

## Players critical: 'Additional referees? No, Thanks'

Wednesday 03 March 2010

The majority of the captains of the clubs in the Europa League see no benefit in the experiment with the 5th and 6th referee. In a survey held by FIFPro, 70% indicate that they have not seen any advantage compared to the old situation. They almost unanimously argued in favour of the introduction of goal line technology.

FIFPro's Technical Committee carried out a survey under the captains of all the clubs which took part in the group stages of the Europa League. During these matches UEFA experimented with a fifth and sixth referee behind the goal line.



Three clear conclusions can be made from the responses from the captains:

the majority of players have not noticed any positive difference from the old situation.

the players are very restrained about the assessment of match situations on the basis of video evidence.

the players make one exception: they almost unanimously argued in favour of the introduction of goal line technology.

No less than 70 percent of the players made it clear that during the experiment with the additional referees they have not noticed any difference compared to the old situation. A similar percentage could not indicate one situation from the six group matches in which the fifth or sixth referee had a positive influence on the refereeing.

On the other hand 30 percent of the captains were positive about the experiment. During the group matches they had noticed between 1 and 5 occurrences when the additional referee made a positive contribution.

Despite the limited enthusiasm about the experiment with the additional referees the majority of the players are in agreement with FIFA and UEFA that football must maintain its human face. For this reason almost all the players are against the use of video images for the assessment of match situations such as fouls, hand balls and off-side. One of the underlying reasons that was mentioned was that the breaks during which the pictures must be viewed are not wanted, that mistakes are part and parcel of football and that with the assessment of the pictures you are again dependent on human judgement - with all the discussions that entails.

A clear exception is made for goal line technology. In the opinion of the players, the introduction of this technology does not take away the human face of football. After all this concerns non-debatable judgements (a ball is or is not over the line), which do not involve unwanted stoppages and which moreover are related to the most essential objective of football: the scoring of goals.

The International Football Association Board (IFAB), the body which decides on changes to the laws of the game, will mee

---

t on 6 March for its annual meeting. The experiment with the additional referees as well as the latest developments concerning goal line technology will be on the agenda.

Tijs Tummers, secretary of FIFPro's Technical Committee: 'There are three clear conclusions which can be made from our survey. The fifth and sixth referees have hardly had any noticeable effect on the refereeing. This expectation was certainly created and therefore there was often irritation if an offence was not noticed despite the presence of an additional referee.'

'This irritation does not occur with the introduction of goal line technology. That does what it promises: ascertains whether a ball has crossed the line, yes or no.'

'We had not expected such high opposition to the increased use of video images. But for this reason it is good that this has been researched into now. With hindsight this is quite understandable. How often does it occur that commentators cannot agree about an off-side or whether it was or wasn't a foul, even after freezing the television pictures?'

'But it is clear that the time is ripe for goal line technology. This measure will only resolve a few of the debatable decisions, but it will certainly result in more justice. And who knows perhaps the fear of a greater use of technology may then also decrease



Downloaded from <http://fifpro.org>. Do not copy without permission.

e.'

