

# JUDGEMENT

Judgement: (juj'ment) *n.* deciding; an opinion; the ability to come to an opinion; decision as to value

It sounds simple enough, but when it comes to officiating it is a word that creates a lot of controversy, because in essence, what official's do for the length of every hockey game is make decisions as to value or come to an opinion on certain events.

Referees must use their judgement to determine if various incidents and infractions are worthy of a penalty. Linesmen must use their judgement to determine if an icing or off-side call is required.

In some cases judgement is not really required, as there are obvious penalties and obvious off-sides and icings, but in the course of a hockey game, officials make hundreds of judgement decisions.

This article will focus on judgement for referees.

The basic Role of the official can be broken down into two simple words – “safe” and “fair”. By using your judgement to determine if incidents fall outside the boundaries of safe and fair, and penalizing accordingly those that do, an official should be able to call a game that is acceptable to most participants.

There is no good excuse for an official not to penalize any infraction that in his judgement threatens the safety of another participant, and the CHA calls upon all officials to strictly enforce these types of infractions.

The word “fair” does allow some flexibility in determining which infractions will and will not be penalized. Any infraction that takes away a good scoring chance should be penalized. However, some infractions, although obvious infractions by the wording in the rulebook, can be overlooked if no advantage is gained. Remember that it is the “spirit” or “intent” of the rule that determines an infraction, not the literal wording. This will be interpreted differently in each game, depending on the official, the level of play and the style of play.

Infractions after the whistle should also be penalized accordingly, with emphasis placed on penalizing the instigator of such activity.

One should also keep in mind the level of game they are officiating. As a referee in minor hockey, there should be little tolerance for any infractions of the rules that call for a penalty when you are using good judgement. In Junior hockey, there may be a small allowance for more latitude in determining what is called and what is allowed, and letting the teams determine the outcome, as long as

you keep in mind that all infractions that threaten the safety of the players or are blatantly unfair to the opposition must be penalized. As officials develop their officiating skills, their “feel for the game” and “judgement” will help them determine the officiating style needed in each game.

The Canadian Hockey Association has determined that the “Rules Emphasis” for this season will be as follows:

Shared Respect – Abuse of Officials

Obstruction

Checking From Behind

Stick Work

High Hits

Restraining Fouls

Face-Off Encroachment

Roughing After The Whistle

Officials should pay special attention to penalties of this nature and penalize accordingly as well as the non-penalty issues being emphasized.

Hopefully this will assist you in determining how to use your judgement when officiating. I welcome your feedback at [ndueck@canadianhockey.ca](mailto:ndueck@canadianhockey.ca)