

International Rules and Style of Play

International hockey, under the rules of the International Ice Hockey Federation, is largely the same game as Canadian hockey; indeed, the IIHF rules were originally adopted, with a few exceptions, from the Canadian game. One of the more noticeable exceptions is the prohibition of the aggressive style of body contact allowed in the Canadian game.

There is also a difference between the size of the ice surface used in international competition and that used in Canadian hockey. Though rink surfaces are generally about the same length (60 metres), the Canadian surfaces are only about 26 metres wide, compared to 30 metres for international rinks. This wider ice surface tends to "open up" the international game; it places more emphasis on speed, and less on "body checking" and individual puck control.

Despite these differences, Canadians' interest in international hockey has increased steadily in recent years. Tours by top European teams, sponsored by the CAHA, have brought home to thousands of Canadians the fact that their sport has been adopted by many other countries -- and that the student is fast approaching the calibre of the master. Their national game, in fact, has truly become an international game.

RP/A