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Hockey Rules in Real Life

By David Leonhardt

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"I went to the fights the other night...and a hockey game broke out." --Rodney Dangerfield.

Every hockey fan has heard of Todd Bertuzzi. Bertuzzi plays for the Vancouver Canucks. Make that "fights" for the Vancouver Canucks. Make that "fought" for the Vancouver Canucks -- he "might" not play again, after breaking fellow player Steve Moore's neck in a brutal attack from behind.

Imagine that happening in your workplace. You rush a fellow call center associate in the next cubicle and beat her senseless. And you "might" get fired.

Or you leap over the counter at the nurses station and tackle another nurse. You "might" get fired.

Or you pick up a fellow hot dog vendor and throw him into his cart, then stuff his mouth full of wieners. You could get fired. Possibly.

Would George Bush let Saddam Hussein rule Iraq again? No. Would the courts release the Unabomber to experiment with explosives? No. Would they fill all the vacant kindergarten teacher positions with surplus pedophiles? No? Would they let hockey goons keep beating up fellow hockey players? Of course.

Although necks don't break every day, thank goodness, fighting, slashing, and other brutalities occur several times in every single NHL game.

"It's part of the game," say many fans. Even those who genuinely feel sorry for Steve Moore. Hmm, last I looked, it was not "part of the game". In fact, there are rules against fighting, high-sticking, slashing and other attacks.

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In the call center, this would be called "attempted murder". In the nurses station, this would be called "assault". In the hot dog vendor business, it's called "mergers and acquisitions."

These assaults broadcast live on national television before an audience that includes several thousand police officers. But nobody gets charged. Unless somebody is sent to hospital with a life threatening injury, nobody even pays notices. Much like in the hot dog vendor business.

In fact, it's just like walking down the street in New York City. Oops, they cleaned up New York City. People now turn their heads to look when somebody screams "Help!"

Hockey offers valuable lessons for players in other sports. For instance, if you are a baseball pitcher, aim for the batter's knees. Just don't hit any vital organs that might force the police to ask you embarrassing questions.

Basketball players also need a new strategy. Tripping. Tripping really is a very innocent thing. Just pretend it's not happening by looking in the other direction. It might not even be illegal.

Don't get me wrong, I know the police keep our streets safe, especially from the hot dog vendors. They keep the nurses stations safe. They keep the call centers safe. Should an assault be immune from prosecution just because there are cheering fans? If a nurse rounded up, say, a few thousand patients to cheer, could she legally deck another nurse?

What about the fans who egg on the players? Accomplices! There is a place to legally encourage gouging, maiming, bone snapping, impromptu facial makeovers, pain and dismemberment. It's called the WWF.

And there is a place for fighting. It's called "politics". It's OK to fight in a boxing ring, too, I suppose.

Is there a place for violence in hockey? Yes. There is a place for legal checking (body slams) as defined in the rules. A good hard hitting hockey game can be as exciting as, as well, as exciting as two hostile nurses wielding razor sharp hot dog vendors in an all-out amphibious assault on a subversive call center in Iowa. No, wait - that was last night's movie.

But when the show gets stopped over and over to watch instant replays of live assaults in mockery of the justice system, one wonders if a hockey game will ever break out.

David Leonhardt writes the Happy Guy humor column:

Read past columns at:

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He also wrote Inspiration & Motivation To Go

and Climb Your Stairway to Heaven: the 9 habits of maximum happiness:

Hockey Rules Made Easy

By Jason Tarasi

If you're a newcomer to the game of hockey you may find the rules of the game a bit confusing, but with a little self-educating you'll pick up them right away. When you understand the hockey penalties, you'll find the game more enlightening regardless of whether you're playing or enjoying a hockey game as a spectator. The rules for hockey aren't too terribly complicated, just pretty different from other sports. Once you learn the rules, you may be ready to complain about the ref's calls like everyone does in other sports, but be careful about arguing with the referees because hockey is a pretty disciplined game. The captain of a hockey team is the one person designated to talk to officials about the rules of the game. Each team has a captain and alternate captains. The alternates can talk to the officials about a play if the captain, for one reason or another, is not on the ice.

In hockey, penalties are assessed by referees for poor behavior. Different penalties have different consequences, some resulting in a team playing short one or two players, but no more than two. When a player is taken out of the game because of a penalty, the play that occurs with the player's team being short-handed is referred to a power play for the other team and a penalty kill for the team that is penalized. There are minor penalties, major penalties, misconduct penalties and severe penalties. With severe penalties, such as trying to injure another player, a player may be suspended or fined.

With a minor penalty, the player sits out for two minutes or until the other team scores while the penalized player's team continues to play with a shortage of one player. For major penalties a player warms the bench for five minutes regardless of whether or not the other team scores. A misconduct penalty earns a player a ten minute outage, but during the time a misconduct penalty is being served by a player, the player's team doesn't have to play short-handed.

The term "offsetting" refers to a situation where both teams have players that are penalized for the same incident. The players involved in the incident have to serve their penalty time, but neither team has to play short-handed in such situations. Some specific rules of hockey clearly state what the penalty or procedure is for certain behaviors, but some are left up to the judgment of the referee who is the final authority on penalty assessments.

Jason Tarasi runs the hockey equipment classified site

, where hockey players

can buy and sell new and used hockey equipment online for free.

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