

The Future of the Game

Current Criticism

Is it
Good or Bad
For the Game?



The Pressure

Pressure on Referees to get the call correct 100% of the time?

Pressure on Coaches to make the right moves 100% of the time?

**Money?
Pursuit of Excellence
Hollywood Entertainment?**

Bill Shankly “Football is not a matter of life and death – it is much more than that.”



Criticism of Referees!

Lack of **CONSISTENCY**

*However more **CONSISTENCY**
means a stricter application of the
Laws but it also means that less
COMMON SENSE will be applied*



David Elleray on Consistency

David Elleray identifies the three levels of consistency we ask for:

- consistency within a game;
- between games refereed by the same referee; and
- between games refereed by different referees.

“To achieve this consistency, referees would need to apply the letter of the law, rather than to interpret the spirit of the law.”

As Elleray has said elsewhere:

"People in football want two things: consistency and common-sense, but to use consistency one has to reduce the margin for common-sense."



Definitions

Consistency:

“Agreement or compatibility between or among acts or occurrences that follow one another in succession”

“Agreement or harmony of parts or features to one another or a whole”

“LETTER OF THE LAW”

Common Sense:

“Practical judgment based on experience or native intelligence, and not on education or training”

“Sound and prudent but often unsophisticated judgment.”

“SPIRIT OF THE GAME.”



A Coaches View

Alex Ferguson – Manchester United

In the 1997-98 season, Alex Ferguson assessed Martin Bodenham's 'liberal' handling of the Arsenal -Manchester United Premier League game. Bodenham ignored penalty claims when Nigel Winterburn appeared to foul Paul Scholes, of which Ferguson said, *"It was a clear penalty, and you just hope referees stop these type of incidents, but he [Bodenham] is the master of not seeing these things"*. After the game, Ferguson said, *"I don't see why anybody needed to be booked in a game like that"*.

Ferguson is insisting, firstly, on the letter of the law, and secondly on the spirit. He obviously wants both, when it suits him.



COMMON SENSE

Comments on the “Spirit of the Game”

“ this referee is really letting the game flow.”

“this referee really appreciates that it is a man’s game.”

Elleray on Common Sense

“An example of common sense would be if a player is clear through on goal and at speed he is brought down somewhere around the edge of the penalty area. If he had not been brought down he would have had a very good chance of scoring. The letter of the law says if that foul took place outside the area, it is a free kick. If it took place on the line or inside it is a penalty kick. Most referees, and I think most players and managers, would accept that the spirit of the law would say that if the referee genuinely was not sure whether it was inside or outside the area, he should give a penalty kick because this decision would go some way to restoring the situation that was unfairly removed. So where the law allows it, a referee uses his discretion to produce some natural justice. “



Pros and Cons

CONSISTENCY

Pros

All fouls called
Players know what to expect
Coaches know what to expect
Spectators know what to expect
No Controversy
Fair Game

Cons

Slow Game
Few Tackles
No Conflict
No Common Sense
Nobody to blame
No Spectators

COMMON SENSE

Pros

Flowing Game
Entertaining game
Fairness
Flexibility
Apply Opinion

Cons

Too lenient
Rash Tackles
Perceived Bias
Injuries / Fights
No Control



Balance

To achieve the correct Balance, Consistency and Common Sense must be applied in concert to ensure a flowing and entertaining game.

In 1949, the F.A. issued the following recommendations in a guidebook for referees: "It is essential that referees should learn to interpret the laws in spirit rather than too literally".

On Balance

The referee is expected to achieve a balance between the ' spirit' and the ' letter' of the law. This flexibility can allow a referee to facilitate a flowing game, ' playing on' when offences occur, which, if the ' letter' of the law was enforced, would result in play being stopped. Often when we watch a game this is just what we want: a fast, ' flowing' game. Yet whilst watching a flowing game, we may begin to think that the referee needs to start ' clamping down' on offences, or that the referee is ' letting the game get out of hand' . There is, then, often some inconsistency in what we expect from the referee. At the start of the game we may enjoy the way the referee' s interpretation of the ' spirit of the law' is keeping the game flowing, but minutes later, are insisting on a stricter interpretation, and expecting the referee to enforce the ' letter of the law' . We expect referees to strike this balance, and to show some ' common-sense' in their application of the Laws of the Game.

The call for common-sense often voiced in discussions about referees also gives us some insight into the reasons why criticism of referees might persist and why, in a sense, referees ' can' t get it right' . Common-sense is a largely subjective notion and, therefore, what is considered common-sense varies between individuals. When we ask referees to demonstrate common-sense, we are not really expecting them to do what they think should be done, but to do what we think should be done.



New Ideas

Two Referee System

By SURESH NAIR (Referee Instructor, Singapore)

Positives:

- more concentration on important tight-match incidents from varied angles at any one point, one Referee is always an active participant in match proceedings with close-to-proximity control
- less time wastage; more mobility in play
- better match control
- Referees are more confident since they are closer to play, with the added assurance that another pair of eyes is also keeping close watch (not to mention the two Assistants)
- less dissent and protest from players
- tighter control in dead-ball situations (e.g. at Free Kicks near the goal one Referee can cover the goal line while the other is positioned behind the ball)
- shirt-pulling and hair-grabbing considerably reduced with players very conscious of two Referees present
- reduced injuries from reckless tackles
- 30% reduction in the number of Red and Yellow cards issued

Negatives:

- the less experienced Referee may have a tendency to defer to the judgement of the more senior one
- more use of whistles
- Advantage rule sacrificed through a tendency for two Referees to be trigger-happy with whistles
- some confusion over who should whistle in crucial situations
- problems with positioning in coordinating movements



New Ideas

New Technology

New Technology should only be used to resolve matters of “Fact.”

- Electronic flags
- Goal cameras
- Offside cameras?
- Clock synchronization with referee’s watch
- 10 yard beam indicators

But we should not expect technological assistance to clear up incidents where the referee is required to use discretion or make common-sense judgments.



New Ideas

Law Changes

Specific consequence to law infringements:

Stricter Law enforcement:

6 second rule

Goal scoring opportunities (Professional fouls)

Laws have changed significantly over the past several years to identify clear consequences to Law infringements.



The ANSWER

Don Revie – Leeds United (1976)

"I fear that at times we managers feel that referees should be absolutely perfect for 90 minutes. Yet we don' t achieve this as managers. We don' t always pick the right team, carry out the right training, book the right hotels. Players don' t put every pass right and coaches don' t always bring youngsters through as they should. So we are wrong in expecting referees to be perfect when we are not perfect ourselves".



COACHES “Opinion”

(COMMON SENSE)

Why did Alex Ferguson play Ole Solskjaer and leave David Beckham on the bench for 63 minutes when Manchester United played Real Madrid in the Quarter Finals of the Champion League? Beckham scores twice when he came on and in contrast Solskjaer had series of open shots from close range but failed to score.

Good call by the coach?



Game Analysis

Source: www.softsport.com

Real Madrid vs Bayern Munich - March, 2000

Activities	Roberto Carlos#3	Effenberg #11
GoalsScored	0	0
ShotsOnGoal	6	2
Impact Passes/Goals	0	1
Impact Passes/Shots	8	4
TotalNo.ofPasses	67	61
No.ofCompleted Passes	42	42
No.ofLostPasses	25	19
CompletionRate	63%	69%
No.ofIntercepted Passes	16	14
No.ofCornerKicks	5	1

