

## **Resolving Confusion over basic laws of soccer**

To Coaches,

I hope that information sheet following this will assist you in terms of any pressure you feel from parents when refereeing and may even clarify your own understanding of these rules.

I do realise that opposition coaches and supporters will often also have an incorrect understanding of the rules, so I would like to suggest that at the commencement of each of your games you clarify with them to ensure that both of you have the same understanding and that you agree it is the referees call as to when a free kick or penalty should be given, not the degree of yelling from the sideline by supporters. You may even wish to have a copy of these notes with you to assist in this process.

**Can I also ask that those of you have parents referee games on your behalf, review this sheet with them to ensure they do understand the rules.**

Finally, it is important that these rules are enforced. It is only 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade that do not play under the offside rule and even then "poaching" is not encouraged. At 9<sup>th</sup> grade level up the off side rule should be enforced.

The handball rule should be enforced at all grades. I have unfortunately witnessed games where children even in higher grades have deliberately used an elbow or a forearm to bring a ball in the air under control and this has not been penalised. This makes a mockery of the rules and is unfair to all the other children playing.

To all Players Parents and Spectators,

Since the start of this season through watching various games, hearing criticism of referees and even through receiving complaints, it has become apparent that there is a good deal of confusion regarding some of the basic laws of the game. In an effort to reduce this we have explained below the CORRECT version of the rules in regard to:

- Offside
- Handball
- Ball in Touch
- Free Kicks (direct or indirect) vs penalties

We have also included quotes on these topics from the "Referees Tip of the Month" out of Mainland Soccer's monthly Score magazine

The first thing to bear in mind in regard to each of these issues is that the key concern is spectators and coaches are calling for free kicks & penalties more often than they should be given and in some cases those refereeing are awarding these when they should not be.

### **OFF SIDE**

For a free kick to be awarded for Offside there are **TWO** things that need to take place

1) The player must be in an Offside Position

**AND**

2) The player concerned must be actively involved in the play

#### ***Referee's Tip (from Score Magazine)***

***In most cases you would be wise to keep in your mind that:***

*Offside will only now be given if that player who was in an offside position touches the ball or it is plainly obvious he/she will get to the ball.*

*The mere fact that he/she is in an offside position has only a small bearing on the referee or his assistant's decision. For this reason you will see what you believe are very late flags. The assistant will be making sure that that player is going to be able to play the ball.*

Other points to note re the off side rule are:

- the offside law applies at the instant the ball is played through NOT, when the ball is received. – SO a player involved in active play may receive the ball in what at first appears to be an offside position, but a free kick is not given because at the instant the ball was played through the receiving player was not offside, but was simply faster to move through than the defender was to turn and get back
- A player cannot be offside
  - In his/her own half
  - If he / she receives the ball directly from a throw in, goal kick or corner kick

## HAND BALL

The key issue for a handball free kick to be given is that the player concerned must actively touch the ball either with the hand or any part of the arm. If the ball strikes the player's hand or arm – this is not a free kick offence

### **Referee's Tip (from Score Magazine)**

**Just because the ball hits a players arm or hand or he gets control of the ball because it has hit his arm or hand, the referee should not rule this as handball.**

**Handball is judged by a *deliberate act of handling the ball* (usually unnatural arm movement), not an accidental 'hand ball'. **Yes, even in the penalty area!****

## IN TOUCH / OUT OF PLAY

The rule differs to that used in rugby. If the ball touches the sideline – This is **NOT** out.

The ball must be 100% across the touch line (either on the ground or in the air) before it is out and a throw in is taken. Similarly it must be 100% over the goal line before a corner kick or goal kick is given, or a Goal is scored.

If the ball is on the line at any of these times - it is still in play

*From page 19 of the Red Book (rules book distributed to coaches by Mainland Soccer)*

*1. The ball is still in play until it has completely crossed the touchline or goal line.*

## PENALITIES / FREE KICKS

Penalties are awarded when 1 of 9 specific offences\*\* occur WITHIN the penalty area. Only the goalkeeper can defend the shot taken from the penalty spot by a member of the attacking team. All other players must stand outside the penalty area.

\*\* = Of the 9 penalty offences, 8 are primarily concerned with violent play including pushing, holding and tripping, while the 9<sup>th</sup> is for deliberate handling of the ball

Free kicks are divided into two distinct groups:

1. For breaking one of the general rules of the game, an indirect free kick is awarded to the other side.
2. For a deliberate act, which is against the spirit of fair play, or is likely to cause injury to a player on the other side, a direct free kick is awarded to the other side. (This includes all of the penalty offences, 1 to 9).\*\*

**Indirect free kicks cannot directly score a goal. Direct free kicks can directly score a goal.**

(Source Greg Cooper)