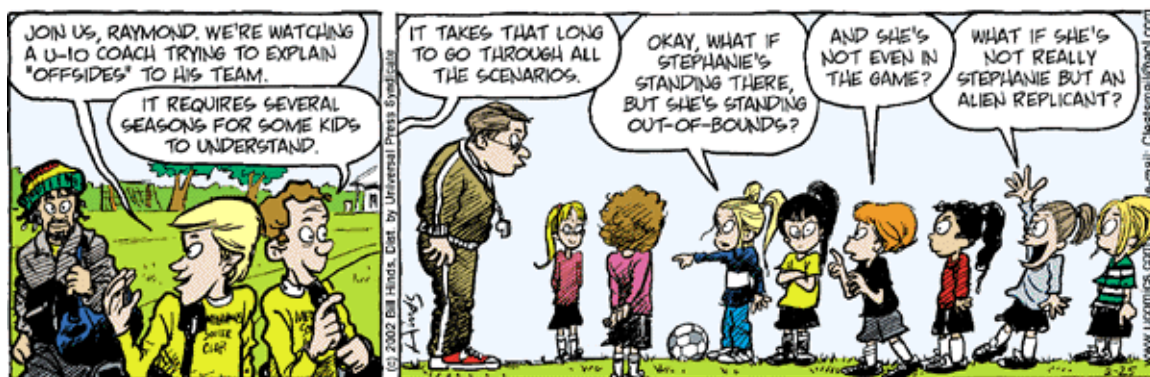


US Youth Soccer

The Modified Rules for the U10 age group were written with contributions from the 55 state association Technical Directors, the US Youth Soccer Referee Committee, the U.S. Soccer Referee Department and the US Youth Soccer Coaching Committee.^① The decision was made to eliminate Law 11 for this age group for the following reasons:

- ✎ Not having offside at U10 is based on the change in the size of the field with the 6-a-side game and the general lack of understanding or conceptualization of the offside law with children this young. Indeed, most of the adults at U10 matches do not correctly understand Law 11, so why are we expecting children to do so? Lending support to eliminating offside through these ages is the emergence of abstract thinking not occurring until around age ten.
- ✎ Given the shortage nationwide of referees to expect leagues and clubs to have three officials on U10 matches seems unrealistic. The U10 division is where novice referees should gain experience and be mentored by more experienced referees with a higher grade.
- ✎ If the club or league is playing with the correct numbers (6 vs. 6) and the correct field size (60 x 45), the field size is too small for effective use of the offside rule. The field size is appropriate to the age level and we want the kids to be able to use the entire field.
- ✎ Due to the reduction of players the field size is also reduced. Therefore, it is conceivable that some coaches may take this opportunity to win a match by using an overtly direct style of play or by planting players permanently near the opponents' goal due to the no offside rule. With this coach driven style matches may be won, yet it defeats the purpose of the developmental benefits of playing small-sided games. It also diminishes the players' learning and enjoyment of the game. Children participate in sports for four reasons: **Action – Involvement – Excitement - Friendships**
- ✎ It is vital that the players determine the outcome of the match by their performances and not because a coach has come up with a "tactic" that wins. Soccer is a player's game, not a coach's game. In order for players to develop they must be allowed to play by using their own minds and talents to solve the challenges of the game.
- ✎ Given the tendency for the offensive style for this age group to be "kick and run" then offside will be called frequently. Calling offside stops the match often; reducing the number of times a team can finish with an attempted shot or attack on goal. It restricts the creative flow of the match. Players begin to think more about offside than they do about playing the match.
- ✎ We don't want coaches coaching the offside trap at these ages. There are plenty of other developmentally appropriate, mentally challenging themes and lessons to teach (i.e. individual and small group tactics). Coaches tend to want to keep this rule because it helps them WIN by coaching to a rule! There is plenty of time and opportunity to coach to this rule as the players get older.
- ✎ An offside line could be used however the space due to the reduced field size would be even smaller if these matches were played with a traditional offside line, which is the halfway line. Not having an offside line allows the field to be stretched and opens up the game for these young players. Length, width and depth can now be an option in a playing format that is developmentally appropriate for U10 players. If there was a traditional or even a modified offside line tactical concepts would not be allowed to happen.



^① Contributors to this document were Mr. Vince Ganzberg, Indiana Youth Soccer Director of Coaching and Player Development and Mr. Tom Goodman, General Manager for the Colorado Fusion Soccer Club.