



## VAR

*Well, if nothing else, the current use of VAR has caused much debate across the game. Former Premier League & FIFA Assistant Referee Andy Hogg gives his opinion and makes a simple suggestion to help clear the fog .....*

My Grandad, who loved his football (he was a Season Ticket holder at both Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday !), and taught me how to love our beautiful game, was a great advocate of KISS, 'Keep It Simple Stupid'. "So, lad", he used to say "KISS, so even the stupid ones like me can understand". He was far from stupid, he was a magnificent man to who I owe a lot, which got me to thinking what would he have made of the current VAR intervention, which, let the truth be told, is a currently a complete dog's breakfast of a scheme as it is anything but simple, but it could be.

Let's just take a step back and look how other sports have successfully introduced the scheme, by keeping it simple and judging on fact, not on opinion. In cricket, the technology is used to determine if the ball would have hit the stumps at an LBW, to determine if a player was run-out or stumped. In tennis, Hawkeye tells the umpire if the serve was in or out, i.e. these are facts, not opinions. So, why don't we do the same in football and keep it simple. For example, let the technology judge if a challenge was inside or outside the penalty area, and leave the subjective decisions, i.e. those which in law are in the opinion of the referee (e.g. was the challenge a penalty), to the on-the-field match officials.

Adopting this process would also overcome one of the main objections on the current use of the system, the time it takes to restart the game. Tennis and cricket don't have this issue as they are, by definition, stop/start games; my suggestion of only judging on fact would only come into place when the ball is not in play and the game has stopped anyway. The delay would be minimal and also would not involve the ridiculous nonsense of the referee coming to view the incident on a monitor on the touchline, because the on-field referee does not have to have an opinion, the VAR is only obtaining the facts. Can this work, of course it can, what is Goal-Line Technology if it's not VAR under a different guise, and look how successful that has been.

So VAR, currently this stand for Video Assistant Referee, but we should change the acronym to be Value Added Replay – let's make sure the new scheme adds value to the referee's decision making process, we should KISS the current system goodbye and have a major rethink.