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(54) **SPEED HOCKEY GAME**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A rink layout and rules of play for speed hockey. The rink defines a substantially square play area, preferably with chamfered corners. A preferred size is approximately eight five feet (26 meters) by one hundred feet (30 meters). Goal creases define an approximately twelve and one half foot (4 meter) radius, and red zones define an approximately thirty two and one half feet (10 meters) in radius. Goals are recessed into dasher boards, and referee positions may be defined above each goal. Each team preferably comprises three players and a goal keeper in play, and an additional three players and one goal keeper in reserve. A team receives one point for goals scored inside the red zone, and two points for goals scored from outside the red zone. Over Time (OT) preferably comprises a first OT period with full teams, a second OT period with a first reduction, and a third OT period with one player for each team.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/727,283**

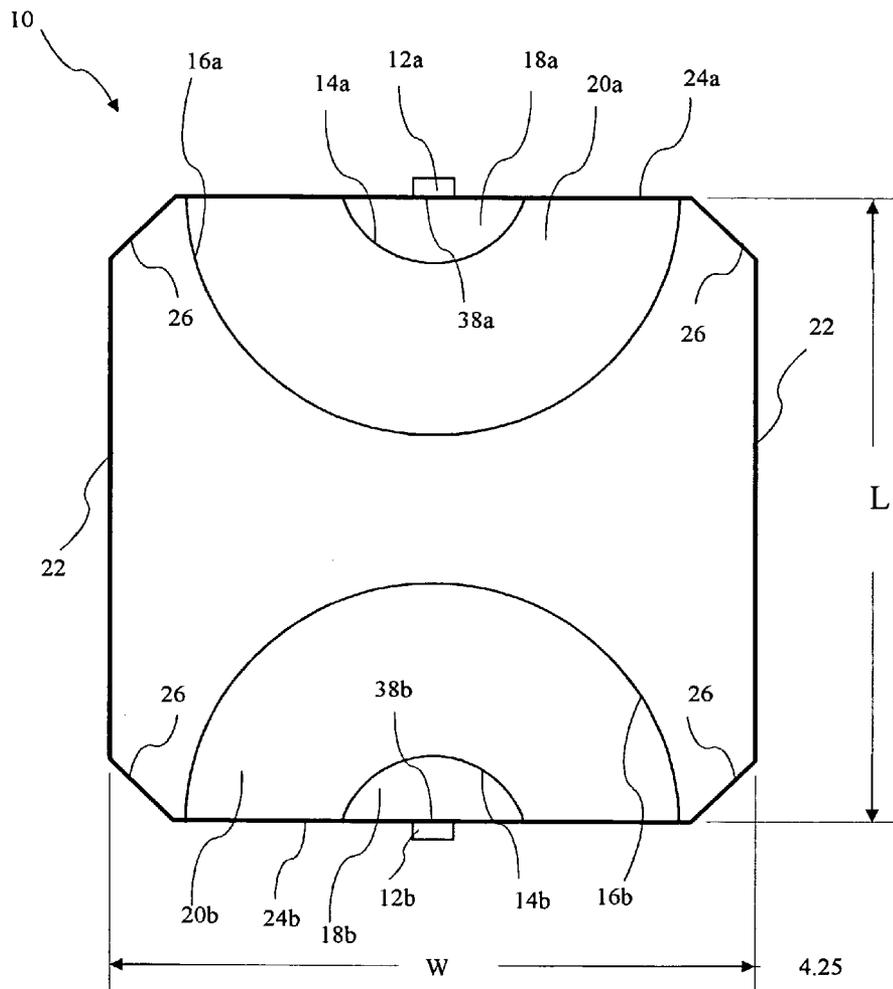
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Publication Classification

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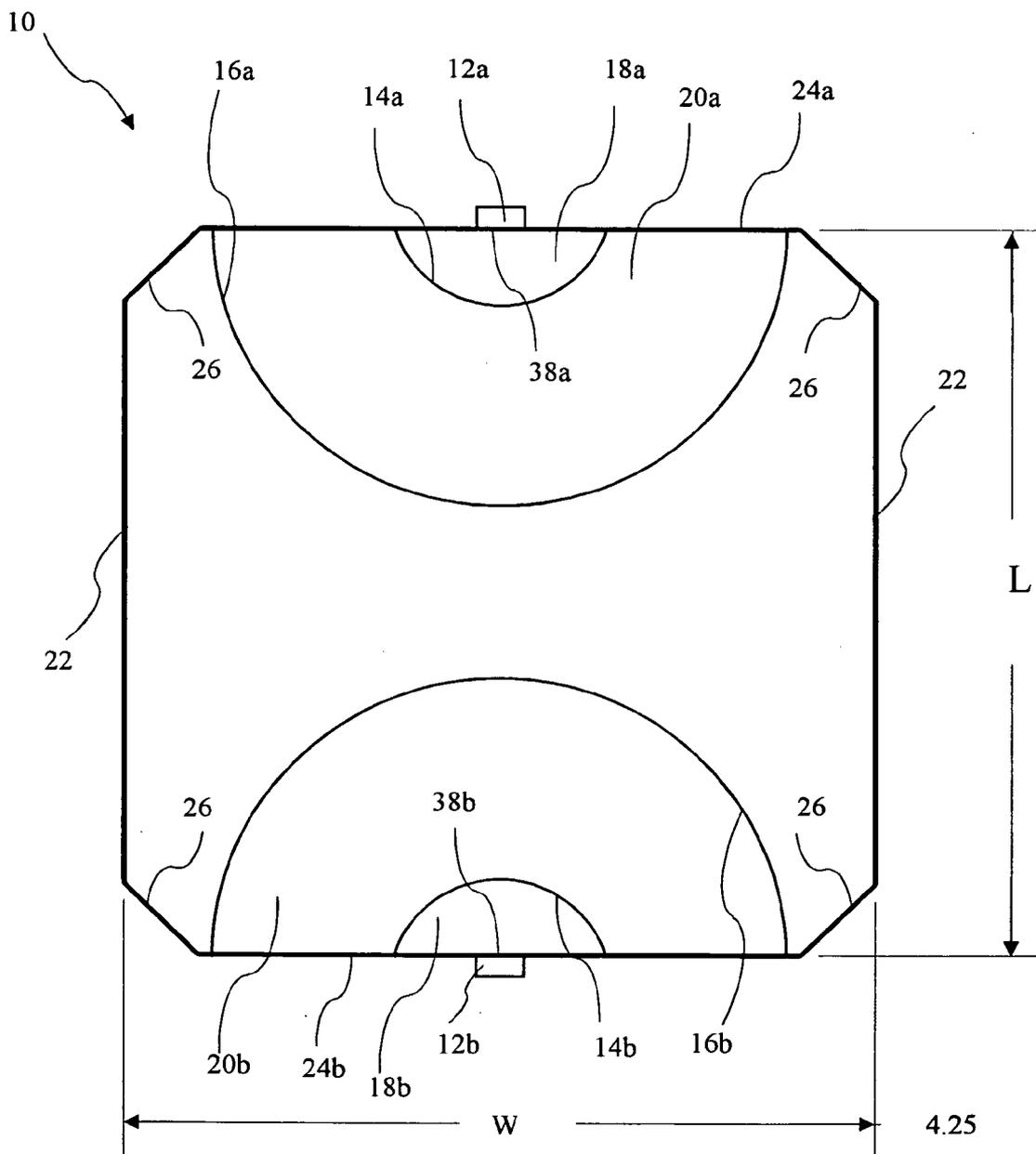


FIG. 1

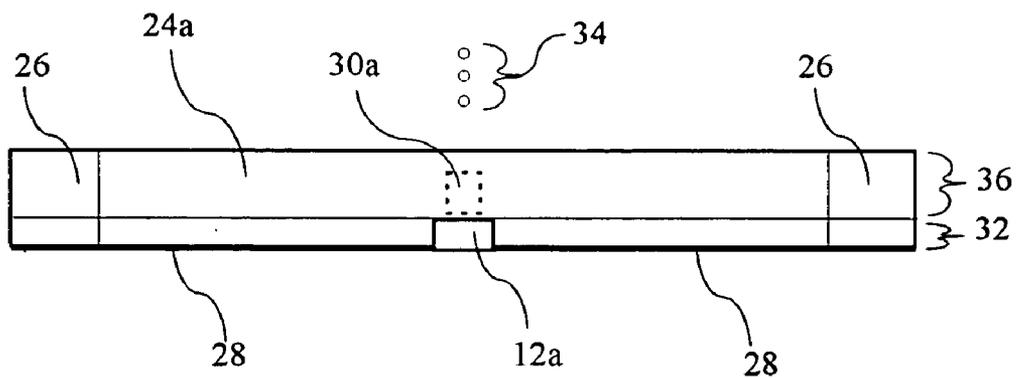


FIG. 2A

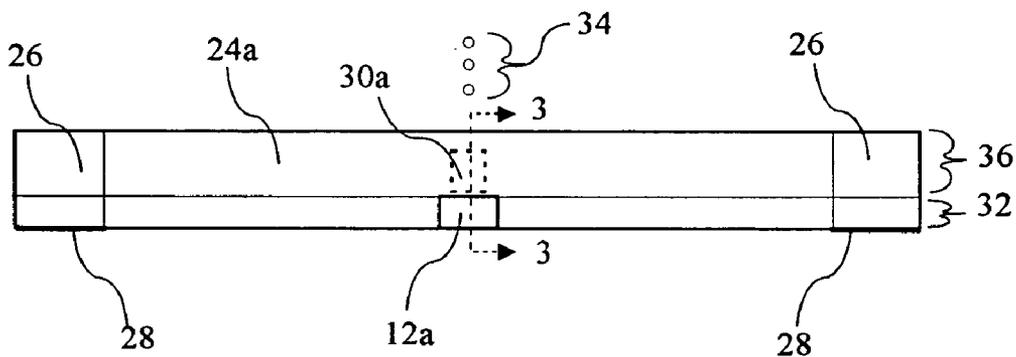


FIG. 2B

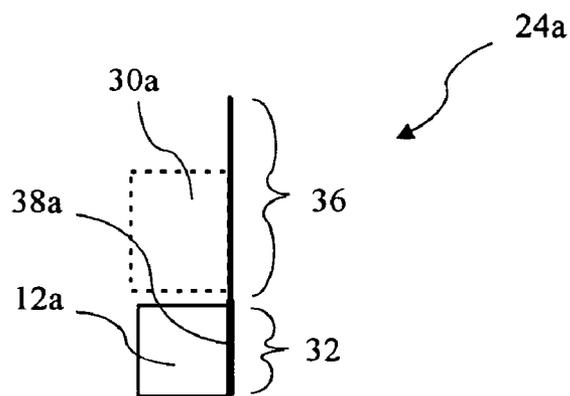


FIG. 3

SPEED HOCKEY GAME

[0001] The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/430,742, filed Dec. 3, 2002, which application is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a method and equipment for playing a hockey game, and more particularly to a method and equipment for playing a roller hockey game, and even more particularly to a method and equipment for playing a high speed roller hockey game intended to be a spectator sport.

[0003] World wide, spectator sports are a multi-billion dollar industry providing entertainment for millions of people. Various sports, and teams withing sports, compete not only for championships, but also for revenue necessary to pay players, staff, and facility costs. Roller Hockey International (RHI), the first and only major inline hockey league, operated from 1993 until 1999. RHI used a conventional size hockey rink, one hundred and eighty five feet by eighty five feet, which forced the team owners to pay exorbitant venue fees. Additionally, when considering the potential ticket sales, the game business plan forced disproportionate costs for equipment, salaries to a large number of players needed for the game, and support personnel. A further problem was that the rules helped create a slow game that failed to excite the live audience or maintain television interest. The size of the rink (i.e. cost) limited the feasibility of amateur roller hockey to develop, which was needed to support professional roller hockey. The combination of very high operating cost to the team owners, coupled with restricted growth to the amateur sport and loss of interest by T.V. and sponsorships, resulted in the eventual demise of RHI.

[0004] The roller hockey industry has concluded that a new and faster version of roller hockey, played on a smaller rink with new rules, would attract greater audiences and provide a stimulus to amateur roller hockey. Television has also expressed interest in a professional roller hockey that is better suited to television media, and has potential to gain a wide audience.

[0005] What is needed is a format, comprising both hockey rink layout and game rules, that will attract both live and television audiences, facilitate the growth of amateur roller hockey, and to substantially reduce the operation cost to both professional and amateur play.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention addresses the above and other needs by providing a rink layout and rules of play for speed hockey. The rink preferably defines a substantially square play area surrounded by dasher boards, preferably with forty five degree chamfered corners having a twelve foot (3.5 meter) hypotenuse. A first preferred size is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) by approximately eight five to approximately one hundred feet (30 meters), and a second preferred size is approximately fifty five feet (17 meters) by approximately fifty five feet (17 meters). A more preferred rink size for amateur speed hockey is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) by approximately eighty five feet (26 meters), and a more preferred rink size for

professional speed hockey is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) by approximately one hundred feet (30 meters). Goals reside at each end of the rink, and are recessed into the dasher boards, and assistant referee positions may be defined above each goal, which referee positions may include chairs for the assistant referees. Goal creases define an approximately twelve and one half foot (4 meter) radius, and red zones (goals shot from outside the red zones receive two points, versus one point for goals inside the red zone) define an approximately thirty two and one half foot (10 meter) radius. Bumpers preferably reside along the bottom of dasher boards, and are preferably made of rubber and are preferably between approximately one inch and approximately eighteen inches high, and more preferably approximately one and one half inches high.

[0007] Each team preferably comprises three players and a goal keeper in play, and may include three players and one goal keeper in reserve. A game starts with the puck in the center of the rink, and the players inside their respective red zones (i.e., the red zones associated with the goal the players are defending). A team receives one point for goals scored from shots made from inside the opponent's red zones, and two points for goals scored from shots made from outside the opponent's red zones. A game preferable comprises four twelve minute periods. If the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, Over Time (OT) is entered. OT preferably comprises a first OT period with full teams, a second OT period with a first reduction, and a third OT period with one player for each team. Play halts when a red light is on, on events such as goals, time-out, and the like. The goal keeper may check opponents within the goal keeper's goal crease, but opponents may not check a goal keeper within his goal crease.

[0008] In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided a sport rink comprising a substantially square playing area having a first end and a second end, a first goal in the first end, and a second goal in the second end, wherein faces of the first goal and the second goal are substantially even with the first end and second end respectively.

[0009] It is a feature of the present invention to provide a method for playing hockey, the method comprising placing two teams into play on a substantially square rink, playing a game comprising four periods lasting approximately twelve minutes each, receiving one point for goals made inside a red zone, receiving two points for goals made outside the red zone, and if the game is tied at the end of the final period, entering Over Time (OT). Each team may include either two players or three players, and one goal keeper. If OT is required, first overtime period is played with full teams; and if the game is tied after the first overtime period, a second overtime period is played with a reduced number of players.

[0010] It is a further feature of the invention to provide a hockey rink comprising a playing area having approximately eighty five foot (26 meter) length and eighty five foot (26 meter) width, a first end of the playing area and a second end opposite the first end, a first goal in the first end and a second goal in the second end, a first crease and a second crease defining a radius of approximately twelve and one half feet (4 meters) and centered approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind a face of the first goal and the second

goal respectively, a first red zone and a second red zone defining radius of approximately thirty two and one half feet (10 meters) and centered on the first goal and the second goal, and chamfered corners having approximately twelve foot (3.5 meter) hypotenuse.

[0011] Speed hockey may be played by players wearing inline skates (inline hockey), by players wearing ice skates (ice hockey), or by players wearing shoes (deck hockey).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The above and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will be more apparent from the following more particular description thereof, presented in conjunction with the following drawings wherein:

[0013] FIG. 1 shows a plan view of a speed hockey rink according to the present invention;

[0014] FIG. 2A shows a front view of a first end of the speed hockey rink, including a bumper along the entire dasher board base;

[0015] FIG. 2B shows a front view of a first end of the speed hockey rink, including a bumper along the corner chamfer dasher board base; and

[0016] FIG. 3 shows a cross-sectional view of the dasher board, goal, and referee position taken along line 3-3 of FIG. 2B.

[0017] Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding components throughout the several views of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0018] The following description is of the best mode presently contemplated for carrying out the invention. This description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, but is made merely for the purpose of describing one or more preferred embodiments of the invention. The scope of the invention should be determined with reference to the claims.

[0019] The present invention comprises a rink layout and rules of play for speed hockey. An example of such rink 10 is shown in FIG. 1. The rink 10 is substantially square having a length L and a width W. The length L is preferably between approximately fifty five feet (17 meters) and approximately one hundred feet (30 meters), and the width W is preferably between approximately fifty five feet (17 meters) and approximately one hundred feet (30 meters), and the ratio of the length L to the width W (or the width W to the length L) is preferably between approximately 1 to 1 to approximately 1.5 to 1. In a first more preferred embodiment, the length L is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters), and the width W is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) to approximately one hundred feet (30 meters). In a second more preferred embodiment the length L is approximately fifty five feet (17 meters), and the width W is approximately fifty five feet (17 meters). A most preferred rink size for amateur speed hockey is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) by approximately eighty five feet (26 meters), and a most preferred rink size for professional speed hockey is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) by approximately one hundred feet (30 meters). The rink 10

preferably includes chamfered corners 26, and more preferably chamfered corners comprising a forty five degree chamfer and a twelve foot (3.5 meter) hypotenuse.

[0020] The rink 10 also defines a first end 24a and a second end 24b. A first goal 12a resides on the first end 24a, and a second goal 12b resides on the second end 24b. The goals 12a, 12b are flush with the ends 24a, 24b (e.g., flush with dasher boards or side boards substantially surrounding the rink.) The goals 12a, 12b preferably are approximately five and one half feet (1.5 meters) wide, and approximately three and one half feet (1 meter) high. The goals 12a, 12b define a first face 38a, and a second face 38b respectively, wherein the faces 38a, 38b are substantially aligned with the ends 24a, 24b, and the goals 12a, 12b preferably include nets. The rink 10 further includes rink sides 22.

[0021] A first goal crease arc 14a defines a first goal crease 18a, and a second goal crease arc 14b defines a second goal crease 18b. The goal crease arcs 14a, 14b are preferable approximately twelve and one half feet (4 meters) in radius, wherein the arcs are taken about a point centered approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind the faces 38a, 38b of the goals 12a, 12b (i.e., the crease preferably extends approximately eight feet (2.5 meters) into the rink) and on center-lines of the goals 12a, 12b. A first two point arc 16a defines a first red zone 20a, and a second two point arc 16b defines a second red zone 20b. The two point arcs 16a, 16b preferably have a radius based on the rink size (i.e., are smaller for smaller rinks) and are preferable between approximately twenty five feet (8 meters) to approximately thirty five feet (11 meters) in radius, and preferably a fifty five foot (17 meter) by fifty five foot (17 meter) rink does not define a red zone. For an approximately eighty five foot (26 meter) rink, the two point arcs 16a, 16b preferably have a radius between approximately thirty feet (9 meters) and approximately thirty two and one half feet (10 meters), and more preferably the two point arcs 16a, 16b have a radius of approximately thirty feet (9 meters) or approximately thirty two and one half feet (10 meters).

[0022] A view of the rink first end 24a as seen by one standing in the rink 10, is shown in FIG. 2A. The rink is substantially surrounded by the dasher boards 32. The dasher boards 32 are preferably approximately three and one half feet (1 meter) high and topped off by glass or netting 36 extending preferably to approximately eight feet (2.5 meters) height (i.e., the dasher board 32 plus the glass or netting 36 reaches eight feet height), which dasher boards may be transparent or conventional boards.

[0023] A bumper 28 preferably reside along the bottom of dasher boards 32, and is preferably made of rubber and are preferably between approximately one inch and approximately eighteen inches high, and more preferably approximately one and one half inches high. The bumper 28 are adapted to bounce a puck back onto the rink 10 if the puck strikes the bumper 28, and is preferably made from rubber or a rubber like material. The bumper 28 may substantially line (e.g., all but the goal 12a, 12b positions and the like) the entire rink 10, or the bumper 28 may only reside in the chamfered corners 26 as shown in FIG. 2B.

[0024] A first referee position 30a is preferably provided in the first end 24a above the first goal 12a. A corresponding second referee position preferably provided in the second end 24b. The referee position 30a may further include a

referee's chair or the like. Lights **34** reside above each goal **12a**, **12b**, which lights preferably comprise three lights, and more preferably a red light, a yellow light, and a green light. A cross-sectional view of the first end **24a**, first goal **12a**, and first referee position **30a**, taken along line **3-3** of **FIG. 2B** is shown in **FIG. 3**. The referee position is preferably behind the glass or netting **36**, and above the first goal **12a**.

[0025] Speed hockey is preferably played by two or three active (i.e., on the rink) players and one goal keeper. Each team may have additional reserve (i.e., on the bench) players and goal keepers, for example, each team may have a total of six players and two goal keepers per team. There are preferably three active players and one goal keeper on each team for a game played on an approximately eighty five foot (26 meter) by eighty five foot (26 meter) rink, and two active players and one goal keeper on each team for a game played on an approximately fifty five foot (17 meter) by fifty five foot (17 meter) rink.

[0026] There is generally one referee on the rink floor, and two linemen off the rink floor. The linemen are preferably positioned near the player's bench or the score keeper. Additionally, there may be referees positioned above each goal. The game preferably comprises four periods of approximately twelve minutes per period. There are preferably approximately three minute breaks following the first and third periods, and preferably an approximately eight minute break at halftime (i.e., following the second period). The game is started by placing a puck in center of rink while the players remain inside the red zone corresponding to the goal the players defend. Once the game begins, an attacking team has a maximum shot-clock time to reach the opponents red zone or to shoot. The shot-clock time is preferably approximately 10 seconds. Time begins at the sound of the referee whistle, or other sonic event (horn etc.).

[0027] One point is awarded for a goal shot from inside red zone and two points are awarded for a goal shot from outside red zone. After a goal, the goal keeper passes the puck into play after the referee whistle, during which passing, the opposing players must remain outside the goal keeper's red zone.

[0028] If the score is tied at the end of the final period, OverTime (OT) periods start with an official dropping the puck in the center of the rink **10**. A first fixed length OT period is played with the full team in play. The first fixed length is preferably approximately three minutes. If the score is tied after the end of the first OT period, a second OT period is played with one player removed from each team. For example, the teams normally having three players and one goal keeper may play the second OT period with two players and one goal keeper. The second fixed length is preferably fixed length, and more preferably approximately three minutes in length. Alternatively, the second OT period may end when a point is scored. If the second OT period ends in a tie score, a third OT period with each team having one player and one goal keeper in play, or one player and no goal keeper in play, may be played. The third OT period lasts until a goal is scored.

[0029] Checking (the use of physical force or impact to take an opposing player out of a play) may be exercised within limits. The goal keeper may check opponents in inside the goal keeper's goal crease (i.e., the crease associated with the goal which the goal keeper defends) but may

not be checked by opponents while the goal keeper is in his goal crease. Goal keepers may be checked outside their goal crease. The goal keepers may not cover the puck outside the crease, and if the goal keeper covers the puck outside the crease, all opposing players must leave the goal crease and the goal keeper, or another player on the goal keeper's team, must pass the puck out for play to continue. Fighting is not permitted, and results in a penalty as described below.

[0030] Play may be stopped at any time by a red light condition. Red light conditions are, for example, scoring a goal, puck goes out of play, Referee time-out, a player injury, or the like. Following a goal, the red light will remain on for goal time seconds. At the end of a set period of time, the light changes from red to yellow, and then to green. The designated player must put puck into play after the green comes on.

[0031] Penalties may be minor penalties or major penalties. In the event of a minor penalty, the fouled player is allowed a penalty shot with all other players initially positioned outside the red zone and behind the fouled player, however, once the opposing goal keeper passes the puck to the fouled player, the remaining players may enter the play. In the case of a more serious penalty, the penalized player will be sent to the penalty box (also called "sin bin") for a set time, preferably approximately one minute or more, or until a goal is scored. After the penalized player enters the penalty box, play resumes with a penalty shot as described for a minor penalty. After serving the penalty, the penalized player must "touch up" outside the red zones before re-entering play.

[0032] In the case of a major penalty, the penalized player is dismissed for the rest of the game, and may be sanctioned. Both teams continue to play with full strength teams.

[0033] While the invention herein disclosed has been described by means of specific embodiments and applications thereof, numerous modifications and variations could be made thereto by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention set forth in the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A sport rink comprising:

a substantially square playing area having a first end and a second end;

a first goal in the first end; and

a second goal in the second end,

wherein faces of the first goal and the second goal are substantially even with the first end and second end respectively.

2. The sport rink of claim 1, further including a rink length and a rink width, wherein the rink length is between approximately fifty five feet (17 meters) and approximately one hundred feet (30 meters) and the rink width is between approximately fifty five feet (17 meters) and approximately one hundred feet (30 meters).

3. The sport rink of claim 2, wherein the rink length is approximately one hundred feet (30 meters) and wherein the rink width is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters).

4. The sport rink of claim 2, wherein the rink length is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters) and wherein the rink width is approximately eighty five feet (26 meters).

5. The sport rink of claim 1, further including chamfered corners.

6. The sport rink of claim 1 further including referee positions above the first goal and above the second goal.

7. The sport rink of claim 1, wherein the first goal and the second goal are approximately five and one half feet (1.5 meters) wide and approximately three and one half feet (1 meter) high.

8. The sport rink of claim 1, further including a first goal crease and a second goal crease, wherein the first goal crease and the second goal crease define an approximately twelve and one half foot (4 meter) crease radius arc, which crease radius arcs are centered approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind a first face of the first goal and approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind a second face of the second goal respectively.

9. The sport rink of claim 1, further including a first red zone and a second red zone, wherein the first red zone and the second red zone define an approximately twenty five foot (8 meter) radius arc to an approximately thirty five foot (11 meter) radius arc, wherein the red zones are centered on the face of the first goal and on the face of the second goal respectively.

10. The sport rink of claim 1, further including dasher boards and including a bumper along at least one portion of a base of the dasher boards.

11. A method for playing hockey, the method comprising:

placing two teams into play on a substantially square rink, wherein each team includes players selected from the group consisting of two players and three players, and wherein each team further includes one goal keeper;

playing a game comprising four periods lasting approximately twelve minutes each;

receiving one point for goals made from shots inside a red zone;

receiving two points for goals made from shots outside the red zone; and

if the game is tied at the end of the final period, entering overtime comprising:

playing a first overtime period with full teams; and

if the game is tied after the first overtime period, playing a second overtime period with a reduced number of players.

12. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, wherein placing the two teams into play comprises placing the two teams into play on the substantially square rink, wherein the rink has a length of approximately one hundred feet (30 meters) and a width of approximately eighty five feet (26 meters), wherein each team places three players and one goal keeper into play.

13. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, wherein receiving two points for goals made outside the red zone comprises receiving two points for goals made outside the red zone, wherein the red zone is between approximately twenty five feet (8 meters) and approximately thirty five feet (11 meters) in radius.

14. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, wherein the rink includes two goals, and further including the step of refereeing the game from positions proximal to each goal.

15. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, wherein playing the first overtime period with full teams comprises playing the first overtime period for approximately three minutes with full teams.

16. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, further including, if the game is tied after the second overtime period, playing a third overtime period with a further reduced number of players until a goal is scored.

17. The method for playing hockey of claim 11, further including penalizing for checking the goal keeper inside the crease, wherein the crease defines an approximately twelve and one half foot (4 meter) radius centered approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind the face of the goal.

18. A hockey rink comprising:

a playing area having approximately one hundred foot (30 meter) length and approximately eighty five foot (26 meter) width;

a first end of the playing area, and a second side opposite the first end;

a first goal in the first end;

a second goal in the second end;

a first crease and a second crease defining a radius of approximately twelve and one half feet (4 meters) and wherein the radius is taken from a point centered approximately four and one half feet (1.5 meters) behind a first face of the first goal and a second face of the second goal respectively;

a first red zone and a second red zone defining radius of approximately thirty two and one half feet (10 meters) and centered on the first face and the second face respectively; and

chamfered corners having approximately twelve foot (3.5 meter) hypotenuse.

19. The hockey rink of claim 18, further including dasher boards and including a rubber bumper along at least one portion of a base of the dasher boards.

20. The hockey rink of claim 18 further including referee positions proximal to the first goal and proximal to the second goal.

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