

Law 5 - The Referee

REFEREE OBSERVATION REPORT

2019 FIFA UNDER 20 WORLD CUP – ROUND OF 16

JAPAN – SOUTH KOREA 0-1

04/06/2019 17:30 CET

Referee: Maguette N'Diaye (SEN)

Assistant Referee 1: Elvis Noupue (CMR)

Assistant Referee 2: Seydou Tiama (BFA)

Fourth Official: Abdelkader Zitouni (TAH)

Fifth Official: Folio Moeaki (TGA)

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

Assistant Video Assistant Referee: Bamlak Tessema Weyesa (ETH)

Blog Observer: Chefren

Presentation of the match:

2019 FIFA Under 20 World Cup, KO Stage, Round of 16. Japan (group B runner up) and South Korea (group F runner up) meeting in Lublin, in what we can describe as “Classic Asian derby”. The referee in charge of the game was Maguette N'Diaye from Senegal, at his second appointment after Ukraine – USA in group stage. The stadium didn't present a full attendance, however the participation from the stands was definitely more noticeable than other games of this tournament. Weather conditions were absolutely OK in order to play a nice football game. The match was not so much difficult for the referee, he had always a full control, however there was a crucial decision regarding offside that unluckily went wrong and VAR had to intervene.

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

Maguette N'Diaye showed a very good physical condition all match long and this is the first aspect I want to underline. He followed always the game very closely, impressive sprints and good movements were always noticeable: I can mention, as example, a situation occurred in 19': here referee, while following the game and running, was able to adapt his point of view with efficient

movements. The approach he decided to have regarding foul detection was strict starting from the beginning. He whistled 33 fouls during the whole game, maybe some of them looked a bit unnecessary and soft, but I think there wasn't any clear mistake in that. He had a very particular focus on aerial duels, he whistled for all such infringements. Despite of that, the choice to end the game with only two yellow cards is OK if we look at the nature of infringements: "normal" fouls but without a real tension between players and I think this choice was supportable. In second half, referee showed also some advantages, but basically he preferred to whistle in almost all situations. Referee was always in control of the game. Talking about the first half, referee started the game with a very early warning after only 10 seconds, following an aerial duel. After that, I can report a very good alertness when a player got injured in 10', he immediately stopped the play and invited the medical staff to join the pitch, well done. There were also other injured players in first half and therefore the decision to assign two minutes of added time was correct. In 22' one of the most interesting incidents of the game: a deliberate handball was whistled and the player booked for SPA. One can discuss about the foul, but as the ball touched also the arm, after having hit another part of the body, I think it is still OK to support referee. Once whistled, YC for SPA is correct. In 24' there was a situation in which AR1 raised the flag but he missed a last touch that was in my opinion rather a deliberate play by defender. I think no big faults by referee here, you can read more about that on next chapter about AR1. In 36' the second YC of the game was absolutely mandatory for a blatant holding from behind, resulting also in a SPA: referee showed it without hesitations. In the last minutes of first half there was a possible deliberate handball in South Korea's penalty area. As the replays are not clear, and there wasn't any check by VAR, I have decided to back referee. Second half was less challenging for N'Diaye, I can only report a situation in 75' in which a YC for reckless challenge could have been issued: a player from South Korea with a late attempt to reach the ball hit the goalkeeper. Card could have been shown, however I think it wasn't a big miss by referee and in the overall context this was the only possible YC to be issued, apart from the given ones. In conclusion, I think that N'Diaye had a satisfactory game, close to expected level. With a more refined foul detection it would have been full expected level. Another small point for improvement can be represented by the usage of the whistle: sometimes he was too excessive in using it to call players. In any case, I think that his tournament could be over for this trio due to AR2's performance, that was weak (you can read more on the related chapter).

Assistant Referee 1 performance (Please mention the minutes of important / crucial situations):

AR1 was very eager in cooperating with referee starting from the early minutes of the game and indeed I can mention some situations in which he reported fouls: 2', 15'. This was a positive note. Regarding offside situations, he had to make three calls: 9', 24' and 59'. In 9' it was a very good decision, as a player in offside position jumped close to opponent and challenged him for the ball, not a very easy offside to be raised, so a quite positive note. However, situation in 24' was unluckily a mistake: the player was in offside but before that, there had been a deliberate play by opponent, that was missed. This happened right in front of AR, who was focused on the position of

the player in offside and very likely missed that. Maybe referee could have helped but the positions of the players involved were all closer to AR with the best possible view for him. So for sure, a point for improvement. Third situation, 59', in second half, was a correct offside flag. In second half, differently from AR2, he was less busy than first half. I would say his performance was close to expected level, but the incident in 24' stays surely as point for improvement. However, in terms of approach in the game, he was clearly very good, he was concentrated.

Assistant Referee 2 performance (Please mention the minutes of important / crucial situations):

AR2 had to make some important calls in second half, overall unluckily he didn't convince me in terms of mental presence, regardless of the decisions, and I will try to explain why. Let's start from the crucial situation in 49': a goal scored by Japan was disallowed after VAR check because was offside. AR2 missed it live. I must say it wasn't an easy decision, because there were several players close each other, two of them in very clear offside, while the one who then played the ball was in a tight offside. However, it stays as crucial mistake and I think he could have detected it with a better positioning. In 64' the positive note was a correct offside flag (tight offside also in this case, well spotted), delayed for allowing VAR intervention in case of mistake. The action ended and AR raised his flag. This was the best call of his game. However, apart from that, I must explain the reasons for which I was not impressed: he never cooperated with referee in reporting fouls / decisions, and a special mention is for a situation occurred in 48': a clear foul happened very close to him. I expected a quick flag to be raised, but he didn't do that. Referee whistled the foul by himself. Another incident worthy of being mentioned took place in the last minute of (regular) time, minute 90': a player from Japan was in borderline position on a long ball, it looked offside, of course without replays I can't be sure and I must back AR, however, after that, ball was out and corner kick had to be assigned. Defending team tried to avoid the corner but the ball was out. In such situations we always see a quick signal by AR, indicating corner, but also in this case he waited without making any decision by himself and it was directly referee to assign corner. From these incidents I got the perception of a too passive approach toward the game, missing mandatory involvements, in terms of presence. This was clearly different from his colleague on the other side, as I reported in the previous chapter. In my opinion AR2 didn't show an adequate performance for such game.

Fourth Official performance:

Executed his duties without special incidents to be mentioned, expected level.