RINK RATS ALL STAR HOCKEY: Official Rules

What's in the Game

- 83 card Draw Deck
- 1 Puck card
- Quick start Rules card

Game Objective

Score more goals than the other team to win. A period is when you play through the entire Draw Deck. Play 3 periods, then count your goals. If tied, play sudden death overtime: play more periods until the next goal wins it.

A period does not end the moment the deck runs out. Once it's exhausted, play continues as long as someone can still make a play with the cards in their hand. The period ends only when the deck is empty and no one can play anymore.

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1. SETUP

On your playing table, set up 4 spots in a line: the Bench, Centre Ice, the Puck spot, and the Penalty Box.

Shuffle the Draw Deck and place it at the Bench. Centre Ice is the play area where cards are played during the game. The Puck spot, next to Centre Ice, is where the Puck card rests whenever it's loose. The Penalty Box sits at the far end, next to the Puck spot.

You can use a real hockey puck in place of the Puck card as your possession tool, if you have one handy.

Deal 6 cards to each player: 5 skaters, 1 Goalie. No one looks at their cards until "GO!"

What makes a strong hand? An ideal hand contains a Scoring Chance (a Setup card, a Setup card, and a Shot card), at least one defensive card to stop an incoming play, a Goalie Save card (Highlight preferred) to defend a Scoring Chance, and a BW card to win possession after a loose puck. You won't always get this combination, but knowing what to aim for helps you decide which cards to keep and which to discard during your Line Change step.

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2. HIGHLIGHT VS REGULAR

Highlight beats Regular. Regular does not beat Highlight. Your cards will tell you how to handle each. To stop a Highlight play, you need a matching Highlight defense card, or a legal Referee card or Penalty card.

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3. FACEOFF

Everyone says "GO!" First player to play a Purple Battle Win card (BW) wins the faceoff and gains possession. That player may immediately play a Scoring Chance if they have the cards for it (Setup card, Setup card, Shot card). If not, they send out their line to 6 and their turn ends.

If nobody plays a BW card, re deal 6 cards to each player and repeat.

After the faceoff, we move to the next player to the left.

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4. YOUR TURN

4.1 BENCH JUMP (Optional)

A separate action from Line Change and Replenish Your Line: at any point in your turn, before those steps, you may swap 1 card from your hand for the top card of the Penalty Box, a 1 for 1 player swap. Skip this if the Penalty Box is empty.

If you hold the Puck card, use 4.2 OFFENSE. If your opponent holds it, use 4.3 DEFENSE.

4.2 OFFENSE

Choose 1:

A) One Card Play: play 1 Pass card or 1 Puck Carrier Move card to advance the puck and keep possession.

B) Scoring Chance: play Setup card, Setup card, Shot card (a Setup card is a Pass card or Puck Carrier Move card). This starts a Free for All.

C) Dump In (cannot play option A or B): say "Dump In." The Puck card returns to centre. Puck is now loose.

4.3 DEFENSE

Respond:

A) Defend the Play: if you hold the countering defense card for the incoming Pass card or Carrier Move card, matching its Highlight or Regular status, play it. If your defense succeeds, the Puck card returns to centre. If you also hold a BW card, you may play it right away to take possession, without waiting for your own turn.

B) Defend a Scoring Chance: play a Goalie Save card, Block Shot card, or Hit the Post card. This starts a Free for All (see Section 6). If you also hold a BW card, you may play it right away to take possession. No BW card, puck stays loose.

C) Goal: if the Shot card is not stopped, it's a goal.

4.4 LINE CHANGE

Discard any number of cards, including zero, to the Penalty Box. Optional.

4.5 REPLENISH YOUR LINE

Draw back up to 6 cards, or up to 5 if penalized, or up to 4 if hit with Two Penalties. If the Bench is empty, this does nothing, keep whatever is in your hand. Turn ends.

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5. LOOSE PUCK

A Goalie Save card, Block Shot card, Hit the Post card, or Defense card stopping a play, a Referee card being played, or an Offensive Dump In makes the puck loose. The next eligible player may play a BW card to take the Puck card and gain possession.

Exception: when a Referee card creates the loose puck, the player who played it may not immediately play a BW card to recover possession. The next eligible player in turn order gets the first opportunity.

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6. SCORING CHANCE: FREE FOR ALL

A Scoring Chance suspends normal turn order. Any player may respond immediately if they hold the right card. You don't wait for your turn during a Free for All.

Play continues until there is a goal, or a goal is prevented and the puck is contested.

In 2 player games, you may replenish your line during the Free for All as you go.

In games of 4 or more, replenishing your line is locked out during the Free for All. Everyone plays from what's already in hand when the Scoring Chance is declared. You can replenish your line for everyone only after the Free for All ends.

If no one can play a BW card, the puck stays loose at centre. Everyone then sends out their line. The next turn starts with the player after the last card played.

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7. REFEREE CARDS

Referee cards are not defensive cards. They simply interrupt play. They can feel like they favor the defense, but they are not a defensive play.

Anyone may play a Referee card. The Puck card returns to centre and play stops. The player who played the Referee card may not immediately play a BW card. The next eligible player must contest possession first.

Icing cards can only be played on a Pass card. Offside cards can be played on any Pass card or Carrier Move card. Neither can be played on a Shot card.

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8. PENALTIES

Any player may play a Penalty card at any time. Play stops and the Puck card returns to centre. The penalized team plays its next 2 full turns with a 5 card hand. The penalizing side then takes 1 random card from the penalized player, either swapped for one of their own or simply discarded.

Two Penalties: playing 2 Penalty cards at once penalizes the team for 2 turns at a 4 card hand, but the penalizing side takes 2 random cards from the penalized player instead of 1.

Penalty Shot: if a Penalty card is played during a Scoring Chance, the offense takes a Penalty Shot instead of responding from hand. Flip the top card of the Bench. Regular Green or Highlight Green offense card = goal. Anything else = no goal. Everyone then sends out their line. The next turn starts with the player after whoever played the Penalty card.

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9. PLAYING WITH MORE THAN 2 PLAYERS

The game is always 2 teams, played with an even number of players: 2v2, 3v3, 4v4, and so on. Odd numbered groups should add, drop, or rotate a player.

Use 1 deck for up to 4 players. Use 2 decks for up to 10 players.

Seating: teams alternate all the way around the table, so you're never next to your own teammate. Turn order moves left as usual.

Once per turn, you may trade 1 card with a teammate, swapped at the same time so hand sizes stay even.

Possession belongs to the team. The Puck card sits with whichever teammate won it.

Team Penalties: card steals are random across the other team, as even as possible.

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10. ADVANCED VARIANTS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Timer Variant

For a faster, more pressure-driven game, players may set a timer per period instead of playing through the full deck. A 5-minute period is a good starting point. When the timer expires, the period ends

immediately, regardless of where the deck is. Goals scored up to that point stand. This variant rewards quick thinking and decisive play.

Card Color Coding

All offensive cards are green. All defensive cards are red. The matching rule is color tier to color tier: Regular Green offense cards are countered by Regular Red defense cards, and Highlight Green offense cards are countered by Highlight Red defense cards.

The specific card names do not need to match literally. A Saucer Pass card (Regular Green) is countered by any Regular Red defense card, such as a Saucer Knockdown card. The names reflect the same action being performed on both sides of the play, but what matters for gameplay is always the color and tier, not the name.

Card Illustrations and the Rink Rats Characters

All cards in the game feature Rink Rats characters from the red team. This includes both offensive and defensive cards. The characters are illustrating the action on the card, not representing which team is performing it during your game.

Because this is a back-and-forth game, every card can be played by either side depending on who holds the Puck card at that moment. The yellow team characters that appear on some cards are there only to provide scenario context and visual clarity, showing what the play looks like in action. They are not a separate playable team and have no effect on gameplay.

When you see a red team Rink Rat on a defense card, it simply means a Rink Rat is demonstrating that defensive play. Your role in the game, offense or defense, is determined entirely by whether you hold the Puck card, not by the characters on the cards.