# Adam Johnson’s tragic death prompts mandatory neck guards in UK ice hockey



Adam Johnson, a 29-year-old American ice hockey player, tragically passed away on 28 October 2023 during a Challenge Cup match between the Nottingham Panthers and the Sheffield Steelers at Sheffield's Utilita Arena. Johnson, who had previously played for the Pittsburgh Penguins in the NHL, was playing for the Nottingham Panthers at the time of the incident. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/oct/29/nottingham-panthers-ice-hockey-player-adam-johnson-dies-after-freak-injury?utm_source=openai))

During the second period of the game, Johnson collided with a Sheffield Steelers player, resulting in a severe neck injury caused by a skate blade. The match was immediately halted, and medical personnel attended to Johnson on the ice. Despite their efforts, he was later pronounced dead at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/sport/ice-hockey/67253892.amp?utm_source=openai))

The incident prompted an outpouring of tributes from the ice hockey community. The Nottingham Panthers expressed their devastation, stating, "The Panthers would like to send our thoughts and condolences to Adam’s family, his partner, and all his friends at this extremely difficult time." ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/oct/29/nottingham-panthers-ice-hockey-player-adam-johnson-dies-after-freak-injury?utm_source=openai)) The Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL) postponed all scheduled matches on 29 October 2023 in response to the tragedy. ([yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk](https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/sport/other-sport/adam-johnson-eihl-games-postponed-and-tributes-paid-as-nottingham-panthers-player-dies-after-horror-injury-in-sheffield-steelers-game-4389606?utm_source=openai))

In the aftermath, South Yorkshire Police initiated an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Johnson's death. A man was arrested on suspicion of manslaughter, but as of April 2024, no charges had been filed, and the investigation was ongoing. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/1e01aaec007751e0ef9d0b87197a2f6c?utm_source=openai))

In response to the incident, the English Ice Hockey Association mandated the use of neck guards for all players starting in January 2024. This decision aimed to enhance player safety and prevent similar accidents in the future. ([the-gazette.co.uk](https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/sport/national/23888783.police-investigate-freak-accident-death-adam-johnson-ice-hockey-match/?utm_source=openai))

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) reviewed the evidence provided by South Yorkshire Police and concluded that there was no realistic prospect of a criminal conviction. Consequently, the CPS decided not to bring charges against the Sheffield Steelers player involved in the incident. Michael Quinn, Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor, stated, "Following a thorough police investigation and a comprehensive review of all the evidence by the CPS, we have concluded that there is not a realistic prospect of conviction for any criminal offence and so there will not be a prosecution." ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk-prosecutors-say-no-criminal-charges-after-death-american-during-ice-hockey-2025-04-29/?utm_source=openai))

The tragic death of Adam Johnson has had a profound impact on the ice hockey community, leading to increased awareness and discussions about player safety measures. The implementation of mandatory neck guards in the EIHL reflects a concerted effort to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/oct/29/nottingham-panthers-ice-hockey-player-adam-johnson-dies-after-freak-injury> - This article reports on the tragic death of Adam Johnson, a 29-year-old American ice hockey player, during a Challenge Cup match between the Nottingham Panthers and the Sheffield Steelers at Sheffield's Utilita Arena on 28 October 2023.
2. <https://www.bbc.com/sport/ice-hockey/67253892> - This report details the incident where Adam Johnson suffered a severe neck injury from a skate blade during the second period of the game, leading to his death at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/oct/29/nottingham-panthers-ice-hockey-player-adam-johnson-dies-after-freak-injury> - This article includes a statement from the Nottingham Panthers expressing their devastation and condolences to Adam Johnson's family, partner, and friends following the tragic incident.
4. <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/sport/other-sport/adam-johnson-eihl-games-postponed-and-tributes-paid-as-nottingham-panthers-player-dies-after-horror-injury-in-sheffield-steelers-game-4389606> - This piece reports on the Elite Ice Hockey League's decision to postpone all scheduled matches on 29 October 2023 in response to Adam Johnson's death.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/1e01aaec007751e0ef9d0b87197a2f6c> - This article discusses the South Yorkshire Police investigation into Adam Johnson's death, including the arrest of a man on suspicion of manslaughter, with no charges filed as of April 2024.
6. <https://www.the-gazette.co.uk/sport/national/23888783.police-investigate-freak-accident-death-adam-johnson-ice-hockey-match/> - This report covers the English Ice Hockey Association's decision to mandate the use of neck guards for all players starting in January 2024, aiming to enhance player safety and prevent similar accidents.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14659347/Man-arrested-death-ice-hockey-star-Adam-Johnson-wont-face-criminal-charges.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data