

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE  
HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS



## NEWS RELEASE

### **Self-start Initiated in High School Girls Lacrosse to Increase Pace of Play**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Lindsey Atkinson

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 30, 2018) — In an attempt to increase the pace of play in high school girls lacrosse, self-start has been adopted for restarting play outside of the critical scoring area.

All 2019 rules changes recommended by the joint National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and US Lacrosse (USL) Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee at its June 18-20 meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, were subsequently approved by the NFHS and USL Boards of Directors.

“The NFHS/USL Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee viewed these changes as a necessary progression in improving the game – from both an administrative and risk minimization perspective,” said Lindsey Atkinson, NFHS director of sports/communications associate and NFHS staff liaison to the Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee.

The adoption of the new self-start in girls lacrosse decreases the amount of involvement by officials in restarting play, thus increasing the pace of the game. The new Rule 5-4 “Restarting Play – Self-Start” establishes the specific allowances for restarting play with a self-start. Additionally, Rules 5-4-2 and 5-4-3 outline procedures for the defense during a self-start and establish that failure to move away from the free position may result in a warning, and repeated failures may result in a delay of game penalty.

The new Rule 5-4-4 establishes that the self-start is not an option when:

- a. The game clock is stopped;
- b. There is a restraining line violation;
- c. The ball is in the critical scoring area, excluding boundary restarts;
- d. There is an alternating possession;
- e. There is an inadvertent whistle; or,
- f. A goal is scored.

“The Girls Lacrosse Rules Committee did an outstanding job to evolve the rules of the game in ways that encourage pace of play, the enjoyment for athletes and growth of the sport, while reinforcing the safety of our game,” said Caitlin Kelley, the USL liaison to the rules committee.

Another significant rule change is the establishment of a penalty zone that must be cleared when a defensive player commits a major foul in the 8-meter arc. The committee advanced this safety-based change to minimize risk around 8-meter free positions as well as to increase pace of play by limiting repeated obstruction calls.

In Rule 10-1-1, the committee established that a penalty zone is the area 8 meters away from the goal circle above the goal line extended and the area created by the extension of the 8-meter mark to the dots and across the dots. The definition of a penalty zone is also included in Rule 13.

An additional change in 10-1-1 establishes defensive positioning on the hashmarks closest to the free position on the 8-meter free position and also eliminates stoppage of play for delay of game due to competition for inside position.

“Establishing the penalty zone and the placement of the defense on the adjacent hashmarks for an 8-meter free position is a rules change that the committee feels will improve the administration of the penalty by increasing the flow of the game and minimizing risk of injury,” Atkinson said.

Among other major changes were the release of the ball from the crosse in relation to timing, and the administration of alternate possession in the critical scoring area.

Changes in Rule 4-8 establish the release of the ball from the crosse before time expires as a legal shot, eliminating the judgment call at the goal line. A shot or propelled action must release the ball before time expires, and a goal cannot be scored when the ball is released after the whistle has blown or horn has sounded.

New language in Rule 4-8-2 states that a shot is deemed complete by an official. A shot is deemed complete when:

- a. The ball enters the goal;
- b. Any player gains possession;
- c. The ball goes out of bounds;
- d. The ball comes to rest on the field of play or inside goal circle; or
- e. The ball touches the ground below the goal line extended.

In Rule 5-4-3b, alternate possession in the critical scoring area is awarded at the closest dot, regardless of the location of the foul in relation to the goal line.

A change in Rule 7 PENALTIES establishes that a free position is now awarded at the dot for goal circle fouls by the defense – other than for an illegal deputy – rather than 8 meters out to either side level with the goal line. This allows for easier administration of the penalty and minimizing the risk of injury.

The committee continues to stress the importance of risk minimization in girls lacrosse with its 2018-19 points of emphasis. The criteria related to the “officiating of obstruction of free space to goal,” “rough and dangerous play” and “empty stick check – intentional vs. unintentional” are the focus of the rules committee for the 2018-19 season.

A complete listing of the girls lacrosse rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org). Click on “Activities & Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Lacrosse-Girls.”

According to the 2016-17 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, there are 93,473 girls participating in lacrosse at 2,717 high schools across the country.

*This press release was written by Cody Porter, a graphic arts/communications assistant in the NFHS Publications/Communications Department.*

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#### **About the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)**

The NFHS, based in Indianapolis, Indiana, is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. The NFHS sets direction for the future by building awareness and support, improving the participation experience, establishing consistent standards and rules for competition, and helping those who oversee high school sports and activities. The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports. As the recognized national authority on interscholastic activity programs, the NFHS conducts national meetings; sanctions interstate events; offers online publications and services for high school coaches and officials; sponsors professional organizations for high school coaches, officials, speech and debate coaches, and music adjudicators; serves as

the national source for interscholastic coach training; and serves as a national information resource of interscholastic athletics and activities. For more information, visit the NFHS website at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).

### **About US Lacrosse**

US Lacrosse, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, is the national governing body of lacrosse and the home of the nation's fastest-growing team sport. US Lacrosse has nearly 450,000 members across the country. Through responsive and effective leadership, US Lacrosse provides programs and services to inspire participation while protecting the integrity of the sport.

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