

Ice hockey

Olympic ice hockey is traditionally played on international rinks, but this year will be played on NHL rinks that are 13.5 ft. (4.1 m) narrower. The Vancouver Organizing Committee was granted this change because of the cost of converting existing arenas, Canada Hockey Place and UBC Thunderbird Arena. Games will be split between the arenas, with medal events at Canada Hockey Place.

Game basics

- Two teams try to score by using hockey sticks to hit a puck past other team's goalie and into goal; team that scores most during three 20-minute periods wins
- If tied, 5-minute sudden-death overtime period is played; in gold medal game, 20-minute overtime period is played
- If overtime period ends with no winner, then teams have a shootout – best of five – between skaters and opposing goalie; should score remain tied, sudden-death shootout round is introduced

Neutral zone

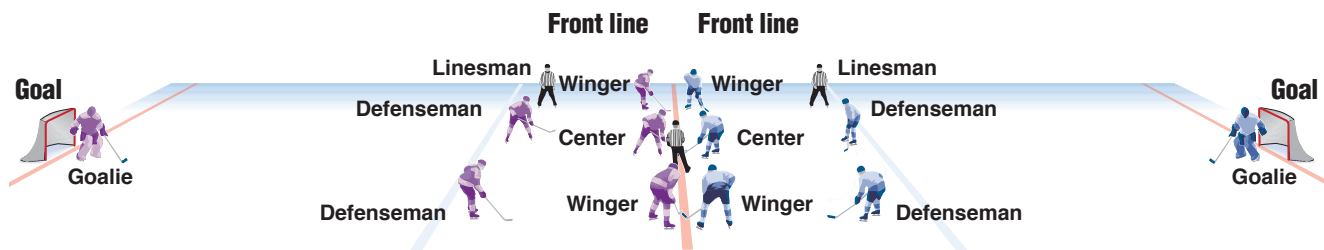
- Players usually spend 45 seconds to 2 minutes on ice at a time; frequent substitutions are made in neutral zone when puck is at other end of rink

Penalty box

- Player goes into penalty box for tripping, hooking (hooking a player with stick with intention of making him fall), slashing (hitting player with stick) or other infractions; minor penalties put player in box for 2 minutes; major call, such as misconduct, puts player off ice for 10 minutes

Referees

- Four-man system: two referees, two linesmen (first time having two referees on ice); women's hockey has standard one referee, two linesmen



The tournaments

Women Eight teams split into two divisions; each team plays three preliminary games (Feb. 13-18)
 • Four teams play classification games (Feb. 20, 22); top two teams from each division advance to medal round (Feb. 25)

Men 12 teams compete in round-robin tournaments
 • First phase (Feb. 16-21) will send four teams with best round-robin records directly to quarterfinals; remaining teams will play sudden-death playoff games for remaining quarterfinal spots (Feb. 24).
 • Quarterfinal winners will go to semifinals (Feb. 26); winners play for gold medal (Feb. 28), and losers play for bronze (Feb. 27).

U.S. preliminary games

- USA vs. China:** Feb 14, UBC Thunderbird Arena
- USA vs. Russia:** Feb. 16, UBC Thunderbird Arena
- USA vs. Finland:** Feb 18, UBC Thunderbird Arena

- USA vs. Switzerland:** Feb 16, Canada Hockey Place
- USA vs. Norway:** Feb. 18, Canada Hockey Place
- USA vs. Canada:** Feb 21, Canada Hockey Place

