

# Myths of the Game

## *Did You Know?*

The old saying goes "IGNORANCE is always LOUDER than KNOWLEDGE." This is often the case out on the soccer field. The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) has gone so far as to develop a video entitled "The Myths Of The Game." This instructional video was sparked by a recognition that, over the years and particularly in youth play, there were many participants and spectators who had developed incorrect ideas about certain elements of play and the rules which govern it.

If you have ever yelled "watch the pushing ref," "handball," "high kick," "they can't play it on the ground," "obstruction," "bad throw" or "that's gotta be offsides" then you can count yourself as one of the many potentially misinformed spectators who decide to announce their lack of knowledge loudly to the world and more typically to a youth referee.

To test your knowledge versus ignorance ratio read through the following "Did You Knows" and see how many you can truthfully say you got correct. ENJOY & let the kids play!

**1) Did You Know** - that soccer is a tough, combative, contact sport and the lawmakers wrote "The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that the games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of the referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches often produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of players and spoils the pleasure of the spectators"? When you as a parent or coach yell "watch the pushing ref," the referee may very well be watching the pushing and deciding it is trifling/doubtful or not affecting the play (you want him to whistle the pushing!).

**2) Did You Know** - there is no such thing in the Laws as a "handball," "high kick," "playing the ball on the ground," or "obstruction"? The proper terms are "deliberate handling," "playing in a dangerous manner," "and impeding the progress of an opponent" and are subject to "in the opinion of the referee." NOTE - Gaining an advantage has NOTHING to do with determining deliberate handling. Also, it is LEGAL to impede the progress of an opponent (i.e. shielding) if the ball is within playing distance and capable of being legally played.

**3) Did You Know** - that it is NOT illegal for a throw-in to "spin" and the most important thing on a throw-in is to get the game restarted? *USSF Advice To Referees* states "Referees are reminded that the primary function of a throw-in is to put the ball back into play as quickly as possible. Therefore, apparent technical infringements should often be deemed trifling or doubtful so long as an advantage is not obtained by the team performing the throw-in and the restart occurs with little or no delay."

**4) Did You Know** - there is no such thing as "offsides" in the Laws? The proper term is offside (the plural form applies to the pointy football game). Did you know a player may remain in an offside position the whole game and NEVER be called for an offside offence? The first sentence in Law 11 Offside states "It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position." The offence of offside requires TWO things to occur - the player must be in an offside position at the moment the ball is touched or played by a teammate AND in the opinion of the referee become involved in active play.

**5) Did You Know** - the wording in the Laws does NOT require two "defenders" when determining offside position? The Law first looks at the position of the ball (player must be ahead of it) and then the position of the second to last OPPONENT (one of whom is typically, but not required to be, the goalkeeper) in relation to the player at the moment the ball is touched or played by a TEAMMATE. NOTE - a deflection off a defender or a shot at goal does not "reset" the player's offside position and if they get involved in active play (i.e. off a rebound of a shot) must be judged offside.