



## DEFINING INJURY GUIDANCE FOR THE HOCKEY REFEREE



*Written by Steve Wallace  
Technical Director of Officiating - Greater Toronto Hockey League  
Director – Canadian School of Hockey Officiating*

The term “injured” is used in two contexts in Hockey Canada’s Playing Rules.

The first context relates to situations where a player is shaken up or hurt. The afflicted player usually falls to the ice and does not continue to participate in the play. In this situation the Referee determines if a player is “injured” solely for the purpose of deciding whether or not to stop play to allow the trainer to attend to the injured player.

The second context relates to situations where an infraction of the rules has occurred. In this case, the Referee must decide whether or not a player is “injured” for the purposes of determining which penalty(s) should be assessed. “Injury” in this second context is not defined by whether or not the Referee stopped play because a player was “down”, the length of time a player was lying on the ice, whether or not the trainer came onto the ice, or if the afflicted player is bleeding. Injury in this context is based solely on the Referee’s assessment of the need for the afflicted player to seek professional medical attention.

If, in the opinion of the Referee, a player that has been fouled should or must seek the services of a health care professional (i.e., doctor, dentist, nurse, etc.) to assess OR treat an apparent injury, then the player should be considered “injured” for the purpose of assessing a Major and a Game Misconduct penalty or, alternatively, a Match penalty for deliberate injury. If, however, the Referee believes that the services of a health care professional ought not to be required, then the player should not be deemed injured – In this case no Major plus Game Misconduct or Match penalty should be assessed.

Establishing a safe environment for players is a primary responsibility of all on-ice officials. Referees are encouraged to rule in favour of the afflicted player when it is reasonable to expect that professional medical attention should or must be sought by a player who is hurt due to the illegal actions of an opponent. This approach will send a clear message to all participants that any rough or illegal play that results in injury is not part of the game and will not be tolerated.

*To comment on this article, send an email to Steve at [tdo@gthlcanada.com](mailto:tdo@gthlcanada.com).*