



# A Brief Analysis of Football Referee's Ability to Control and Guide the Game

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**Abstract.** Whether modern football matches can develop in a good and healthy direction, so that both players' skills and tactics can be fully played, depends not only on the referee's understanding and mastery of the rules, but also, and more importantly, on the referee's ability to control and guide the game. Therefore, this paper analyses and researches the changes in the game atmosphere of referees in the process of law enforcement, and seeks to find its characteristics to improve the methods of domestic referees in controlling and guiding the game, so as to ensure the fair and smooth progress of football matches.

**Keywords:** Referee · Control the game · Guide the game

## 1 Introduction

Modern football is an intense game, with rapidly changing conditions on the field and a variety of factors influencing the outcome of matches. The impartiality and accuracy of the referee's decisions are the basis for protecting the health of the players, enabling both sides to play fairly and equitably, avoiding unsportsmanlike conduct, promoting the technical and tactical development of football, and improving the spectacle of the game, while the ability to control the game and guide the players in a good and fair direction is an important factor in ensuring the successful completion of law enforcement. The ability to control the game and guide players in a good and fair direction is one of the most important factors in ensuring successful enforcement.

Most of the research on football referees in China has been on the training system or on the statistics of referees' penalties on the field, but there has not been much research on specific individual elements. This paper analyses the main characteristics of the referee's approach to the game, based on the changing atmosphere on the field, and provides a reference for the development of the referee's approach to the control and direction of the game.

## **2 Research Subjects and Methods**

### **2.1 Research Subjects**

Five international level football referees and fifteen national level football referees, Enforcement duties in nearly 240 matches in the 2021 China Football Association Super League.

### **2.2 Documentary Method**

More than 20 core sports journals of the highest academic level and authority in China from 2016 to 2021 were searched through literature search and SPORTS CD-ROM search, and more than 700 academic papers on football and 206 academic papers on football refereeing were reviewed.

### **2.3 Expert Interview Method**

Visit relevant senior international and national football referees, referee supervisors and experts in football in China to understand and discuss the latest developments and concepts in academic research on refereeing in modern football development.

### **2.4 Logical Analysis Method**

The use of inductive and other forms of thinking to analyse and logically process scientific papers and match footage of football referees.

## **3 Research Findings and Analysis**

### **3.1 Analysis of the Main Patterns that Lead to Changes in the Atmosphere on the Field During a Football Match**

#### **3.1.1 When There Are Signs of Deterioration in the Mood of the Players and the Atmosphere of the Game**

In general, when the game is played in a normal atmosphere, certain fouls are accepted more leniently by the offended player as long as the referee makes the judgement [1]. But when the action is fierce and the atmosphere deteriorates, both players will argue about every foul call and will not give in to each other. In some cases, despite the referee's prompt decision, the offended player does not give way, sometimes resulting in verbal and physical altercations, or even immediate retaliation with punches and kicks. Individual players will chase after the opponent who has just attacked them after the game has resumed, until they have retaliated to get their balance. In such cases, the referee should arrive at the scene of the incident in time after the whistle is blown for the foul to avoid verbal or physical contact between the two players and to prevent escalation. The players who retaliate will not be tolerated and will be severely punished because such behaviour will directly affect the emotions of other players, coaches and fans on the field

and, if not stopped quickly, will lead to a further deterioration of the atmosphere of the game, with more fireworks on the field or even to a vicious incident. This requires that referees must be keen observers during the game, must read the game and understand it, and must nip it in the bud quickly when there are signs of deterioration in the mood of the players and the atmosphere of the game [2].

### **3.1.2 In the Event of a Score Change on the Field in an Important Match**

An important match is one that has a great impact on the future of a team, a player or a ranking [3]. If two teams are of equal strength or if relegation is at stake, both sides will make a lot of mental and physical preparations and the athletes will come onto the field with a lot of energy to win the match. A game like this can get heated very quickly from the kick-off and is very much about every possession of the ball. The athletes are also in a constant state of high spirits, with both sides wanting to score goals to maintain their psychological and field position. If one side scores first and the score changes, the atmosphere on the field becomes more tense. There will be more fierce competition for the ball between players and more aggressive running. As the end of the game approaches, the psychology of individual players can sometimes get out of hand and make overly large and aggressive tackles, and deliberate fouls can increase significantly. In this situation the leading team will try to retain their advantage, the trailing team will fight back with all their might and all players will use all aspects of their potential to recover from the disadvantage as soon as possible. That's when it's time to the referee to use reasonable methods and means to control the atmosphere and the behaviour of the players and coaches in accordance with the atmosphere and the situation on the field. Another situation, the leading team changes tactics to delay the game. At this point the referee must promptly and severely punish, if left unchecked, it will anger the players and coaches of the lagging team and make them lose their minds, and in serious cases, there may even be a conflict between the two sides.

### **3.1.3 When a Referee Makes a Mistake or Misses a Judgement**

Due to the large size of the field, the large number of people, the speed of offensive and defensive transitions, the intensity of the confrontation and the difficulty of management, we can clearly see the difficulty of enforcement by referees, so it is inevitable that mistakes and omissions will occur in the game. However, there is no denying that mistakes made by referees can have a direct impact on the team's technical and tactical performance, the mood of the players and even the final result of the match. Therefore, in the process of enforcement, referees must always concentrate on being clean, fair, serious, conscientious, strict and accurate. Even if you make a mistake or miss a call, don't let it affect you. You must concentrate and adjust your mind as soon as possible and devote yourself to the rest of the game [4]. In general, there are several situations that are likely to cause resentment and emotion among players and to lead to a deterioration in the atmosphere of the game, and that referees should be warned against: (1) Penalty errors that directly affect the number of points scored or lost: Such as offside goals, wrong calls on penalty corners in the penalty area, wrong calls on free kicks in the front of the penalty area, and goals scored after the attacking team has committed a

foul - these are the key goals and key areas where missed calls are most likely to provoke anger and resentment from players, thus losing trust in the referee's ability to enforce the law. (2) When a player or an opponent persistently violates the rules, the referee continuously misses calls: this situation can provoke the player of the offended side into mistakenly believing that the referee is deliberately biased in favour of the opponent and thus inflicting retaliatory fouls on the opposing player in a confrontational manner. The level of foul play continued to increase and the atmosphere of the game deteriorated, with serious consequences if not stopped in time. (3) Failure to apply the principle of "uniformity of scale": When a referee does not apply the penalty in an even-handed manner but intentionally favour one side, the other side is bound to show discontent. This is why referees must be "uniform", "fair and honest" in their enforcement of the law and face each match with a high degree of responsibility. (4) Lack of mental adjustment after a penalty error: Referees lose control of their own psyche after a penalty error and do not adjust their mindset in time, always thinking about the last wrong call, shrinking and hesitating to call fouls in future matches, thus resulting in more errors and omissions. (5) Finding the "balance": For example, after missing or wrongly judging a foul on one side, they are afraid to judge a penalty even though they clearly see the other side committing a foul, trying to use it as a balancing act. This includes awarding a penalty kick to the opponent in the following game after an incorrectly awarded penalty kick; For some reason a red or yellow card is not shown, and in the following game when the other team misbehaves, the same card is not shown, etc. Such attempts to balance the players' minds with compensatory penalties and to allow unsportsmanlike conduct to develop, instead of effectively controlling the atmosphere of the game, can intensify it and make it impossible to close the game [5].

### 3.1.4 At the Final Round

In a league or conference competition, the final round of matches is a delicate one and there are multiple possibilities for changes in team rankings. This requires referees to be highly vigilant when enforcing the final round of matches, because individual teams have high expectations of achieving good results before the tournament, but for a variety of reasons they do not realize them and do not match the initial psychological set-up, so during the match some players will give up on themselves, break down, take offence at their opponents, interfere with disruptive play, or even commit serious fouls, act violently or use insulting or offensive language and gestures to provoke the opposition [6]. In some cases, the referees may be mobbed, roughed up and beaten up in an attempt to vent their frustration during the game, making it impossible for the game to go ahead. In the final round, the red and yellow cards used by the referee have become less effective, as they do not involve suspensions for the next round of matches, so the referee has to strictly enforce the law and at the same time carry out the necessary guidance and communication work with the players on the field to encourage them to start and finish well. However, if a player on the field commits a serious foul, a violent act or a foul whose aim is to get the ball to the man but not to the man, the referee must be firm and order the player off the field so that the situation does not expand and a clash between the two sides occurs [7].

## **4 Conclusion**

### **4.1 Take Control of the Opening Stages of the Game**

The first fifteen minutes of the game are particularly important, especially the first whistle to call a foul is an indication of the referee's standard and must be accurate and timely. Hand signals should be clear and decisive, to make the players feel from the start that all their activities are under the supervision of the referee and that they cannot be disruptive. The referee must strive to control the atmosphere in the opening stages of the game and the level of the referee will give the players an impressive level of deterrence.

### **4.2 Accurate Penalties Are the Basis for Controlling the Atmosphere of the Game**

To do this, the first thing you should do, while being well versed in the rules, is to use plenty of physical strength, reasonable running and position selection to maintain the right distance to call the penalty (about ten-fifteen meters behind the left side of the ball), and use a loud and powerful whistle and simple and generous body language to reflect the spirit of the referee. Secondly, the correct identification of intentional and unintentional fouls, fouls against the man or the ball, and the strict distinction between foul play and foul play of courage and tenacity. Once again, accuracy in foul calls in and around the penalty area should be achieved, and calls affecting points scored must be accurate and foolproof.

### **4.3 Timely and Good Facilitation and Communication**

The referee is the enforcer and educator on the field, it has to enforce the rules and stop misconduct from occurring according to the various situations that arise on the field. Athletes, coaches, team officials and spectators are educated on sports ethics, and every penalty is assessed to have the effect of warning and educating the sports team. Verbal advice should be given to athletes for unintentional fouls in a timely manner, care for injured athletes in a timely manner, and reassure athletes in an emotional state with a kind attitude, affectionate language, and briefly, so that they can return to a normal psychological state as soon as possible. When there is a foul action with large movements or physical contact, it is important to be in place in time to avoid further physical contact between the two players after the penalty has been called, to prevent any unsportsmanlike conduct between players that could lead to conflict and to deal with it in time.

### **4.4 Show the Red and Yellow Cards Correctly**

The purpose of the red and yellow cards is to ensure the successful completion of the match, but they are also an important means of educating the players, controlling the atmosphere of the match and regulating their over-excited mental state. First of all, according to the requirements of the Rules of Football Competition, we should dare to use boldly under the premise of permission, and we should not hesitate to show red and yellow cards decisively to control the game for those players who use pitch violence, commit serious fouls, commit unsportsmanlike conduct and repeatedly fail to improve.

Secondly, it is important to get the timing right when the cards are shown, especially when the first card is shown, as this is an important time for the referee to announce the scale of the penalty to the whole field. If a penalty is awarded for a downgrade, it is not conducive to controlling the game later on.

#### **4.5 According to the Mood of Players and Game Atmosphere Properly Grasp the Advantage Principle**

The game atmosphere is normal when more advantageous, so that the players have more opportunities to play technical and tactical level, but also to cultivate the athletes good use of advantageous and brave and tenacious fighting style. If the mood of the players and the atmosphere of the game tends to deteriorate, prompt and severe penalties must be handed down for fouls that have the potential to cause conflict and for fouls that are inconsiderate of the safety of the opponents. Do not consider favourable for the time being in this situation, as it may expand. When the ball is developing in the backfield, consider favorably as little as possible. When a player's back is turned towards the ball and is infringed, consider less favorably. When the number of defending players is significantly greater than the number of attacking players, consider less favorably. Consider less favorably when the pitch is muddy and slippery in rain or snow.

#### **Recommendations**

1. Referees need to understand, learn and grasp the spirit of the rules in depth.
2. Be well informed about the game and the background of both teams before the match.
3. The first call and the first card shown in a match must be accurate and well-timed.
4. It is important to communicate with the players on the field, to channel them in a timely manner and to use different methods with different players.
5. The purpose of using red and yellow cards is to educate the players rather than just enforce the rules and is a way to help the referee control the game.

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