

Some coaches had questions about the off-side law. This is a bit long, so take two aspirin and read on...

A player passes the ball to a teammate, who is running toward the opponent's goal. Suddenly the referee blows his whistle. You look over and see the assistant referee standing at attention with his flag pointed straight up, and then to the area of the field where the infraction occurred...

What just happened???

When judgment of offside position is necessary, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his own team ask these questions:

- 1. Is the player in the attacking half of the field?**
- 2. Is the player nearer the goal line than the ball?**
- 3. Is the player nearer the goal line than any two defenders?**

If any question is answered no, stop here. The player is not in an offside position.

If all are answered yes, then the player is in an offside position, ask two more questions:

- a. Is the player interfering with play or an opponent?**
- b. Is the player gaining an advantage?**

If either of these is true then the assistant flags for offside and the referee blows for the infraction and awards an indirect free kick, to be taken from where the attacker was at the moment the ball was touched or played by a member of his own team.

Remember that it is not contrary to the Law to be in an offside position. After the ball is played a footballer may run into an offside position and play it without penalty. When a player is in an offside position and the ball is played forward that player may not get involved without penalty even if the ball bounces off an opponent or an opponent misplays it.