FIFA Referees Representation

1. FIFA U-20 World Cup

FIFA Referee Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari was selected by FIFA to officiate in the FIFA World Cup U-20 tournament last May in South Korea as a video assistant referee (VAR). Being his second prestigious FIFA tournament since his last participation two years ago in the same competition, it reflects on the capability and high level of match officials that FAS referees’ department are continuously producing throughout the past years.

The use of VARs is a new FIFA project that is still in the testing phase, with 12 countries including Australia, Germany and Italy participating in an ongoing two-year “live trial”. The FIFA Under-20 World Cup is only the second-ever FIFA tournament after the Club World Cup in Japan last December 2016 to feature VARs, with the Confederations Cup and the Club World Cup 2017 next.

If the tests are successful, VARs may be implemented in future FIFA tournaments.
The VAR system has been developed, just like goal-line technology, to provide additional support for the referee. The essential flow of the game will be maintained as much as possible and, as always, the first and the final decisions lie with the referee.

Being the second FIFA tournament to be tested with VARs, it provides a difficult encounter and challenge for all the match officials in adapting to the new techniques and methods. It was important for the VAR match officials to adapt to the new system together with the main referee as the teamwork and communication between them plays an important role in critical match changing decisions. With this experience, Taqi hopes to share with all the referees’ fraternity when the opportunity arises.
2. Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) & Video Assistant Referee (VAR) Seminar

Following on all of the referees’ preparation for the FIFA U-20 World Cup, Taqi had the privileged and was invited to attend the AFC Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) Course in March and the FIFA Seminar with Video Assistant Referee (VAR) in last April. AFC will be introducing the usage of AAR system for the knockout stages of the AFC Cup and Champions League competitions this year.

The AAR is positioned along the goal line nearer to the Assistant Referee on both goal ends. The concept of the AAR is to strengthen the support for the referees and enhance the decision-making process in particular relating to the penalty area incidents, goal or no-goal situations and incidents which is out of the view of the referee.

It is important for the AAR not to interfere as much as possible with the referee decisions as he still has the sole responsibility to make the final decisions. Apart from providing additional support, as a referee being on the field, the AAR brings that extra confidence and assurance for the main referee when making important decisions on the field especially in the penalty area during the daily practical sessions at the course. Teamwork is crucial in this instance as clear and precise communication is vital in ensuring a swift and correct decision to be given at the end of the day.
Similar to the AAR and the goal-line technology, the VAR is also an additional tool to provide support and assistant to the referee. VAR system requires resources such as manpower, technology and facilities for the whole system to be executed smoothly. As it is still in a testing period, the video replay system will be used in the official FIFA competitions this year before the final assessments and feedback being provided to IFAB for review.

The concept and the role of the VAR is to assist the referee in clear errors and critical, match-changing decisions - for example if there is any doubt on whether a goal has been scored (the ball has crossed over the goal line), penalty decisions, direct red cards and cases of mistaken identity. Subjective decisions are not interfered by the VAR as the referee is still the man in the middle to make the final decisions on the field of play. The entire mantra is to have minimum interference for maximum benefit.

FIFA Seminar incorporating with the Video Assistant Referee in Florence, last April
3. AFF U15 Girls’ Championship 2017

The AFF U-15 Girls Championship is a biennial tournament organised by the Asean Football Federation for women’s national teams under the age of 15. The 2017 tournament edition saw Rohaidah Bte Mohd Nasir was being invited to participate as one of representation of the match officials out of the total 16 referees.

With the aim of developing and gaining match exposure for the women footballers around the region at the international level, this tournament serves as a platform for the women referees to showcase their refereeing skills and capabilities.
4. The Sultan of Selangor’s Cup 2017

Held at the National Stadium, Singapore Sports Hub for the first time, the matches were attended by His Royal Highness Tengku Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, The Sultan of Selangor; His Highness Tengku Amir Shah, The Raja Muda of Selangor; Mr S. Iswaran, Minister of Trade and Industry Singapore; Dr Maliki Osman, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence & Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mayor, South East CDC; Dato’ Seri Mohamed Azmin Bin Ali, Chief Minister of Selangor; Chairman of The Sultan of Selangor’s Cup Tan Sri Dato Abdul Karim; Mr Teo Hock Seng, Vice-President of the Football Association of Singapore (FAS), Head of Singapore Delegation and Co-Chairman of The Sultan of Selangor’s Cup 2017; and Mr Thavaneson Selvaratnam, Vice-President of the FAS.

The Singapore Selection equaled Selangor’s win record in the Sultan of Selangor’s Cup and lifted the Cup for the seventh time after defeating the Selangor Selection 3-2 in front of 25,619 fans. In the opening match of the day, Singapore Sports School beat Selangor Combined Schools 3-2 in a penalty shootout to take home the inaugural Singapore–Selangor Schools Challenge Cup, after the match ended 1-1 at full-time. The traditional curtain raiser match between the Singapore Veterans and Selangor Veterans ended in a 0-0 draw, with both teams being crowned joint winners.
Abirami Naidu, Victor Teo, Lim Liang Yi and Muhammad Zulfigar officiated the U-16 friendly between Singapore Sports School and Selangor Combined Schools.

Farhad Mohd, Muhammad Nazree, Chan Kwok Wai and Sathyakumar officiated the traditional curtain raiser between Singapore Veterans and Selangor Veterans.

Teetichai Nualjan from Thailand was assisted by Edwin Lee, Abdul Hannan and G Letchman in the main match between Singapore Selection and Selangor Selection.
5. International Friendly Singapore U-23 and Vanuatu U-20

As part of Vanuatu preparations for the FIFA Under-20 World Cup 2017 in South Korea, they stopped over in Singapore for a series of friendly matches with the Singapore U-23 team. Our FIFA referees and a couple of Class 1 referees had the opportunity to officiate the matches and at the same time they were able to gain valuable experiences in these youth matches.
Referees Development

1. S & Prime League Referees Match Analysis

Referees' performance in the S & Prime League matches are crucial and important as it reflects on the level of refereeing that the referees' fraternity has established. As such, monthly match analysis together with referees' practical training all held for all the S & Prime League is essential. Feedback from referees' shortcomings during each round matches in S & Prime League which were provided from the referees' assessors were incorporated in the practical training session by the referee instructors so as to develop and improve their match performances in their subsequent matches.
2. Referees Progressive Training Session

Monthly referee progressive training is part of the junior referee development programme. Apart from the development for the S & Prime League referees, the junior referees in the other classes also play an important role in the future growth of the referees. Every middle of the month, intensive fitness and practical training sessions are conducted for the referees and the sessions are incorporated with the latest training programmes that are provided by the fitness and technical instructors.

While on field practical are necessary, theoretical sessions are also essential at the same time. Video analysis of local and international matches are being analysed by the referees and shared for discussion in order to achieve a uniformity decision. Laws of the Game trivia and video test were also part of the education tools during the regular monthly sessions.
3. Mentor and Mentee Programme 2017

The mentor and mentee programme has been running on smoothly with the cooperation from both the referees’ development programme group and FIFA referees. The mentors have been conducting regular fitness training sessions with the mentees within their cluster and they also participated the fitness training session conducted by fitness instructor, T Aravinthan, who has been guiding the junior referees in the physical fitness preparation and development.
Referee’s Aspiration

Journey of an upcoming young referee into the FIFA ranks

Many of us may have seen Mr. Nathan Chan officiating regularly in the S.League the past years but the journey to be accredited as a FIFA referee this year was not achievable without the hard work, desire and sacrifice.

Nathan started Refereeing in 2009 June at the age of 17 years old. He picked up refereeing as a hobby due to his passion for football. Subsequently, he stopped playing competitive football in both school and club level to dedicate more time officiating than playing the game itself.

With commitment, great guidance, opportunity given by the Referee department back then led by Mr. PT Murthi and many other senior referees who are still active or had already retired, he was able to learn and progress forward in my refereeing ladder.

Nathan was then given more opportunities to perform and showcase his abilities in the field of play which granted him to be promoted to Class Two, then One and eventually FIFA.
His journey from a Class three referee to FIFA wasn’t a smooth sailing one but he was glad that he had made many friends and seniors around the fraternity who had guided him along and gave him the confidence and support that was needed.

1) AFC Project Future 2012
   Course was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

2) UEFA CORE 2013
   Course was held at Geneva, Switzerland

Both courses gave him a great opportunity to experience refereeing with referees and instructors from countries such as China, Japan, Middle East and Europe. Getting to learn different refereeing styles and culture equipped him with more skills and knowledge which in return helped him to apply them on the field of play.

Refereeing with referees from other countries also allow him to see the level of refereeing and their aspiration of achieving to the international stage further motivate him to strive even harder to be on par or even better than them.

Nathan’s first overseas experience as a referee was an International Friendly Match between Vietnam and Chinese Taipei few months ago. He shared that being able to officiate and experience teams playing at international stage was amazing and honorable. The pace and style of football was great and enjoyable for him to watch and officiate the game.
As a current and young FIFA referee, Nathan aimed to strive for and work harder to be able to officiate higher level of matches and to enhance his personal refereeing experience by travelling more to different countries and footballing culture. At the same time, it was also important to further improve himself definitely and perform well in his S-league matches. When opportunity arises, he hopes to possibly share as much knowledge and experiences that he had learned to other fellow referees in all level in the near future.

An advice by Nathan for the younger referees, “For fellow referees who inspire to be a FIFA Referee, always believe that it is achievable and focus towards the goal. Opportunities rarely comes often, so train well, prepare yourself always and be ready for any opportunities given to you.”
Referees in Action

Referees at the ‘B’ Division School Premier League Final

i) Singapore Sport School and Meridian Sec. Sch. (2-1 in favour of SSS)
Referees at the S.League Matches
Other Matches

Women’s ‘A’ Division Final

Sports SG 7 a-side tournament

Women’s League

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