



A GUIDE TO VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE (VAR)



ONE ASIA  ONE GOAL

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What Is VAR?



The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) was approved in March 2016 by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) and was used in the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018. Now it will be introduced at the Quarter-finals stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019.

Rationale Of VAR

To rectify clear and obvious mistakes or serious missed incidents in certain key match-changing situations (as stated in the section – Reviewable decisions).

Minimum interference: Maximum benefit

Enhance not detract from the game

National FAs and competitions are only permitted to take part in experiments (or use VARs) with the permission of IFAB. Permission is only granted where IFAB protocols will be used in full and IFAB's referee-VAR education and technical requirements have been fulfilled:

'One protocol – used by all'

The AFC received support to use VAR in the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 from IFAB and FIFA in October 2018 and a workshop to confirm the implementation took place in Dubai in November 2018. The AFC Referees Committee recommended the use from the Quarter-finals onwards at their meeting in Kuala Lumpur on November 15 and this decision was approved by the AFC Executive Committee at their meeting in Muscat, Oman on November 27.



Reviewable Decisions

Match officials make hundreds of decisions in every match, including decisions that an offence has not occurred. It would be impossible, without completely changing football, to review every decision. Therefore, the use of VAR is limited to four areas of match-changing decisions/incidents:

The role of the VARs is to assist the referee in determining whether there was an infringement that should have prevented the goal from being awarded. Potential infringements include, but are not limited to:

1. Goal or No Goal

- a) offence by the attacking team in the build-up to or scoring of the goal (handball, foul, etc.);
- b) offside: position and offence;
- c) ball out of play prior to the goal;
- d) goal/no goal decisions.



2. Penalty Kick Decisions

The role of the VARs is to ensure that no clearly wrong decisions are taken in conjunction with awarding or not awarding a penalty kick. This includes:

- a) penalty kick incorrectly awarded;
- b) penalty kick offence not penalised;
- c) location of offence (inside or outside the penalty area);
- d) offence by the attacking team in the build-up to the penalty incident;
- e) ball out of play prior to the incident;
- f) offence by goalkeeper and/or kicker at the taking of a penalty kick;
- g) encroachment by an attacker or defender who becomes directly involved in play if the penalty kick rebounds from the goalpost, crossbar or goalkeeper.



3. Direct Red Card Incidents

Reviews are limited to clear and obvious errors in crucial offences which resulting a red card to a player (not second yellow cards/cautions).

- a) Denying an Obvious Goal-scoring Opportunity (DOGSO), especially position of offence and positions of other players;
- b) serious foul play (or reckless challenge);
- c) violent conduct, biting or spitting at another person;
- d) using offensive, insulting or abusive gestures.

4. Mistaken Identity

If the referee penalises an offence and then gives the wrong player from the offending (penalised) team a yellow or red card, the identity of the offender can be reviewed; the actual offence itself cannot be reviewed unless it relates to a goal, penalty incident or direct red card.

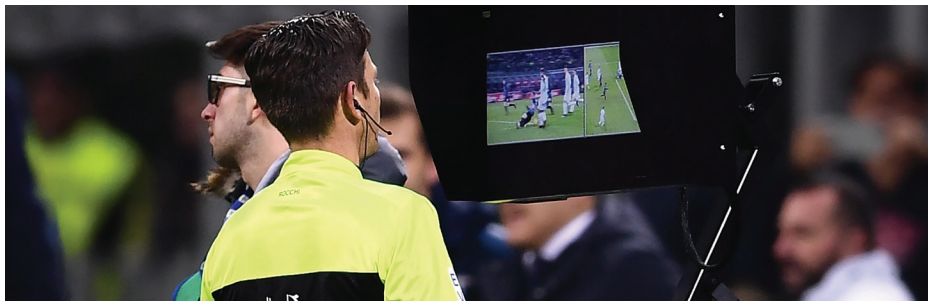
In all these situations, the VAR is only used after the referee has made a decision (including allowing play to continue), or if a serious incident is 'missed' ie: not seen by the match officials.



Principles Of VAR

1. Video technology will only be used to correct clear and obvious errors and serious missed incidents in predefined match-changing decisions (goal/no goal, penalty/no penalty, direct red card, and if the referee cautions or sends off the wrong player).
2. The final decision will always be taken by the referee, either based on information from the VAR or after the referee has undertaken an on-field review.
3. VARs are match officials and any information they provide to the referee will be treated by the referee in the same way as information received from an assistant referee, an additional assistant referee or the fourth official.
4. The referee must always take a decision, regardless of the existence of VARs, i.e. the referee is not permitted to give “no decision” and refer the situation to the VARs. On rare occasions, when it is unclear whether a penalised offence is a caution or a sending-off or who should receive the sanction, the referee may consult the VARs.
5. The original decision taken by the referee will not be changed unless the video review clearly shows that the decision was a clear and obvious error.
6. Players, coaches or other team officials are not permitted to ask for reviews.
7. There is no time limit for the review process as accuracy is more important than speed.
8. The players and team officials must not surround the referee or attempt to influence whether a decision is reviewed, the review process itself or the final decision.
9. As the VAR will automatically check every situation/decision, there is no need for coaches or players to request a review.

10. The referee can make an on-field review. This review will take place in the referee review area (RRA). Only the referee is allowed to enter this area.
 - Any player who enters the RRA will be shown a yellow card
 - Any team official who enters the RRA will be dismissed from the technical area
11. The referee must remain “visible” during the review process in order to ensure transparency.
12. If play continues after an incident which is then reviewed, any disciplinary action taken/required during that period is not cancelled, even if the original decision is changed (except for a caution/sending-off for stopping a promising attack or DOGSO).
13. If play has stopped and been restarted, the referee may not undertake a review except for a case of mistaken identity or for a potential sending-off offence relating to violent conduct, spitting, biting or extremely offensive, insulting and/or abusive gesture(s).
14. The period of play before and after an incident that can be reviewed is determined by the Laws of the Game and VAR protocol.
15. The VAR protocol shall be in line with the principles and philosophy of the Laws of the Game.



When A Review Is Initiated

The VAR will be operated from the Video Operations Room (VOR) which for the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 will be located at the Zayed Sports City Stadium.

The replay operator will have access to all broadcast feeds to maintain the integrity of the process. A broadcaster cannot show footage which was not available to the VAR.

The VAR will check every decision.

If a 'check' indicates that an incident should be reviewed, the referee will be informed immediately. In addition, if the referee suspects that a serious incident may have occurred, or something serious has been missed, a review can be requested.



Only the referee can initiate a review

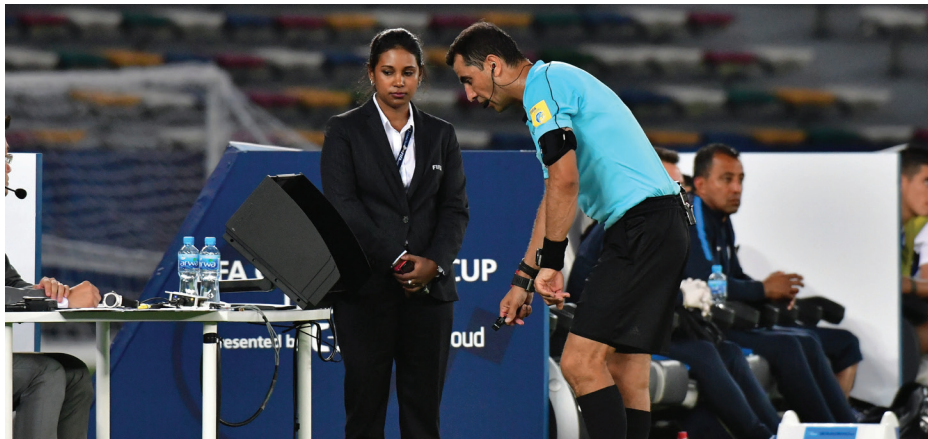
Other match officials (especially the VAR) may recommend a review but only the referee will decide whether or not to have a review and the outcome of that review. The referee may decide that the match officials have clearly seen the incident and therefore no review is needed.

If the referee wants a review when play has not stopped, play should be stopped as soon as it is in a 'neutral' zone/situation ie: when neither team has a good attacking possibility.

How Does A Referee Call For A Review?

The referee will make the sign of the outline of a TV screen. A decision cannot be changed unless a review signal has taken place.

Where Does A Referee See The Review?



The referee can make a decision on the information from the VAR or more likely review the footage at a pitch side monitor. This is known as an On-Field Review (OFR) and the viewing area is known as the Referee Review Area (RRA). Once the referee has reviewed the footage and made a decision, that decision is final).

OFRs will usually be for decisions that require the referee's interpretation and not for factual decisions e.g. position of an offence or player (offside), point of contact (handball/foul).

Normally the RRA is by the fourth official's area and players and team officials must not enter this area during a review or seek to influence the referee.

The footage can be watched at normal or slow-motion speed if required and a decision should be made as efficiently and quickly as possible remembering accuracy not speed is vital.

What Must The Referee Decide?



If the decision to be made is within the four designated scenarios of match changing incidents – if not it cannot be reviewed.

The decision can only be changed if there is a clear and obvious error highlighted by the viewed footage.

What Happens If The Technology Malfunctions Or There Is A Mistake By VAR?

The match continues as normal without VAR.

A match is not invalidated because of:

- malfunction(s) of the VAR technology;
- wrong decision(s) involving the VAR (as the VAR is a match official);
- decision(s) not to review an incident;
- review(s) of a non-reviewable situation/decision.



Who Are The VAR Officials?



The AFC has appointed 19 licensed match officials to support the implementation of the VAR at the Competition, all of whom have been trained in accordance with IFAB's stringent requirements and have the necessary experience at the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018.

Accordingly, the AFC is indeed well placed in following the guidelines established and approved by the IFAB for the use of the VAR system in football matches; ensuring that the protocol for the VAR system is implemented to the highest standards.

For further information

This document is for informational purposes only. The full protocol applicable to the use of VAR can be found in the Laws of the Game (LOTG) published by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), available via the following link: <http://www.theifab.com>.

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