

Interpretation  
of the Laws of  
the Game and  
Guidelines for Referees

## Definitions

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In the context of Law 11 – Offside, the following definitions apply:

- “nearer to his opponents’ goal line” means that any part of a player’s head, body or feet is nearer to his opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent. The arms are not included in this definition
- “interfering with play” means playing or touching the ball passed or touched by a team-mate
- “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 movements or making a gesture or movement which, in the opinion of the referee, deceives or distracts an opponent
- “gaining an advantage by being in that position” means playing a ball that rebounds to him off a goalpost or the crossbar having been in an offside position or playing a ball that rebounds to him off an opponent having been in an offside position

## Infringements

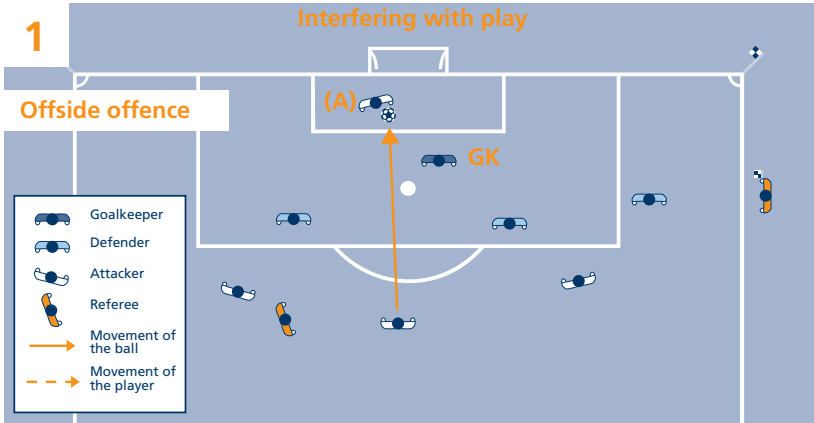
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When an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played to him by one of his team-mates.

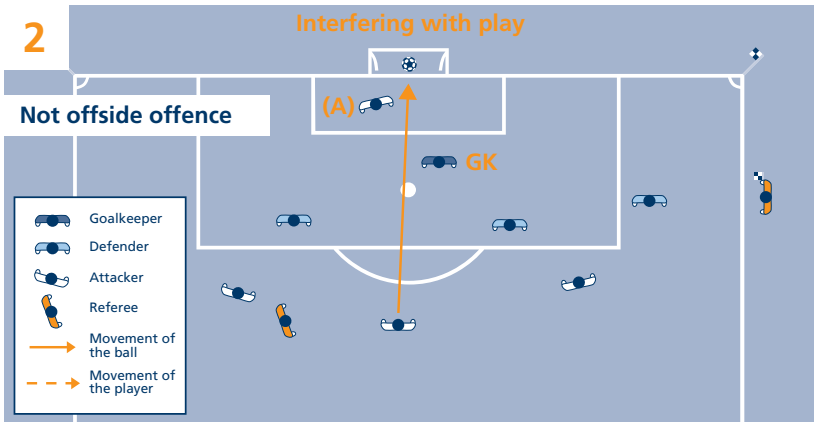
Any defending player leaving the field of play for any reason without the referee's permission shall be considered to be on his own goal line or touch line for the purposes of offside until the next stoppage in play. If the player leaves the field of play deliberately, he must be cautioned when the ball is next out of play.

It is not an offence in itself for a player who is in an offside position to step off the field of play to show the referee that he is not involved in active play. However, if the referee considers that he has left the field of play for tactical reasons and has gained an unfair advantage by re-entering the field of play, the player must be cautioned for unsporting behaviour. The player needs to ask for the referee's permission to re-enter the field of play.

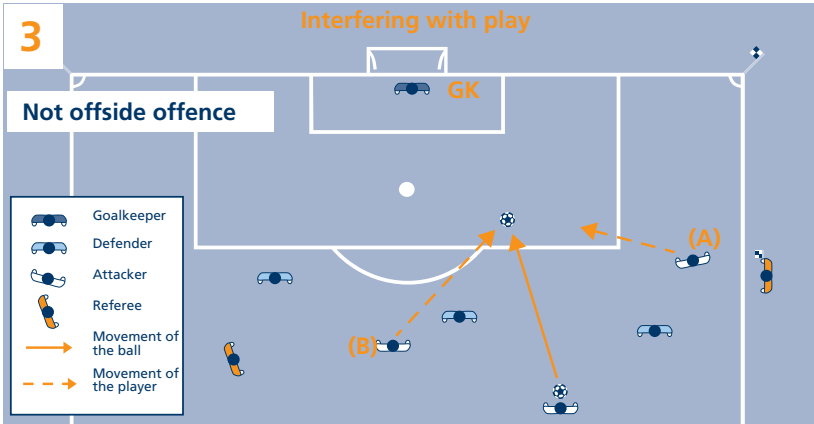
If an attacking player remains stationary between the goalposts and inside the goal net as the ball enters the goal, a goal must be awarded. However, if the attacking player distracts an opponent, the goal must be disallowed, the player cautioned for unsporting behaviour and play restarted with a dropped ball from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.



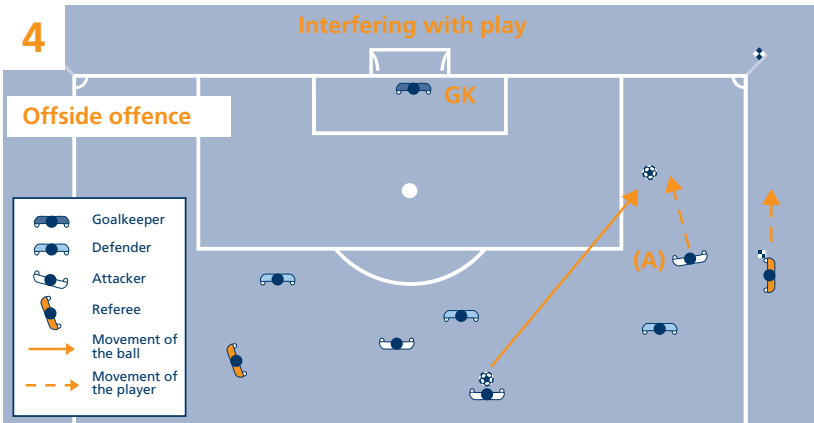
An attacker **in an offside position (A)**, not interfering with an opponent, **touches the ball**.  
The assistant referee must raise the flag when the player **touches the ball**.



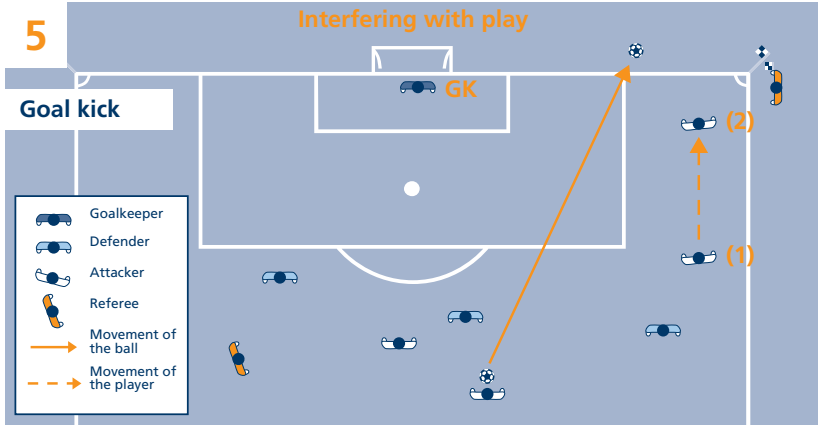
An attacker **in an offside position (A)**, not interfering with an opponent, **does not touch the ball**.  
The player cannot be penalised because he did not touch the ball.



An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball and a team-mate **in an onside position** (B) also runs towards the ball and plays it. (A) cannot be penalised because he did not touch the ball.

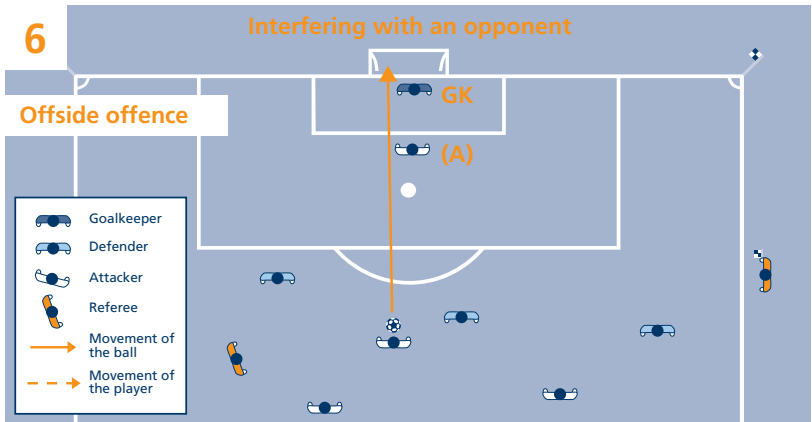


A player **in an offside position** (A) may be penalised before playing or touching the ball, if, in the opinion of the referee, no other team-mate in an onside position has the opportunity to play the ball.

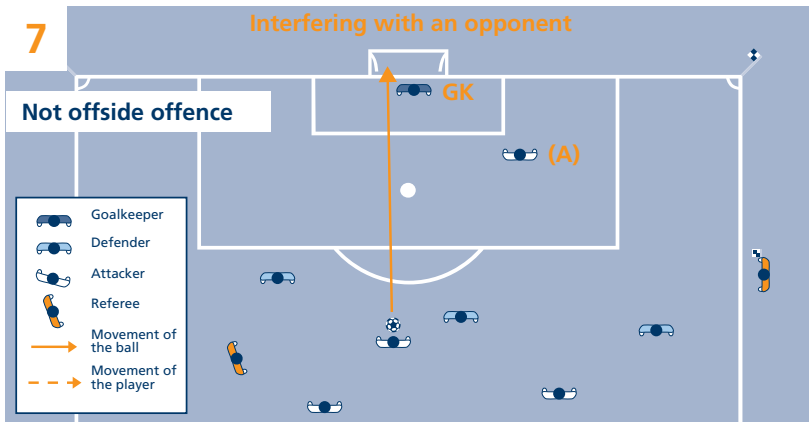


An attacker **in an offside position** (1) runs towards the ball and **does not touch** the ball.

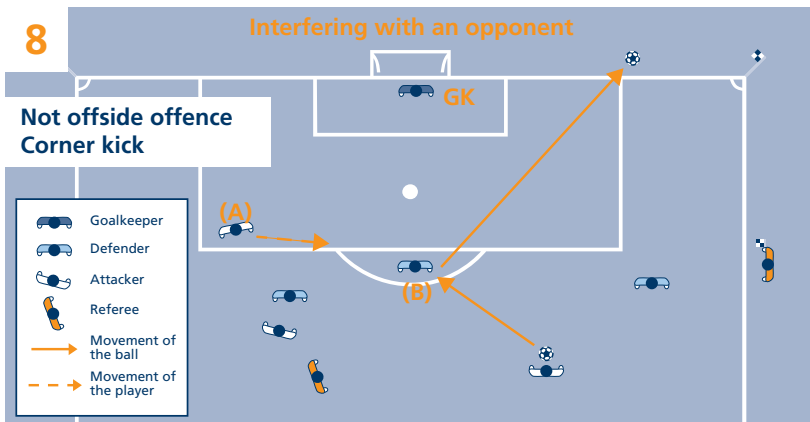
The assistant referee must signal **“goal kick”**.



An attacker **in an offside position** (A) is obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision. He must be penalised because he prevents an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball.

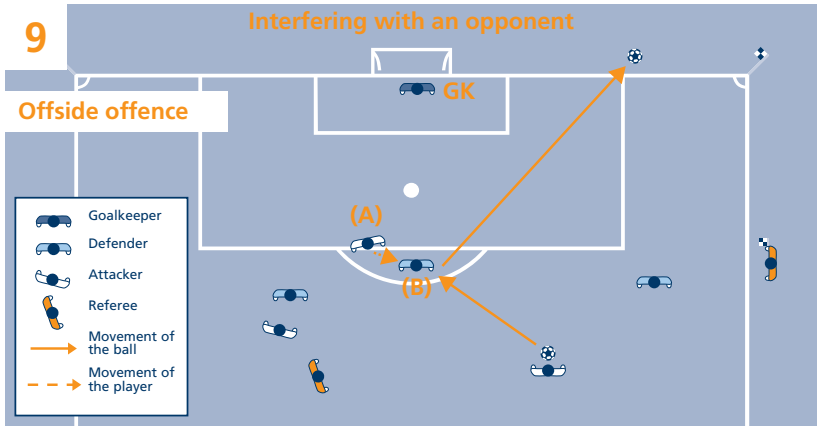


An attacker **in an offside position** (A) is **not** obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision or making a gesture or movement which deceives or distracts him.

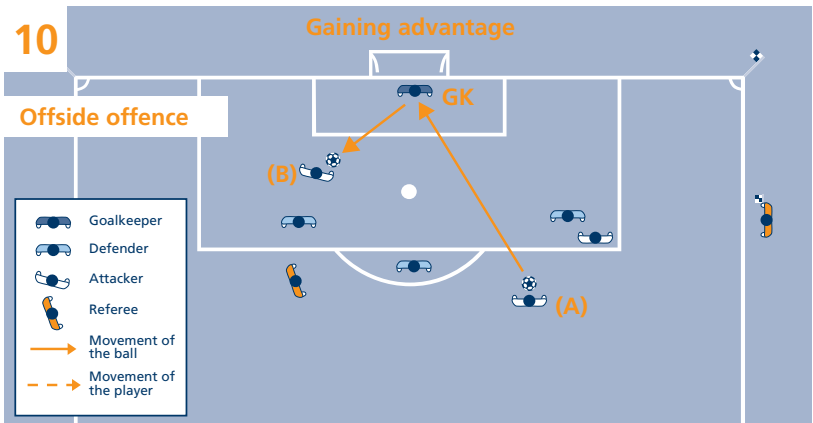


An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball but he does not prevent the opponent from playing or being able to play the ball.

(A) is **not** making any gesture or movement which deceives or distracts (B).

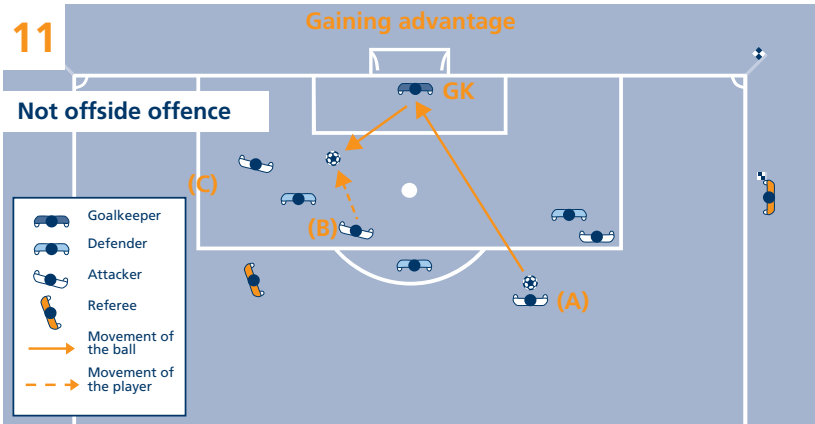


An attacker **in an offside position** (A) runs towards the ball preventing the opponent (B) from playing or being able to play the ball.  
(A) is making a gesture or movement which deceives or distracts (B).



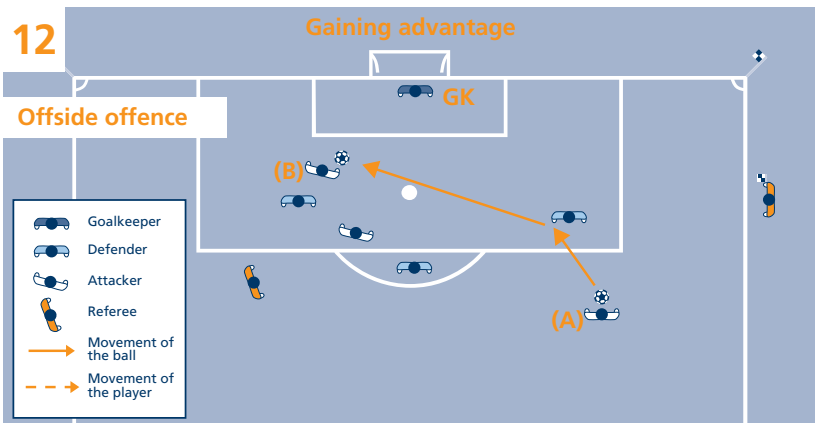
The shot by a team-mate (A) rebounds from the goalkeeper to (B) who is penalised for **playing the ball** having previously been **in an offside position**.



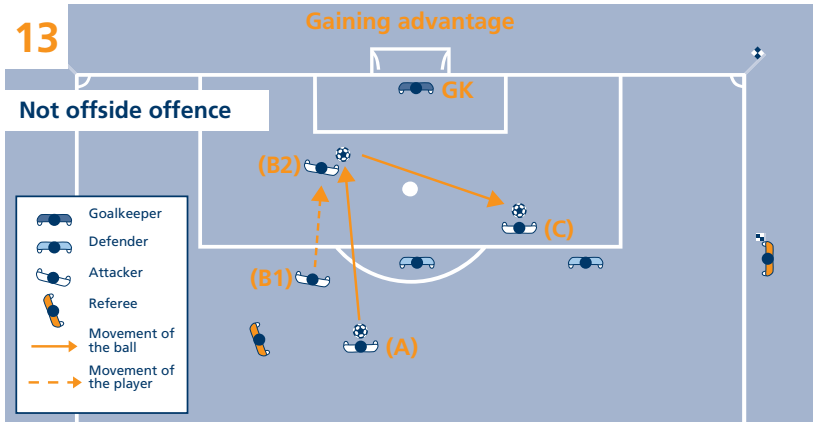


The shot by a team-mate (A) rebounds from the goalkeeper. (B) is in an onside position and plays the ball.

(C) **in an offside position** is not penalised because he did not gain an advantage from being in that position because he did not touch the ball.



The shot by a team-mate (A) rebounds off an opponent to attacker (B) who is penalised for **playing the ball** having previously been **in an offside position**.



An attacker (C) is **in an offside position**, not interfering with an opponent, when a team-mate (A) passes the ball to player (B1) in an onside position who runs towards the opponents' goal and passes the ball (B2) to team-mate (C). Attacker (C) cannot be penalised because when the ball was passed to him, he was **in an onside position**.