

Law 5 - The Referee

REFEREE OBSERVATION REPORT

2019 FIFA UNDER 20 WORLD CUP – GROUP STAGE – MD1

POLAND – COLOMBIA 0-2

23/05/2019 20:30 CET

Referee: Mustapha Ghorbal (ALG)

Assistant Referee 1: Mahmoud Ahmed Kamel Ahmed (EGY)

Assistant Referee 2: Mokrane Gourari (ALG)

Fourth Official: Héctor Said Martínez Sorto (HON)

Video Assistant Referee: Marco Guida (ITA)

Assistant Video Assistant Referee: Khamis Al-Marri (QAT)

Blog Observer: Chefren

Presentation of the match:

This was the debut of Polish national team, the host country in U20 World Cup. Mustapha Ghorbal from Algeria got the honor to officiate this game. Stadion Miejski in Łódź presented a sold out with many fans on the standings and a great atmosphere. However, there wasn't any visible pressure on referee and the match was mostly fair. It was clear from the beginning that visitors were better team and they managed to win this match without any real trouble. For sure a normal difficulty but nothing more than that. In this context, the referee preferred to remain in the background, without appearing too much.

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

Mustapha Ghorbal started the game in a very promising way, and I was positively surprised by his attitude in the early minutes. Indeed, a couple of very good advantages (e.g. 8') and a clear alertness shown by the Algerian official toward the progress of the play. Physical condition was OK all game long. Referee showed to be fit and able to follow the game. Cooperation with assistant referees was not so much required in this game if not in a situation that I will mention soon. Referee whistled a total of 20 fouls, this is also a signal that overall the game was not so intensive. Foul detection was overall good. Surely first half was easier than second half. Referee exercised

the control throughout the whole 45 minutes. During the whole game there were situations in which referee could have booked a player from SPA, but all these situations were not mandatory in my opinion, so it is fully supportable the choice made by Algerian. The most interesting situations regarding first half occurred in 43' and 44'. The first YC was shown to #16 COL for a reckless use of arm (hitting the opponent while challenging for the ball), but I think in this case the referee was deceived. Indeed, the home-team player pretended that he had been hit in face, while replay showed that the arm / elbow was rather a soft touch on the chest. I wouldn't consider this YC as 100% wrong, but surely very, very soft. Maybe AR1 could have helped referee, but I'm not sure he had a clear view, given the position of the fouled player. One minute later referee stopped the game when a corner kick had been already kicked to warn players in penalty area. He should have managed better this situation, as according to LotG, once allowed the execution, in case of whistle, referee should have assigned the foul. With a proactive management, he could have avoided such mismanagement. Not still a mistake because referee is fully entitled to stop the game when he decides for that, but for sure there was a definitely better way to do that. Second half was definitely more challenging with some penalty appeals and more physical play. A very mandatory YC came in 48', for a foul which was surely very close to RC for SFP. I think that RC wouldn't have been a mistake but one can agree with referee (and VAR) that YC was not 100% wrong as well. In any case, if compared to previous YC in first half, for sure something very, very different. The player kicked the ankle of opponent in a very reckless manner, as result of a late challenge after having kicked the ball, however he tried immediately to remove his leg. In 50' another very interesting situation: a penalty appeal for handball by Colombia. Referee played on, VAR confirmed the (no) call. I think that there wasn't evidence that this handball was deliberate and it is not clear in which exact part the ball touched for the most the body of defender. Since it is impossible to be 100% sure, I just back referee without a + or -. This was VAR decision as well. In 62' there was a missed foul, while in both 69' and 72' referee played on following some penalty appeals by Polonia (69') and Colombia (72'). Absolutely OK decision regarding the first case, while due to a lack of replays I can't be 100% sure about the second one (72'). Anyway, VAR supported and so I think this was not a clear situation as well. Another point for improvement to be mentioned is for sure the management of added time, indeed I think that 3 minutes (original decision) in second half was a wrong choice, game had been stopped about 2 minutes for an injury, then there was another injury in the last minute of the game, substitutions and therefore I think a minimum of 4 would have been ok. Referee changed his decision from 3 to 4 because there was an injury in the last minute of the game, but then when the game was resumed (91:10), he whistled the end at 94:10 without extending the game to 95:10. Maybe this was also because meanwhile Colombia had scored 2-0, however more attention regarding this topic would be very important. Time must be always recovered. To summarize, I think that performance by Ghorbal was not that bad, basically one could still say close to expected level, but in my opinion never a full expected level. He is a referee who doesn't want to appear too much, as already reported, but in this way there is the risk to become "too passive" regarding the game. He has therefore clear points for improvement. I have decided to back him regarding the penalty appeal for handball and the YC in 48', I think there are arguments in favor of that. For sure the Algerian can work and improve but he needs to gain further experience. Let's wait for his next game.

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

The game was normal difficulty for AR1, there weren't at all offside situations to be assessed. He reported some fouls to referee (e. g. 36'), maybe not so much faults regarding the soft YC showed by Ghorbal (43'). Expected level.

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

Rarely involved, the game was not demanding for him. No offsides to be raised. Expected level.

Fourth Official performance:

Executed his role on an expected level.