

LAW 5 – The REFEREE

REFEREE OBSERVATION REPORT

2019 FIFA Under-20 World Cup (Poland) – Match 2, Group A, Matchday 1

TAHITI – SENEGAL 0:3 (0:2)

Refereeing team: Muhammad Taqi bin Jahari (Main referee; Singapore), Ronnie Koh Min Kiat (AR1; Singapore), Abdul Hannan bin Abdul Hasim (AR2; Singapore), David Yareboinen (FO; Papua New Guinea), Pol van Boekel (VAR; Netherlands), Fù Míng (AVAR; China PR)

Blog Observer: Howard Maxi

Presentation of the match

The conditions were perfect for this Group A opener in front of a crowd of slightly less than 5,000 spectators. As expected, Senegal won handily against a labouring, but ultimately clearly outgunned Oceanian side. The fastest goal ever scored at an Under-20 World Cup brought the Senegalese victory under way and the game continued to be one-way traffic for much of its duration. For the refereeing team, this meant rather predictable runs of play. The match was a fair one, with only 20 misconducts penalized overall.

Referee performance (Personality, LotG application, disciplinary control, physical condition, cooperation, VAR management)

Muhammad Taqi read the game well and had a lenient approach, trying to let the game flow and whistle not every contact. This line was well accepted by the players and we can credit them and the referee for ensuring that the match was very fair and required little intervention from the officials. Player management was therefore rarely required. In the few scenes Taqi and the players got involved, the referee remained calm and asserted himself well. He was present but did not try to be in the spotlight.

Taqi's foul detection was good and he kept his line throughout the match, meaning the players were well aware of what was allowed and what wasn't. He decided not to punish two early fouls with cards, in both cases cards were an option, but not required (8' TAH #11 for SPA, 14' Reckless foul by TAH #18). He booked two Tahitian players near the end of the first half: TAH #11 for another challenge, this time a reckless one (34'). A caution here was mandatory. The second one was for TAH #2, who had committed a reckless high boot challenge that hit the opponent (39'). A mandatory booking as well.

Apart from these scenes, only one incident in the first minute after the break should be mentioned with regards to disciplinary control. TAH #11 once again committed a foul and got a calmly given, but clear final warning. It succeeded; the player committed no more fouls.

The biggest challenge for the referee was to keep up with the quick Senegalese attacks, especially if Tahiti was caught in possession. His fitness was appropriate for the tournament. Taqi's running style might look unfamiliar at times, but it yields results. The Singaporean was always close to the game when needed. If there is one point for improvement to be mentioned, it would be to be a bit firmer with the medical teams. There were several scenes in the second half where players of both teams were treated on the pitch and Taqi wanted them to leave the field to continue play, but it seemed they weren't listening to him and only obeyed slowly.

Final assessment: Expected level performance in an easy game. He should get a better match for further assessment.

Assistant referees:

For the assistant referees, this game was straightforward. Each had one half with little to do and one half where he needed to be alert basically all the time. Both ARs were there when required. There were only few replays of offside/onside situations shown and there were no offsides given at all. From the point of view of the observer, both ARs did well. AR2 perhaps helped with the YC given in 34', as he was close to the incident and in a good spot to evaluate the nature of the challenge and how strong a contact was made.

Fourth Official:

A quiet game for David Yareboinen, the benches were peaceful for the entire duration of the match. Only one noteworthy event: In 64', a Tahiti player that was brought on as a substitute entered the field a bit too soon. While certainly not a big deal, he should keep an eye on such situations.