



Findlay Adult Hockey League Referee Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Findlay Adult Hockey League Referee Handbook. This document contains information regarding referee expectations, namely their roles and responsibilities, game administration, FAHL-specific rules, and the referee's role in the league's disciplinary process.

The FAHL values our referees and will stand behind them on their calls. Referees are League Personnel performing Protected League Functions on behalf of the FAHL.

Purpose of Referees

Referees are necessary to the functioning of the FAHL to enforce the rules of the game and keep games under control.

Chapter 1: Referee Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities

- Be a neutral party to keep games fair for both teams
- Enforce the rules of the game
- Keep games under control
- Follow the applicable playing rules adopted by the FAHL and AAU
- Fill out availability in All-Star Rec Manager so that the Referee Scheduler can schedule officials for games
- Follow the Referee Code of Conduct (Appendix A)

Chapter 2: Gametime Expectations

Arrival

Referees shall be in uniform and present at the scoring table at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled game time.

FAHL games are officiated by two referees and one scorekeeper. Games may start as early as 5 minutes before their scheduled time if the previous game ends early.

Pregame

Referees shall check the ice for issues prior to allowing players on it.

Referees shall move the game nets into position and put down the pegs to keep them in place during the game. A goalie may request to personally put down the pegs.

Referees are encouraged to introduce themselves to both teams and set expectations for how the game is going to be officiated.

*League pegs that hold much better than the standard ones are available in the puck bucket.

Warmup

Following the warmup, referees shall again check the ice for issues, assist the scorekeeper in collecting pucks, pick a couple good pucks for use during the game, and corral players to center ice for the puck drop.

Game Officiating

The FAHL follows the USA Hockey playing rules as adopted by AAU, except where modified by FAHL league policies. Referees shall make all calls in accordance with the applicable rules.

Referees shall keep games under control at all times. If games start to get out of control, referees shall communicate the issues with both benches and call appropriate penalties to bring the game back under control.

Each team receives one 2-minute timeout per game, which may be used at any point during the game.

If a game is tied, the FAHL uses its established shootout procedure. Players serving an unexpired penalty are not eligible to participate in the shootout, except when serving an unexpired penalty for a teammate. Subs are not eligible to participate in the shootout.

Goals

Referees shall, to the best of their knowledge, report the players who scored and assisted on goals to the Scorekeeper at the time of the goal.

Penalties

Referees shall accurately administer penalties authorized by the applicable playing rules.

Referees shall report the player name and penalty that was called to the Scorekeeper at the time of the infraction.

Assist the Scorekeeper

Referees shall assist the Scorekeeper as requested to help enforce the rules the Scorekeeper is responsible to enforce, such as player check-in, age restrictions, player ratings, team rating cap overages, and players not paying.

All players are required to check in with the Scorekeeper before getting on the ice. Players who fail to check in may be issued a delay of game penalty.

The referee may need to assist when a player is arguing with the Scorekeeper and/or has already entered the ice and is refusing to acknowledge the Scorekeeper or come off the ice.

Postgame

Referees shall move nets to the zamboni door (if last game of the night) or to the side (if not last game of the night) so that the zamboni driver can work around them.

Referees shall verify with the scorekeeper that the correct referees are listed on the scoresheet and the payment amounts are correct.

Chapter 3: Important Rules or Rules Specific to FAHL

Governing Playing Rules

The FAHL follows the USA Hockey playing rules as adopted by AAU, except where modified by FAHL league policies. Referees are responsible for applying the applicable rules during the game.

Score Clock Times

Once the zamboni leaves the ice, the clock needs to run for 3 minutes to allow the water to freeze. Immediately following is a 3 minute warmup. Periods are 17 minute stop-clock.

Blue-line Icing (specific to FAHL)

In the FAHL, the puck must be sent from inside your own zone to below the goal line at the other end of the ice for it to be an icing.

No Checking (specific to FAHL)

The FAHL is a no-checking hockey league. All checks whether performed with a stick or the body shall be called penalties.

If a player clearly body checks a player, clearly checks a player from behind, or clearly hits a player in the head area, a major penalty and game misconduct shall be assessed. A match penalty for reckless endangerment may also be assessed depending on the severity of the check.

Repeat offenders may receive additional supplemental discipline. Referees should not attempt to determine or announce supplemental discipline; that responsibility belongs to the FAHL disciplinary process and, where applicable, AAU.

However, no-checking does not mean no contact. Body contact is defined as "Contact that occurs between opponents during the normal process of playing the puck, provided there has been no overt hip, shoulder or arm contact to physically force the opponent off of the puck." Body checking is not permissible in any of the league's divisions.

Slap Shots (specific to FAHL)

Full slap shots are permitted in the Fall and Winter A, B, and C divisions and in the Summer A and B divisions.

Full slap shots are not permitted in the Fall and Winter D division or the Summer C division. In these divisions, the stick may not be raised higher than the knee.

Protective Equipment

All players must properly fasten chin straps on their hockey helmets.

In the A divisions, players are permitted to wear helmets without facemasks, although facemasks or visors are preferred.

In the B and C divisions, a minimum of a half-shield facemask is required. In the D division and Summer C division, a full facemask is required.

Referees should address apparent equipment violations in accordance with the applicable playing rules and FAHL policies.

Jerseys (specific to FAHL)

In situations where both teams playing in a game have similar color jerseys, the home team gets to decide which team will wear different color jerseys for the game. The FAHL has extra jerseys in the locker for this purpose.

Abuse of Officials and Players

Abuse of referees by players and players by referees is not tolerated.

Players may respectfully ask officials for clarification regarding on-ice rulings when appropriate, but they must not argue, harass, threaten, intimidate, or abuse League Personnel during or after league activities.

Players shall not enter officials' locker rooms or wait for officials after games for the purpose of confronting or discussing officiating decisions. Concerns regarding officiating or league operations should be directed to the FAHL Leadership Team.

Referees shall remain respectful of players. Throwing players around the ice or calling them names is not acceptable.

The FAHL's disciplinary policy recognizes referees as League Personnel performing Protected League Functions. Threats, intimidation, harassment, retaliation, abusive or demeaning language, attempts to improperly influence officiating decisions, and coordinated efforts to discredit or target League Personnel because of official league actions may be subject to supplemental discipline.

Fighting

Fighting will not be tolerated in the FAHL. Players who engage in a fight will receive a 5-minute fighting major and a Game Misconduct. The FAHL may impose additional supplemental discipline for recurring or otherwise serious conduct.

Three-Penalty Game Ejection

A player who receives three penalties of any type during the same game will be ejected from the game and must leave immediately after receiving the third penalty.

A game ejection is different from a game misconduct. When receiving a game ejection, the player is not automatically suspended for the next game.

The three-penalty game ejection is separate from any additional disciplinary action that may result from the penalties themselves. Additional discipline may be imposed in accordance with the FAHL Disciplinary and Corrective Action Handbook.

Misconducts, Major Penalties, and Match Penalties

Referees have authority to assess penalties, misconducts, game ejections, game misconducts, match penalties, and other penalties authorized by the governing rulebook.

10-minute misconducts and game misconducts are automatically reviewed by the FAHL Disciplinary Panel. This automatic review is intended to ensure consistent review and does not mean that supplemental discipline will necessarily be imposed.

The AAU National Hockey Rules & Discipline Director conducts hearings on major and match penalties. The FAHL Disciplinary Panel and Board may assess stricter penalties than those issued by AAU, but cannot weaken an AAU decision.

Do not promise a player that a penalty will result in a particular suspension, or that it will be overturned. The disciplinary outcome is determined through the applicable FAHL and AAU processes.

Incident Report Form

When a referee assesses a **10-minute misconduct, game misconduct, major penalty, or match penalty**, the referees shall collectively complete one FAHL Incident Report Form following the game. The link to this report can be found on the Referee Resources page of the FAHL website.

The purpose of the Incident Report is to provide the Disciplinary Panel with a clear, factual account of the incident that led to the penalty. The report should describe **what occurred, what the referee observed, and the circumstances that led to the call**. The report should contain sufficient detail to allow the Disciplinary Panel to understand the incident without relying solely on the penalty recorded on the scoresheet.

Incident Reports should be **factual, objective, and professional**. Referees should avoid speculation, personal opinions, assumptions about a player's intent, or conclusions regarding what supplemental discipline should be imposed. Determinations regarding supplemental discipline are made through the FAHL's disciplinary process.

Incident Reports may be reviewed by the Disciplinary Panel or other League Personnel as part of the disciplinary review process. Referees may be contacted after the game if additional information or clarification is needed.

Referees may also file Incident Reports if they would like the Disciplinary Panel to review a play, regardless of whether a call was made.

Disciplinary Review and Referee Participation

An incident may be reviewed based on an automatic review, an incident report submitted by an on-ice official, or another referral under the FAHL Disciplinary and Corrective Action Handbook.

The Disciplinary Panel may review game video, referee and scorekeeper reports, written statements, witness information, electronic communications, and other reliable evidence.

Referee reports are specifically recognized as evidence that may be considered when determining responsibility.

The Disciplinary Panel determines whether a violation occurred using the preponderance of the available evidence. Referees do not determine supplemental discipline unless specifically authorized by league policy.

If a player disputes an officiating decision, referees should remain professional and allow the established FAHL process to address the matter.

Appendix A: Official Code of Conduct

Introduction

The Findlay Adult Hockey League (FAHL) relies upon referees and scorekeepers to help provide a fair, organized, safe, and enjoyable recreational hockey experience.

As League Personnel, referees and scorekeepers are expected to perform their responsibilities professionally, impartially, and in accordance with FAHL policies and applicable governing rules. The conduct of officials can directly affect player safety, sportsmanship, the accuracy of league records, and confidence in the administration of the league.

As a condition of serving as a referee or scorekeeper for the FAHL, I acknowledge and agree to the following:

1. Professionalism

I will perform my responsibilities to the best of my ability and conduct myself in a professional manner before, during, and after FAHL games.

I will:

- arrive prepared and on time for assigned games;
- perform the responsibilities associated with my position;
- communicate with players, team personnel, other officials, and League Personnel in a professional and respectful manner; and
- avoid conduct that could reasonably undermine confidence in my ability to perform my responsibilities fairly and objectively.

2. Fairness and Impartiality

I will perform my duties fairly and impartially.

As a referee, I will make penalty and other on-ice decisions based upon what I observe during the game and the applicable playing rules, without favoritism or prejudice.

As a scorekeeper, I will maintain game records accurately and impartially and will not intentionally favor or disadvantage a player or team.

I will not allow friendships, personal disagreements, prior incidents, team affiliations, or other personal considerations to improperly influence my performance.

3. Respect and Sportsmanship

I will treat players, other officials, League Personnel, and spectators with courtesy and respect.

I will not:

- use abusive, threatening, discriminatory, or demeaning language;
- intentionally provoke or antagonize players or other participants;
- engage in personal arguments with players or team personnel; or
- use my position as League Personnel to intimidate, retaliate against, or improperly influence another participant.

I understand that officials are expected to remain professional even when players or other participants disagree with an official decision.

4. Integrity and Accuracy

I will act honestly and in good faith when performing my responsibilities for the FAHL.

I will:

- accurately record or communicate information within the scope of my responsibilities;
- make decisions based upon the information reasonably available to me;
- provide truthful information when requested by the FAHL;
- not intentionally alter, conceal, or misrepresent relevant information; and
- cooperate with reasonable requests from the FAHL concerning games, incidents, records, or disciplinary matters.

5. Incident Reporting and Disciplinary Matters

I understand that my responsibilities as League Personnel may include providing information to the FAHL regarding incidents that occur during league activities.

As a referee, when I assess a **10-minute misconduct, game misconduct, major penalty, or match penalty**, I will complete the required FAHL Incident Report Form and provide a factual account of the incident as required by the Referee Handbook.

I will make incident reports and other statements:

- accurately and honestly;
- based upon what I personally observed or information clearly identified as having been provided by another person;
- without intentionally omitting material information; and
- without speculation or personal conclusions about what disciplinary action should be imposed.

I understand that incident reports, scoresheets, and other information provided by officials may be reviewed as part of the FAHL's disciplinary process.

I will cooperate with reasonable requests from the Disciplinary Panel, Board, Commissioner, or other authorized League Personnel for additional information or clarification concerning an incident.

6. Conflicts and Personal Relationships

I will make reasonable efforts to identify circumstances that could interfere with my ability to perform my responsibilities fairly and objectively.

I will not use my position as League Personnel to provide an improper advantage to a friend, teammate, family member, or other person with whom I have a personal relationship.

If I believe a personal relationship, disagreement, prior incident, or other circumstance could materially affect my ability to perform my responsibilities impartially, I will notify the appropriate League Personnel when reasonably practicable.

7. Governing Documents and League Authority

I agree to follow the applicable:

- FAHL Referee Handbook;
- FAHL Player Handbook, to the extent applicable to officials;
- FAHL Disciplinary and Corrective Action Handbook;

- playing rules adopted by the FAHL;
- applicable rules and policies of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU); and
- applicable USA Hockey rules and guidance

I understand that my authority as a referee or scorekeeper is limited to the responsibilities assigned to my position. I will not represent that I have authority to impose supplemental discipline or make league decisions that are reserved to the Board, Commissioner, Disciplinary Panel, AAU, or other authorized League Personnel.

8. Accountability

I understand that my conduct as League Personnel may be reviewed by the FAHL.

I acknowledge that the FAHL may investigate conduct occurring before, during, or after league activities when that conduct affects player safety, sportsmanship, league operations, League Personnel, or the integrity of the league.

I agree to cooperate with league investigations and understand that violations of this Code of Conduct or other applicable league policies may result in corrective action, including removal from an assignment or termination of service as League Personnel.

9. Commitment to the FAHL

I understand that serving as a referee or scorekeeper is a position of responsibility and that League Personnel play an important role in maintaining a safe, fair, and enjoyable recreational environment.

I agree to perform my responsibilities in a manner that supports:

- player safety;
- fair and impartial competition;
- good sportsmanship;
- accurate league administration;
- respect for League Personnel and participants; and
- the overall recreational mission of the FAHL.

By accepting an assignment as an FAHL referee or scorekeeper, I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with this Official Code of Conduct and the applicable FAHL policies and governing rules.