

Ice hockey: A guide to the game

It's no wonder hockey is one of the marquee events at the Olympic Winter Games. To make it to the medal stand, teams composed of the world's top players must beat the competition over multiple games. Here's what you need to know to follow the action.

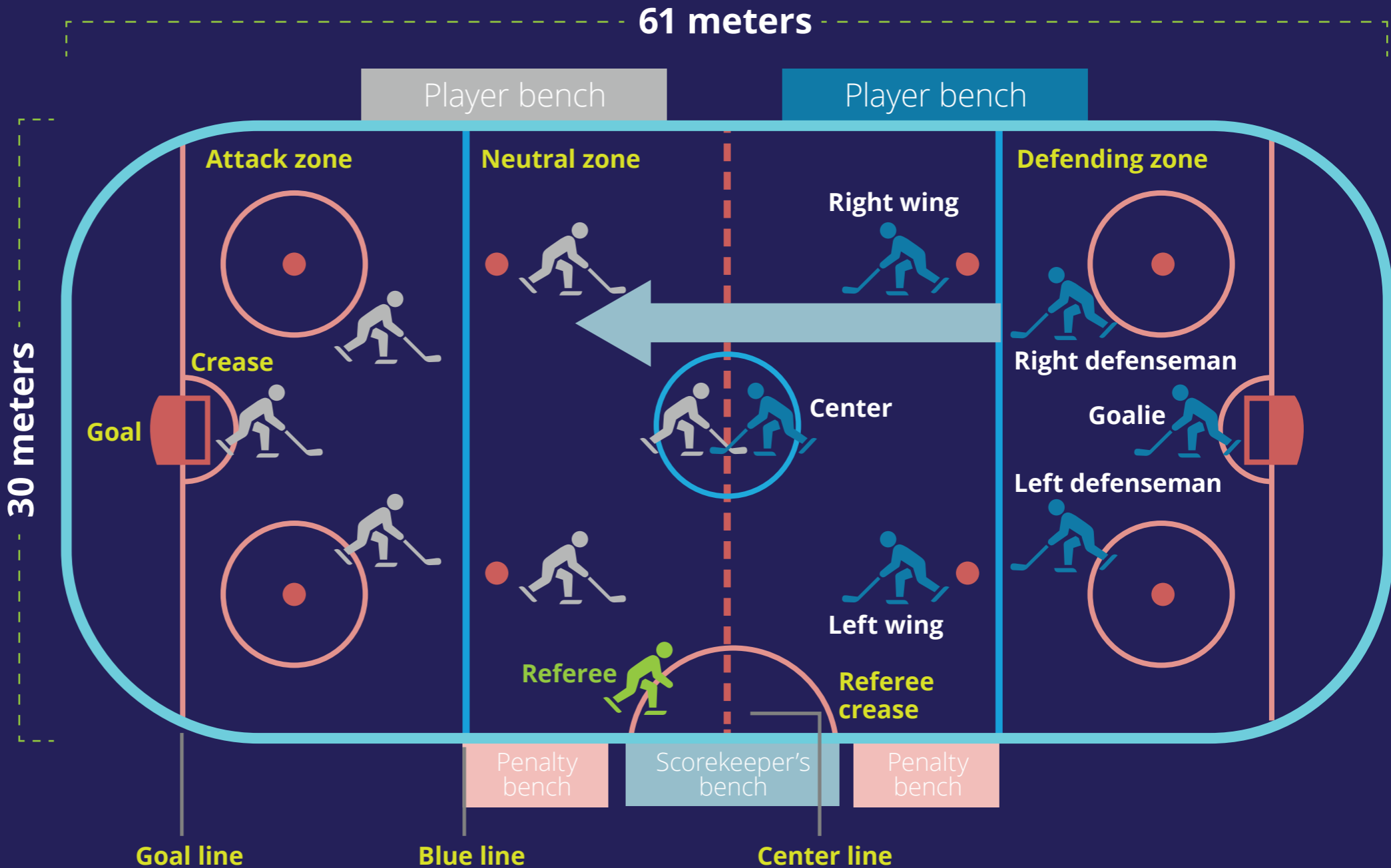
Teams within each group play a round-robin format to determine the seeding of the eight teams that make it to the single-elimination phase of the competition.

Each team may have 20 members, including a substitute goalkeeper, but only six on the ice at a time: one goalkeeper, two defenders, two wings, and one center.

The goalkeeper can be replaced for another skater at any time—at the team's own risk!

Red face-off spots are used to start or resume play. Blue lines are used to judge if players are offside; the "neutral zone" is the area between the two lines. The semi-circle in front of the goal is called the "crease," and only the goal-keeper is allowed there.

International-size rink



The game consists of three 20-minute periods of play with 15-minute breaks between each. Teams change ends after each period.

In the gold-medal game, a 15-minute intermission is taken before playing a 20-minute sudden-victory period. If no team scores in the sudden-victory period, a penalty shoot competition determines the winner.

If the teams are tied at the end of the third period of a medal-round game, a five-minute sudden-victory overtime period is played.