



To: Chair, State Referee Administrators, State State Directors of Referee Assessment, Assessors and Referees
Committee, State Referee Directors of Referee Instruction, National Instructors,

cc: State Directors of Coaching

From: Alfred Kleinaitis
Manager of Referee Development and Education

**Subject: Applying Law 11 (Offside) Correctly
D.C. United v. Red Bull N.Y. (April 2, 2006)**

Date: April 5, 2006

It was a magnificent direct free kick by Red Bull #10 (Djorkaeff). The shot from 30 yards out sailed untouched into the upper left corner of the DC United goal and represented the kind of exciting play that makes soccer “the beautiful game.”

Unfortunately, the goal should not have been counted due to a violation of Law 11 (Offside) by two Red Bull attackers who were in an offside position at the time of the restart and who interfered with the United goalkeeper (#1, Perkins). A clip of this incident is attached.

There is no dispute that Red Bull #19 (Henderson) and #6 (Stammler) were in an offside position at the time of the free kick. Both attackers were just inside the goal area with Henderson virtually in line between the United goalkeeper and the location of the free kick while Stammler was farther to the right. This put Henderson less than six yards in front of the goalkeeper. There was no strategic or tactical reason for these positions, nor had the players in question placed themselves in these positions as a result of dynamic play. It was a ceremonial restart and the positions of these players were deliberately chosen.

According to Law 11, a player in an offside position is not permitted to engage in any of the following activities:

1. Interfere with play (playing or touching the ball). Neither attacker did this.
2. Gain an advantage (playing a ball that rebounds from the goal post, crossbar, or defender). Neither attacker did this.

3. Interfere with an opponent by clearly obstructing his movement. Neither attacker did this.
4. Interfere with an opponent by clearly obstructing his line of sight. Henderson blocked the vision of the United goalkeeper.
5. Interfere with an opponent by making a gesture or movement which, in the opinion of the referee, deceives or distracts an opponent. Both Henderson and Stammler, by deliberately moving to this particular offside position solely for the purpose of diverting the United goalkeeper's attention, violated this requirement.
6. The referee should evaluate whether or not a player in an offside position interferes with the opponent or play. The referee, before making a decision, must also consider the following additional variables:

Position of players on the field

Distance of the attacking player from the opponent(s), and

Flight of the ball.

For these reasons, the goal by Djorkaeff should have been disallowed.

The foundation for correctly deciding whether an offside offense has occurred is the opinion of the referee, but that opinion must be formed by the guidelines as stated above.