



A GUIDE TO VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE (VAR)

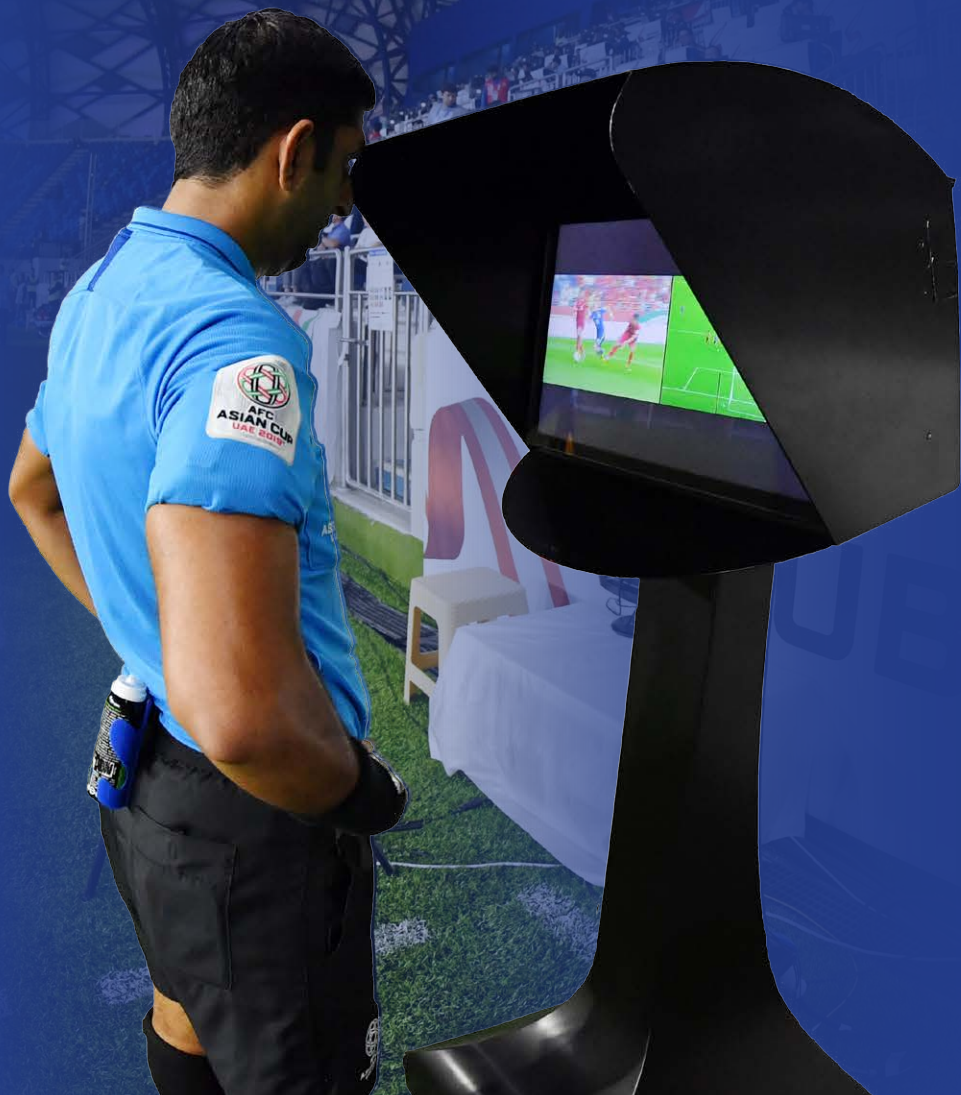
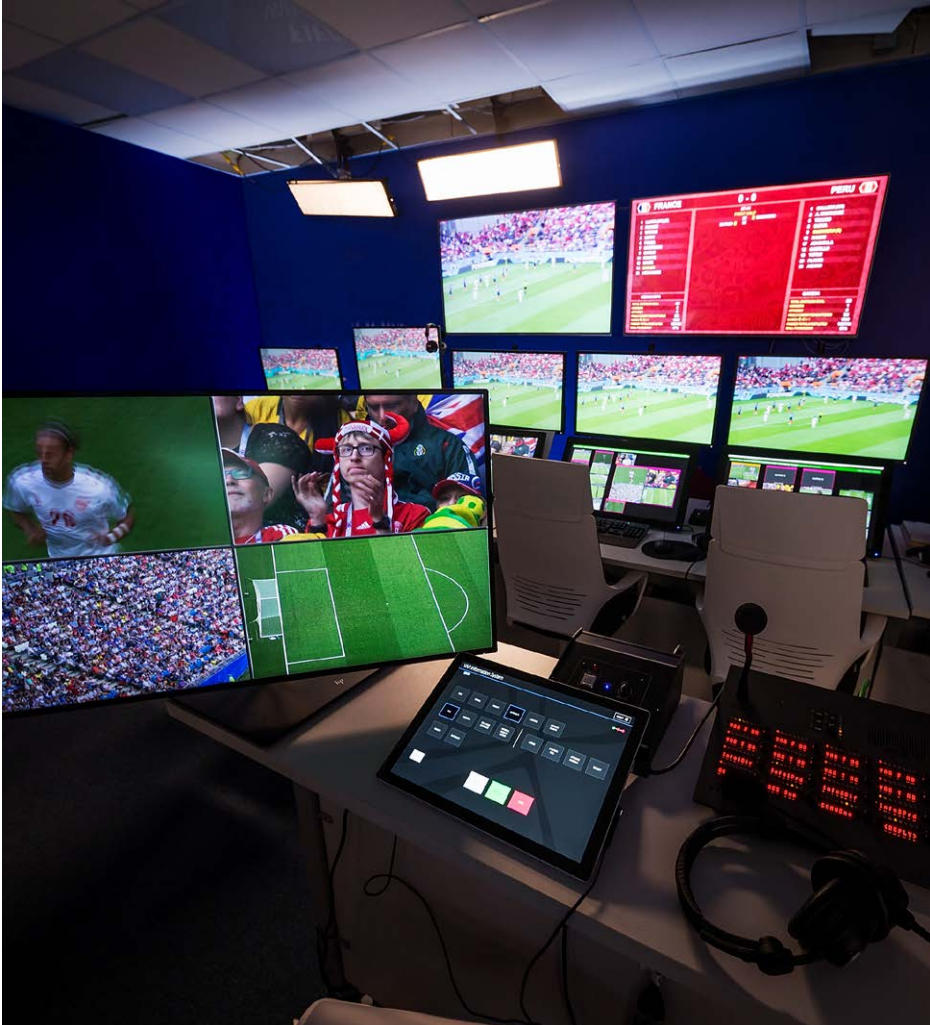


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What Is VAR?



The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) was approved in March 2016 by the International Football Association Board (IFAB). Since its inception, the VAR has been used in many international and domestic competitions worldwide and has been a major innovation in modern football. The AFC continues to embrace VAR since its first use in an AFC competition at the 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'.



Reviewable Decisions

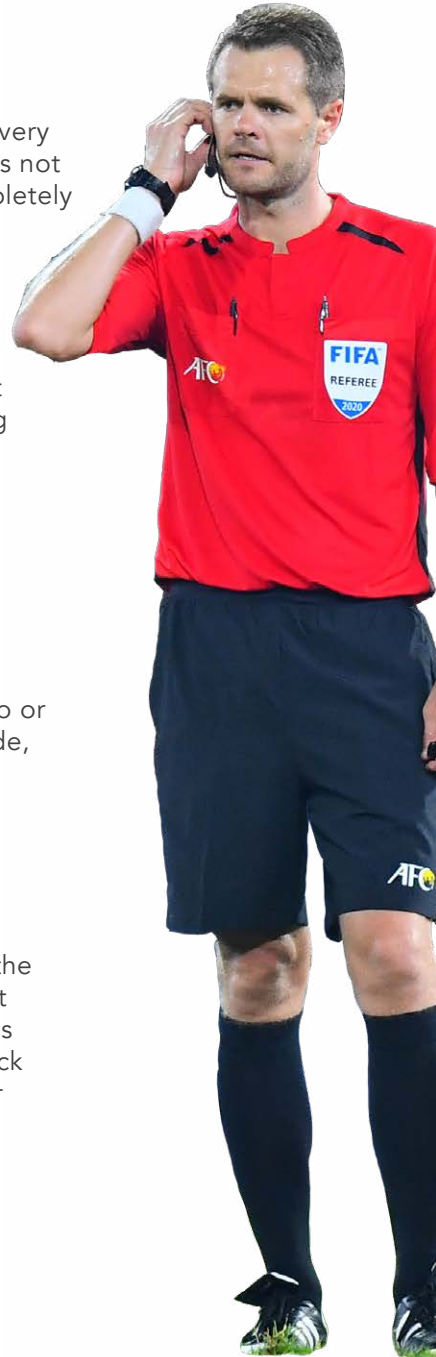
Match officials make hundreds of decisions in every match, including decisions where an offence has not occurred. It would be impossible, without completely changing football, to review every decision. Therefore, the use of VAR is limited to four match-changing decisions/incidents.

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 / no Goal

- a) attacking team offence in the build-up to or scoring of the goal (handball, foul, offside, etc.)
- b) ball out of play prior to the goal
- c) goal/no goal decisions
- d) offence by goalkeeper and/or kicker at the taking of a penalty kick or encroachment by an attacker or defender who becomes directly involved in play if the penalty kick rebounds from the goalpost, crossbar or goalkeeper



2. Penalty kick / no Penalty kick

- a) attacking team offence in the build-up to the penalty incident (handball, foul, offside, etc.)
- b) ball out of play prior to the incident
- c) location of offence (inside or outside the penalty area)
- d) penalty kick incorrectly awarded
- e) penalty kick offence not penalised



3. Direct Red Card Incidents

- 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.
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. There is no time limit for the review process as accuracy is more important than speed.
7. The players and team officials must not surround the referee or attempt to influence if a decision is reviewed, the review process or the final decision.
8. As the VAR will automatically check every situation/decision, there is no need for coaches or players to request a review.
9. Only the referee is allowed to enter the referee review area (RRA). A player/substitute/substituted player/team official who enters the RRA will be cautioned.

10. The referee must remain “visible” during the review process to ensure transparency
11. 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).
12. 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).
13. The period of play before and after an incident that can be reviewed is determined by the Laws of the Game and VAR protocol.
14. The VAR protocol shall be in line with the principles and philosophy of the Laws of the Game.



When A Review Is Initiated

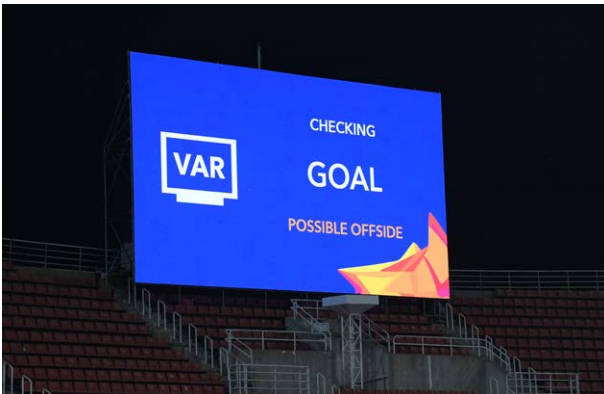
The VAR is operated from a Video Operations Room (VOR) located at each venue or, in the case of a centralised competition format, located at a central VAR hub.

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.

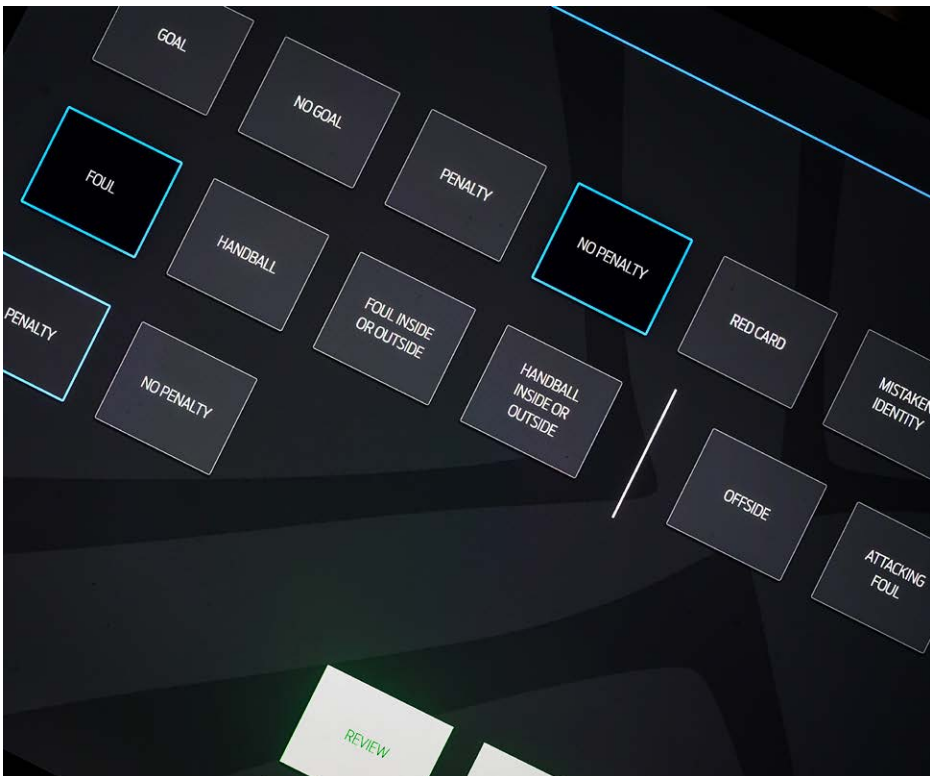
The decision can only be changed if there is a clear and obvious error highlighted by the footage.

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 Referees?



All match officials appointed to support the implementation of the VAR at an AFC Competition must have been trained in accordance with IFAB's stringent requirements and have extensive experience at the FIFA, AFC and Member Association levels.

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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