



**NEW ZEALAND**  
**SOCCER**

**THE ASSISTANT**  
**REFEREE**

**MEMORANDUM**

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# THE ASSISTANT REFEREE

We wish to draw your attention to the following recommended NZS coaching policy in respect of assistant referees. Please note that this reflects current FIFA coaching.

## **OFFSIDE**

1. Match officials are reminded of the recent International F.A. Board clarification of offside offences.

The interpretations issued by the Board in Circular 874 in respect of players in an offside position are:

### **“Interfering with play”**

- Playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a team-mate

### **“Interfering with an opponent”**

- Preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball for example, by clearly obstructing the goalkeeper’s line of vision
- Making a gesture or movement while standing in the path of the ball to deceive or distract an opponent

### **“Gaining an advantage by being in that position”**

- Playing a ball that rebounds off a post or crossbar or opponent having been in an offside position
2. If an assistant referee is not totally sure about an offside offence the flag should not be raised (i.e. in case of doubt benefit must be given to the attacking team).
  3. In deciding whether an attacking player is nearer to the opponent’s goal line than the second last defender, consideration should be given to the position of the attacker’s feet and body in respect to that of the second last defender.
  4. To ensure correct judgement of offside offences, an assistant referee should not raise the flag before considering the following criteria, the so-called ‘wait and see’ technique:
    - a. Movement of the ball (direction, speed, distance, deflection, etc.)
    - b. Involvement of the player in active play by any of the offences listed above in point 1.
  5. In connection with assistant referees making judgements concerning offside, they are reminded that it is better to be slightly late and correct, than to be too quick and wrong.
  6. If a flag signal for offside is given and is not seen immediately by the referee; the assistant referee must keep signalling until it has been recognised or the ball is clearly in control of the defending team. Offside should be signalled with the right hand.

## BALL OUT OF PLAY

- 7 Assistant referees are reminded that, whenever the ball leaves the field of play, the flag signal of the assistant referee should show clearly the correct restart and direction. In clear throw-in situations, the assistant referee can directly show the direction (along the whole touch line). But if there is any doubt about the direction, the assistant referee should simply raise the flag, make eye contact with the referee and follow the referee's signal.
8. Whenever an assistant referee signals the ball out of the field of play (even if players continue to play the ball) the signal must be held until acknowledged by the referee taking action.
9. To confirm a valid goal has been scored, an assistant referee should display clear movement down the touchline towards the centre line (25-30 metres). In borderline cases, this movement should be clear (sprint) to be recognised by the referee.

To confirm a tight goal, the assistant referee should raise the flag and then after eye contact sprint to half way (25-30 metres).

If in his opinion a goal has not been scored correctly, the assistant referee should stand still, retaining any signal already given. The referee may then choose to consult further if he needs additional guidance.

## FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

10. An assistant referee must use a raised flag signal to advise the referee that he has seen a foul committed (or misconduct e.g. violent conduct) when he is better positioned than the referee and the referee has not clearly acted on the offence.

It is emphasised that such action by an assistant referee must be taken for all appropriate offences including those committed inside the penalty area.

Additionally there is benefit in the assistant referee being seen to be aware and signalling for any offence in his immediate vicinity and this practice is recommended.

11. If a flag signal for any offence is not seen immediately by the referee, the assistant referee must keep signalling until the flag is acknowledged by the referee or a clear advantage is recognised to the team against which the offence has been committed.
12. Where direct consultation is necessary between the referee and assistant referee, the information should include, as concisely as possible, what happened, which players were involved, the precise location, recommended action and the re-start of play. It is recommended that in such cases the assistant referee advance towards the referee by 4 to 5 metres.

During consultation, the assistant referee and referee should both face the field of play. It is usually appropriate to avoid the consultation being heard or understood by others.

13. Offences of violent conduct seen and signalled by an assistant referee must be acted upon in accordance with the Laws of the Game by the referee. If play has been stopped for the disciplinary action (even if the signal has not been seen immediately and play has continued), the restart must also be in accordance with the Laws (free kick / penalty kick). However, if the assistant referee's signal is not seen immediately and play has been restarted for a subsequent situation only the appropriate disciplinary action can be taken against the offending player.

#### **OFFENCES NEAR THE PENALTY AREA**

14. Where a referee seeks guidance from an assistant referee concerning the exact location of an offence near the boundary of the penalty area the action of the assistant referee should be as follows:
  - a. The referee stops play for an offence.
  - b. If the offence is inside the penalty area – the assistant referee moves visibly down the touchline towards the corner flag.
  - c. If the offence is outside the penalty area – the assistant referee stands still having moved to be in line with the place where the offence occurred.

#### **POSITIONING**

15. At free kicks close to the penalty area, the assistant referee should be positioned in line with the second last defender (controlling the offside), but also with awareness of the goal line. The referee should control the ball and the wall.

16. **Offside**

When possible an assistant referee, after a free kick for offside has been given, should position himself in line with the spot where the ball should be positioned to restart the game. Once the ball has been positioned he should then immediately take up a position to control the offside line (level with the second-last defender), which is his priority.

17. **Goal Kick and Goal Clearance**

For goal kicks and when the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball inside his own penalty area, it is advised that the assistant occasionally checks that the ball is correctly positioned or that the goalkeeper does not cross the 16 metre line before releasing the ball from his hands. This should be done in convenient situations (e.g. second last defender near the penalty area). Control of offside from subsequent play is the priority concern. Goal kicks should preferably be signalled with the right hand.

18. **Corner Kick**

For corner kicks, it is recommended that the assistant involved takes a

position behind the flag in line with the goal line.

#### 19. **Penalty Kick**

When a penalty kick is awarded during the normal course of play, the assistant should be on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line. Assistant referees should signal the goalkeeper's forward movement off the goal line before the ball has been played by raising the flag.

#### 20. **Kicks from the Penalty Mark**

For kicks from the penalty mark to determine the winner of a match, one assistant should be positioned on the goal line where it meets the goal area boundary line, the other assistant controls the players within the centre circle.

#### 21. **Substitutions**

When single substitutions take place they shall be supervised by the 4<sup>th</sup> official in co-operation with the referee. However, in the case of multiple substitutions, the assistant referee should move to the half way line to assist the 4<sup>th</sup> official.

### **REFEREE ERRORS**

22. If an assistant referee knows that a referee has made an obvious disciplinary error (e.g. two yellow cards to the same player without sending him off, red or yellow card to the wrong player, player kicked the ball twice at free kick, etc.) he must intervene immediately (flag or even enter the field of play). The other assistant referee (or 4<sup>th</sup> official) should if necessary, also assist in such case.

### **CONTROL OF THE 9.15 METRES**

23. When a referee chooses to use the help of an assistant referee on the field of play to control the 9.15m distance from the ball at free-kick, it is recommended that the assistant referee does not physically measure the 9.15m but rather asserts control from the position of the ball. This exceptional on field involvement of the assistant referee is recommended only for free kicks very near the touchline.

### **KICKS FROM THE PENALTY MARK**

24. The referee must determine and agree the role of the assistant referee on the goal line and his own role in detecting any forward movement from the goal line of the goalkeeper. Usually the referee will judge the goalkeeper's forward movement while the assistant referee determines whether or not the ball has crossed the goal line. Referees and assistant referees are also reminded that the "inactive" goalkeeper should remain positioned on the goal line where it meets the penalty area boundary line.

### **FLAG TECHNIQUE**

25. It is recommended that an assistant referee hold the flag in the hand nearest to the field of play by switching hands whenever the direction of

movement changes so that the flag is visible to the referee at any time.  
The flag should remain still when the assistant is moving.