

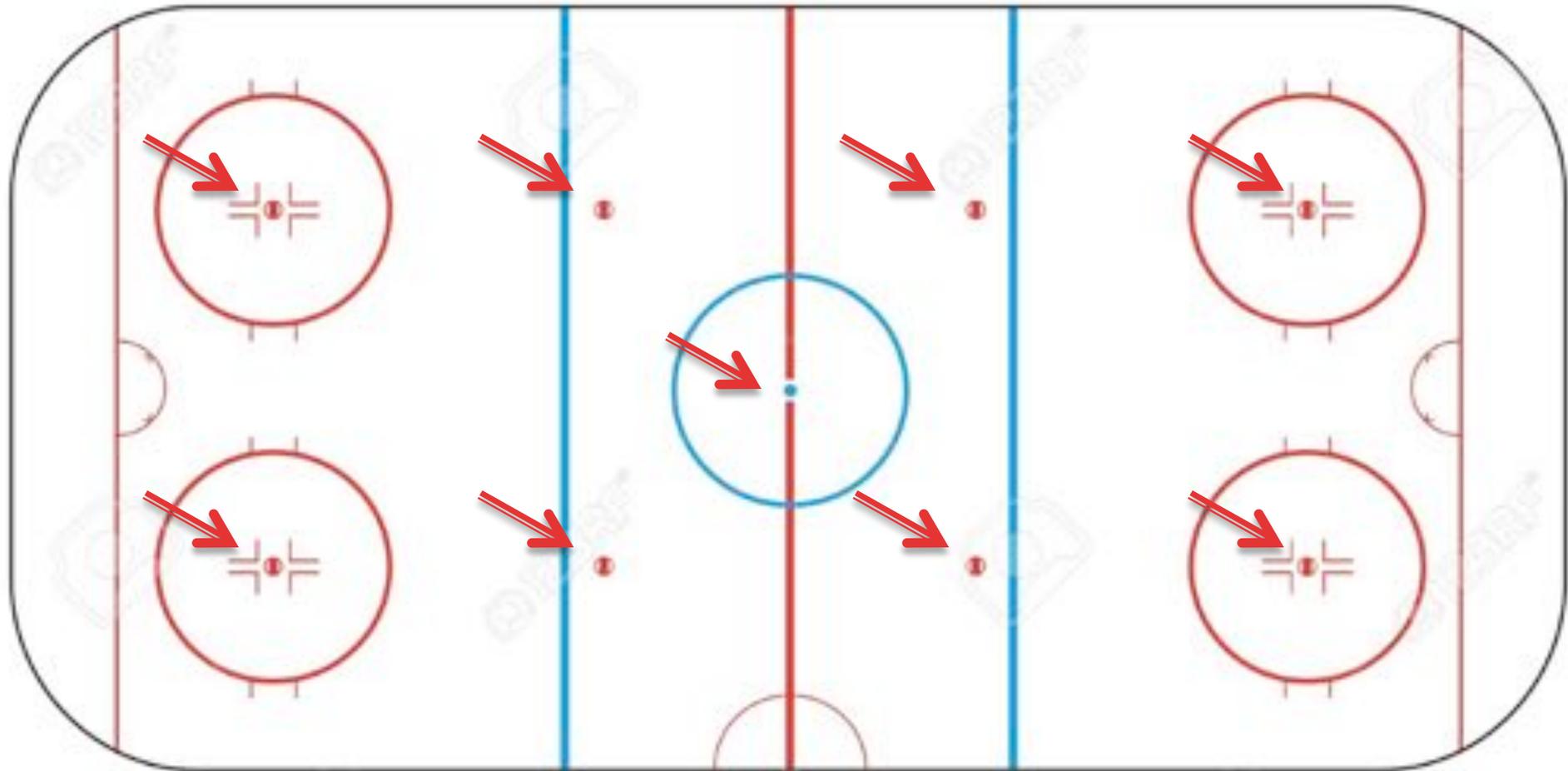


# Conducting Face-Offs

Level 1 Officiating Seminar,  
14 April, 2018, Paradise Avondale



# Face-off Locations





# Face-off Locations

## Center ice:

- ✓ Start of the game, of a period
- ✓ After a goal is scored
- ✓ Referee mistake on an icing
- ✓ When the rules says: "To the closest spot..."

## Neutral Zone:

- ✓ Off-sides
- ✓ Puck shot out of ice area from neutral zone
- ✓ Puck shot directly out of ice area by attacking team in attacking zone
- ✓ When the rules says: "To the closest spot..."

## End Zone:

- ✓ Goaltender freezes puck
- ✓ Puck deflected out of ice area by defending team
- ✓ Penalty assessed; face-off in offending team's end zone
- ✓ When the rules says: "To the closest spot..."

# The Procedure:



- ▶ **Stance:**
  - Square to the players, 30 cm from dot
  - Feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent
  - Puck held in non-whistle hand
  - Head up and looking forward
- ▶ **Holding the Puck:**
  - Thumb on top, forefinger along the side
  - Just below belt height level, puck-hand extended out from the body so that centers can see puck
- ▶ **Dropping the Puck:**
  1. Downward motion, keeping puck flat
  2. Bend knees as you push puck downward
  3. Puck must land flat and remain stationary
  4. Puck must land on center of face-off spot
  5. Do not flick wrist prior to puck drop
  6. Push the puck to the ice partners

✓ Face-off must be fair!





# Moving into Position After Face-Off

1. Drop puck
2. Pause to view play
3. Look behind you
4. Back to side boards (Not too fast! You want players to see you.)
5. Keep play in front of you
6. Proceed to position facing play
7. Hustle only when clear to move



# Players' Positions

- ▶ **Centers:**
  - Stick stationary on white half moon of face-off spot
  - Shoulders square with end boards
- ▶ **Other Players:**
  - Same side of circle as center
  - Outside of circle and skates on their side of hash marks
- ▶ **Which official is responsible for which players?**
  - Official conducting face-off
    - Centers and players in front of him
  - Partner
    - Players behind the official conducting the face-off



# Getting Players into Position

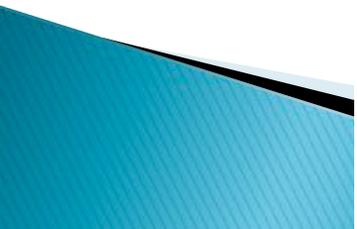
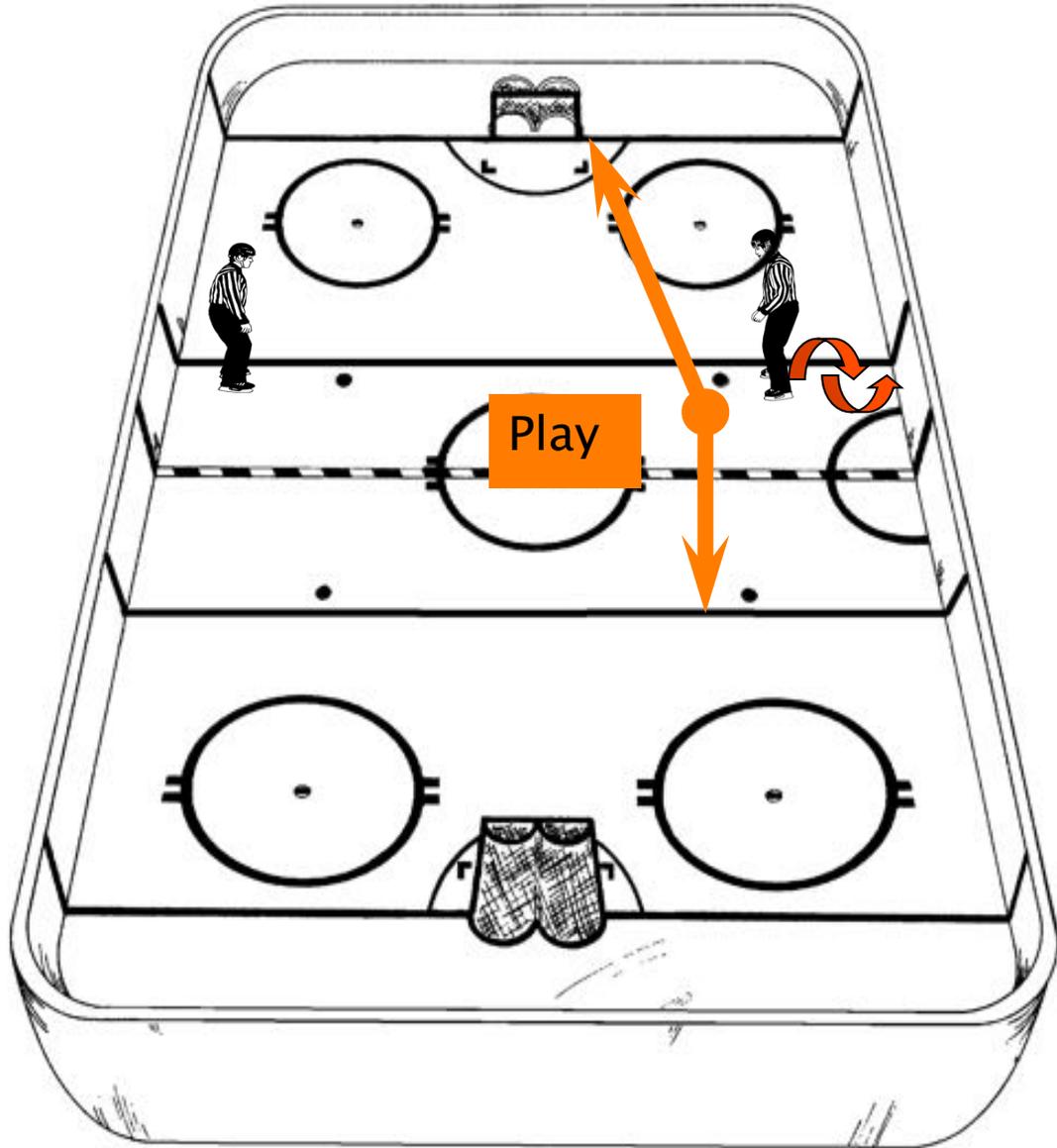
## Procedure:

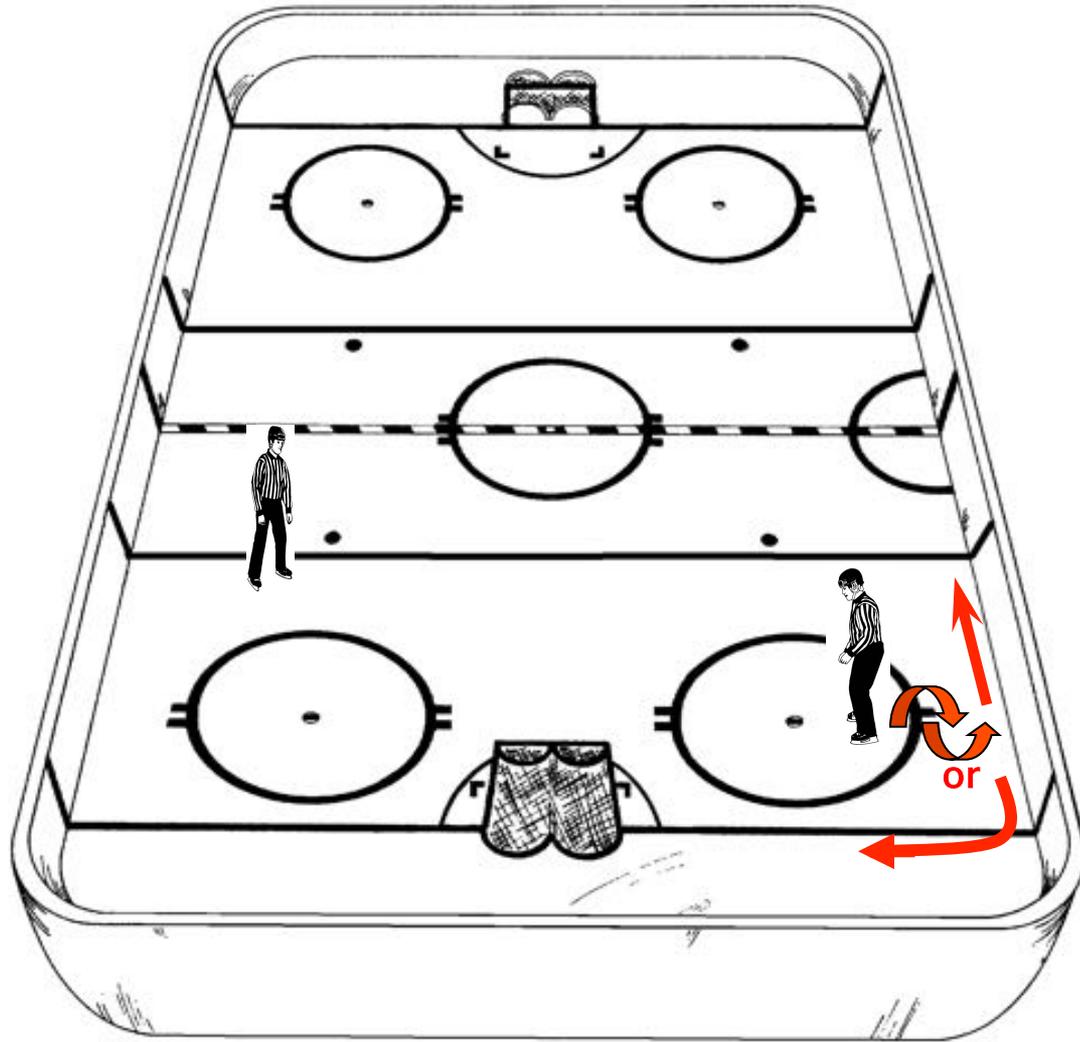
- Officials must be in position before players
- Whistle initiating 5-second window
- Players take their positions, defending team in defending half of the ice stick down first
- Communication: talk to players, direct them into position
  - Specific directions: “Put your stick on the ice.”
  - Begin talking *before* players get into face-off circle



# Center Ice Face-Offs

- ▶ Start of the period:
  - Referee dropping the puck:
    - Face score bench
    - Signal goal judges (or goalkeepers!)
    - Signal time keeper
  - Partner: at the score-bench side, opposite partner
- ▶ Following a goal: same as above but no signal to time keep or goal judges







# Conducting Face-Offs

- ▶ Why are face-offs important for a referee?
  - Properly-conducted face-offs set standard for game-control
  - Efficiently-conducted face-offs keep the game moving
  - Builds players' confidence in the referee
  - A chance for referee to communicate with players
- ▶ At higher levels, higher stakes for face-off wins
  - Important that referee conducts fair face-offs!

Communicate with your partners



# Handing the Puck to your Partner

## Hand shake technique:

1. Place the puck flat in palm of partner
  - *Make sure your partner receives the puck!*
2. Receiving official closes hand firmly on puck
3. Professional look when clean and crisp
  - Everyone is watching you during this time!

# CONDUCTING FACE-OFFS

One of the most routine but important duties of an official is conducting face-offs. Since this duty occurs frequently, an official can benefit by conducting the face-off properly and consistently, which establishes a standard for game control. A good face-off helps keep the game moving and helps control players' emotions. If officials use good, strict standards from the beginning of the game and enforce them throughout, then face-offs conducted at crucial times in the game are more likely to be performed fairly. Poorly conducted face-offs convey a lack of confidence by an official and can give an unfair advantage to one of the teams involved.

There are a variety of skills an official should master so that each player has a fair and equal chance to win the face-off. The first skill involves body mechanics.

## Stance

Start the stance with a solid foundation. Skates should be approximately shoulder width apart, shins parallel and knees slightly bent, putting the official in a "ready" position. The back and spine are kept straight which allows the official to direct the players into position. The puck is held in the non-whistle hand, and the forearm rests on the hip with the puck held close to the body and just below the waist. The other arm hangs comfortably at the side of the body. This stance positions the official to be "ready" to move quickly and efficiently in any direction.

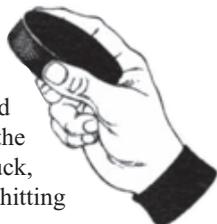


## Holding The Puck

USA Hockey has two acceptable methods of holding the puck. In the first method the thumb is placed on top, the forefinger along the side of the puck, with the other fingers underneath. The weight of the puck rests on the side of the middle finger.

In the second method the thumb and index finger are wrapped on the side of the puck. The remaining three finger tips rest on the bottom.

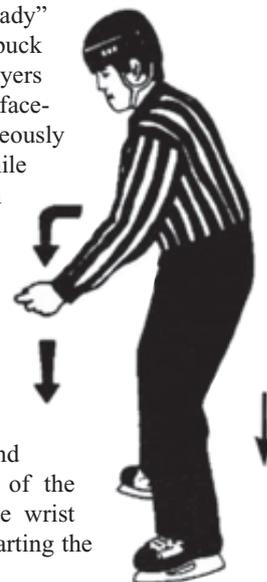
The official should experiment with both methods to find the one that is most comfortable and provides maximum control. With either method it is important that both players at the face-off have an equal view of the puck, and that the puck lands flat when hitting the ice.



## Dropping The Puck (Execution)

The official should be in the "ready" position before the players. The puck is dropped at the instant both players are in the proper position for a fair face-off. To drop the puck, simultaneously bring the arm out and down while bending the knees. When the arm becomes fully extended, the puck is released.

Bending the knees during the arm extension enables the official to get closer to the face-off spot before releasing the puck. After the release, the object is to get the puck to land flat and remain stationary in the center of the face-off spot. Avoid cocking the wrist or bringing the hand up before starting the out-and-down motion.



At the end of the arm extension, some force should be used during the release instead of letting gravity take over. Use just enough momentum to get the puck to the ice quickly. Otherwise, a "lazy" release may result in the puck hitting a player's stick on the way down, resulting in a false or unfair face-off.

Two mechanics to avoid are throwing the puck down and bending at the waist. Aside from creating an appearance of a lazy, unprofessional official, throwing the puck may result in a bouncing puck, or a puck that shoots through and out of the face-off spot. Bending at the waist puts an official in a position of being off-balance or in line to be hit by an errant stick.

The stance and execution of dropping the puck are used at every face-off, including those held at center ice.

## Players' Positions (Centers, Wings)

At the conclusion of the player changes, the linesman conducting the face-off will blow his/her whistle. This signals to both teams that they have five seconds to properly line up for the face-off prior to the puck being dropped. During this time, the official should check to see if each team has the correct number of players on the ice, and make sure his/her partner is in the proper position to begin play. Attention is now turned to fine tuning the player's positioning within the five seconds.

## Centers

Each center must place the blade of his/her stick on the ice and in contact with the white part of the face-off spot. If

neither puts his/her stick down first, direct the “attacking” player to get his/her stick down. Centers should be “squared-off,” meaning their shoulders should be square with the end boards of their opponent’s defending goal and their skates should be clear of the face-off “L’s”. For face-offs that occur where no spot exists, the centers’ stick blades should be one stick blade length apart from each other to provide an area in which to drop the puck.



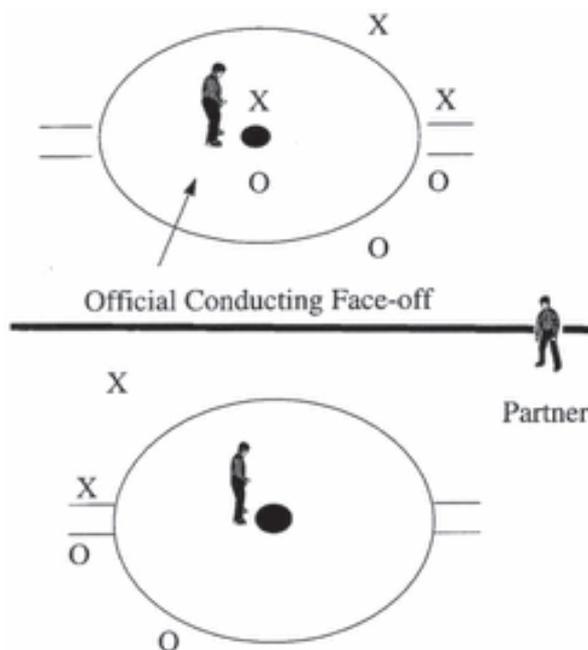
### Wings

Other players may not be within the fifteen-foot radius face-off circle and must be on the same side of the circle as their team center. The two lines located at the side of the circle, referred to as the “hash marks,” are used to keep a distance of four feet between opposing players. All skates and sticks must be kept outside the circle and behind the lines.



When face-offs take place where the markings do not exist, the official must make sure the players line up in a position similar to that described above. All guidelines concerning players’ positions during a face-off apply to any face-off, regardless of the location.

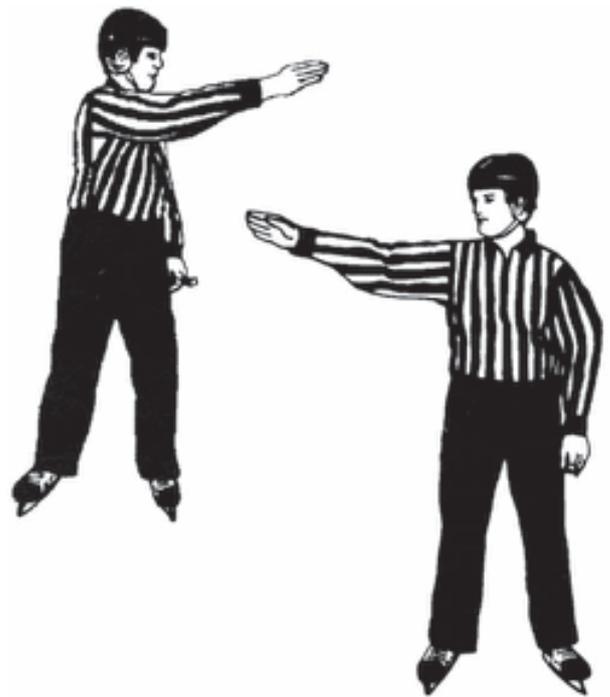
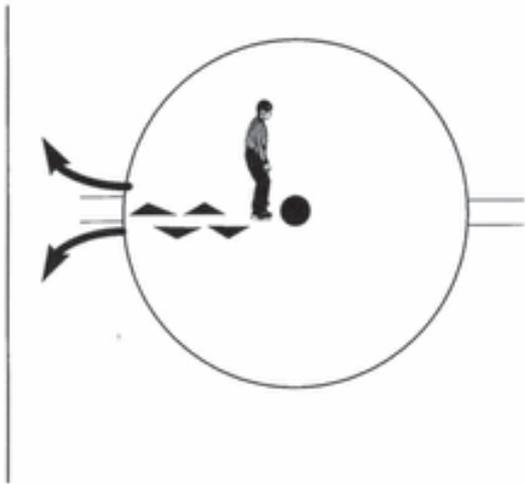
Each official has a responsibility for different players when they line up for a face-off. The official conducting the face-off is responsible for the centers and all other players in front of him/her. His/her partner watches the players behind the official handling the face-off. Any player not properly positioned must be corrected before the face-off takes place.



Provided all players are properly lined up prior to the conclusion of the five seconds, the puck should be dropped and play continued. If not completed within five seconds, the official may drop the puck to start play, but only if it is obvious one team is delaying the face-off while all players are properly on-sides.

### Moving Into Position After The Face-Off

Once the official drops the puck, he/she should pause to view the play. When the area is clear he/she will back up to the side boards and out of the flow of the play. In returning to his/her normal position he/she should avoid interfering with the puck and the players. Although the direction in which the puck moves will dictate his/her actions, the official will try to back up to the boards as soon as possible, keeping play in front of him/her. At no time should he/she turn his/her back to the play while moving away from the face-off. When he/she reaches the side boards, the official should proceed to the position that is appropriate for the system being used (two- or three-official system).



### Center Ice Face-Off Technique

There are a variety of occasions when face-offs take place at center ice:

- the beginning of each period
- after every goal
- when the center ice spot is determined to be the closest face-off location without providing a territorial advantage
- premature goalkeeper substitution

At the beginning of the period, the official should stand facing the game timekeeper. In a three-official system, all other center-ice face-offs will take place with the referee facing the benches. When the two-official system is used, the official conducting the face-off at center ice will always face the game timekeeper. His/her partner will line up directly opposite him/her where the center ice red line meets the sideboards.

When conducting a face-off to start a period, the official's primary responsibility is to make sure that the game timekeeper and both goal judges are ready to begin. This is done by raising the non-whistle hand while facing each of the respective goal judges. They will acknowledge the fact that they are ready by turning on the light. In many USA Hockey games, however, there will not be any goal judges, but the official must still give the signal to each of the goalkeepers to insure their readiness. When the goal judges or goalkeepers are ready to begin, the official signals the game timekeeper in the same manner. Once all game officials and players are ready, the official conducts the opening face-off with the same stance and execution as previously described.

