INNSBRUCK · AUSTRIA

WORLD HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS

2027

OFFICIAL TOURNAMENT RULES

All games are played under the current IIHF Rulebook unless otherwise stated in this document. Where this document differs from IIHF rules, this document takes precedence for WHC games.

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SECTION 01

Tournament Governance

1.1 Tournament Director

The Tournament Director is responsible for resolving all inquiries or disputes regarding:

- Off-ice rule application or interpretation
- Player eligibility
- Disciplinary action and suspensions
- Any other procedural disputes

The Tournament Director will not overturn any dispute concerning the on-ice application of rules and/or judgment decisions made by on-ice officials. All decisions of the Tournament Director are final.

1.2 On-Ice Officials

All decisions by on-ice officials regarding penalties, goals, and game situations are final and cannot be protested.

SECTION 02

Player Eligibility & Rosters

Each tournament division is based on a designated birth year (e.g. "2012 Division"). Unless stated otherwise below:

- Players may always play in an older age category ("playing up").
- Players may never play in a younger age category, regardless of gender, even if age exceptions would technically allow it.

2.1 Male Players – Age Exception

Three (3) male players can be up to three (3) months older than the designated birth year:

Eligible males: Players born in the designated birth year, plus three (3) players born between 1 October and 31 December of the previous calendar year.

> *"Example: For the 2013 Division, male players born 1 January–31 December 2013 and male players born between 1 October and 31 December 2012 are eligible."*

2.2 Female Players – Age Exception

Female players may be up to one (1) year older than the designated birth year:

Eligible females: Players born in the designated birth year, plus all players born in the previous calendar year.

> *"Example: For the 2013 Division, female players born 1 January–31 December 2013 and female players born 1 January–31 December 2012 are eligible."*

2.3 Goalies

Unless otherwise communicated in the tournament information, goalies follow the same eligibility rules as skaters for their gender and division.

2.4 Proof of Age

If a player's age is challenged, the team must provide acceptable documentation (e.g. passport, national ID card, official player license). Failure to provide proof may result in the player being removed from the tournament and/or games forfeited at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

2.5 Roster Freeze & Changes

The team roster is frozen at the start of the team's first tournament game. Any changes after that point:

- Must be requested from the Tournament Office.
- Require explicit approval by the Tournament Director before the player participates in any game.

2.6 Exceptions to Eligibility Rules

In exceptional cases, deviations from the above eligibility rules may be granted. Any such exception:

- Must be requested in advance by the Team Leader in writing, and
- Is valid only if explicitly approved by the Tournament Director in writing before the player participates in any game.

Exceptions are granted at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director and may be refused without further justification.

SECTION 03

Equipment, Uniforms & Safety

3.1 Jerseys & Colours

- Home and visiting teams are indicated on the tournament schedule.
- Home teams wear dark-coloured jerseys.
- Visiting teams wear light-coloured jerseys.
- All jerseys must have a clearly visible player number on the back; front/shoulder numbers are recommended but not mandatory.

In the final game of each division (Gold medal game), the higher-ranked team from round-robin play has the right to choose jersey colour (dark or light). In case of a colour conflict not covered by this rule, the Tournament Director or rink manager will make the final decision.

3.2 Neck Guards

All players (skaters and goalies) must wear a neck laceration protector (neck guard) approved for ice hockey use. A player without a neck guard is not permitted to participate until properly equipped.

3.3 Mouthguards

The use of mouthguards is strongly recommended for all players. Federation-specific or national rules mandating mouthguards remain in force if stricter than this tournament rule.

3.4 Other Protective Equipment

All other mandatory protective equipment, as defined by IIHF rules, must be properly worn (helmet, cage, gloves, shin pads, elbow pads, etc.). Equipment must be in good condition. The on-ice officials and/or Tournament Director may remove a player from the game until equipment issues are resolved.

3.5 Team Insurance

Teams are responsible for ensuring that all players and staff have valid health and accident insurance that covers ice hockey activities. The organiser does not provide insurance and is not responsible for any medical or related costs.

SECTION 04

Game Format & Timing

Element	Duration / Rule
Game length	3 periods × 15:00 minutes, stop time
Warm-up	3 minutes on the game clock
Intermission	2 minutes between periods
Ice resurfacing	Normally after each game (rink manager may adjust)
Early start	Teams ready up to 10 minutes before scheduled time
Mercy rule	6+ goal lead: running time until margin under 6 goals

4.1 Game Length

All games are played with three (3) periods of fifteen (15) minutes stop time.

4.2 Warm-Up

Each game will be preceded by a three (3) minute warm-up on the game clock.

4.3 Intermissions

There is a two (2) minute break between periods.

4.4 Ice Resurfacing

The ice will normally be resurfaced after each game. The exact resurfacing schedule is subject to change by the rink manager and will be communicated with the game schedule if necessary.

4.5 Early Start Option

All teams must be ready to begin up to ten (10) minutes prior to the scheduled start time if games are running ahead of schedule. Players must be ready to step onto the ice immediately after the Zamboni leaves the ice. The rink manager on site will make the final determination regarding early starts.

4.6 Running Time – Mercy Rule

If at any time a team leads by six (6) goals or more, the game clock will run continuously (running time) until the lead is reduced to fewer than six goals, at which point stop time will resume. All penalties assessed during running time are served as normal time (the full 2, 5, 10 minutes on the game clock).

SECTION 05

Playing Rules Checking, Offsides, Icing, Slapshots

5.1 Body Checking by Age Group

Divisions 2012, 2013 & 2014: Full body checking is permitted, in accordance with IIHF rules for the applicable age group.

Divisions 2015 & 2016:

- Controlled body contact is allowed (competing for the puck, leaning, and rubbing out along the boards in a controlled manner).
- Body checking aimed at separating the opponent from the puck with force, especially open-ice hits, head-on collisions, blind-side hits, or excessive acceleration into the opponent, is not permitted.

The on-ice officials will determine whether contact is legal body contact or illegal body checking, charging, boarding, or checking to the head/neck, in accordance with IIHF principles.

5.2 Slapshots

Slapshots are permitted at all levels.

5.3 Offside Rule

Tag-up offside will be used at all levels, as defined by the IIHF Rulebook.

5.4 Icing Rule

Hybrid icing will be used at all levels, as defined by the IIHF Rulebook.

SECTION 06

Penalties & Discipline

6.1 Standard Penalties

Unless otherwise stated, penalties are enforced according to IIHF rules. For reference:

Penalty	Duration / Effect
Minor penalty	2 minutes
Major penalty	5 minutes
Misconduct penalty	10 minutes
Game Misconduct / Match Penalty	Removed for remainder of game; may face suspension

6.2 Ejection vs Game Misconduct

For clarity in this tournament:

a) Ejection (Game Ejection without automatic suspension) — In certain cases (e.g., a player receives multiple penalties or is penalised for unsportsmanlike conduct as determined by the officials), a player may be removed from the remainder of the current game only, without an automatic suspension for future games. This will be recorded as a Game Ejection.

b) Game Misconduct (with review option) — When a Game Misconduct is assessed under IIHF rules:

- The player is removed from the remainder of the current game.
- The incident is automatically reviewed by the Tournament Director.
- The Tournament Director may impose an additional one (1) game automatic suspension and/or further suspensions depending on the severity of the infraction, the referee's report and any available video.

6.3 Fighting

Any player assessed a penalty for fighting will:

- Be removed from the remainder of the current game (Game Misconduct / Match Penalty as applicable).
- Receive an automatic suspension of at least one (1) additional game, with the possibility of further games at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

6.4 Checking From Behind

Checking from behind is considered a serious safety violation. Any such infraction will carry:

- A minimum 5-minute major penalty, plus
- A 10-minute misconduct or Game Misconduct, as determined by the on-ice officials.

Further suspension may be imposed after review by the Tournament Director.

6.5 Boarding

Boarding that endangers an opponent will carry:

- A minimum 5-minute major penalty.

Additional disciplinary action (10-minute misconduct, Game Misconduct, Match Penalty, and/or suspension) may be imposed, depending on severity.

6.6 Intent to Injure / Player Suspension

Any action deemed to have the intent to injure an opponent will result in:

- A 5-minute major penalty,
- A Game Misconduct, and
- Automatic review by the Tournament Director, with suspension of at least one (1) additional game and possible further games, depending on the severity of the incident.

6.7 Additional Disciplinary Authority

The Tournament Director may, at their discretion:

- Increase the length of suspensions beyond the automatic minimums.
- Impose suspensions for incidents not fully penalised on the ice (e.g. off-ice misconduct, severe unsportsmanlike behaviour).
- Disqualify a player or team from the tournament in extreme cases.

SECTION 07

Standings, Points, Tie-Breakers & Overtime

7.1 Points Format

Points in round-robin games are awarded as follows:

Result	Points
Win	2 points
Tie	1 point
Loss	0 points
Forfeit	0 points, with a 0–5 loss recorded (see Section 8)

7.2 Round-Robin Games – No Overtime

There is no overtime in round-robin games. Games can end in a tie.

7.3 Game Times & Overtime in Playoff/Placement Games

Playoff, placement and medal games (including quarter-finals, semi-finals, bronze medal games and finals, if applicable) may require a winner.

a) Regulation Time — Three (3) periods of 15:00 minutes stop time, as in all games.

b) Overtime — If a playoff/placement game is tied at the end of regulation:

- A five (5) minute sudden-death overtime will be played, considered an extension of the 3rd period.
- Overtime is played 4-on-4 skaters plus goalies.
- The clock runs continuously (running time), except during timeouts and during power plays, when the time is stopped.
- In the Gold medal (championship) game, the five (5) minute sudden-death overtime is played with full stop time.

c) Shootout — If the game remains tied after overtime:

- Each team selects three (3) shooters.
- The home team shoots first.
- Teams alternate shots.
- If still tied after three shooters per team, a sudden-death shootout follows: teams continue alternating shooters, one at a time; any player who has not yet shot may be selected until all players have shot once, after which players may shoot a second time.

Any player serving a penalty when regulation time expires (i.e. at the end of the 3rd period) is not eligible to participate in the shootout.

7.4 Tie-Breaking Procedure – Round-Robin Standings

If two or more teams are tied in points after round-robin play, the ranking will be decided according to the following criteria, applied in order:

1. **Forfeiting a Game** — Any team that has forfeited is ranked last among the tied teams.
2. **Number of Wins** — More wins in the group games rank higher.
3. **Goal Percentage** — Team's Goal Percentage = GF / (GF + GA), where GF is total Goals For and GA is total Goals Against across all group games. Goal Difference is not used as a tie-breaking criterion; Goal Percentage is used instead to reduce the impact of individual blow-out results.
4. **Goals Scored** — More goals scored in the group phase rank higher.
5. **Penalty Minutes** — Fewer total penalty minutes in the relevant phase ranks higher.
6. **Random Draw** — If still tied, a random draw by the Tournament Director.

The tie-breaking procedure is applied iteratively. When one or more teams are separated at a given step, they are ranked accordingly. The remaining tied teams are then re-evaluated, starting again from criterion 1, repeating the process until all ties are settled.

SECTION 08

Forfeits

8.1 Forfeit Result

If a team forfeits a game for any reason (including insufficient players, refusal to play, or disqualification), the result will be recorded as a 5–0 win for the opponent, and the forfeiting team receives 0 points.

8.2 Impact on Tie-Breakers

As per Section 7.4, any team that forfeits a game is automatically ranked last among the teams involved in any tie on points.

8.3 Decision Authority

The decision that a game has been forfeited is made by the Tournament Director, based on reports from on-ice officials, rink management, and/or other tournament staff.

SECTION 09

Liability, Insurance & Conduct

9.1 Liability Waiver

The organiser of the World Hockey Championships (WHC) shall not be held responsible for any injuries, damages, or losses sustained by participants, spectators, officials, or any other individuals on or off the ice during the tournament. By participating in or attending the tournament, individuals acknowledge the inherent risks associated with ice hockey and related activities and agree to attend and participate at their own risk.

9.2 Insurance Requirement

All participants (players and team staff) must have valid health and accident insurance that covers injuries resulting from ice hockey activities. Teams are responsible for verifying that their players are properly insured.

9.3 Medical Services

Basic first aid may be available at the rink; however, the organiser does not guarantee on-site medical personnel and does not assume responsibility for any medical treatment, transport, or follow-up care.

9.4 Code of Conduct

All players, coaches, team staff, parents, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and sportsmanlike manner at all times.

- Abuse (verbal or physical) of officials, opponents, staff, or spectators is strictly prohibited.
- The Tournament Director may remove individuals from the facility and/or take further disciplinary action against teams for repeated or severe misconduct by their members or supporters.

SECTION 10

Final Provisions

10.1 Rule Interpretation

In any situation not explicitly covered by this document, the IIHF Rulebook will apply. If interpretation is required, the Tournament Director's ruling is final.

10.2 Updates & Communication

The organiser reserves the right to amend or clarify these rules before or during the tournament if necessary for safety, fairness, or operational reasons. Any changes will be communicated to team officials as soon as reasonably possible.

10.3 Acceptance of Rules

By registering for the World Hockey Championships 2027 (WHC 2027) and participating in tournament activities, teams and participants acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agreed to abide by these Official Tournament Rules.