



Identifying and Dealing with Dissent

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The U.S. Soccer Way





# Point of Emphasis



## Referees dealing with dissent

In the Laws of the Game, dissent is defined as:

A public protest or disagreement (verbal and/or physical) with a match official's decision; punishable by a caution (yellow card).





# Impact of Dissent

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- Disrupts play
- Erodes referee authority
- Escalates tension
- Is contagious
- Produces a negative spectator reaction

Can be against any/all match officials: Referee, Assistant Referees & 4th Official



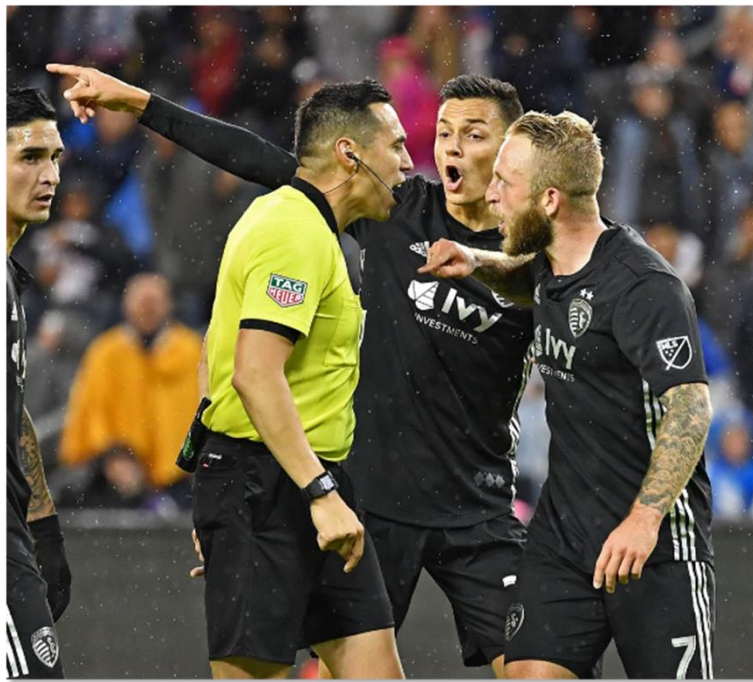
# Why Players Dissent



## To influence and “win” the next decision

- Make the official feel uncomfortable and lose control of their emotions
- Distract and disrupt the referee's concentration and decision-making
- Make the referee second-guess themselves





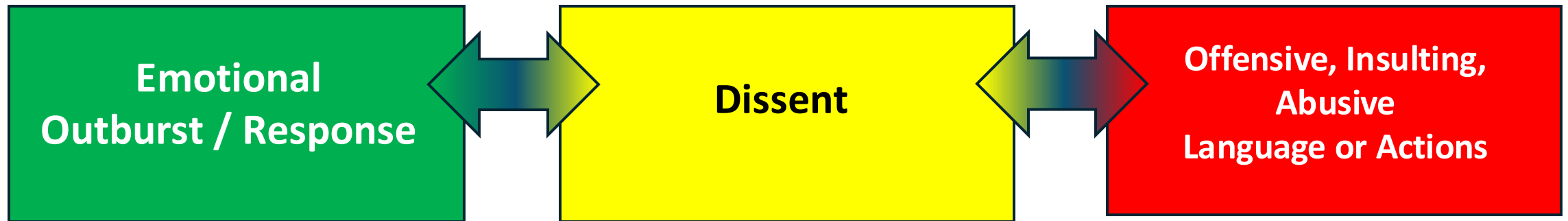
# THE RANGE OF PLAYER RESPONSES



# Range of Responses

Not all verbal or physical responses to referees are considered dissent

Important to identify language & actions correctly then manage appropriately



# Identifying an Emotional Outburst



## Emotional Outburst / Response

Visual and verbal cues examples:

- Frustration
- Immediate
- Not sustained, extended, or lengthy
- Result of a referee decision or teammate's action, or atmosphere in the stadium
- Not severely aggressive
- Not directed at an official
- Not personal, public, or provocative



# Identifying Dissent



## Dissent

### Personal – Public – Provocative

Visual and verbal cues examples:

- Distance: Running from distance to confront a match official
- Aggressiveness: Approaching / confronting a match official in an aggressive manner
- Visual: Waving arms, making disrespectful actions/gestures
- Mobbing: Three or more players confronting a match official
- Duration: Sustained + lengthy (not “one and done”)
- Calculated: Not a reaction, had time to think



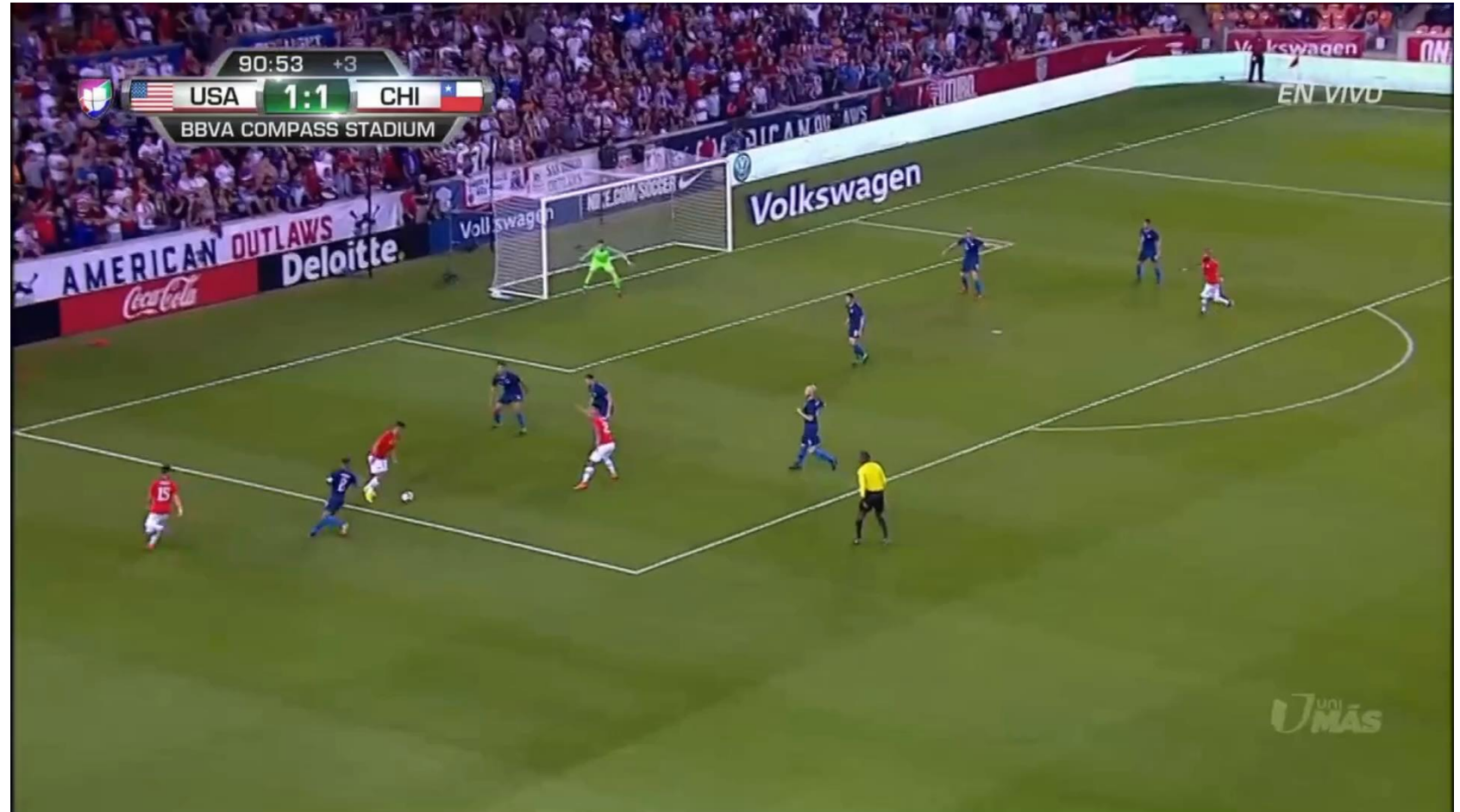




# Dissent - Examples

## Visual

- Body
- Hands + Arms

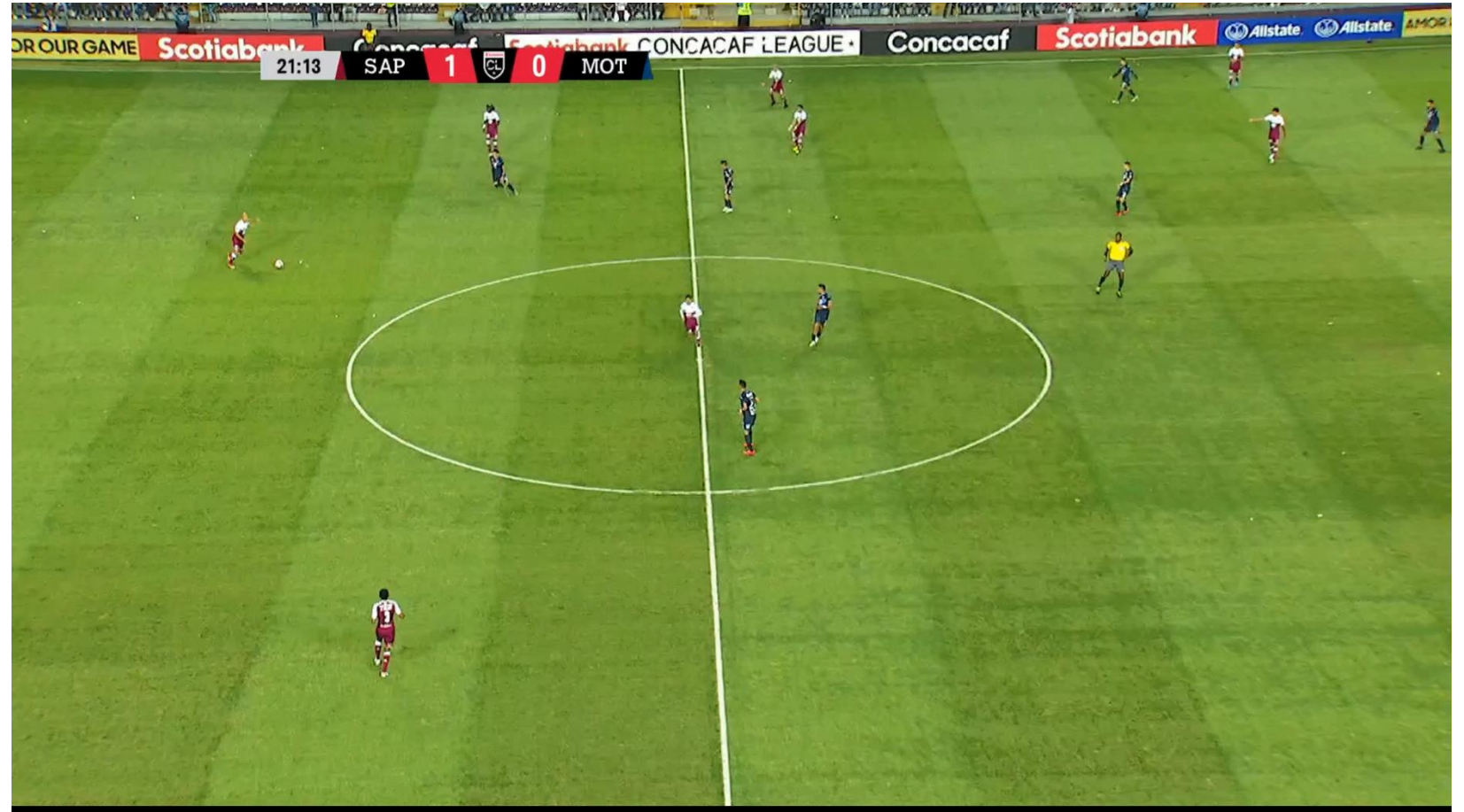




# Dissent - Examples

## Visual

- Body
- Hands + Arms





# Dissent - Examples

## Mobbing + Distance

- Multiple Players
- Surrounding Referee
- Close Proximity / Invading Body Space





# Identifying Offensive/Insulting/Abusive Language + Actions

## Offensive, Insulting, Abusive Language + Actions

- Racial, religious, ethnic or gender-based comments or actions
- Unacceptable language in any situation
- Words “attack” the official
- Physical contact





# THE RESTART

What if the game is stopped for Dissent or Offensive, Insulting or Abusive Language and/or Actions?

- The game is restarted with an indirect free kick at the spot of the infraction (location of player who dissented)



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# Keys to Identifying Dissent



3-Ps of Dissent

Personal  
Public  
Provocative





# The 3-Ps . . . Personal + Public + Provocative

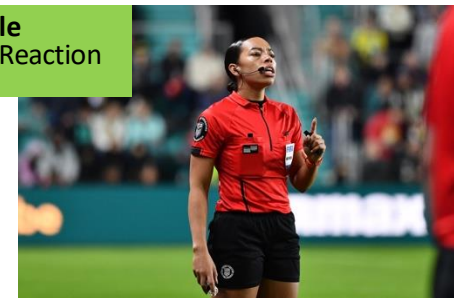


## Personal

- Is the protest aimed at the ref or just a generalized display of frustration?
- Are the comments a reasonable emotional reaction or directed at an official?
- Do the gestures and body language make it clear that an official is being blamed?
- Is the player using the official's name or personal pronouns (e.g. "you" or "your") which focus on the official?

## Match the Event to the Ref's Response

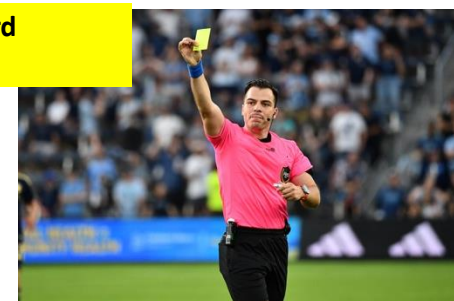
Manageable  
Emotional Reaction



## Public

- Are the player's action(s) loud, clear, and a visible protest or disagreement?
- How widely can the player's language be heard (volume) and/or gestures be seen?

Yellow Card  
Dissent



## Provocative

- Are the comments or actions intended to incite further misconduct, make dissent seem acceptable, or heighten the tension level?
- Are the comments likely to spark anger amongst others and potentially provoke further conflict on the field?
- Any racial, religious, ethnic or gender-based comments must almost certainly be considered offensive, insulting, abusive language and require a send-off

Red Card  
Offensive, Insulting,  
Abusive





# Managing the Grey Areas



## Considerations

*Go Up or Go Down?*

*Manage or Caution?*

*Caution or Send-Off?*

- Environment / Atmosphere of the Game
- Temperature of the Game
- Time of the Game
- Does the Player Need It? <or> Does the Game Need it?
- Will it Have a Positive Impact on Game Control?
- The “Reason” for the Action or Words: Referee Contributed to the Frustration + Type of Decision





# MANAGING LEVELS OF DISSENT

## THE STEP APPROACH



# Dealing with a “Range of Responses”

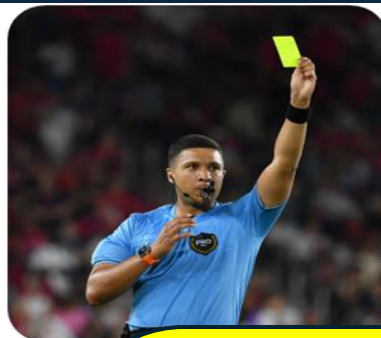
## Step Approach



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### Manage + Common Sense Approach

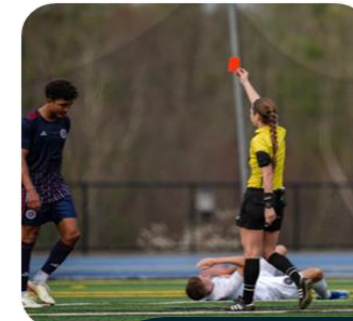
- Address early in the game
- Don't ignore it
- Draw the “line in the sand”
- Transfers burden of behavior modification to the player/coach
- Management Tools: quiet word, public admonishment, body language (“drive by” v public)



2

### Caution

- Clear dissent by words or action
- Verbal provocative outburst designed to influence the ref
- Actions that can be interpreted as the player being in-charge
- Stepping over the “line in the sand”
- Slamming the ball down in disgust/protest
- Kicking the ball away in disagreement
- Waving arms in disgust/disagreement
- Charging toward an official or aggressively following them



3

### Send-Off + Second YC

- When a player/coach doesn't change/correct their behavior
- Clear dissent continues
- Offensive, Insulting, Abusive Language and/or Actions



# Managing: Emotional Reaction & Frustration

- Keep interactions with players as short as possible unless there is a clear and fair line of two-way communication established
- Balance between listening and ignoring: Ignoring players may increase the player's level of frustration
- Don't get emotional
- Remain calm and professional
- Deal with it early in the game; proactively show the players it won't be allowed. The more it escalates the worse it gets



# Managing Levels of Dissent



- The “Step Approach” is a guideline. The step process is not required
- If behavior warrants an immediate Yellow Card or Red Card, do it!
- All reports of abuse physical & Non-Physical are subject to the updated US Soccer Referee Abuse policy.



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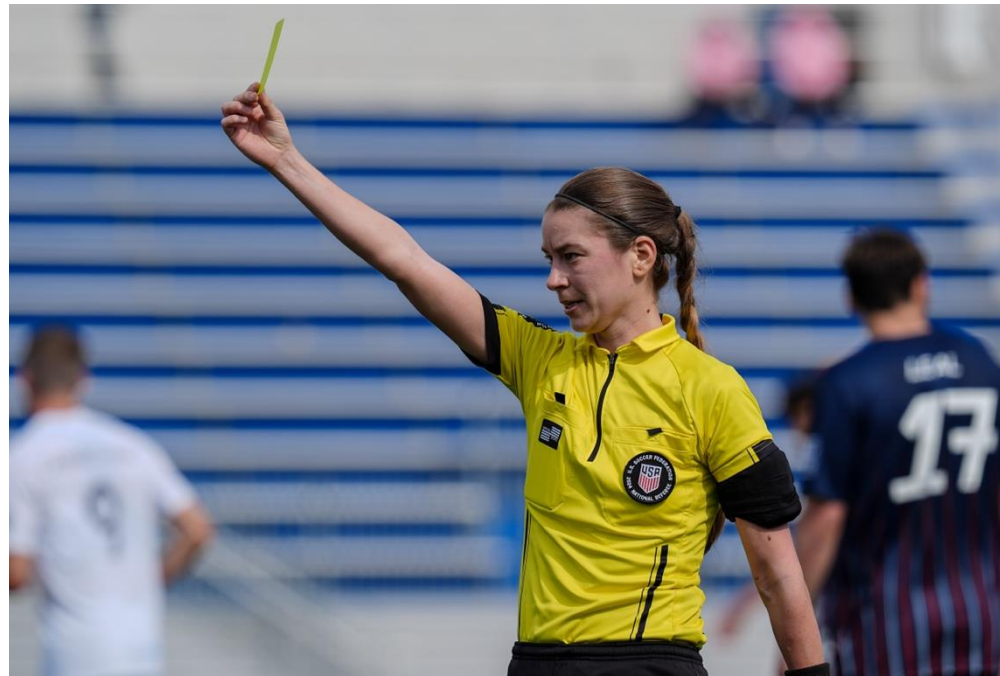
# MANAGEMENT: OPTIONS & EXAMPLES





# MANAGEMENT: OPTIONS & EXAMPLES





# EVALUATING THE RANGE OF PLAYER RESPONSE / ACTION





# When Evaluating the Videos Consider:



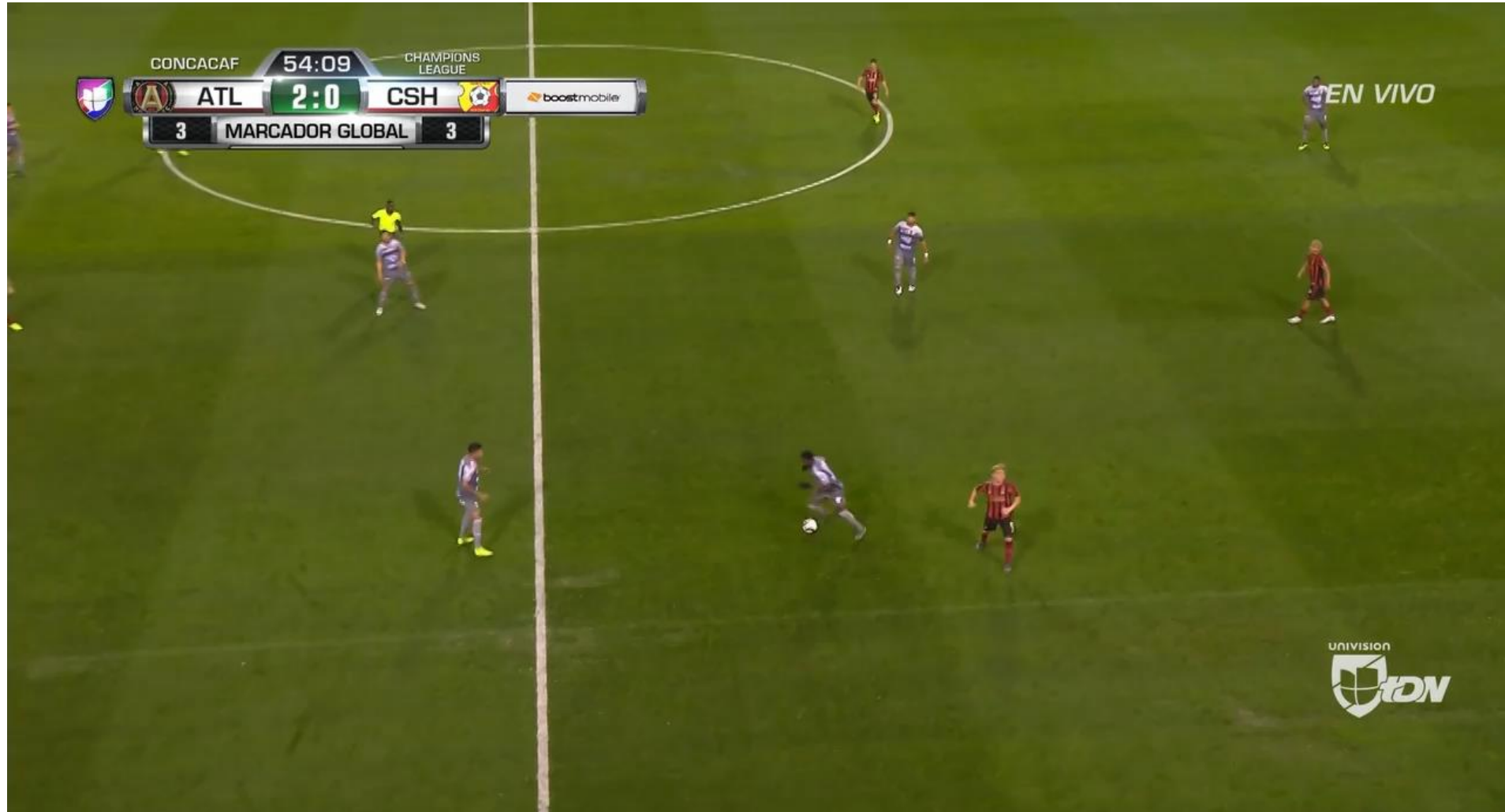
- The level of **PLAYER RESPONSE**
- The range of **REFEREE RESPONSES**







# Evaluating the Player Response



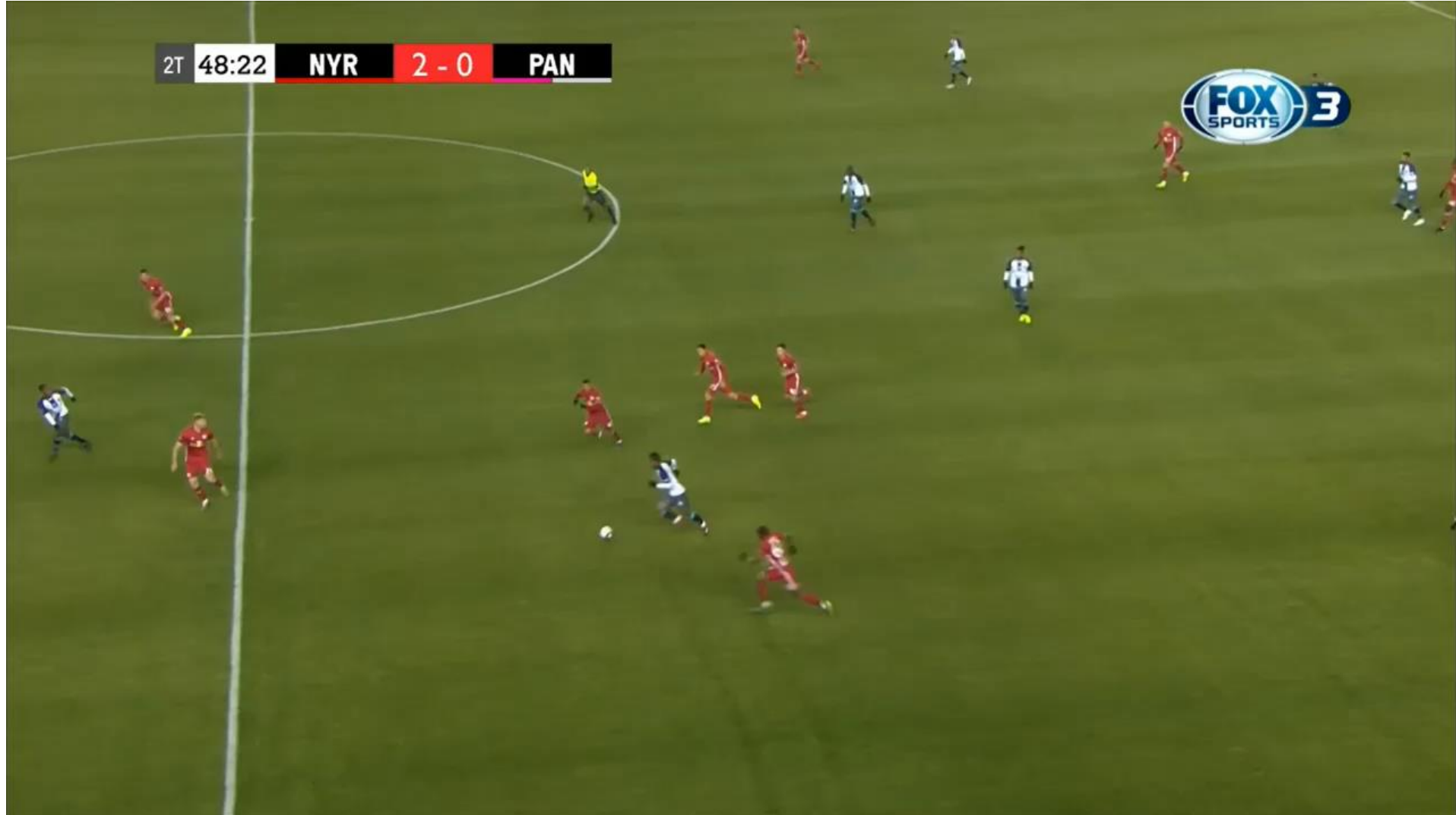


# Evaluating the Player Response



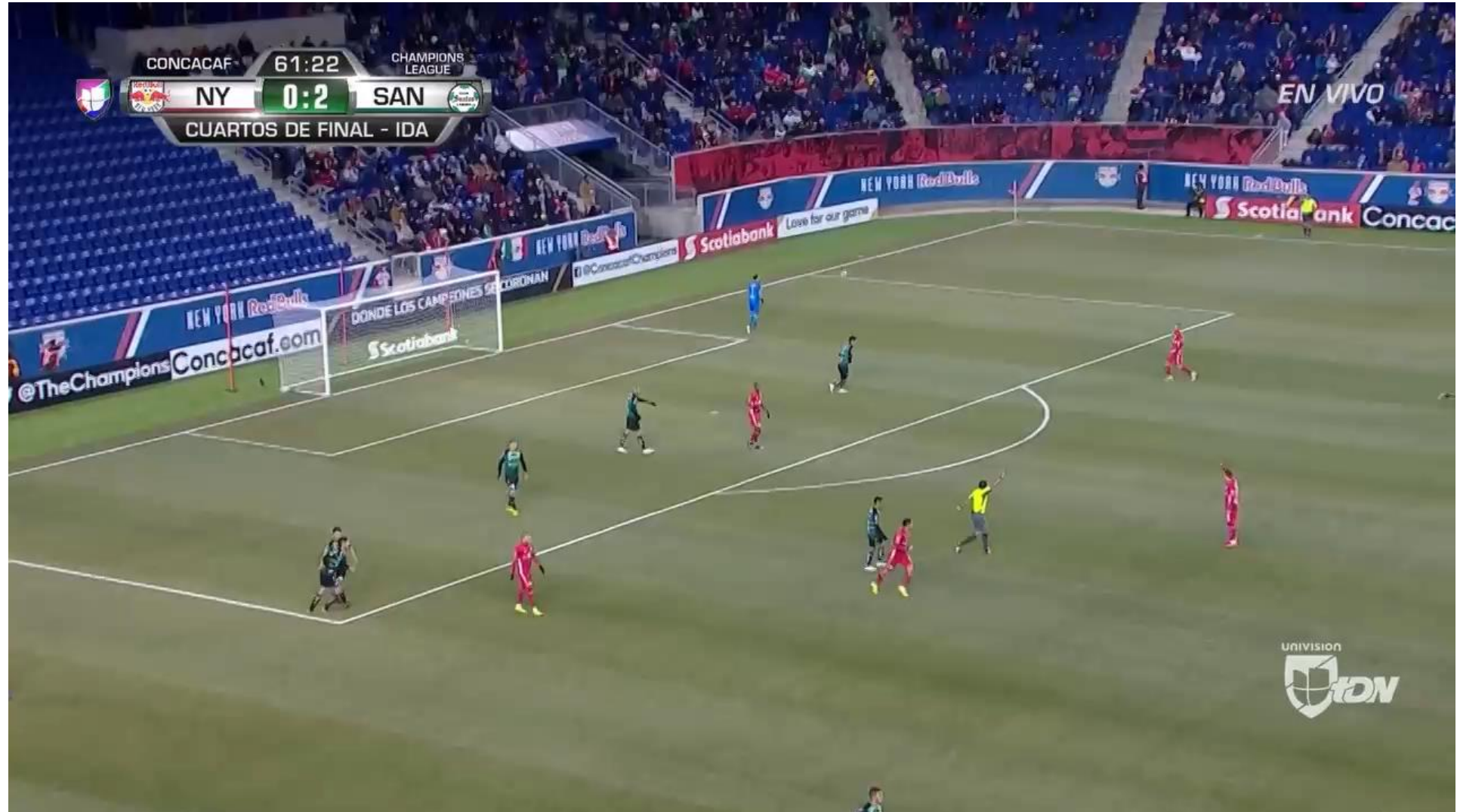


# Evaluating the Player Response





# Evaluating the Player Response



Questions ???

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