Research Shows Football Fans Support Introduction Of Technology in Football

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DJS Research Ltd , a leading market research agency based in the North of England, have completed pro bono research with football fans which suggests the vast majority would support the introduction of technology in to the beautiful game.

Fans Generally Support Introduction of Technology

The research, which looked at the opinions of 251 individuals who played in or attended football matches, or who watched the sport on television, found that 85% of them supported the use of technology. Of those who felt that the beautiful game should modernise technologically, more than 4 in 5 (85%) stated that they felt officials should be given responsibility for deciding when to call upon technology. Fewer than 1 in 10 said managers (8%) or captains (2%) should be responsible, with 1 in 20 (5%) suggesting another means of utilising technology such as geo-tagged balls, micro-chipping, or increased use of retrospective video decisions.

Checking Validity of Goals Is The Key Expectation

Those respondents who were pro-technology almost unanimously felt that it should be used to check whether the ball had crossed the line, with 94% stating they would like to see technology used in this scenario. Almost three fifths (57%) said they would like to review penalty appeals, with a similar number (54%) wanting technology to be available to review off the ball incidents. Perhaps surprisingly, as many as two fifths (43%) felt technology should be available for a second viewing of tackles and fouls which lead to a card.

More â€˜Football Focussedâ€™ Fans Perhaps Less Likely To Support Technology

As part of the research, fans were asked whether or not they were also followers of a number of other sports â€“ including cricket, tennis, rugby league and American football â€“ all of which have adopted technology to some degree. Those fans who did not watch any of the sports on the list were statistically more than twice as likely to be anti-technology, suggesting that individuals who are more â€˜committedâ€™ to football (i.e. at the expense of other sports) are more likely to want to keep the traditional style of the game.
Although all these individuals still represent a minority, it could arguably present a quandary for footballâ€™s governing bodies if replicated on a survey which looked at fan perceptions on a larger scale. Should bodies such as FIFA, UEFA and the FA follow the views of the majority, or should more â€˜committedâ€™ fans be given more of a say?

Referees Generally Receive A Positive Review

Positively for the sportâ€™s governing bodies, the survey also found that the majority of fans (73%) felt that referees did a â€˜goodâ€™ or â€˜excellentâ€™ job of officiating on match days (10% excellent). Only 1 in 20 (6%) felt that, on balance, referee â€˜badâ€™ or â€˜terribleâ€™ job.

Elliot Simmonds, responsible for the project, felt the results marked a step in the right direction for football:

â€œAlthough this was a small piece of research in terms of respondents, I think it certainly gives some indications as to what may be the important considerations for the sport going forward. If we say that more committed fans are more likely to be anti-technology, then FIFA and co. have to consider that â€“ and perhaps look in to it in a more robust round of research. That said, the vast majority of respondents were pro-technology â€“ particularly in terms of goal-line technology and ensuring that goals which are scored are goals which are given.

Â I think the overall picture we get here â€“ especially if we look at some of the more qualitative feedback â€“ is that fans generally think that referees do a good job with what they have, but that as the game has become so much faster, as technology has infiltrated other aspects of the game like footwear, the balls, the media, it now needs to be included in the rules to help officials make the correct decisions.

I'm not a Manchester United fan, but if technology had been available for use in the Champions League game against Real Madrid, perhaps Nani may have stayed on the pitch, and the result may have been different. Not only does it affect the fans, but football is such a big money game these days that a lot of people are calling for technology in order to make sure decisions are as correct as they can be.â€•â€•

The full results are available online at DJS Researchâ€™s website: Football Market Research .