Chapter 11

Interactive Trivia of Laws of the Game as a Resource for Training FIFA Football Referees

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter presents the interactive trivia game developed by the TECMERIN research group in collaboration with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) as an online educational resource to facilitate the learning process for football referees and assistant referees. The interactive trivia model uses a total of 1500 multiple-choice questions. This research explains the structure and dynamics of the game, the technology used, its structure, and the theoretical basis. The model has been tried out by eleven international referee instructors in order to test the user experience as felt by the participants. The results obtained show great satisfaction in the game as an educational resource and confirm the immediate possibility of extrapolating the model to other areas of sport.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The use of technology as an aid in the taking of refereeing decisions is a recurring subject of debate which becomes more intense in the aftermath of mistakes like those made during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is committed to training using the new technologies as a tool for improving the decisions of its referees and consequently reducing decision-making errors during matches. The objective of the research was to develop an interactive trivia model to use it as a game to facilitate learning the Laws of the Game of football on the part of FIFA's International Referees (Rs) and Assistant Referees (ARs) and a new way of improving existing evaluation methods. In addition to making learning enjoyable, the model had to be able to evaluate the Rs and ARs' knowledge of the contents of the official rulebook, Laws of the Game of football. However, how could we create a model that would be enjoyable and at the same time allow us learn the Laws of the Game?

Laws of the Game is the official rulebook published annually by FIFA (2009), which describes the 17 rules of the game. It has two sections: the first part presents the 17 laws of the game of football in a concise way. The second part provides an interpretation of the rules and uses illustrations to help readers understand certain concepts related to each of the laws.

In addition, international Rs and ARs attend periodical courses which use hypermedia learning materials with interpretations of the laws of the game. These materials clarify the contents and rely on the use of 2D and 3D animations and videos to facilitate the understanding of certain concepts (Armenteros & Curca, 2008) (see Figure 1).

Towards the end of 2007 we started working with our initial ideas about how to create an interactive game that includes all the laws of the game. We took a few references from the Interactive Guide to Offside Law 11 (FIFA, 2005) and Multi-

Figure 1. Book cover of Laws of the Game (left) and screenshot of the multimedia teaching material (right) (© 2010, FIFA. Used with permission)
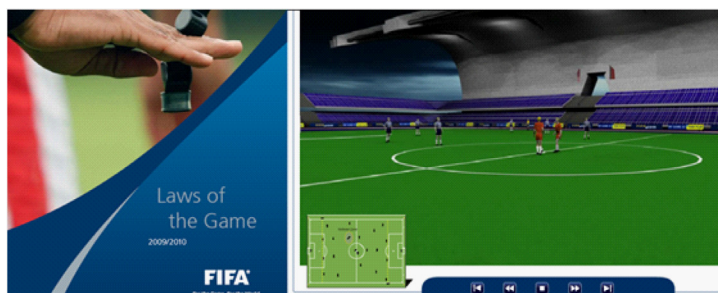
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