# High School Ice Hockey Players to Wear Neck Laceration Protectors from 2024-25 Season



The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) has announced that all high school ice hockey players will be required to wear neck laceration protectors starting in the 2024-25 season. The rule, initially proposed by the NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee in April, was approved by the federation’s board of directors and disclosed on Wednesday.

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) confirmed that any modifications to the NFHS rulebook will be implemented for the upcoming season. According to Rule 3-4-4, the neck laceration protectors must be worn as intended by the manufacturer without any alterations during competition.

This decision follows a similar rule by USA Hockey, which, since January 28, mandates neck laceration protectors for all players under 18. The move was influenced by the death of former NHL player Adam Johnson, who suffered a fatal neck laceration during a Champions Cup game in England last October.

The cost of neck protectors varies. Those integrated into undershirts can range from $75 to $200, while separate collars are priced between $20 and $40. The NFHS rule stipulates players must return to the bench if they enter a game without the protector or if it comes off during play. Teams will incur a two-minute minor penalty if a player refuses to wear the equipment. Goaltenders will also be required to wear the protectors beneath their throat protectors.

"After thorough discussion, the committee decided on changes that will minimize risks for players and provide clarity in the rules," said Dan Schuster, NFHS director of educational services and liaison to the ice hockey rules committee.