

Orange Cards in Football?

By Paul Gibson



Well, it may seem like a silly idea, and it probably is, but some football “experts” are now contemplating the possibility of implementing a much more lenient approach to sanctions in football: THE ORANGE CARD.

No we aren’t talking about anything that has to do with ING Direct, nor is this an advert for Valencia oranges, but rather the latest proposal for the upcoming European Football League Championship.

The details are rather unclear, but the idea would be to have an “orange” card that would be somewhere “in between” a red card and a yellow card. This would apparently resolve several issues with refereeing and the consequences of “a bad ref.” The idea is to give referees a “way out” of expelling or kicking a player out of a game for certain actions that could be considered as serious, such as a slide tackle from behind or a second “grab” of a shirt.

The controversial proposal comes after the 2006 World Cup registered the highest number of yellow and red cards in a World Cup competition. The idea seems to mimic the sentiment that referees just don’t cut it any more. Sometimes they adopt a “now you see it, now you don’t” attitude or shall we say, “Now I see it, now I don’t.”

The other proposal seems to be a rather interesting one and is certainly not new to the sport: instant replay. Instant replay advocates seem to have the edge, because after all: “a picture is worth a thousand words.” Tell that to the referee who missed our beloved Zidane knock down an Italian player with an excruciatingly painful head butt to the chest.

I am not quite sure if orange cards or instant replay are the answer to good arbitration. Maybe we just keep things the way they are and possibly have a compromise. In American Football, we have something called “a challenge” where a coach has the ability to request that the main referee review a specific play on a monitor in order to make a “ruling” that would affect the possible outcome of a match. Each coach or trainer is allowed one challenge per half, and it certainly makes the games seem a lot fairer. Who knows - this could be the wave of the future in the European Football World.

The orange card seems to be a bit weak though, and instant replay should be the way to go...now all we need to worry about is how to stop footballers from losing their temper or how to teach them to play it clean...but that’s a topic for another day no doubt.