



The Four-Official System Positioning & Mechanics

Revised — October 2011

INTRODUCTION

The game of hockey has changed. At the highest levels, the game is played at a faster pace and with more skilled players than ever before. With the Standard of Play emphasis for both body checking and restraining fouls, greater importance is placed on the officials to make the right call and enforce the rules of the game in a consistent and fair manner. The four-official system (two referees and two linesman) is designed to provide the best possible officiating coverage for a playing environment where both teams are competing within the rules.

The objective of the four-official system is to ensure infractions do not go unpenalized and to place the referees in the best possible position to see the play. Each referee has an equal responsibility to call infractions, award goals, communicate with players and coaches and to work together with the other on-ice officials to manage the game. It is important that the two referees compliment each other when it comes to field of vision and then trust each other to make the right call, regardless as to location on the ice. The system is no place for a referee with an “ego” that is not willing to work together as a team for what is in the best interest of the game.

The following pages provide standard positioning guidelines and proper procedures to be used when working the four-official system. Those who work the system properly will quickly learn it requires an equal amount of work and effort as being a referee in the three-official system and any lack of effort will easily be detected by coaches, players and spectators. Although the following cannot cover every possible scenario, utilizing practical position techniques learned through other officiating systems will be a good place to start when determining the best response to a particular situation.

Before we get started, there are some very simple principles that all referees in the four-official system should follow. These are:

- End zone/goal line positioning is essentially the same regardless as to what officiating system is used.
- The R2 (official in the neutral zone) must compliment the site lines of the R1 (official in end zone) to ensure the entire play area is covered.
- Instead of following play up the ice, the Lead Referee (R1) will have to use excellent backward skating skills to lead the play into the zone
- There should be no competition between the two referees to assess penalties,
- The referees must work together to consistently apply the rules and share equal responsibility for managing the game.

Provided these principles are followed, the use of the four-official system provides an excellent opportunity to reach a higher level and standard for officiating.

Terminology

- **Name of the system:** Four-Official System
- **Front / Lead Referee (R1)** – responsibility – first priority is the action area
- **Back / Trailing Referee (R2)** – responsibility – compliment R1’s site lines including play away from the action area
- **Action Area** – the area and play in the immediate vicinity of the puck

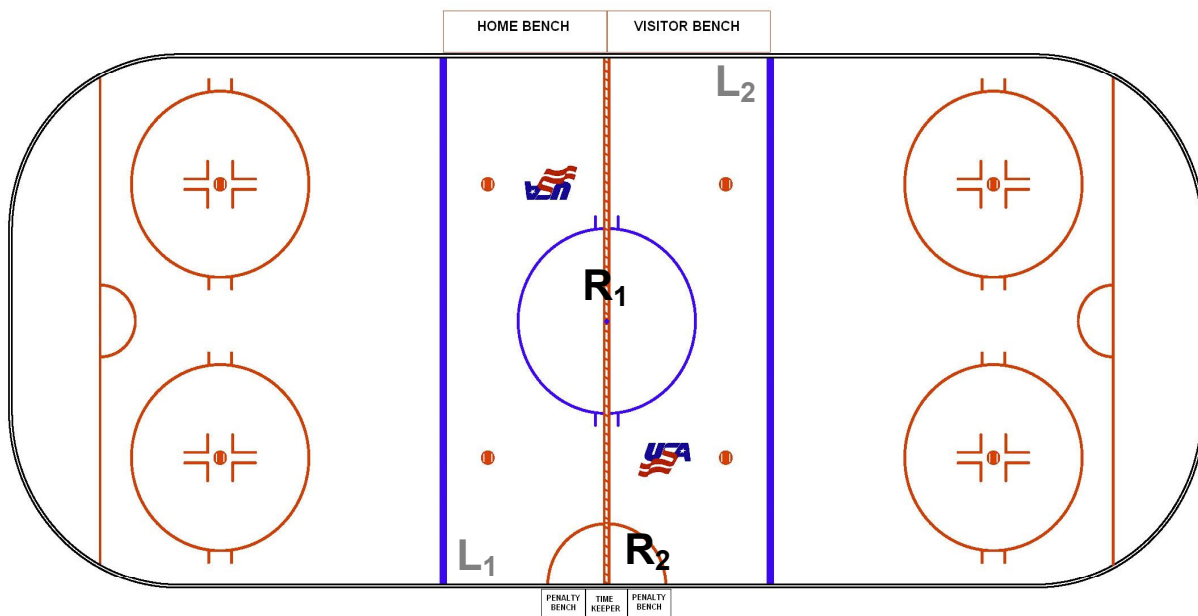
Note to Reader — Please note that the words “she” and “her” are used to include both male and female participants. Furthermore, the Three-Official System is defined as the one Referee and two Linesmen system.

PART I - POSITIONING

CENTER ICE FACE-OFF - START OF PERIODS AND AFTER GOALS

- The Referee (R1) will drop the puck facing the timekeeper's bench while the other Referee (R2) will be positioned on the opposite side of the ice facing the player's benches. The R2 can be positioned slightly on either side of the red line to provide a clear view for the Timekeeper. (Figure 1)
- The two Referees shall decide who shall drop the puck to start each period or overtime.
- The Referee who was on the goal line when the goal was scored and is reporting the goal to the Scorekeeper will remain in front of the timekeeper's bench while her partner conducts the center ice face-off.

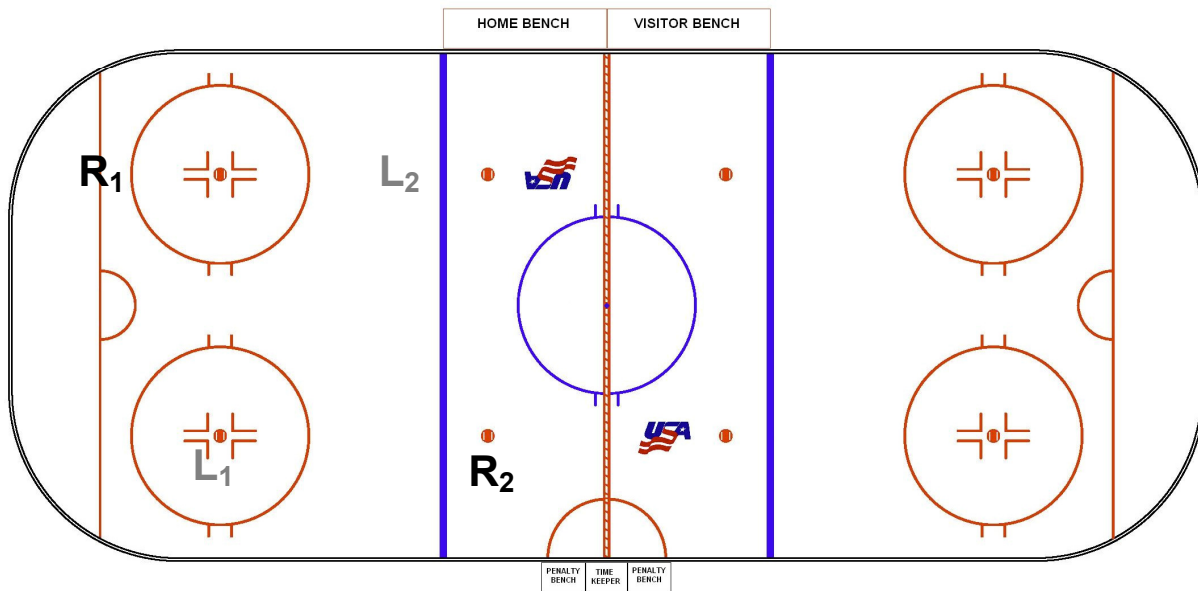
Figure 1



END ZONE FACE OFFS

- For end zone face-offs, the Referees position themselves diagonally from each other just as they would during play (Figure 2).
- The Lead Referee (R1) will be positioned on the goal line opposite the face-off just as she would if working the three-official system
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will be positioned on the same side of the ice as the face-off and just outside the blue line. The R2 should stay clear of the back Linesman's view of the blue line while also establishing a presence with the players. The R2 must be prepared to move in any direction once the puck is dropped and react appropriately to the play.

Figure 2
Linesman 1 (L₁) is conducting the face-off.



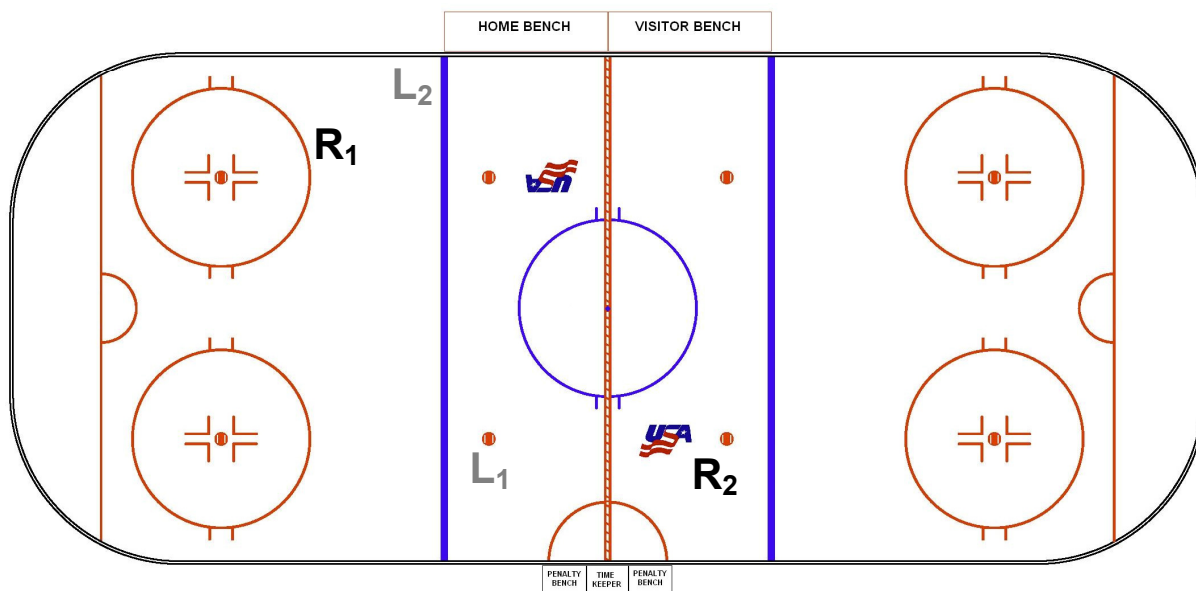
- *The position and responsibility of the Linesmen do not change from that of the three-official system. However, the R2 may be able to assist on encroachment of the wingers behind, if necessary, as she will be in a good position to communicate and establish a presence with those players.*

NEUTRAL ZONE FACE-OFFS

- For neutral zone face-offs, the Referees position themselves diagonally from each other just as they would during play. During a normal stoppage, they will stay on the same half of the ice they were located on when play stopped
- The Referee (R1) will position herself on the opposite side of the ice to where the face-off is being conducted. Once again, just as she would if working the three-official system.
- The Referee (R2) will position herself on the same side of the ice as the face-off close to the far blue line. This area is not anticipated to immediately be in the play and each Referee is now in position to lead the play into each of the respective end zones. (Figure 3)
- The responsibility of the Linesmen is the same as in the three-official system. In this instance, the R2 shall be flexible in her positioning to avoid the players and still maintain good sight lines and presence during the face-off.

Figure 3

Linesman 1 (L₁) is conducting the face-off.

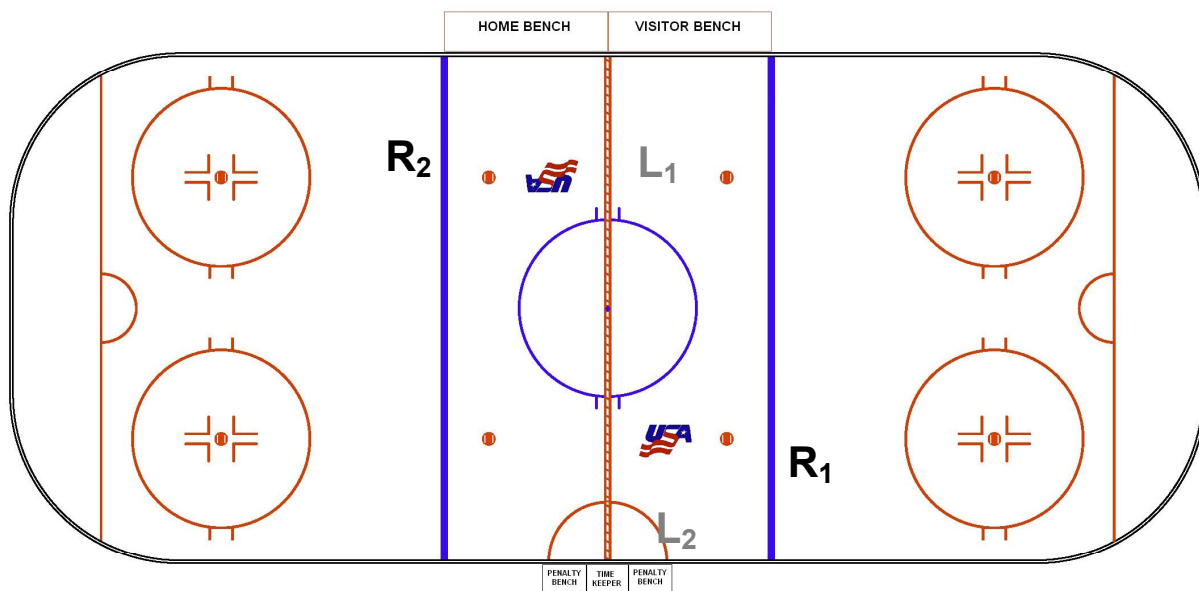


Neutral Zone Face-offs (Continued):

- A similar positioning philosophy will exist when the face-off is conducted along the imaginary lines connecting the neutral zone face-off spots. (Figure 4)

Figure 4

Linesman 1 (L₁) is conducting the face-off

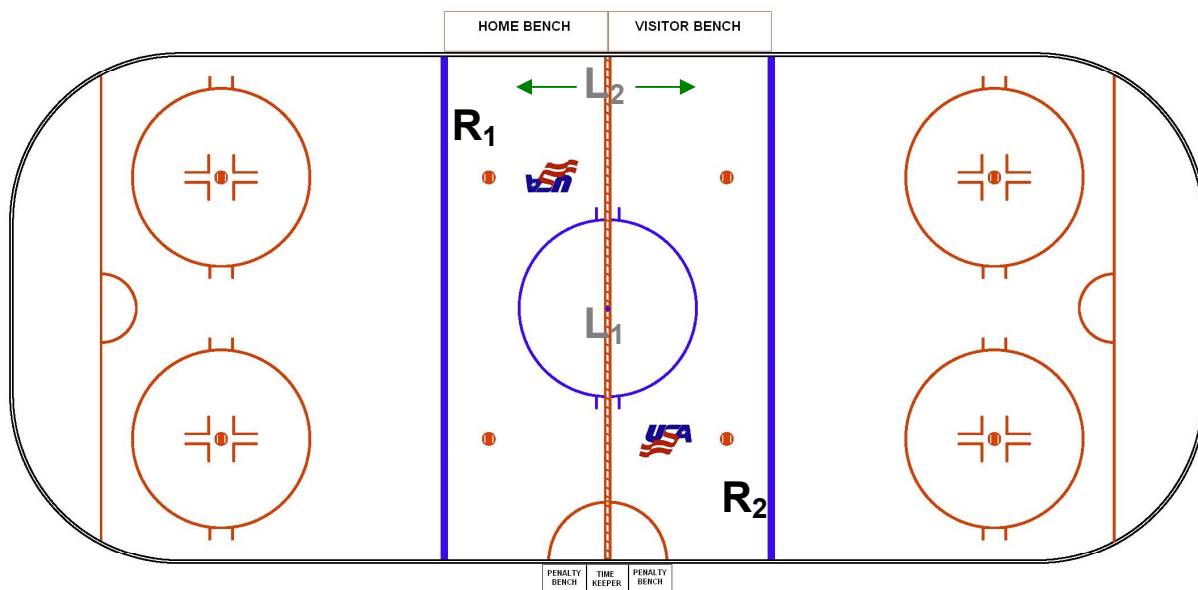


Neutral Zone Face-offs (Continued):

- When the face-off takes place at the center ice face-off spot other than the start of periods or after goals, both referees shall position themselves in the neutral zone near the blue lines and on opposite sides of the ice. (Figure 5)
- As in the three-official system, the linesman not dropping the puck must be prepared to skate in either direction according to the play to be in position to make the first call at either blue line.
- One change from the three-official system is each referee, in this instance, may take a more active role in encroachment by the wingers on their side of the ice as they are in a good position to establish presence and communicate with the players, if necessary.

Figure 5

Linesman 1 (L₁) is conducting the face-off

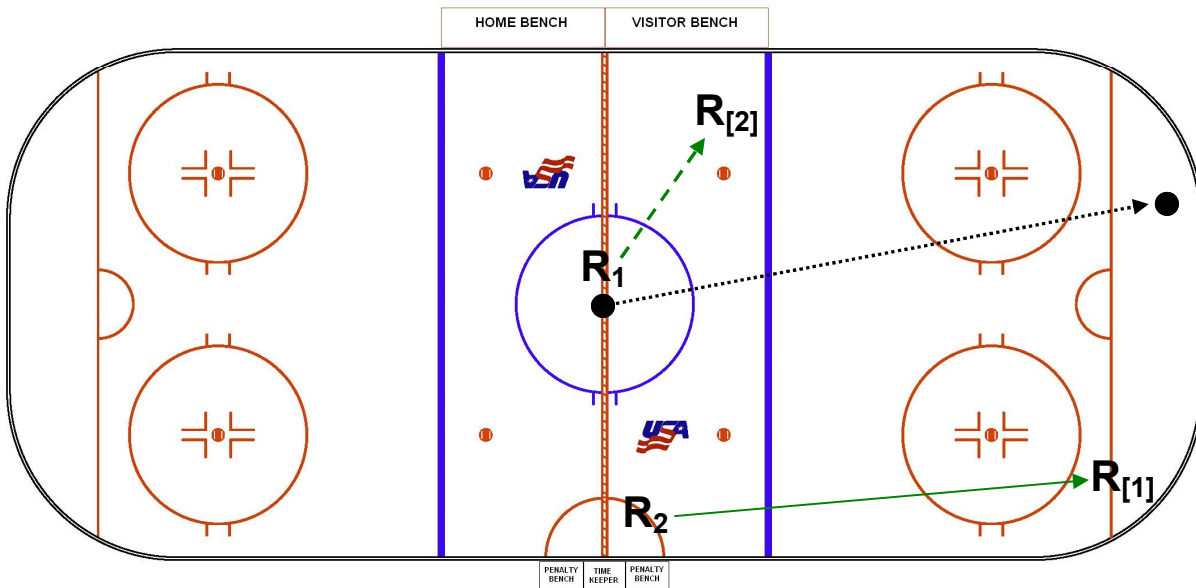


POSITIONING AFTER CENTER ICE FACE-OFF

- The referee not conducting the center ice face-off (R2) shall go in the direction of the puck and establish the proper position in the end zone. She now becomes the Lead Referee (R1). It is important for her to hustle into the end zone and get into the proper position as quickly as possible.
- The referee who conducted the center ice face-off now becomes the Trailing Referee (R2) and will follow play and assume the proper position outside the blue line. (Figure 6)
- The linesmen would assume their normal position on the blue line and in the neutral zone as normal for the three-official system.

Figure 6

Dots and arrow mark direction of play

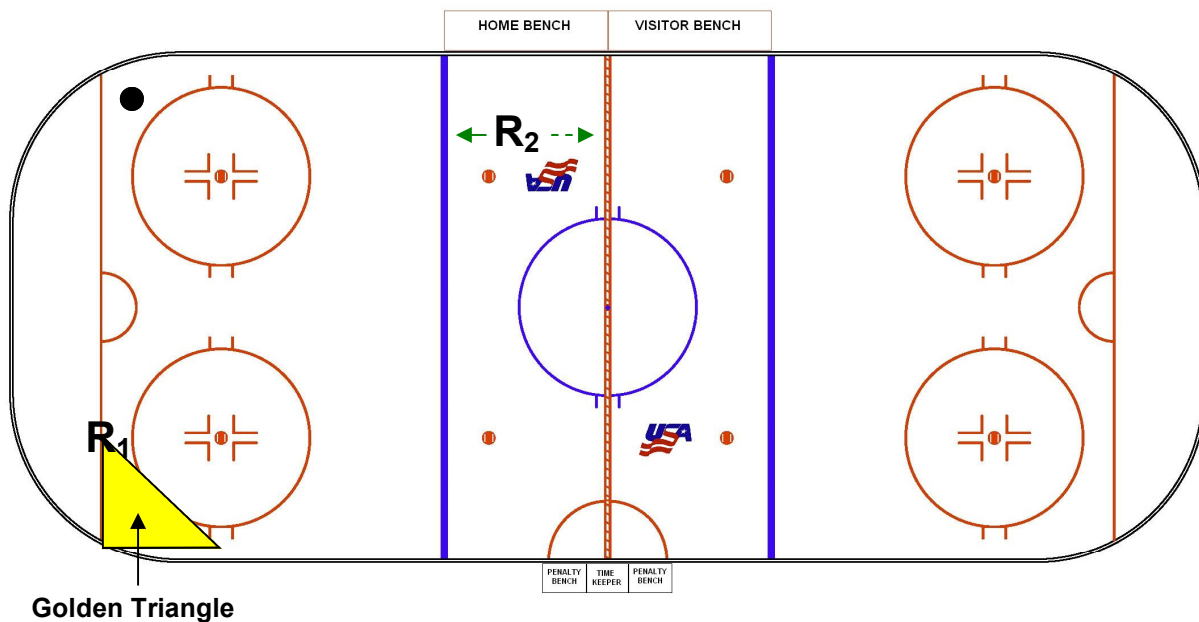


POSITIONING WHILE PLAY IS IN END ZONE

- The Lead Referee (R1) will follow the same positioning techniques as is used in the three-official system. She will use the Golden Triangle and proper goal line position in order to stay out of the way of the play, get the best possible view of the play and establish a presence at the goal when necessary.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will be positioned outside the blue line on the opposite side of the ice. Her position in relation to the blue line may vary slightly based on her backward skating ability, the speed of play and the need to avoid getting in the way of the linesmen and their responsibilities. (Figure 7)

Figure 7

Dot marks location of play

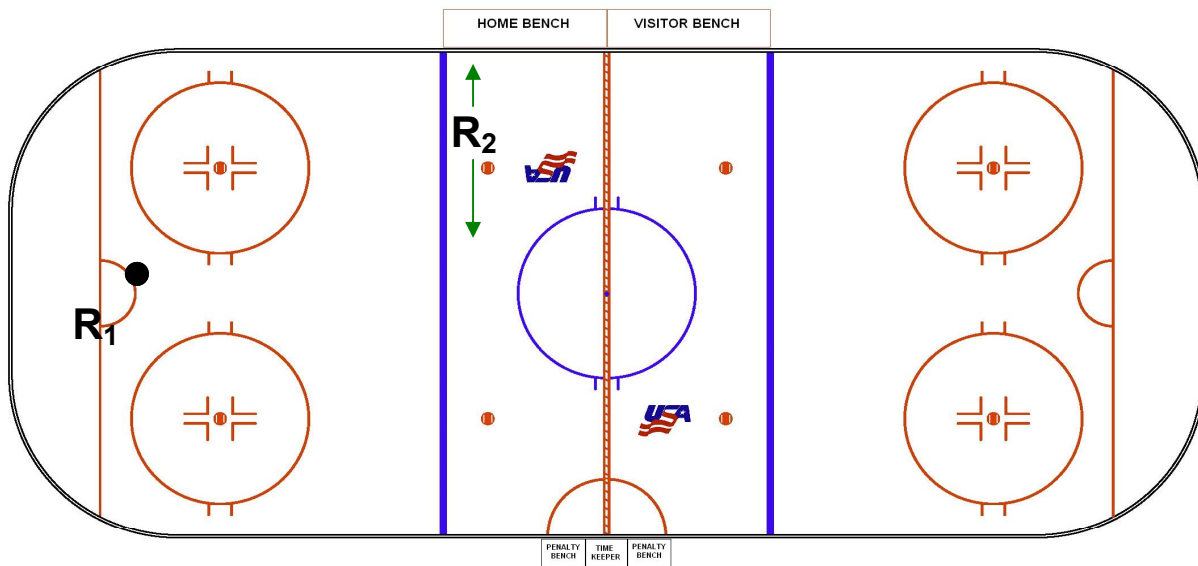


Positioning while play is in End Zone (Continued):

- One difference in end zone position from the three-official system is the Lead Referee (R1) is provided greater latitude to move in and stay closer to the goal in an effort to see the play clearly, knowing R2 will be able to compliment her sight lines away from the immediate play. With proper teamwork, there is no reason as to why the Lead Referee (R1) would not be positioned close to the goal when a goal is scored or a close play occurs on the goal line. This presence is one of the advantages of the four-official system.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will also move laterally in the neutral zone depending on which side of the ice play is on and the actions of R1. The position of R2 must always compliment the sight lines of R1 and will vary depending on the play and situation. (Figure 8)

Figure 8

Dot marks location of play

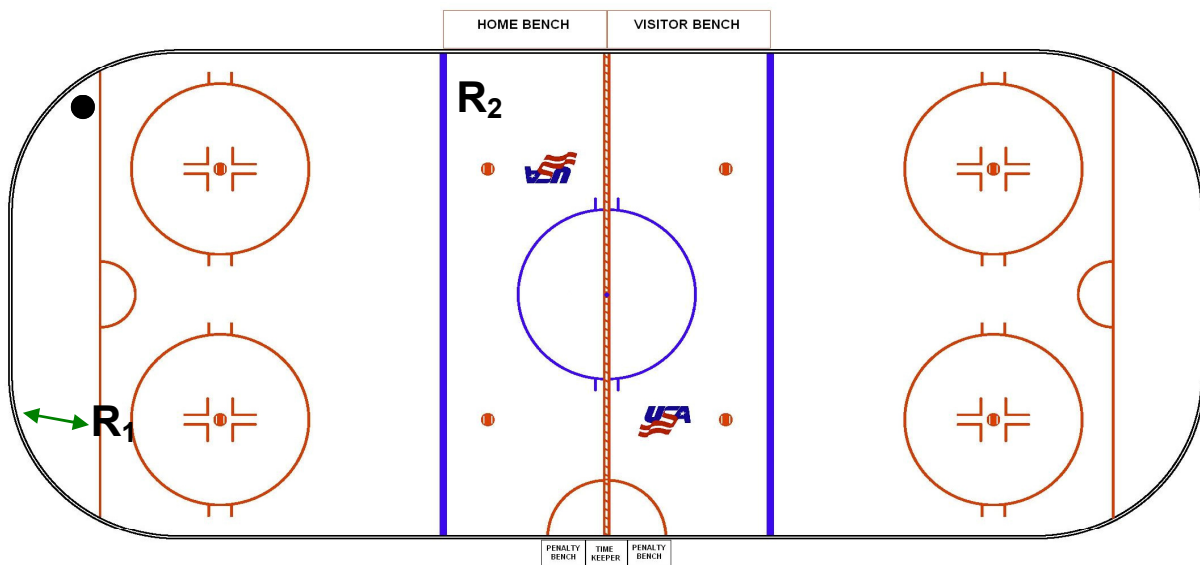


Positioning while play is in End Zone (Continued):

- When play is in the corner, or along the side boards, on the opposite side of the ice from the Lead Referee (R1), she will take a position near the goal line that gives her the best view of the action area. In this system, the R1 is provided some latitude to use the area between the goal line and end boards in order to get the best possible view of the play.
- In this scenario, the Trailing Referee (R2) must position herself close to the boards to provide the best sight line to see the hit along the boards. This positioning by the referees provides two different angles in which to view the play along the boards. Depending where the action occurs, one referee will have a view directly or diagonally from behind while the other will have a side view. (Figure 9)
- Naturally, both referees must also maintain awareness and use their peripheral vision to keep all players in their view.

Figure 9

Dot marks location of play

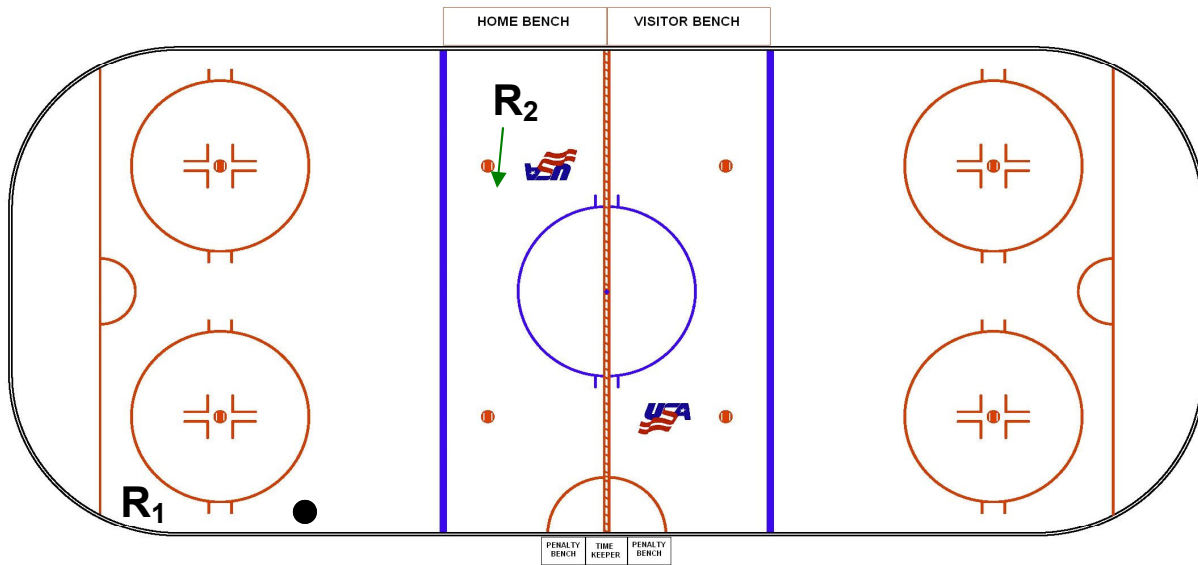


Positioning while play is in End Zone (Continued):

- When play is on the same side of the ice as the Lead Referee (R1), she must find a position to see the play clearly while also staying out of the way. This may include using all areas of the Golden Triangle or even momentarily stepping back to the end boards to allow play to go in front. Just as in the three-official system R1 should minimize players going behind her.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) needs to respond accordingly and will move farther off the boards to be able to get a good look at the play while also maintaining field of vision away from the play. Even with the neutral zone face-off spot (or as far as 3-5 feet inside the spot) is a good rule of thumb that provides the proper sight lines and enough proximity to the play to make a call, if necessary. (Figure 10)
- It is important for both referees to always turn their bodies towards their focus area to maximize their field of vision.

Figure 10

Dot marks location of play

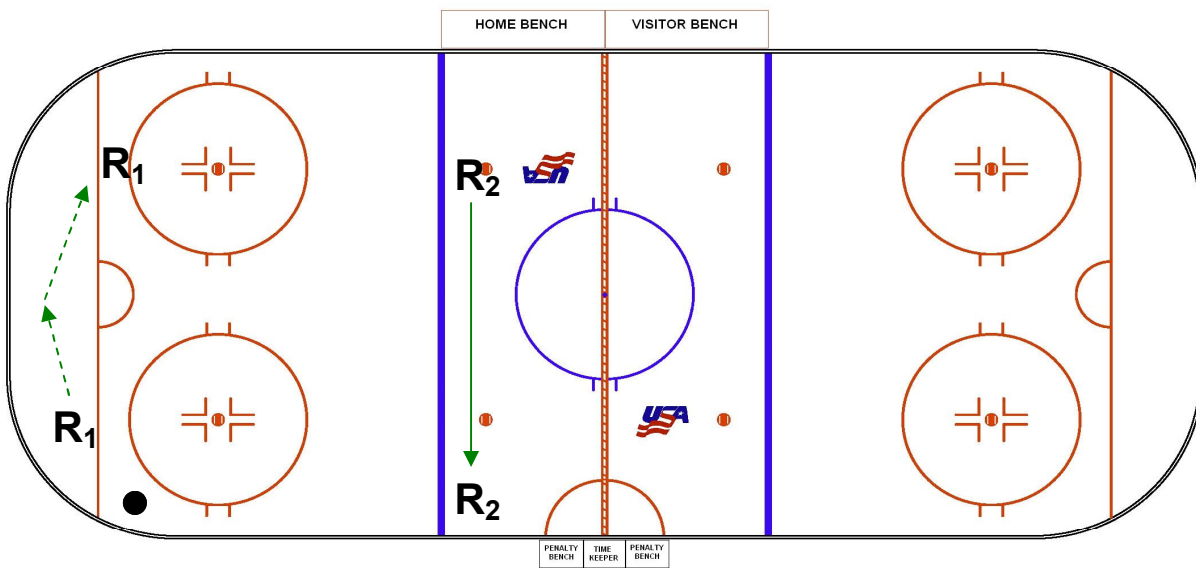


Positioning while play is in End Zone (Continued):

- The Lead Referee (R1) will take the lead as it relates to positioning as they are in the heat of the action when play is in the end zone. There are situations when it may be necessary for R1 to skate behind the net to the other side of the ice in order to avoid play. When doing so, it is critical for her to move quickly once the commitment is made to go behind the goal and she must turn to skate backwards to keep the play in front of her.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) is responsible for reading the play and her partner, anticipating her actions and then reacting accordingly. When R1 is forced to go behind the goal, R2 must react quickly to cross to the other side of the ice to get a good view of the action area. Keep in mind, R1 has crossed the ice to get away from the play, so R2's hustle is necessary to get a view of the play from the same side of the ice as the play. (Figure 11)

Figure 11

Dot marks location of play

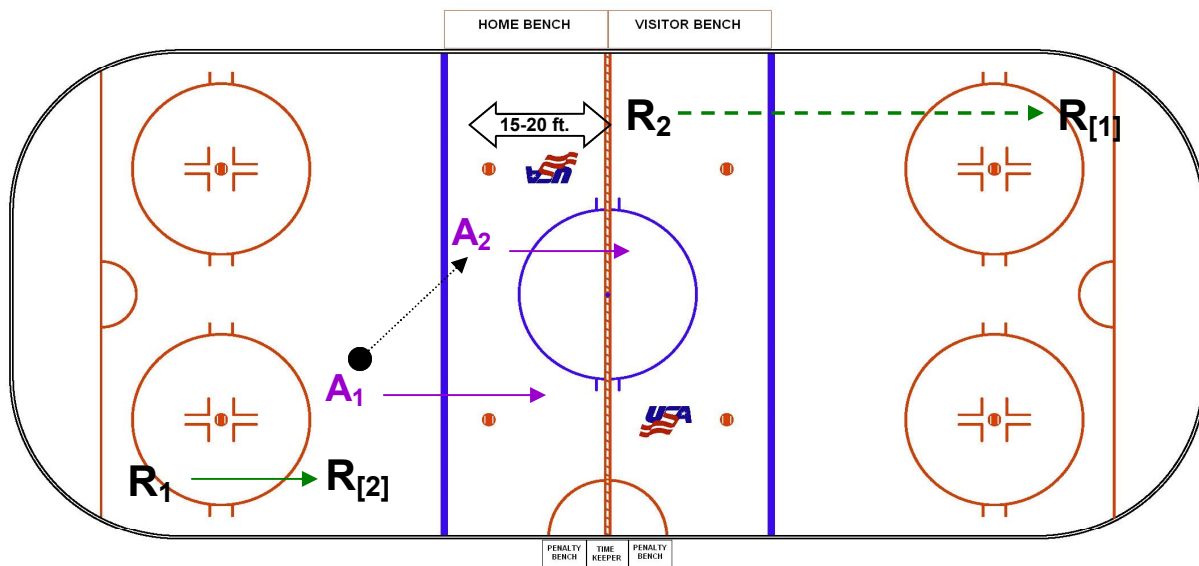


POSITIONING AS PLAY TRANSITIONS

- The Trailing Referee (R2) must read and anticipate the play leaving the zone and be aware of any players who may be floating into the neutral zone. A good rule of thumb is to move off of the blue line so as to not get caught behind the play if there is a long breakout pass.
- The R2 must be prepared to skate backwards in front of the play while keeping play in front her and staying out of the play. She also has to be careful not to get too far in front of the play where she will not get a good view and the distance between the referees becomes too large. A good guide would be to be skating backwards 15-20 feet in front of the play as play is coming towards her. This will also ensure she doesn't interfere with the linesman's call at the blue line. In this instance, R2 will transition to become the Lead Referee (R1).
- The original Lead Referee (R1) who was deep in the zone, will now follow play up the ice and transitions to become the Trailing Referee (R2). She will follow play in a manner that keeps opposing players in her view while also closing the distance between her and her partner. (Figure 12)

Figure 12

Dot and arrow marks direction of play between Player A1 and A2



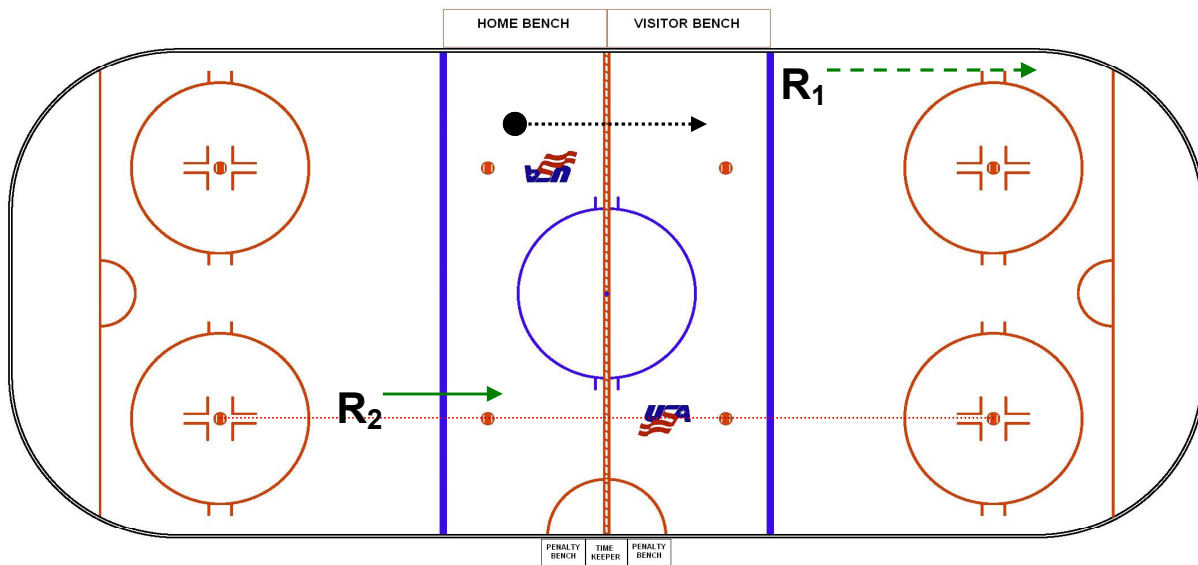
- It is important for the referees to keep the distance between them reasonable in order to avoid a situation where a referee is required to make a call from more than half a rink away. In those situations when the gap does get more than a half a rink (i.e. the R2 waiting for opposing players behind the play or stops quickly to replace a goal as play leaves the zone, etc.), she must hustle to close the gap and assume the proper position as quickly as possible.

Positioning as play transitions (Continued):

- The skating lanes for both referees using the four-official system is another change from that used in the three-official system. The referee who is on the opposite side of the ice of the play will skate in a lane that is about 4-6 feet on either side of the imaginary line connecting face-off spots. The referee who is on the same side of the ice as the play will stay closer to the boards – about 5-10 feet off of the boards and may go back to the boards if necessary to keep the play in front.
- This is true for either the Lead Referee (R1) skating backwards or the Trailing Referee (R2) skating forwards. (Figure 13)

Figure 13

Dot and arrow marks location and direction of play

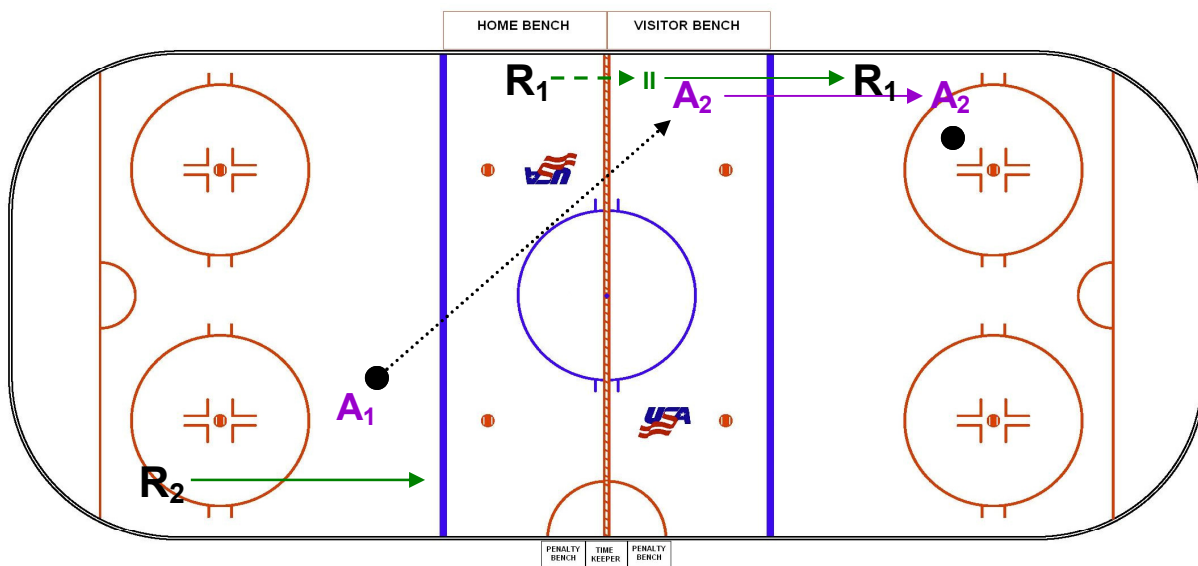


Positioning as play transitions (Continued):

- There may be times when the Lead Referee (R1) gets caught flat footed or there is a long cross-ice pass that places her in a position to possibly interfere with the play. In this instance, it would be best for R1 to skate back to the boards to allow play to pass in front of her and then follow the play to the goal line. (Figure 14)

Figure 14

Dot and arrow marks direction of play between Player A1 and A2

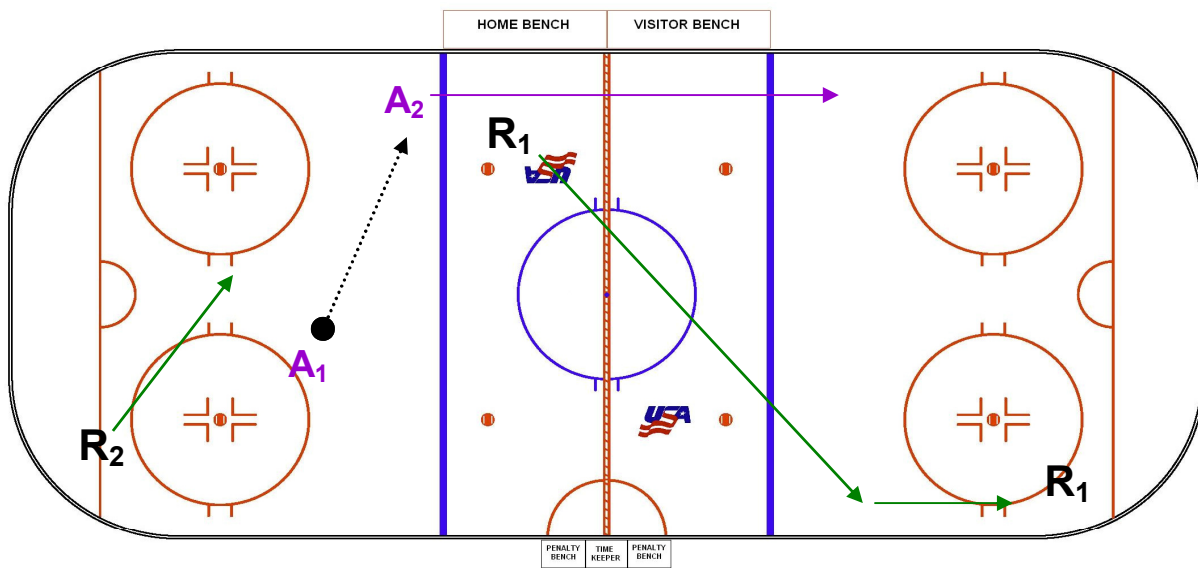


Positioning as play transitions (Continued):

- It is also possible where the best course of action for the Lead Referee (R1) is to quickly cross the ice in order to avoid being in the play, although this should be a rare occurrence. In this instance, the Trailing Referee (R2) will need to react to her partner's actions and cross to the other side when it is convenient as she follows play up the ice. Naturally, both referees must hustle to get into proper position quickly once the commitment has been made to cross the ice. (Figure 15)
- **Important Note:** *It is important to recognize that even though the referees in the four-official system are provided greater latitude to cross the ice in certain situations, this practice should always have a specific purpose and is not something that should be done simply for the sake of doing it. Awareness, anticipation, teamwork and hustle are all traits of successful officials and will minimize the need to execute this maneuver regardless as to what officiating system is used.*

Figure 15

Dot and arrow marks direction of play between Player A1 and A2



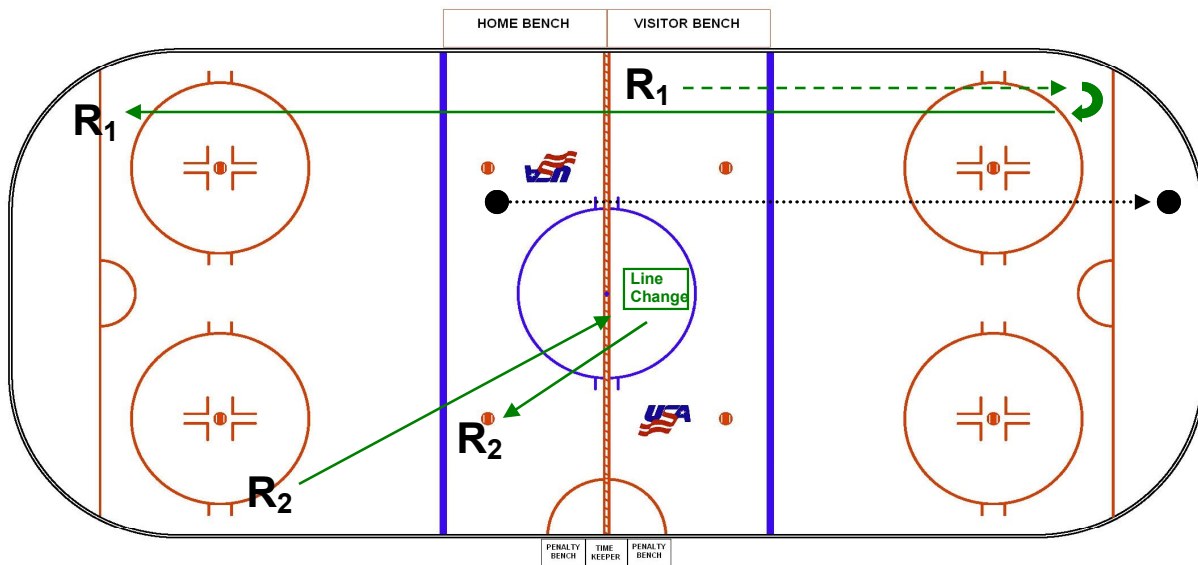
POSITIONING DURING STOPPAGES

ICINGS

- During a potential icing situation, the Lead Referee (R1) will assume her normal position by skating backwards and keeping play in front of her. The Trailing Referee (R2) will follow play up the ice – but in this case may stay back a little further to keep all players in front her.
- Once play has been stopped for the icing, the original R1 will remain the R1 on the opposite end of the ice when the face-off occurs. In essence, she will skate the entire length of the ice during the stoppage and the end result is the Referees will switch ends.
- The original R2 will be responsible for managing the line change procedure during the stoppage and she will then assume the face-off position as R2. (Figure 16)

Figure 16

Dot and arrow marks direction of icing play



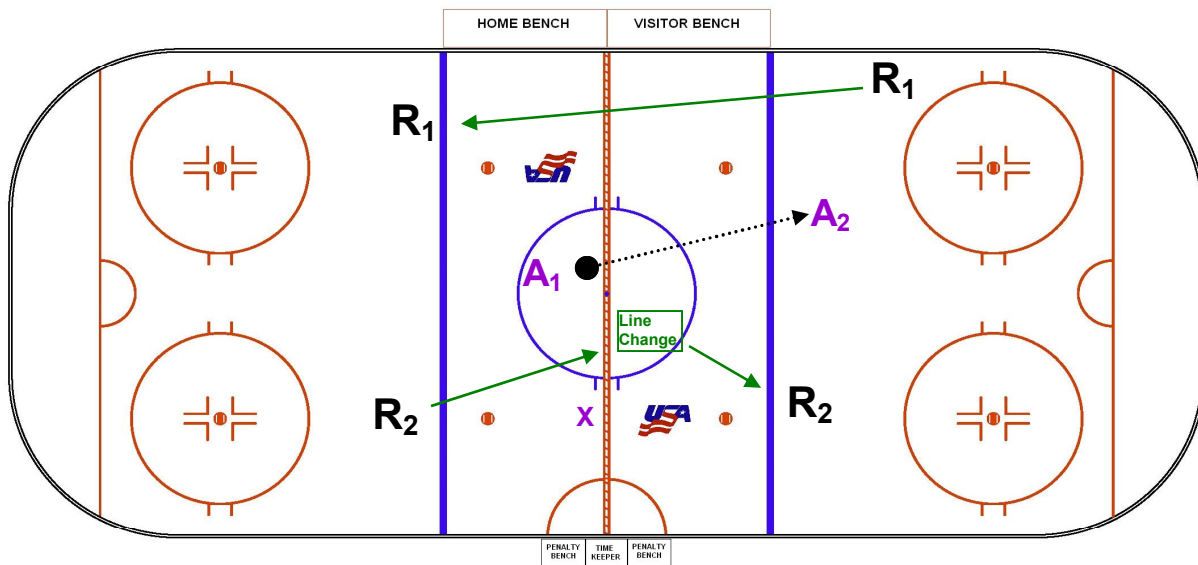
Positioning during stoppages (continued):

OFF-SIDES

- After a stoppage as a result of an off-sides play, the first priority of both referees is to watch all the players and make sure nothing happens after the whistle. Once the players have been separated, the original Lead Referee (R1) at the time of the stoppage will assume the position of the R1 for the ensuing face-off. The original Trailing Referee (R2) will be responsible for managing the line change procedure and will assume the R2 positioning for the ensuing face-off when the line change procedure is complete. (Figures 3 & 4)
- When a stoppage occurs as a result of an intentional off-sides or a pass originating from behind the red line, the referees will switch ends of the ice. The Trailing Referee (R2) will conduct the line change procedure and the Lead Referee (R1) will cross the red line and retain her role as R1 for the ensuing face-off. (Figure 17)

Figure 17

A1 and A2 simulate an offside pass
"X" marks location of face-off



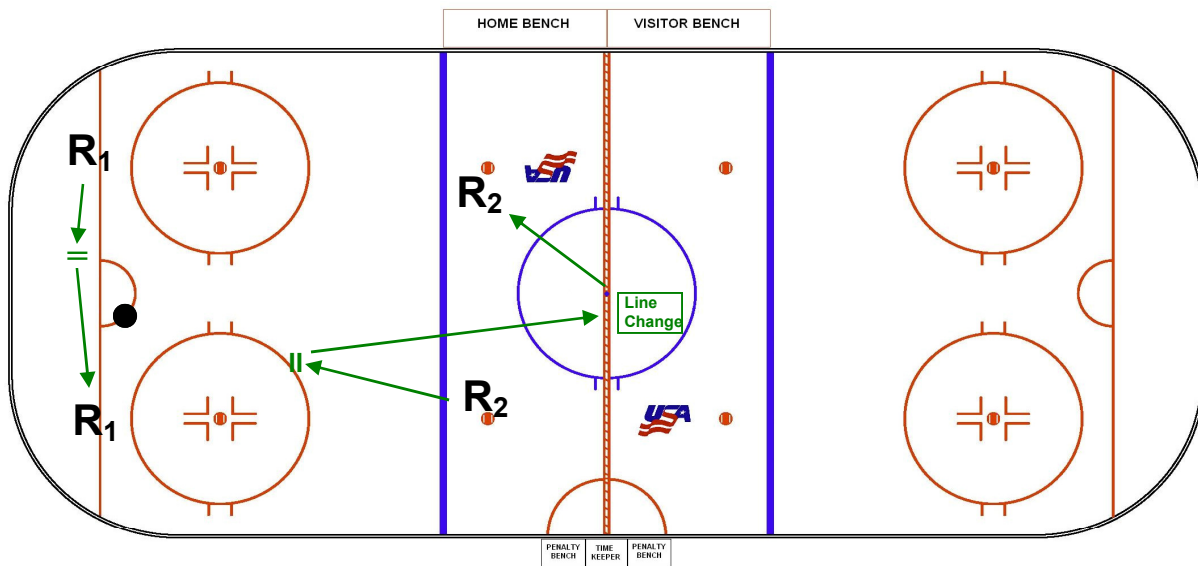
Positioning during stoppages (continued):

END-ZONE STOPPAGES

- During a normal stoppage of play in the end zone, the original Lead Referee (R1) will maintain the R1 position when play resumes while the original Trailing Referee (R2) will manage the line change procedure. R1 will be responsible for keeping an eye on all players and R2 will start the line change procedure after moving to the center of the zone between the blue line and tops of face-off circles when play is stopped to establish a presence and make sure all players have separated.
- In all instances where R2 is managing the line change process during a stoppage, she should position herself in the neutral zone in the center part of the ice in order to establish a strong presence and best be able to address any problems with the line changes when they occur. (Figure 18)

Figure 18

Dot marks location of stoppage



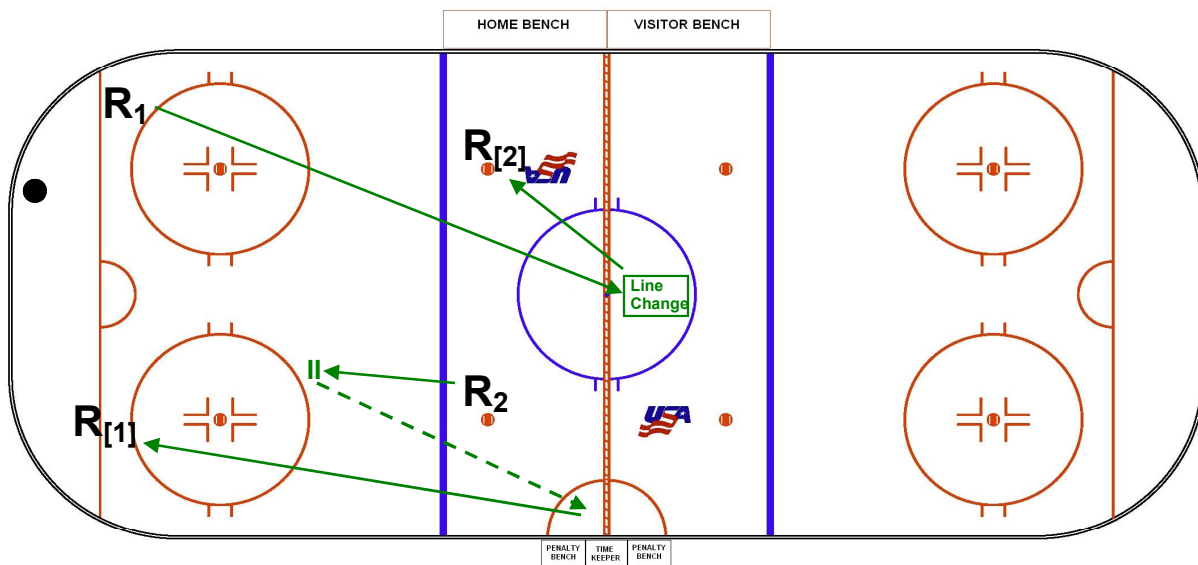
Positioning during stoppages (continued):

PENALTY ASSESSMENT

- When a penalty occurs, whichever referee assesses and reports the penalty will assume the position of the Lead Referee (R1) for the ensuing face-off while the other referee will assume the responsibility of the Trailing Referee R2 in managing the line change procedure. (Figure 19)
- If both referees are assessing different penalties during the same stoppage of play, whoever reports their penalty first will assume the position of the R2 while the second referee to report will assume the R1 position for the ensuing face-off.

Figure 19

Dot marks location of stoppage after delayed penalty
R₂ has called a penalty against the defending team



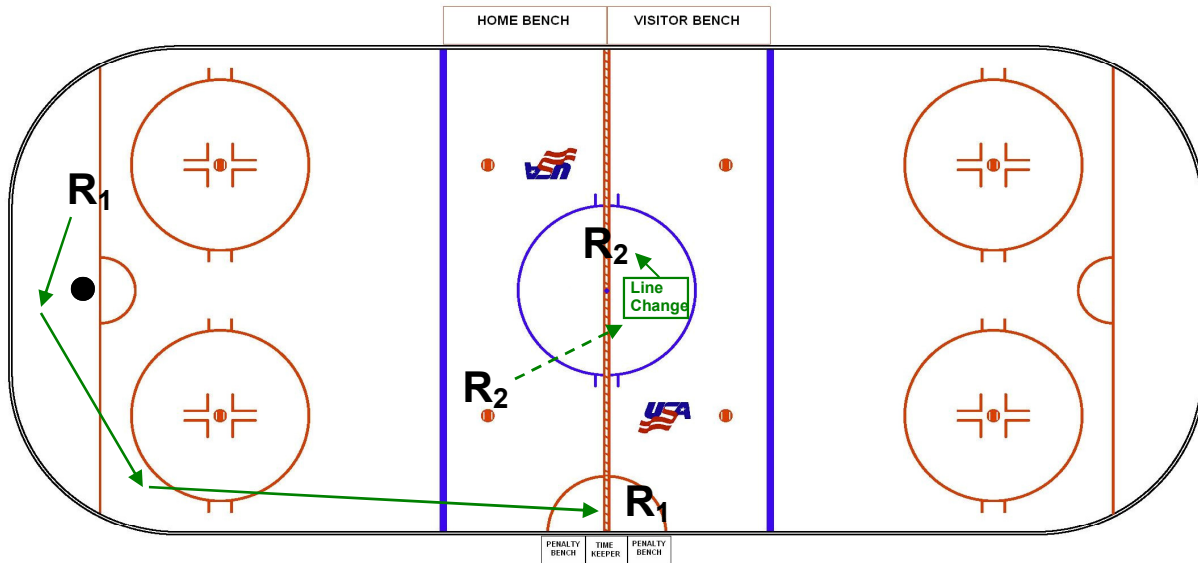
Positioning during stoppages (continued):

REPORTING GOALS & ASSISTS

- The Lead Referee (R1) is responsible for signaling goals and reporting goals and assists to the Scorekeeper. The Trailing Referee (R2), along with the linesmen, may help by providing the numbers of the players earning assists as R1 skates by them on the way to the Scorekeeper's Bench.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will be responsible for watching all players after the goal is scored and then manage the line change procedure prior to conducting the ensuing face-off at center ice. (Figure 20)

Figure 20

Dot marks location of goal

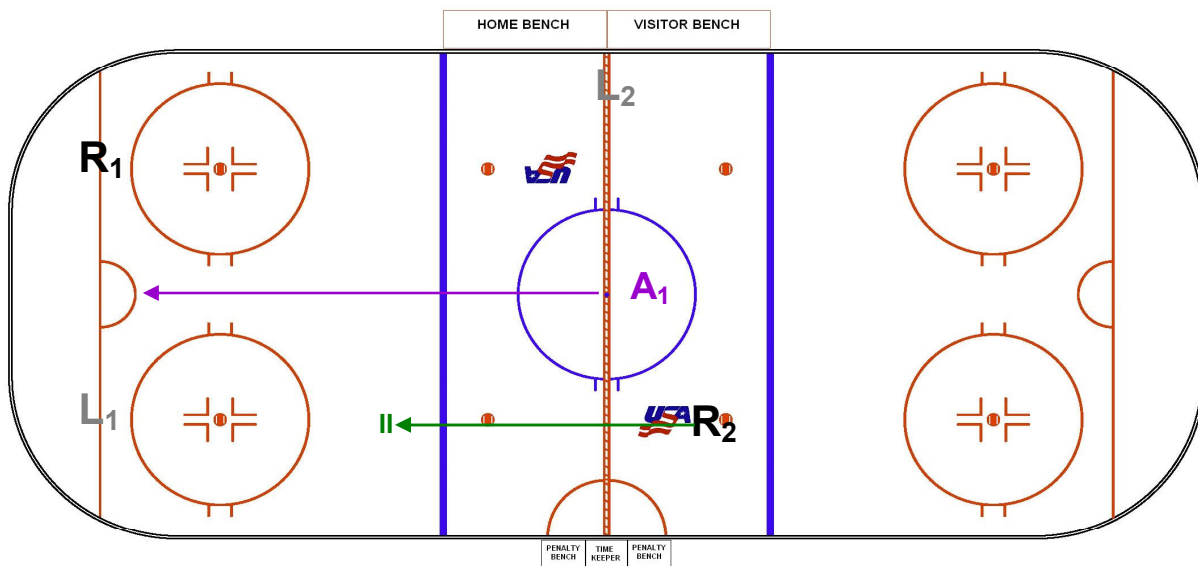


POSITIONING DURING A PENALTY SHOT

- The Lead Referee (R1) - or official who made the call - will take up their normal position along the goal line along with the Front Linesman. She will provide the goalkeeper with instructions and then signal the penalty shot to start by blowing her whistle.
- The Back Linesman will position herself in the neutral zone between the benches.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will provide instructions to the shooter and then position herself on the center red line on the opposite side of the ice as the benches in order to keep all players in view.
- When the shot has started, the R2 will follow behind the shooter and take a position 5-10 feet inside the blue line at center ice as the shot is taken. This will provide her a good view of the play and is able to assist the Lead Referee (R1) in determining whether a legal goal is scored, if necessary. Although the final decision as to whether a goal is scored is the responsibility of the R1, she may consult with both her referee and linesmen partners to ensure the correct call is made. (Figure 21)

Figure 21

Player A1 is awarded penalty shot



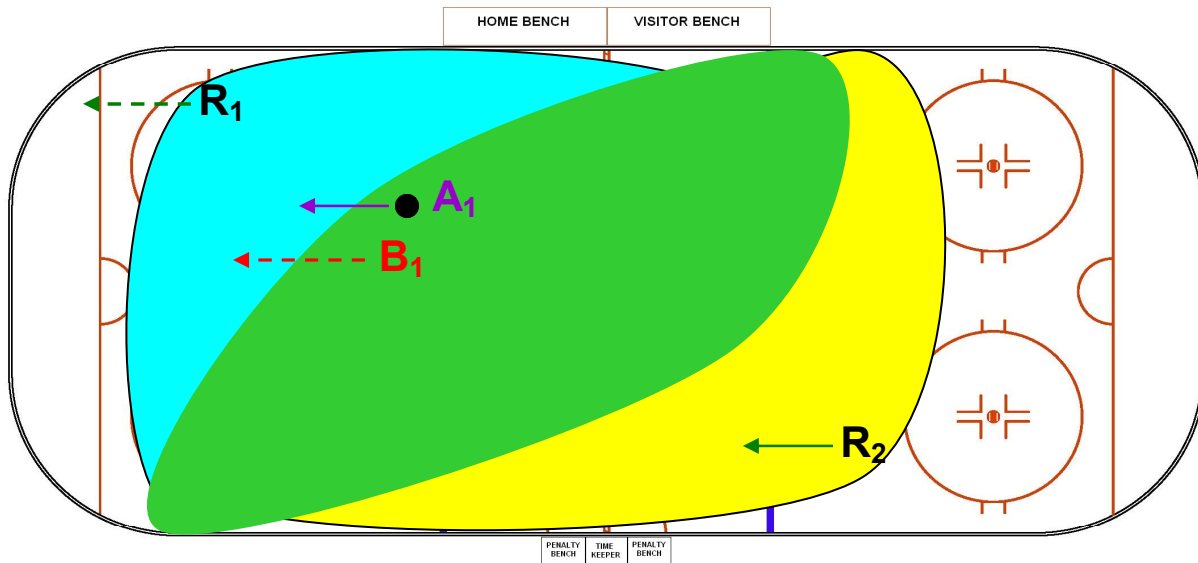
PART II - OFFICIATING PROCEDURES

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

- There is no designated end zone that each referee will assume throughout the game. The referees will change ends throughout the game according to the various procedures. If it does end up where the referees have spent an unusual amount of time in the same end zone, they may choose to switch at the next normal stoppage of play to balance things out.
- The Lead Referee (R1) should watch the play as it is coming up the ice towards her and will assume the coverage of the entire end zone until the play has been established in the end zone.
- The Trailing Referee (R2) will be responsible for the peripheral play as she follows play up the ice. This includes players away from the immediate action area and those trailing play up the ice. (Figure 22)

Figure 22

Player A1 is the puck carrier



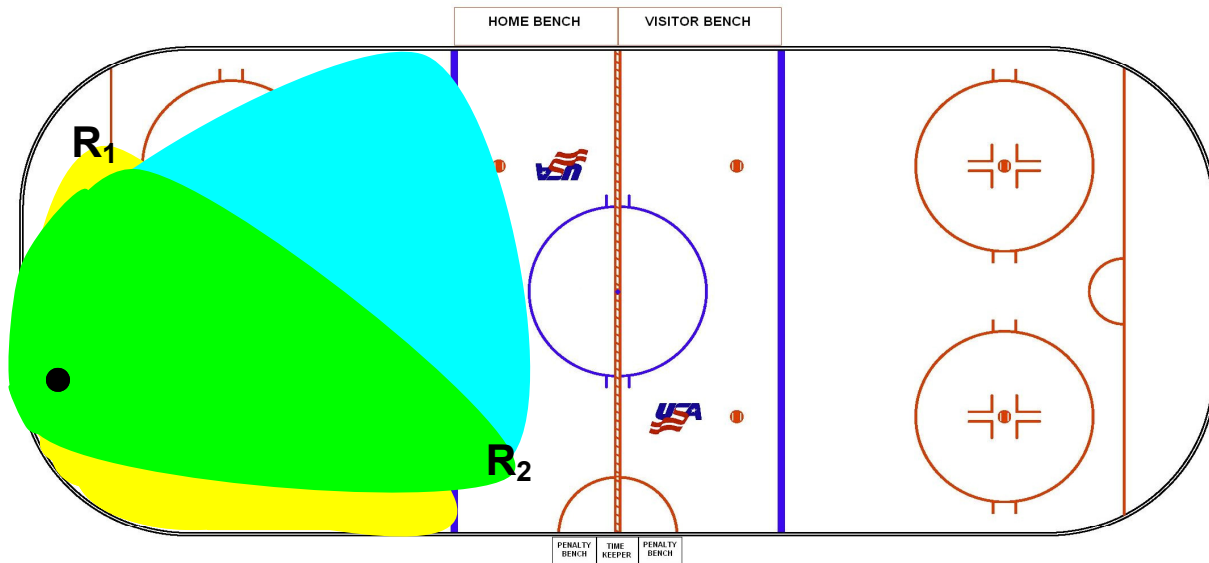
- **BLUE AREA:** Primary responsibility of Lead Referee (R1)
- **YELLOW AREA:** Primary responsibility of Trailing Referee (R2)
- **GREEN AREA:** Shared responsibility by both referees

Areas of Responsibility (Continued)

- Once play is established in the zone, the Lead Referee (R1) will tend to focus on the “action area” where the primary players and puck are located. Naturally, she will also need to be aware of other areas through her peripheral vision and feel for the game.
- Once play is established in the zone, the Trailing Referee (R2) will focus her attention on those areas necessary to compliment the R1’s sight lines. Although much of this may include the area away from the puck, the R2 must also have a good feel for the game and awareness of the action area to be able to make any call that is necessary. (Figure 23)
- This is where good communication between referees, awareness of the play and partner, anticipation and an overall feel for the game is critical to the success of the four-official system.

Figure 23

Dot marks location of play



- **YELLOW AREA:** Primary responsibility of Lead Referee (R1)
- **BLUE AREA:** Primary responsibility of Trailing Referee (R2)
- **GREEN AREA:** Shared responsibility by both referees

CALLING PENALTIES

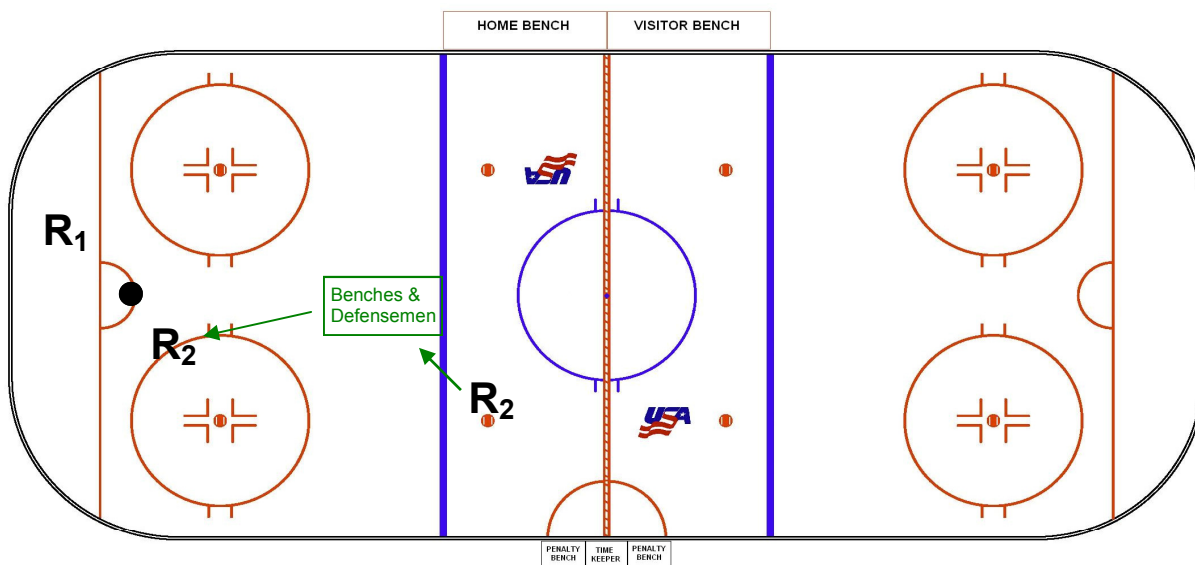
- Either referee may call a penalty at any time, regardless as to where it may occur on the ice. The referee making the call will generally be dictated by their position and who has the best view of the play. It is not dictated by which referee is closer because that does not always mean they have the best view. It is critical that the referees communicate before the game and use any opportunities they have during the game (i.e. time-outs, in between periods, extended stoppages, etc.) to reinforce the penalty standard and establish consistency between them.
- When only one of the referees sees the infraction and raises her arm, there is no reason for the other referee to also signal a delayed penalty unless there is a second infraction that occurs and is observed by the second referee. Raising your arm indicates that you have actually seen an infraction and in this instance, it was not seen and is not something you are prepared to report to the Scorekeeper.
- When the Trailing Referee (R2) is calling an infraction that occurred in the end zone and play is stopped while in the end zone, she should move inside the blue line as play is stopped and towards the middle of the ice in order to establish a presence and proximity to the call when signaling the penalty.
- If both referees see an infraction at the same time, they should both raise their arms and keep their arms raised until the stoppage has occurred. If play is stopped in the end zone, the Lead Referee (R1) will signal the infraction and report it to the Scorekeeper. If play ends up being stopped in the neutral zone, it is generally accepted that the Trailing Referee (R2) will signal the penalty and follow the proper reporting.
- In either instance, the important thing is that the referees use good non-verbal communication to indicate who will take the lead and the fact the right call is made. It is also imperative for the referee not making the call to monitor her partner in order to confirm that the same penalty is being called by both referees. If each referee is calling a different infraction, then the second infraction must also be signaled immediately after the first penalty is acknowledged.
- In situations that involve more severe infractions such as injury situations, a minor plus misconduct, major penalties, game misconduct penalties or match penalties, it is suggested the referees have a brief discussion to provide the best possible chance of making the correct call.
- In situations where a penalty occurs during a stoppage of play, the referees should consult quickly to make sure the proper call is being made and only one referee is reporting the penalty. If multiple penalties during a stoppage are being assessed, it is important for the referees to consult quickly to make sure the appropriate penalties are being assessed to the offending players. In this instance, only one referee should report all of the penalties to the Scorekeeper while the other referee monitors the players and the line change procedure.
- Although it is rare when the four-official system is performed properly, the linesmen should also be prepared to report any infractions they are authorized to identify according to the rules and/or provide their version of any incident when asked by either of the referees.
- Under no circumstances should the judgment of a partner be openly questioned by one of the officials. All officials must be careful not to second guess their partners nor indicate either verbally or through body language that they disagree with a judgment call. Doing so will only create a negative environment in which to work and put the credibility of the officiating team in question. Any questions or discussions necessary to establish consistency must remain between the officials and be done in a discreet manner that does not raise questions regarding any one member of the teams credibility.

MANAGING ALTERCATIONS

- During an altercation situation in an end zone, the Lead Referee (R1) will assume the observer role and is responsible for assessing any penalties that may occur. She will position herself in good position to view the entire altercation while also establishing a presence to communicate with the players involved and the linesmen.
- The Trailing Referee's (R2) primary responsibility is to monitor and control the players' benches and also the players who are away from the altercation. She will position himself just inside the blue line in the middle of the ice. Once those players are controlled, she may move deeper into the zone to establish a presence to the altercation while also maintaining his control of the benches and non-participating players. (Figure 25)

Figure 23

Dot marks location of altercation



- The Trailing Referee (R2) may consult with her partner to offer any additional penalties and is responsible for monitoring players who enter into the zone deeper than the tops of the face-off circles and the players who are on the ice in a situation where a penalty may be assessed to a goalkeeper.
- The linesmen will assume their normal responsibilities during the altercation, using good awareness, anticipation, hustle and teamwork to prevent the altercation from escalating.
- ***Where one referee calls a penalty and the other referee is questioned by players/coaches, a good comment to make in reply is: "She had a better angle to call it". Referees shall refrain from saying "Good call" or "I support her call".***
- Every attempt shall be made to keep conferences of the four game officials to a minimum at the Referee's Crease area. If four game officials are required then they should participate in the discussion at the Referee's Crease.

COMMUNICATION

- Communication with your partner(s) is a must. However, every attempt should be made to keep any conferences among the officials to a minimum and brief in nature as to not delay the game unnecessarily. Good teamwork can also be accomplished with a subtle comment while skating by your partner during a stoppage that reinforces the standard and offers support. Although our objective is to do what is necessary to make the right call, officials also have to be conscious of having too much discussion resulting in the game being delayed.
- When one referee makes a call and the other referee is questioned by player or coaches, a good strategy is to simply mention “she had a better angle to see the play” and avoid any editorial comment about the call – good or bad. If the non-calling referee clearly saw the play and was also prepared to call the penalty, they may reinforce the call with a brief answer that lets the player/coach know it was correct.
- In most cases, when it is necessary to communicate with a bench it is best that the referee who made the call, or is directly involved with the situation (i.e. line change procedure) be the one to do so. In some cases, it may be necessary for both referees to be present during the conversation if the non-involved referee can provide a calming influence. If there is an obvious problem between one referee and a bench, the other referee should take a more active role in managing the situation and avoiding any additional conflict.
- When situations arise where a message needs to be relayed to both benches, each referee will choose a bench and distribute the information as needed in order to minimize time and get the play going again. An example of this might be when there is a clock malfunction or the time needs to be adjusted and it is imperative that the same message is provided to both benches.

FILING A GAME REPORT

- When an incident occurs that requires a game report to be completed for the Proper Authorities, both referees should work together in filing the report with the official making the call taking the lead. As long as all four officials are in agreement as to what occurred and the appropriate penalty was assessed, one report with all of the officials signing is sufficient.
- However, if one of the officials has a different view of the play and what should have been called, this official should write a separate report and that should be forwarded with the original game report so all of the necessary information is documented.

LINESMEN GUIDELINES

- The linesmen working in the four-official system will follow the procedures and positioning guidelines that they would normally follow if working the three-official system. They will have the same duties, authority and responsibilities while maintaining a high level of awareness and anticipation.

SUMMARY

The four-official system is an optional officiating system that, when performed properly, will foster an environment where players are encouraged to play the game within the rules. The objective is to ensure infractions do not go unpenalized and to place the referees in the best possible position to see the play. Each referee has an equal responsibility to call infractions, award goals, communicate with players and coaches and to work together with the other on-ice officials to manage the game.

Working in this system does require a specific skill set in order for a referee to be successful. These skills are developed through officiating experience while working the other officiating systems recognized by USA Hockey. They include skating skills – with an emphasis on backward skating and agility, communication, the ability to work as a team and a high level of judgment in order to establish a consistent standard that benefits the game.

It is important that the two referees COMPLIMENT each other when it comes to field of vision and then TRUST each other to make the right call, regardless as to location on the ice. The system is no place for a referee with an “ego” that is not willing to work together as a TEAM for what is in the best interest of the game.

The material presented in this manual provides you with the resources necessary to go out and successfully work in the four-official system. The positioning and procedure guidelines outlined are based on years of experience in operating this system at the NHL and IIHF levels of play and have been tested over time.

USA Hockey hopes you find this information to be valuable in performing your duties as an official in the four-official system and thanks you for your continued commitment to the game of hockey.

