



The Code: The Unwritten Rules of Fighting and Retaliation in the NHL

By Ross Bernstein



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For decades, hockey crowds have been brought to their feet for one of the most exciting aspects of NHL games—the fights. *The Code: The Unwritten Rules of Fighting and Retaliation in the NHL* by Ross Bernstein takes you in-depth and behind the scenes to explore the history of fighting during hockey games and the honor system behind it. More than 50 NHL players, coaches, and media personalities were interviewed to examine how players go about their business during a fight on the ice. They explain why fighting is allowed and what tactics are used before, during, and after the melees. *The Code: The Unwritten Rules of Fighting and Retaliation in the NHL* discusses the top reasons why the gloves come off during hockey games.

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The Code: The Unwritten Rules of Fighting and Retaliation in the NHL By Ross Bernstein **Bibliography**

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Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

Hockey is and always has been a sport steeped in a culture of violence. Players have learned, however, to navigate the escalating levels of physical contact by adhering to an honor system known simply as "the Code." As mysterious as it is sacred, the Code is an unwritten set of rules—the bible of hockey sportsmanship, if you will—that has been handed down from generation to generation. Although the Code has been around since the game's inception in Canada, it remains a taboo subject, so much so that many players are simply unwilling to talk about it publicly—until now, that is.

Author Ross Bernstein spent two years researching and conducting extensive interviews with a broad spectrum of players, and he was able to get them to talk freely about their most intimate feelings about fighting and retaliation. What he learned and shares in this book is truly fascinating. While some players relished opportunities to drop the gloves and others simply dreaded it, they all had one thing in common: they did it when they had to in order to protect themselves as well as their teammates. The Code features extensive quotes that detail everything from the legal and cultural issues between the North American players and their foreign counterparts to how the players are able to turn it off when they leave the arena and go home to their kids. Most importantly, this book reveals what really goes on between the players while the fights are on.

Hockey's rules of engagement can be summarized in three categories: protection, intimidation, and retaliation. If one player challenges another player, that second player must answer the call and "show up" or else face the humiliation of being considered dirty, or even a coward. Worse yet, if that player refuses to right what was wronged and defend his actions, he risks having that incident escalate to a higher level, involving additional teammates. That is when the enforcers come off the bench to keep the peace, and that is also usually when the crowd goes wild. By the time two heavyweights drop the gloves, there may have been up to a dozen events between several different players that led up to that fight. That is all a part of the intricate matrix that makes up the Code. And this book will help to demystify that matrix for you.

The Code is completely up to date with the new league-wide rules changes, which were implemented following the NHL lockout of 2005, when the rules of engagement completely changed. This first-of-its-kind project provides an incredible window into an extremely controversial subject matter that always evokes passion. It's a must-read for all puckheads!

About the Author

Ross Bernstein is the bestselling author of 40 sports books and has appeared on numerous local and national television and radio programs. His work has been featured on *CNN*, *ESPN*, *the Wall Street Journal*, and *USA Today*. As a sought-after motivational speaker, he speaks to corporations and groups across the country about the inspirational legacy of the late Herb Brooks, Hall of Fame coach of the fabled 1980 gold-medal-winning U.S. Olympic "Miracle on Ice" hockey team. He lives in Eagan, Minnesota. **Marty McSorley** is a former National Hockey League player. He is famous for swinging his stick and hitting another player in a game, which resulted in his suspension for the remainder of his hockey career. **Tony Twist** is a former National Hockey League player who was known as an enforcer.

Users Review

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Linda Spaulding:

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Daniel White:

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