The dreaded offside! Nothing's straight forward though is it?! You can sometimes be in an offside position and STILL not be offside! What's all that about it? Don't panic help is at hand.

* **A player is in an offside position if they are nearer to the opposition's goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.**
* **You can't be offside if:**

**you receive the ball directly from a goal kick, a throw-in or a corner**

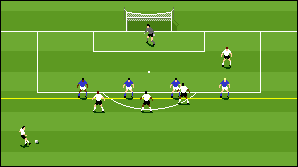
**you are in your own half of the pitch**

**you are level with the second last or last two opponents**

Still following the rule? You can be deemed on-side even if you are offside! It's quite a new rule and is all down to interpretation.

If a player is not offside when the ball is played but then runs forward too soon and is nearer to the opposition goal than the second last opponent this is Offside. **It's all about timing that run!** If the player had timed his run perfectly and not moved past the second last opponent until after the ball was played the he would not have been offside.

The new interpretation of the offside law says it is **not necessarily an offence to be in an offside position.**



As you can see above, that means that as the ball is played in, **an attacker can stand in an offside position so long as they are NOT involved in active play in the three following scenarios.**

**Scenario 1- Interfering with play** (e.g. receiving the ball directly or courtesy of a flick on from any player). If the ball is cleared then that phase of play is over. That means that the attacker's initial offside position no longer stands. If the ball is then played into the box again the attacker's new position is the one that counts.

**Scenario 2 - Interfering with an opponent** (e.g. blocking the goalkeeper or their line of vision)

**Scenario 3 - Gaining an advantage** by being in that position (e.g. if ball is played and then rebounds off either a post, the crossbar or an opposing defender, then the attacker is offside.)

Until either scenario occurs, the flag will stay down.

A player wins the ball and bursts down the left wing ahead of the defenders, he passes back to his team mate who is ahead of the second last opponent. Is he offside? No he's not offside because the **ball was played backwards.** Therefore he's not nearer to the goal line than the ball and the goal stands.

A player is busy in midfield and surges forward with the ball looking for his strikers. He plays the ball forwards to the striker, but it's not the greatest pass and ends up bouncing off a defender's leg. But the ball deflects to the striker - who's now in an offside position - he picks the ball up and lashes it into the goal. Surely that was offside? Nope, he was in an offside position, but the flag stayed down because **the ball was played by an opposition defender.**

That's it! You should now be the offside supremo!

To read the full article please see;

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/sa/football/rules/newsid_3632000/3632335.stm>