



AUGUST BULLETIN

NEW ZEALAND NATIONALS FORMAT

The NZIHA Executive would like to have a full complement of teams at Nationals, where possible. Unfortunately not all regions have teams in all grades or only one or two teams in some grades. It is acknowledged that the regional competition does not finish until 7th September, and some teams will not know if they have qualified until that date. To continue with planning, Clubs are asked to provide an indication (see form attached) if they would like to enter a wildcard application.

Note: **All Grades except Open**

There will be a minimum of 1 team per grade per region where a regional competition has taken place and a maximum of two teams per region per grade where the number of teams in the regional competition in that grade numbers three or more.

Open Grade

There will be a minimum of one team per region where a regional Open Grade competition has taken place and a maximum of four teams per region. The following allocation will apply:

- 2 teams in the Regional Championships - 1 team qualifies
- 3 or 4 teams in the Regional Championships - 2 teams qualify
- 5 or 6 teams in the Regional Championships - 3 teams qualify
- More than 6 teams in the Regional Championships - 4 teams qualify
- NZIHA reserves the right to allocate additional teams per region to enhance the competition at National Championships.

If you club would like to attend and may not have an automatic entry please submit an application for a wildcard entry.

In the Open grade there has been some concerns expressed over the seeding process used at Nationals. Apparently this has led to some teams choosing not to attend. As a result the NZIHA Executive have agreed to trial a new format for the Open Grade competition at New Zealand National Championships in October 2008. The process now established for 2008 will be reviewed before the planning meeting for the 2009 season.

The format has been put in place to overcome issues regarding the allocation of seedings to entered teams. It is anticipated that there will be 16 teams in the Open division at Nationals for 2008. While it is acknowledged that the process in 2007 resulted in providing seeding for the "top 8" teams, to use the same eight teams as the top seeded group in 2008 is difficult to justify when the majority have not played each other this season and the team rosters are not necessarily identical to those in 2007.

The format that will be used this year on a "trial" basis has been put in place to overcome the issue of determining the correct seeding and it is envisaged that this will achieve a more accurate spread of teams in each of the Division 1 and Division 2 groups of 8 teams.

A top priority for the NZIHA Executive is to achieve a reasonable competitive balance in each division. The process will be as follows:

- A "draft seeding will be allocated to each of the 16 team entries, using information from regional championship results in each region.
- Teams seeded in positions: 1, 2, 3 & 4 will be the initial teams in Div 1
- Teams seeded in positions: 13, 14, 15 & 16 will be the initial teams in Div 2
- The following teams will play one game each to determine their final seeding : 8 vs 9, 5 vs 12, 7 vs 10, & 6 vs 11; with the winner of each game moving to Division 1 and the Loser to Division 2. Note: There are no points allocated for each of these games, they are only for seeding purposes.
- It may be necessary to also conduct a seeding game for teams ; 1 vs 16, 4 vs 13, 2 vs 5, & 3 vs 14. This will be determined once all entries are received. Winner would move to Division 1 and Loser to Division 2 (no points).
- Division 1 and Division 2 teams would then be split into 2 pools

Div 1 Semi/Finals	Div 2 Semi/Finals
1 st PA v 4 th PB (1)	1 st PA v 4 th PB (1)
1 st PB v 4 th PA (2)	1 st PB v 4 th PA (2)
3 rd PA v 2 nd PB (3)	3 rd PA v 2 nd PB (3)
2 nd PA v 3 rd PB (4)	2 nd PA v 3 rd PB (4)

of 4 and commence the championships playing a single round robin for points. (3 games each)

- Semi Finals and Finals will follow the format detailed on the charts as shown (semi finals, 1 game each)

Winner G1 v Winner G3 (A) Winner G2 v Winner G4 (B)	Winner G1 v Winner G3 (A) Winner G2 v Winner G4 (B)
Div 1 FINAL Loser G A v Loser G B (3 rd /4 th Place) Winner GA v Winner GB (1 st / 2 nd Place)	Div 2 FINAL Loser G A v Loser G B (3 rd /4 th Place) Winner GA v Winner GB (1 st / 2 nd Place)

The top 4 teams in each division move to finals to play for 1st/ 2nd/ 3rd & 4th using the following format:



Clubs are reminded that teams eligible to attend 2008 National Championships are required to submit team rosters and team entry fees by September 8th to NZIHA. It would be appreciated if team entry rosters could be submitted electronically on the Entry Form already emailed. If you require another copy please email to krys.beardman@xtra.co.nz.

Communications from Clubs and Members to NZIHA Executive should in the first instance be directed to the Executive Officer, at email krys.beardman@xtra.co.nz for forwarding on to the Executive Committee.



Daniel Christie., New Zealand Level 3 Referee attended the IIHF World Inline Hockey Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, June 2008. Daniel has provided a report of his experience and observations and has made recommendations to further develop and improve game officiating in New Zealand. On behalf of the NZIHA, we acknowledge and appreciate Daniel’s commitment and attendance at the 2008 WC and thank him for providing our association with his report on his return to New Zealand. He joins his dad, Allan, by having attended a world championship as a referee at this level of competition. The experience and observations gained refereeing at this level of competition can only assist the future development of officials in our country.

Below is a summary of Daniel's report. It is important that all referees, players and team officials read this information. The NZIHA Referee Chairperson, Derek McLean, advises that games will be officiated using these recommended standards.

The games at World Cup tournaments are fast paced end-to-end games. Players are free to carry the puck without having to worry about being fouled by dirty stick play. It is this strict discipline, which allows the games to be played at such a high intensity and make for a better spectator sport.

Historically at World Cup tournaments the playing standard was relatively loose. The games were played with more aggression.

In recent years the playing standards for all IIHF Inline and Ice Hockey games were redefined. The goal of this new playing standard is to reduce restraining infractions in the game, improve speed and skills while not penalising players who are playing within the rules.

New Zealand Inline Hockey need to enforce these new playing standards. With tighter control of our games by the local referees, NZ game speed and player skill will increase.

IIHF Playing Standards include the following:

- The use of the stick will be limited to only playing the puck.
- The stick will not be allowed to impede a player's progress.
- The use of a free hand/arm will not be allowed to grab or impede a player's progress.
- Players will not perform acts of an intimidating nature.
- One standard for Major penalties – injury and intent.

HOOKING	HOLDING	INTERFERENCE
<p>A player cannot use a stick against an opponent's body (puck carrier or non-puck carrier) to gain a positional advantage. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tugs or pulls on the body, arms or hands of the opponent, which reduces the space between players. • Placing the stick in front of the opponent's body and locking on – impeding the opponent's progress or causing a loss of balance. • Stick on the hand/arm that takes away the ability for the opponent to pass or shoot the puck with a normal amount of force. • Hooking a player's stick with enough force to turn/take them away from the puck. NB: lifting the opponents stick head or holding your stick head over the opponents stick head while attempting to play the puck is generally fair play. Assess whether the intent is to play the "puck" or the "player". If "player" then penalise. 	<p>A player cannot wrap arms around an opponent or use a free hand to clutch, grab or hold the stick, jersey or body on the opponent in a manner that impedes their progress. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrapping one or both arms around the opponent along the boards in a manner that pins them against the boards and prevents them from playing the puck or skating. • Grabbing the opponent's body, stick or jersey with one or both hands – using a free hand to restrain. 	<p>A player cannot use the body ("pick" or "block") to impede the progress of an opponent with no effort to play the puck. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally playing the body of an opponent who does not have possession of the puck. • Using the body to "block" and prevent an opponent from being able to chase a puck carrier. NB: Stationary players cannot be penalised for interference. Players who are chasing a puck carrier and deliberately run into a stationary opponent, who was used as a "pick", should be penalised ("body checking" or "charging").
SLASHING		
<p>The use of the stick will be limited to only playing the puck. Any stick contact as a result of a slashing motion, to the hands, arms or body of the opponent will be penalised. Hard slashes to the upper portion of the stick (just below the hands), with no attempt to legally play the puck shall also be penalised.</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing another player's foot speed for the purpose of impeding that player from being able to chase an opponent player (puck carriers or non-puck carrier). • Showing no attempt to play the puck and intentionally playing the body of an attacking player who attempts to chase the puck after having just played the puck around the defensive player 		

IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE STANDARDS IN NEW ZEALAND

Implementation of the recommended playing standard **will commence now.** NZ Inline Hockey's first glimpse of this playing standard was during the 2007 National tournament. Visiting IIHF referee, Jeff Scott, refereed his games to this standard. The NZIHA Referee Committee is not changing the game rules, they are simply asking everyone to play within the current rules of the game.

Identifying illegal play within the rules of the game and conforming to the international played standard can be summarised as follows:

Separate the puck from the player	Generally there will be no penalty UNLESS unnecessary body contact occurs
Separate the player from the puck	Always penalise
Impede the progress of a player (non-puck carrier)	Always penalise
Hold/Hook any player	Always penalise
Using the stick against the hands, arms and body	Always penalise

GAME MANAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION

Referees need to communicate with the players and coaches more. Referees sometimes need to explain to players "why" they were penalized. Most players don't understand the rules as clearly as they should. Some players have never read the rule book and make assumptions about what they can or can't do.

For example: most players would think that hooking on the stick head to take the puck is fair play. However this is still hooking and can be penalized. Lifting the opponents stick via hooking should only be penalized if you take the player off the puck. Usually would require a pretty strong hook. Note that this does not mean there was any contact with the arms or hands. It is the shear force of the hooking motion that takes the player from the puck. This is where the penalty occurs. Players generally don't understand why they get a penalty for stick on stick play. It comes down to 3 main factors, the 3rd being the most important one:

1. The force of the stick hook
2. Was it aggressive?
3. Did the hooking action take the player off the puck?

FACE-OFF PROCEDURES

Referees in NZ need to be more relaxed when it comes to face-off procedures. There is too much emphasis on making sure the players are standing square to the face-off spot. In discussions with international referees at the World Cup 2008 the standard for "face-offs" is to make sure the "face-off" situation is a fair contest for both players. If both players come into the face-off position *slightly* off to the side then this is a fair contest and the referee should proceed with the puck drop. However if one player is standing straight on to the face-off spot then the referee should instruct the opponent to do so as well. The objective is to get the game started as soon as possible. This is especially important in NZ because here we do not play the game with a stop clock.

NB: Players should not be allowed to stand side on to the face off spot. Referee and player safety should be taken into consideration when judging player position for the face-off.

Early Notification of Special General Meeting for NZIHA Affiliated Clubs

Early notice is given to all clubs that NZIHA will call a
Special General Meeting

To be held in Wanganui over Labour Weekend

At Inter Regional Championships

(venue, day & time to be advised shortly)

2009 NZ COACH & SELECTOR APPLICATIONS

Applications for Coaches & Selectors are now open
Application Forms have been emailed to clubs and
are available on request. Closing is August 31st, 5pm.

**WILDCARD ENTRY APPLICATION INVITED FOR
2008 NZ National Inline Hockey Championships**
Please use the attached form and reply by August
31st, 2008. Notification will be advised by
September 10, 2008