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THE
INTERNATIONAL
FOOTBALL
ASSOCIATION
BOARD



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SINCE 1886

Video assistant referees (VARs) experiment

Principles & Practicalities

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“Minimum interference — maximum benefit”

Main principles

- The aim is not to achieve 100% accuracy for all decisions as this would destroy the essential flow and emotions of football
- Video assistance is only for key match-changing situations (goals, penalty incidents and direct red cards and mistaken identity) and serious missed incidents
- The referee will always make a decision (including ‘no offence’) which will only be changed if the review shows a clear error – “was the decision clearly wrong?”
- Video Assistant Referees (VARs) are match officials
- Only the referee can initiate a review; VAR and other officials can recommend a review
- The referee should be ‘visible’ during the review process to ensure transparency
- The final decision will always be taken by the referee
- There is no time pressure during a review – accuracy is more important than speed
- A match is not invalidated because of malfunction(s) of the VAR technology (same as for goal line technology) or wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a match official) or a decision not to review an incident
- Competitions must use the full IFAB VAR protocol – “one protocol - used by all”

Main practicalities

- The VAR will automatically ‘check’ all incidents using the broadcaster’s footage (there is thus no need for coaches or players to request a review)
- The referee can stop play for a review if no team has a good attacking possibility
- The referee will indicate a review by showing the outline of a TV screen; a decision can not be changed unless the review signal has been shown
- For goals, penalty incidents and some red cards (e.g. denial of obvious goal-scoring opportunity), the review may include the attacking move that led to the incident, (including gaining possession of the ball) but not a restart which began the attack
- The referee can make a decision based only on the information from the VAR or after reviewing the footage directly (on-field review – OFR)
- OFRs will usually be for ‘subjective’ decisions and not for factual decisions e.g. position of an offence or player (offside), point of contact (handball/foul)
- ‘Real time’ speed should be used for ‘intensity’ (foul) or ‘intent’ (handball) and slow motion replays only for ‘point of contact’ (physical offences and handball)
- The referee will clearly indicate the outcome of a review; take/change/rescind any disciplinary action (where appropriate); and ensure the correct restart of play