

Football world in disbelief: 'A disservice to referees'

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Much to the chagrin of footballers, coaches and referees worldwide, IFAB Saturday decided not to introduce goal-line technology. FIFPro gathered some reactions.

Gordon Smith, chief executive of the Scottish Football Association, is one of the IFAB board members. With his English counterpart Ian Watmore he voted in favour of goal-line technology, but without success. 'For me the sad thing is that decision could have been made four years ago', Smith reacted. 'It's not based on the fact that technology is not good enough, there was no problem with the technology. It was just an ideological idea that technology does not belong in football.'



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Watmore added: 'In the end it came down to a difference of opinion about whether you believe the future of football involves technology or not. Some of the arguments were very powerful and persuasive and we have to accept them. The credibility of football is always improved if you get the critical decisions right. I would have liked to try it out in the real game to see whether it is good or not.'

The credibility Watmore talked about was immediately tested. Just moments after IFAB had decided to make an end to the discussion about the introduction of goal-line technology, Birmingham City's Liam Ridgewell pushed the ball behind the goal-line during a FA Cup quarter final tie with Portsmouth. But as the referees did not notice the ball had passed the goal-line, they did not award Birmingham the goal.

In the end Birmingham lost 2-0 and manager Alex McLeish was furious, especially when he was told about IFAB's decision. 'My stance has always been that they should introduce goal-line technology. This is a frustrating decision by FIFA, because I think they are doing their officials a disservice.'

Arsène Wenger, manager of Arsenal, was equally disappointed. 'For me, it is difficult to understand, for one reason because you want as much justice as possible. I do not even think it is linked with the money factor. If you love football you want the right decisions to be made.'

Former English World Cup referee Graham Poll said he was also disappointed, but not surprised. 'It's probably because of the level of arrogance. They feel that we have the best game, it's our game, the number one game and it's the same as experimenting with things like sin-bins – Oh no, that's a rugby idea we wouldn't do that.'



the possibility of seeing immediately whether the ball was a goal or wasn't a goal. It's changed completely and it's really affecting the confidence and respect that match officials now have.'

