



To: National Referees
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Subject: **Offside Offense on a Corner Kick**

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Officials must remain focused and vigilant in order to make correct offside decisions, particularly in situations where an offside violation is not expected. Such was the case last Sunday, April 20, in the match between Kansas City at Chicago when corner kicks were called in favor of Chicago.

Twice, in a set play often referred to as a “short corner,” Chicago players (#21, Mapp, and #10, Blanco) committed offside violations which were not detected by the officiating team. Referees must remember that Law 11 states there is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a corner kick. However, once the corner kick has been taken (i.e., after the ball is kicked and moved), all play occurring afterward must be closely monitored for a possible offside offense and all the usual requirements of Law 11 must be applied.

The accompanying video clip highlights how a corner kick can develop almost immediately into the sort of play where an offside offense can occur. The referee and assistant referee should have been alerted to this challenge by the presence of two attackers close to each other at the corner, a team tactic which has become more common in recent years. The corner kick taker plays the ball to this nearby teammate. The teammate stops the ball to allow the kicker to play the ball again or may even play the ball back to the corner kick taker. However, the moment the teammate makes contact with the ball, the assistant referee must quickly determine if the basic conditions of an offside position exist regarding any attacker but most particularly regarding the corner kick taker.

If at least two defenders had been standing on the goal line at the moment the Chicago attacker stopped the ball which he had received from the corner kick, there would have been no offside position and therefore no offside violation in either situation.

This is a difficult play to observe and the purpose of this paper is to raise awareness as to its challenges for the officiating team. Referees and assistant referees should also be prepared for actions by the opposing team to counter the “short corner” tactic, including an increased likelihood of an encroachment violation as opponents attempt to move in closer to mark both attackers.