



VIDEO REFEREEING – TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

History has been made this week in the annual FIFA World Club Cup championship with video referee trials featuring alongside Real Madrid's success in overcoming Kashima Antlers after extra time to claim the second world title in the competition.

Speaking in 2008, as reported by CBC, after initial test of a video refereeing system, FIFA's ex President Sepp Blatter came out strongly against using such a system, stating "Let it be as it is and let's leave (soccer) with errors". However, his controversial departure seems to have opened the door to potential future uses of such systems. They have been trialled on occasion, firstly with France hosting Italy in a friendly in Paris this September, with The Telegraph reporting UEFA President Gianni Infantino speaking positively of the new system. "We turned a new page in football's history book," though cautiously suggesting "We must use it in a way that does not have a negative impact on the flow of the game and the game itself." Referee that evening, Bjorn Kuipers also spoke positively of the new system stating

"The players again accepted (the decisions) immediately. This trust by the players gave me a lot of confidence."

However since September, the systems use has not been without controversy. The Guardian reported on it's first major impact during it's first use during a competitive top-tier match in a Dutch Cup fixture between Ajax and Willem II. Willem II's Anouar Kali was sent off after 60 minutes when his on field yellow card was overturned into a red card on review by the video referee, helping to turn the tide to an 5-0 Ajax win. Though the decision was accepted by players, it left the crowd confused as to proceedings as explained by referee of the evening Pol van Boekel. "We do hope that there will be some communication for the public in the future, they have a right to it,".



A photo posted by AXIWI (@axiwi_international) on Sep 22, 2016 at 10:32am PDT

**Trial in the Dutch Cup.*

The systems use in it's first FIFA sanctioned tournament this week, has turned out to be a catalyst for controversy around the system. As [reported by Sky Sports](#), the semi-final between Atletico Nacional (COL) and Kashima Antlers (JAP) featured the system being tested as a trip by Orlando Berrio on Daigo Nishi in the penalty area was not spotted by referee Viktor Kassai on the field. Following a delay of some three minutes during a throw-in, the referee was alerted to the incident by the video referee and pulled play back to award the spot-kick causing confusion, particularly among Atletico Nacional players and their captain Alexis Henriquez saying "I don't understand it because Kashima's players didn't argue and carried on playing." Henriquez continued,

**Kassai awards landmark penalty*

"That's what surprised me the most. The decision killed us, it was a huge blow. It took the referee two minutes to come to that conclusion." going on to say "I don't know if this system will work. It's going to be a complicated issue in the future. The technology takes away the essence of football."

Things went a little more smoothly in the Final between Real Madrid and Kashima Antlers, notably the video referee confirming a disallowed Ronaldo goal for offside, FIFA president still admitted that there were 'teething problems' to overcome, [according to Goal.com](#).

"Of course there are learnings, of course there are a few topics that we have to look into and discuss in more detail, but the result is extremely positive,"

So despite it's rocky start to life as a tool for referees, it seems as though only time will tell if be a welcomed addition to the game, much like referee

marking spray, or be a continued source for debate as has been the case for the "Additional Assistant Referee". As for video referees, the debate is sure to grow as the system becomes more widespread in the game into the future.