Beginning in the 2011-2012 season, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Ice Hockey Rules Committee began to approve rule changes to minimize the risk of injury in ice hockey. The safety and well-being of the participants is paramount and the primary focus of the NFHS committee. In 2017, the NFHS Ice Hockey Committee continues to emphasize health, safety, sportsmanship, game management by officials and ensuring players are properly equipped.

Through 2016, note the progression of increase and additional penalty options for checking from behind, boarding, head contact. **Boarding and checking from behind both must be assessed a Major penalty.** Most other infractions also have the option of a Game Disqualification penalty. These penalty changes are a directive to address a change of culture in high school hockey, and players, coaches, officials and fans need to understand the consequences of these infractions.

The NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee believes this progression of the penalty structure will allow officials to make the proper call and penalize the offending player accordingly by rule. Removal of language allowing officials discretion in administering penalties by Rule 7-6; contact to the head places additional emphasis on head or neck contact to a player. Other penalty increases stress legal body-checking and act as a deterrent when combined with proper teaching and coaching education.

Please familiarize yourself with all current NFHS Ice Hockey Rules.  You must apply the rules as directed toward achieving a change in culture, emphasize safety and minimize the risk of injury in NJ High School Ice Hockey.

**NFHS ICE HOCKEY MAJOR RULE CHANGES**

**2011**

**7-6-1 CONTACT TO THE HEAD (Penalty Increased In 2016)**

No player shall make contact with an opposing player's head or neck area in any manner.

PENALTY: MINOR or MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**2012**

**7-19-1 CHECKING FROM BEHIND (Penalty Increased In 2014)**

No player shall push, charge, cross-check or body-check an opponent from behind in open ice.

PENALTY: MINOR AND MISCONDUCT.

**2013**

**7-19-2 CHECKING FROM BEHIND**

No player shall push, charge, cross-check or body-check an opponent from behind into the boards or goal frame.

PENALTY: MAJOR and MISCONDUCT or if flagrant, GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**7-17-3 UNNECESSARY ROUGHNESS (ROUGHING)**

No player shall deliver a check to an unsuspecting and vulnerable player.

PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**2014**

**7-18-1 BOARDING**

No player shall check, cross-check, elbow, charge, trip or otherwise contact an opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to be thrown violently into the boards.

PENALTY: MAJOR.

**7-18-2 BOARDING**

If flagrant or the action causes the player to crash headfirst into the boards, either a MAJOR and MISCONDUCT or GAME DISQUALIFICATION penalty must be assessed.

**7-19-1 CHECKING FROM BEHIND**

No player shall push, charge, cross-check or body-check an opponent from behind in open ice.

PENALTY: MAJOR.

**2015**

ADD an option for GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**Cross-Checking, Elbowing, Goalkeeper Contact, Kneeing, Slashing, Tripping, and Roughing.**

PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**Grabbing the Facemask and Head Butting**

ADD an option for MAJOR and MISCONDUCT.

PENALTY: MAJOR. If flagrant, MAJOR and MISCONDUCT or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**Holding, Hooking, Interference/Obstruction, and Body-Checking (Girls Teams)**

ADD an option for MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

**2016**

**7-6-1 CONTACT TO THE HEAD**

No player shall make contact from any direction with an opposing player’s head or neck area in any manner, including, but not limited to, with the shoulder, stick, elbow, etc.

PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

7-6-2 **CONTACT TO THE HEAD**

Direct contact to the head or neck area is a flagrant foul under this rule. Direct contact occurs when the initial force of the contact occurs to the head or neck area.

PENALTY: MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

7-6-3 **CONTACT TO THE HEAD**

Indirect contact to the head or neck area shall be penalized under this rule. Indirect contact occurs when the initial force of the contact begins below the neck and progresses upward to the head or neck area.

PENALTY: MINOR. If flagrant, MAJOR or GAME DISQUALIFICATION.

