

SELF START

The adoption of the new self-start rule in girls' lacrosse decreases the amount of involvement by officials in restarting play, thus increasing the pace of the game.

“For a whistle blown for a foul outside the critical scoring area, the player who is awarded the free position, after coming to a stop/settled stance, may continue the course of play without waiting for an additional whistle.”

The offending player must immediately move 4 meters away from the player taking the free position, as indicated by the official. Any other player(s) within 4m must move to a position indicated by the official. All players farther than 4m from the foul must “stand” until ball carrier resumes play.

The option of self-starting is administered at the spot of the foul. However, if the ball is within playing distance (a stick and-a-half length away) from the player who is awarded the free position, the player who is awarded the free position may pick up the ball and, from a settled stance, self-start from that location.

If the ball ends up outside the playing distance of the foul, the player who has been awarded the free position and the ball must return to the spot of the foul for the self-start. If the spot of the foul cannot be determined, the official shall indicate the location of the free position.

If the player who has been awarded the free position chooses to self-start, the defensive players may engage immediately following the self-start. The ball carrier does not have to wait for all other players to be in position before she self-starts. The ball carrier may also elect to wait for the official's whistle to restart play.

To resume play when the ball has gone out of bounds, the closest player of the team awarded possession of the ball may commence play with a self-start, relative to the spot from where the ball went out of bounds (within playing distance).

The player may commence play, from a settled stance, with a self-start within 2m of the boundary line. All other players must be at least 1m from the ball carrier.

Frequently Asked Questions about Self-Start

Q1. How do we define a settled stance?

A settled stance is defined as: both feet are stationary, on the ground, with the ball positioned in the head of the stick, and the player with possession making, at minimum, a momentary pause before restarting play

Q2. When is a self-start NOT an option?

- a) The game clock is stopped for any reason.
- b) Restraining line violation (offsides)
- c) Foul is in Critical Scoring Area (excluding boundary restarts)
- d) Alternate Possession
- d) Inadvertent Whistle
- e) Overtime
- f) After a goal is scored

Q3. Can a player self-start on an illegal draw?

Yes

Q4. What does “within playing distance” mean?

Playing distance can be defined as within 1½ stick’s length of where the foul occurred. A player’s momentum may carry them forward this distance (after a whistle has been blown for a foul). Self-starts are permitted within this distance, unless the restart would occur within the critical scoring area.

Q5. Is it a foul if the player self-starts beyond “playing distance?”

NO, it is a reset. The official should whistle to stop play and indicate the correct location for the restart. The original ball carrier returns to spot of foul, takes a settled stance and self-starts (no whistle needed.)

Q6. What if a player self-starts when it is not allowed?

The player should be reset to the correct location and play shall commence with a whistle. With repeated offenses, the player may be given a verbal warning, or the official may issue a delay of game foul or card. Self-starts on an offensive 8-meter free position shall be treated as a false-start.

Q7. What if the offending player or other players do not try to move 4m away/behind the ball carrier? Does a player wishing to self-start have to wait for other players to move 4m behind/away?

The player with the ball does not have to wait to self-start. If the ball carrier chooses to commence play with a self-start while players are within 4m of the ball, there is no foul. If, however, the ball carrier chooses to wait to commence play until all players are 4m away and the opposing players do not try to move, a verbal warning or a delay of game foul may be considered.

Q8. How do we determine when play has commenced?

Play will commence once the ball carrier steps or passes. A step is defined as the act of lifting and setting down one's foot. Rocking motions do not commence play. Additionally, movement of the ball carrier's stick does not commence play.

Q9. Is it a foul if a defender engages the ball carrier prior to her self-start?

No. If the defender engages the ball carrier prior to the self-start, the official blows her whistle, resets the play and self-start is allowed. Repeated offenses, the player may be given a verbal warning or the official may issue a delay of game card.

Q10. What are the requirements for play to be restarted when the ball goes out of bounds?

The team awarded possession may self-start. The closest player from that team may self-start within playing distance of where the ball went out of play and within the playing field. Exception: If the ball goes out of bounds and is awarded to the goalie (who is within her goal circle,) the goalie may NOT self-start. Play is restarted with a whistle.

Q11. Can a player self-start when the ball goes out of bounds as the result of a foul?

Yes. The fouled player is positioned, with the ball, at the spot of the foul (at least 4m from the boundary) and may choose to self-start unless the foul occurred inside the CSA.

Q12. Are self-starts permitted within the last two minutes of each half (when stopped clock is in effect)?

No. Self-starts are not permitted when the game clock is stopped. However, if there is a running clock due to a 10-goal differential, self-starts are permitted.

Q13. Is there ever a time when a whistle start should be used when a self-start is allowed?

YES. If the ball carrier does not attempt to self-start in a reasonable period of time, the official may choose to restart play with a whistle. For example, if the ball carrier has waited to ensure all players are 4m away and still does not self-start, the official may start play with the whistle. Or if, in the judgement of the official, a team is deliberately delaying the restart to gain an advantage (e.g., a one-goal game), a whistle start may be used.