

Law 5 - The Referee

REFEREE OBSERVATION REPORT

2019 FIFA Under-20 Championship – Poland vs Senegal **0:0 (0:0)**

Refereeing team:

Referee: Raphael Claus (BRA)

Assistant Referee 1: Danilo Ricardo Simon Manis (BRA)

Assistant Referee 2: Bruno Raphael Pires (BRA)

Fourth Official: Joel Alonso Alarcón Limo (PER)

Video Assistant Referee: Wilton Pereira Sampaio (BRA)

Assistant Video Assistant Referee: Artur Manuel Ribeiro Soares Dias (POR)

Blog Observer: Osborne

A) Presentation of the match:

Groupstage A Matchday 3 Poland-Senegal took place, as expected, in front of a large crowd (almost 16.000 individuals), as almost all seats seemed to be booked at Lodz Stadium. The crowd occasionally whistled when a decision was taken against the home team, but the referee was not biased by this. The pitch was in good condition and it was a partly cloudy night with 14°C.

The game was not very challenging, as both teams seemed satisfied with a draw. I can recall only one real goal scoring opportunity for each team. Furthermore, the teams were rather imprecise at times, notably in the first half between minutes 24 and 27. Therefore the game rarely reached the penalty boxes.

The players were very calm and overall fair throughout the game. There was barely any complaint in 1st half. Protests slightly increased in the 2nd half, but they were pretty decent and easy to manage. The referee did not have any violent conduct to assess.

Claus was overall good in all aspects, but as we will see, not perfect in most of them, despite benefitting from full acceptance during the game.

B) Referee performance

b1) Personality

Raphael Claus displays a mature refereeing attitude, thanks to his solid experience gained in Brazil and South America. His body type and composure confer him natural authority. However – even though all of his decisions were accepted by the players – his communication and body language

could still be improved, notably in two situations of the 1st half, according to the observer. The two incidents occurred at 2' and 43'.

At 2' there was a corner kick with Polish players very close to the goal line. Claus spotted some holdings and pushings and made several warnings waving his hands, first standing close to the players, then when he was walking back to his position, and then again as the corner kick was about to be taken. He should rather have isolated a few players from each team and have a quick chat instead of making gestures from far behind. A similar episode happened at 43', as SEN # 10 fell down after a contact. Claus firstly warned SEN #10 himself, possibly for not accepting a hand offered from POL # 13 – who was not even the player that touched him. Then he seemed to warn the other Polish player, but from a rather far distance. In this case as well, he should have called the two players together. Which is by the way what he did excellently at 62' on a similar situation.

He must be praised for being very alert and active in stopping the game when players stayed down on the ground with possible injuries, not only to the head (22', 34', 89', 93'). This made even more sense in the context of the game, as the teams were very much interested in not losing crucial players for future games.

b2) LotG application

The referee's foul detection was good and clearly one of the reasons why the game never heated up. A total of 23 fouls were whistled, 10 from Senegal and 13 from Poland. Especially in the 1st half, he tried to let the game flow. In the 2nd half, as players got more tired and less smart on their tackles, he was less lenient. Claus also made use of advantage when possible, notably at 9', 63' and 89'.

On 6' POL complained for a foul on the edge of the penalty area, but there are no replays showing if there actually was a foul. On 45+2' he correctly waved away a FK appeal by SEN just outside the penalty box, at 72' he rejected a penalty appeal from POL for a handball by SEN #5, which was clearly undeliberate (VAR review). On 83' he awarded a clearly wrong corner kick to POL, as the SEN goalkeeper touched the ball as it was already outside. He also showed to be alert on the wrong positioning of the ball at corner kicks (81'). Any complaint on fouls he whistled was generally on cards rather than on the foul itself.

b3) Disciplinary control

Despite the calm game, disciplinary control was not as easy as one would expect. There were several different situations on the edge of YC, where Claus chose a lenient approach, till minute 41, when the first booking was issued to POL #17.

Two minutes later, SEN #17 made a careless challenge on #7. The referee neither whistled nor gave advantage to POL. Another two minutes later at 45', as the game was interrupted, SEN #17 was booked for the previous foul. The input must have come from 4th official, who was rather well positioned to assess the situation. These were the only cards shown.

A clear YC was clearly missed at 48' to SEN #9 on POL #6. This was particularly surprising, as replays show that the referee was well positioned and very close.

Overall, there were a few earlier fouls that could have been cautioned – one could mention foul by SEN at 4', or POL at 9' – but the referee only chose two, one of which only after a hint by the 4th official. These were not clearer than other episodes, but the feeling is that before the end of 1st half Claus felt he was allowing too much and decided to send a warning to the players. The rather lenient approach however worked, based on the type of game, resulting anyway in very little complaints.

b4) Physical condition

Claus showed good fitness and positioning. As said, the game did not require excessive sprinting, as most of the action took place far from the penalty box. He did not interfere with the game.

b5) Cooperation and VAR management:

Cooperation with VAR was very good. Claus and Sampaio, both from Brazil, managed to have all relevant episodes checked quickly and with very limited dissent from the players. This applies especially to the penalty appeal at 72' but also for a potential handball at 20'.

b6) Final assessment:

Claus was good but not excellent. Firstly his disciplinary control could have been more consistent, especially with a clear missed YC at 48'. Secondly, he had a rather passive attitude in communicating at times. However this had very little impact on the game, as his personality and ability to read the play allowed him to be always in full control of the game.

His performance can be assessed as positive in a not challenging game. There should be some valuable insights he can take from this game, and mistakes to avoid for future more difficult games.

We can expect him and his team to be selected for further appointments in KO stage, as he clearly has the skills and experience to manage more important games.

Positive points: foul detection, fitness, alertness on injuries

Points for improvement: communication, one clear YC missed.

Assistant Referee 1 performance:

Danilo Ricardo Simon Manis did not signal any offside and had no important situations to assess.

Assistant Referee 2 performance :

Bruno Raphael Pires also did not have any offside to assess. He probably gave his consent to the play on at 45+2'.

Fourth Official performance:

Joel Alonso Alarcón Limo executed his duties on an expected level. There was no dissent from the bench. He correctly awarded 2' of extra time in 1st half (injuries), as well as 4' in the 2nd half (5 substitutions + 1 VAR check). Furthermore, as mentioned before, he was involved in the booking of SEN #17.