Situation: During the last two minutes of the second half, a one-goal game has gone to a stop-clock on every whistle. Both teams are working hard. Both teams have done a good job the entire game with self-starts outside the CSA, and whistle starts inside the CSA. Teams have had a few re-sets for starts from the wrong place, or when a whistle was needed, but nothing major.

Blue team wants to maintain the lead, and White team needs to score to go into overtime play. White team player #20 has the ball in mid-field and is running towards her attacking end when Blue player #12 fouls her with an illegal cross check. The official sets up the penalty administration correctly, and even remembers to say “Whistle start”! White #20 self-starts. The official blows her whistle, calls #20 back, and re-sets the play. #20 settles and self-starts again. Opposing coach is yelling for a change of possession. What is the official to do?

Response: In the scenario shared above, we would again re-set #20, make very sure we are fully managing the whistle start, and with our whistle, initiate play.

We’ve shared many times that this is a learning year. That means all season, in every game. It’s so important that we, as officials, are consistent in our instruction, our calls, our penalty administration – and the way we call the game from beginning, to end. We should not change the way we look at the game because of the minutes on the clock.

In the scenario above, if the White team has not been warned or given a delay card at any point in the game for excessive self-starts when a whistle start is required, or for starting from beyond playing distance, the last two minutes is NOT the time to initiate this response. EVEN IF the opposing coach is screaming for a turnover. EVEN IF the player starts early twice. The last two minutes of the half, and of the game, are a particular game management responsibility of the officials. You can manage the players with your whistle tone, with your raised hand, with your very specific instruction. It’s important that you do not create a “game changing” call by letting the frenzy of the moment and the emotions on the field impact your decisions. Calm and sure will rule the day – and help you manage a safe and fair outcome.

Note: As competition increases towards the end of our season, and as we enter post-season play, this situation will likely repeat itself. Officials need to discuss the last two minutes and be prepared to manage this important part of the game within the rules, consistently between partners, and consistently from game to game.

GAME PERSONNEL

**Question:** At several games this season my partner and I show up to a field, on time, only to find that the scorer and the timer are not even on site. One, or both, show up at the last second, and they don’t know what they’re doing. Then everyone gets mad at us for problems with the clock, or with scoring/carding issues. At my last game, there wasn’t even a time-keeper available when it was almost game time. We got a last second fill-in, but what are we supposed to do? What are we allowed to do?

**Answer:** This question could go under “Who’s job is it, anyway?” If we look in our rule book, we see that the game administrator is responsible for all equipment and personnel to run the game. If there is not a game administrator on site, that responsibility falls to the head coach. We need to know this. The officials are in charge of managing the game, never are we in charge of problem-solving for situations the home team is responsible to handle. In fact, as an official, you could create problems if you insert yourself and tell the game administrator, or the coach, who they are to use for what job.

Instead, use the language of the rules. If, for instance, there is not a timer on site – go to the appropriate person and ask who will be the timer for the game. Whether you feel the individual assigned to the job is competent, or not, you must then work with that person to review the expectations of a timer. An extreme response would be “we don’t have a timer – no one is available.” If that is what you are told (and this has happened), then we say “OK. I’m hearing that you cannot provide the game personnel needed in order to have this game today. Is that correct?” They will find someone! We DO NOT problem solve by suggesting – or telling them - who they should get to fill in. If there is an issue later and YOU chose the timer, that’s a problem. Make sure the home team is fulfilling their responsibilities, as your crew makes sure all pre-game items on the official’s list are addressed. Then – game on!

**Rule Reference:** Page 25, Section 3 – Game Administrator

OFF SIDES… WHAT ABOUT THE GOALIE?

**Question:** I’ve been officiating girl’s lacrosse for a while, and yesterday I had a situation I never saw before. In the last 4 minutes of the game, Blue is on their attacking end, and they are stalling. It’s a one goal game and Blue is leading. White defense cannot break the stall. White coach calls to her goalie to leave the circle and run above the Restraining Line. After the White goalie goes above the RL, another White defender comes running down. Blue still has seven attack players, now White has eight defenders, but no goalie. Is this legal? We didn’t know what to do, so we allowed it, but everyone was screaming.

**Answer:** This is an interesting one! The question we need to answer is what constitutes legal play, from a player count standpoint, when team’s are below the restraining line? The rule book tells us how many players may be below the restraining line for the offensive and for the defensive teams. The rule book does NOT define those players by position. So, while we certainly don’t see the situation above very often, there is nothing illegal about it. Interesting discussion point - if this would happen, what do the officials need to think about in terms of a potential deputy? Are we knowledgeable about what the defending team, without a goalie, can do to defend a shot?

**Rule References:** Page 49, Section 1 – Restraining Line, Page 46, Section 3– Deputy Rules
Q & A CONTINUED

OFFICIAL’S ROLE AT ANY GAME

**Question:** I worked with a really good partner this week. The game went well, with one exception, and I’m not sure if this should be addressed or not. So, I’m sending it in as a question. My partner likes to “coach” the players. This official knows the game. At the draw, after goals, sometimes to the goalie, this official takes time to tell the player how to do a mechanic, or how they might have responded to a situation in a stronger way. This is during the game. During a recent game, one of the coaches asked what my partner was doing. It was awkward. The coach said she wanted it to stop. What do I do? Is it completely wrong to help these high school players?

**Answer:** I understand this is a sensitive question, because we know that some of our officials have a background in coaching, working with students, or maybe they were just a great player “back in the day”. Helping comes very naturally to them, and the help offered is with very good intention. However, the simple answer is that an official offering advice or direction to players during a game should never happen. Even if we don’t mean to suggest bias, we are “helping” one team to do a better job against the other team. Unacceptable. This is a situation where we, the officials, can be the cause of frustration with coaches and with players on the field.

Officials need to know the rules, and call the game. We do NOT take time at the draw, after goals, during time outs, or at any other point in the game to advise or suggest skill improvements. If your partner is doing this, privately take a moment and say something like, “I know you want to help the players, but we cannot offer help during the game. Let’s make sure we aren’t advising, and that we are just calling the game.”

Official’s – if you recognize your own behavior in this question, please work to disengage from “coaching” during your games. Thank you!

DID YOU KNOW?

**The Clock** – NFHS rules require a game clock. No specific type defined. No mandate that it is visible. Yes, this means a cell phone could be used if necessary. (Page 25, Section 3 “all equipment required” includes a clock… nothing more specific).

**Mouth Guards** – NFHS rules require some specifics regarding mouth guards. **Clear and White** are not allowed. One of them IS NOT that the mouth guard needs to be molded to a player’s teeth. That is recommended, not required. (Page 18/19, Section 7).

**Goggle straps** – Nothing in our rule book says goggles must have straps. Nothing. The ASTM F3077 standard does say that the eye wear must be “securing affixed”. Most goggles do this with straps – that’s how most goggles stay on! Rec Specs have the “grip” on each side of the goggle - secured over, then behind the ear – like glasses. Do not manufacture a requirement for straps – it doesn’t exist. (Page 19, Article 2 and Page 89 Eye Protection, Appendix B state eye wear must be properly worn and meet ASTM F3077 standard for women’s lacrosse).

**When the Whistle and the Shot are Simultaneous** – If the ball enters the goal and the whistle has been blown for a foul – simultaneously or just before the shot - we do NOT allow the goal in NFHS/USLax play. That is not allowed within our rules. Please work towards consistency on this, and help make it right if your partner is unsure, or incorrectly allows the goal. For a whistle for a defensive foul simultaneous with a shot, a goal will not count, and a FP will be administered.
**NOTE**

Note: It’s the little things that can drive everyone crazy… let’s not be the game police; let’s be the game officials. If you KNOW something is illegal, address it. If you THINK something is illegal, you could be wrong. Be pleasant, and if unsure, look it up if time allows, and if not - let it go! Use common sense if there are legitimate safety concerns. Follow up after your game to be sure of the rule. Remember - our ultimate goal is to create a really great, safe and fair game experience for our young athletes!

**GREAT FOLLOW UP TO PREVIOUS BULLETINS**

**THANK YOU FOR MAKING SURE WE “GET IT RIGHT”!**

**Update from Bulletin 5…**

Page 2: “The Goalie and Her Circle” – Observation shared that if the official can make an immediate call on the goalie reaching out and “covering”, that call would be a minor foul versus the goal circle foul when she pulls it in within playing distance of another player. Great point, and great call! (GK may stay in GC for this indirect FP. See Page 53, 3d).

**Update from Bulletin 6…**

Page 1: Great discussions about the Goal Circle line under “Who’s Line Is It Anyway?” Follow-up is “If that goalie has most of her foot “out” of the circle, and only part of the back of her foot on the line, isn’t she considered “out”?…. Doesn’t she have to keep walking?

No. The line is not ever “split”. If any part of her foot is on the line (and the other foot still entirely in the circle) she can go back in. Think of the side line. If the ball is ¾ on the playing field and ¼ on the line, it’s still out. Same is true when thinking about the foot being “in”. Knowing that any part of the foot in contact with the line keeps the goalie “in” actually helps keep the rule clean and simple, without officials having to decide if the goalie is “enough out”, to be “out”.

---

![PIAA logo](logo.png)