

2006 USCA Officials Bulletin #1

December 22, 2005

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.

Officiating Manual

The new officiating manual is now available on the USCA web site. It is in PDF form so you can print it directly from the web. EVERY registered official should have a copy of this manual in their event kit (see manual for more info on event kits). Officiating forms are in an Excel file that you can download.

Officiating Philosophy

Over the last two years, the USCA officiating philosophy has changed. We've shifted to a philosophy where the athletes take more responsibility for completing a game properly. This year we will continue to focus on officials be used "as needed" during the championship. Let the athletes play but strictly enforce the rules when they are violated.

Timing Notifications

As Timing and On-Ice Supervisors, avoid "over notifying" the athletes during the games. First practice starts 30 minutes before the game and ends 40 minutes before. Second practice begins 20 minutes before and ends 10 minutes before. The athletes know these procedures. The athletes also know how much time they have between ends and during the fifth end break.

During time-outs, the Game Timer should stop the clock then start the one minute clock. When one minute has elapsed, the game clock is restarted. This can be done with no On-Ice Supervisor present.

During timed games with small clocks, playdowns, Qualifiers, etc. Official Game Record can easily be shown to the athletes during the game. Allow the athletes to view the running clocks if they ask. Post-It notes should not be used.

The Supervisors must still be present and aware of how the athletes police themselves. Time-out abuse is getting more common. Coaches delaying their exit onto the ice and then slowly walking to the team is very common. Coaches staying on the ice with the team after the one minute is also a problem. If these happen, the On-Ice Supervisor must intervene

Sensor Handles

The Championships Committee is proud to announce the acquisition of five sheets of sensor handles. They were purchased using funds from the "field of play" contribution of

every entry fee. The sensor handles will be used at the Junior Nationals in Duluth, the World Team Trials in Bemidji, the National Championships in Superior and the Mixed Nationals in Fairbanks. This eliminates the need for hog line judges at these events. It is very clear when the hog line has been violated and the sweepers simply remove the rock from play. The Officiating Manual describes the procedure as well as the Chief Umpires responsibilities regarding the handles.

Hog Line Rules for Other Events

Any USCA event held without sensor handles will use last year's hog line interpretation used at the Trials in Madison. A player must have "clearly violated" the hog line to have the rock pulled. This is different than the WCF rules that states the rock must be "clearly released". This interpretation is better for officials and athletes.

Ranking Procedures

At each championship event, the Chief Umpire is responsible for ranking the teams after round robin play. Last year, we did not use head-to-head. This year the head-to-head results are again part of the ranking process. The USCA ranks teams by Record, then Head-to-Head results. If the tie still can't be broken, the shootout score will be used. **DO NOT USE** sub-record (records of the tied teams within themselves). The tie-breaking chart in the Rules and Procedures book should always be used.

Choice Team

The USCA Drawmaster will randomly assign a "Choice" to the teams. Choice team can choose hammer or rocks. Teams will be required to notify the Chief Umpire no later than 45 minutes prior to the start of any game. Failure of the choice team to notify the Chief Umpire before the start of first practice (30 minutes prior) will result in the team ready to play having the choice or rocks but not hammer (non-hammer team will be ready for practice 30 minutes prior and can choose rocks if the choice team has not chosen).

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. Surveys can be found in the USCA Officiating Manual.

New Lineup Cards

A new team lineup card is part of the event forms package (USCA web site). The new form allows for several changes to the lineup on one piece of paper. The Chief Umpire should keep the cards in a binder. The teams will update the form as necessary throughout the vent.

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 during the following situations.

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

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.