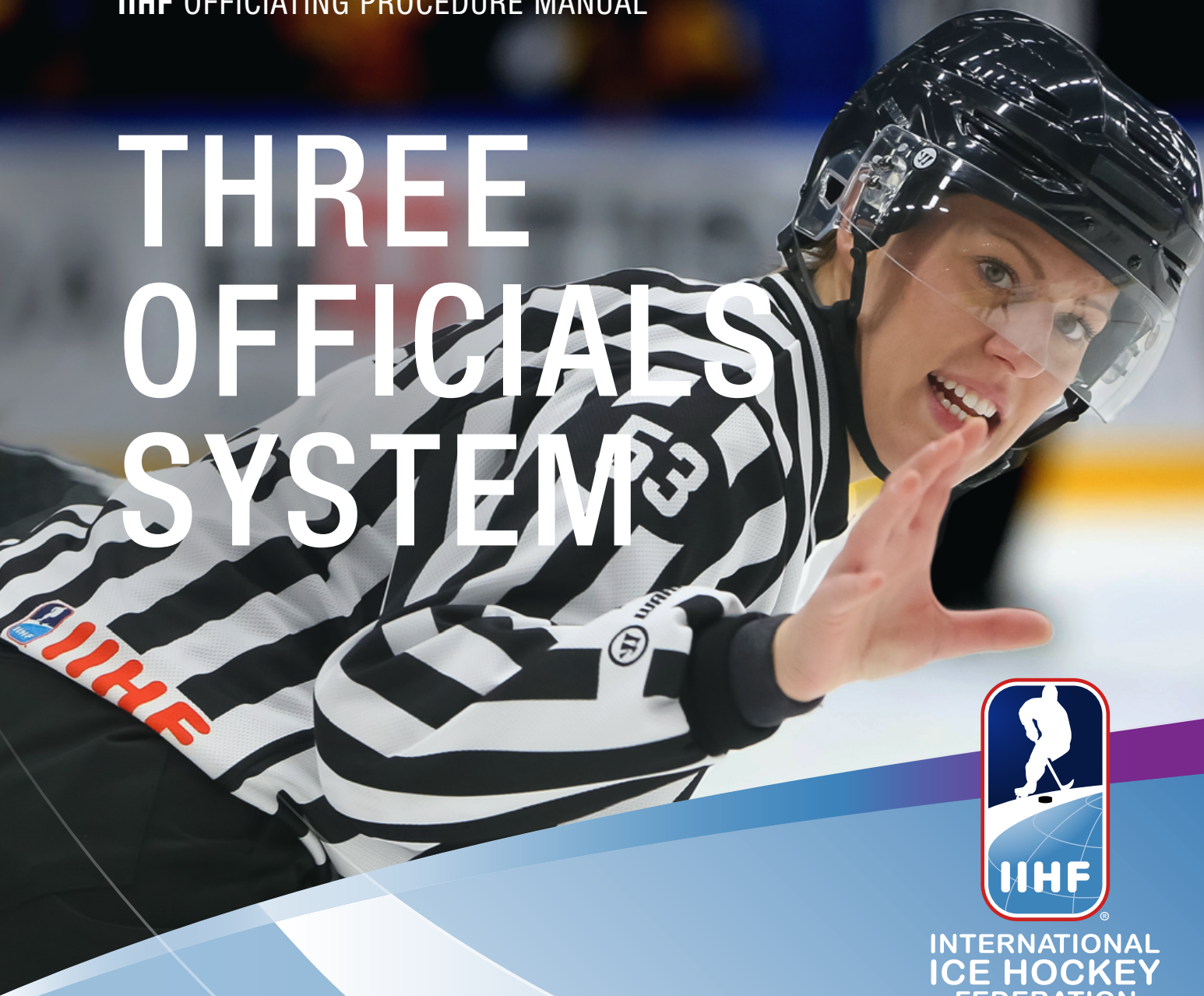


THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM



INTERNATIONAL
ICE HOCKEY
FEDERATION

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

PREFACE

Welcome to the updated and new version of the procedure manual for the Three-Officials System, the toolbox and guidelines for you as a game official or an officiating coach to be able to better understand the best and most efficient way of working as a referee or a linesperson.

As the world governing body for ice hockey, seeks to unify the key elements in the games so that it is as similar as possible regardless on what level or where in the world a game is played. To have a common procedure and working patterns for game officials is one of these key steps to make sure that the national program and as well as any international tournament is officiated in the best possible way.

The IIHF hopes that you as a reader of this document will be able to understand and work as a game official within the Three officials system:

- Receive a basic knowledge about officiating in the Three-Officials System.
- Clarify the various areas of responsibility and tasks in the Three-Officials System.
- Unify the working pattern within the IIHF officiating family.

Please note that this document is a living document, we continually work for perfecting and developing our procedures and the role of the game officials, therefore it is important you always assure that you have the latest version of the OPM downloaded from the IIHF webpage.

We wish you great success in your reading and education around the Three-Official System and as well the implementation of the same in the coming games.

Danny Kurmann
Officiating Manager
International Ice Hockey Federation

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Officiating Development Manager
International Ice Hockey Federation

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

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THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. DEFINITION OF THE THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

Game Officials working in The Three Officials' System is to use one of the most traditional ways of officiating an ice hockey game. The Three Officials' System outlines many of the basic procedures in which other officiating systems are building their base on. A game official familiar and confident in this system will have good opportunities to be successful in any other officiating system. The Three Officials' System consists of three game officials in the game, divided into one referee and two linespersons. Teamwork is key for success, and knowing the procedures will help you get the job done.

1.2. REFEREE

For a referee, the most important thing in the 3-officials system is the cooperation between the two linespersons on the ice. In this system, the position of the referee is, at some points a lonely job with all the major responsibility on the single referee but with the support of the linespersons the hardest situations could be made easy. The referee must have the mobility required to obtain the perfect angle to view the situation that is happening and at the same time be able to cover as much of the ice as possible. It is easy to end up watching only the area of play and to be a game official that "chases the game", therefore high demands are set on the referee's feel for the game, their "Hockey IQ" and ability to read where potential situations will occur.

1.3. LINESPERSON

It is the utmost important priority that the Linesperson maintains good player control over the full ice surface during play and at the same time to cover their areas of responsibility. A good linesperson can also support the referee, both during play and in the stoppages. To achieve this, there is a high demand on the official's "Hockey IQ" to read and react to the game appropriately. The primary area of responsibility for the linesperson is to monitor the procedures and decisions around offsides and icings prior to supporting the referee.

1.4. TERMS

Referee = is the one referee in the game who has the main responsibility in calling penalty and goals.

Linesperson = is divided into linesperson number 1 (L1) and linesperson number 2 (L2). L1 is responsible for the offside and the decision on the "race" towards the puck during an active icing, as well as supporting the referee in the close area around the play/puck. L2 is responsible for monitoring the center line for possible icing calls supporting L1 with offside decisions, and supporting the referee with player control outside main area of play.

Disconnected = Game official is in a position where it does not have a good angle in on the main area of focus.

1.5. IMPLEMENTATION

The game of ice hockey is a team sport from start until end. It is important that all 3 officials on the ice take their individual responsibility and works the game in the best possible way. It is vital that the game officials utilize Hockey IQ to their fullest capacity, as well as their feel for the game in the best way when implementing this manual in combination with the official playing rules so that the game is served in the best possible way.

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

2 REFEREE

2.1. LINE CHANGE – PROCEDURE

The most important part for the referee when conducting the line change procedure is to be in a clear and open position, that enables a good contact and communication with both teams. When conducting the line change procedure, the basic position for the referee is dependent on where the following face-off will take place.

- **Face-off at centre ice:** Line change procedure is conducted at centre ice, positioned roughly one meter towards the players benches to maintain a good contact with the benches.
- **Face-off in the neutral zone:** The referee shall take a position on the opposite side of the face-off dot where the face-off is taking place and conduct the line change procedure in a position that is between the face-off dot in neutral zone and the face-off dot in the end zone. This position is close to the starting position that is used after that the line change procedure is completed.
- **Face-off in the end zone:** The referee shall take a position by the top of the circle on the opposite side from the end zone face of dot where the face-off is taking place. After the procedure is finished the referee shall use active skating to get back to the Base of Operations position for the face-off in the end zone.

Throughout the full line change procedure, the linespersons needs to pay full attention to ensure good player control and at the same time act with speed be in the correct positions for conducting the following face-off.

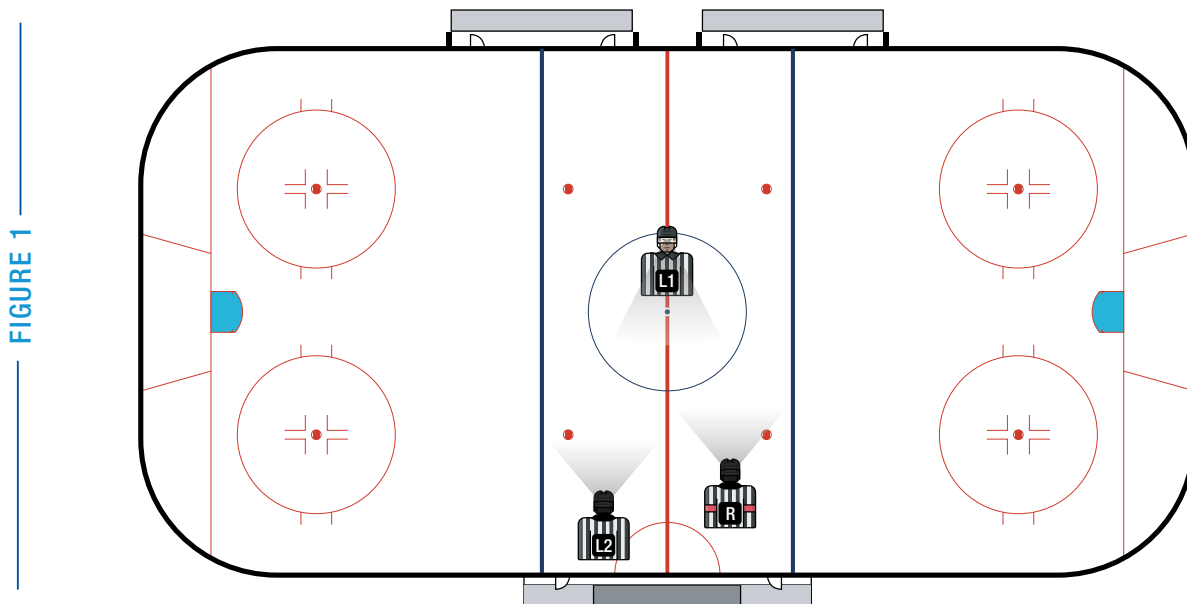
2.2. POSITION OF THE REFEREE FOR FACE-OFFS



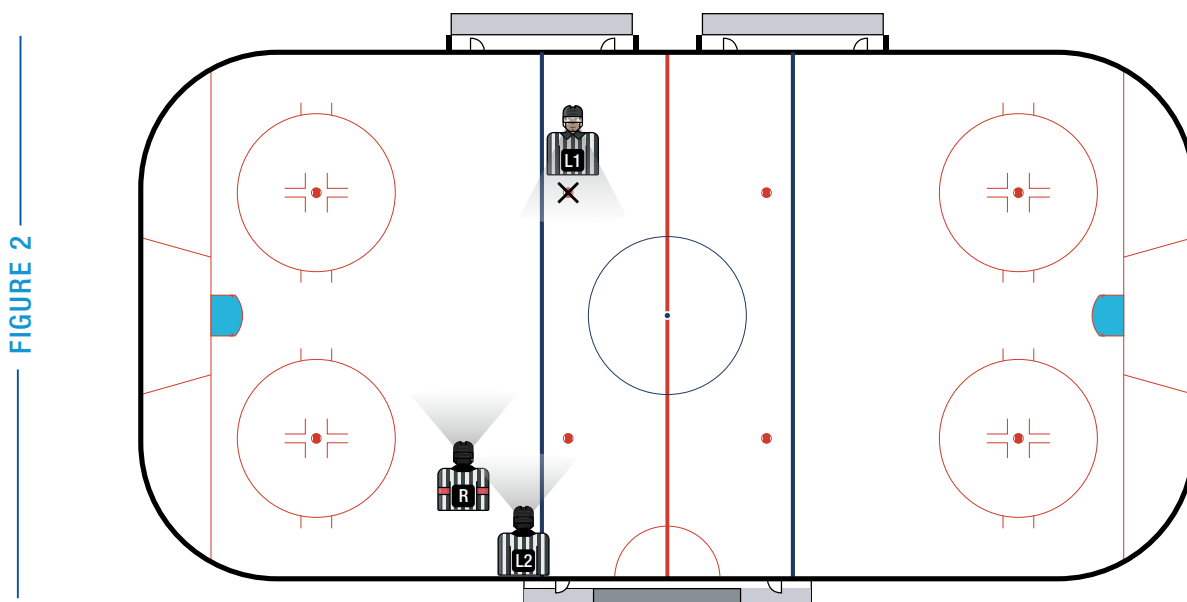
THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

For a face-off at the center ice face off spot in the neutral zone, the referee should be positioned on the side of the scorekeeper's bench about 3 metres from the boards, and 1.5 meters metres from either side of the red line to not block the view for linesperson. This provides the best sightline to the play and enables the referee to move in quickly in both directions while following the play up the ice (**Figure 1**).



For a face-off at any of the four spots in the neutral zone, the referee should be positioned on the opposite side of the ice, about 1.5 metres inside the blue line and 1.5 to 3 metres out from the boards. From this position, if the play goes directly into the end zone, the referee can follow it quickly, and implement “end zone positioning”. If, however, the play breaks out up the ice, the referee is far enough out from the boards to avoid collision with the linesperson (**Figure 2**).

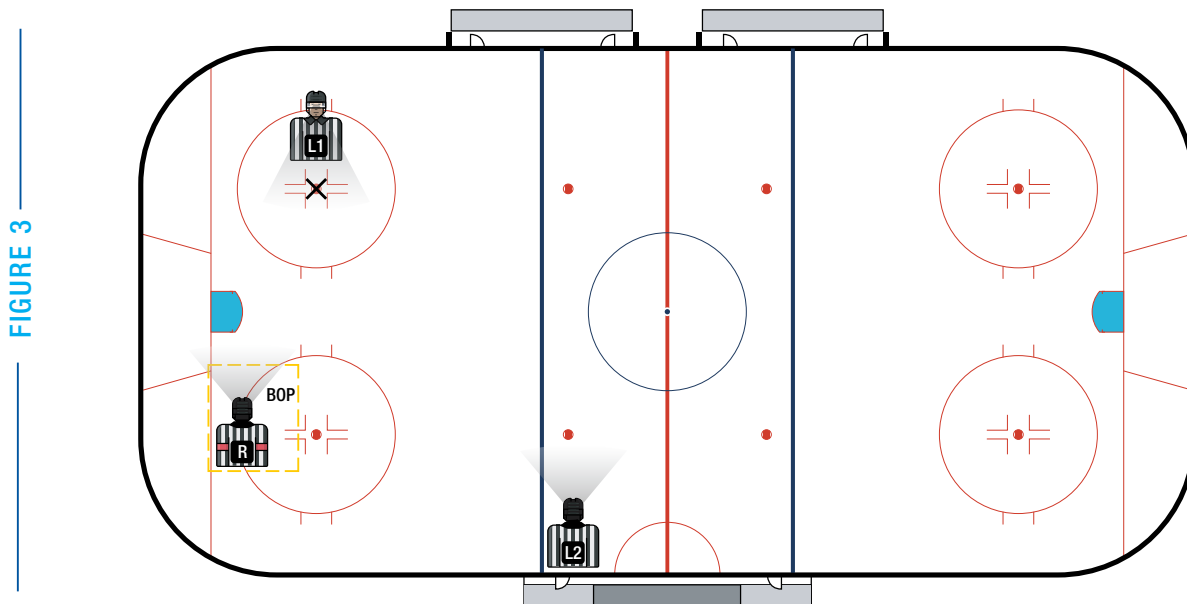


THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

When the face-off takes place at one of the end zone face-off spots, the referee should be at the “Base of Operations” position (BOP) (**Figure 3**). From this position the referee will be ready for a close play at the net and have an excellent view of the goal line. The referee will also not be in the way if a quick shot is taken at the net. The referee should avoid the area behind the goal line and the corners. If caught in these areas, the referee will lose mobility due to player congestion, will be screened by the net, and be too far behind the play should play break out of the zone quickly.

If the center and the team is warned for a first face-off violation, the referee does not move over to the same side as of the face-off. The referee should warn the offending team that a second violation will result in a penalty being assessed. The linesperson taking the face-off should give the referee time to issue the warning and return to their proper position again.



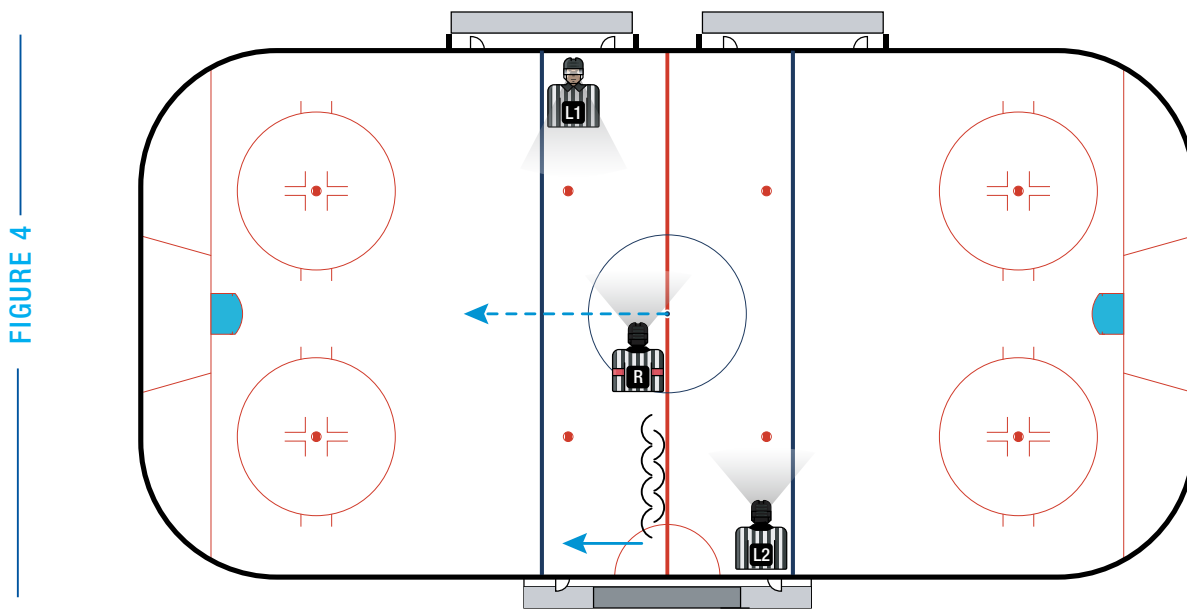
2.3. POSITIONING WHILE PLAY IS IN PROGRESS

The referee is responsible for calling penalties for infractions anywhere on the ice. The referee will not call offsides or icings as these are the responsibility of the linespersons however, if it is obvious that a call has been missed due to the linesperson being blocked or out of position, the referee may stop the play. This type of call would only be the odd exception.

After conducting the face-off at centre ice, it is imperative that the referee gets back towards the boards as quickly as possible, because while the referee is in the middle of the ice, part of the ice and some of the players are behind the referee’s back. Good positioning means keeping all of the players in front of you (**Figure 4**).

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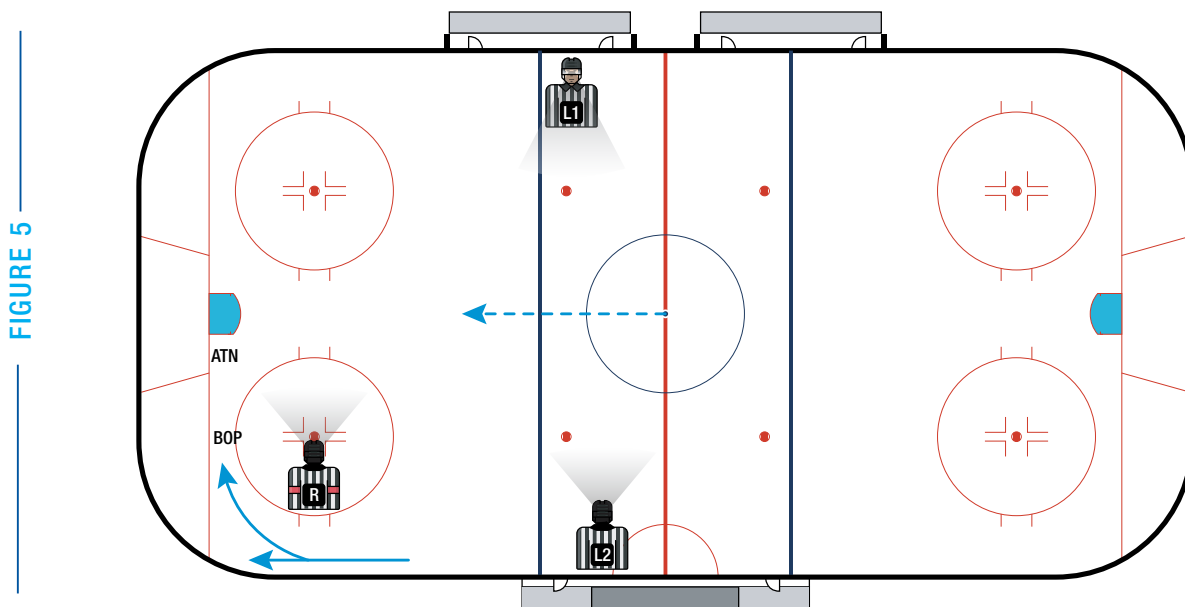
REFEREE



If the puck remains in the centre ice area and the puck is in front of the referee, the referee should skate backwards along the red line to the boards. Common sense dictates that the referee will not skate to the boards when the puck is behind them, therefore if the puck goes behind the referee, the referee should pivot and turn around then skate backwards along the red line to the boards in the opposite direction to the puck. If the puck goes into the end zone, the referee must follow the play and angle towards the end and side boards. If the play does go deep into the end zone, the referee should assume the “end zone positioning” as described earlier in this section (see in Figure 5), otherwise the referee should follow the play at the appropriate distance.

Note: Experienced referees are permitted to cross over behind the net to gain a better position at the net and to stay away from the play. This must be used in exception circumstances only and take place only when the play dictates and it is safe.

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM REFEREE



Good end zone positioning gives the referee in all different officiating systems a better overall view of the play, a better view of the goal and goal line and less risk of being caught behind the play on a fast break, thereby reducing unnecessary hard skating. The outlined areas described in this document are the fundamental areas of positioning and act as a deterrent to any unnecessary activity. Important points to note when play is in the end zone are to be at the net when needed as often as possible, stay out of the play and keep all of the players in your field of vision, and not to turn your back to the mid ice.

The three positions are:

- **Base of Operations (BOP)**

Base of Operations is the area located between the goal line and the face-off circle and between the At The Boards position and the nearest goal post. The objective of the referee is to be in the Base of Operations position as much as possible when the play is in the end zone.

- **At the Boards (ATB)**

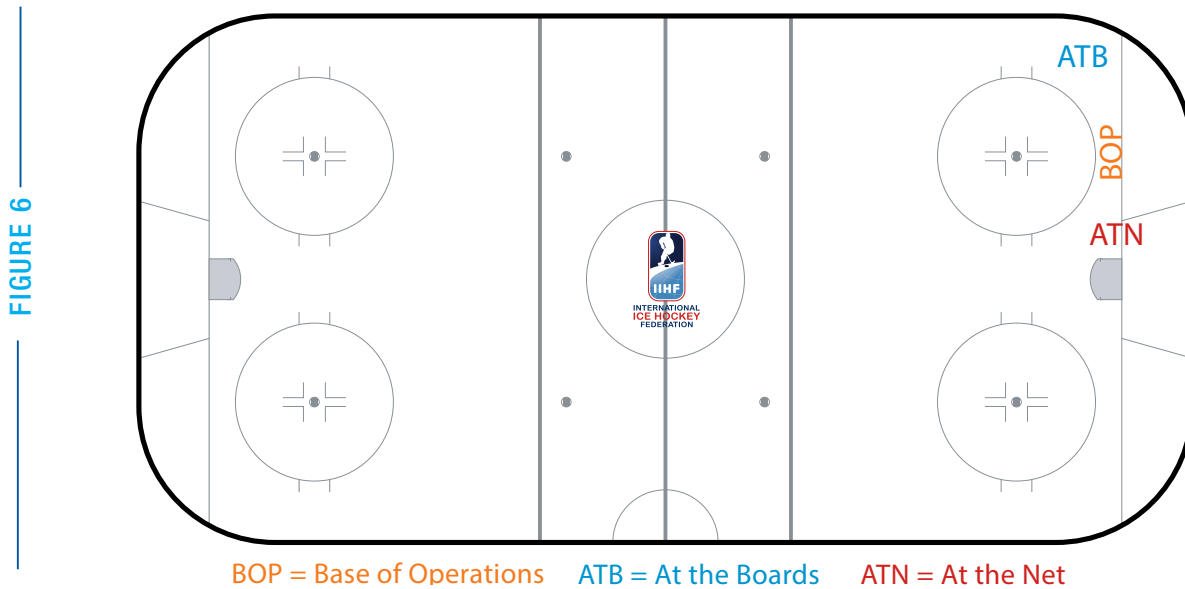
At the Boards is a position 15 to 20 centimetres from the boards, halfway between the goal line and the face-off circle hash marks.

- **At the Net (ATN)**

At the Net is the position anywhere around the net that gives the referee the best view to see if the puck has crossed the line, but ideally, at the corner of the net, 0.6 to 1 meter from the goal line. This gives the referee the best possible position to view the activity on and around the goal line and goal crease area (see in Figure 6).

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE



There are two important manoeuvres for the referee to utilize to maintain good positioning, these are:

- **The Bump**

The Bump is used when the play comes around the boards and in the direction of the referee standing at the At the Boards position. The referee will Bump away from the play (either up or down the boards) until he reaches either the hash marks or the goal line.

- **The Pivot**

The Pivot consists of taking a stride out away from the boards, crossing under and skating backwards to the At the Boards position after the play has passed behind the referee. At this point the referee can follow the play either up the ice or watch as it continues in the end zone.

Note: For experienced referees, the cross over move behind the net is allowed to gain better position at the net and to stay away from the play.

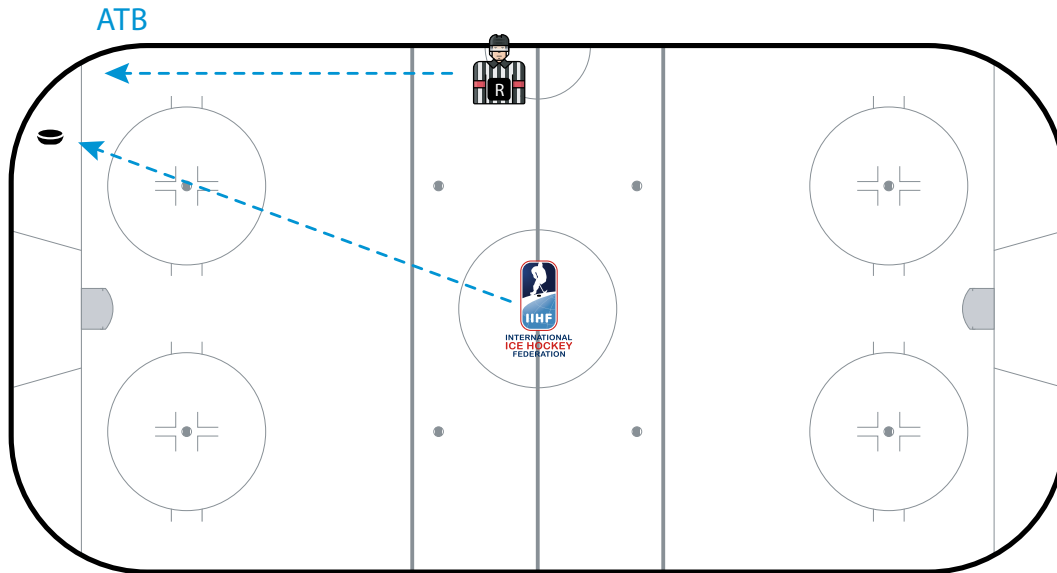
When play is in progress and enters the end zone on the referee's side of the ice, the referee will enter the zone along the boards towards the At the Boards position. If the puck remains on the same side of the ice, the referee will stay in or near the At the Boards position (**see in Figure 7**), until play dictates that a different position be adopted.

The referee skating up the ice should be in the blue area only. The red area should not be used by the officials, nor should they "cross over" from one side of the ice to the other side while play is in progress (**Figure 6**). Officials can move over at a stoppage of play, depending on the location of the face-off, and for a face-off at centre ice

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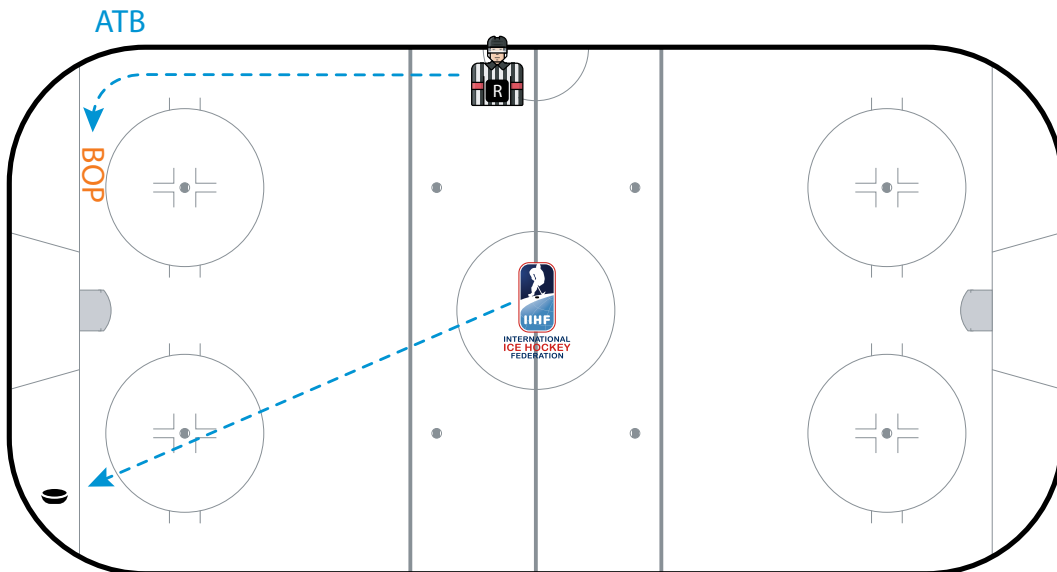
REFEREE

FIGURE 7



If the puck enters the zone on the opposite side of the referee, the referee will enter the zone along the boards and proceed from the At the Boards position to the Base of Operations position (Figure 7). If the net blocks the view of the puck in the far corner while in the Base of Operations position, it is advisable to take one step towards the face-off spot to improve the viewing angle. This can be done without entering into No Man's Land (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8



THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

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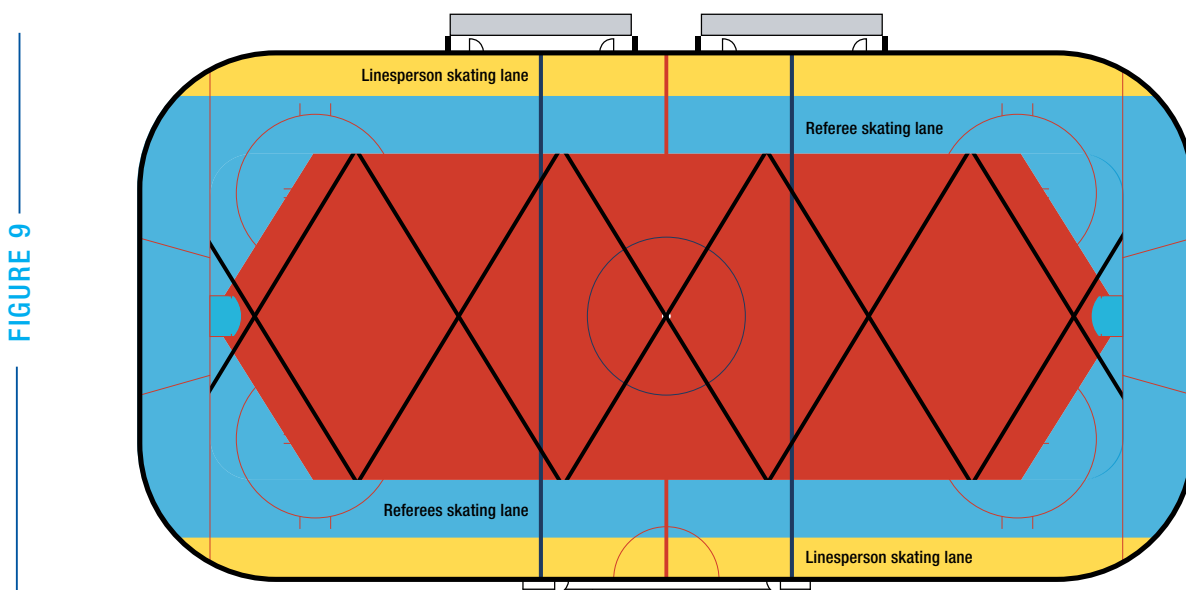
- **The Pivot**

The Pivot consists of taking a stride out away from the boards, crossing under and skating backwards to the At the Boards position after the play has passed behind the referee. At this point the referee can follow the play either up the ice or watch as it continues in the end zone.

Note: For experienced referees, the cross over move behind the net is allowed to gain better position at the net and to stay away from the play.

When play is in progress and enters the end zone on the referee's side of the ice, the referee will enter the zone along the boards towards the At the Boards position. If the puck remains on the same side of the ice, the referee will stay in or near the At the Boards position (Figure 7), until play dictates that a different position be adopted.

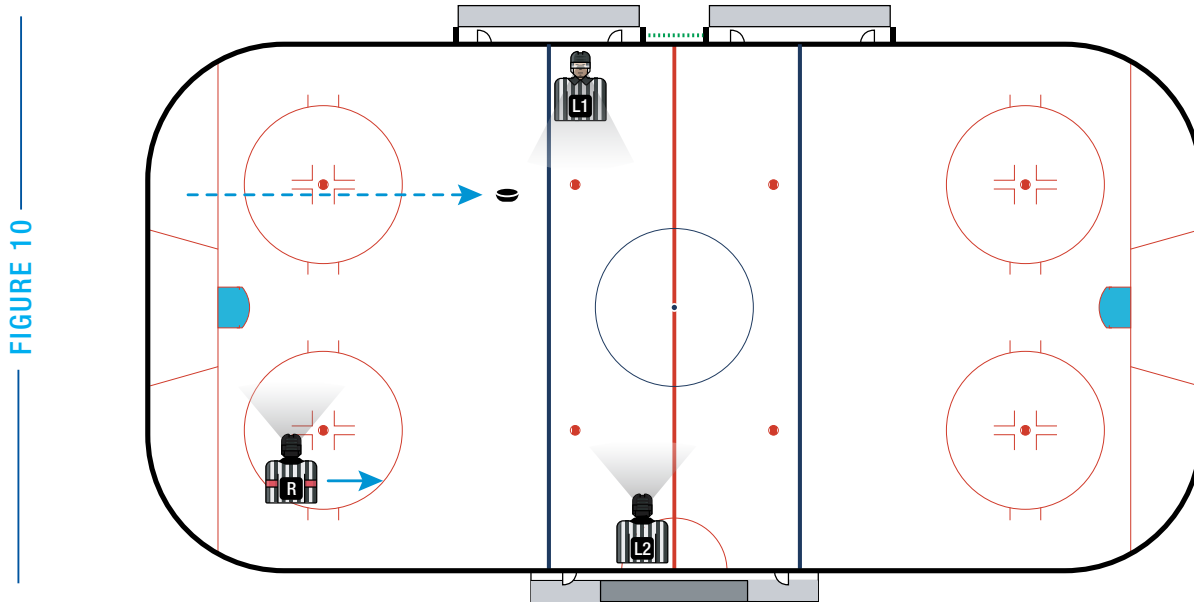
The referee skating up the ice should be in the blue area only. The red area should not be used by the officials, nor should they "cross over" from one side of the ice to the other side while play is in progress (**Figure 9**). Officials can move over at a stoppage of play, depending on the location of the face-off, and for a face-off at centre ice



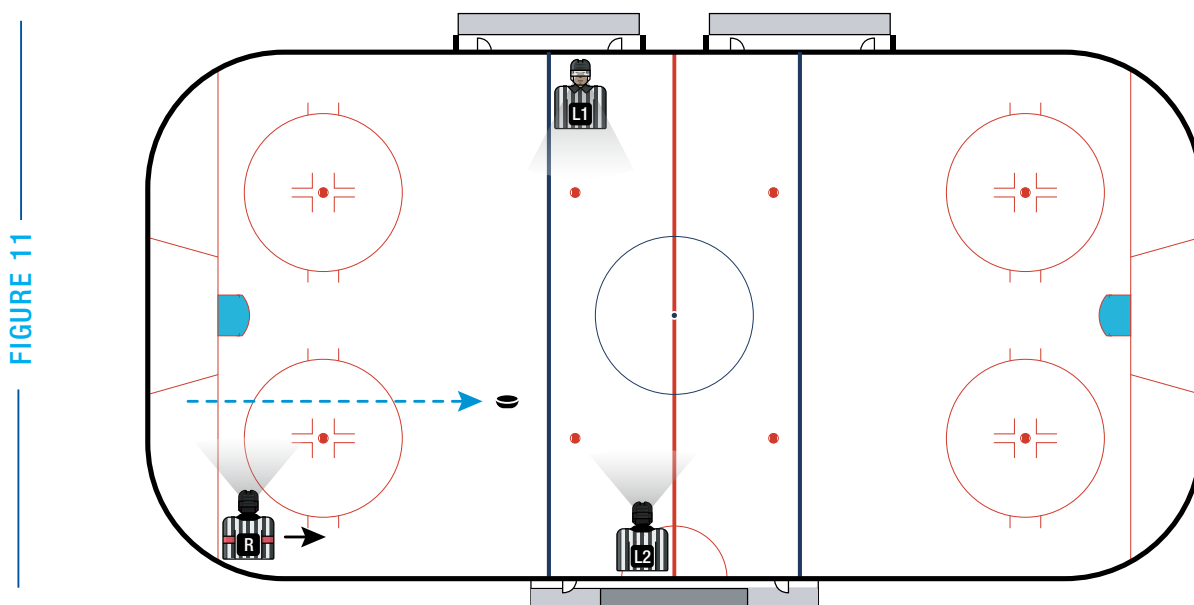
THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

If the defending team gains possession of the puck, the referee must be prepared to move out of the end zone with the play. When the puck is on the opposite side of the ice, the referee should be 2 to 4 metres from the boards and 6 to 8 metres behind the play (**Figure 10**).



If the puck is on the same side of the ice, the referee should be 1 to 1.5 metres from the boards and follow 8 to 10 metres behind the play (**Figure 11**).



THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

REFEREE

Maintaining appropriate range from the play provides the referee with a good perspective of all the players. Also, if the puck suddenly changes possession and the play starts out in the opposite direction, the referee will have sufficient room to avoid interfering with the play.

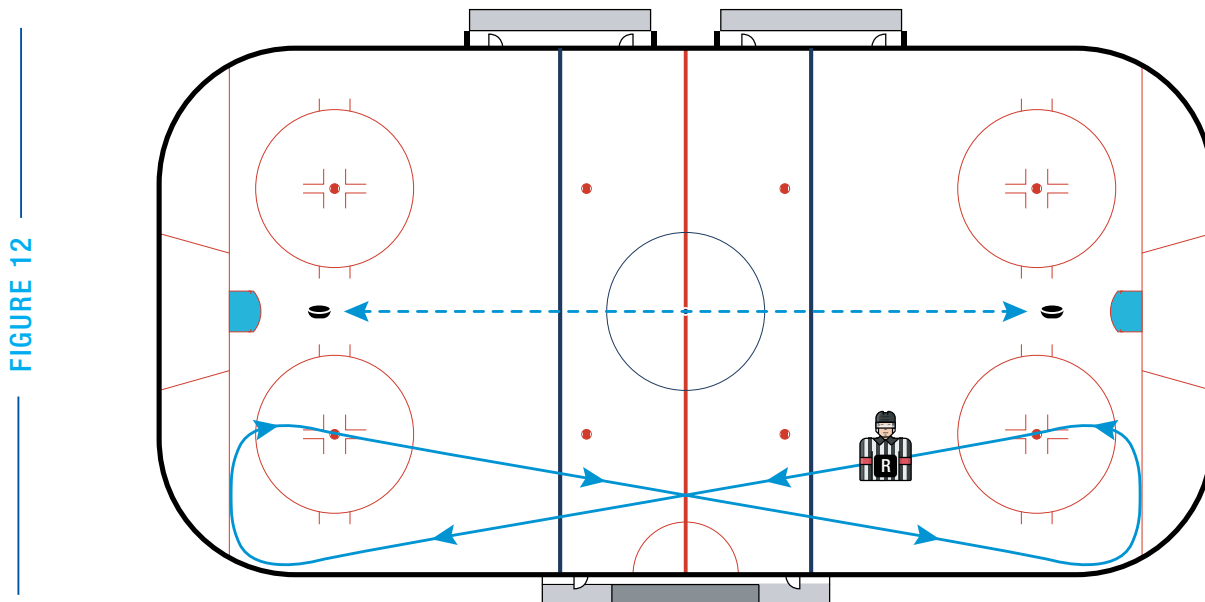
When the puck is on the same side of the ice, the referee must stay near the boards to ensure the following:

- No player gets behind the referee,
- The referee does not interfere with the play,
- Protection from being hit by a player if contact is unavoidable (safer than an open ice hit).

Common Faults and Tips

A common fault for referees is their failure to move out of the attacking zone in pursuit of the play if there are opposing players straggling behind. Instead, the referee should follow the play, glance back several times and rely on the linesperson to communicate with those players and to keep you informed of any problems that may occur. To reduce the number of stops and starts, and to maintain excellent position while play is in progress, try to maintain a “figure 8” pattern of positioning by using tight turns (**Figure 12**).

Many altercations occur in the area around the net. Once play has stopped the referee should move to a position of not more than three metres from the net but with all players and both benches in full view. Your presence and verbal communication will deter any actions and you will have a good view of any altercation or players leaving the benches.



Most of the face-offs are conducted by the linesperson. Upon the stoppage of play, the two linespersons should watch the players on the ice as their first priority. If two players are standing talking and challenging each other, they should move in quickly and separate the players before any serious trouble occurs. If there is no potential trouble, the linespersons should proceed with supporting the line change procedure and the subsequent face-off.

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

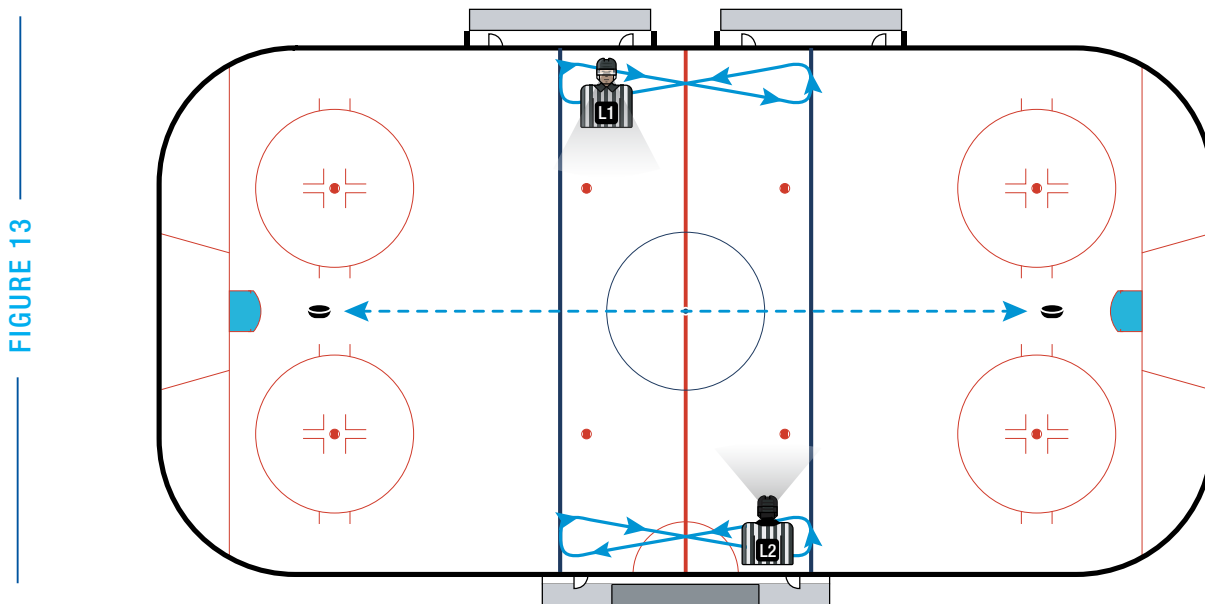
LINESPERSON

3 LINESPERSONS

3.1. POSITIONING WHILE PLAY IS IN PROGRESS

- They should always be in position to call the play – good sightline (with good sightline you earn trust)
- They should be at their blue line (or slightly inside the blue line), establishing the best position to have an unobstructed view down the line. This is called “Working the Line” as the puck crosses the line.
- They should not straddle the line or end up in a dangerous position by jumping up and sitting on the boards.

Linespersons should work from the blue line to a position about midway between the centre red line and the other blue line (**Figure 13**).



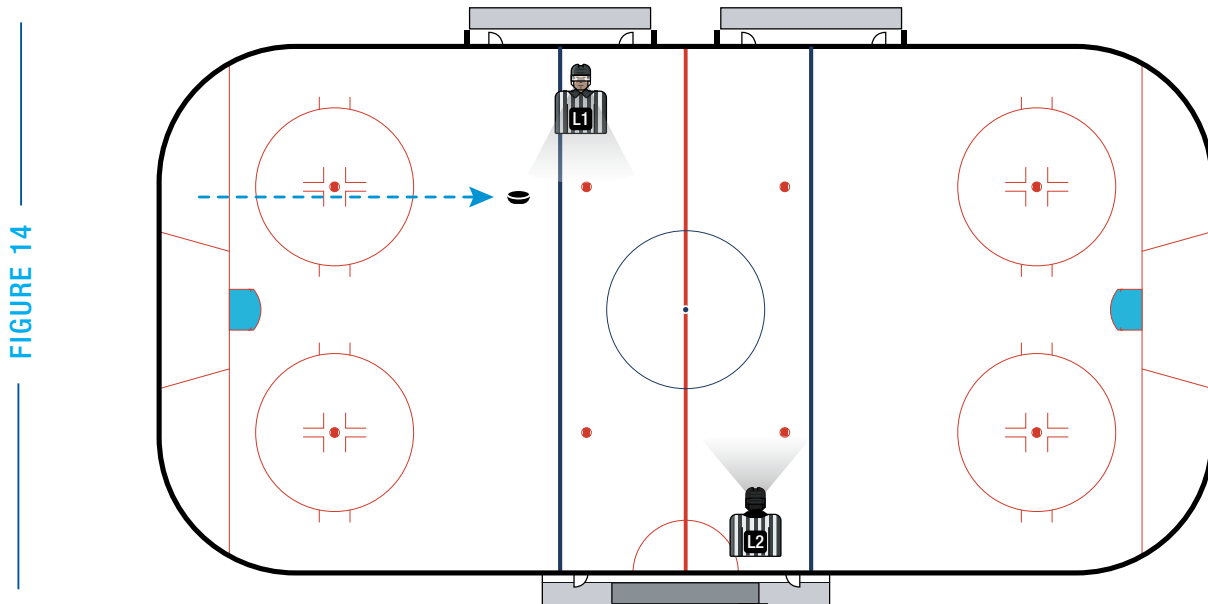
The back linesperson must ALWAYS position themselves so that they are at the same level as the deepest offensive player in order to cover their blue line in case of a fast break or long pass situation.

When play is in the end zone, the front linesperson, L1, should be one stride outside the blue line, with their body turned at a 45 degree angle to view the entire end zone while the other linesperson, L2, should be midway between this blue line and the centre red line on the opposite side of the ice (**Figure 14**).

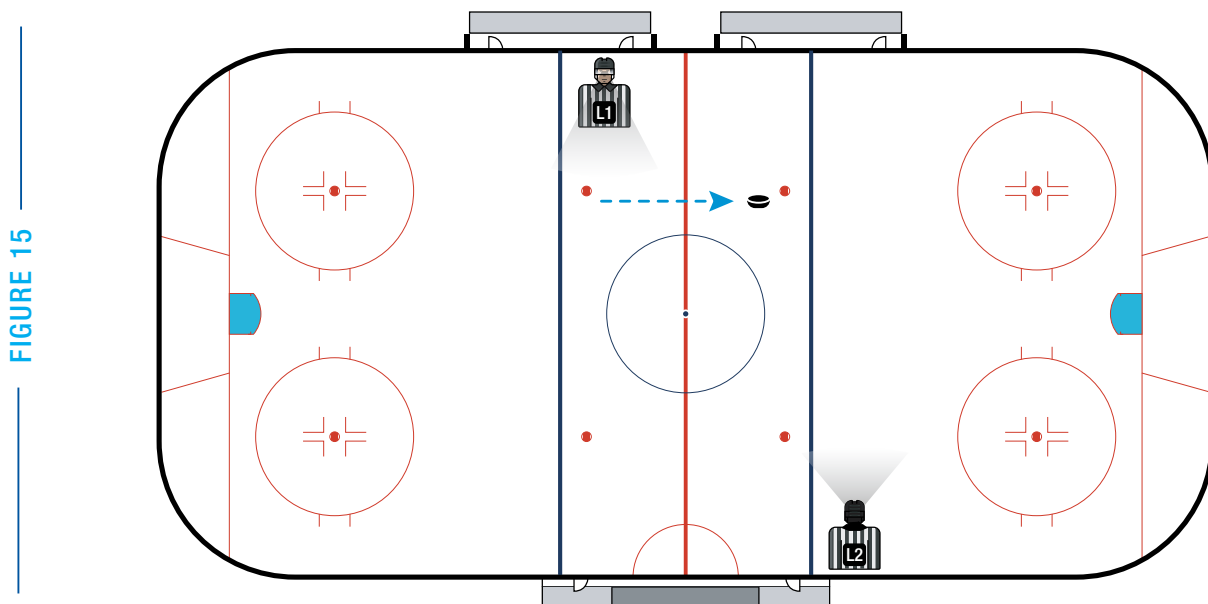
THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

LINESPERSON

When the defending team gains possession in their end zone, L2 should anticipate the play coming out of the end zone and move back to the red line. In these positions, L1 and L2 now have both blue lines covered (**Figure 14**).



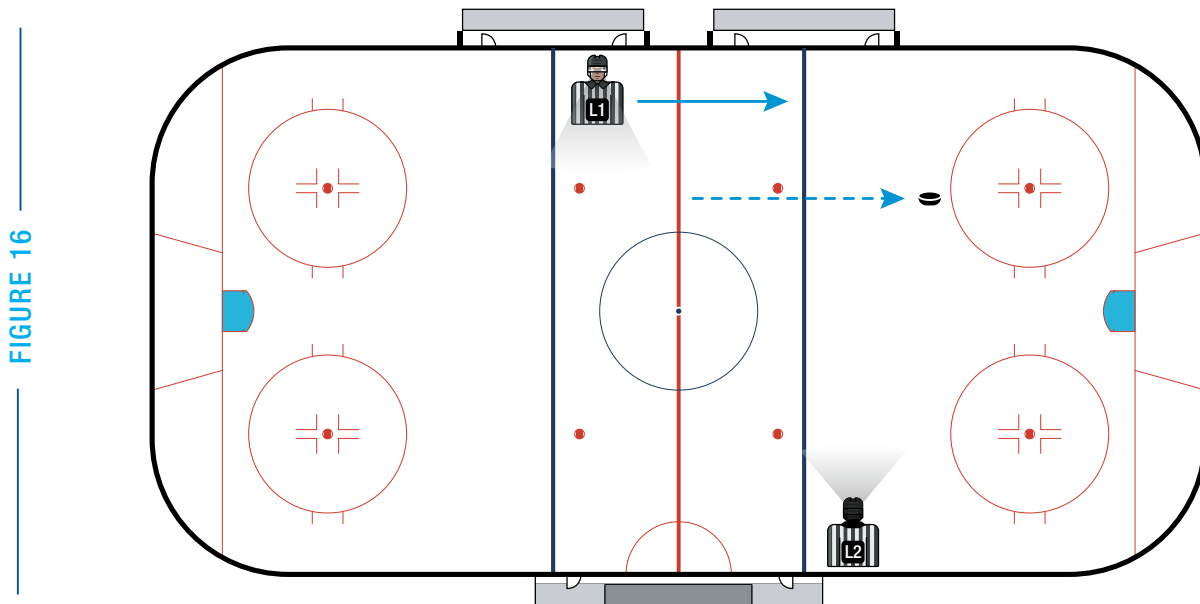
Linesperson, L1, must observe attacking players behind the play as the play leaves the end zone and be able to get back to the blue line in time to make a call if the play changes direction. After the puck crosses the blue line, L2 will move to the attacking blue line and be in position to call a potential offside at that line (**Figure 15**).



THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

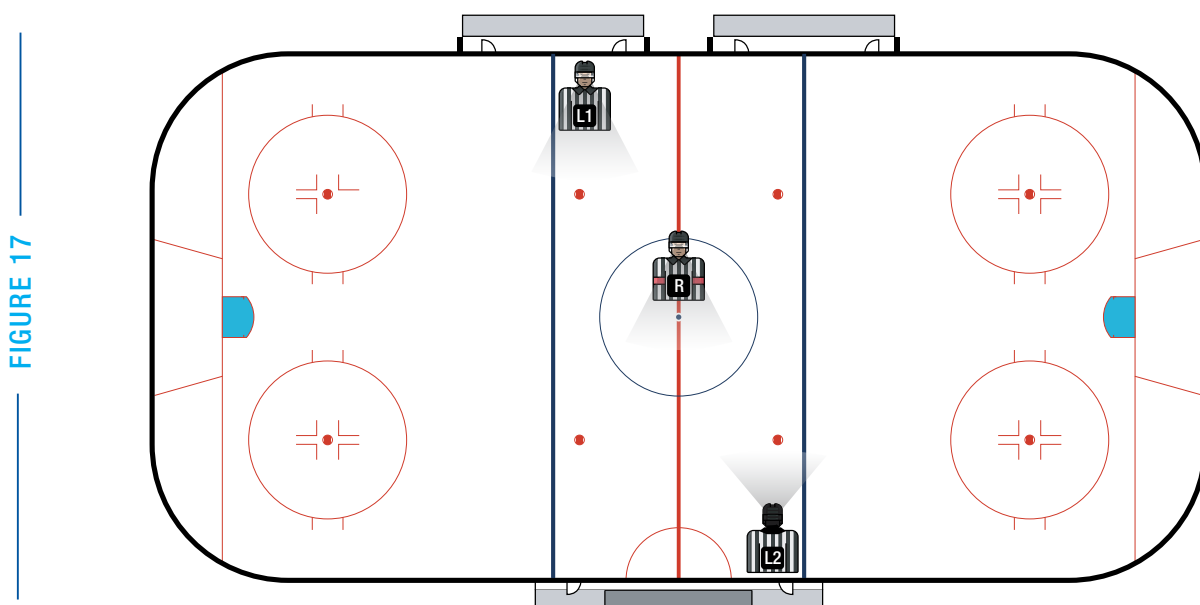
LINESPERSON

When the puck approaches the blue line, L2 must be at the line while L1 should move up to a position midway between the centre red line and blue line. Both linespersons should always be at their blue line and in correct position before the puck, on any potential offside play at the blue line (**Figure 16**). When the puck comes out of the end zone, the procedure for positioning is then reversed for each official.



3.2. POSITIONING FOR A FACE-OFF

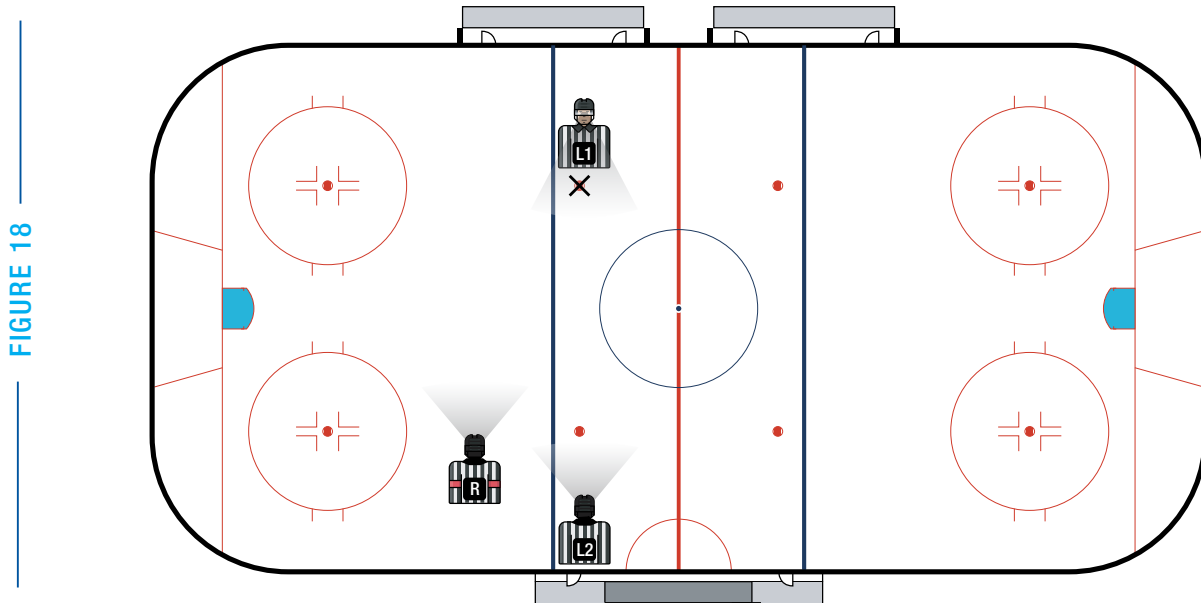
When the referee is taking a face-off at centre ice, the two linesperson should be on opposite sides of the ice against the side boards, just outside the blue line (**Figure 17**).



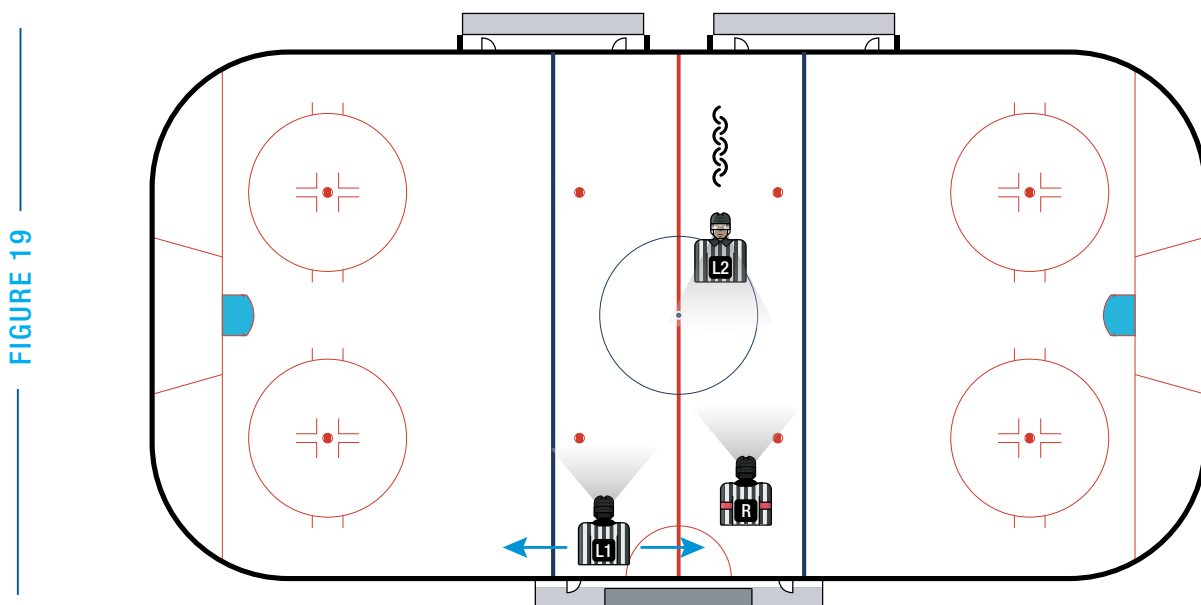
THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

LINESPERSON

For a face-off at the face-off spots in the neutral zone, L2 must always follow the play and cover the attacking blue line, as L1 is always taking up their position as back linesperson between the blue line and the red line (**Figure 18**).



The linesperson taking the face-off, L1 should be facing the scorekeeper's bench so that the timekeeper can start the clock when the puck is dropped. L2 positioning on the side of the scorekeeper's bench is responsible for all lines in case L1 is trapped in the middle of the ice (**Figure 19**).

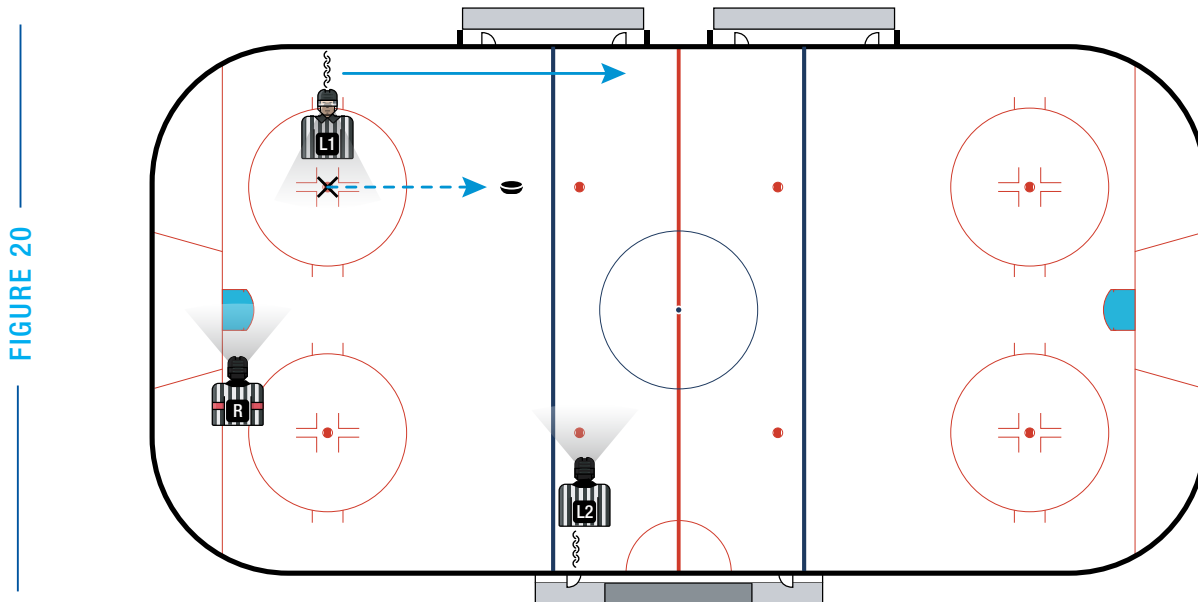


THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

LINESPERSON

When the face-off is at an end face-off spot, L2 should be positioned one stride outside the blue line on the opposite side of the ice. If the referee is screened from seeing players positioned behind L1, who is conducting the face-off, then L2 may move off the boards an appropriate distance to get a clear view.

If a player is encroaching, L2 will blow the whistle and raise its arm, slightly bent with the open palm - on the side of the team which conducted the face off violation. After the puck is dropped, L2 will move back to the side boards and take a position one stride outside the blue line. L2 will remain there and L1 will then move out midway between the centre red line and blue line (Figure 20).

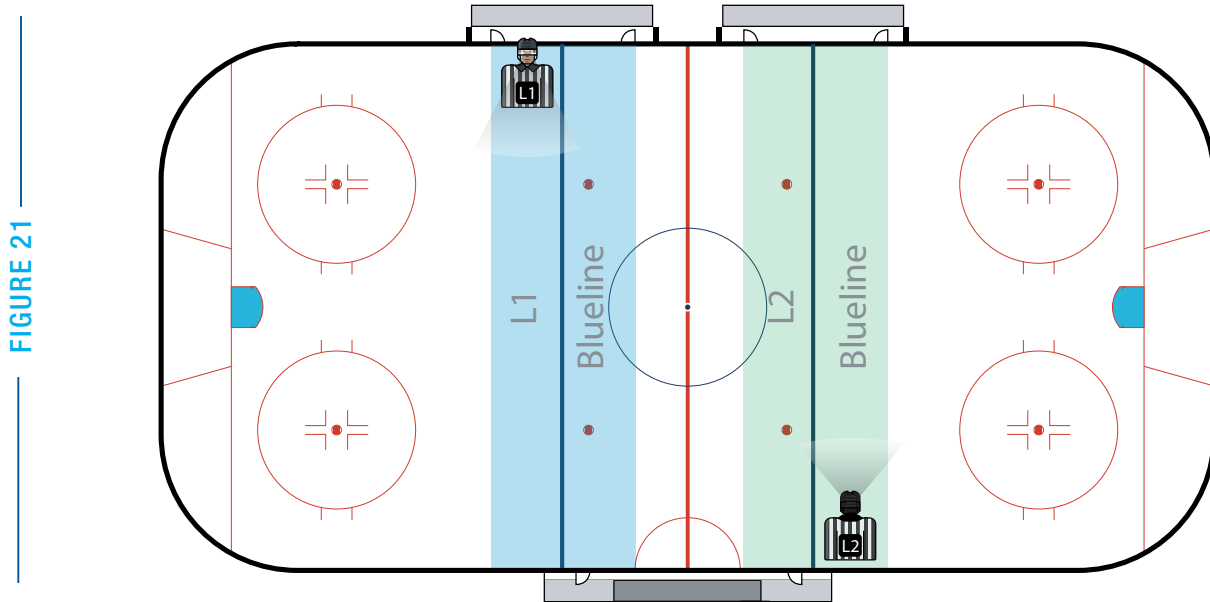


Both linespersons should work as a team, and always be aware of what is going on and knowing where the other linesperson is at all times. They should always be alert and ready to cover each other's lines if one linesperson should fall or be trapped out of the play. They should always be prepared to cover for the referee if they fall or get trapped out of the play, or if the play turns around and the referee is caught out of position. If this happens the linesperson may have to enter the end zone and implement "end zone positioning" until the referee is back into position. Working as a team, along with the referee, they should have complete control of the hockey game.

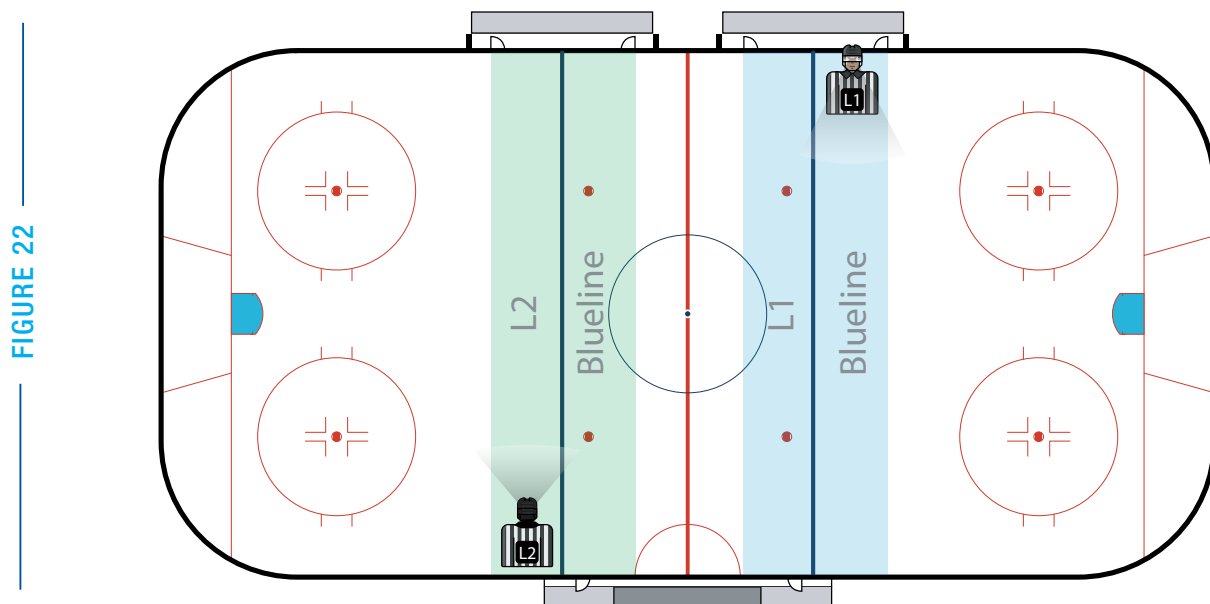
THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM LINESPERSON

3.3. DESIGNATED BLUE LINE

To ensure consistency in the judgment of offside situations, the linespersons will be in charge of the majority of the decisions made at a designated blue line. This designated blue line should follow the pre-selected side for face-offs as described under 2.5.



The linesperson focuses on the designated blue line for the first half of the game and then changes their designated blue line halfway during the game at their discretion.



THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

LINESPERSON

It is important to note that the designated blue line doesn't mean that the linesperson can not change with their partner or cover their partner if they end up in a bad position or angle towards the play. The goal is always to utilize team work to make the best possible decision during the entire game. If the linespersons switch blue lines, then the blue line should be kept under the responsibility of that linesperson until its appropriate to change back the responsibility of the blue lines according to the previous mentioned structure.

During end zone face-offs, linespersons must prioritize communication to ensure the blue lines remain covered. The back linesperson will take over responsibility for the blue line belonging to the linesperson conducting the face-off. They must remain on the blue line until play dictates the linespersons can switch responsibility, or if a turn-over / fast break out occurs requiring the back linesperson to cover their designated blue line.

For center ice face-offs, it is important that the linespersons use their feel for the game to ensure the appropriate blue-line is covered when required. The linesperson not conducting the face-off should follow the play to ensure any potential offside situation is covered, even if this means taking over the responsibility of the other linespersons blue line for a short period of time until they can switch back responsibility again.

Before the game commences, both linespersons must decide which designated blue line they will focus on for the first half of the game. Linespersons must clearly communicate with each other using verbal or visual cues, or both, prior to switching blue line responsibility at the half-way point of the game.

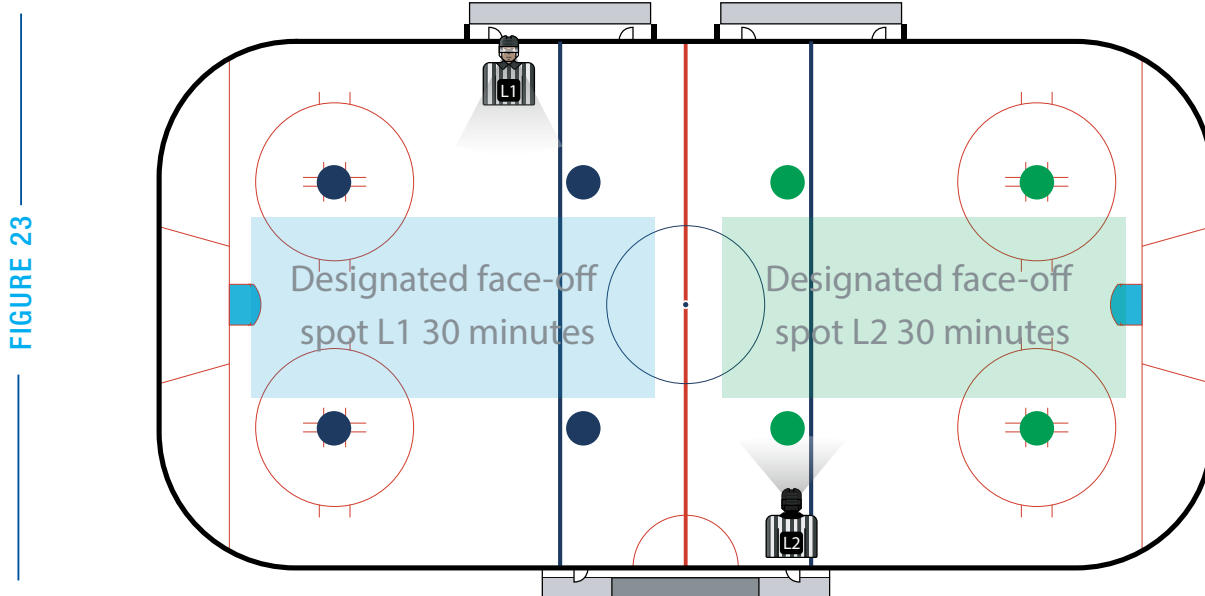


THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

LINESPERSON

3.4. DESIGNATED FACE-OFF SPOT

During the course of the game, each linesperson will have a designated area of the ice surface where they will be in charge of the face offs. This separation of responsibility of the face-offs is aligned with the designated blue line presented under 2.4. Each linesperson will be in charge of one half of the ice surface and conduct the face-offs that designated half of the ice during the game. The linespersons will switch responsibility of the face-offs spots halfway through the game, following the procedure for the designated blue line.



It is important to note, to ensure good game flow, there could be situations where a linesperson has the puck and is closer to a face-off spot than the designated linesperson for that spot. The linesperson should then prioritize the pace of the game and conduct the face-off and return to the procedure as stated in this section.

3.5. HAND OFF THE PUCK

When the linesperson conducts a face-off after an icing call, it is the responsibility of the back linesperson to ensure that the player change procedure is followed properly and then proceed with the face-off procedure in the end zone. The front linesperson will pick up the puck after the game is stopped and actively skate to the non-offending teams selected face off spot and hand over the puck to the linesperson in charge of the face-offs in that half of the ice surface. The linesperson will then proceed with active forward skating to the blue line and take a position in the neutral zone overseeing the face-off procedure.

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM

PROCEDURE DURING A SCRUM/FIGHT

4 PROCEDURE DURING A SCRUM/FIGHT

4.1. REFEREE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The referee should never at any point get physically involved with players that are involved in a scrum or fight. The referee should take a position away from the direct area of the scrum/fight but close enough for a good overview of the situation that provides the ability to assess the proper penalties and as well use the voice/whistle to communicate with the involved players.

For situations in the end zone, it is important that the referee also takes active control over the “point players” in the end-zone and if they are making any movement down towards the scrum and over the outlines of the face-off circle. Regardless of where on the ice the scrum occurs, one focus area for the referee is also the benches in case any players jump onto the ice and join the fight/scrum.

The referee must work actively to memorize/note the numbers of the players that are involved in the scrum. This is also important if the goalkeeper gets involved in the situation and one player on the ice needs to serve the penalty or if there are players that come in from the benches into the altercation.

4.2. LINESPERSON RESPONSIBILITY

The linesperson should be active in trying to deescalate the situation and if needed, physically interrupt the involved players. The linespersons should always try to work together in a pair in every situation when they try to break up a fight/scrum. Good communication is key.

When the linespersons are monitoring the right time is to enter the situation, it is very important that the linespersons' safety is considered first and should never be neglected. The referee must support the linespersons by assessing the appropriate penalties to any player that endangers the linespersons when breaking up altercations.

4.3. COMMON FAULTS AND TIPS

The most important factor to take in consideration when a scrum or fight occurs is to minimize the involved players in the altercation. Officials must actively work to prevent others from joining and communicate verbally and when needed. Linespersons should physically intervene when safe to minimize the severity of the situation.

THREE OFFICIALS SYSTEM PROCEDURES DURING PENALTY SHOOT

5 PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

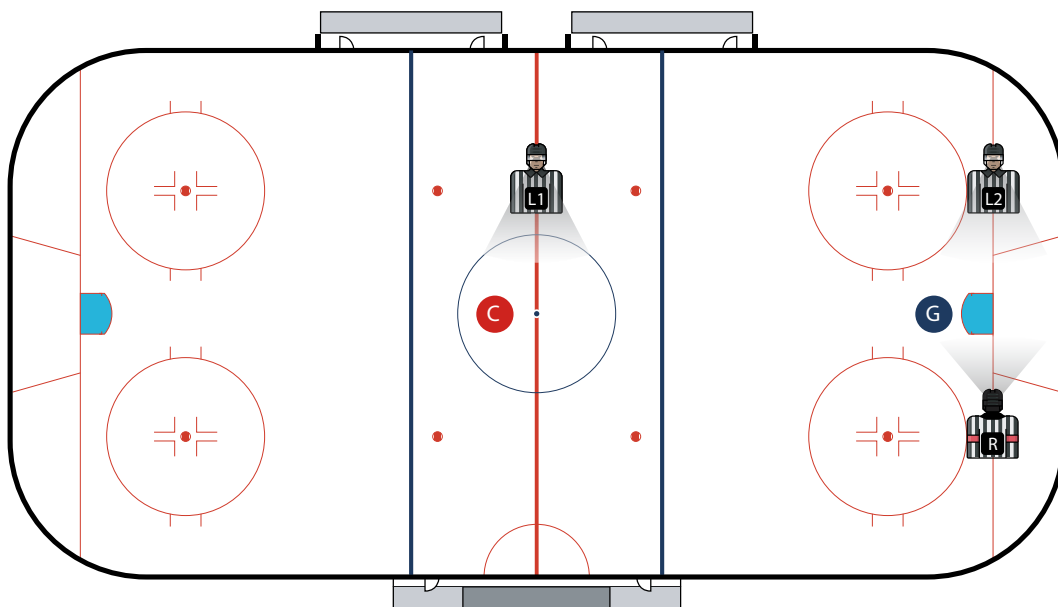
5.1. GENERAL PROCEDURE

The referee will take a position at the net on the same side as the scorekeeper's bench. L2 will take a position on the opposite side of the net to support the referee in the penalty shot. The other linesperson, L1, will position the puck on the centre ice spot and stand over the puck until all the participants for the shot are ready, all game officials are in position and rest of the players have left the ice. When the penalty shot is ready to commence, L1 will position themselves between the benches in the neutral zone. The referee must make sure that everyone is set for the penalty shot and that L1 has moved from centre ice. The penalty shot will start with a signal from the whistle by the referee. The referee's main area of responsibility is to monitor the shooter, as well monitoring the goalkeeper and the puck crossing the line.

Only the referee should signal for a goal (puck in the net) or signal a wash out if no goal is scored. Linesperson should put their whistle in their pocket.

The referee should involve the linespersons in situation that is unclear, but the final decision is always made by the referee. When a shot has been taken, it is the job of L1 to control the players and for L2 to take the puck. During the game winning shot procedure, both linespersons will alternate being L1 and L2. **(Figure 24).**

FIGURE 24



YOUR FEEDBACK IS WELCOME

For any comments email: officiating@iihfoffice.com

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