

2005 USCA Officials Bulletin

November 1, 2004

Each year, the USCA Championships Committee reviews and discussed various rules and procedures. Many of the discussions are the result of officials experience at events the prior year. This "Bulletin" will serve as the official notification to all US officials of rules changes or interpretations.

Chief Umpire Designation

This year please focus on the proper terminology of our officials. The "Chief Umpire" term should be used in place of "Head Official".

Ranking Procedures

At each championship event, the Chief Umpire is responsible for ranking the teams after round robin play. In the past, the USCA ranked teams by record, then head-to head results, then shootout score. This year, the Chief Umpire will **not use head-to-head competition in the ranking process**. The new process is simply record then shootout score.

Choice Team

Last year, during the draw making process, the Drawmaster assigns hammer and rock color to the teams. This year the Drawmaster will assign a "Choice" to the teams instead of hammer. Choice team can choose hammer or choice of rocks. Teams will be required to notify the Chief Umpire no later than 45 minutes prior to the start of any game. Failure to notify the Chief Umpire on time could result in the team ready to play having the choice.

USCA Format Formula

During the playdown process for the Olympic/World Team Trials, the formats will vary depending on the number of teams competing. The USCA will use the following formula and will encourage states and regions to do the same for all events.

2-4 teams	Straight, Double Round Robin
5-7 teams	Round Robin with a double knockout provision
8-24 teams	Divisional Round Robin
25-32 teams	Triple Knockout

Use of On-Ice Observers

The role of the On-Ice Observer is being phased out at the USCA. As a result, Level I officials will be known as Game Timers. During round robin play at the championships, there will be an On-Ice Supervisor for every two sheets and the vice skips will post scores. During the semis and finals, and On-Ice Supervisor will be used for each game and they will post scores. The On-ice Observer may still be used by the WCF at World play.

Official Game Record

This year, the Game Timers will also keep the Official Game Record (OGR). One form will be used to record all aspects of the game.

Officials Surveys

The Chief Umpires and the athletes at all championships will review officials. Surveys completed by athletes will be collected by the site chairs and sent to the championships committee.

Certification Currency

Certification criteria for all officiating levels will remain the same. There will be a new policy of certification currency. At each level, to maintain certification, officials must work in the capacity of their certification once every three years AND have satisfactory reviews from athletes and Chief Umpires. Failure to officiate every three years will result in a non-current status. Failure to receive satisfactory reviews will result in a Championships Committee review of the situation and may result in loss of certification. On the other hand, positive reviews may be grounds for promotion.

Time-Out Interpretation

The time out rule language has not changed. It is still part of every championship game. Interpreting the WCF rule was difficult last year resulting in several different processes through the world championships

Only the teams may call a time-out. The one-minute time out will begin when the coach reaches his/her team. The opposing coach will not be able to consult with his/her team without being charged a timeout. On-Ice Supervisors are encouraged to intervene as little as possible during this process. Do not inform the teams of how much time remains. This is the responsibility of the coach. When the one-minute clock stops, resume the team's game clock.

Sweeping Rule Interpretation

The sweeping rule, with the USCA interpretation is pretty clear. The sweeper must cover the running surface with clear and visible head movement, which is roughly perpendicular. Officials must decide if the sweeping violation is an attempt to manipulate the rock or if it simply poor sweeping mechanics. Officials should intervene only if the players are in violation AND attempting to manipulate the rock. Do not intervene because of poor sweeping mechanics alone.

Angle Brushes

Angle brushes, when used properly, usually cover the running surface when the brush is on the ice. Angle brush sweeping usually only requires head movement which is roughly perpendicular.

Points of Intervention

We would like all officials to intervene less. The athletes are expected to play the game without the need for official intervention other than questions, measures and timing. As a general rule, officials should intervene in a game using the following scenarios.

- An athlete asks them to intervene
- Athlete misconduct
- Hog line violations
- Measures
- Blatant rules infractions

Small-talk between games is permissible. During games, the officials are encouraged to not communicate with the athletes outside of the intervention points.

If the team's need to be contacted, officials should contact the skips or coaches before or after the games. More serious issues may be discussed at the fifth end break. Very serious issues such as hog line violations, misconduct, etc. can be discussed during the game.