



To: National Referees  
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State Directors of Instruction  
State Directors of Assessment

cc: State Directors of Coaching  
Referee Committee

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Subject: **Offside and Interfering with Play**

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The attached clip displays an offside decision in a match between the U.S. Women's national team and Brazil played on June 23 at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford NJ. Early in the match, the U.S. team (Lopez) took a corner kick which was played into the top of Brazil's goal area. A Brazilian player headed the ball out but it was returned by Lori Chalupny toward her teammate, Cat Whitehill (#4).

Whitehill, while on the run, neatly flipped the ball above an opponent and ran forward, in effect passing the ball to herself as she then retook control of the ball past the second to last Brazilian opponent, with only the goalkeeper to beat. When Whitehill flipped the ball up, a teammate (Heather O'Reilly) was arguably in an offside position (the camera angle makes an independent decision unclear).

However, O'Reilly was flagged for an offside violation even though she did not touch the ball and her teammate, Whitehill, was running hard from an onside position to retake control of the ball. The only action O'Reilly took was to wait for her teammate to control the ball and then to run alongside her as Whitehill dribbled to the goal, kicked, and put the ball into the net.

The assistant referee should have withheld the flag until it was clear which of the two attackers, one (O'Reilly) in an offside position and one (Whitehill) running hard from an onside position to collect her own pass, would get to the ball first. O'Reilly neither interfered with play nor with an opponent.

The goal should have been allowed.