

District Referee Administrator's Report

November 14, 2007

1. 2008 Re-registration

League Referee Coordinators are encouraged to remind their referees to renew with USSF for 2008. Renewal packets have been sent from USSF and referees need to follow the instructions included in the packet or they can go to www.cnra.net and re-register. Referees need to retain their confirming number. If they haven't received their badges etc. within 4 weeks, they need to contact Steven Murry, Manager of Registration at smurry@ussoccer.org with the confirming number of the transaction..

Referees, who choose not to re-register online, can do so on www.cnra.net. They need to follow the instructions for persons who do not have a credit card.

2. Referees Wishing to Upgrade or Maintain Higher Referee Grades

All upgrades as well as re-registration for grades 7 and State Referees 1 & 2s **MUST** go through the DRAs. Failure to do so will result in that referee being knocked back to grade 8. Those referees reduced in grade will need to do a mid year upgrade.

Referees wanting to upgrade are reminded that they need to have attended annual training, passed an assessment and passed the fitness and written exam.

3. 2007 District Youth Referee of the Year

Youth Coordinators and/or PP assignors who assign youth referees (18 years of age and younger) to HSY PP games are encouraged to contact the DYRA/DRA with the names of any referees that they want considered for Youth District Referee of the Year.

D7 has not had any candidates for Youth Referee of the Year in either 2005 or 2006. Candidates must be able to officiate at least a U14 game and have a desire to improve as a referee. So far, I have yet to have received information from any league coordinators as to possible candidates.

Memorandum

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees, National Assessors
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching
"A" License Coaches
Nike Club Coaches
CoachesNet

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside Myths

Date: October 17, 2007

In response to the suggestion that there is “widespread confusion” regarding Law 11 (Offside), the allegation that referees are being inconsistent in applying the requirements of this Law, and the increasing use of phrases like “passive offside,” we would like to offer the following brief explanation to assist in understanding the meaning and application of Law 11.

There is no such thing as “active offside” or “passive offside” despite the common use of these terms, particularly by commentators. They are, at best, merely shorthand phrases coined for easy reference to the two central concepts in Law 11. Unfortunately, as with so many shorthand phrases, they often confuse rather than clarify what needs to be understood. In general, “passive offside” is used to identify an attacker who is in an offside position but not involved in active play, whereas “active offside” is intended to identify an attacker who has become actively involved in play while in an offside position.

Law 11 has two core threads- these are position and offence. The *offside position*, has a well-established meaning and its concept is clear:

- A player is in an offside position if he is nearer his opponent’s goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent
- A player is not in an offside position if:
 - He is in his own half of the field of play.
 - He is level with the second last opponent.
 - He is level with the last two opponents
- The judgment as to the offside position is determined at the moment the ball is played by a member of the player’s team.

Offside position is factual based on the relative positions of an attacker, the ball, the halfway line, and the second last opponent.

The *offside offence* is, by contrast, a matter of interpretation by the officiating team and, while the concepts are equally clear, some clarification as to how the officials reach their decision is offered:

- Being in an offside position is not an offence in itself.
- A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball is played or touched by a teammate, he is involved in the active play *by interfering with the play, interfering with an opponent or gaining an advantage by being in that position.*

- A player who receives the ball directly from a goal kick, throw in or a corner kick has not committed an offside offence.
- A player's offside or onside position at the time the ball is touched or played by a teammate cannot be changed by any subsequent movement of the player, the opponents or the ball, so long as there has been no intervening play of the ball by an opponent. An offside or onside position is based on *where the player is when the player's teammate touches or plays the ball, not where the player becomes actively involved in play.*

There must be a clear understanding that an offside position is decided based on a moment in time – when the ball is touched or played by a teammate – whereas the offside offence is judged from that moment onward. In other words, having in effect taken a snapshot of player positions and frozen their onside or offside positions at that moment, the officials must then judge whether players in offside positions become involved in active play. This involves weighing the direction and speed of the ball, the direction and speed of the player in an offside position, the direction and speed of any teammates coming from onside positions and the position and movement of any opponents relative to players in offside positions.

Although this sounds very complex and perhaps beyond the abilities of mortal men and women, in reality the decision-making process of a properly trained official is smooth and calculated to reach a correct interpretation of each situation. What is important to remember is that match officials take into consideration the whole playing scenario across the entire field from where the play started, factoring in the elapsed time, whereas many observers often only focus on a few players, over a short period of time, based on the direction of play and where it ends up.

How is the determination of “active involvement” made leading to a decision to penalize for offside?

“Interfering with play” means touching or playing the ball last touched or played by a teammate. In this context, touching and playing the ball are considered equivalent actions by the player. At a meeting of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) on 11 August 2005, this point was clarified as follows: “A player in an offside position may be penalized **before** playing or touching the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, no other teammate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.” This clarification means that the player could be penalized immediately rather than having to wait for a physical touch of the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, there was no teammate in an onside position who could compete for the ball. It follows that, if there were a teammate coming from an onside position who could play the ball legally, it would be necessary to wait to see which player actually got to the ball first.

“Interfering with an opponent” means **preventing** an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or movement, or by a gesture or movement which ***in the opinion of the referee deceives or distracts an opponent.*** We also have to remember that:

- Attackers clearly behind a defender do not interfere with them.
- Merely knowing that an opponent is in offside position does not justify a defender claiming that he was interfered with.
- An attacker raising his hand to signify no involvement does not, by itself, constitute an action which “deceives or distracts.” Indeed, in this context, there is no need for an attacker to signal “no involvement” as his involvement can be objectively determined by what he does, not by what he fails to do.

“Gaining an advantage by being in that position” means ***playing a ball*** that rebounds to him off a goalpost, crossbar, or an opponent, having been in an offside position when that phase of play began. In effect, this particular element is an extension of interfering with play, compounded by the rebound of the ball. In cases where this aspect of law is invoked, confusion sometimes arises from the fact that the attacker in an offside position would not have been penalized for offside if the ball had not rebound to him or her in this passage of play.

The approach taken by most match officials is to wait and see. In these circumstances it may appear that the

official is late or slow in signaling the offence, but in reality he or she has taken all the evidence presented to him or her, applied the knowledge and understanding of the criteria and come to a *balanced* decision. This may have included the fact that the player was not initially involved in active play and therefore no signal was given. It is almost universally accepted that, if there is any doubt, then the balance of doubt is given to the attacker.

We have addressed the specific instances in separate correspondence. The purpose of this communication is solely to provide an extended discussion of the elements from Law 11 that we have applied in responding to requests for “rulings” regarding specific offside incidents. We also hope that you actively (rather than “passively”) discourage the use of the phrases “passive offside” and “active offside” as they are not part of the Law and only lead to confusion. If you have any points or queries you wish to raise on this paper, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Memorandum

To: State Referee Administrators
State Youth Referee Administrators
State Directors of Referee Instruction
State Directors of Referee Assessment
National Referees, National Assessors
National Instructors

cc: State Directors of Coaching
CoachesNet
"A" Licensed Coaches
Nike Club Coaches

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Offside Issues

Date: October 16, 2007

During a match between FC Dallas and the Columbus Crew on October 6, 2007, a sequence of play occurred which resulted in the scoring of a goal by Columbus player #12 (Eddie Gaven). At the time, Columbus player #26 (Andy Herron) was indisputably in an offside position and some analysts of the play have suggested that the goal should have been canceled because Herron had committed an offside infraction.

Being in an offside position is not an offense. A player in an offside position is only penalized if he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play, or
- Interfering with an opponent, or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position.

Below, using the guidance provided by FIFA, we examine whether Herron should have been penalized for being in an offside position.

Although Herron is seen sticking his leg out as the ball passes him, there is no contact with the ball and therefore Herron cannot be considered *to have interfered with play*. This is a fact.

The camera angles on the several replays of the event on the attached clip do not provide us with a clear line of sight from the perspective of the Dallas goalkeeper #30 (Ray Burse) so we must draw our conclusions from what can be seen. First, Herron is about 12 yards from the Dallas goalkeeper when the play was initiated by Columbus. Accordingly, Herron occupied only a small portion of the goalkeeper's field of view and it is therefore inconclusive that Herron interfered with the goalkeeper by blocking Burse's view of the path of the ball. Second, there is no video evidence that Herron's actions deceived or distracted the goalkeeper (much less any other defender). The goalkeeper's position to defend against this shot on goal appears to be set by the trajectory of the ball as it left Gaven's foot, not by any action taken by Herron. The evidence thus supports a decision that Herron *did not interfere with an opponent*.

Gaining an advantage while in an offside position is not an issue here since there was no deflection from the goalposts, crossbar, or a defender. This also is a fact.

As a consequence, none of the elements of involvement in active play while in an offside position were present and the referee's decision not to penalize Herron for his position must be supported.

Memorandum

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment
State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: Handling Injuries

Date: October 12, 2007

An incident at the first U.S. Soccer Development Academy Fall Showcase tournament led to extensive discussions regarding the correct referee actions to be taken when a goalkeeper and opponent are injured. The lack of a single clear answer among the many experienced observers gathered there is the reason for this position paper.

Injuries pose numerous difficult decisions for the referee. On the one hand, soccer is a game of continuous action in which stoppages are and should be infrequent. On the other hand, player safety is an obvious matter of concern. Since stopping play may be beneficial for one team, an added issue is the possibility of a player simulating an injury or its degree of severity in an effort to gain that benefit.

Law 5 establishes several basic principles regarding player injuries:

- If, in the opinion of the referee, the injury is serious, play must be stopped.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, the injury is not serious, treatment of the injury is delayed until play is stopped for some other reason.
- If the referee stops play for an injury, the injured player must leave the field and cannot return until play is restarted and the referee gives permission.

The International Football Association Board (IFAB), in its Additional Instructions and Guidelines (AIG) which accompany the Laws of the Game, has clarified certain issues:

- An injured player may not receive treatment on the field unless the injury is "severe" (immediate medical attention is needed).
- An injured goalkeeper is not required to leave the field and may receive treatment while on the field.
- The refusal of an injured player to leave the field despite being required to do so is a cautionable offense (unsporting behavior).
- The removal of an injured player must be swift but safe.
- The referee may signal permission for medical personnel (including stretcher-bearers) to enter the field to assist in the player's removal from the field (or to provide emergency first aid).

Referees should keep in mind the following additional guidelines regarding the handling of player injuries:

- A player may seek assistance and treatment off the field during play if given permission by the referee to do so (permission is also needed to return to the field, which may occur during play).

- A player who is injured may leave the field for treatment and return to the field before play resumes if the stoppage was not solely for that player's injury and if medical personnel were not called onto the field by the referee to aid the player's removal.
- "Medical personnel" for purposes of these guidelines includes any team official who has responsibility for the player in the absence of available trained medical staff.
- If a goalkeeper is seriously injured as a result of a collision with a teammate or opponent and the teammate or opponent is also injured, all players injured in the collision may be treated on the field and are not required to leave the field.
- A player for whom the referee has requested medical personnel to enter the field at a stoppage is required to leave the field and may return with the referee's permission only after play has resumed even if the stoppage was not expressly for the injury.

Evaluating and balancing these factors must be done quickly and fairly, with appropriate regard for the age and skill of the players. In all cases of doubt, the safety of the player must be the referee's primary concern.

Memorandum

To: National Referees
National Instructors
National Assessors
State Referee Administrators
State Directors of Instruction
State Directors of Assessment

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

Subject: **The Opinion of the Referee and Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunities**

Date: September 25, 2007

Attached is a clip from a match played September 16 between Chivas USA and Colorado Rapids (at Colorado). The clip presents a series of issues which, among other things, focuses our attention on the critical role of the referee's judgment in grey areas and on staying current as to interpretations of the Laws of the Game.

The simple facts are that Chivas player # 10 (Merlin) was attacking the Colorado goal and was fouled in the 11th minute by Colorado # 3 (Erpen). As a result, Erpen was given a red card and Chivas were given a penalty kick.

The first core issue is where the foul by Erpen happened. Fouls are complex events and require both time and space to occur. They cannot be easily pinpointed at a given spot on the field and a given second on the clock. Recognizing this, FIFA made it clear last year that a foul may begin outside the penalty area and conclude inside the penalty area – in which case, the referee should award a penalty kick.

That was clearly the case here. Initial contact with Merlin was outside the Colorado penalty area but the nature and consequences of that contact did not become evident for several more steps and seconds of play, by which time the event itself had continued into the penalty area. The penalty kick was a correct decision.

The second core issue is whether the offense met the requirements of an obvious goal scoring opportunity (the "4 Ds"). Here, the clip is less revealing. Each of the requirements involves judgment, some more than others, but three of the "Ds" would appear to be present based on the evidence – distance to goal, distance to the ball, and direction of play.

At the time of the foul (measured by when the referee decided the foul had occurred), Colorado player #29 (Sanneh) was definitely in the area of the offense. Based on the referee's distance and angle, Sanneh could have been judged either not between the foul and the opposing goal (making the Colorado goalkeeper Coundoul the only defender) or not able to add materially to Colorado's defense had Merlin not been fouled. Either decision would result in the 4th D (number of defenders) also being met.

This latter element confirms once again that, even with an apparently objective and factual issue such as "number of defenders," there remain critical decisions which are and always will be based on "in the opinion of the referee."