



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMPETITION COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE NHL TORONTO OFFICE
JUNE 15, 2007**

A meeting of the Competition Committee was held at the NHL's Toronto Office at 7:00 a.m. on June 15, 2007. Colin Campbell, Senior Executive Vice President of Hockey Operations, presided.

In attendance from the League Office were Commissioner Gary B. Bettman; Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly; Director of Officiating Stephen Walkom; and Video Coordinator John Sedgwick.

In attendance from the National Hockey League Players Association were Associate Counsel, Labour Stu Grimson; and Associate Counsel, Labour Ian Penny

Members of the Competition Committee in attendance were:

Don Waddell	General Manager, Atlanta Thrashers
Kevin Lowe	General Manager, Edmonton Oilers
David Poile	General Manager, Nashville Predators (via phone)
Rob Blake	Player, Los Angeles Kings
Trevor Linden	Player, Vancouver Canucks (via phone)
Brendan Shanahan	Player, New York Rangers
Marty Turco	Player, Dallas Stars

Introduction and Meeting Agenda

- Colin Campbell welcomes the group and outlines the agenda for the meeting:
 1. **Discussion of the enforcement of hooking, holding and interference** – The issue was discussed at the February 2007 GM meeting in Naples, Florida and Colin Campbell will provide a summary of the conclusions that were reached at that meeting.
 2. **Hits to the head** – Buffalo Sabres Governor Tom Golisano submitted the issue for discussion at the upcoming meeting of the Board of Governors and it is an issue that should be discussed by the Competition Committee.
 3. **Fighting** – Colin Campbell made comments to the media earlier this season regarding the need to have a discussion about the role of fighting in hockey, in lieu of the increased size and strength of today's players and the increased risk of injury. It is an issue that the Competition Committee should be made aware of.

4. **Face shields** – Should they be mandatory? Should the League allow tinted/mirrored face shields?
5. **Four on four overtime in the playoffs** – the issue was discussed at the most recent GM meeting and should be addressed by the Competition Committee.
6. **Supplementary discipline** – this is a subject that crosses into a number of the other topics up for discussion at this meeting.
7. **Diving** – Colin Campbell states that, generally speaking, the incidents of diving were down this past season. Players have called to complain about their diving letters and clearly do not like receiving them. Colin Campbell outlines the Hockey Operations process for identifying diving letter recipients. Colin Campbell states that potential dives are identified, discussed and voted on by the members of the Hockey Operations Department before any letters are sent out to players.
8. **Other issues**

- Stu Grimson states that he has the results of a player survey conducted by the NHLPA. The NHLPA surveyed its membership on thirty issues and received responses from approximately two thirds of these individuals. Stu Grimson provides those in attendance with a summary sheet of the findings.

Hits to the head

- Colin Campbell introduces the topic by showing video of 52 examples of various types body contact from the 2006/07 NHL season. Each of these incidents is numbered for discussion purposes.
- Colin Campbell states that some of the plays in the video resulted in injury, some resulted in penalty calls and that the incident involving Chris Pronger and Dean McAmmond was a missed elbowing major and resulted in a suspension during the Stanley Cup Finals.
- Colin Campbell asks the group how they would like body contact to be officiated. He notes that the OHL has a specific penalty for hits to the head and that he has discussed this rule and its enforcement with CHL Commissioner David Branch.
- Kevin Lowe asks what the OHL standard has been for calling hitting to the head penalties and Stephen Walkom explains that it has been to call penalties on all plays where the “primary point of contact” has been with the head. He notes that they were forced to back off their standard a little later in the season, because the officials were calling too many good hits as penalties.
- Stephen Walkom notes that, in reference to the video shown to the group, many of the hits along the boards should or were called as boarding penalties.

- Colin Campbell states that there were approximately 45,000 hits during this past season, noting that this number is probably lower than it should be, and that the basic question to ask is whether or not the League has a problem with high hits/hits to the head? If there is a problem, then how do we go about fixing it?
- Colin Campbell states that the group should also look at hits from behind. He notes that he has noticed a growing problem with players leaving themselves exposed and/or jumping into the boards in an attempt to draw penalties. The game is so fast now that it has become difficult to distinguish between legitimate hits from behind, those involving embellishment, and plays where players turned into the hit at the last moment.
- Brendan Shanahan states that in his opinion the majority of the hits shown to the group are clean hockey hits. The injuries are unfortunate, but in many cases they are the result of bad luck. He refers to the hit by Guite on Rucchin as an example. In his opinion, Guite simply misses his hit and accidentally makes contact with Rucchin's head, causing an injury. He feels that these plays are unavoidable.
- Brendan Shanahan states that the hit by Armstrong on Letowski and the hit by Ruutu on McLaren are examples of players seeing another player in a vulnerable position and launching themselves in an effort to injure.
- Don Waddell asks if the hit by Guite on Rucchin should have been a minor penalty. Stu Grimson notes that it probably would have been under the OHL rules.
- Stu Grimson and Brendan Shanahan see the OHL rule as a dangerous path to take. They express concern that it will take hitting out of the game and would be extremely difficult to enforce effectively.
- Brendan Shanahan states that the League should come down hard on players through supplementary discipline when they hit "dirty".
- Kevin Lowe states that the most dangerous hits that occur are those that happen late, after the puck has been released.
- Stu Grimson states that the focus should be on eliminating hits to players who are in an "unfairly vulnerable" position but he sees this standard as a tough judgment call for on-ice officials to make in a split second. He refers to the hit by Armstrong on Letowski as a good example of "unfairly vulnerable".
- Kevin Lowe and Brendan Shanahan agree that the hit by Torres on Williams is a clean hockey hit.
- Colin Campbell asks the group to discuss the hit by Neil on Drury. Kevin Lowe thinks the hit was a little late. Colin Campbell notes that it occurred roughly half a second after Drury released the puck.
- Colin Campbell asks the group how they would like the League to measure the lateness of a hit when considering whether or not to apply supplementary discipline.

Should there be a prescribed time frame? Does it matter whether or not the player is injured on the play? Should the League attempt to determine the intent of the player making the hit?

- Kevin Lowe states that the League should show the players a video of hits that will be deemed late prior to the start of next season and explain to the players that these hits will be penalties or will result in supplementary discipline. Put them on notice.
- Colin Campbell shows the group the hit by Koci on Thomas. He states that this hit is likely the result of there being less neutral zone obstruction in the new NHL. Thomas was moving freely through the neutral zone with speed. He notes that the hit was called a charging major by Kerry Fraser, but that this was the wrong call.
- Brendan Shanahan asks if there is something we can do or say to regulate the body position of the hitter. When Armstrong hits Letowski he is coming from behind him. Is it possible to punish hitters who “stalk” other players? Players who hit to hurt? This is part of the game, but maybe it shouldn’t be. How do we eliminate these dirty hits without taking physical play right out of the game?
- Colin Campbell states that Stephen Walkom has proposed adding a major penalty for interference to the rule book, which may address some of the concerns regarding late hits.
- Kevin Lowe states that it is very difficult to call many of these hits late on the ice (e.g. the hit by Mitchell on Franzen), and supplementary discipline is probably the best way to address the problem. Brendan Shanahan agrees. Both think this will work as long as the new standard of enforcement is demonstrated to the players using video.
- Kevin Lowe states that the risk of suspension will likely cause many players to ease up and not go for the big hit when it may be a fraction late. He refers to the hit by Regehr on Downey as an example. Regehr could ease up on the hit once Downey releases the puck without putting himself out of defensive position.
- Stephen Walkom states that the new major penalty for interference will help officials to make these calls on the ice in situations where a player is injured. It will give them the opportunity to confer and discuss the play.
- Colin Campbell shows the group the hit by Eager on Stajan. Rob Blake and Brendan Shanahan agree that it is a missed check. Accidental head contact that is hard to avoid.
- Stephen Walkom asks the group whether or not we need a penalty for “head only” contact.
- Stu Grimson states that this would be a very difficult penalty to call on the ice, given the speed of the game, and agrees that supplementary discipline is probably the best route to take. He is, however, worried that the supplementary discipline route will not have the same impact and will not send as clear a message to the players as a new rule would.

- Stephen Walkom notes that the on ice officials would also have the proposed interference major, the boarding major and the charging major to combat the problem. Stu Grimson again feels that this may not have the same direct impact as a new rule would on the players.
- Kevin Lowe states that it will create too much confusion and will be too difficult to enforce a separate penalty for hits to the head. He is very concerned about making players afraid to hit and taking physical play out of the game.
- Don Waddell states that we can deal with late hits by calling them interference.
- Stu Grimson argues that players do not currently see interference as including late hits and it feels that it needs to be made clear to the players that late hits will be penalized, either by creating a new rule or by including language to this effect in the current rule.
- Kevin Lowe notes that, based on the survey results provided by the NHLPA, players are sixty percent in favor of a rule that protects them against hits to the head.
- Stu Grimson states that the survey should not be given too much weight on this particular issue. This was just a quick response survey and it is difficult to reflect the true opinions of the players on a complicated issue by eliciting yes or no answers.
- Kevin Lowe states that whatever the Competition Committee decides on this issue, it is critical for the NHLPA to support the League as the League is too often accused of not protecting the players.
- Stu Grimson agrees and states that the players assume a certain amount of risk when they take the ice and that they need to be responsible for their own protection.
- Gary Bettman states that the starting point for the discussion needs to be: is there a problem? How do we define the problem? Do we want to do anything about this problem?
- Gary Bettman notes that at the most recent GM meeting the issue was discussed at great length and that it was agreed that the League should consider adopting a rule that penalizes hits where contact is made **only** to the head. Gary Bettman states that this is probably a good place to start.
- Colin Campbell states that when considering whether or not to apply supplementary discipline the League often looks at resulting injury. The practice has been to hold players accountable for the injuries that they cause. Should resulting injury turn a two minute penalty into a suspension?
- Brendan Shanahan notes that in many of the hits that resulted in injury, the problem was caused by the player being hit moving and placing themselves in a vulnerable position as the hit was coming.

- Kevin Lowe states that there are a couple of hits on the video that are examples of players hitting vulnerable players late with the aim of hurting them. He identifies the hit by Conroy on Wallin and the hit by Kunitz on Visnovsky.
- Stu Grimson and Don Waddell see the hit by Kunitz on Visnovsky as an example of a player admiring his pass and leaving himself vulnerable. Stu Grimson states that this hit is completely different from the hit by Armstrong on Letowski where Letowski has no chance to get himself into a less vulnerable position before being hit.
- Kevin Lowe states that players need to be told if they are going to hit late and going to hit the head, they will be penalized through supplementary discipline.
- Gary Bettman asks the group what they think of Colin Campbell's standard that hits can occur within a second after the puck is released, without resulting in suspension. He notes that Ken Dryden has suggested players should only be fair game when they are in possession of the puck, not after they play it.
- Don Waddell, Colin Campbell and Stu Grimson feel that Ken Dryden's rule would only result in players getting rid of the puck to draw penalties. Cause confusion.
- Kevin Lowe notes that many of the hits on players coming around the net (e.g. Armstrong on Eaves and Armstrong on Koivu) are the result of a growing trend around the League of teams softening their point coverage.
- Brendan Shanahan feels that these hits would be difficult to penalize as charging, because in many instances, the player coming off the point coverage is coming down low to make a play on the puck. The hit is merely a reaction at the end of this pursuit.
- Don Waddell states that many of these could be penalized as charges.
- Brendan Shanahan states that it would be a mistake to make a new rule that will take away hitting. In his opinion, the solution is to create a new set of criteria for imposing supplementary discipline on questionable hits. Players do not want to be suspended and the threat of suspension will be an excellent deterrent. Brendan Shanahan proposes the following factors for consideration: player history; resulting injury; did the player stalk his opponent; was there a hit to the head; and was the hit late.
- Stu Grimson states that the hit by Armstrong on Letowski is a better example of the type of play that needs to be punished than the Neil hit on Drury. Players should not be allowed to hit opponents who are in an "unfairly vulnerable" position. Brendan Shanahan and Don Waddell agree.
- Brendan Shanahan notes that a major for interference will allow the on-ice officials the opportunity to confer and discuss late hits resulting in injuries, which will help.
- Stu Grimson notes that when players make hits they explode into opponents and that we need to be careful not to confuse this with players leaving their feet to make hits.

- Colin Campbell states that perhaps part of the problem is the rigidity of the shoulder pads being worn by players today. He notes that there are several examples of these shoulder pads in the room today and asks the group whether or not this issue should be part of the discussion.
- Stu Grimson states that the Pronger elbow on McAmmond during the finals is a clear example of an illegal blow to the head.
- Rob Blake sees the hit by May on Lehoux as clearly late and as a dirty hit.
- Kevin Lowe asks the group to look at the hit by Boogaard on Hemskey. The hit resulted in an injury to a star player. A penalty call was made for interference and Edmonton won the game on the resulting power play, but was that enough?
- Stephen Walkom and Brendan Shanahan note that this is an excellent example of where the five minute penalty for interference would allow the on-ice officials to confer.
- Gary Bettman and Colin Campbell note that there was concern at the most recent GM meeting that this new interference major could result in players embellishing injuries to draw major penalties.
- Gary Bettman states that addressing the issue through supplementary discipline is fine, but the players need to be clearly put on notice and there need to be clear standards set.
- The consensus is that the following factors should be considered: was the hitter stalking his opponent? Was the person being hit "unfairly vulnerable" at the time? Was there a blow to the head? Did the play result in an injury? Was the hit late? Does the hitter have a history of this type of illegal hit?
- A memorandum should be sent to the players, including video examples, outlining these criteria and a message should be sent early on that the League is serious about imposing this new standard.
- Colin Campbell states that this can be done and notes that the League can also look at intent as there is and always has been some subjectivity in the imposition of supplementary discipline. The incidents that are reviewed need to be put in context.
- Colin Campbell states that the toughest suspensions to hand out are the shorter ones. The League has to be very aware of the message that is being sent, the precedent that is being set and has to be able to defend the decision that is ultimately made.
- Gary Bettman states that he is unclear on how these criteria will be applied. Does the Neil hit on Drury fall within the parameters of this new standard?
- Stu Grimson and Colin Campbell agree that they can come up with a directive to the players with respect to the types of hits that will be reviewed and on the criteria that will be used to review them. Stu Grimson asks Bill Daly and Gary Bettman if this will

require approval from the Board of Governors. Gary Bettman responds that it will not, as it constitutes a clarification of supplementary discipline and not a rule change.

- Gary Bettman expresses concern that imposing supplementary discipline on incidents for which the League does not even have a minor penalty could lead to confusion.
- Don Waddell states that the League also needs to make it clear to the players that it will be tightening up the standard of enforcement for interference, boarding and charging. Don Waddell and Stu Grimson agree that the wording of the interference rule should also be amended to include hits that are deemed to be late. Stu Grimson expresses his concern that this will not have the same impact on the players as a new rule prohibiting hits to the head.
- Kevin Lowe states that the League needs to be very careful giving the on-ice officials license to make calls on hits as these could easily be over called. He feels that we do not want referees making calls every time there is a hard hit.
- Kevin Lowe and Rob Blake see the hit by Kopitar on Vlasic as a clean hit. Stephen Walkom agrees.
- Kevin Lowe states that when Kopitar hits Vlasic his helmet comes off way too easily. Do we need to consider putting better helmets on the players? Maybe force players to have double chin straps to ensure that their helmets stay on?
- Stu Grimson suggests that players should no longer be allowed to wear helmets with plastic clips, as these come off too easily.
- Kevin Lowe states that there should be a rule against wearing loose chin straps. Stu Grimson does not feel that this will be very popular among the members of the NHLPA.
- Stu Grimson, Kevin Lowe and Brendan Shanahan agree that the hit by Kronwall on Lupul is a good example of a player exploding into a hit, as opposed to leaving his feet to make a hit.
- The group discusses the hit by Eaves on Savard. There is some disagreement as to whether or not this should have been a boarding penalty. The majority feel that this should not have been a penalty as Savard puts himself in a vulnerable position in an attempt to draw a penalty.
- The group agrees that the Nichol hit on Phaneuf should have been an elbowing penalty.
- Brendan Shanahan and Kevin Lowe agree that it is too difficult for on-ice officials to tell whether or not a hit is late on the ice. The play happens too fast.
- Kevin Lowe and Brendan Shanahan suggest showing the players a video at the start of the season so they can understand the distinction between hits that will be punished with supplementary discipline and those that will not.

- The group agrees that the hits by Volchenkov on Tucker and by Markov on Stoll are clean hits. Neither player was in an “unfairly vulnerable” position when they were hit. Stu Grimson notes that both had the hitter in their line of sight.
- Colin Campbell states that he has noticed an increase in players going after players who hit their teammates, regardless of whether or not the hit was clean. Brendan Shanahan does not see this as a problem.
- Colin Campbell asks so where does this leave us?
- Stu Grimson states that this must also be looked at as a political issue and that the groups should be able to clearly explain what came out of the meeting. In his opinion the group has resolved that the issue should be primarily addressed through supplementary discipline but that late hits can also be called as interference where appropriate. He states that a clear set of criteria will be created and communicated to the players so that they understand when their physical play will be deemed to have crossed the line and will be punished by the League.
- Gary Bettman asks again, is the Neil hit on Drury one that would fall within this new standard. Stu Grimson answers that it is a difficult one to assess, but that in his opinion it would not as Drury was not “unfairly vulnerable” when he was hit.
- The group concludes that the League should use three hits to explain this new criteria to the players: the Volchenkov hit on Tucker (as a clean hit); the Neil hit on Drury (as a hit that is right on the line); and the Armstrong hit on Letowski (as a hit that crosses the line and will result in supplementary discipline).

Major penalty for interference

- Colin Campbell introduces the rule changes proposed by Stephen Walkom at the most recent GM meeting. The first of these is the creation of a major penalty (which may or may not include a game misconduct) for interference (under rule 56) where a player is injured. The language of the proposed new penalty is provided to the group.
- Colin Campbell asks Stephen Walkom how many such incidents would be likely to occur in any given season. Stephen Walkom responds somewhere around five.
- Stephen Walkom explains that under the current rules, the referee has the option to call a minor penalty or a match penalty for attempt to injure, there is no middle ground. The proposed rule change would give the on-ice officials another tool when a player is injured as the result of being hit late or when not in possession of the puck.
- Stephen Walkom explains that the standard for injury required under this proposed new major penalty would be the same as that in place for boarding and/or elbowing majors.
- Colin Campbell asks the group if it is in favor of creating a major penalty for interference and there are no objections to the rule change. A vote is held and all

seven members of the Competition Committee in attendance vote in favor of the change.

Face off locations

- Stephen Walkom explains that at the most recent GM meeting he recommended that all end zone face offs should take place in one of the two end zone face off circles, to ensure the integrity of the face off. The GMs went a step further and recommended changing the rules so that all face offs anywhere on the ice should take place on one of the nine face off dots (the four end zone circles, the centre circle or one of the four neutral zone dots outside the blue lines).
- Colin Campbell states that there had been some concerns expressed at the GM meeting that having all end zone face offs in a circle would advantage the offensive team, but that the GMs had voted in favor of making the proposed change.
- David Poile states that this proposal should go a step further and have all face offs take place in one of the five face off circles (the four end zone circles or the centre circle).
- Stephen Walkom states that the concern with David Poile's proposal would be that it gives a territorial advantage to teams that send players in offside from just outside their own blue line.
- Kevin Lowe states that the group should consider recommending that we hold face offs after an offside takes place outside of the offending team's blue line.
- Colin Campbell mentions that Bob Clarke had once proposed having only three face off circles down the centre of the ice surface.
- Everyone is in agreement with the proposal coming out of the GM meeting that all face offs should take place on one of the nine face off dots on the ice surface.

Quorum

- Stu Grimson asks Gary Bettman and Bill Daly if having Trevor Linden and David Poile on the phone satisfies the procedural requirement for a Competition Committee quorum (rule 22).
- Gary Bettman responds that if both parties agree that there is a quorum at each individual meeting of the Competition Committee than rule 22 has been satisfied. Gary Bettman, Bill Daly and Stu Grimson agree that the attendance of Trevor Linden and David Poile via telephone satisfies the requirement for a quorum at this meeting, without prejudice to future meetings.
- Stu Grimson states that going forward meetings of the Competition Committee should be set well in advance to ensure the attendance of members in person. Trevor Linden agrees.

- Colin Campbell and Gary Bettman explain that the Competition Committee has to meet between the GM meeting, which Gary Bettman explains will from now on take place during the finals to ensure increased exposure in all thirty markets, and the Board of Governors meeting.
- Gary Bettman and Stu Grimson agree that future meetings of the Competition Committee should take place on the day after the NHL Awards. This date is determined well in advance and falls within the window between the GM and Board of Governors meetings.
- Stu Grimson does not feel that Colin Campbell should be allowed to vote as a proxy for members of the Competition Committee who are absent.

Line changes after intentional offsides and commercial breaks after icings

- Brendan Shanahan states that perhaps the Competition Committee should consider recommending a rule change to prohibit line changes for the offending team following an intentional offside call (similar to the rule in place after an icing).
- Don Waddell expresses some concern that this may lead to even less intentional offsides being called. Stephen Walkom states that the League has tried to encourage more courage in making these calls by sending out video to officials.
- Kevin Lowe and Don Waddell are in favor of the suggestion made by Brendan Shanahan.
- Colin Campbell suggests a similar rule be put in place for situations where goalies freeze the puck unnecessarily and suggests taking the general idea to the GMs to have them propose any other situations after which line changes should not be allowed.
- Gary Bettman asks the group if it would be beneficial to no longer allow for commercial breaks to be taken following icing calls. Brendan Shanahan likes the idea and states that it would not be a rule change, but a rule enhancement.
- Bill Daly states that this may cause some timing issues as there are already several situations after which a commercial break cannot be taken.
- Colin Campbell asks the group what penalizes a team more, bad match ups or leaving players on the ice who are fatigued. Brendan Shanahan and Kevin Lowe agree that it is fatigue.
- Gary Bettman states that he will investigate the feasibility of eliminating commercial breaks after icings with the television people.

Penalty shots

- Stephen Walkom states that at the most recent GM meeting he proposed expanding the zone in which a penalty shot could be called from inside the red line to inside the far

blue line. Stephen Walkom states that this is a minor rule change and that he has recommended it in the interest of consistency with most other leagues.

- Colin Campbell notes that this happens so infrequently that we could not even find an example of it this season.
- Gary Bettman states that he would like to make it mandatory for players to remove their helmets when taking penalty shots and during shootouts.
- Stu Grimson states that the NHLPA survey results indicate that the players are not in favor of this change, but that the rationales behind the change (increasing player exposure and recognition and heightening the moment for television) are solid and need to be better explained to the players before they actually vote on the issue. Stu Grimson states that the NHLPA needs to have this issue on the agenda at a future meeting.
- Brendan Shanahan and Stu Grimson state that they agree with the idea, but that the players need to be better informed by the television people of the potential benefits and that they need to be given the opportunity to discuss the issue and to vote on it.
- Gary Bettman states that the idea would not work unless it was mandatory and that the League is strongly in favor of the idea. The League's entertainment people believe that it would really add to the moment. Gary Bettman states that it is up to the NHLPA to make it happen.
- Stu Grimson notes that the NHLPA will be meeting next in late June and again in late August.
- Stu Grimson asks what happens in the first instance when someone falls into the boards and is injured because they are not wearing a helmet.
- Don Waddell states that there has never been an incident during a shootout or penalty shot.
- Brendan Shanahan and Stu Grimson agree that shootouts and penalty shots are controlled situations. There is no back pressure and not much risk of injury.
- Gary Bettman notes that the television people would also like players to remove their helmets during warm ups, but he and Colin Campbell both feel that this is more dangerous and everyone seems to agree that it should remain the choice of the player what to do with helmets during warm up.

Gross Misconduct

- Stephen Walkom states that at the most recent GM meeting he recommended converting the gross misconduct penalty into a game misconduct penalty. Stephen Walkom explains that gross misconduct penalties do not accumulate and lead to automatic suspensions, but game misconducts do. Gross misconduct penalties include a \$200 fine, but have no further implications with respect to automatic supplementary

discipline. Stephen Walkom states that the gross misconduct is obsolete and confusing and the change that has been recommended, and endorsed by the GMs, is a rule book cleanup.

- Colin Campbell notes that the majority of gross misconducts occur at the end of games and are divided evenly between players and coaches.
- Stu Grimson clarifies the potential implications with respect to automatic suspensions to the players in attendance.
- Colin Campbell explains that when a player earns a game misconduct penalty and suspension as a result of the same incident, the League will remove that game misconduct for the purposes of accumulation towards automatic suspensions. The League does not “double dip”.
- Colin Campbell states that the GMs were unanimously in favor of this change and asks for any objections from the members of the Competition Committee. There are no objections.

Enforcement of the Standard

- Colin Campbell states that the League’s enforcement of the standard was discussed at length at the February GM meeting in Naples, Florida. Are we calling it too tight? Are we on the right track?
- Colin Campbell states that the general conclusion of the GMs was that we are on the right track. It is important that the officials call what they actually see and that they stay on top of new tactics used by players to take advantage of the tight standard.
- Trevor Linden states that the League is on the right track and must remain vigilant to continue enforcing the standard. There will always be a human element and mistakes will be made, but overall the game is much better than it was.
- Stephen Walkom states that there is now an acceptance level on the ice, which helps the officials. The officiating department continues to coach the on-ice officials not to overreact to player tactics (e.g. embellishment of hits along the boards).
- Marty Turco states that we need to be careful not to jump to conclusions. It will take time to really assess where we are and how we are doing. We need to stick with it.
- Kevin Lowe states that the League’s interpretation of slashing has been too tight. The officials have been calling too many penalties when players have sticks knocked out of their hands and/or broken. These should not be automatic penalties.
- Stephen Walkom states that stick on stick play is legal as long as there is not a “forceful” slash.

- Kevin Lowe and Brendan Shanahan both feel that today's sticks break too easily. Slashes that break sticks should not be automatic penalties. There must also be a forceful slash. Trevor Linden agrees.
- Stephen Walkom states that when a stick is broken the player is virtually incapacitated. Brendan Shanahan, Trevor Linden and Kevin Lowe maintain that it does not matter. The key element needs to be the forcefulness of the slash.
- Stephen Walkom states that he will instruct officials to call the act and not the result.
- Don Waddell states that perhaps the League needs to address the types of sticks that players are allowed to use.

Decrease in scoring

- Gary Bettman states that there has been a decrease in scoring this year, from 6.2 goals/game last regular season to 5.9 goals/game this regular season and from 5.9 goals/game last playoff to 4.9 goals/game this playoff. Gary Bettman states that the scoring decrease is probably linked to a decrease in penalty calls. The number of powerplays was down this season on average 2 power plays/game this season from last season.
- Brendan Shanahan states that the decrease in power plays is to be expected, as players learn to play with the new standard. He wonders whether or not we coach enough offense.
- Kevin Lowe states that the best solution is to create an illegal defense rule to open the game up. Brendan Shanahan states that players and coaches are not just going to get dumb overnight. Kevin Lowe argues that we need to change the rules in order to force them to play differently.
- Don Waddell states that today's coaches preach clogging up the middle of the ice and blocking shots. This limits scoring chances.
- Marty Turco states that more excitement would be a good thing, but believes that drastic changes like bigger nets will be hard for most people to swallow. Agrees that illegal defense might be a possible solution.
- Colin Campbell asks Marty Turco if it is possible to make the goaltenders any smaller without risking injury.
- Marty Turco states that there is a relatively simple and minor alteration to goalie pads that can be mandated and that would make life much more difficult for goaltenders. Marty Turco states that modern goal pads have a series of flaps on the inside of the knee. The outside flap of the series of flaps is hard and subject to measurement by the League, but goaltenders are allowed to have as many inside flaps as they want, which can be as big as they like, and are allowed to wear any additional knee padding they wish to under their goal pads, which serves to push the flaps out even further in many cases. The flaps are necessary, as they protect the goaltender's knee when he goes

down, but Marty Turco is of the opinion that they do not need to be as wide or as thick as they are currently allowed to be. Goaltenders make them thick and as wide as possible because when they are low in a butterfly position, these pads push out and block what would be a wide open five hole. In addition to allowing goaltenders to look bigger, because they are not forced to keep their pads completely together, this "internal" padding eats up a lot of rebounds and allows the goaltender to stand up taller in the net and keep their knees off the ice. Without this additional padding closing up the five hole, the goaltender would be forced to drop completely down to their knees to get their pads together and close the gap between their legs. Not only does this expose several holes higher up in the net (under the arms and over the shoulders), but it means that the goaltender is unable to keep his skate blade edges constantly dug in, thereby making it much harder for the goaltender to move quickly from side to side.

- Marty Turco demonstrates the effect that these flaps can have and states that reducing the width of these flaps by a couple of inches would dramatically change the way in which goaltenders play without posing any major injury risks. Make the goaltenders smaller by making them work harder to be in position to make a save.
- Brendan Shanahan states that our focus should not be on the dimensions of the goal pad, but on alterations to the inside flaps that essentially allow goaltenders to play a style that makes them bigger in the nets and allows them to move too easily.
- Kevin Lowe asks Marty Turco if going to ten inch pads would increase the risk of injury. Marty Turco responds that it would.
- Kevin Lowe states that he believes that the new style of playing goal demands bigger pads that must be worn looser and that maybe this is the problem.
- Marty Turco states that if you make it harder for goaltenders to guard their five hole then more goals will be scored. It will force them to open up and require them to be much more athletic.
- Kevin Lowe states that we need to seriously think about making changes like this if we see a decrease in goal scoring as a major issue.
- Rob Blake asks Marty Turco what complaints the goaltenders will have if this change is made. Marty Turco states that they will likely argue that this seemingly minor change to their equipment will force them to play a different style and that this will increase the risk of long term injuries (e.g. hip injuries). Marty Turco does not feel that this is valid.
- Marty Turco states that this change to the equipment could be mandated in time for the start of next season. The flaps in question are not a part of the pad itself and can easily be made smaller by the manufacturers and trainers in time for next season.
- Colin Campbell notes that Kris King and Kay Whitmore will be attending the trainer's meeting in late June and can broach the topic with the trainers at that time.

- Stu Grimson states that this change cannot and should not be made for next season. Stu Grimson argues that the idea needs to be better digested and the goaltenders need to be given time to adjust to the change before it can be brought in. It will change the way they play the position. Brendan Shanahan agrees.
- Don Waddell states that it would be a bad idea to delay this change any longer than we need to.
- Marty Turco again states that this change can be pulled off in a month, giving goaltenders plenty of time to adjust and prepare for next season. The alteration to the pad is not a major one.
- Gary Bettman states the sooner we can get this change in place, the better. The more scoring decreases, the more different paths people start going down to increase scoring.
- Marty Turco states that the length of the goal pads should not be the focus. Our energies are better spent on these flaps, because they allow goaltenders to play at an angle that makes them bigger and allows them to react and move side to side much quicker.
- Marty Turco guesses that 59 of the 60 goaltenders playing in the League use these flaps on their pads.
- Gary Bettman states that procedurally, this change cannot be pushed through at this meeting of the Competition Committee. There are several internal NHLPA processes that need to be followed first.
- Stu Grimson asks Marty Turco if the manufacturers can make this happen in time for next season. Marty Turco states that they should be able to.
- Brendan Shanahan states that he believes the NHLPA would vote overwhelmingly in favor of implementing this change. This is not a protection and safety issue. The only issue that he has is that the goaltenders be given adequate time to practice with the new equipment prior to the start of next season.
- Stu Grimson states that there are some internal NHLPA hurdles that need to be passed but that the NHLPA process and discussions with manufacturers and trainers can run a parallel course.
- Colin Campbell asks Marty Turco if this is an equipment change that can be made by trainers, or one that has to happen at the manufacturer level. Marty Turco responds that it should be an easy change to make.
- Stu Grimson states that this is something that needs to be looked at closely and that should not be forced through too quickly.

HD overheads and goal judges

- Gary Bettman states that there are two technology issues to be discussed: 1) the Board of Governors will likely approve the expenditure of between \$4-5 Million Dollars to put HD overheads in every NHL rink; 2) upon request, on a team by team basis goal judges will be removed from directly behind the net in some building around the League and placed elsewhere in the arena. The League wants the goal light to come on, but we do not need the goal judge directly behind the net in order to make this happen.
- Gary Bettman states that next season the on-ice officials will likely have the ability to speak directly with the video room in Toronto and may even have a monitor in the penalty box.
- Brendan Shanahan states that there are 3 or 4 rinks around the league that do not have x-ray machines in them.
- Bill Daly states that 24 of the 30 rinks have these machines and the team physicians are all meeting this summer to come up with a recommendation for what every arena should have in terms of medical equipment.

Instigator

- Colin Campbell states that at the February GM meeting in Naples, Florida the GMs recommended that the instigator be changed so that a player would be allowed to accumulate five instigators over the course of a season before being automatically suspended. The current limit is three instigators.
- Colin Campbell states that he does not feel the instigator rule has really been a problem, but that there are those who feel it should be totally eliminated. What do the members of the Competition Committee think? Do we need to eliminate the instigator rule?
- Colin Campbell states that the automatic suspension for players who are given instigators in the last five minutes of a game, which can be rescinded by the League, has been really effective. Brendan Shanahan agrees.
- Trevor Linden does not see the current rule as problematic.
- Stu Grimson states that the real issue is how the rule has been applied. If you are playing that role and are smart, three instigators is more than enough latitude to get you through the season. He feels that there is no reason to make the jump to five. This will only lead to problems with players jumping guys.
- Don Waddell states that this change passed at the GM meeting because it came up late in the day and was not carefully considered. He voted in favor of it, but would change his vote today if he could. He spoke to others who felt the same way about it. He feels the change to five games will have no real impact, but makes for bad optics.

- All of the players and the GMs in the Competition Committee meeting agree that the proposed rule change, which was endorsed by the GMs, should not be recommended by the Competition Committee.
- Stu Grimson states that the players are in favor of leaving the instigator rule as is.
- Stu Grimson states that the officials have done an excellent job of applying the instigator conservatively and that it does not need to be loosened to five games.

Face Shields

- Stu Grimson states that the players are strongly opposed to mandatory visors. He does feel that they will start to be worn more as most players coming into the League are coming from systems that force them to wear visors.
- Gary Bettman states that the AHL experience has demonstrated that the number of facial injuries drops considerably when visors are mandatory.
- Bill Daly notes that about forty percent of NHL players wear face shields.
- Gary Bettman asks if the peer pressure to remove face shields is decreasing around the League? Kevin Lowe and Stu Grimson say that it is.
- Colin Campbell asks what he should do about tinted/mirrored visors? He does not understand why anyone would need one. Alexander Ovechkin wears on.
- Marty Turco and Rob Blake agree that they never look at other players' eyes. They do not feel there is any competitive advantage. It is more of a style thing.
- Gary Bettman states that players are not allowed to wear these visors at IIHF events and do not seem to complain, so why do we allow them in the NHL?
- Ian Penny wonders why the League would want to detract from something that Ovechkin feels is good for the way he plays/his image. He notes that there has not been an explosion of these visors.
- Kevin Lowe asks what if someone were to wear a bright colored visor. Does this undermine the integrity of the uniform?
- Stu Grimson states that the NFL allows its players to wear tinted visors, why shouldn't the NHL?
- Bill Daly states that the major concern is with visors that are too colorful.
- Colin Campbell notes that the League probably could have outlawed them under the rule book from day one. Stu Grimson responds that this ability has been waived.
- Colin Campbell states that if there is not an appetite to get rid of them, then so be it. Don Waddell notes that this is only true of tinted visors, mirrored visors are still not

allowed. Even the tinted visors cannot be too dark. He notes that they agreed at the last Competition Committee meeting that you had to be able to see a player's eyes through them from reasonably close.

- Stu Grimson asks if there is a specific distance from which we have to be able to see the player's eyes? Don Waddell responds there is not.

Fighting

- Colin Campbell introduces the discussion by showing a series of fights that ended in knockouts from this past season. He notes that he mentioned to a reporter that maybe it was a topic that needed to be discussed, is it?
- Brendan Shanahan states that the automatic suspension for instigators in the last five minutes has been very effective at getting rid of the stupid stuff.
- Brendan Shanahan states that today's fighters are very specialized and getting so big and strong. He feels there are less fights, but that they are getting more dangerous because the guys that fight are essentially trained fighters.
- Trevor Linden states that staged fights between fighters are not really a necessary part of the game.
- Brendan Shanahan asks Stu Grimson what happens more often: 1) fight to protect a teammate; 2) fight because it's your job and you feel you have to. Stu Grimson adds that there is a third reason 3) fight to change momentum and states that clearly 2) and 3) occur more often than 1). He states that, from his experience, players who play that role would rather play than fight.
- Brendan Shanahan asks the group if the argument that teams need tough guys to protect their skill players really holds true today.
- Kevin Lowe states that having a second referee on the ice has really helped to police things, as it eliminates a lot of the little, cheap stuff.
- Colin Campbell again asks, is it really a problem?
- The feeling is that, with Anaheim winning the Stanley Cup, teams will be building more around toughness now.
- Stu Grimson states that the hard salary cap and the twenty three man roster limit collapse some of the checking forward/players who fight roles into one (e.g. Chris Neil).
- Colin Campbell states that the League will suspend players for "bully fights". He refers to Domi and Arvedsson, Tootoo and Robidas and May on Johnsson as examples.

- Stu Grimson states that teams do not have as many tough guys on their rosters as they used too. Not as many around the League as there once was.
- Kevin Lowe asks the group if fighting helps or hurts hockey's credibility as a sport in the United States. Stu Grimson states that he cannot imagine it chases people away. Gary Bettman feels that it probably brings as many people in as removing it would.
- Gary Bettman asks if specialist fighters lead to more of a concern that someone will get hurt. Stu Grimson does not think so. In his opinion there have always been big, strong guys. He feels the issue is the same as the head hit issue, in that fighters assume some risk when they fill that role.
- Colin Campbell states that the moment someone gets killed it will be very difficult to morally defend allowing punches to the face.
- Kevin Lowe says that part of the problem is that we are much quicker to send players off on stretchers than we used to be. Looks more dramatic.
- Brendan Shanahan suggests that maybe limiting the number of fights that a player can get into and that a team can get into is the solution. This might make fighting more of a natural/organic part of the game.
- Colin Campbell concludes that this is an issue to keep on the backburner and to keep discussing.
- Stu Grimson states that teams clearly play differently against teams that have a tough guy in the line up. The example is cited of the New York Rangers and Philadelphia Flyers when Colton Orr was playing.

Conclusion

- Colin Campbell wraps up the meeting by noting that the group has made progress on the issue of hits to the head. There has also been progress on the possibility of decreasing the size of goaltenders.
- Colin Campbell states that, as of right now, nothing will be done about forbidding line changes after intentional offside calls.



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMPETITION COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
TORONTO, ONTARIO
JULY 25, 2006**

A meeting of the Competition Committee was held at the National Hockey League's Toronto Office in Toronto, Ontario on July 25, 2006. The meeting convened at 7:30 a.m. Colin Campbell, Senior Executive Vice President and Director of Hockey Operations presided.

In attendance from the League Office were Commissioner Gary B. Bettman; Senior Vice President, Hockey Operations Michael Murphy; Senior Vice President and Director of Officiating, Stephen Walkom; Director, Hockey Operations Kris King. In attendance from the Players Association Office were executive Director and General Counsel Ted Saskin; Director, Hockey Affairs Mike Gartner, and

The Competition Committee Members in attendance were:

Rob Blake	representing the Players Association
Martin Brodeur (via conference call)	representing the Players Association
Bob Gainey	representing the General Managers
Jarome Iginla	representing the Players Association
Trevor Linden	representing the Players Association
Kevin Lowe	representing the General Managers
David Poile	representing the General Managers
Brendan Shanahan	representing the Players Association
Don Waddell	representing the General Managers

*Ed Snider was not in attendance however, he requested the Mr. Campbell vote on his behalf.

Introduction: Colin Campbell welcomed the attendees to the Competition Committee Meeting and provided a brief overview of the meeting's agenda. Mr. Campbell reviewed the changes that had been made to the game in the last year and the individuals that had played a crucial role in the process. Mr. Campbell discussed with the Committee of the issues that had been addressed at the General Manager's Meeting on June 23, 2006.

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1. Review / Discussion of New Rule Changes

Mr. Campbell began the meeting by addressing the rule changes and their progression, beginning with their inception during training camp, to their role in the playoffs and the feedback that was generated. Mr. Campbell reviewed the trial and error process that was experienced with the new rules and commented upon the progression of both the Players and the Officials. Mr. Campbell commented on the development of the game and stressed that it was the responsibility of the Committee to keep thinking forward to ensure that this style of play would continue. Mr. Campbell further summarized the steps that were taken by the League's Hockey Operations Department to monitor the Officials and ensure that they were calling the proper penalties as well as adhering to the new Standard.

2. Officiating: Discussion with Stephen Walkom

Mr. Campbell introduced Stephen Walkom and asked him to further the discussion regarding the ways in which the rules changes had affected the Officials. Mr. Walkom provided a brief synopsis of the progression of the calls and the methods that were used to make the Officials more confident. Mr. Walkom described the preparation that went into the Officials Training Camp at the beginning of the 05-06 Season. He specifically addressed the different scenarios that were presented to the Officials and the emphasis that was placed upon setting a uniform standard of calling. Trevor Linden asked Mr. Walkom whether the Officials responded in a positive nature. Mr. Walkom responded that the meetings with the Players and Coaches was a positive experience for the Officials. However, Mr. Walkom stated that the meetings would become too competitive if this exercise continued during the regular season. Mr. Linden further commented on how effective the Official's introductions in the team dressing rooms had been prior to the start of the season. Brendan Shanahan agreed with Mr. Linden stating that it had created better communication lines and more equality amongst everyone on the ice. Following Mr. Shanahan's comment, a discussion ensued regarding the amount of talking that takes place on the ice between the Officials and the players. The discussion touched upon how effective communication between the two sides had been as well as its effect upon the new style of play over the previous season. The discussion was concluded by Mr. Linden who stressed the educational process of the pre-season and the opportunity that it provided for situations such as the former.

3. Review of Enforcement of Rules

The focus of the meeting was then directed to the previous discussion regarding the recent rule changes and the matter in which they were intended to be enforced going forward. Mr. Poile expressed his concern for next season as it was in his opinion that all of the parties involved would be under different types of pressure. A discussion regarding the future of rule enforcement ensued. Mr. Campbell addressed a number of controversial calls associated with free hits, hooking and tripping. It was suggested by Mr. Poile and Mr. Linden that an educational DVD be sent to all the teams outlining exactly what would be called in order to emphasize the enforcement of the "Standard".

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Don Waddell agreed that an emphasis on zero tolerance Standard was necessary especially with regards to battling around the net, as the frequency of calls seemed to change depending upon the time of year. Upon Mr. Waddell's comment, a discussion ensued regarding the grey area associated with a number of calls, specifically regarding the amount of time allowed for a player to finish a check and the adjustments that had to be made with these calls. Mr. Walkom reminded the Committee Members that the biggest problem associated with battling around the net and hitting along the boards was embellishment. Mr. Campbell agreed with Mr. Walkom and addressed the issue of crosschecking, asking the players how they felt that it had been called throughout the past season. A further discussion ensued and it was concluded by the Players that the appropriate calls had been made. They deemed battling in front of the net to be a vital aspect of the game as it created screens and opened up more scoring opportunities. The discussion progressed by addressing ideas such as a bigger crease, as well as the idea of the implementation of a key. The ideas that were proposed were intended to maintain the high level of goals scored as well as to create more room for the goalies. Mr. Gartner concluded the discussion by stating that upon reviewing the Standard, it seemed clear that the Committee was looking for ways to improve the game by making every effort to educate the Players and the Officials. Mr. Campbell agreed by stating that the most important objective for the upcoming season was to shrink the grey as much as possible to ensure that all of the parties involved were of the same mindset.

Following Mr. Campbell's comment, Mr. Shanahan addressed the group asking their opinion on the type of message they were planning to project to the media. Mr. Bettman and Mr. Campbell stated that it was the responsibility of the group to display a positive image. They asked that everyone continue to acknowledge their satisfaction with the Standard and its role in continuing to uphold the style of play that was demonstrated throughout the 2005-2006 Season.

Mr. Lowe agreed with the conclusions drawn by Mr. Bettman and Mr. Campbell, but asked what steps would be put in place to prepare for the upcoming changes. Mr. Lowe was primarily concerned with the Research & Development Team and their projected plans. Following Mr. Lowe's comments, a brief discussion developed regarding the implementation proposed rule changes from both the Players Association and the League. Mr. Poile stressed the need for forward thinking and Mr. Lowe agreed suggesting there might be benefits that would be afforded to the League by bringing in an outside source to evaluate what has been established in an effort to increase productivity and revenue.

4. Review of Rules

Concluding the discussion of rule enforcement, Mr. Campbell asked the group to participate in an open discussion regarding their perspectives on the new rules and the extent of how effective they were. Upon the discussion of the first two rules in question: Rule 75 and Rule 5, neither the League representatives nor the Player's Association representatives had any grievances. Mr. Campbell then addressed the third proposed rule change: Rule 21 – *Reduction of the size of the goaltender's equipment*. The Committee Members were primarily concerned with the progression of the methods used for measurement. The questions were primarily directed towards Martin Brodeur and Kris

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King. It was the consensus of both individuals that the next step would have to involve measuring the equipment according to the size of the goalies rather than setting a definite standard. Mr. Brodeur specifically commented upon the smaller goalies and their ability to take advantage of the use of larger equipment. Mr. Gartner stated that the smaller goalies may argue that it is necessary for them to wear larger equipment, as it would afford them more size and protection. The Committee Members continued to discuss the topic of the size of equipment and the methods that could be put in place to deter the small percentage that were believed to be cheating.

Mr. Gainey asked the group if they had the power to give Mr. King the authority to visit every team and determine the appropriate size of the equipment based upon the size of the player. Mr. Bettman responded by stating that it would be possible if a rule change was put into effect. Mr. King stated that he was aware of who was cheating and that this would not be a tough initiative. In conjunction with the proposed initiative to send Mr. King to the Teams for individual measurement, all of the Committee Members were in favor of instituting the tighter Goalie jerseys that had been proposed at the start of the previous season. Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they supported tightening up the size specifications for the Goalies. Mr. Brodeur proposed the idea of having each team send in the size specification of their goalies as a way to cross-reference their equipment upon inspection and to place the onus upon the goalie for not adhering. All 10 Members of the Committee supported the proposed initiative to tighten size specifications for the Goalies.

Mr. Campbell redirected the Group's attention towards the discussion of the new rules. Mr. Campbell stated that all of the changes had widespread support with the possible exception of Rule 51 – *shooting the puck over the glass*. Many of the committee members had comments regarding this penalty specifically when it was deemed necessary as a defensive play, as opposed to when it was deemed to be an intentional tactic to delay the game. Mr. Lowe stated that there were 2,500 fewer pucks over the glass than there had been in the 2003-2004 season. Mr. Bettman called for a vote to see whether or not everyone was in favor of keeping this rule. After a brief discussion regarding the degree of clarity that would have to be enforced, 9 out of the 10 Members voted in favor of keeping the rule.

Mr. Campbell further addressed the rule changes by discussing Rule 56 – *Intentional fighting*. Mr. Campbell stated that there was some grey area associated with the rule. He addressed a few scenarios and stated his concern for the rule specifically as well as its wording. Mr. Campbell stated that he was content with the rule, but that the wording should be altered. Mr. Campbell suggested adding “discretion” to the wording of the rule in an effort to clarify its exact implication. After a brief discussion, it was unanimously agreed upon by the group to add “discretion” to the wording of Rule 56 to provide further clarification for its intent.

The next rule change that was addressed by the group was Rule 89 – *The shootout*. Mr. Gartner suggested the possibility of changing the number of shooters to 5 from 3 and asked the Committee Members to comment. A discussion ensued regarding the Players perspectives and the fan response received from the previous season. Following the discussion a vote was held and none of the Committee Members voted in favor of

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changing the number of shooters from 3 to 5. Following the vote, it was brought to the attention of the group by Mr. Murphy that approximately 70 % of the teams that scored first during the shootout went on to win the game. In light of this statistic, it was suggested that the home team be given the option of shooting first or passing. After a brief discussion, a vote was conducted and it was unanimously agreed upon by the Committee Members that the Home Team would be allowed the option to shoot first during the shootout. Following the vote, further discussion surrounding the rule changes was not necessary. The discussion regarding last season's rule changes was therefore concluded.

5. Minor Penalties in Overtime:

Mr. Campbell directed the meeting towards the possibility of implementing one minute minor penalties in the overtime periods as opposed to the status quo. A brief discussion began in which the Members addressed a variety of issues associated with the five minute overtime and the excitement that was created, especially during powerplays. Mr. Lowe argued that if the minor penalties were reduced to one minute penalties and in turn became less punitive, that the players may become more apt to drawing penalties. Mr. Campbell stated that at the previous General Manager's Meeting in Vancouver, that the Managers had voted 16 to 14 in favor of changing the rule. The Committee Members voted 9 to 1 in favor of keeping the two minute minor penalties in the overtime period.

6. Overtime

Following the discussion regarding overtime penalties, the Committee discussed the idea of having the shootout in the playoffs. A discussion ensued regarding different ways to end overtime games during the playoffs. Mr. Campbell suggested the option of reducing the teams to a 4 on 4 situation at the start of the second overtime. Mr. Shanahan supported Mr. Campbell's idea but stated that they would not be able to rule on the proposal without speaking to the players. The majority of the Committee Members were supportive of the proposed change as it would help establish a concrete time frame for the games. The Committee further agreed that it would be a beneficial initiative for the players, the fans, and the media as it would alleviate a lot of the uncertainty associated with broadcasting. The Committee Members discussed the impact that this would have on all of the parties involved while specifically addressing the projected response of the General Managers. It was concluded that the proposed idea of reducing the teams to 4 on 4 during the second period of overtime during the playoffs, was an idea worth considering, but that it was something to be discussed at length by both sides before any decisions could be made.

6. Curve Sticks:

Mr. Campbell informed the Committee that the General Managers had voted in favor of changing the curvature of the sticks to the IIHF $\frac{3}{4}$ " curve. Mr. Campbell asked the representatives of the Players Association if they supported the proposed change. A

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discussion regarding the effect of a greater curve as well as the possibility of enforcing a minimum weight for the sticks was addressed. Throughout the discussion there was a lot of concern regarding the policing policy that would be adopted in order to make sure that illegal curves would not be making their way onto the ice. Everyone agreed that it was incumbent upon the player to make sure that any sticks that they chose to use were deemed legal. Mr. Gartner intervened by stating the IIHF Standard was in centimeters and was between 5/8" and 3/4" of a curve. Despite the correction, everyone was still supportive of discussing the adoption of a 3/4" curve. Mr. Walkom asked if the Committee would allow the players to further alter their sticks. The Committee agreed that this would be allowed, however they emphasized the importance of setting a standard and making sure that it would be enforced for issues of safety. Mr. Waddell also emphasized the importance of creating a penalty severe enough to deter players from attempting to bend the Standard. Following Mr. Waddell's comment a discussion ensued regarding the policing measures that would be enforced for both the players and their teams, as well as the manufacturers.

After the circulation of numerous ideas, Mr. Shanahan suggested that it was his and Mr. Iginla's opinion that the best method for identifying an illegal stick would have to be an initiative executed by the coaches, especially during the shootouts. Mr. Shanahan suggested that upon a coach questioning the legality of a player's stick, if they were correct, then the opposing team would lose one of their three shooters, and if they were incorrect, then their team would lose the rights to one of their three shooters. Mr. Shanahan believed that due to the severity of this ruling, that it would primarily act as a viable deterrent to ensure that coaches would not randomly accuse players, and secondly, that it would deter players from cheating.

Mr. Shanahan's suggestion generated a lengthy discussion. As it became more and more difficult to define the nature of the penalty and the methods that would be used to enforce it, the consensus was made by both sides that their goal was to completely eliminate the problem. The Committee Members discussed whether or not the players would be more apt to cheat even with the allowance of a bigger curve. The discussion was primarily targeted towards safety concerns during the course of play rather than the shootout. Mr. Brodeur stated that because the shootout was designed for entertainment purposes, that it was in his opinion that the players should be allowed to use their stick of choice as safety concerns would not be as much an issue and it would make for a more exciting finale.

As it became clear that two topics were in fact being discussed: an illegal stick during the shootout versus an illegal stick during regulation and overtime, Mr. Campbell asked the Committee to rule on the following proposal for the use of an illegal stick during the shootout:

Penalty – next shooter lost

- *if coach is wrong – coach receives a \$1,000.00 fine
 - Team receives a \$5,000.00 fine
 - the coach's team will lose a shooter
- *if coach is right – player receives a \$1,000.00 fine
 - team receives a \$5,000.00 fine
 - the player's team will lose a shooter

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Mr. Campbell stated that the objective of this ruling would be to put the onus on the player for using an illegal stick that did not comply with the standard of a $\frac{3}{4}$ curve, or the standardized width. Mr. Campbell then asked the committee members to vote on this proposal and 7 of the 10 Members voted in favor of this change. The vote was passed under the guidelines of the CBA and therefore the rule (19 - Sticks) change is deemed approved by the Committee and is subject to a vote of the Board of Governors.

Upon finalizing a decision regarding the use of an illegal stick during the shootout, the Committee focused their discussion towards the penalty for having an illegal stick during regulation. It was agreed that with the introduction of the $\frac{3}{4}$ curve that anything more could prove to be a safety hazard. Mr. Bettman suggested that the first time a player was caught that they would receive a minor penalty, the second time they would receive a fine, and the third time they would be subject to a one game suspension. Mr. Campbell called for a vote in favor of Mr. Bettman's suggestion and all ten members of the Committee voted in favor.

It was also ruled all illegal sticks would be seized and shipped to Hockey Operations in Toronto.

Lunch Break: 12:20

Once the meeting resumed, Mr. Murphy informed the group that a correction had been made to the statistic that had been given previously stated regarding the shootout. Mr. Murphy's correction stated that only 56% of teams that scored first went on to win the shootout rather than the average of 70% that had been cited. In light of this correction, Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they were still willing to uphold their initial ruling to allow the Home Team the advantage to shoot first during the shootout. After a brief show of hands, the Committee was still supportive of the change and the initial ruling was therefore upheld.

Upon reentering discussion, Mr. Brodeur was no longer on the Conference call. In his absence, Mr. Campbell was no longer required to vote on behalf Mr. Snider. The vote therefore was reduced to 8 individuals instead of 10.

7. Broken Sticks

Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they felt that it was necessary to pursue a stick study in order to find the minimum strength necessary to reduce the number of broken sticks. From the players perspective, Mr. Linden thought that the players should be allowed to use what was most comfortable for them. From the Manager's perspective, Mr. Waddell argued that the cost of sticks was continuing to grow and that it was something that had to be taken into consideration. After a brief discussion from supporters on both sides, it was agreed upon by the Committee members that a formal study should be conducted and presented to the players to show the average number of broken sticks, the costs as well as safety issues associated with them before any further discussion regarding the weight of the sticks would occur.

8. Diving / Embellishment

Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they were satisfied with the process used to discipline divers. The Committee members emphasized that they were content with the step by step process that had been but in place, but believed that more had to be done; that the consequences needed to be more severe. Mr. Shanahan even stated that it should be in the League's interest not to suspend players, but to deter them from diving as it challenges the integrity of the game. The players thought that because of the subjective nature associated with calling dives, that the process should still take the form of a multi-step supplementary discipline process.

After a brief discussion regarding the current form of supplementary discipline for divers, the Committee Members agreed that the process should be reduced to three stages during the regular season and two stages during the playoffs. Mr. Campbell agreed with the new proposal and added that players would be given a clean slate once the playoffs began. Mr. Campbell stated the newly proposed disciplinary process to provide clarification: first incident – warning letter; second incident - \$1000.00 fine; third incident – phone call to the player from Mr. Campbell to discuss the incident, and possible suspension which is not subject to appeal). Following Mr. Campbell's summary, Mr. Gartner emphasized the importance of allowing the player to plead their case upon being considered for suspension due to the subjective nature of assessing dives. Mr. Campbell then summarized the disciplinary process for the playoffs: first incident - \$1,000.00 fine; second incident – phone call to the player from Mr. Campbell and possible suspension (again not subject to appeal). The suspensions would increase (double) for each ensuing incident by the player. After stating the proposed process, Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they were prepared to vote. All 8 committee members passed the newly proposed supplementary discipline process for diving during the regular season and the playoffs. Following the vote, Mr. Linden asked that a Diving DVD be sent to all the teams to allow players the opportunity to clearly understand what will be called.

In light of the proposed change for diving discipline, Mr. Waddell suggested implementing the same process for the use of an illegal stick. A brief discussion ensued and the group agreed that due to the subjective nature of assessing dives that the newly passed disciplinary process was designed accordingly and was not applicable for black and white infractions such as the use of an illegal stick.

9. Tinted Shields

Mr. Campbell introduced the topic of tinted shields to the Committee by stating that at the previous General Manager's Meeting, that 29 of the 30 Managers in attendance had voted in favor of not allowing their further use. Mr. Campbell stated that the Managers had deemed them to be unnecessary and concluded that the only players to be allowed exemption, would be those who required them for medical purposes. Mr. Gartner responded to Mr. Campbell by stating that 79% of the players who had been questioned regarding this topic, were in favor of allowing tinted shields to be optional. Mr. Lowe intervened by commenting on the marketability of being able to see the players and

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argued that tinted shields would obstruct this. Mr. Lowe sighted player Alex Ovechkin in particular, stating his importance to the game and the frustration with not being able to see his face due to his tinted shield. Following Mr. Lowe's comment, a lengthy discussion took place regarding Mr. Ovechkin's shield and whether or not a grandfather clause should be evoked if in fact a vote was passed to prohibit tinted shields. As well, the issue of not being able to see a player's face in competitive play. Following the discussion, Mr. Campbell asked the Committee if they were prepared to vote on the disallowance of tinted shields. Mr. Saskin stated that in light of the fact that 79% of the players supported their use, that there would have to be a compelling reason for going ahead and voting without speaking further to the players. Following Mr. Saskin's comment, there was a brief discussion about whether or not the option of a "lesser tint" could be introduced. After a conclusion could not be reached, it was decided that a conference call with Mr. Ovechkin would have to take place in addition to further discussion with the players.

* * *

Mr. Campbell concluded the meeting by stating that there had been two topics listed on the agenda that had not been addressed: Supplemental Discipline and Playoff Bracketing. Mr. Campbell stated that a conference call would be arranged for August, at which point both sides would be able to review what had been discussed. Mr. Campbell further stated that a video would be sent to the Competition Committee members addressing supplemental discipline.

Mr. Campbell explained he would like the Players and Managers viewpoints on a couple of Supplemental Discipline issues.

Following Mr. Campbell's conclusion, the Competition Committee unanimously agreed to keep the content of the meeting confidential with the exception of rule enforcement and its continued support on behalf of the League and the Players Association. As there was no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMPETITION COMMITTEE
HELD AT THE NHL TORONTO OFFICE
TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2005**

A meeting of the Competition Committee was held at the NHL Toronto Office on Tuesday, July 19, 2005 which convened at 9:00 a.m. Colin Campbell, Executive Vice President and Director of Hockey Operations, presided

In attendance (in alphabetical order) were:

Blake, Rob	Player Representative
Campbell, Colin	NHL Representative
Gainey, Bob	GM Representative
Gartner, Mike	NHLPA Representative
Iginla, Jarome	Player Representative
Linden, Trevor	Player Representative
Lowe, Kevin	GM Representative
Poile, David	GM Representative
Shanahan, Brendan	Player Representative
Snider, Ed (via conference call)	Owner Representative
Waddell, Don	GM Representative

Introduction: Colin Campbell announced those present for the meeting to Mr. Ed Snider who was participating in the meeting via conference call. At that time Mr. Campbell duly noted that it was the Commissioner's expectation for the Committee to put forth their Rule Recommendations at the conclusion of the Meeting.

1. Zero Tolerance on Interference, Hooking and Holding:

Mr. Campbell advised the Committee that Mike Murphy would be conducting a meeting on July 28th in Toronto with the three members of each of the following groups: Players / Coaches / Managers / Referees for the purpose of defining "Interference / Obstruction". The idea is to have each of the groups involved for the purpose of having ownership of the solution going forward in hopes of the process not breaking down as it has done in the past. Mr. Campbell stated that Mr. Murphy would be stopping by the meeting at some point to discuss the meeting in more detail with the Committee. It was also mentioned that those from the Committee that would be unable to attend, a recommended replacement would be required. It was suggested that the meeting only be one day in duration in respect for everyone's time with so much to be done.

2. Goaltenders:

a) Reduction of equipment:

Mr. Campbell informed the Committee that Kris King has already started receiving equipment from Manufacturers. It was noted that the process is still in its infancy stage and that there are some logistics needing to be

sorted out i.e. how to ship back to the Manufacturers, etc. Manufacturers are not pleased with extra step. It was also stated that perhaps Kay Whitmore should be hired to help with the process. Mike Gartner thought Mr. Whitmore would be a good choice for the position..

Going forward, the goaltenders of all 30 teams will be visited at any time during the day to have their equipment measured. Even though goalies are sensitive – we have to do it now otherwise it jeopardizes the quality of our game. It was suggested that a picture of each goalie with their equipment on could be sent to each team as a reference.

Mike Gartner stipulated that the goaltenders don't mind the reduction in equipment, just want the penalties to be consistent.

Suggested penalties for violation are one game suspension to the player, \$25,000 to the team and \$1,000 fine to the Trainer. It was noted that by fining the Trainer, it would give the Trainer a reason to address the issue with the goaltender since it would be affecting him personally.

b) Retain AHL Goaltender's crease behind net:

Worked pretty well in the AHL. Somewhat curtailed the goalie wandering. One question – debating – goalie coming out deep in the corner and not being fair game.

c) Emphasize Rule Book re: Goaltender Freezing Puck / Stopping Play:

It was noted that most stoppages in a game are the result of goalies freezing the puck. Bob Gainey stated that the Officials needed to be instructed on freezing the puck and that the area has to be taken away from the goalies. Mr. Campbell stated that there had been discussions internally in the Hockey Operations Dept. as there was ambiguity concerning the rule and that the Referees would ask "how do I interpret the rule? Kevin Lowe stated that if the goalie had the ability to play it – then play it or it would result in a penalty. It was determined that the goalies needed to be instructed on the rules are going forward. Mr. Campbell stated that the Hockey Operations Department would get 10 – 15 clips with a description from the Officials on what the definition should be to be delivered to the Teams by Training Camp.

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

3. Overtime / Shoot-out / Points:

- 2 pts for win in regulation.
- 1 pt each team for tie in regulation.
- 1pt for each win in 4-4 or shoot-out.

This was a contentious issue. While the GMs felt that 4 on 4 was very successful and exciting for the fans and that most Managers wanted to maintain the present system. Players think a little differently and like the 2/0 point structure. They don't think that a point should be awarded for mediocrity. They felt there should be a winner and there should be a loser. Fans need to feel really excited or heart-broken at the conclusion of a game.. Players think win / lose, GMs think Playoff races. It was determined that the GMs did not want the Playoff races to

stop Feb. 1st. Mr. Snider was all for keeping the 2/1 and not have the 3 on 3. He also felt that if we wanted the Shoot-out to be embraced that we would have to award it 2 points.

Vote was conducted with respect to adding 3 on 3 (to the above-referenced bullet points):

Ed Snider:	No
Rob Blake:	No
Kevin Lowe:	Yes
Jarome Iginla:	Yes
Trevor Linden:	Yes
David Poile:	No
Mike Gartner:	Yes
Bob Gainey:	No
Don Waddell:	Yes
Brendan Shanahan:	Yes
Total Count:	6 Yes
	4 No

Vote was conducted without 3 on 3 (to the above-referenced bullet points):

Ed Snider:	Yes
Rob Blake:	Yes (would rather have 2/0 Pt structure)
Kevin Lowe:	Yes
Jarome Iginla:	No (would rather have 2/0 Pt structure)
Trevor Linden:	Yes (would rather have 2/0 Pt structure)
David Poile:	Yes
Mike Gartner:	Yes (would rather have 2/0 Pt structure)
Bob Gainey:	Yes
Don Waddell:	Yes
Brendan Shanahan:	Yes (would rather have 2/0 Pt structure)

Total Count:	9 – Yes
	1 – No

A recommendation to move forward was made with Mike Gartner suggesting that this should be revisited in the future. Also play-ins and the point structure to be revisited in the future.

If time permitted, a discussion can take place regarding 4 on 4 in the 2nd overtime period in the Playoffs.

4. **Bigger Nets:**

Mr. Snider discussed the option of going with bigger nets. Suggested that we keep changing rules to get more offensive and more scoring and we haven't been successful in the past. He does not feel that the testing done in the AHL was successful (although the GMs noted that the zero-tolerance and removal of the red line was not included with the changes in the AHL in order to be a fair comparison). Players have increased in size over the years while the nets have remained the same. Mr. Snider does not feel that the reduction in equipment alone will make a big difference. Does not think that changing the size of the nets is as radical as the changes we are already pursuing.

Vote on bigger nets was conducted:

Brendan Shanahan:	No
Don Waddell:	No
Bob Gainey:	No
Mike Gartner:	No (revisit as necessary)
David Poile:	No (a lot of interest the longer you talk about it – getting arms around it – timing is not there to do it. Everyone wants to try the other things first – leave it on the table going forward.)
Trevor Linden:	No
Jarome Iginla:	No (not for this season)
Kevin Lowe:	No (going after zero tolerance on obstruction - too far down that path now – would not recommend it at this time. Not there for the fan demand.)
Rob Blake:	No (would like to see how obstruction plays out once the top players are given more opportunity to score.)
Ed Snider	Yes
Total Count:	9 - No 1 – Yes

However it can be noted that players are warming up to the idea and would be open-minded to address this issue in the future should the desired results not be achieved with the present rule changes being considered.

5. **Tag-Up:**

Very little discussion needed took place on this issue before gaining unanimous support for the tag-up to be introduced similar to application in AHL.

6. **Taking out the Red Line (for the purpose of a two-line pass):**

Colin Campbell stipulated that it has been used in other Leagues and felt that our players would make it work because they are the best in the world. His point was that we have argued about it in the past and we will never know until we try it.

Unanimous support for taking out the red line.

7. **Icing (with the red line out):**

Discussed touch icing being maintained but with the Linesmen's judgment - puck crosses the goal line – whistle is blown. GMs thought it needed to go back to the player re injuries. The players like the Touch Icing – just don't like the injury factor. The problem is that we are talking about an injury that hasn't happened yet. They felt that No-Touch was not an option.

Vote was conducted for Touch Icing maintained with Linesman's judgment regarding attempted pass – waived-off:

Mike Gartner:	abstained (now that Mr. Snider was no longer on the call and thus not voting, his vote was not required.)
Brendan Shanahan:	No– Yes to status quo
Don Waddell:	Yes
Bob Gainey:	Yes
David Poile:	Yes
Trevor Linden:	Yes
Jarome Iginla	Yes
Kevin Lowe:	No – Yes to status Quo
Rob Blake:	Yes

Total Count: 6 – Yes
2 – No (yes to status quo)
1 - abstain

8. Zero Tolerance on Interference / Hooking and Holding:

Mike Murphy joined the meeting for the purpose of discussion the Interference / Obstruction Meeting that was going to take place in Toronto on July 28th, 2005. Mr. Murphy handed out a package to all in attendance to look over in preparation of formulating a definition of Interference / Obstruction. It was asked that whoever could not attend that they find a suitable replacement. It was expressed that in order to have zero tolerance it would take a massive culture shift and that if we could not achieve this, we are done. This is the way we will let the great players be great. Brendan Shanahan stated that the players have to know that this will not go away and that they have to invest the time to change the way they play. It had been expressed that stick on stick and body on body would represent a good play. Once a definition has been established, it would also be provided to the various Leagues as well.

9. a) **Wider Lines:** It was deemed that the wider lines would be less relevant with the red line out.

Vote was conducted:

Rob Blake:	No
Kevin Lowe:	Yes
Jarome Iginla:	No
Trevor Linden:	No
David Poile:	No
Bob Gainey:	No
Don Waddell:	Yes
Brendan Shanahan:	No

Total Count: 6 – No
2 - Yes

b) Moving Lines:

Icing Line (Goal line) = 11' from end boards
Icing Line (Goal Line) to outside blue line = 64'
Inside from centre ice - blue line to blue line = 50'
End Boards to outside Blue Line = 75'
(Both face-off dots and face-off circle move automatically with the line movements.)

Unanimous support for the above-referenced line markings.

10. Instigator:

Final 5 minutes of game if player instigates fight – automatic 1 game suspension to double with each additional incident. Coach receives \$10,000 fine also to double with each additional incident. Hockey Operations can rescind. No appeals allowed.

Colin Campbell stated that it is normally in the last 5 minutes of a game when something bad happens with lingering effects with two more games in your division. With back to back games this will happen more often. He stated that he hadn't seen a "good" fight in the last 5 minutes of a game.

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

11. Diving:

Colin Campbell discussed how the After reviewing game videos, fines will be assessed to players who dive or embellish to draw penalties. The Hockey Operations Department will make a determination in this regard, based upon the player's history and the severity of the incident. A list of fines and / or suspensions to players will be distributed to every club on a weekly basis and clubs will be directed to post the list in an appropriate location within their respective dressing rooms. The purpose of this rule enforcement is to eliminate what has become an unseemly aspect of our game by embarrassing those players who habitually engage in this practice.

Hockey Operations noted the following process:

- 1st Incident: warning letter to GM & player (not to whole League)
- 2nd Incident: \$1,000 fine and list circulated throughout League.
- 3rd Incident: \$2,000 fine and list circulated throughout League.
- 4th Incident: one (1) game suspension with suspension doubling with each subsequent incident – no appeal.
- Playoffs: Same unless you are a 3rd or 4th time offender in the regular season, then next incident \$5,000 fine. 2nd incident one (1) game suspension.
- Fine Letter to be sent to every team weekly and posted in locker room.

Brendan Shanahan suggested that the Officials be kept apprised of the list as well and felt that the list should be distributed to those needing it in the League.

Trevor Linden suggested that this list be kept amongst ourselves and not made public.

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

13. Complaints / Derogatory Comments Toward Game:

It was agreed that this has been a problem in the past and that nobody should be trashing the game. It is very disrespectful to the very game that is providing them with a living. Any comment that is demeaning to the product or any negative insinuation to the game – is not right. Mike Gartner has no problem assessing fines to their members but wants to talk about it more amongst themselves. Public derogatory comments about Officiating undermines the integrity of the game. Comments about Officiating need to be addressed with your Manager, Competition Committee. It was mentioned that there should be a 12 / 24 hour rule following a game before you can contact someone so that it is not done in the “heat of the moment”. Colin Campbell mentioned that Gary Bettman has conducted meetings with all teams and has indicated that going forward he would not be hesitant in fining for this practice.

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

14. Playoffs :

It was agreed that there wasn't enough known about and that it should be tabled for another year

15. Officiating:

Colin Campbell explained that going forward, Officials may be assigned to divisions / conferences more often for cost effective measures. The possibility was also discussed for the Officials to meet with the Teams at the beginning of the season. Trevor Linden brought forth the idea of having the Officials meet with the entire Team at every pre-season game. The feeling was that it would be helpful to have a question and answer period to exchange information and to get to know the Officials a little better as human beings. Colin Campbell mentioned that it could also be done following the All-Star / Olympic Break as well.

16. Shooting puck in stands from defensive zone:

Will result in a two (2) minute penalty similar to the goaltender penalty for delay of game.

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

17. No line change on the icing – anytime:

Unanimous support for the above-referenced.

18. To serve coincidental minors when teams are already one-man short i.e. the Edmonton 80's rule:

David Poile stated that this was changed because of the fact they didn't think the referee could differentiate...bailed out and left it on 5 on 4.

Colin Campbell stated that this was changed in the late 1980's.

Brendan Shanahan remarked that when he was on the power play, he would attempt to draw an Adam Foote into a penalty so they would now be in a 4 on 3 power play situation.

Trevor Linden stated that it is the power play guy doing it to the penalty killing guy.

Vote was conducted:

Rob Blake:	Yes
Kevin Lowe	No (Roughing is the common one.)
Jarome Iginla:	Yes
Trevor Linden:	Yes
David Poile:	No
Bob Gainey:	No
Don Waddell:	Yes
Brendan Shanahan:	Yes (Concerned someone will take advantage of it. Our referees need to realize tactics.)

Total Count: 5 – Yes
3 – No

19. 4 on 4 Overtime playing strength:

This was to correct how penalties were served going into overtime from regulation time and penalties assessed during overtime.

All penalties would now be served as they were in regulation time.

Unanimous Support for the above-referenced.

Colin Campbell, after speaking with Gary Bettman, made mention that Gary is going to present the rules as a package opposed to being voted on individually at the Board of Governors Meeting.