



Law 11 OFFSIDE

Actively Involved



Offside Law Changes

Contrary to common perception Law 11 has **not** been drastically changed time and again over the last several years. Actually, very little “change” has really occurred verses the addition of IFAB “clarifications” and “definitions” in an effort to standardize the interpretations of the Law in order to provide a more consistent application internationally.

Clarifications:

- In 1997 the format of Law 11 was simplified with no changes in the Law.
- In 2005 IFAB added definitions for offside position, interfering with play, interfering with an opponent and gaining an advantage. No changes in the Law, just an attempt to explain, clarify and unify the misconceptions and interpretation inconsistencies that existed across the world.
- In 2016-17 some definitions were simply reworded and/or expanded to provide a more universal understanding. Again, no changes.
- In 2017-18 three example situations were included to better define the concept of interfering with an opponent. No changes.

Offside Law Changes



There are only 4 parts to Law 11:

- Offside Position
- Offside Offense
- No Offense
- Infringement / Sanctions

The review of LOTG books dating back to 1976 (before almost all of you ever began your officiating career) reveals that **only** the following “changes” have been made to Law 11:

- Offside Position ... Player even with the 2nd to last defender no longer considered to be in an offside position (1990)
- Offside Offense ... Changed “Seeking to Gain” an Advantage to “Gaining” an Advantage (1995)
- No Offense ... No changes
- Infringement / Sanctions ... Location of IFK restart changed (2016-17)



Offside Law Changes

From the standpoint of “Changes to Law 11” THAT’S IT!

From the standpoint of correcting and unifying differing interpretations that is a completely different story ...

- ❖ some interpretations are related to soccer culture and
- ❖ some misconceptions are just individual in nature.

The “**Law 11 – History**” slides, included in this presentation, show some of the exact changes/modifications in the language of the written Law at the time when the clarifications were first introduced and are highlighted in **yellow**.



Part 1 - Offside Position

- 🕒 An "Offside Position" decision is typically based on the opinion of the AR, especially on the close play.
- 🕒 Absolute concentration and positioning by the AR are mandatory. The faster the game the more difficult the decision.
- 🕒 The AR's responsibility is to render a fair and unbiased decision.
- 🕒 When not 100% sure (for whatever reason), the AR must allow play to continue, i.e. the player cannot be considered to be in an offside position and consequently cannot be guilty of committing an offside offense.



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Position (The Halfway Line):

(1978– 1997) A player is in an offside position (...), unless:

- he is in his own half of the field (...)

(1998-2015) A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field (...)

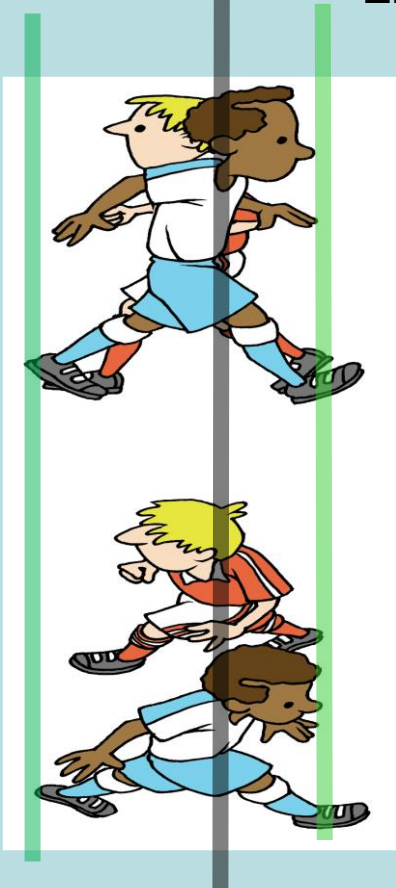
(2016-18) A player is in an offside position if:

- any part of the head, body or feet is in the opponents' half (excluding halfway line) (...)



Offside Position

← Halfway Line



Both players are straddling the halfway line.

With respect to the halfway line only is:

- the player in **red** in an offside position?
- the player in **white** in an offside position?

The answer to both questions is “YES”. The 2016-17 Law 11 clarification better defines offside position with respect to the halfway line.

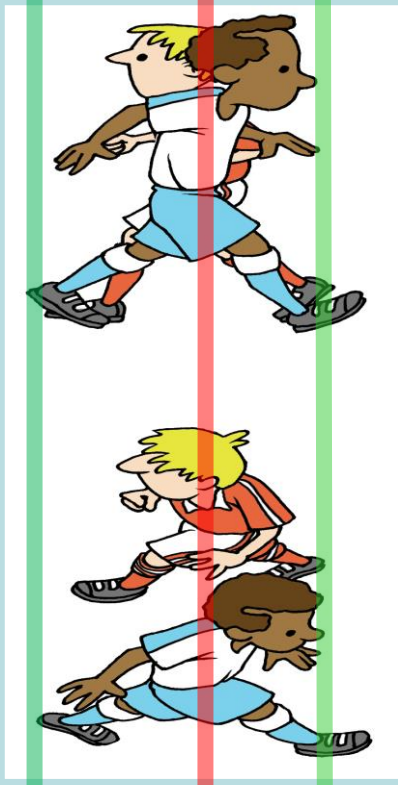
A player can be in an offside position whilst straddling the halfway line, i.e. the player is in both halves of the field.

Previously, Law 11 stated that a player was not in an offside position when in their own half of the field, i.e. straddling the line was effectively defined as not being in an offside position. Technically correct, but not necessarily how this section of the Law was interpreted or applied on the field. New language clearly defines the distinction.



Offside Position

← Not the Torso



With respect to the opponent only is:

- the player in **red** in an offside position?
- the player in **white** in an offside position?

The line of demarcation is not the location of any part of the player's head, body or feet with respect to the torso (red line in diagram) of an opponent's body.

This line of demarcation must be with respect to any body part of the opponent, in order to meet the criteria of being "closer" to the goal line than an opponent.

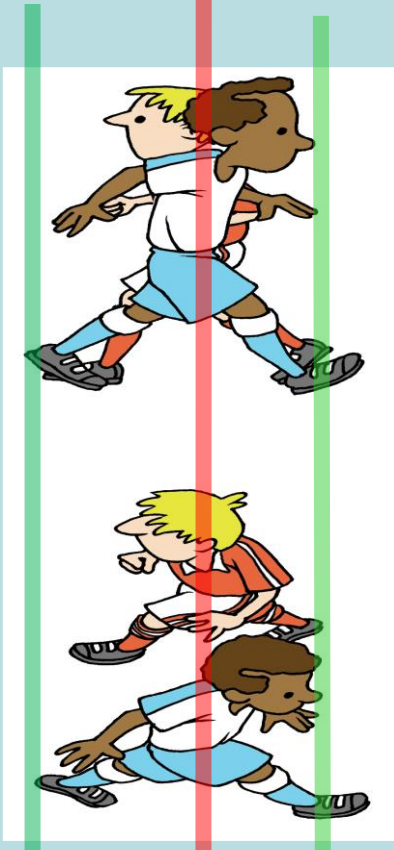
As an AR, it probably is easier to relate to a player's torso, than it is a trailing foot, but using the torso as a reference is incorrect.

For each player in the diagram, the green lines denote the separation between offside position and not offside position.



Offside Position

← Not the Torso



With respect to the opponent only is:

- the player in **red** in an offside position?
- the player in **white** in an offside position?

The player in **red** is not in an offside position ... no portion of the head, body or feet is ahead of all of the opponent's body parts.

Technically, in accordance with Law 11, the player in **white** is in an offside position ... in this case by the length of a toe.

In reality, will you ever be able to distinguish this ... and is the player trying to “cheat”?

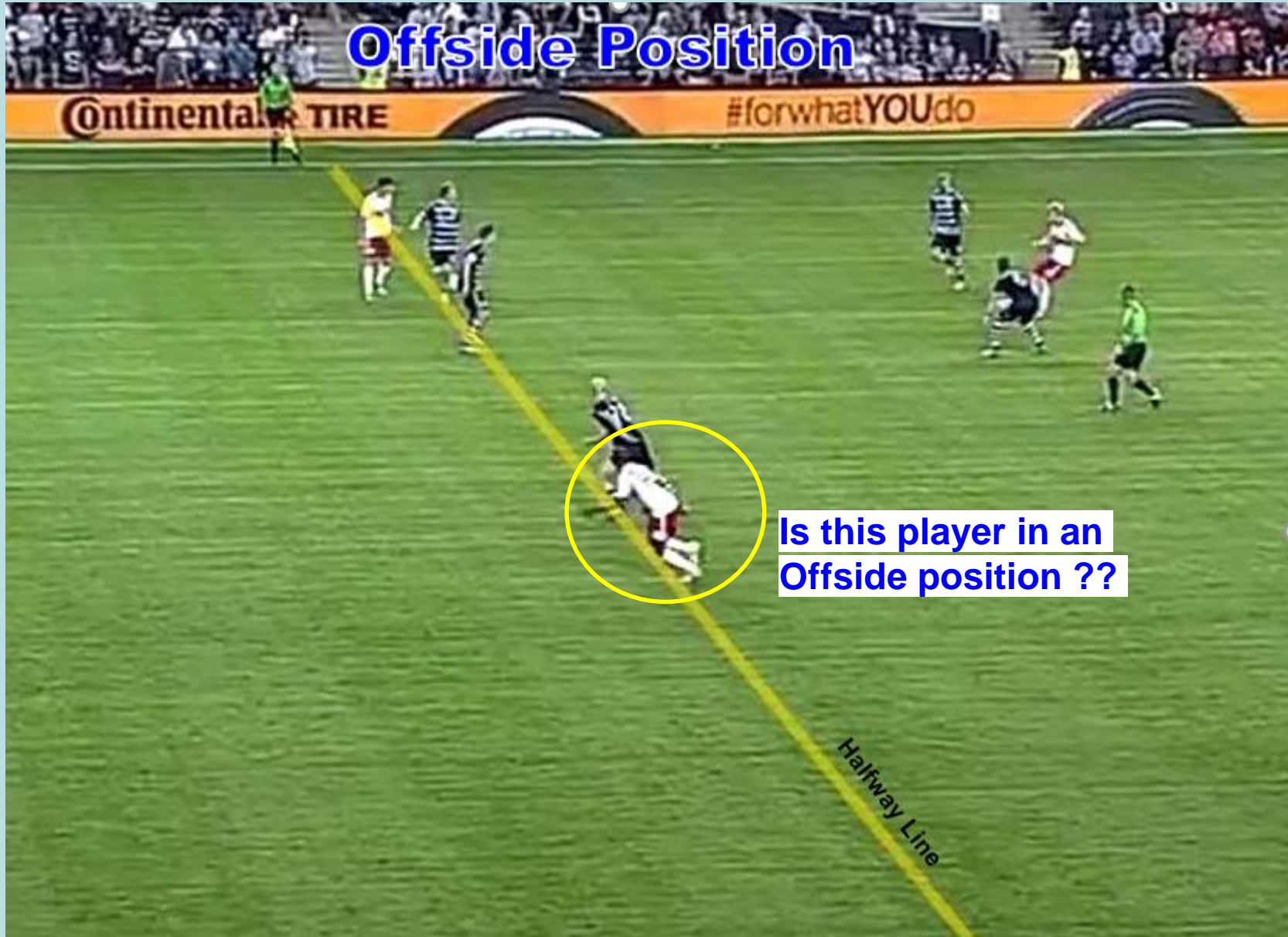
Certainty is needed. If an AR is not certain that an attacker is in an offside position, then the offside offense is no longer possible and should not be called. The faster the action the less certain at any level an AR is likely to be.



Offside Position

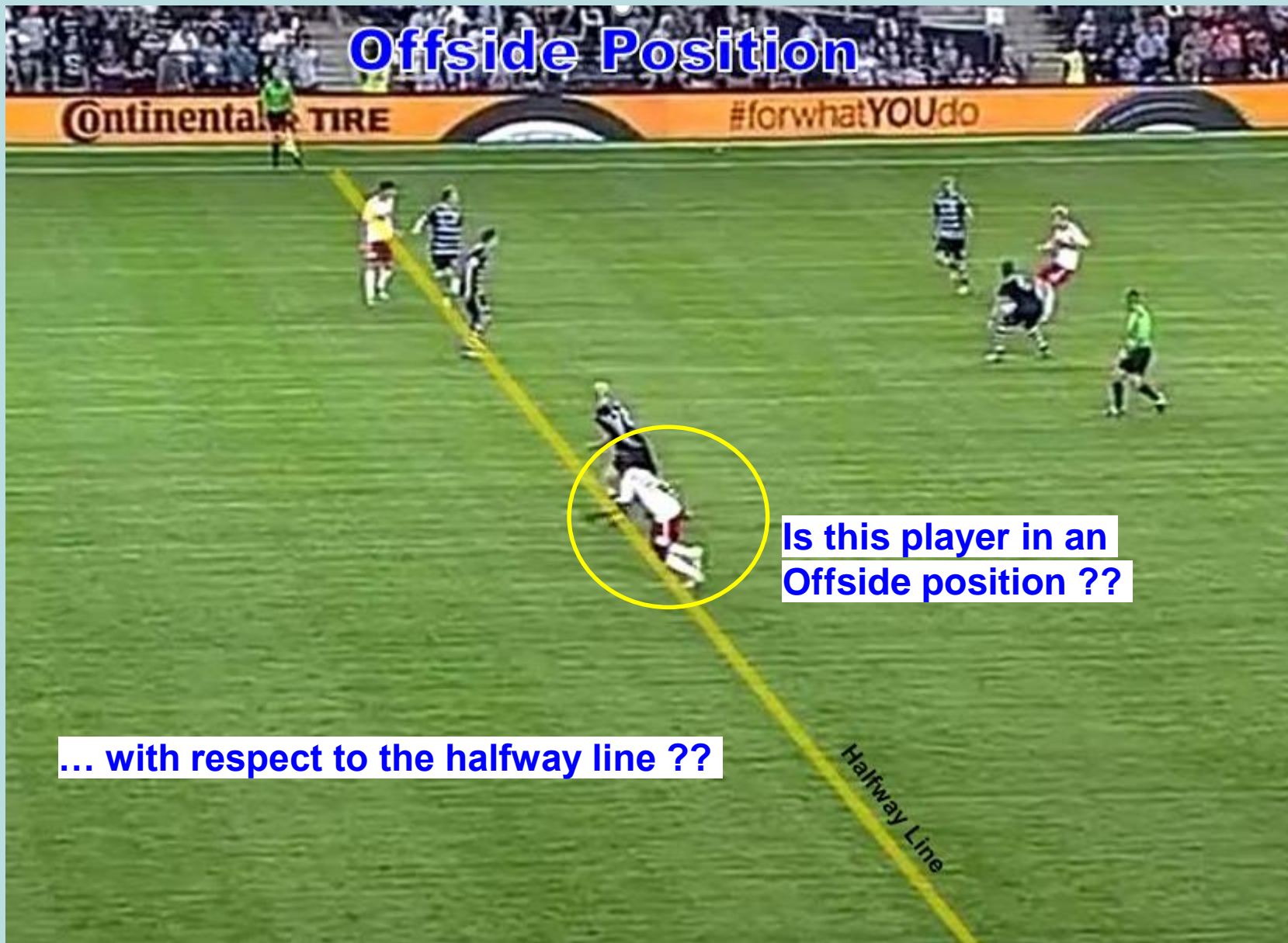


Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

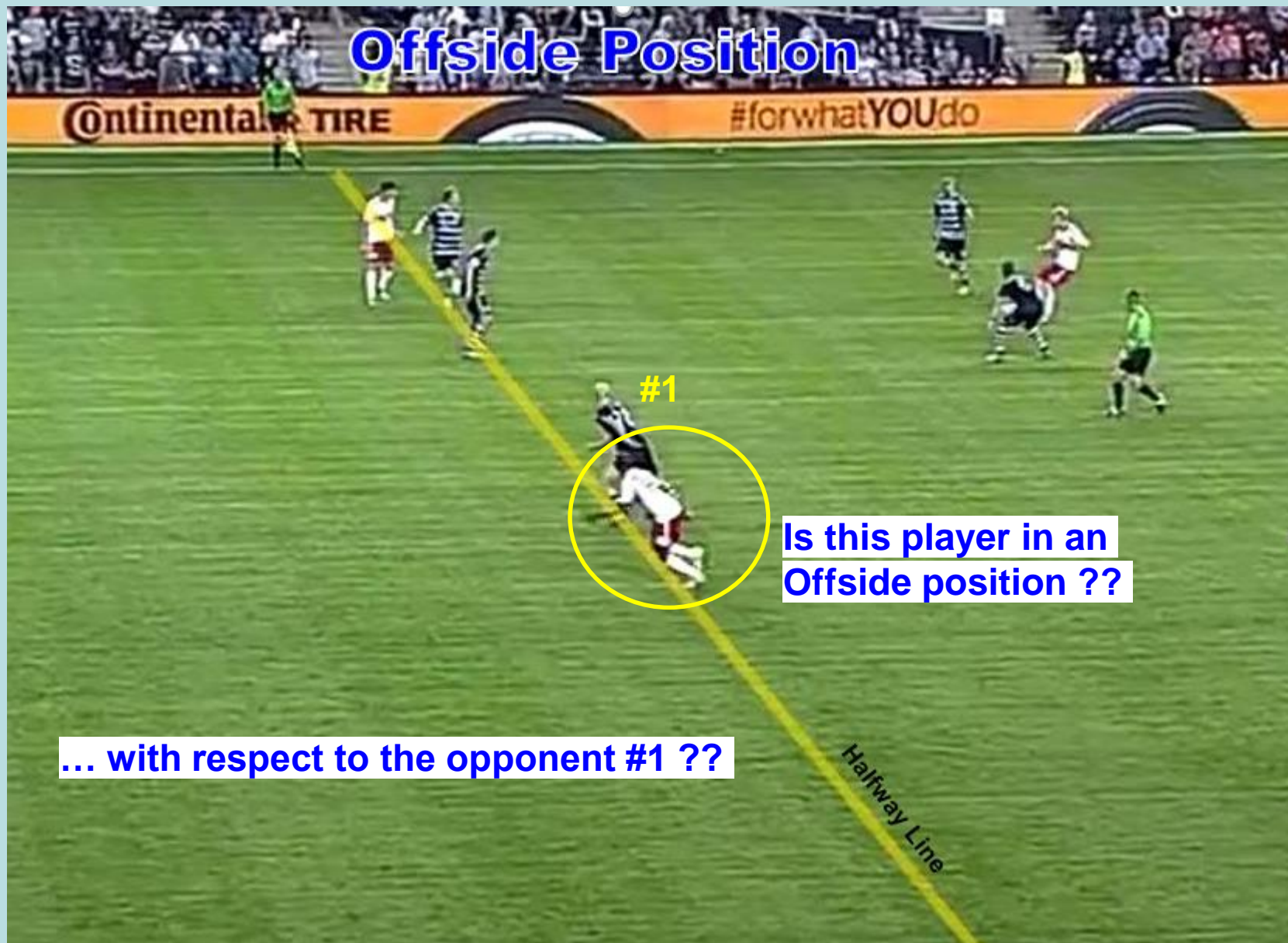
Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the halfway line ??

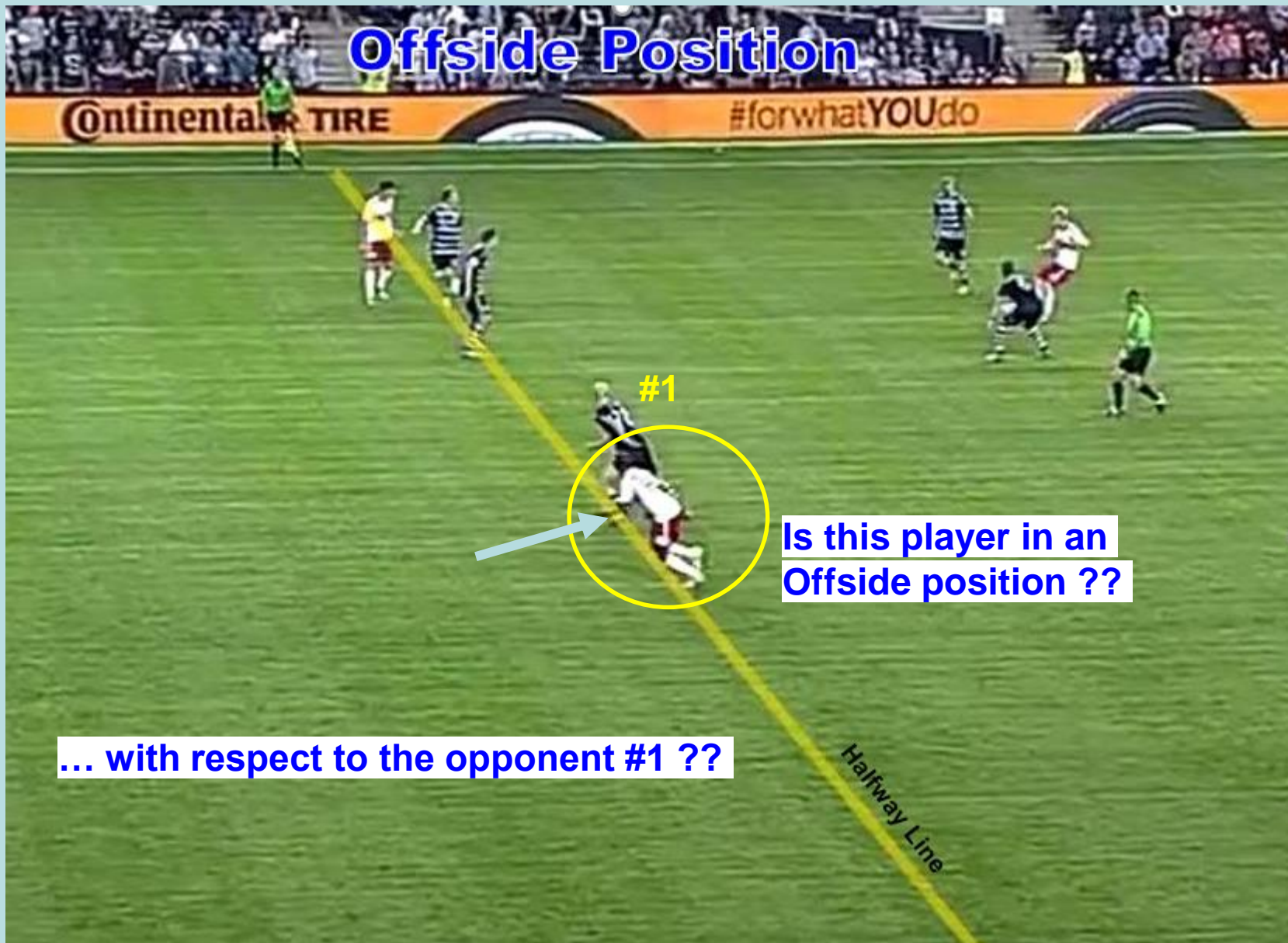
Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #1 ??

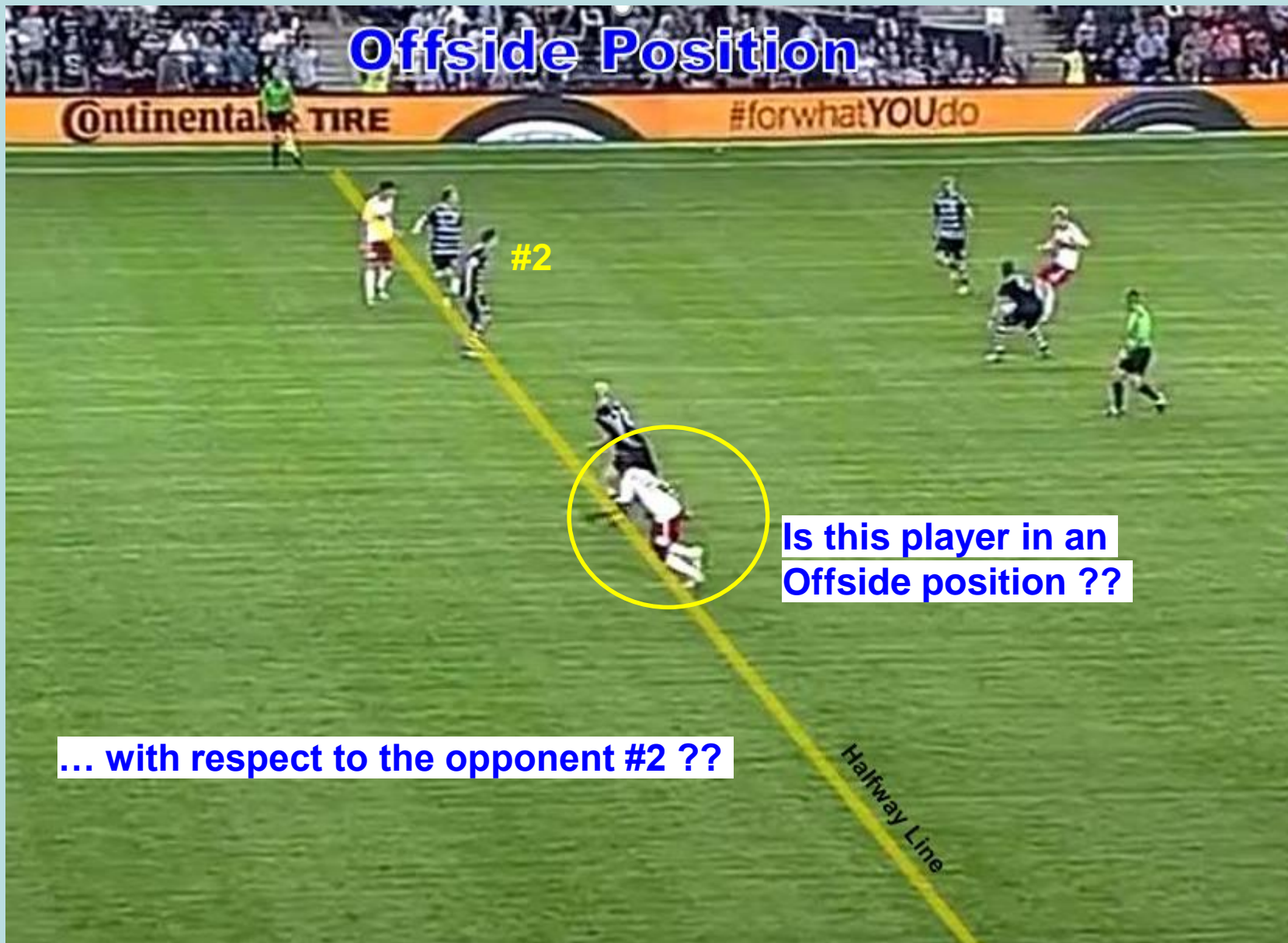
Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #1 ??

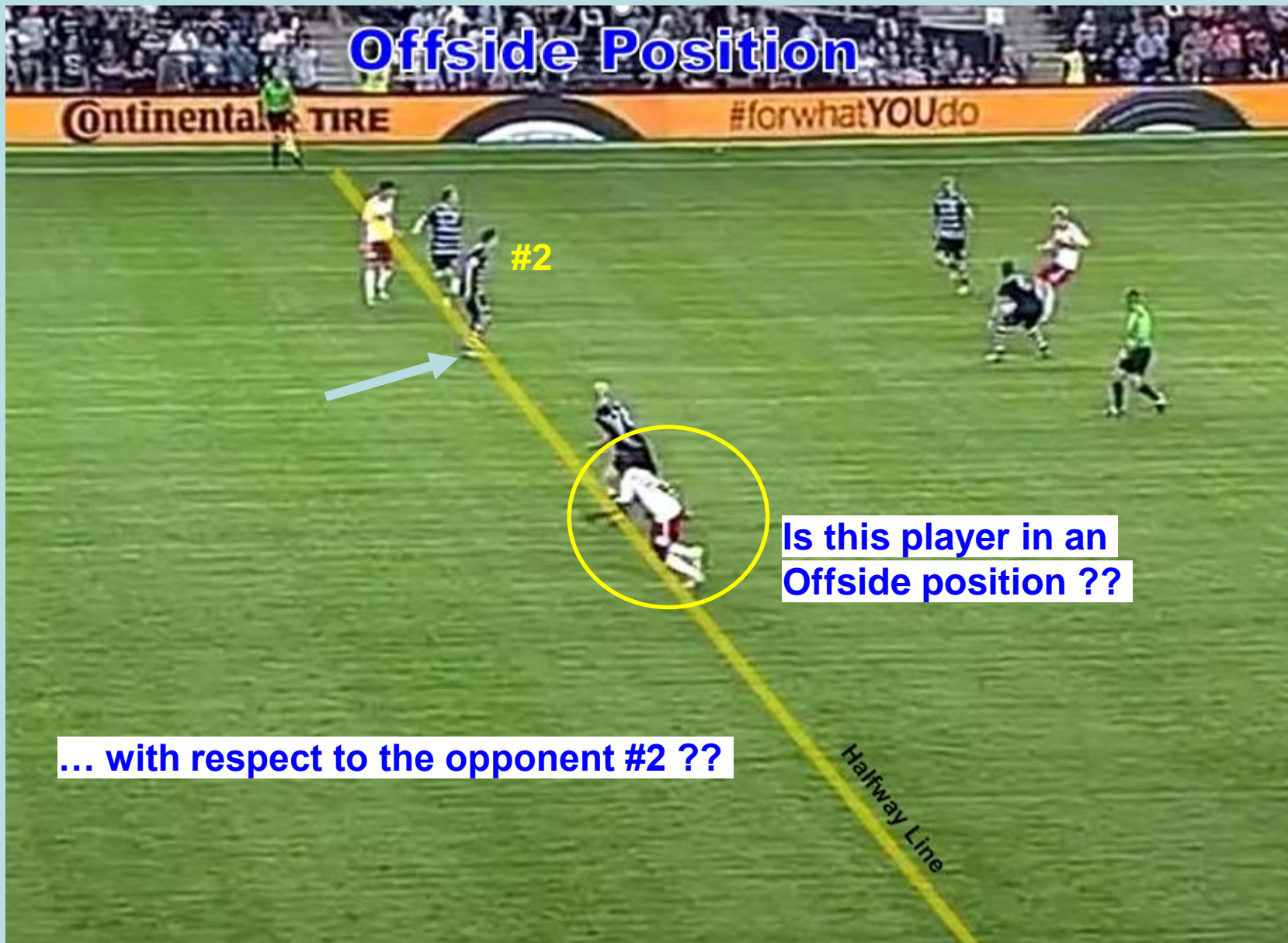
Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #2 ??

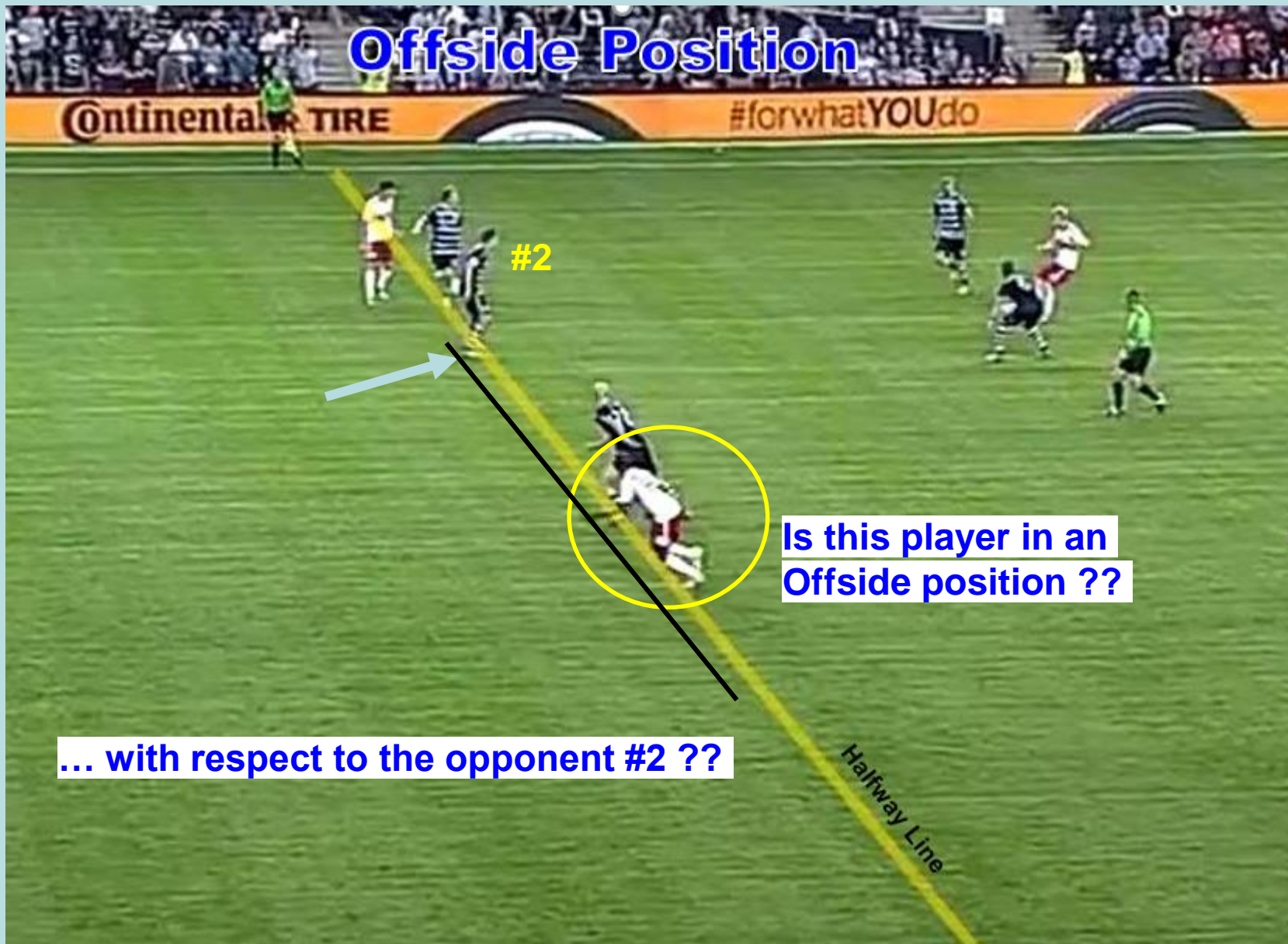
Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #2 ??

Offside Position



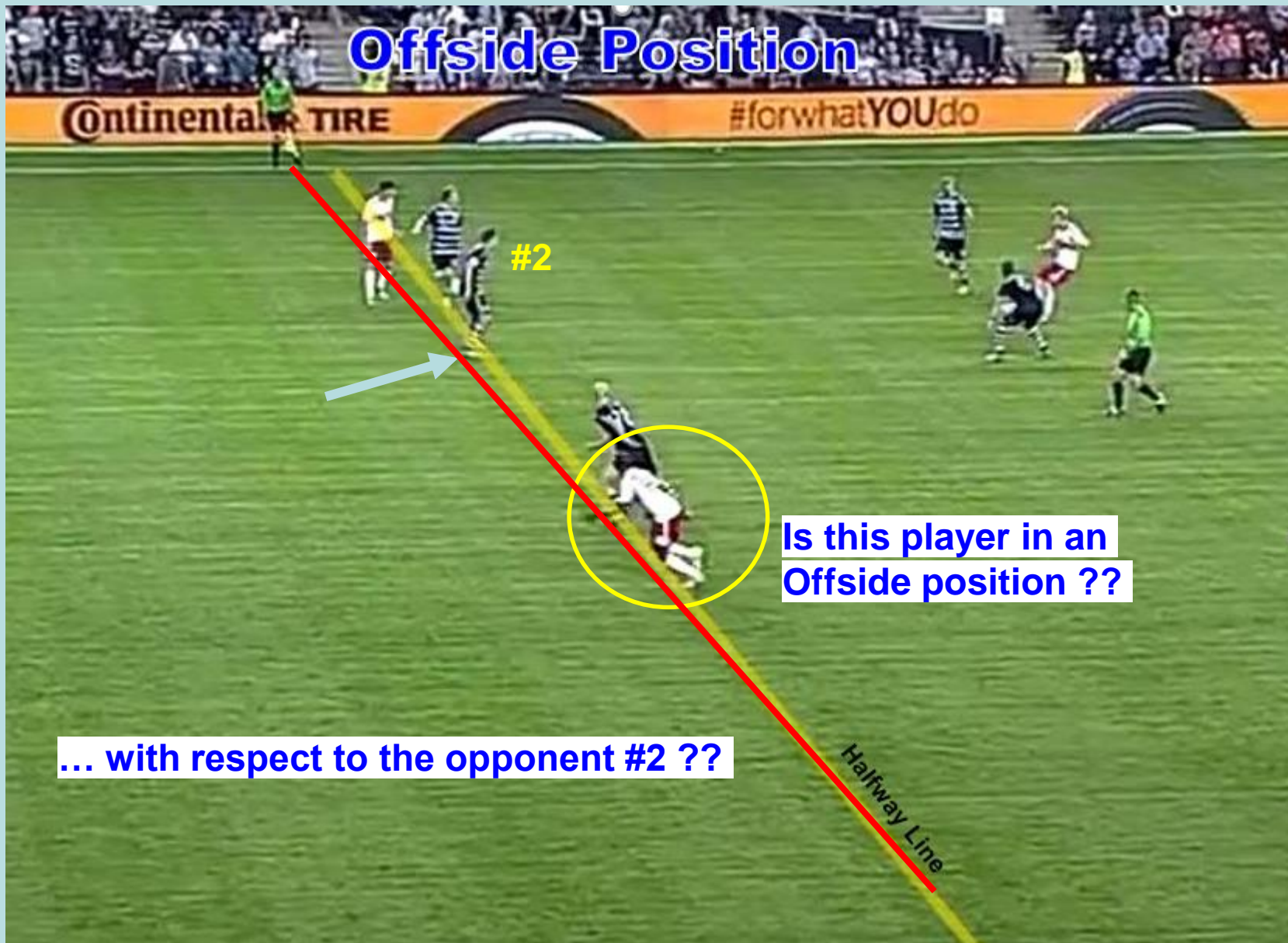
#2

Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #2 ??

Halfway Line

Offside Position



Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #2 ??

Offside Position

What is the AR's view ??

Line of Sight to Ball

#2

Is this player in an Offside position ??

... with respect to the opponent #2 ??

Halfway Line



Offside Position

Based upon the previous stop action slide, where do you think the AR is basing his decision on whether or not the attacker is an offside position?

- **Halfway line ?** ... this appears to be the easiest and the most discernable point of reference.
- **Opponent #1 ?** ... this opponent would appear to be dismissed as a point of reference, since he is totally on the other half of the field.
- **Opponent #2 ?** ... this realistically would only be caught in a still photo ... in dynamic play, it would never be seen ... and the AR's point of reference with respect to #2 is also more likely to be the torso rather than on the trail foot.

At least the AR's line of sight to the ball is clear and unobstructed.



Offside Position

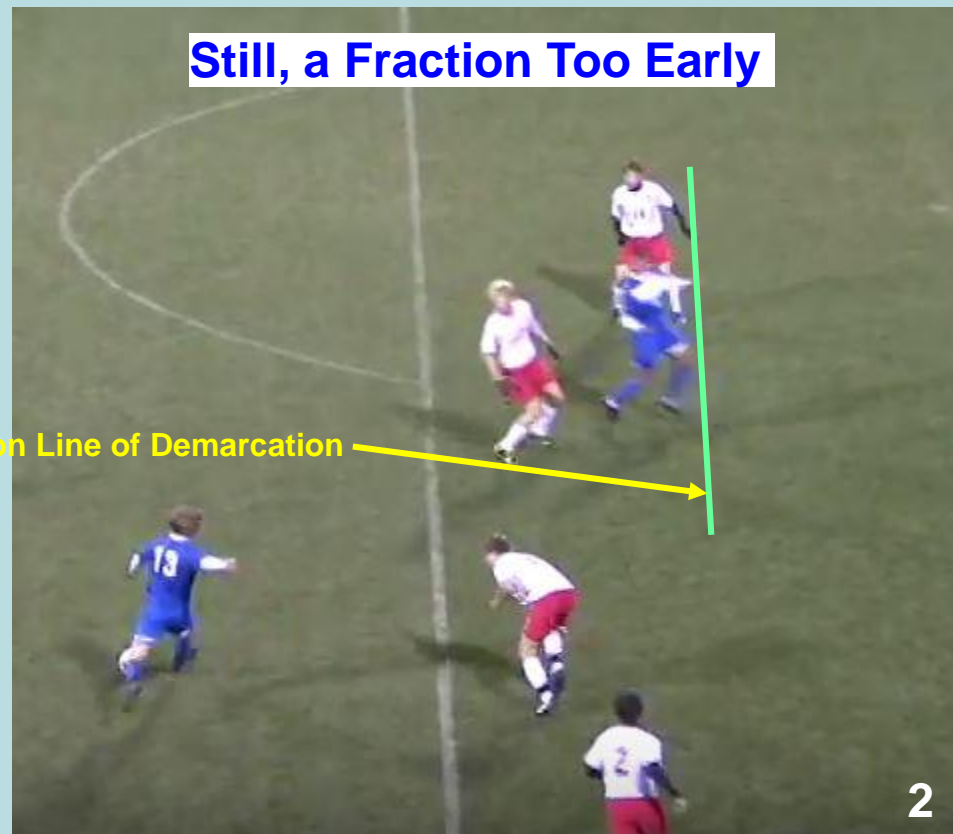
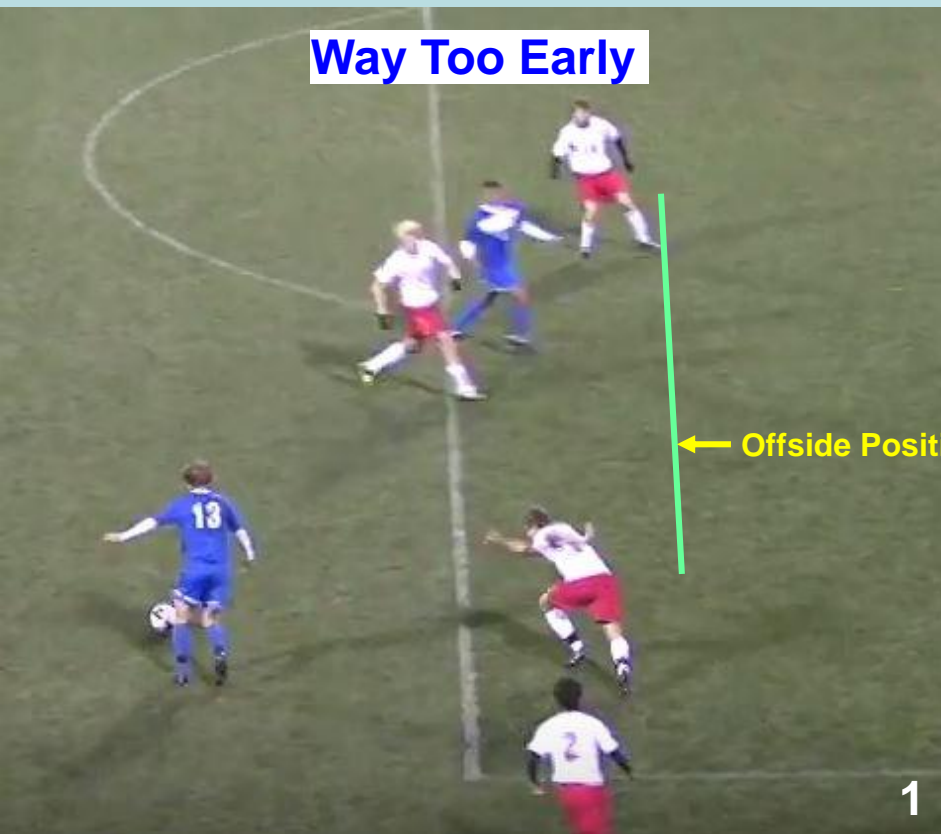
Now, no matter what his point of reference, can this AR really see where the attacker is located? Consider he's at ground level, he's not precisely in the correct position (off by a yard) and must look thru 2 or 3 players to get a good view of the attacker.

If you were the AR in this "dynamic play", how successful do you feel you would be in making the correct "offside position" decision?

Remember, this slide was taken at the moment the ball was kicked by the attacker's teammate. A second later is too late! This attacker will be well past everyone by that time ... as an AR, you must at least realize when your time for making the offside position decision is gone.

The AR's total concentration must be focused on the play. It is not fair to the game to make a wrong decision or even a correct decision, if by default due to a lack of focus.

Dynamic Play #1



← Offside Position Line of Demarcation →

AR must have one eye on the attacking player and simultaneously one eye on the kicker, #13.

The attacker is moving ... **and** ... the line of demarcation is also moving.

Dynamic Play #1



Too Late



AR must look thru players to be able to see the location of attacking the player ... **and** ... must look thru another group of players to see the ball and when the kick by #13 occurs.



Dynamic Play #1

In this sequence of stop action slides the time of the kick and the location of the attacker at that same moment has actually been missed.

However, in slide #2 we can see that a fraction of a second later when the kick will actually be taken ... the attacking player would also be a fraction ahead of the last defender, i.e. the line of demarcation.

With that in mind when viewing these slides, can you say with 100% certainty that the attacking player was in an offside position??

In this scenario (and be honest with yourself), how well do you feel you would have performed in making the correct offside position decision if this were:

- a BU19 Division 1 match ?
- a GU14 Division 2 match ?

The point being, is there a difference? And no matter what your self evaluation is, what do you need to do to improve to get it right at all levels?

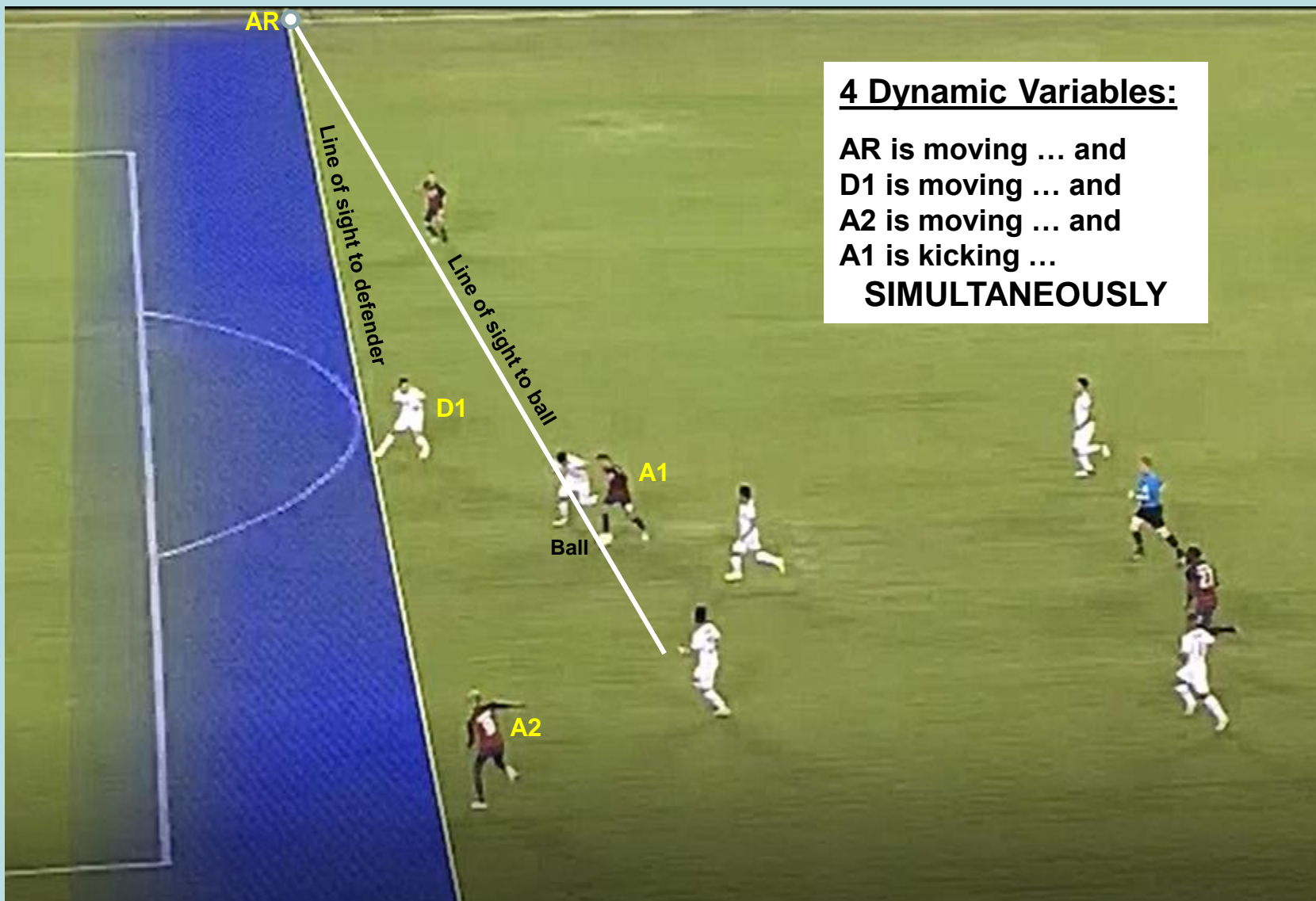
DYNAMIC PLAY - GOLD CUP 2017



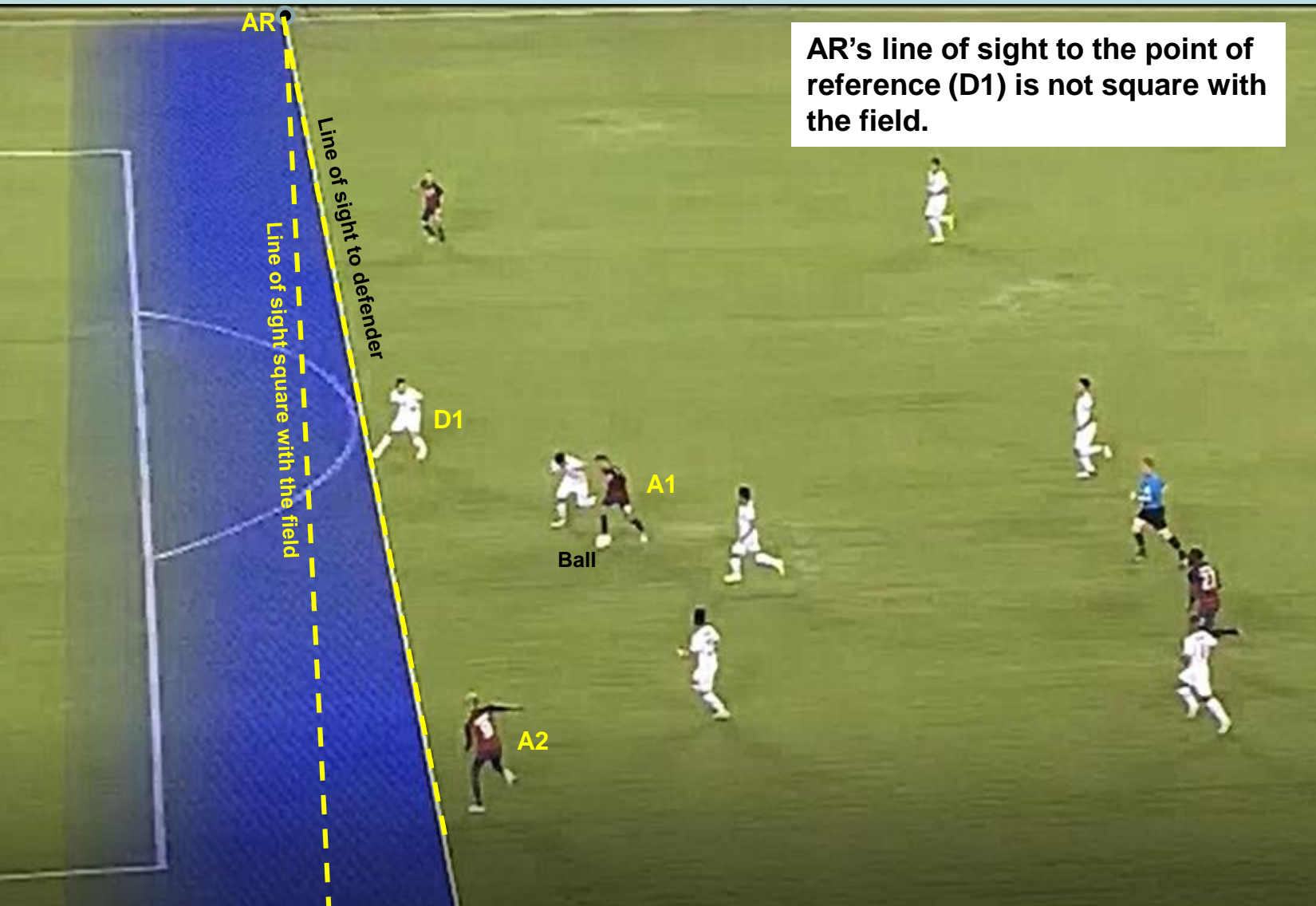
4 Dynamic Variables:

AR is moving ... and
D1 is moving ... and
A2 is moving ... and
A1 is kicking ...

SIMULTANEOUSLY

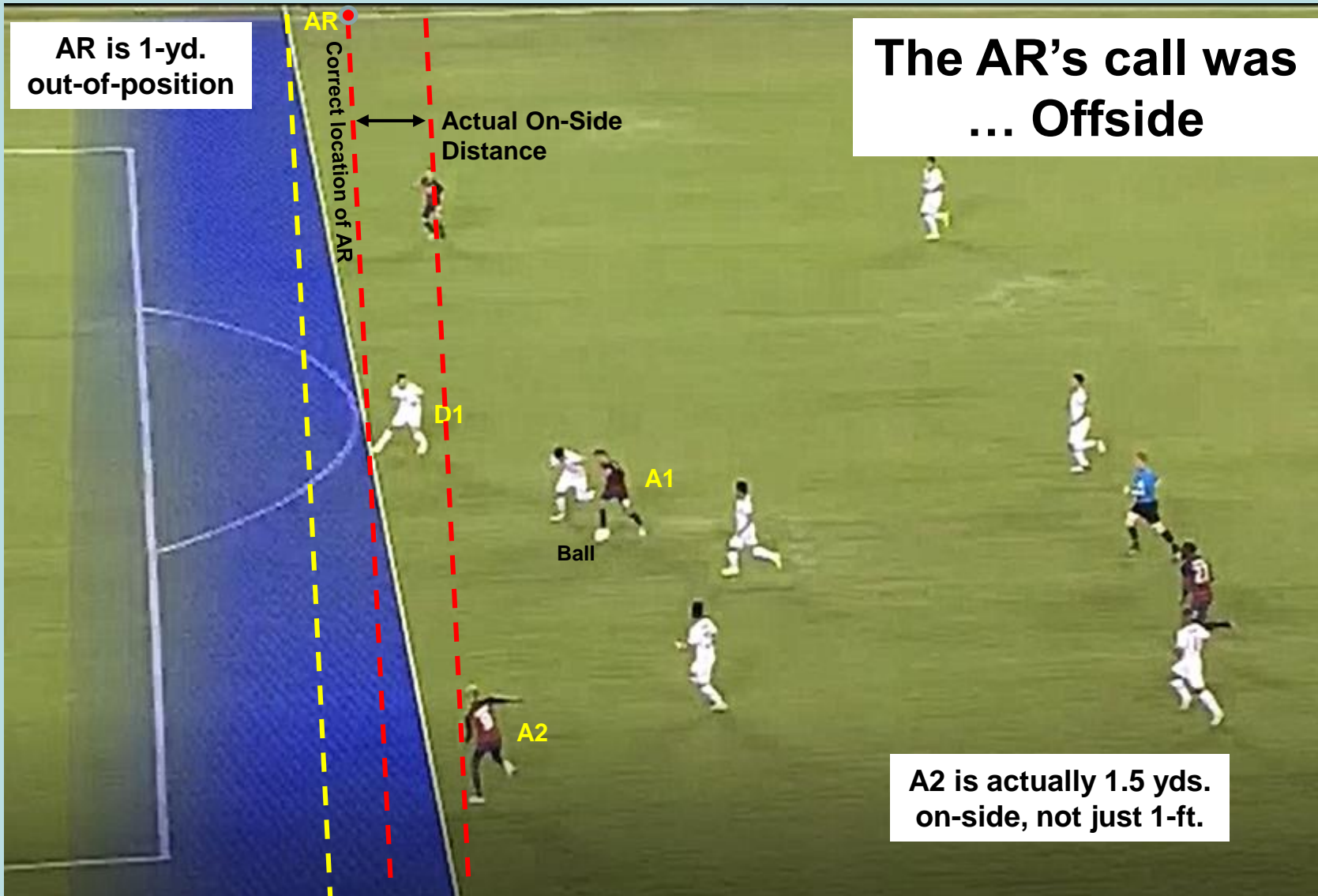


DYNAMIC PLAY - GOLD CUP 2017



AR's line of sight to the point of reference (D1) is not square with the field.

DYNAMIC PLAY - GOLD CUP 2017



DYNAMIC PLAY - GOLD CUP 2017



In a dynamic play such as this case any AR has only a “snowball’s chance in hell” of ever actually getting this call right. The AR must have one eye on the kicker and the other eye on the position of A2 with respect to D1, whilst moving with the play and looking through a myriad of bodies.

All the variables must be in perfect alignment at the same “instant” in time in order for the correct decision can be made, i.e. in the blink of an eye one way or the other and the alignment no longer exists, if it ever did.

Point is ... all officials need to understand that fact. It’s like trying to line up the sun and the moon directly over your exact GPS location in precisely 2.15 seconds from now. It just is not going to happen.

DON’T GUESS Realize you cannot really make the correct call in a dynamic play situation like this and allow play to continue. No apologies needed.

BUT, ALSO UNDERSTAND ... change the parameters of this play ever so slightly and the AR may have enough instantaneous information to be able to make the correct offside decision.

DYNAMIC PLAY - GOLD CUP 2017



For example, if in this play situation player A2 was 2 or 3 strides past defender D1, when teammate A1 was about to kick the ball, then the dynamics of the play and the perspective of an AR have changed significantly. Failure to be able to make the correct decision in this case would probably relate directly to an unacceptable level or lack of concentration being applied.

If this play were instead a free kick restart and the positions of all three players, A1, A2 and D1, were the same at the time of the kick, then an AR should unequivocally be able to make the correct decision. Why?

- First and foremost the AR has the time to get in the correct position square with the field;
- Second, the defender D1's position is most likely to be stationary until the kick is taken;
- The AR's line of sight to the kicker and the ball is not being blocked by other players and the AR is better able to see the timing as to when the kick is taken;
- So, effectively, three of the 4 variables are more static in nature and the only real dynamic variable is the movement of the attacker, A2.



Part 2 - Involvement

- ⦿ "Involvement in Active Play" typically involves the opinion of both the Referee and the Assistant Referee with the Referee being the ultimate decision maker.

- ⦿ "Involvement in Active Play" requires the player in an offside position to:
 - **interfere with play ... or**
 - **interfere with an opponent**whether having gained an advantage or not.



Part 2 - Involvement

The need to keep track of the activities of a player judged to be in an offside position continues from when the ball was first touched by a teammate until some action on the field cancels the player's offside position status, i.e. when:

- the ball is again touched by a teammate ... or
- the ball is deliberately played by an opponent ... or
- the ball goes out of play.



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(1978– 1995) *A player shall only be declared offside (...), if (...) he is:*

- a) interfering with play or with an opponent, or*
- b) seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.*

(1995-2016) *A player shall only be declared offside (...), if (...) he is involved in active play by:*

- a) interfering with play, or*
- b) interfering with an opponent, or*
- c) **gaining an** advantage by being in that position.*



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2005–2014) The following IFAB definitions also applied:

- **“Interfering with Play” means playing or touching the ball (...)**
- **“Interfering with an Opponent” means preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent’s line of vision or movements or making a gesture or movement which (...) deceives or distracts an opponent.**
- **“Gaining an Advantage” (...) means playing a ball that rebounds to him off a goal post or crossbar (...) or playing a ball that rebounds to him off an opponent (...).**



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2014–2016) The following IFAB definitions also apply:

- **“Interfering with Play” means playing or touching the ball (...)**
- **“Interfering with an Opponent” means preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent’s line of vision **or challenging an opponent for the ball.****
- **“Gaining an Advantage” (...)** means playing a ball:
 - i. **that rebounds to him off a goal post, crossbar **or an opponent (...);****
 - ii. **that rebounds, is deflected or is played to him from a deliberate save by an opponent (...).**

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



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2016–2018) *A player in an offside position (...) is only penalized on becoming involved in active play by:*

- *“interfering with Play” by playing or touching the ball (...)*
- *“interfering with an Opponent” by:*
 - *preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent’s line of vision, or*
 - *challenging an opponent for the ball, or*
 - *clearly attempting to play a ball which is close to him when this action impacts on an opponent, or*
 - *making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball.*



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2016–2018) A player in an offside position (...) is only penalized on becoming involved in active play by:

- **“Gaining an Advantage” by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:**
 - **rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, match official or an opponent;**
 - **been deliberately saved by an opponent**

A player (...) 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.

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



Interfering with Play

Interfering with “**PLAY**” has always specifically meant “*touching the ball*” by the player (or having the ball touch the player) in the offside position. In essence it does not have to be a deliberate touch of the ball.

- “Interfering with Play” must involve **actual contact with the ball**
- Mere movement toward the ball cannot constitute “interfering with play”

The IFAB inclusion of the added language “*playing the ball*” within its definition is, simply put, redundant.

In order to play the ball a player must touch it, i.e. it is not described as an attempt to touch the ball and subsequently miss.



Interfering with Play

CONCERNS? ... PROBLEMS?

YES ... There are still officials, both Referees and ARs, who take the “touch of the ball” concept and apply it to all offside play situations, i.e. if no touch occurs, then there is no offside offense ... or at least that is what appears to be happening in many game situations ... and, sorry to say, at all levels of play.

The AR is just as responsible as the Referee to recognize and signal when an offside offense has occurred ... and that not all offside offenses involve the touching of the ball.

CORRECTION?

Somehow, collectively, we all must get those officials to better understand that “a touch of the ball” is not the only way that an offside offense can be committed.

All officials need to understand that the other way an offside offense can be committed is when the player in an offside position “interferes with an opponent”.



Interfering with an Opponent

Interfering with “**AN OPPONENT**” is really the only other way for a player in an offside position to commit an offside offense. A touch of the ball is not needed nor should the act of interfering with an opponent even consider the actual touch of the ball.

In simple terms “interfering with an opponent” has always meant:

- blocking the view of an opponent ... or
- impeding the progress of an opponent ... or
- any movement which causes a nearby opponent to react/move, i.e. movement causes movement

The IFAB has tinkered, clarified and/or refined the descriptive language in an effort to be all inclusive with respect to the varying ways interference can be manifested.

The end result, no matter the choice of words -- be it “challenging an opponent” or “impacting an opponent” -- is still the same ... no more, no less.



Gaining an Advantage

The act of “Gaining an Advantage” occurs when there is initially neither interference with play nor an opponent, ... but after the ball makes contact with the goal frame, the referee or any opponent, the player in an offside position then becomes actively involved in play.

- Contact with the goal frame or the referee is a simple decision.
- Contact with a defender, including the goalkeeper, is more complicated ... the referee must determine whether that contact was:
 - a rebound;
 - a deflection;
 - a deliberate save;
 - a deliberate play on the ball.



Gaining an Advantage

- Rebounds and deflections are uncontrolled, instinctive and/or accidental redirections of the ball.
- A save or an attempt to save is a deliberate, otherwise legal attempt to prevent the ball from entering the goal (by any defender), and does not include any effort to direct the ball to any place in particular.
- A deliberate play is when a defender makes an intentional movement to the ball and then makes contact with the ball. No contact, then no deliberate play on the ball has occurred, even though an attempt was made.



Gaining an Advantage

Some criteria for determining Play vs. Deflection

| <u>DELIBERATE PLAY</u> | <u>DEFLECTION</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Player moving towards the ball | Ball moving towards the player |
| The ball is expected | Finds the ball coming against him |
| A deliberate act | An instinct reaction attempt to play |
| Enough time to play | Not enough time to play the ball |
| Balanced and ready to play | Has to find their balance first |
| The ball is properly played | The ball deflects from the player |

The age and, more importantly, the skill level of “the player” must also be included as part of this decision.



Gaining an Advantage

The end result of "Gaining an Advantage" is when the player in the offside position subsequently becomes actively involved by either:

- 1) interfering with play ... or
- 2) interfering with an opponent

Absolutely nothing has changed ... the Referee still must determine if a rebound or touch of the ball by an opponent is a deliberate "play", i.e. a controlled effort.

The inclusion of expanded language has just been an attempt to refine and better explain this decision-making effort.



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2017–2018) *A player in an offside position (...) is only penalized on becoming involved in active play by:*

➤ ***“Gaining an Advantage” (...)***

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

In situations where:

- **a player moving from, or standing in an offside position is in the way of an opponent and interferes with the movement of the opponent towards the ball this is an offside offense if it impacts on the ability of the opponent to play or challenge for the ball;**
 - **If the player moves into the way of an opponent and impedes the opponent’s progress (e.g. blocks the opponent) the offense should be penalized under Law 12).**



Law 11 - History

LOTG - Offside Offense

(2017–2018) (...)

In situations where:

- a player in an offside position is moving towards the ball with the intention of playing the ball and is fouled before playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the foul is penalized as it has occurred before the offside offense.
- an offense is committed against a player in an offside position who is already playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the offside offense is penalized as it occurred before the foul challenge.



Law 11 – Situations

IFAB's inclusion, as part of 2017-18 Law 11, of these three situations regarding the interaction between an offside position player and an opponent is only intended to be a clarification where:

- ❖ a player in an offside position away from the ball commits an offense which impacts an opponent;
- ❖ an offense is committed against a player who is in an offside position.



Law 11 – Situations

Situation #1

- There is no change in the Law regarding the determination of whether an offside offense has been committed by a player in an offside position, who is standing still or trying to move away, but still ends up to be in the way of an opponent. This has always been and still is an offside offense for interfering with an opponent.
- However, if the player in the offside position moves to impede the progress of an opponent, then the foul of impeding has occurred and a free kick is awarded at the spot of the offense:
 - an indirect free kick (IFK) if there is no contact ... or
 - a direct free kick (DFK) if there is contact.Again, no change, just a clarification that has just never been included as part of the written Law.
- In effect the result in either case is the same, i.e. a free kick for the defending team.



Law 11 – Situations

Situation #2

Since the player in the offside position has not yet become involved in active play, and therefore not yet guilty of committing an offside offense, a defender is not free to commit a foul against that player.

In fact, if the defender commits a DFK foul within the penalty area, the resulting restart would be a penalty kick for the team whose player happened to be in an offside position.

Again, no change in the Law, just a clarification of a situation that has just never been included as part of the written Law itself.



Law 11 – Situations

Situation #3

Since the player in the offside position has become involved in active play, a subsequent offense by a defender does not negate the fact that the offside offense had already occurred.

This would not be a situation of the two offenses occurring simultaneously. The restart would be an IFK where the offside player became actively involved.

And as before, no change in the Law, just a clarification of a situation that has just never been included as part of the written Law itself.

However, the defender may still be subject to disciplinary action for unsporting behavior, being reckless, or using excessive force depending upon timing and/or severity of the subsequent offense



Law 11 – Summary

Law 11, which was once only a half-a-page long has evolved into three (3) pages of explanations with the addition of all the “no changes” and “clarifications”.

Is the end result better??



Offside Point to Ponder

Consider the Following Scenario:

During an attack on goal the blue team goalkeeper has just made a diving save and punched the ball out, which is then collected by red player, A1.

At the time A1 takes the shot the position of all players is as shown in the following diagram.



Offside Point to Ponder





Offside Point to Ponder

Situation 1:

Player A2 is clearly in an offside position with no other player in close proximity at the time the kick is taken.

A2 sticks her foot out in an attempt to play the ball, but clearly misses making contact with it.

Has A2 become actively involved in play?

Is A2 guilty of committing an offside offense?

Should the referee award the goal?



Offside Point to Ponder

Situation 2:

Again, player A2 is clearly in an offside position with no other player in close proximity at the time the kick is taken.

A2 sticks her foot out in an attempt to play the ball. As the referee, you determine that A2 does indeed make contact with the ball with her foot in this play sequence, but the ball then slowly continues on into the goal.



Offside Point to Ponder

Situation 2:

Has A2 become actively involved in play?

Is A2 guilty of committing an offside offense?

Can or should the referee award the goal?

Consider the Following:

Could the actions of A2 be considered as “trifling”?



Offside Point to Ponder

Situation 2:

If the actions of A2 are considered as “trifling”, then the goal is scored.

- What would you or would you not do?
- Would it depend upon game circumstances?
 - If the score was 7-0 in favor of the red team
 - If the score was 7-0 in favor of the blue team
 - If the score was 0-0 in the last 5-minutes of the game
 - If it was 3-0 in a tournament game where score differential mattered.



Offside Point to Ponder

Remember:

A **trifling infraction** is one which, though still an offense, has no significant impact upon play.

It is applicable to **all** possible violations of **any** of the Laws of the Game.

It is the **duty** of the referee to penalize only those violations that matter.



Offside Point to Ponder

Trifling ... what does it mean and how or when can/should it be applied?

Can it be applied to an offside decision? Bear in mind that trifling actions are not just to be applied to Law 12 offenses.

Some will argue that anytime a goal is involved, then it can never be considered as trifling. Really?

Whatever you would or would not do should not be based on the score or time of the game. A trifling decision should only be based upon the play itself and/or the players involved.

What are the other factors that you would include in your decision?

Think about it and consider the following IFAB “history” involving trifling situations.



Offside Point to Ponder

HISTORY:

“The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on part of players and spoils the pleasure of spectators”.

This former IFAB decision was removed from the Law prior to 2013 only because, according to previous USSF documentation, it was felt to be an unnecessary reminder of the referee’s fundamental duty to penalize only those violations that matter. The spirit, if not the words, still remained at the heart of the Law and is applicable to all possible violations of any of the LOTG.

A trifling infraction is defined as one which, though still an offense, has no significant impact on play.

A doubtful offense is defined as one to which neither the referee nor the other officials can attest.



Offside Point to Ponder

The 2016-17 IFAB Laws added the following language:

- “Decisions will be made to the best of the referee’s ability according to the LOTG and the ‘***spirit of the game***’ (...).”

The best example of IFAB’s inclusion of this “spirit of the game” concept is with respect to an outside interference on a ‘sure goal’ situation, which now allows the play to continue verses requiring an immediate stoppage. This, in effect, declares that such an intrusion that results in a goal being scored is acceptable, i.e. it is trifling with respect to the play itself.

Since, when such an interference does not change the end result, i.e. it is in effect trifling, then the goal is awarded.

Might it be logical then, in accordance with IFAB, to expand this exact “spirit of the game” / “trifling” concept to the previous game scenarios?

Totally Your Decision !!!