



To: State Referee Administrators
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National Instructors
State Directors of Coaching

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Subject: **Offside Issues**

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During a match between FC Dallas and the Columbus Crew on October 6, 2007, a sequence of play occurred which resulted in the scoring of a goal by Columbus player #12 (Eddie Gaven). At the time, Columbus player #26 (Andy Herron) was indisputably in an offside position and some analyses of the play have suggested that the goal should have been canceled because Herron had committed an offside infraction.

Being in an offside position is not an offense. A player in an offside position is only penalized if he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play or
- Interfering with an opponent or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position.

Below, using the guidance provided by FIFA, we examine whether Herron should have been penalized for being in an offside position.

Although Herron is seen sticking his leg out as the ball passes him, there is no contact with the ball and therefore Herron cannot be considered to have *interfered with play*. This is a fact.

The camera angles on the several replays of the event on the attached clip do not provide us with a clear line of sight from the perspective of the Dallas goalkeeper #30 (Ray Burse) so we must draw our conclusions from what can be seen. First, Herron is about 12 yards from the Dallas goalkeeper when the play was initiated by Columbus. Accordingly, Herron occupied only a small portion of the goalkeeper's field of view and it is therefore inconclusive that Herron interfered with the goalkeeper by blocking Burse's view of the path of the ball. Second, there is no video evidence that Herron's actions deceived or distracted the goalkeeper (much less any other defender). The goalkeeper's position to defend against this shot on goal appears to be set by the trajectory of the ball

as it left Gaven's foot, not by any action taken by Herron. The evidence thus supports a decision that Herron did not *interfere with an opponent*.

Gaining an advantage while in an offside position is not an issue here since there was no deflection from the goalposts, crossbar, or a defender. This also is a fact.

As a consequence, none of the elements of involvement in active play while in an offside position were present and the referee's decision not to penalize Herron for his position must be supported.