



## Video referees: good, bad or necessary?

Referees are responsible for making decisions in a game, but when many sports first started, there weren't any referees. There were team captains and they were responsible for making these decisions. Were the teams always happy with the decision? Sometimes they were but other times they weren't! Now, there are referees in nearly all sports to make sure players play by the rules of the game. But many sports also use video technology.

Video technology uses cameras to show different views of a match. Sports like hockey and tennis, for example, use a system called Hawk-Eye to decide if a ball is out. This is because actions are too fast to see, or the referee isn't in a good position to see well.

Nowadays, many sports use video referees. A video referee watches the event in a room with lots of monitors. Different sports use video refereeing differently. In NBA (National Basketball Association) games, the fans in the stadium watch replays on a big screen, so they can see why the referee isn't sure about a point. In rugby championships, fans can also listen to the conversation between the match referee and the video referee.

Sometimes the video referee helps with really big decisions. One example was the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup™ match between Scotland and Argentina. It was nearly the end of the match. The referee stopped the game and asked the help of the video referee. The spectators weren't happy because there wasn't any information for a long time. After the VAR\* review, there was a penalty and the Scottish goalkeeper saved it. But the goalkeeper moved too early and the VAR referee saw this. There was another penalty and Argentina scored. Scotland were out of the competition.

So, are video referees necessary? Some people love them, others hate them – it probably depends if your team is winning!

\* **VAR:** video assisted referee