

To all football associations,  
confederations and FIFA

### Circular no. 3

Zurich, 17 July 2015  
SEC/2015-C051/bru

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON LAW 11 – OFFSIDE

Dear Sir or Madam,

Following requests from a number of football associations and confederations regarding offside, The IFAB would like to provide additional clarification and/or guidance relating to the definition of the offside offence of **'interfering with an opponent'** and also to the definition of **'save'** in the context of offside (Laws of the Game, p.110).

This clarification follows detailed deliberations between our Technical Sub-Committee and the Technical Advisory Panel, which consists of refereeing experts from all the confederations.

Please be informed that this clarification replaces any non-IFAB instructions or guidance received previously with respect to this matter. We trust that this clarification will ensure a higher uniformity in the application of Law 11.

### 1. "Interfering with an opponent"

#### Clarification

In addition to the situations already outlined in the Laws of the Game, a player in an offside position shall also be penalised if he:

- *clearly attempts to play a ball which is close to him when this action impacts on an opponent*
- or
- *makes an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball*



## Guidance

- **‘clearly attempts’** – this wording is designed to prevent a player who runs towards the ball from quite a long distance being penalised (unless he gets close to the ball).
- **‘close’** is important so that a player is not penalised when the ball goes clearly over his head or clearly in front of him.
- **‘impact’** applies to an opponent’s ability (or potential) to play the ball and will include situations where an opponent’s movement to play the ball is delayed, hindered or prevented by the offside player.

However, just because a player is in an offside position it does not always mean that he has an impact. For example:

- if the ball is on the right-hand side of the field and an ‘offside’ player in the centre of the field moves into a new attacking position he is not penalised unless this action affects an opponent’s ability to play the ball
- where a player tries to play the ball as it is going into the goal without affecting an opponent, or in situations where there is no opposition player near, he should not be penalised

## 2. “Save”

### Clarification

Law 11 outlines situations when an offside player is penalised by becoming involved in active play and these include (p. 110):

- *gaining an advantage by being in that position by playing a ball*
  - that rebounds or is deflected off the goalpost, crossbar or an opponent*
  - from a deliberate save by any opponent*

*A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent, who deliberately plays the ball (except from a deliberate save by any opponent), is not considered to have gained an advantage.*

As indicated in the last sentence a ‘save’ can be made by any player and is not limited to the goalkeeper. Therefore, The IFAB wishes to clarify that:

*A ‘save’ is when a player stops a ball which is going into or very close to the goal with any part of his body except his hands (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).*

NB: This clarification is consistent with the use of the word ‘save’ in Law 12 – Offences by the Goalkeeper (p122).



### **Additional information: change of FIFA Quality Program logos**

Unrelated to Law 11, we would like to take this opportunity to mention the change to the FIFA quality marks on footballs (p. 16), which was not part of the previous correspondence. This change is already reflected in the printed editions of the Laws of the Game 2015/16, which you received recently.

Thank you for your attention and please feel free to contact us should you have any questions or enquiries.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the Board of Directors



Lukas Brud  
Secretary

