



Offside  
Signal

## Offside Rule

The offside law brings up many debates, but in truth the rules that define this law are quite easy and should be explained to children in simple terms. Do not over-complicate this when working with young players.

The aim of the offside law is simple. In short it is intended to stop attacking players from hanging around the goal. Without this rule forwards would be able to stand in their opponent's Penalty Area waiting for long balls to be played forward and the game would turn into a very scrappy affair.

To avoid this, the offside law requires there to be at least two defenders (one of whom is usually the goalkeeper) between an attacker and goal-line at the time when the ball is played forward by a teammate.

**TEACHING YOUNG PLAYERS ABOUT OFFSIDE** - The best way to explain this to young players is to show them how easy the game becomes if hanging around the goal is permitted. To do this, set up small-sided games and position one attacker from each team just in front of the goal. Let each team score a few goals, while you encourage them to hit long balls towards their respective "cherry pickers" (goal hangers). After a few minutes of play stop the game and explain to the players how an offside trap could stop the "cherry pickers" from scoring.

Following this passage of play, move the session on and set up another small-sided game with the offside rules in effect. Also, restrict the players to three touches only. This will encourage the players to pass and move. Finally, explain to the players that when attacking they can not go beyond the next-to-last defender (usually the last fullback) until their teammate has released the ball forward, unless they are not ahead of the ball.

There are key elements of the offside law of which the coach must be aware and understand:

1. Just because you are in an offside position (ahead of the ball and in advanced of the next-to-last defender, with only the keeper between you and the goal) you are not necessarily offside. To be offside, you need to be involved in active play. Inactive play, for example, would be running back towards your own goal when the ball is played forward. In this example, you would be running away from the play and away from the action and deemed not in violation of the rules.
2. The ball must be played forward for you to be offside, so if you shoot into an open goal, having received a square or backward pass the goal will stand.
3. The critical moment is when the ball is actually played forward. It doesn't matter that you are in an offside position when you receive the ball; it is where you were when your teammate touched the ball forward that is important.
4. You cannot be offside if you were in your own half of the field when the ball was played forward.
5. You cannot be offside if an opponent plays the ball to you.
6. You can never be offside if you are not ahead of the ball.

## Ten Tips To Be A Better Soccer Parent

1. Soccer is a team sport.
2. Our children are on a team, not us.
3. If you think your child is better than the other children on the team, congratulations - you probably fall into the majority of soccer parents. However, this is largely irrelevant (see tip #1).
4. If you want your child to improve his/her skills and performance, then leave it to the coaches. Your job as a parent is to: pay, drive and offer positive support.
5. If you think you can offer advice to one of the coaches, then see the team manager and arrange to take the coaching certification exam. If you want to coach from the touchlines without coming to team practices, team meetings, team camps, coaches clinics or coaches meetings, keep your thoughts to yourself until you can watch soccer on tv.
6. Although coaching advice from parents is generally not appreciated, communication is very important. If anything at all is bothering your child, let the coach know as soon as possible so that he/she has an opportunity to adjust if possible to make your child experience more rewarding and enjoyable. If you really want to destroy a team, tell everyone... but the coach, about your child's problem. Talk about it and complain about it with the other parents all season and never the one person who can fix it - row there is a concern.
7. If you think you can offer good advice to a game official... (see tip #5).
8. A soccer match is not won or lost by any child ( see tip #1).
9. To play well during the season, our children must come together as a team and support, communicate with and trust each other. The coaches and children will accomplish this if we don't undermine their efforts. However, if you disagree with the foregoing statements, undermining can be accomplished by using any of the following tactics: criticizing the efforts of your child, telling your child he/she is the most/least important and best/worst player on the team, telling your child that another child on the team is lousy or has deficiencies, yelling negative comments during practices or games, criticizing the decisions or strategies of the coaches, and/or claiming that victory or defeat was the responsibility of any child.
10. Follow the rules and use good judgment so everyone will have a great season.