

Welcome to the 2025 Soccer season!

Thanks for taking time off from your busy schedules to attend our in-person clinic.

We feel it's best that you come to an in-person clinic so that you can see the people that are working for you behind the scenes and get face-to-face instruction and for us to see your face as well, so thanks again for being here.

We're officials working for officials! Our clinicians are all still actively officiating, so they have nothing but the best interest for officials as we're officials too!

As your clinician I'll be sharing some of my perspectives on officiating soccer so be a great listener and make sure to ask questions. I want to make sure you get all your questions answered before you leave today's clinic.

Most of you are new soccer officials so please pay attention as we'll cover quite a bit of information, with some of you being returning officials so what we will cover here will be a refresher.

We'll start by covering these areas:

\* Soccer Business (Communication with assignors and teams. Update your availability in Arbiter Sports)

- Per-game meeting (Introductions, Sportsmanship and anything else that needs to be covered)
- Psychology of being a good official (being impartial)
- Game management (how you handle players and coaches)
- Effective communication
- \* Interpretation and application of rules
- Working with different partners
- Proper positioning and mechanics
- Situation awareness
- Nutrition and Rest

### Soccer Business

This starts a couple of days before your game (s) with sending an email/text to the home team with the details of time, location as sites might change due to field conditions. This is the professional and business side of our craft. Take care of the house. First impressions go a long way. Make sure you have an updated email address and cell number so assignors and teams can get a hold of you. Take a minute to start a text line the night before or at least the morning of as that's all it will take, a minute. Peace of mind goes a long way too. Make sure you connect with your partner as well.

Show up on time. On time means at least 30 minutes prior to your first game as it does take a little time to get dressed and most parking lots are a distance away from the field. Make sure your shirt is clean and that it does not smell, and your shorts/pants are clean. If you plan to wear a hat it must be an all-black hat with no logos. Look sharp as you only get one chance to make a first impression. When you show up on time and look professional, they will treat you like a professional. Pull out your equipment and make sure everything is working condition. Replace any worn or faded hats, shirts, or shorts/pants. Check your shoelaces too as they may be worn.

### Pregame protocol

Check in with the tournament director and read the rules for that game/tournament. Most assignors will send out the rules a night or two before the tournament so make sure things are still correct.

You must have a pre-game meeting with both head coaches going over sportsmanship and the expectations are for today's game. You could say "Coaches if you have any question throughout the game please ask appropriately and I will answer your question" If it's a judgement call, we'll need to leave that alone.

This must happen, 5 minutes before the start of each game. I know most officials will want to sit down for a minute or two in between games for a rest and get a quick snack, which is acceptable but take the time to get a coaches meeting in as this will set the tone for the game as having open communication between the coaches and the officials which will relieve some tension between officials and coaches. When the players and fans see this happening, it helps with game management.

### Game Management

The way you walk out onto the field is important. Walk with confidence not arrogance as that will set the tone for the game. When you walk onto the field you could interact with the fans to humanize yourself but just keep it short with maybe just a "Hi, how's it going" then move on like you have other things you need to do, which you do. You may know some of the people in the crowd but keep your interaction with them limited as to not show favoritism because the other fans and coach will be watching. When talking with players and coaches keep neutral tones in your voice. Let's not match them. Like if a coach is yelling about a call and you know they are talking to you just walk over to the



coach calmly and keeping enough space between the two of you and ask the coach, "coach, do you have a question about the call?" in a calming voice with good body language too. If the coach is just yelling to be yelling read the situation. Why is the coach yelling or who is the coach yelling at? If they are not yelling at you then you can ignore the coach unless it is influencing the game, then use the tools you have in your tool belt. Stop sign, warning, ejection! We'll support you with that.

As for the players, you will need to be in regular communication throughout the game. It is not constant, just when needed. Do not say anything that will get you into any trouble. It happens most often when a player or a coach disagrees with a call. Just make your call and try and stay stoic and matter of fact about your call. Be decisive. Just explain what you have and move on. This should not become a debate. This is where we really need to be great communicators. If a player is doing something illegal and you can talk with the player we want to keep players in the game especially the good players. Some coaches don't want you to talk to their players if that's the case then talk with the coach, and they can relay the message to their players. Don't let the game run amuck.

Knowing the rules will help you get the right call so get into the rule book! Go slow as well as working on your timing when making your calls will be the difference in them believing your call. Slowing down gives you a second to gather your thoughts and give a clear call with good volume and cadence. Again, no need to be in a hurry as that is where we get in trouble. Slow down. This process will be a wash, rinse, and repeat.

Throughout the game make sure to give quality effort. There will be times when you won't get the best angle and that's just the nature of the game and it is okay. Just make the call based on what you see. Players sometimes put us in tough spots based on what happens so expect the unexpected. Get the best angle.

Have great spot mechanics as that will show the players, coaches, and the fans what you are calling. Be decisive with your calls too. Own the call. Try to be decisive with your calls so there is no doubt from anyone on the field. We want to get plays right and that shows that you can communicate well. If it's a judgement call, then stay with what you have and explain to the player/coach what you have and move on. We as officials always need to be even keel and constant and steady, if we can do that well the game should maintain some steady flow. We also need to be able to block out some of the comments that pop up during our games as we're there to officiate the game and not try and solve the players/coaches' issues.

You need to always give your best! Remember, attitude and effort are the two things we have complete control of and along with being a good communicator, getting the best angles on plays,

with solid mechanics, and great rules knowledge, adding all those things up together will help in your journey as a soccer official.

Situational awareness will give you a better chance to get into the right position during a particular play. Penalty kicks in particular

Nutrition & Rest starts the day before your games. Make sure you're hydrating the day before and having a solid meal the night before as well. Getting a good night's rest is also important. Pack a lite snack and something to drink for in between games.

### The Seven Qualities of a Great Sports Official

#### Hustle:

Since officiating is a game of angles and positioning, officiating hustle describes movement and field position. There's no connection to speed and meaningless motion. Every great official moves efficiently to be in the right place at the right time. It's the only way to see the entire play and make the correct call.

#### Communication:

Basically, communication means, "Can you deal with people?" Can you deal with coaches and players during the game? Communication can be accomplished in many ways and in most cases the situation will dictate your appropriate response. Sometimes a simple response to the question, a one-word answer (Advantage) or a look can communicate what is needed at a particular time. Saying the right thing to the right person at the right time can help one avoid potential problems in a game. Communication is also the knowledge of when it's best not to say anything. Let your whistle do the talking.

#### Consistency:

Young officials have more difficulty with consistency than any other quality, mainly because they lack experience to realize when their decisions are inconsistent. Everyone has some difficulty in this regard, but the great officials are unrelenting in their judgment. They see and call the game better than their colleagues. The key is to make the same call on the same kind of play. If they believe an official is consistent, coaches and players will adjust accordingly. Inconsistent decisions on similar plays trigger negative behavior and poor sportsmanship among players and invites criticism from players and coaches.

#### Judgement:

Great judgment is a byproduct of effort and experience. It goes beyond the rule book and includes an almost instinctive ability to apply the critical principles of the play.



### Courageous:

Regardless of the situation, personalities involved, or pressure from the fans, great officials place fairness above all other concerns. They act courageously and accordingly to the dictates of that value.

### Integrity:

Great sports officials are the last guardian of honesty in athletics. They must maintain a complete absence of bias. Officials are rarely accused of any kind of dishonest or deceitful conduct. An official holds a position in the world of sports, as to call it the way you see and do the right thing. If you aspire to be a great official, you must never put yourself in a position where your integrity could be questioned.

### Common Sense:

Of the qualities discussed, common sense is the most important. That which is fair and right must take precedence throughout each game. Common sense ensures that fairness, understanding, and the best interests of the game are foremost in the mind of a great official. If you truly understand the spirit and intent of the rules, common sense will guide you well.

Plenty of games situations develop that are not specifically covered by the rules or mechanics. That's when common sense must take over. What is fair or what is right is what should be done. Common sense goes hand and hand with communication and dealing with coaches and players. It helps determine how to handle a tough situation.

In a sense, all the things you've just read are no more than his opinions about the key elements that make a great sports official. There are plenty of other basic requirements that cannot be overlooked such as physical appearance, knowledge of the rules, mechanics, reliability, and professionalism. However, the seven qualities above are those which he feels set great sports officials apart from the rest.

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### Resources

Where to get my uniform?

Soccer Planet

Minneapolis 2716 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55408

Burnsville 2999 County Rd 42 W #134, Burnsville, MN 55306

Blaine 1465 101st Ave NE, Blaine, MN 55449

You can also buy your uniform from an online outfitter just be careful as some of the products don't meet the standards.

Field work and positioning

### **Two-Person Philosophy:**

Soccer is a game of nearly constant motion, so an official's angles, distance, and adjustments are constantly changing based on the play. It could just be a step or two, either way to see in between players or it could be a fast break, just make sure you're in proper position to see the play from start to finish by calling the game fairly and safe.

Both officials must understand these rules of angles, distance, and adjustments giving themselves a clear line of site on plays. When these are known then each official will know what areas of coverage theirs are, and these areas of coverage change as play moves from north to south and from east to west.

Good officials also know where each other is by having good eye contact with where our partner is located on the field. Not only do we need to watch the teams/players, but we also need to know where each other is on the field and what we're watching so we can shift our primary coverage area as needed.

We should always try and mirror the ball even if it's not in our primary coverage area, that way we're in a better position to take over the ball when it enters our primary coverage area. You do that by using your peripherals. Watching your area but being able to see beyond your coverage area to mirror the ball. The players will tell you where the ball is and where it's going.

Putting all this together leads us to having great communication. Practical field applications develop through partner communication, knowing exactly what you and your partner are expected to do in specific situations.

### **Three-Person Philosophy:**

The same principles above apply to three-person as in two-person for the most part except in three-person the center official will be the calling the game for the most part. They should have a pregame meeting with the two ARs letting them know what the center officials wants and expects from the ARs for that game. Just be on the same page for whatever the crew decides for that game and call the game fairly and safe.

### **One-Person Philosophy:**

The same principles above apply to one-person for the most part with movement and calling the game fairly and safe with the only difference being you are by yourself so you will miss some things along the way like sideline out of bounds calls and goal line out of bounds and goals.

## Proper Mechanics:

Communication is a vital part of the game of soccer for the officials, players, coaches, and fans. The use of proper mechanics communicates what you have after you blow your whistle. No need to be in a hurry when calling a foul, that's where we can get in trouble by losing the number of the player or outright forgetting what your call was. Always have great spot foul mechanics. Use your voice as well, that way your partner and the players can hear your call and that gives your partner and players time to set up for what's next. Also, if it's a no-call with advantage then use your voice stating advantage with using the proper signal. If it's a foul call say what the foul is then give the direction of play with it being direct or indirect.

Signals reminders:

1. Don't be in a hurry. Composure and professional will sell your calls.
2. Have just one strong blast or multiple blast of your whistle on calls so play stops.
3. Use the correct signal so there's no confusion.
4. Stop and give spot foul signals, you should be stationary.
5. Make sure the ball is stationary too as the ball cannot be a rolling ball they put back in play.
6. Give help when asked or when you have 100% certainty.

Here is a list of some of the most common fouls:

- 1) Charge
- 2) Hold
- 3) Push
- 4) Tackles or challenges
- 5) Trips
- 6) Strikes- kicks, punches, spitting, head butts
- 7) Carelessness or Reckless play, Excessive force or contact
- 8) Handling
- 9) Obstruction
- 10) Dangerous play or misconduct

If a player is constantly being called for these fouls, they can and should be given a yellow card for constant infringement of the rules.

Make sure players are putting the ball in play correctly on:

- 1) Throw-Ins
- 2) Goal kicks
- 3) Free kicks (No rolling balls)
- 4) Corner kicks





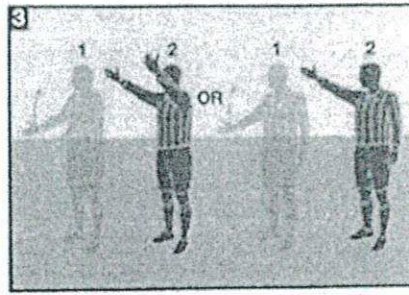
# OFFICIAL SOCCER SIGNALS



**1**  
Direct free kick  
(Point in direction  
of kick)



**2**  
Indirect free kick  
(Hold until kick is  
taken and touched)



**3**  
Play On



**4**  
Time-out



**5**  
Wind-up to  
start clock



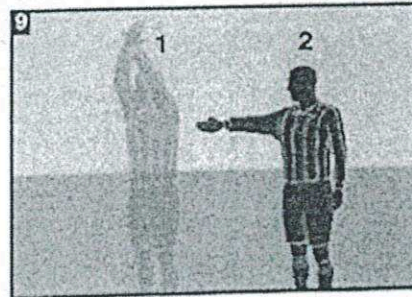
**6**  
Penalty kick  
(Point to spot)  
Goal Kick  
(Point to goal area)



**7**  
Caution/  
Ejection



**8**  
Corner kick  
(Point to corner)



**9**  
Goal

PlayPic®

PlayPics courtesy of REFERENCE





## ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS



### Throw-in

(The flag should not be brought across the body. Appropriately, the flag should be switched to the appropriate hand.)



### Substitution

(Hold the flag above the head as shown until acknowledged by the referee, then return the flag to the side.)



### Foul

(1. Hold the flag vertically until acknowledged by the referee; 2. Wave flag; 3. Point the flag in the direction where the free kick will take place.)



### Corner kick

(Assistant referee should point to the nearest corner.)



### Goal kick

(Assistant referee should point to the goal area.)



### Stop play - Offside

(Assistant referee should indicate he/she has seen an offside with the right arm.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position on the far side of the field.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position near the center of the field.)



### Offside free kick

(When the referee stops play, the assistant referee indicates position on the near side of the field.)

PlayPic®

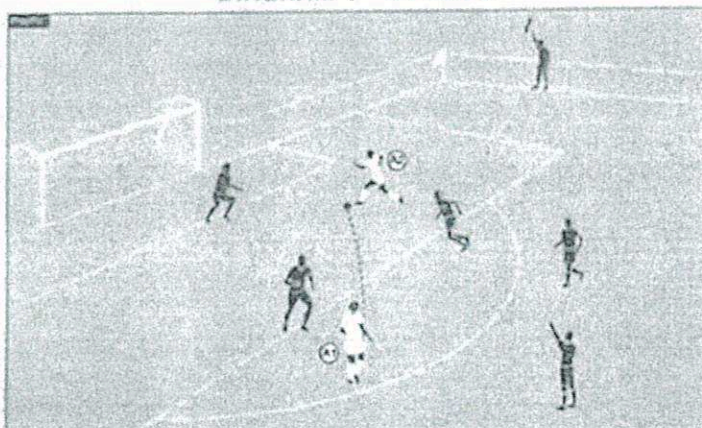
PlayPics courtesy of REFERENCE

Offsides needs to be called and there are many ways players can be in an offside position and here are some play-pics to help you understand the fundamentals of offsides.

## DIAGRAMS ILLUSTRATING OFFSIDE

PlayPic PlayPics courtesy of REFEREX

### DIAGRAM 1 – OFFSIDE



#### Pass to a Teammate

A1 passes the ball to A2. A2 is offside because A2 is in front of A1 and is nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two opposing players when the ball was passed by A1.

### DIAGRAM 2 – NOT OFFSIDE

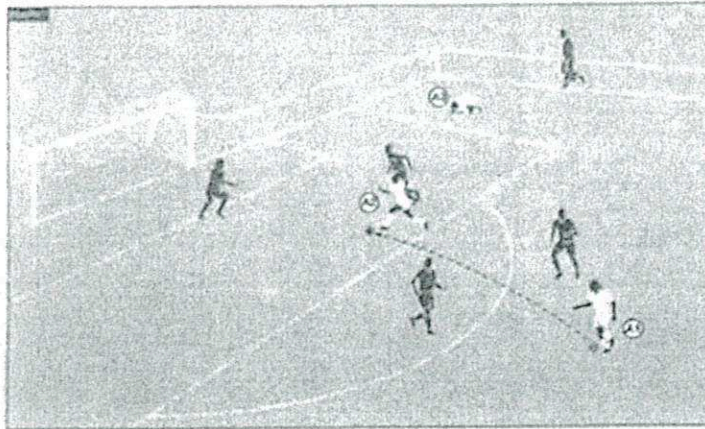


#### Pass to a Teammate

A1 plays the ball forward to A2 who is level with the second last defender. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two opposing players.



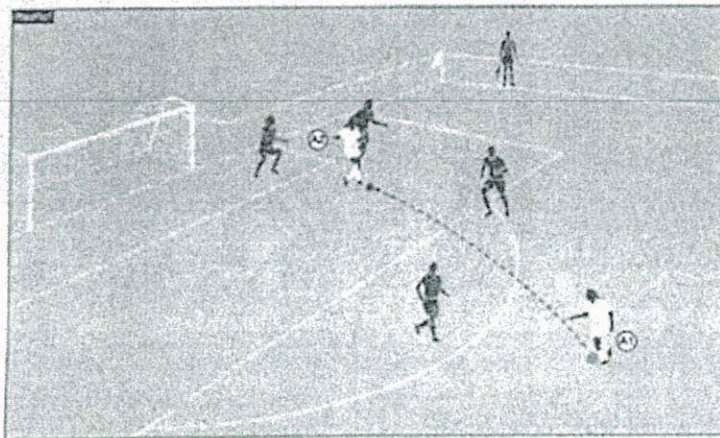
**DIAGRAM 3 – NOT OFFSIDE**



**Pass to a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball forward to A2 who is level with the second last defender. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players. Player A3, lying injured outside the penalty area, is in an offside position but would not be penalized since the player is not involved in active play.

**DIAGRAM 4 – NOT OFFSIDE**

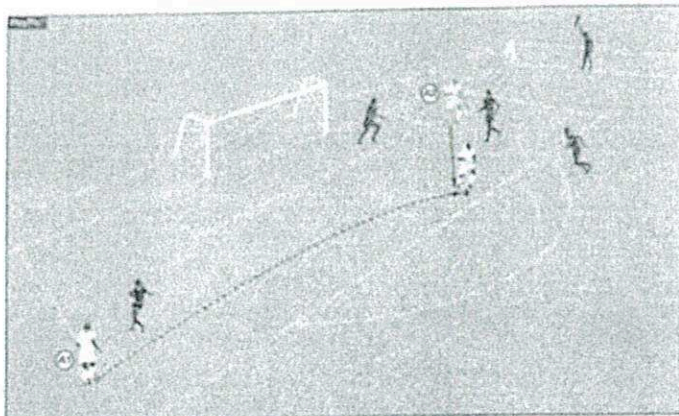


**Pass to a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball to A2 who is level with the last two opponents. A2 is not offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not nearer the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players.



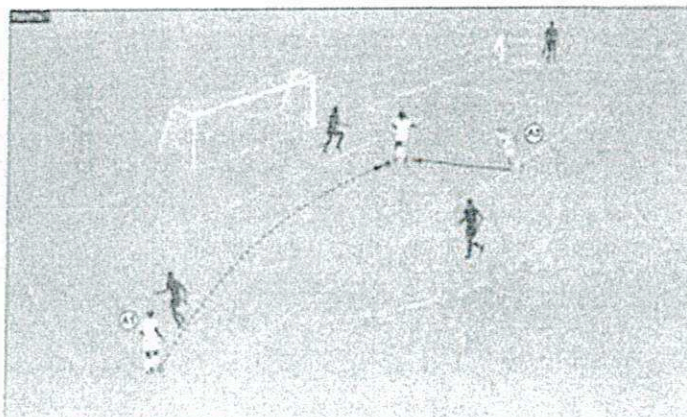
DIAGRAM 5 – OFFSIDE



**Pass to a Teammate**

A1 crosses the ball forward from outside the penalty area. A2 runs from Position 1 and collects the ball as it lands at Position 2. A2 is offside since, at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players and was involved in active play by interfering with the play when they touched the ball.

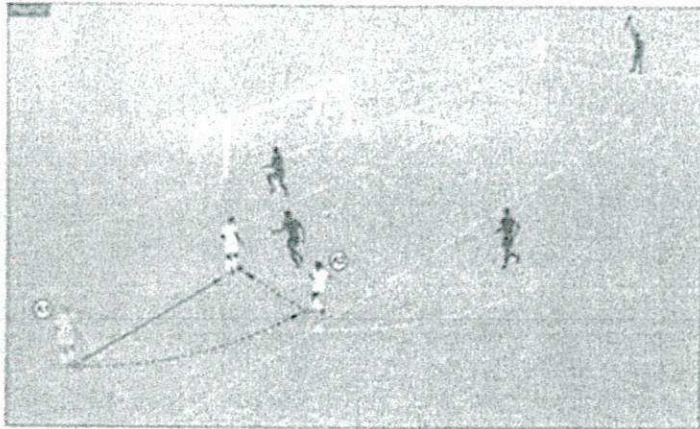
DIAGRAM 6 – NOT OFFSIDE



**Pass to a Teammate**

A1 passes the ball to A2 who runs from Position 1 to Position 2 to play it. A2 is not offside because at the moment the ball was played by A1, A2 was not in an offside position since A2 was not in front of the ball and was not nearer to the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players.

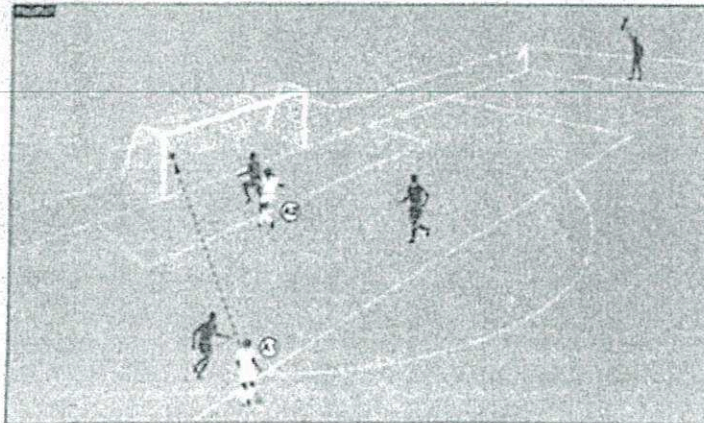
**DIAGRAM 7 – OFFSIDE**



**Interpassing with a Teammate**

A1 plays the ball to A2 from Position 1 and runs forward to receive the return pass. A2 plays the ball to A1, who is now in Position 2. A1 is offside since at the moment the ball was played forward to A1 by A2, A1 was nearer the opponent's goal line than at least two of the opposing players and was involved in active play by interfering with play when A1 touched the ball.

**DIAGRAM 8 – OFFSIDE**

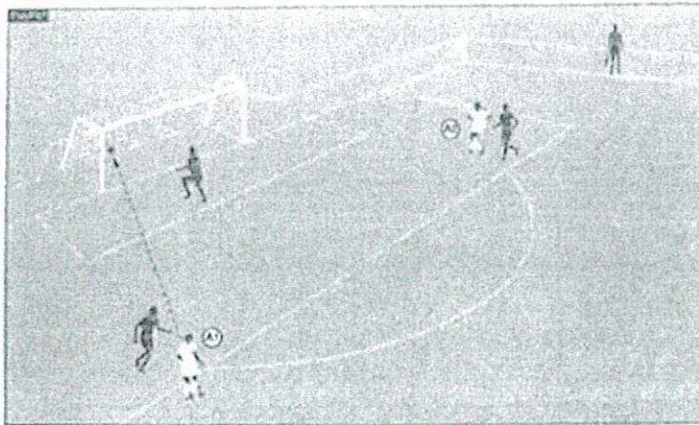


**Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. A2 is standing in front of the goal-keeper. The goal would not be allowed since A2, who is in an offside position, is involved in active play and is interfering with an opponent.



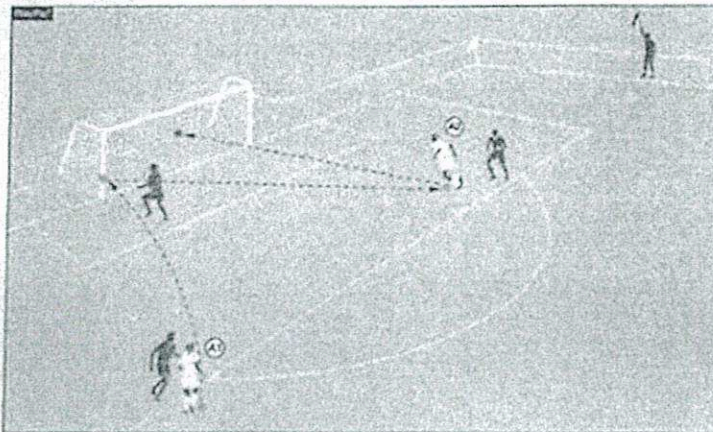
**DIAGRAM 9 – NOT OFFSIDE**



**Shot at Goal**

A1 shoots for goal and scores. Although A2 is in an offside position, this player is not involved in active play and the goal would be allowed.

**DIAGRAM 10 – OFFSIDE**

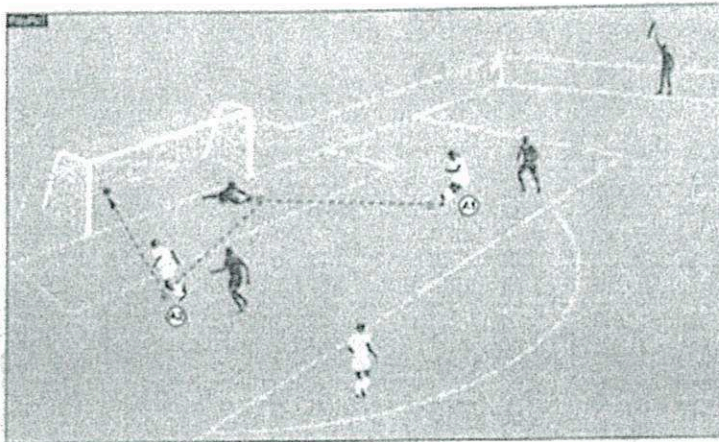


**Ball Rebounding from Goal Posts or Crossbar**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball rebounds from the post to A2 who kicks the ball into goal. The goal would be disallowed since A2, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by A1, was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.



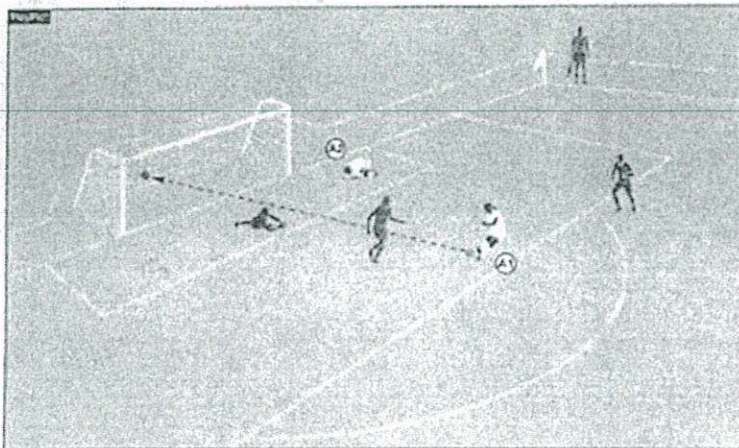
**DIAGRAM 11 – OFFSIDE**



**Shot Rebounds from Goalkeeper**

A1 shoots the ball at goal and the ball rebounds from the goalkeeper to Player A2. The goal is disallowed since A2, who was in an offside position when the ball was last played by A1, was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.

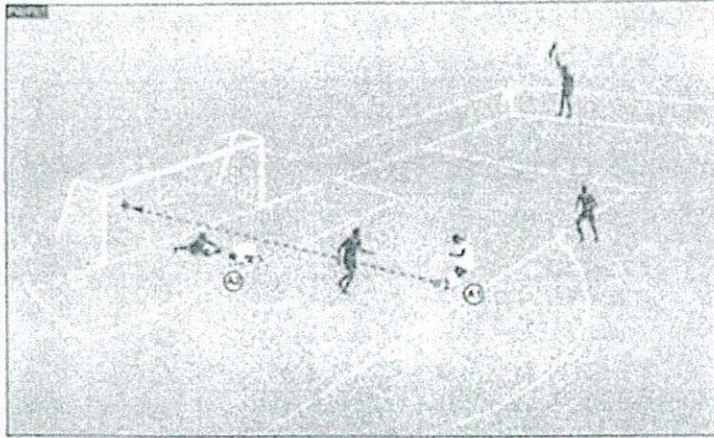
**DIAGRAM 12 – NOT OFFSIDE**



**Not Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and scores. Although A2 is lying injured in an offside position, this player is not involved in active play. The goal would be allowed.

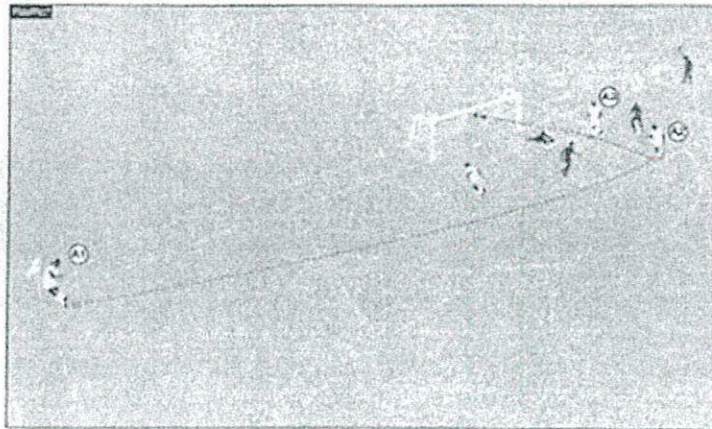
DIAGRAM 13 – OFFSIDE



**Interfering with an Opponent**

A1 shoots for goal and the ball enters the net. A2, who is lying injured in the goal area and in the path of the ball, would be penalized for offside. By A2's presence, however accidental, A2 is involved in the active play and is interfering with an opponent.

DIAGRAM 14 – OFFSIDE

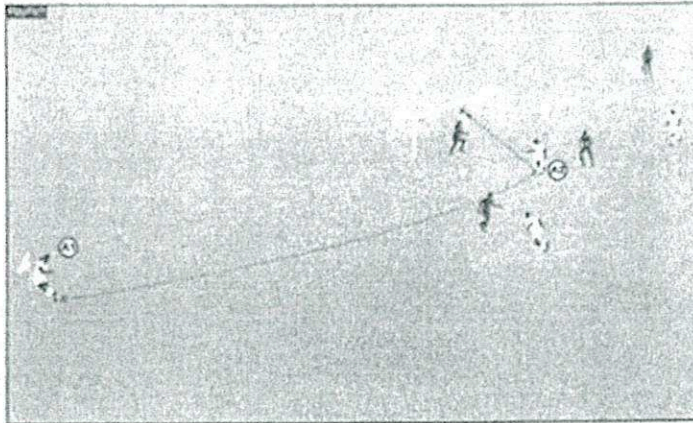


**Corner Kick**

A1 takes a corner kick and the ball goes to A2. A2 shoots for goal and the ball is touched by A3 and enters the goal. The goal is not permitted since A3 was in front of the ball and there were not at least two opposing players between A3 and the goal line when it was last played by A2.



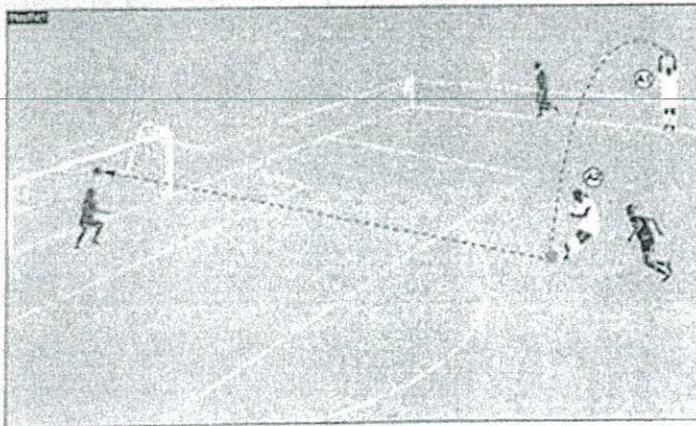
DIAGRAM 15 – NOT OFFSIDE



#### Corner Kick

A corner kick is taken by A1 and the ball goes to A2 who scores. Although there is only one opposing player between A2 and the goal line, the goal is allowed since a player is not penalized for being in an offside position if the player receives the ball directly from a corner kick.

DIAGRAM 16 – NOT OFFSIDE

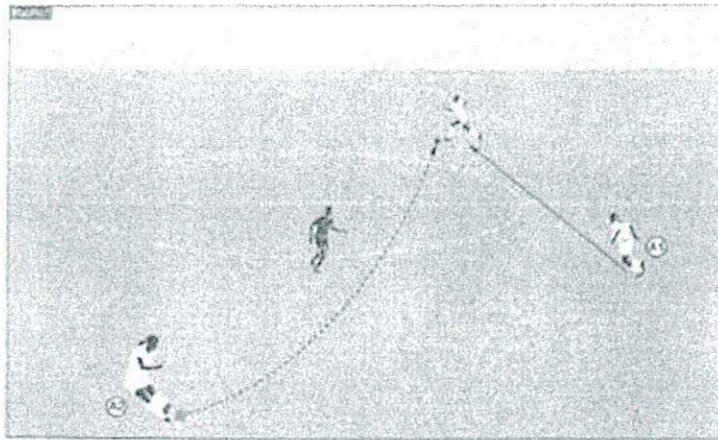


#### Throw-in

A1 throws the ball to A2 who scores. The goal is allowed. Although A2 is in front of the ball and there is only one opposing player between A2 and the goal line, A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position because A2 received the ball directly from a throw-in.



DIAGRAM 17 – NOT OFFSIDE



**Pass to a Teammate**

A2 plays the ball ahead of A1 who is in A1's own half. Although there are not at least two opposing players nearer their own goal line at the moment when A2 played the ball, A1 is not offside since a player cannot be offside in the player's own half of the field of play.

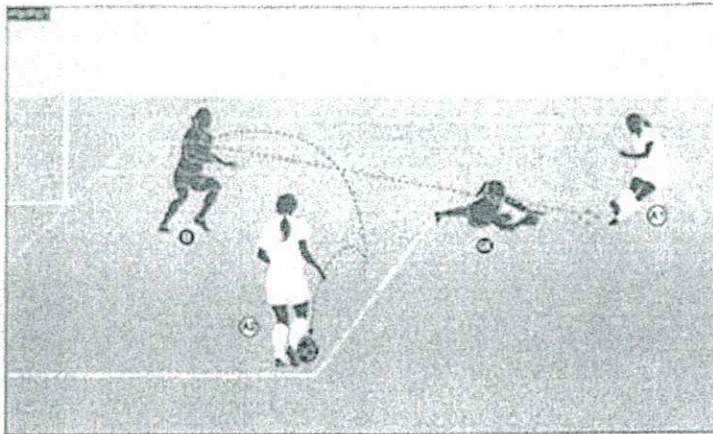
DIAGRAM 18 – NOT OFFSIDE



**Active Play**

The ball is intercepted by player A2, a teammate of the attacking player. It is transferred to another teammate, player A3, on the wing. Although the attacking player A1 is in an offside position, A1 would not be penalized since A1 is not involved in active play.

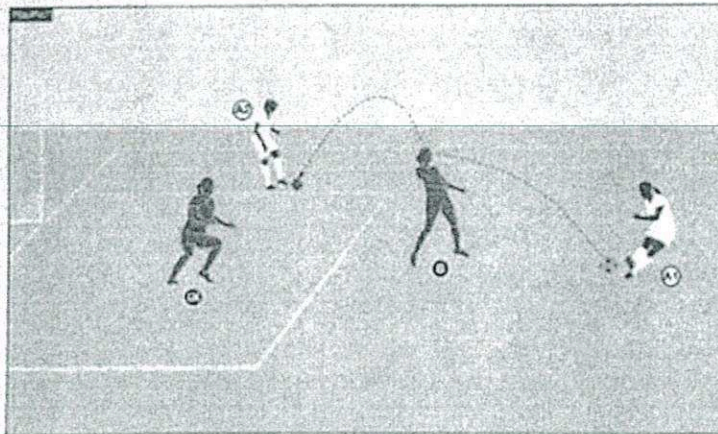
DIAGRAM 19 – OFFSIDE



**Shot On Goal with Goalkeeper Out of Position**

Player A1 takes a shot on goal. With the goalkeeper out of position, a defender (Player B1) makes a deliberate save and the ball rebounds directly to Player A2 in an offside position. Player A2 received the ball directly from a save and was involved in active play by gaining an advantage by being in that position.

DIAGRAM 20 – NOT OFFSIDE

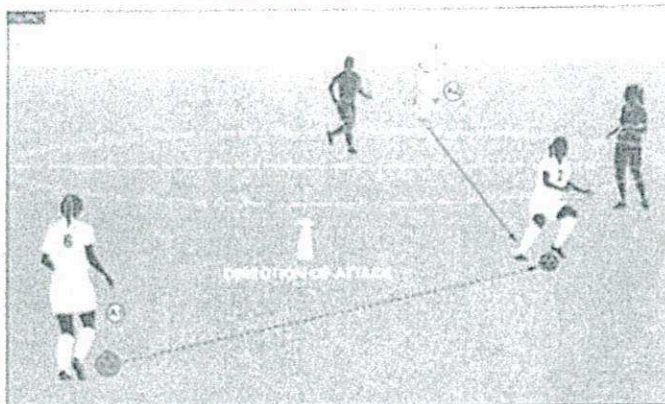


**Defender Making a Play on the Ball**

Player A1 passes the ball and a defender (B1) heads the ball directly to Player A2, who is in an offside position. A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position, however, because this player received the ball directly from a defender who had time and space to make a controlled play on the ball.

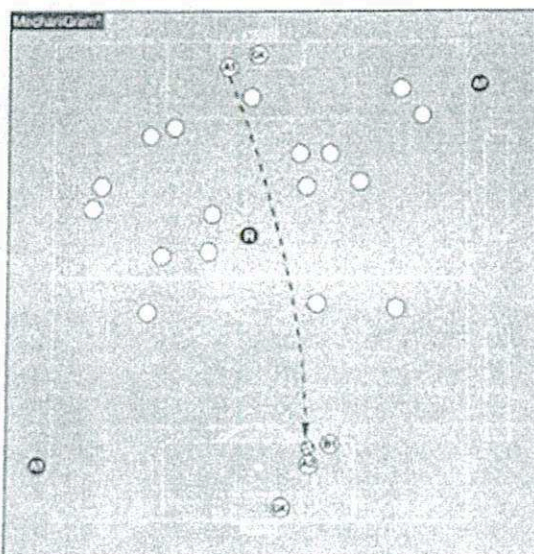


DIAGRAM 21 – OFFSIDE



A1 plays the ball toward A2. A2 is in an offside position and runs from the offside position into A2's own half of the field and plays the ball. Player A2 is offside as A2 was in an offside position when the ball was played. An indirect free kick is taken where A2 touched or played the ball.

DIAGRAM 22 – NOT OFFSIDE



A2 receives a goal kick in the attacking half of the field from A1. There are not at least two opponents nearer their own goal line when A2 receives the ball directly from A1. A2 is not penalized for being in an offside position since the player received the ball directly from a goal kick.



Points of emphasis:

Each year there will be a list of things that are a point of emphasis so at the beginning of each season we can look back to last year's action to see what we need to be watching/looking at for the upcoming season.

To name a few:

Technology that players wear, make sure the leagues you work in allow these.

Coaching and team area decorum

Denying an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity (DOGSO)

Substitutions (When they can vs when they can't)

### **Rough play:**

Rough play is the number one concern in soccer games and it needs to be cleaned up! The way you can do that is call more fouls. Calling more fouls earlier in the game makes game play cleaner and safer and the game should have better flow. Call the fouls the way the rules are written, and the game will go better. We can't keep letting teams have the advantage they're getting by letting rough play continue. That's part of game management. We need to be Ambassadors of Soccer by calling a fair and safe game.

### **In conclusion:**

Being an official I've got to meet some great people and travel to some neat places while still being part of the game that I love. Here's a list of benefits of being an official.

- 1) It's fun
- 2) You're still part of the game
- 3) It's good exercise
- 4) You can be an official for a long time
- 5) The money is pretty good too

Now is a great time to become an official. There's been efforts to get youth coaches trained through Trusted Coaches programs throughout the country so they're getting some of training that you're getting through our Officials training program. Just make sure to be as professional as possible when working with players/coaches throughout the season. Most fans are starting to understand the impact they're having on youth sports and have become a little better with how they handle themselves but there will still be some fans that just don't get it. Again, be professional when dealing with that aspect of the game. Work through the site person when available. It is getting better! Remember, be a Soccer Ambassadors! Pay is at an all-time high right now too. This is a good part-time job that pays well and you're getting some exercise in too. Control what you can control. Attitude and effort! When you're on the pitch have fun! Talk with the players when you get a chance and make sure to communicate with the coaches. It goes a long way when they're heard by us officials. The MRPA will have your back just make sure you're doing things the right way.

Thanks again for being here and good luck in your upcoming season!

