penalize the team that initiates deliberate physical contact after the whistle.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 8

A3 punches B6 in the facial protector with sufficient force that there IS a real risk of injury. B6 retaliates with several punches and a fight between both players occurs. SRD



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 8

A3 punches B6 in the facial protector with sufficient force that there IS a real risk of injury. B6 retaliates with several punches and a fight between both players occurs. SRD

*A3: Major & GM Fighting + Minor Instigator*

*B6: Major & GM Fighting*

*Head contact that occurs between combatants as part of a fight is NOT penalized under the Head Contact rule.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 9

A3 delivers a firm but legal body check to B6 which results in B6's head striking the glass.  
SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 9

A3 delivers a firm but legal body check to B6 which results in B6's head striking the glass.  
SRD.

*A3: Minor Boarding. However, Major + GM Boarding if the degree of violence was significant or if injury occurs.*

*The Head Contact rule does not apply in this situation because the offending player did not make contact with the opponent's head, face or neck.*

*If a player is checked in a way that results in their head striking the glass they have clearly been thrown violently into the boards and a boarding penalty should be called.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 10

Before play is stopped A3 pokes at B1's catching glove in an attempt to poke the puck free. In the referee's opinion, this action is worthy of a double Minor for spearing and play is immediately stopped. Shortly after the whistle sounds B6 gives A3 a face wash. A3 retaliates by punching B6 firmly in the chest. NO injuries occur on the play. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 10

Before play is stopped A3 pokes at B1's catching glove in an attempt to poke the puck free. In the referee's opinion, this action is worthy of a double Minor for spearing and play is immediately stopped. Shortly after the whistle sounds B6 gives A3 a face wash. A3 retaliates by punching B6 firmly in the chest. NO injuries occur on the play. SRD.

*A3: Minor SP + Minor SP + Minor RAW*

*B6: Minor Head Contact + Minor Head Contact*

*Since this post-whistle altercation involves a Head Contact infraction the case book instruction to call an extra minor against the team that initiates deliberate physical contact after the whistle when the retaliation cannot be overlooked does NOT apply. Penalize teams for infractions that actually occur.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 11

The whistles sounds. Shortly thereafter A3 shoves B6 in the chest. B6 shoves A3 back with equal force in the chest. A4 intervenes and wraps their arm around B6's neck and pulls them away from A3. Luckily, the situation does not escalate and NO injuries occur on the play. B6's retaliation cannot be overlooked. SRD.





# PART FOUR – RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 11

The whistles sounds. Shortly thereafter A3 shoves B6 in the chest. B6 shoves A3 back with equal force in the chest. A4 intervenes and wraps their arm around B6's neck and pulls them away from A3. Luckily, the situation does not escalate and NO injuries occur on the play. B6's retaliation cannot be overlooked. SRD.

*A3: Minor RAW*

*B6: Minor RAW*

*A4: Minor Head Contact + Minor Head Contact*

*A4's action of grabbing around the neck constitutes a Head Contact infraction. Since this post-whistle altercation involves a Head Contact infraction the case book instruction to call an extra minor against the team that initiates deliberate physical contact after the whistle when the retaliation cannot be overlooked does NOT apply. Therefore, do not assess an extra (phantom) Minor penalty for RAW to A3.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 12

A3 is down on the ice on hands and knees. B6 moves to pursue the puck and their knee strikes A3's head with enough force to daze A3. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 12

A3 is down on the ice on hands and knees. B6 moves to pursue the puck and their knee strikes A3's head with enough force to daze A3. SRD.

*If A3 is "dazed" they are considered injured. Major + GM Head Contact – Rule 7.6(b) applies.*

*Feeling dazed (or stunned) is one of the symptoms of a head injury. Therefore, although the incident may be considered accidental, Rule 7.6(b) still applies and Major + Game Misconduct penalties are assessed.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 13

A3 cross-checks B6 in the upper arm but inertia allows the cross-check to contact B6 in the neck. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 13

A3 cross-checks B6 in the upper arm but inertia allows the cross-check to contact B6 in the neck. SRD.

*Major + GM Head Contact*

*The fact that initial contact was made to the upper arm is not a factor in considering which penalties apply in this situation.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 14

A3 gives B6 a mild face-wash. B6 retaliates with several punches and a fight between these players occurs. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 14

A3 gives B6 a mild face-wash. B6 retaliates with several punches and a fight between these players occurs. SRD.

*A3: Major & GM Fighting + Minor Head Contact + Minor Head Contact*

*B6: Major & GM Fighting + Minor Instigator*

*A fight does not occur until a punch is thrown. Hence, the face-wash is not considered part of the fight and is penalized separately. Therefore, A3 receives double Minors for the face-wash under rule 7.6(a).*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 15

A3 grabs B6 around the neck and applies a head lock. B6 escapes from the head lock. Shortly afterwards both players engage in a fight with each other. No injuries occur and there is no clear instigator or aggressor. SRD.





# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 15

A3 grabs B6 around the neck and applies a head lock. B6 escapes from the head lock. Shortly afterwards both players engage in a fight with each other. No injuries occur and there is no clear instigator or aggressor. SRD.

*A3: Minor Head Contact + Minor Head Contact + Major & GM Fighting*

*B6: Major & GM Fighting*

*The head lock preceded the fight and is penalized separately under the Head Contact rule.*

# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 16

A3 and B6 grab each other around the neck and head. This action evolves directly into a fight. No real risk of injury occurs during the grappling action. There is no clear instigator of the fight. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 16

A3 and B6 grab each other around the neck and head. This action evolves directly into a fight. No real risk of injury occurs during the grappling action. There is no clear instigator of the fight. SRD.

*Both players: Double Minors Head Contact + Major & GM Fighting*

*A fight does not occur until a punch is thrown. In this scenario the grappling was a precursor to the fight and should be penalized separately.*



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 17

A3 and B6 decide to fight each other. They square up and raise their gloves. A3 throws the first punch and it knocks B6 to the ice. The officials intervene and no further incident occurs. SRD.



# PART FOUR - RULE APPLICATION QUIZ



## Situation 17

A3 and B6 decide to fight each other. They square up and raise their gloves. A3 throws the first punch and it knocks B6 to the ice. The officials intervene and no further incident occurs. SRD.

*Both Players: Major + GM Fighting*

*Head contact that occurs between combatants during a fight is NOT penalized under the Head Contact rule.*

*Rule 7.10(b) & Interpretation #4 apply in this case.*

# GTHL HEAD CONTACT TRAINING COURSE



*Congratulations for completing this important course. You are now very knowledgeable about all aspects of Hockey Canada's Head Contact playing rules as they apply to Minor & Female hockey.*

*Thank you for your participation and for helping ensure that the playing environment for our Minor and Female hockey players remains safe, fair and fun.*

*Best wishes for a funtastic season!*





Report errors and omissions to [refereedevelopment@gthlcanada.com](mailto:refereedevelopment@gthlcanada.com)

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