

Law 11 - The Offside Law

(Note: Reference to 'he' is for simplification and applies to both males and females)

It is **not** an offense in itself to be in an offside position. FIFA has, however, clarified the application of the Law in order to protect attacking play intended to lead to a goal, which is the ultimate objective in football

To be in an offside position, a player must be nearer to 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 or he is level with the last two opponents.

Law 11 says that: *a player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball is touched or played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:*

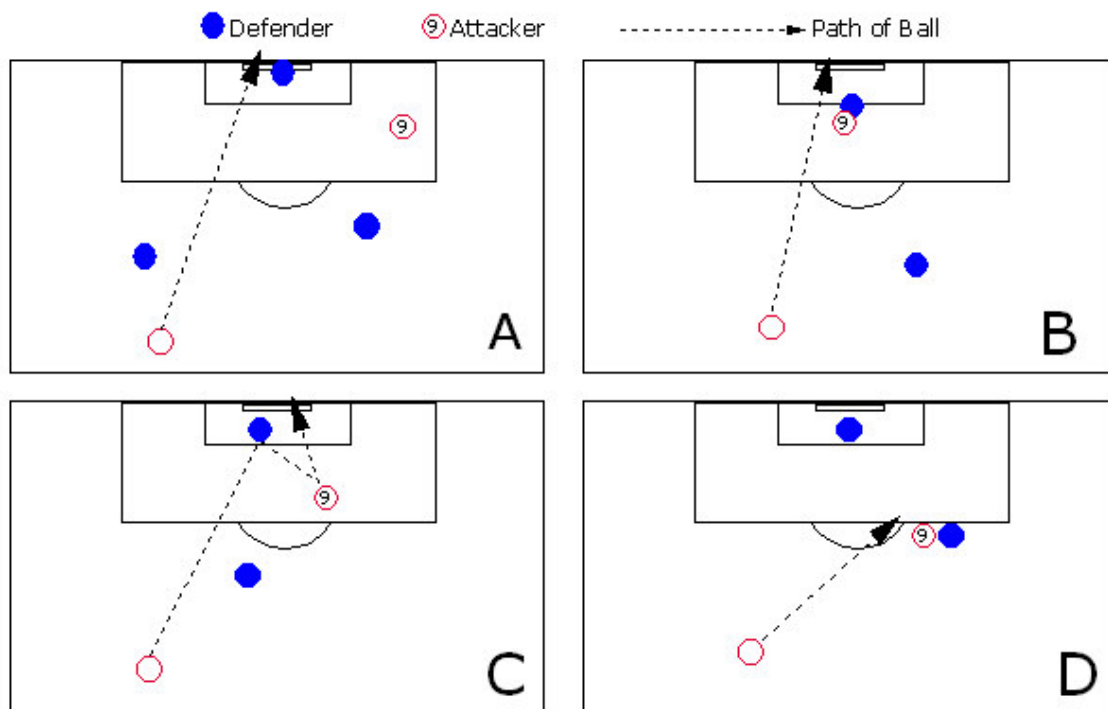
- *Interfering with play, or*
- *Interfering with an opponent, or*
- *Gaining an advantage by being in that position*

The FIFA interpretation of the three possibilities is as follows:

- A player is only *interfering with play* if he **PLAYS OR TOUCHES** a ball passed or touched by a team-mate.
- A player is only *interfering with an opponent* if he **PREVENTS** an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball. For example, by clearly obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision or movements.
- A Player is *also interfering with an opponent* if he makes a gesture or movement while standing in the path of a ball to **DECEIVE OR DISTRACT** an opponent
- A player is only *gaining an advantage* by being in that position if he **PLAYS A BALL** that rebounds off a post, crossbar or opponent having been offside when the ball was played or touched by a member of his own team.

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from a *goal kick, a throw in or a corner kick*.

Test: which of these play diagrams are offside and which are not offside?



Answers:

A is not offside as attacker 9 is not interfering in play

B is offside if Attacker 9, clearly in an offside position, is interfering or obstructing the defender's line of vision

C is offside because attacker 9, when the ball is played, is in an offside position and gains an advantage by being in that position when the ball rebounds off the defender. If the ball had gone straight into the goal he may not have been offside depending on whether the referee decides he was or was not in active play.

D is not offside because attacker 9, when the ball is played to him by his teammate, is level with the second last defender. Even if he runs into an offside position to control the ball he will still not be offside because the offside offense decision is when the ball was last touched by the other attacker.