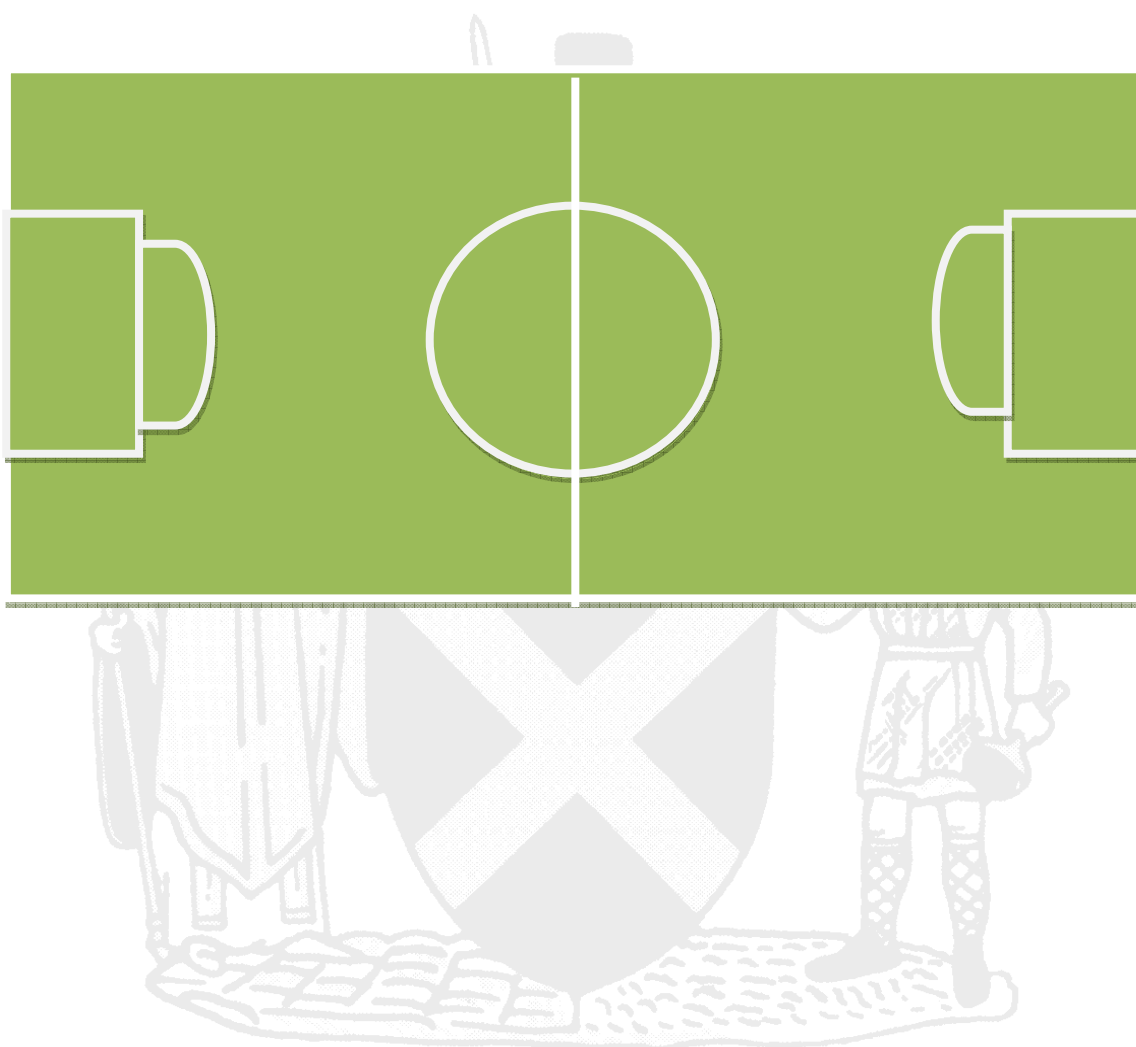


ST. ALBANS CITY YOUTH F.C.

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CLUB LINESMAN GUIDE

BY MATT BENNETT



**F.A. CHARTER STANDARD COMMUNITY CLUB
ABILITY COUNTS**



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Introduction

This document will give a fairly detailed account of how to run the line in 11-a-side football. I don't want to patronise anyone, but I will cover all the basics, as well as the commonly misinterpreted laws of the game.

Unqualified volunteer linesmen have a reputation for cheating and holding bias. In fact, if all football linesmen knew the laws and signals, we wouldn't have the problems we do. The referee is much more likely to go with your decisions if the signals are correct.

I have been a referee for five years, and have had some great experience, both in the middle and running the line. I have officiated with some of the best referee's in the county, and also been in charge of a game with some fairly poor volunteer referees. I hope I can use my (short but varied) experience to help you become a good football linesman.

If you have any questions about anything in here, please ask, I know there's a lot to take in here. Email me at matt_bennett1990@hotmail.com. And good luck 😊

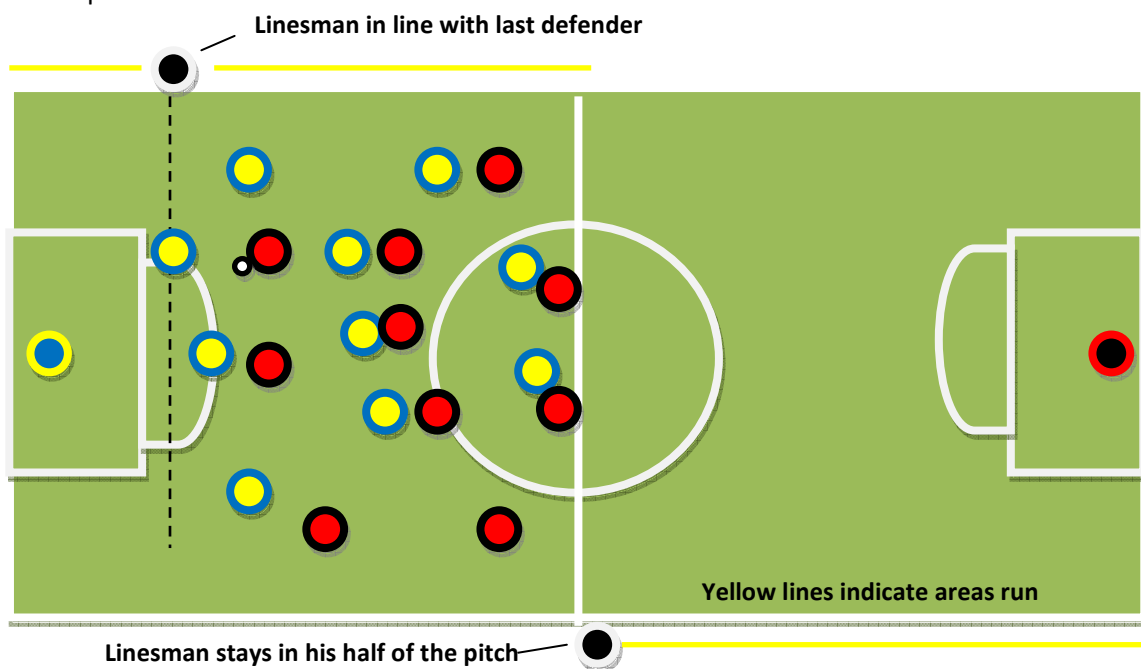
Matt Bennett

Positioning

The linesman should be in line with the second last defensive player at all times. As the goalkeeper is normally always the last defensive player, we say **the linesman should always be in line with the last defender**.

This is a critical point. Too many decisions are given wrongly because the linesman is not 'in line with play'. **The linesman should be moving constantly**. The linesman should not leave his half of the field.

For example:





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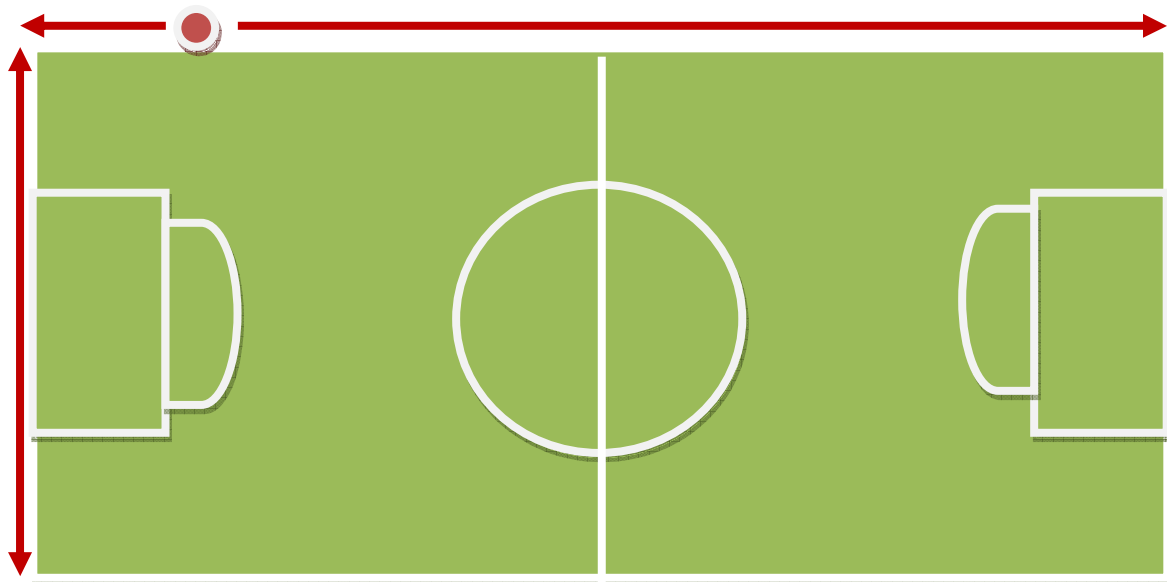
Note. The majority of referees will ask you to run alongside the teams left back, as shown. This is the usual way, but some referees prefer it done with the right back. It is also up to the referee which end you run the line, although you are normally in line with your defenders, as opposed to with the opposition's.

Areas Responsible

You are only normally only required to make decisions in certain areas. This is not to say that you can't draw the attention to the referee at any time, if you see something, but in general decisions will be yours within a certain area, which the referee will make clear to you before the game.

Boundary Decisions – Throw Ins & Corners

Below is a diagram showing which boundaries belong to each linesman. Decisions should be flagged at all times on these lines, however far away the decision is.





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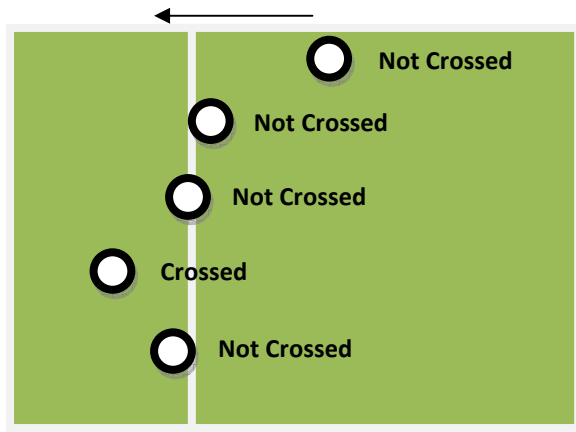
The Linesman's Responsibilities

These are as stated in the official Laws of the Game, under Law 6. I will tell you the official responsibility, and what it means.

The Assistant referee must indicate:

- **“When the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play”.**

One of the most misunderstood laws is when the ball is in and out of play. The whole of the ball must cross the whole of the line before it has gone out of play. This is shown below.



- **“Which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in”.**

This is self explanatory. You use the signals as shown later on.

- **“When a player may be penalised for being in an offside position”.**

More on offside's in a minute.

- **“When offenses have been committed whenever the assistants are closer to the action than the referee (this includes, in particular circumstances, offenses committed in the penalty area)”.**

As stated earlier, you are only likely to get involved with decisions such as handballs, fouls etc. when they are in your area of the pitch. Some referees don't take any decisions on fouls from linesmen, but this should be cleared up before the game.



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- **“Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper has moved forward before the ball has been kicked and if the ball has crossed the line.”**

This will also be cleared up by the referee at the time. Some referees like to take this into their own hands.

Communications with the Referee via Signals

It is always easy to spot qualified linesmen from non-qualified ones by the way they signal decisions. In truth, a referee is more likely to trust a decision if it is signalled in the right way.

The flag should always be held in the hand nearest the pitch. This is normally your right hand when running towards the centre line, and your left hand when running towards the goal line. Note, all of these decisions are done statically, with no movement while the signal is being shown.

- **The Throw In**

Throw In's should be signalled for the whole way down your touchline, despite you only operating in one half of the field. The Throw In signal is a straight arm in the direction the throw is to be taken, as shown.

Note. Your arm should not cross your body when giving the decision. The flag should be swapped to the correct hand before raising it.



- **The Goal Kick**

Goal Kicks are signalled by raising the flag forwards, as shown. You should then wait to check that the ball is placed correctly in the six-yard box, before realigning yourself with play (before the kick is taken).



- **The Corner Kick**

Corners are signalled by lowering your flag to point to the corner that the kick is to be taken from. Which ever side the kick is to be taken





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from, the flag is lowered to the one nearest you – there is no pointing to the corner flag on the opposite side of the pitch.

- **The Substitution**

This is not the most important signal, but if a manager near you wants to make a substitution, it is the best way to communicate to the referee that a team wants to make a substitution. It is done by raising the flag above the head with both hands, as shown.



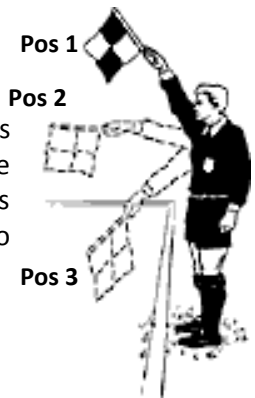
- **The Offside**

Offside decisions are given in two phases. On first giving the decision, the flag is raised vertically upwards, and you stop moving, as shown.

You then hold this until one of two things happens. If the referee wants to continue with play (an advantage), he will acknowledge you and ask that you continue with the game. Otherwise you wait until he blows to stop play. You must not continue with the game until you have been acknowledged, or a clear advantage is in progress.



The chances are the referee will go with most of your decisions. On the referees whistle, you then change your flag position, and this depends on where the offending player was standing. If he was on the far side of the pitch, the flag is lowered to position 1, as shown. If he was in the middle of the pitch, it is lowered to horizontal (position 2), and if it was close to you, it is lowered to position 3.





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Offside

The Offside Law is one of the least understood laws in football. I will do my best (examples to follow).

- It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

This is the most ambiguous part of the law. A player may stand in an offside position and not be penalised, until he is interfering with play. He does not have to touch the ball to interfere with play. A movement towards the ball, or even being in the eye-line of a defender/goalkeeper can be deemed as interfering with play.

It is always tempting to raise the flag as soon as the ball is played forwards, and there is in an offside position. But don't. Wait and see where the ball goes. It may be that you stop a perfectly legitimate opportunity for another player, so don't raise the flag until you are 100% sure the player is interfering with play.

- The player is not offside if, when the ball was played, he was in his own half of the field.

Players making a run in which they are in their own half when the ball is played are not offside, regardless of how many defenders are between them and the goal.

- The player must be in front of the ball when it is passed.

This is one of the often-forgotten components of the offside rule. The player must be in front of the ball when it is played to be given offside. Players ahead of the last defender cannot be given offside if they are behind the ball, when it is played.

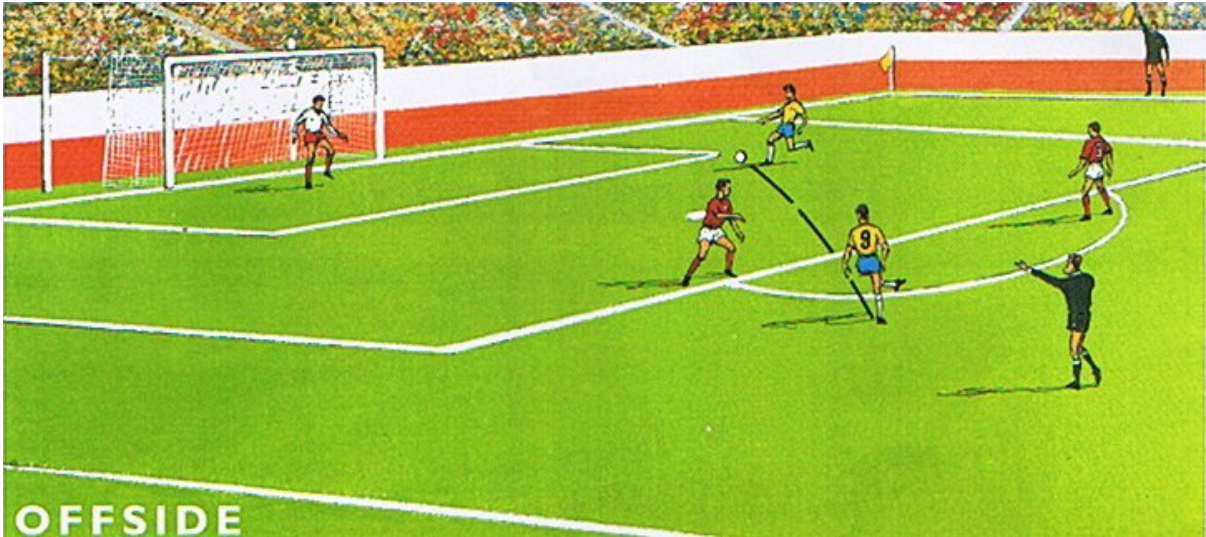
- A player can be given offside, regardless of the direction of the pass.

Even if a ball is kicked backwards, if the player started in an offside position, he is offside. If a player starts in an offside position (when the ball is played), and then gets back onside to receive the ball, he is still offside.

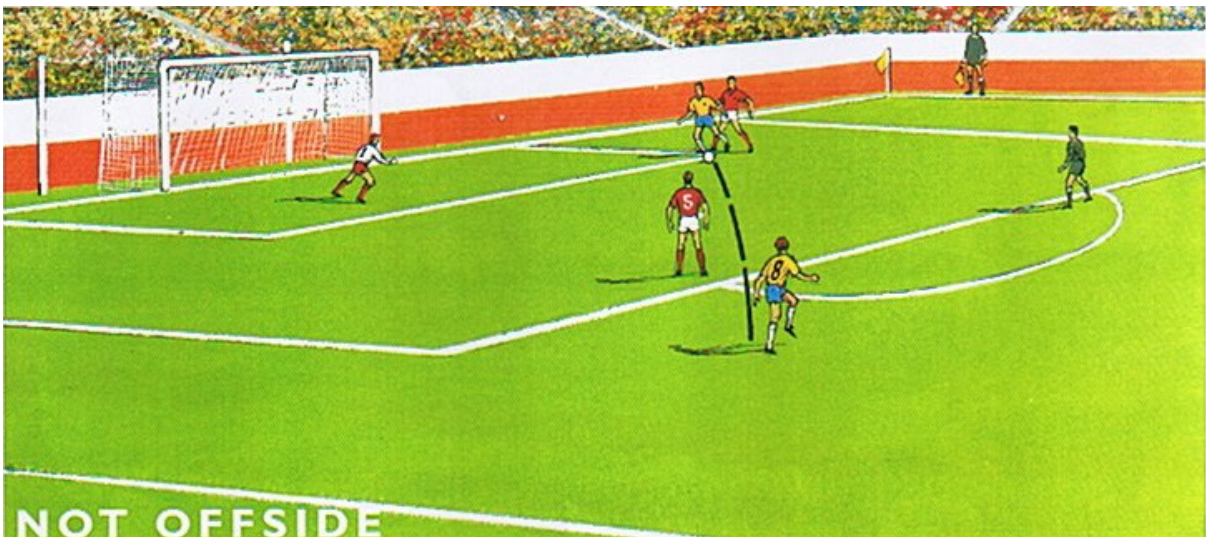
- Players cannot be offside directly from a goal kick, throw in or a corner kick.

This is goal kicks from the ground after the ball has gone out of play. Offside's do count from drop kicks.

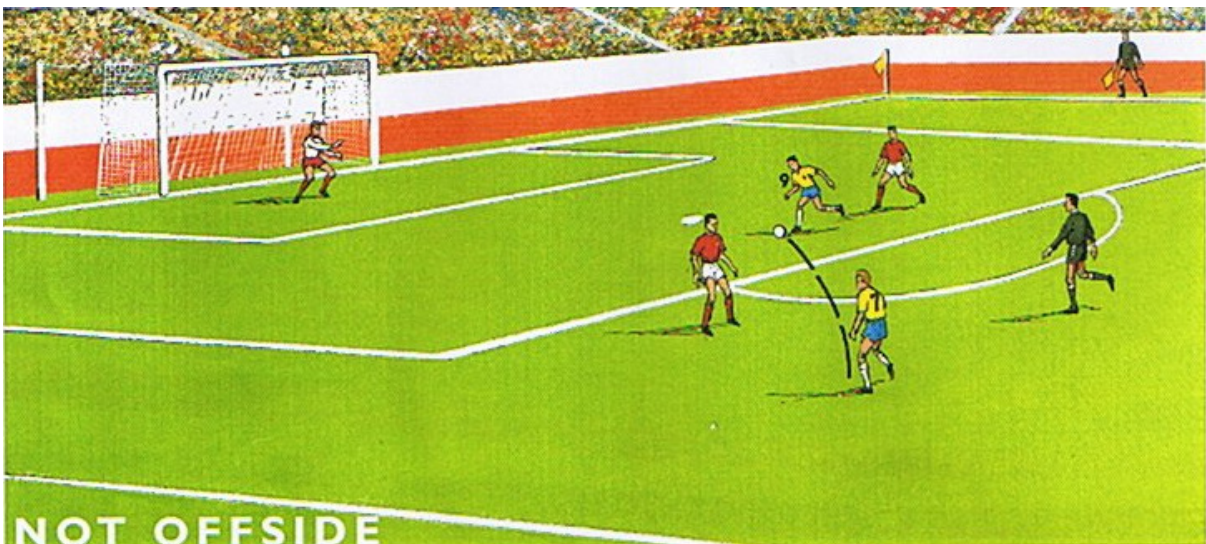
- Even if the ball hits an opposition player, you can still be offside.



The attacker who receives the ball from his team-mate, number 9, is offside since he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than the ball and the second last defender and gains an advantage by being in that position.



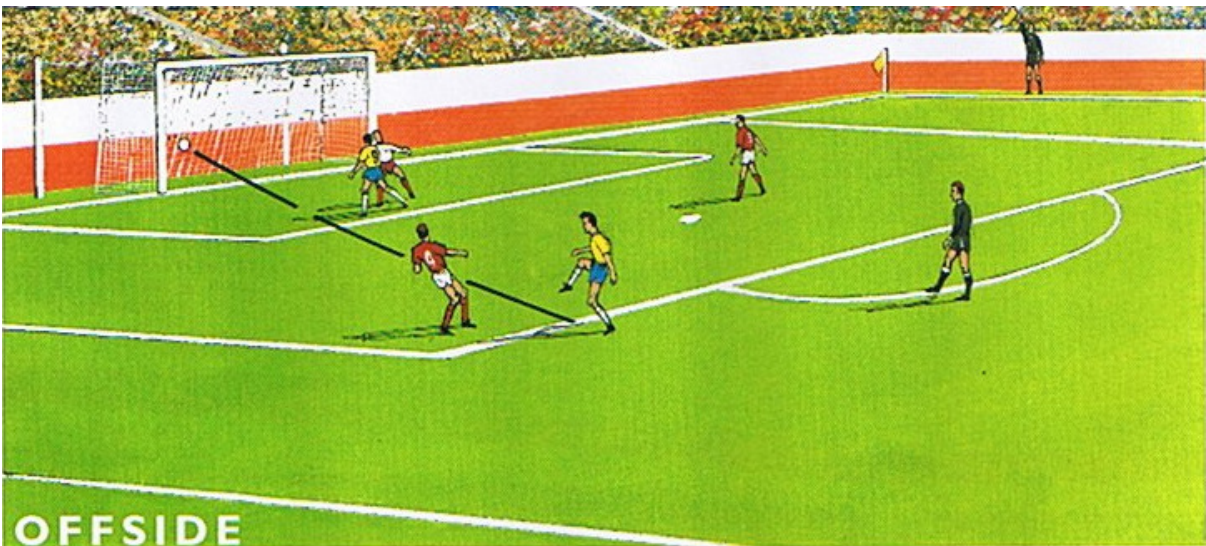
The attacker who receives the ball from his team-mate, number 8, is not offside because, when the ball is kicked, he is level with the second last defender.



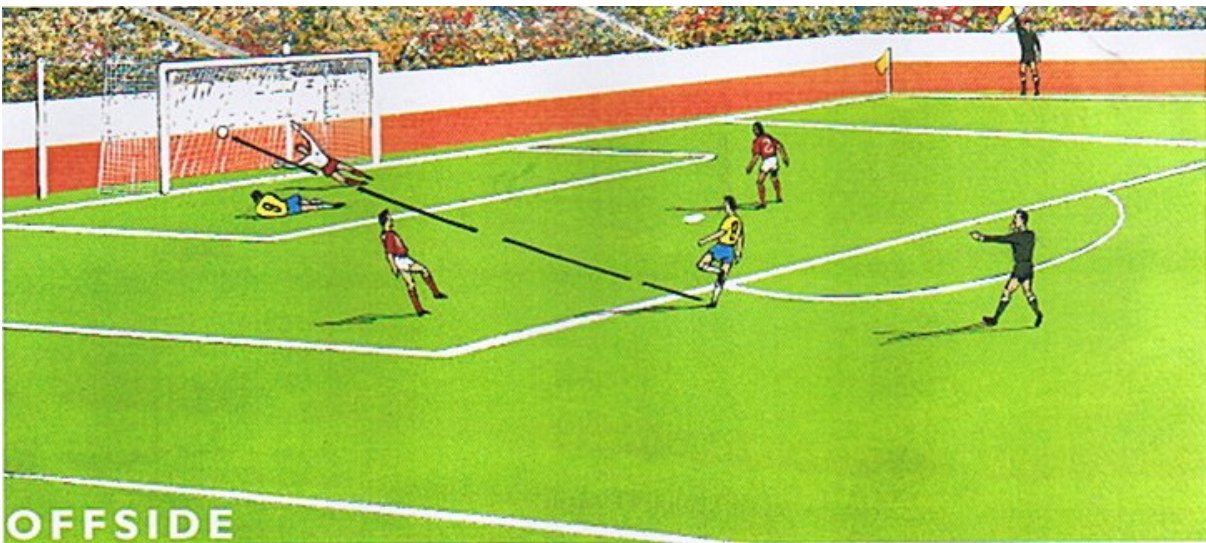
The attacker, number 9, is not offside because, when the ball is played to him by his team-mate, number 7, he is level with the second last defender.



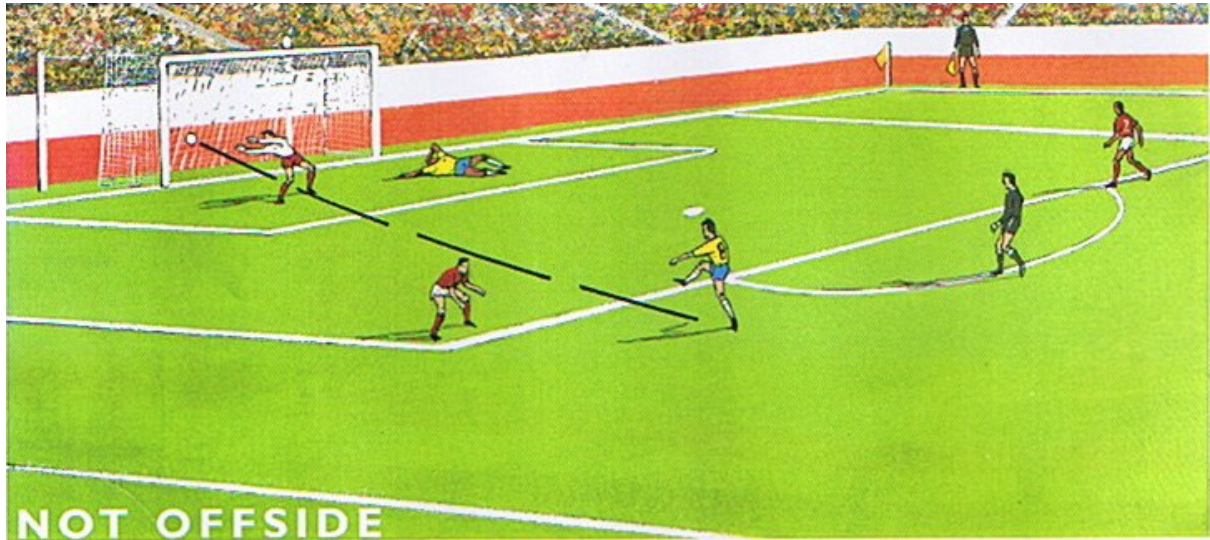
A player cannot be offside from a throw-in.



The attacker, number 9, is offside because he is involved in active play and is interfering with the goalkeeper.



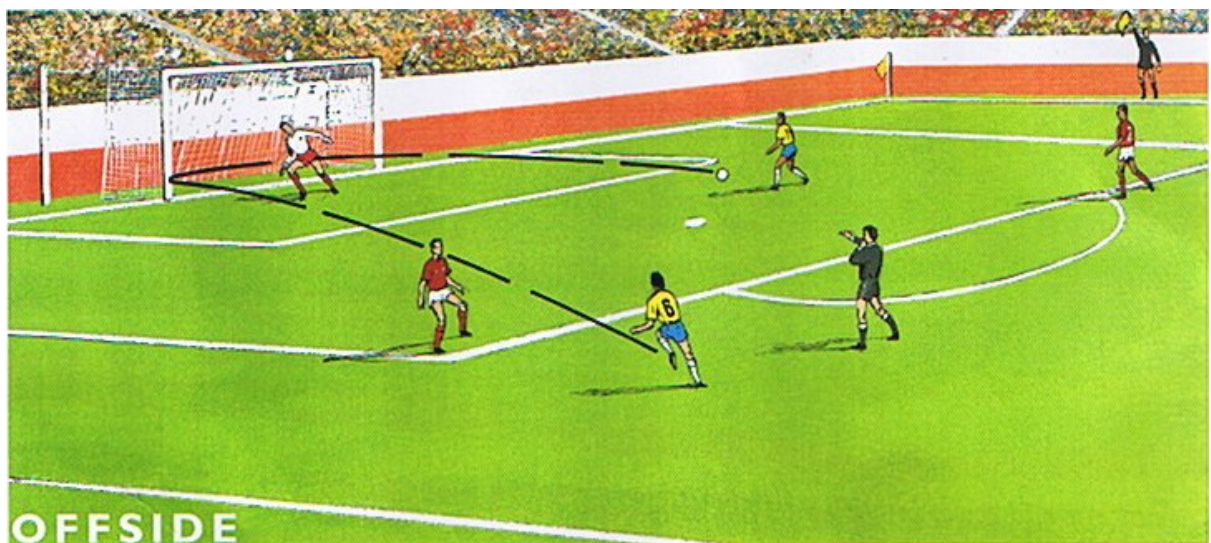
The attacker, number 9, is offside because he is in an offside position and is interfering with the goalkeeper.



The player lying in the goal area is not offside since he is not involved in active play and is not interfering with the goalkeeper.



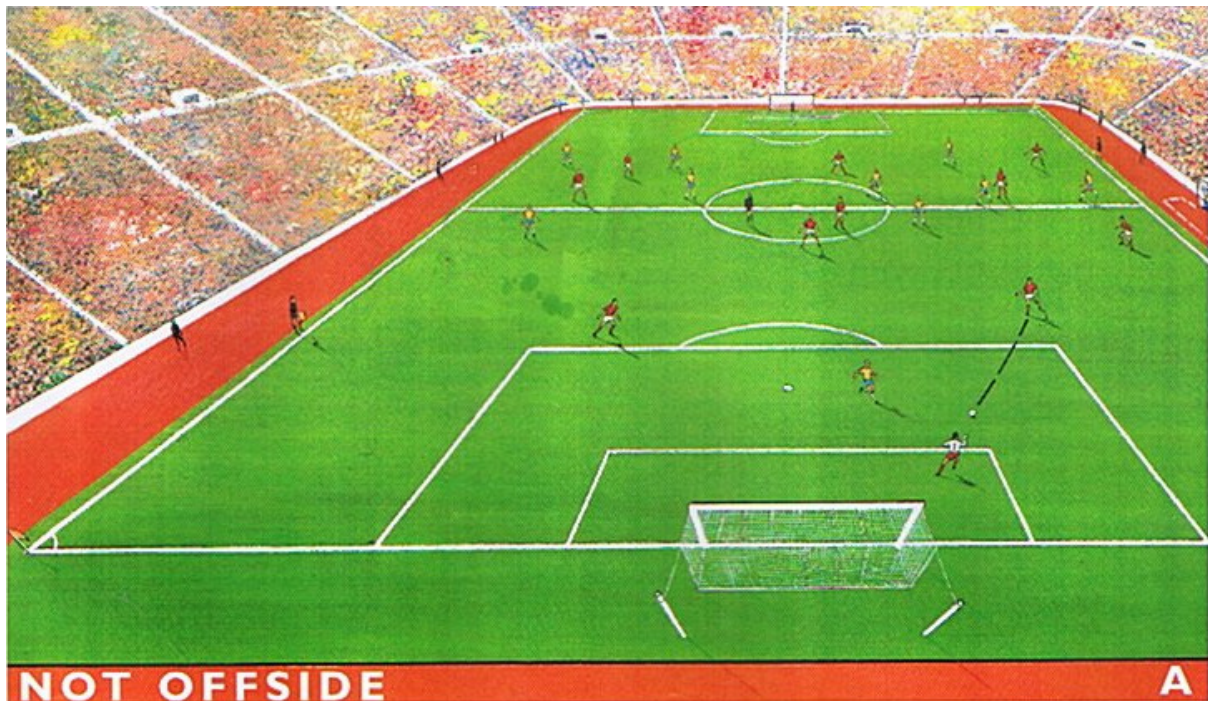
Although the attacker is in an offside position when the ball is kicked by his team-mate, number 10, he is not penalised because he is not involved in active play and does not gain an advantage by being in that position.



The shot by number 6 rebounds from the goalpost to a team-mate who is penalised for being in an offside position because, when the ball is played, he is involved in active play and gains an advantage by being in that position.



The shot by a team-mate rebounds from the goalkeeper to number 8 who is penalised for being in an offside position because, when the ball is played, he is involved in active play and gains an advantage by being in that position.



The ball is kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate and an attacking player moves to challenge him. This is not offside as the ball was not played by a team mate.