

## Dear parents, carers, coaches, players and officials,

Welcome to the first instalment of **Ask the Ref.** for 2011. This is a re-issue and update of the regular bulletins issued by the Adelaide Hills Referee Branch covering and discussing a particular local arrangement, rule or law of the game.

The Ask the Ref bulletins, while designed for newcomers to the game, should be informative to anyone who is involved in the competition, and we, the referees, encourage you to take a few minutes to read the bulletin whether you have been around the game for ages or are just starting out on the journey.

Our first bulletin looks at **the role of the volunteer club linesperson.**

### Providing a club linesperson:

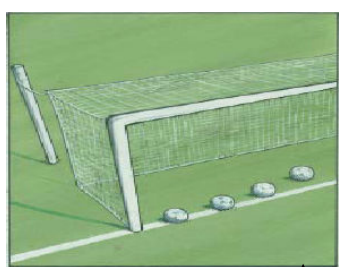
During the competition each team is required to provide a linesperson as well as a ground steward to assist the centre referee. The referees are very grateful for any voluntary assistance. We know the commitment the volunteer is making is great, as they will now have to be an impartial neutral official of the game rather than being a supporter and fan for a team, which can be difficult to remember.

The centre ref will want to talk to the linesperson before the game. He or she will provide some instructions on what they will expect from the linesperson. If practicable, the referee will try and talk to both volunteer lines people at the same time, to save repeating themselves and to create a team environment ahead of the game.

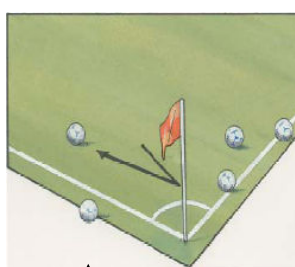
Basically, all that is expected from a volunteer club linesperson is assistance with identifying when the ball goes out of play (often difficult from within some of our pitches) and assistance with identifying offside situations.

### When is the ball out of play?

Sometimes, spectators, players and centre referees may disagree with an out of play decision. The diagrams shown below indicate what is meant by 'the whole of the ball' being in or out of play. This is most easily seen by an assistant "running" the line. The length of the grass, rain, sun and poorly marked lines often make this more difficult for referees on Hills pitches. Try to find a moment to look back at the line from on the pitch. Hard to tell isn't it?



GOAL



Ball OUT of play

Other balls are all IN play

### Positioning:

A referee will, in general, run a diagonal path from corner post to corner post. He/she will, in general, be left of the player with the ball keeping the ball between him or her and you, the assistant. There are many exceptions to this approach. This does mean that you will be running the line for the defensive half of the field for your team on the right of the referee as he/she moves with the players of the other team. Do not follow the play past the half way line or you will not be in a good position to advise the referee on off-side play.

### Special positions:

- Corners - level with the goal line please near the corner flag
- Goal kicks - level with the edge of the penalty area
- All other times - level with the second last defender up to the centre line of the pitch

### Signals:

When the ball goes out of play, please stop running and raise the flag high and held out in the direction of the attack for the team that has been awarded with the throw (i.e. the opposition had the last touch before it went out). Hold your signal.



If the ball goes out of play but you are unsure of who touched it last, simply raise your flag straight up in the air and wait for the referee to decide. It is always the referee's call anyway and most of us award 50/50 decisions to the defence in difficult circumstances (after a quick look at the body language of the players).

The referee should acknowledge your flag either by:

- Awarding the throw as flagged (we will not always blow the whistle if it is not needed)
- Signalling to you that he or she has over-ruled (possibly in a better position at the far end of the pitch or if your vision was obscured by a player)

If the referee does not notice your flag, hold your position. Players will generally loudly help the referee out in this circumstance! If play goes into further phases and a team has not been significantly disadvantaged it is diplomatic and helpful to the referee to get on with the game if too much time goes by in this manner.

### Special signals:

- Corner - point the flag down at the base of the corner flag on your side of the pitch
- Goal kick - point the flag at a downwards angle towards the edge of the goal area
- Goal - start to run back towards the centre line
- Substitution/Interchange required by the coach - hold the flag up with the corner of the flag stretched out by your other hand
- Injured player - raise your flag and try to attract the attention of the referee. Do not go onto the pitch unless asked to do so by the referee



### Identifying Offside:

The other main duty that a referee will ask of you is assistance with identifying when a player is offside. Note that it is NOT an offence to simply be standing in an offside position. Read on!

### Offside!

This is generally the most often contested decision in Hills games. There are many subtly different situations and it is worth looking at a couple of websites if you want to understand the law more fully.

The AHJSA has a good link: <http://www.dynamic-thought.com/OffsideClicketteLo.html>

The FIFA site is also worth a look:

[http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/afdeveloping/refereeing/law\\_11\\_offside\\_en\\_47383.pdf](http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/afdeveloping/refereeing/law_11_offside_en_47383.pdf)



I will try to keep it simple! Firstly, when are you (as a player) **NOT offside?**

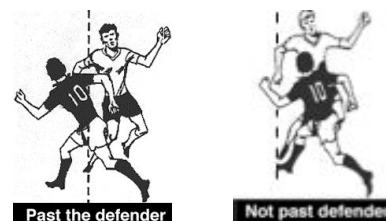
- You cannot be off side if the ball is kicked by a team mate so that you can contest and possibly win it when you are in your own defensive half of the pitch even if you run into the attacking half to contest it **AFTER** it has been kicked
- You cannot be offside if you receive the ball directly from a **throw, goal kick or corner kick**

When are you (as a player) **NOT offside?** (continued):

- You cannot be offside, regardless of where the play is on the pitch or where defenders are positioned if you are **BEHIND** the ball at the instant it is kicked by your team mate
- You are not offside if you dribble or otherwise play the ball past defenders yourself
- You are not offside, even though you may be in an offside position on the field, if you are not playing the ball or interfering with play or judged guilty of unsporting play
- You are not offside if, **at the instant the ball is played by your team mate**, there are **two defenders** at least level with you or between you and the goal you are attacking

When are you **offside?** Simple!

- If, at the instant that the ball is played to you in your attacking half by a team mate, you are closer to the goal than the ball, you are offside **UNLESS** there are at least two defenders either level with you or closer to the goal you are attacking. Note the diagrams. The No. 10 in the second diagram has an arm just offside but this is not a part of the body that can be used to play the ball legally! So he is not offside.
- If you do not play the ball yourself but the referee rules that you are in an offside position and actively affecting play, you are still offside!



You should run your line keeping level with the second last defender (the last is generally but not always the goal keeper) to be able to flag for offside effectively. If you believe a player, actively involved in play, is offside, stop and raise your flag to signify this to the referee.

It is the referee's final decision so hold your position until he or she awards the indirect free kick or signals to you that play is continuing. This can happen for any one of a number of reasons so please do not be upset or feel slighted if this occurs. Once again, players will alert the referee if he/she does not see your signal so hold your position. As with throws, if play goes into further phases and a team has not been significantly disadvantaged it is diplomatic and helpful to the referee to get on with the game if too much time goes by in this manner.

If an assistant referee is in any doubt as to whether a player is in an offside position, the assistant referee must respond in favour of the attacker and refrain from signalling offside. To phrase it slightly differently: When in doubt, keep the flag down and give the benefit of that doubt to the attacker. The referee, too, must be certain that there is active involvement before deciding for offside. It is **always** the referee's final decision.

Please **DO NOT**:

- Coach, cheerlead or talk to your team, respond to spectators or advise your defenders in relation to offside play. Your impartiality is extremely important for the spirit of the game.
- Question the decisions of the referee who has the final say under the laws of the game
- Flag for any other situations where you may feel foul play has occurred. As a club line assistant, the referee cannot act on your call as with an officially registered assistant.

If you have any other issues (e.g. problems with spectators), you can always call the central referee over to you (put the flag across your chest to indicate this) and talk to him or her.

**Finally:**

Within reason, we are very interested in your feedback on the Ask the Referee bulletins. If you have any questions on any aspect of the laws of the game, FIFA rulings or particular local junior guidelines please get in touch with Paul Rees or me and we will do our best to supply an answer.



Peter van der Zwaag, AHRB.