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NFHS Ice Hockey Weekly Rule Interpretations

Welcome to the 2025-26 Ice Hockey Season! A new rule for this season is Rule 9-8-4. The rule states “A puck on the outside of the goal netting below the crossbar shall be considered in play by both teams. A puck resting on top of the goal netting between the crossbar and goal frame shall be considered unplayable, resulting in an immediate stoppage.”

Situation 1: Player A shoots the puck toward the net in Team A’s offensive zone. The puck hits off the glass and lands on top of the goal cage netting as indicated in “Image 1”.

RULING: Play shall be stopped.

Comment: As soon as the puck rests on top of the goal cage, as indicated in “image 1”, play shall be stopped and result in a faceoff in Team A’s offensive zone. When play is allowed to continue, sticks and bodies quickly converge the goal cage and the goalie with sticks up trying to play the puck off the top of the net. High sticks pose a danger to players and the goalie alike.



Situation 2: Player A1 shoots the puck toward the net in Team A's offensive zone. The puck hits off the glass and lands on the back outside netting of the goal cage as indicated in "Image 2". Player A2's stick knocks the puck off the back of the net and skates with the puck.

RULING: Play shall continue.

Comment: Puck is in play as long as the puck is resting on the cage netting below the crossbar.



Situation 3: Player A1 shoots the puck toward the net in Team A's offensive zone. The puck hits off the glass and lands on the back outside netting of the goal cage as indicated in "Image 2". Player A2's stick attempts to knock the puck off the back of the net but is not successful. Player B1's stick attempts to retrieve the puck as well with no success.

RULING: The puck is, by definition, still in play, however the referee may stop the play to prevent a potentially dangerous interaction between players and/or the goalie with sticks attempting to knock the puck off the back of the net.

Comment: The goal is for play to continue, however sticks swinging/jabbing toward the net could be a potentially dangerous situation. That is why the referee has the ability to stop the play and conduct a faceoff at the nearest faceoff spot.