

This is an article that attempts to cover comprehensively, most of the FACE-OFF rule changes over the last 13 years BEFORE I TOOK OVER. First off, I should say I have purchased the game for 12 out of those last 13 years, and despite some small misgivings, I still believe FACE-OFF is the finest sports simulation available. It duplicates the sport it represents better than any other game I've found.

If there is one big problem with FACE-OFF, it is the constant rule changes. In the twelve card sets I have (I missed the 1977-78 season card set), only twice has the game rules remained the same from the previous year. That was the memorable 1981-82 card set and the 1988-189 card set. Now, if the only thing you do with your card sets is participate in a draft league, then maybe this doesn't bother you as much. However, one of the beauties of table-top sports games should be to match teams from different years against each other in dream match-ups. It would be nice to be able to play, for instance, the 1876-77 Montreal Canadians who lost only 8 games during the regular season against some of the Edmonton or Islander championship teams. Unfortunately, this is not possible with FACE-OFF, even though I own all these teams and seasons.

In fact, even if I decide to pull out a card set from some past season and play a game, it is very hard to remember just which rules were or were not in effect. The main thrust of this article, then, is to act as a sort of handy reference guide you can pull out at a moment's notice if you want to use a card set from some past season. It has all the major (and minor!) rule changes from the 1976-77 card set up until the present day. Hopefully, you will find this article to be of some use, and even more hopefully, it won't have to be updated very often in the near future!

Here is the convention I used to denote what years a certain rule was in effect; 1983 would refer to the 1982-83 season card set that was sold in the Fall of 1983. 1977-84 would mean that the rule was in effect for the 1996-77 card sets all the way through the 1983-84 card sets. As the main purpose of this article is season replays as opposed to draft league usage, I have not included anything on the following rules systems: Checking Game, Pressure Offense, Optional Passing, or Injuries.

NHL RULE CHANGES (That affect FACE-OFF play)

ROSTER SIZES: 17 skaters, 2 goaltenders, 1983-NOW

COINCIDENTAL MINORS: (FACE-OFF Penalty types A, F, and G) On penalty types A and G, players must sit out, neither team plays shorthanded. On penalty type F, players must sit out, team with double minor plays shorthanded for the first two minutes. 1985-NOW

FACE-OFF RULE CHANGES:

EVEN-STRENGTH DEFENSE: (Left Zone, Right Zone, Center Zone, respectively)

(5 ON 5)

LW+LD+C, RW+RD+C, LD+C+RD 1977-83

LW+LD+C(Adjusted), RW+RD+C(Adjusted), LD+C+RD 1984-86 C(Adjusted),

LW+LD+RW+RD+C(Adjusted), LD+C+RD-2 1987-Now

(4 ON 4) LD+RD+(LW+RW)/2 (Rounded Up) Add +2 to "n"-situations 1977-83
(3 ON 3) LD+RD+C Add +2 to "n"-situations 1977-83

(4 ON 4) and (3 ON 3) Use PK Adjustment Chart 1984

(4 ON 4) and (3 ON 3) Use Game Chart 1985-Now

PK DEFENSE:

Use Game Chart 1977-NOW Ace Penalty killers (+1 to PK Defense) started in 1980. +1 to "n"-situations for PP shooters started in 1987. (Early PK Defense tables on the Game Charts and in rule book had errors on them. For PK Defense Tables prior to 1985, the PK Defense ratings should be, in descending order, 8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1)

PP DEFENSE:

LD+RD+(LW+C+RW)/3 (Rounded up) 1977-94. Forwards playing the point on the power play use the lesser of 2 or their own defensive rating. With forwards playing the point, the PK team could get a breakaway chance from 1977-80, with one forward on the point, +2 to any "n"-situation for PK team 1981-84, with two forwards on the point, +3 to "n"-situations for PK team 1981-84

LD+RD+2 1985-Now Forwards playing the point use the lesser of 1 or their own defensive rating.

MISCELLANEOUS DEFENSIVE NOTES:

6 Skaters Defense: LD+RD+(All 4 Fs added)/4 1977-84. Normal Defense +1 1985-Now Shadow ratings were added in 1980, -2 to "n"-situations for opposing winger.

The 1 Defensive rating was added for forwards and defensemen in 1979. The PK Defense Table and the Clearing Chart were changed in 1985. A defenseman with a defense rating greater than his partner may assign one of his defense factors to his partner, raising the defense partner's rating by one and decreasing his own rating by one 1988-Now.

SHOOTING RANGES:

N - Normal shooting range, P - Power play shooting range, S - Shorthanded shooting range 1977-Now. Use of shorthanded shooting range limited to actual number of shorthanded goals scored 1981-Now. Use of Power play shooting range limited to actual number of Power play goals scored 1987-Now. Nominal Shorthanded shooting range of 1-4 (later changed to 1-3) began in 1981.

Shooting ranges for forwards playing the point on power plays: From 1977-1983, a PP rating could be found on a forward's card to go along with other ratings like A,AA,I,II, or S. This was not an action code like on today's cards. Forwards with a PP rating used a shooting range the lesser of 2-5 or their normal shooting range when playing the point on the power play. This was in effect on all "n"-situations and

the first shot of an rebound shot. At all other times (forechecking, * shots, etc), the forward's normal shooting range (N-range) was used. For a forward without the PP rating, all of the above applied except the rating used was 1-12, instead of 2-5.

For 1984, a special D shooting range was introduced for power play shooters. Forwards used this range at all times when playing the point on the power play for 1984. From 1985-Now, forwards playing the power play point used the D range in most cases. When taking a shot because of the passing rules, forechecking rules, or the second shot of an R shot, the forward's normal shooting range (N-range) is used.

Empty Net shooting ranges: 1-12 for PK team, 2-12 any other situation 1977-86, 2-12 for PK team, 4-12 any other situation 1987-Now.

MISSING IN ACTION CODES: (Action codes no longer used or added later.)

y - Automatic interception for defenseman, no forechecking applied.
1977-80 T or t - Automatic shot if player is on power play, interception otherwise.

1977-84 Xc or XC - Penalty unless player is on team initiating a checking game.

1977-83 % - Indicates action which takes up 2 time sequences.

1981-84 (From 1977-80, any dice roll in column 6 used up 2 time sequences.

b - possible breakaway. PK team when PP team uses forwards on points 1977-80. When opposing team uses Pressure Offense 1977-84 (*H9, *H8 ..*H2) - Shot for member of home team if number following the H is GREATER than normal opposing "n"-type defense. (As opposed to greater than or equal for regular "n"-situations.)

1988-Now

(*D9,*D8,..*D2) - Simply replaces former *9,*8,..*2 1988-Now PP - (action code) Pass if player on team with man advantage, interception otherwise 1987-Now

PLAYING OUT OF POSITION (Even-Strength):

Apply OP rating to all "n"-situations and *9, *8, *7, *6, *5 are interceptions 1977-84. Basically not allowed for 1985-Now. Any player can play any position on power play except that a player rated at C or F must play at the C position.

REBOUND SITUATIONS:

Rebounds read off Game Charts 1977-83. Rebounds read off Goalie's cards 1984-Now. "R"-situations resulting from shooter's card - check for clearing 1977-Now.

"R"-situations resulting from goalie's card - DON'T check for clearing - automatic shot 1977-84.

"R"-situations resulting from goalie's card - DO check for clearing 1985-Now.

If puck is cleared, offensive team maintains possession, no shot 1977-84. Interception to defensive team 1985-Now.

"R"-shots off a player's card when player is on the PK team treated as

a "*" -shot instead. No rebound unless off goalie's card. 1980-1984

INTERCEPTIONS:

Read off Game Charts 1977-83. Read off player's card 1984-Now.

Interception to vacant defensive position: Player maintains puck control, 1 time sequence 1977-84, 1988-Now. Player maintains puck control, no time sequence on first occurrence, 1 time sequence for each successive occurrence 1985-87. Furthermore, from 1985-Now, these situations are treated as passing situations with all notes from the next section applying.

PASSING:

Read off Game Charts 1977-83. Read off Player's card 1984-Now.

Passes take no time sequences - Even Strength 1977-84, Penalty Killing and Power Plays 1977-79. Two passes take 1 time sequence and result in automatic shot for Power Play team 1980-Now. (Including Puck Controls from above 1985-Now.) First pass takes no time sequence, each subsequent pass takes 1 time sequence - Even Strength (Including Puck Controls) 1985-87, Penalty Killing 1980-87.

Each pass takes 1 time sequence - Even Strength (including Puck Controls) 1988-Now

Pass becomes interception, takes 1 time sequence - Penalty Killing 1988-Now.

Please note that for 1987-Now, the rules that go into effect if you roll a "6" on the red die during a man advantage situation should only be attempted to be understood by those holding Harvard Law degrees or degrees in Nuclear Physics from MIT. Nevertheless, here goes: if red die roll is "6", then for man advantage team, interceptions become passes, passes remain passes and passes goes to 6th man (if on ice), or position following PP symbol. If red die is "6", then for shorthanded team passes become interceptions, interceptions remain interceptions, and interception goes to opposing team's 6th skater (if on ice), or opposing team position following PK symbol. (NOTE that for 1988-Now, ALL red die rolls cause PK passes to become interceptions. Red die rolls "1"- "5" follow normal interception rules, red die roll "6" follows special rules.)

Passes to vacant offensive position: Interception, follow normal interception rules (including rules for interceptions to vacant positions if opposing position is vacant) 1977-84. Interception to player opposite vacant position, player retains puck control if that position is also vacant. 1985-Now.

PASSING FACTORS:

On any direct pass, add passing player's PS rating to any "n"-situation, applies in even-strength situations only 1977-82.

If player gets @1 through @6, add all PS factors Including player with puck. If total equals or exceeds number following @, automatic shot. Even strength, Power Play only. Interception in all other cases 1983-84.

If player gets @1 through @6, add all PS factors excluding player with puck. If total equals or exceeds number following @, automatic shot, interception otherwise. All manpower situations. 1985-87

If player gets @, add all PS factors excluding player with puck. If total equals or exceeds number on red die, automatic shot, interception otherwise. All manpower situations. 1988-Now

INTIMADATION:

You're not going to believe this, but this rule has not changed in the entire 13 years I've owned the game. It probable deserves some sort of special award.

FORECHECKING:

On any interception from a defenseman to a forward except a "y"-type interception, add number of forechecking forwards to any immediate "n"-situation rolled by a forward. Even-strength only
1977-1980.

DAVE - THE NEXT LINE IS WIPED OUT - HERE'S THE BEST I CAN MAKE OF IT:

Check Pf number. ??with or to opposing?? number of forecheckers. Pass if Pf number is greater or player is on Power Play, automatic shot for opposition otherwise. Forward use 1-12 range, defensemen use 1-6 range, in-range shots are automatic goals, no chance for save. 1981-84
THE NHL SHOULD ADOPT THIS ONE TO INCREASE SCORING!

Same as previous except shooters resolve shot normally and goalies are allowed to make saves. 1985-Now

BLOCKED SHOTS:

Defensemen had a 4 or 5 on their card and could block shots only in their own defensive zone. If matching 4 or 5 showed on white dice total on a shooting attempt, no shot was taken, pass instead.
1977-84

On shooting attempt, if white dice total 3 with 1 shot-blocking defenseman on ice, or white dice total 3 or 11 with 2 shot-blocking defensemen on ice, no shot, interception instead if red die reads 3 through 6. With same white dice totals, screening takes place if red die is 1 or 2. 1985-Now

SCREENING PLAYERS:

Began in 1983-Now. Screening players are forwards with an S rating or defenseman playing forward position. Screening players subtract 1 from defensemen's clearing rating on rebound shots except where noted below. Even-strength and Power Play only.

Exceptions:

Rule applies when "R"-shot situation comes from shooter's card
1983-Now Rule does NOT apply when "R"-shot situation comes from goalie's card
1983-84 Rule applies when screening player is taking

shot 1983-84. Rule does NOT apply when screening player is taking shot
1985-Now. Screening player negates 1 shot-blocking defenseman 1985-86.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES:

"C" Penalties were changed from retaliator getting the full 7 on a
roll of 3 through 6 to getting the 7 minutes on a roll of 5 or 6 to
reflect the instigator rules. 1987-Now

Assist/Retaliation Cards were used to determine assists and penalty
retaliations from 1977-1983. They were made optional in 1984 and
eliminated in favor of game charts in 1987. (I still use them as they
are much more accurate than the game charts.) I GUESS JEAN NEEDS A
SET?

Delayed penalties were in effect from 1977-83, eliminated from the
game in 1984, and bought back as an optional rule from 1985-Now.

Fatigue rules involving the players' shift ratings were available from
1977-84.