



Laws of the Game: more detailed interpretation of Law 11: Offside

Zurich, 29 October 2003 -At the Annual Business Meeting of the International Football Association Board on 16 September 2003, a decision was passed in order to ensure uniform interpretation of Law 11: Offside (see below). The aim of this decision is to respect the Laws of the Game and to protect attacking play intended to lead to a goal, which is the ultimate objective in football. This is not a change to the Laws of the Game as this interpretation adheres entirely to the original wording of the Law.

Law 11 reads as follows: "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."*

How to interpret:

"interfering with play"

-> PLAYING OR TOUCHING a ball passed or touched by a team-mate.

"interfering with an opponent"

-> PREVENTING an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball. For example, by clearly obstructing the goalkeeper's line of vision or movements.

-> Making a gesture or movement while standing in the path of the ball to DECEIVE OR DISTRACT AN OPPONENT.

"gaining an advantage by being in that position"

-> PLAYING A BALL that rebounds off a post or the crossbar having been in an offside position.

-> PLAYING A BALL that rebounds off an opponent having been in an offside position.

With these clearer instructions, the referees will be in a better position to make informed decisions based on uniform criteria. However, as stipulated in the Laws of the Game, the referee's decision is final.