

FUNDAMENTALS OF SKATING

Importance of Skating Well

Skating is the building block to successful officiating, just as it is with players. An official who skates efficiently with excellent balance will be able to get into position and his/her credibility will be enhanced when up with the play. This ability to be in position and skate smoothly will also contribute to the official's ability to see the play (field of vision), which in turn enhances judgment. An official who skates poorly will find officiating extremely difficult as the concentration shifts from watching the play and reacting to standing up and getting out of the way. Excellent skating skills are a must in order for an official to advance to the highest levels of hockey.

Referee Skating Versus Player Skating

One of the most important things a new official needs to recognize is that officials need to skate differently than players. Their objectives are different; therefore, a different style is needed to meet those objectives. Officials are always turning and stopping facing the play while players will turn and stop in either direction as is necessary. While a player may skate with his/her head down at times to watch the puck, the official must always have his/her head up in order to maintain full field of vision.

Officials stay close to the boards in tight skating lanes to stay out of the way of the play, utilizing tight control turns and minimizing stops and starts to conserve energy.

A player needs to keep both hands on the stick which forces his/her arm swing into a side to side motion. Meanwhile, an official utilizes a more efficient arm swing by motioning his/her arms in a front-to-back manner. These are just some of the differences in skating styles between players and officials.

Balance

An efficient skater will always be in good balance. The player who is difficult to knock off of his/her feet always maintains excellent balance. An official must also be in proper balance at all times in order to stay out of the way of the play, avoid injury and have the best possible field of vision.

The most important element of balance is knee bend. Proper knee bend will allow the hips and ball of the foot to be in alignment and will provide the best balance. As always, the head must be up and the official will be on the inside edge of each skate.

Key Elements

- knee bend
- shoulder-hips-ball of the foot are in alignment
- knees are out over the toes of the skates
- head up
- weight on inside edges
- arms relaxed

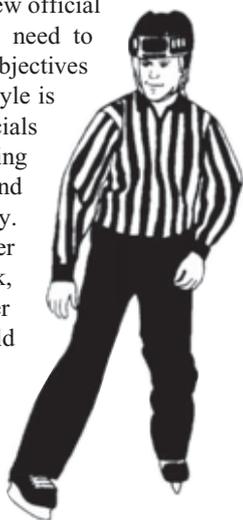
Common Errors

- legs are straight (knees locked)
- feet too close together or too far apart
- head down
- bend at the waist
- use of outside edges



Ready Position

The ready position is the most basic and important of all stances. The ready position allows the official to assume a stable stance and, therefore, enables him/her to move in any direction. There are two types of stances that are used by officials during stoppages of play. In either stance, the key elements remain the same. During play, the official will always stand upright with the body angled toward the play.



Key Elements

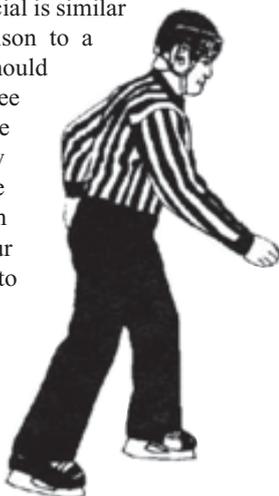
- skates are shoulder width apart
- weight is on inside edges of skates
- knee bend
- back is straight and the head (chest) is up
- shoulders are level and in alignment with the hips and ball of foot
- knees are out over the toes of the skates

Common Errors

- skates are greater than shoulder width apart (limits ability to move quickly)
- bend at the waist instead of the knees
- skates too close together (limits mobility and stability)
- head is down
- body is flat, backed against the boards

Arm Swing

The correct arm swing for an official is similar to that of a runner. In comparison to a player, an official's arm swing should be more front to back (45 degree angle) rather than side to side. The arms should be relaxed and follow a natural motion. A side-to-side motion affects your momentum as your arm movement and your shoulders contradict your desire to go forward or backward.



Key Elements

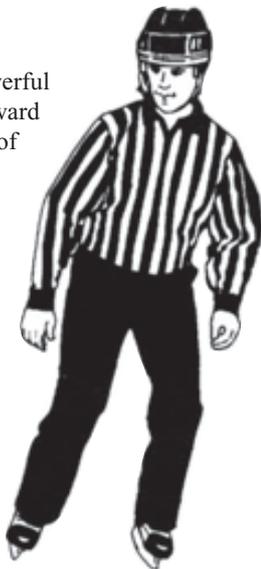
- front-to-back motion (45-degree angle in front of your body)
- arms relaxed and in a natural position

Common Errors

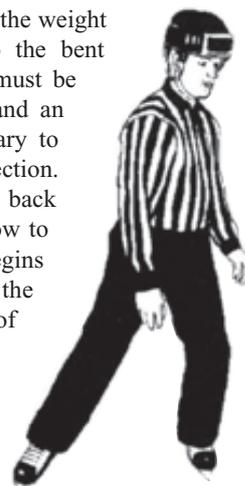
- stick-carrying posture
- side-to-side arm swing
- arms bent at elbow while stopped (dog paw)
- clenched fists
- arms are tense or rigid

Forward Stride

An official must use a long and powerful forward skating stride. The forward stride starts with a thrust off of the inside edge of the skate. The pressure (weight) starts on the heel and extends through the blade to the toe while using full extension of the leg. A powerful stride will thrust down through the ice and at full extension will snap out with the toe while straightening the leg and locking the knee. At full extension, the back is in a straight line with the extended leg.



While the one leg is thrusting out, the weight must be gradually transferred to the bent glide leg. The skate on this leg must be pointed in the desired direction and an exaggerated knee bend is necessary to maintain proper balance and direction. The thrusting leg is then brought back to full recovery (keeping skates low to the ice) while the opposite leg begins to thrust. During this process, the upper body stays disciplined as all of the skating is done from the hips down. When the forward stride is executed correctly, the official should feel the pressure in the thigh.



Key Elements

- knee bend on the glide leg (over the toe of the glide skate)
- full extension of the thrust leg (knee locked)
- upper body discipline (straight alignment of the trunk and thrust leg at full extension)
- thrust and glide legs alternate
- glide skate points in the desired direction
- full recovery of the thrust leg
- head is up and shoulders are level
- transfer of weight from the thrust leg to the glide leg

Common Errors

- failing to place weight on the glide leg
- not bending the knees
- thrusting backward off the toe instead of outward toward the side (walking)
- high kick to start the recovery phase
- straighten the glide leg after each stride (bobbing up and down)
- not extending the thrusting leg fully and snapping with the toe
- not returning thrusting leg to full recovery (railroading)