



VAR Fan Perception

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The Golden Questions Regarding VAR

- Initial assumption is that most soccer fans dislike VAR
 - Are they just the loud ones?
- Is this assumption true?
- To what extent should VAR be applied?
 - Which in-game situations?
 - How many times per game?
 - Who should initiate?



???

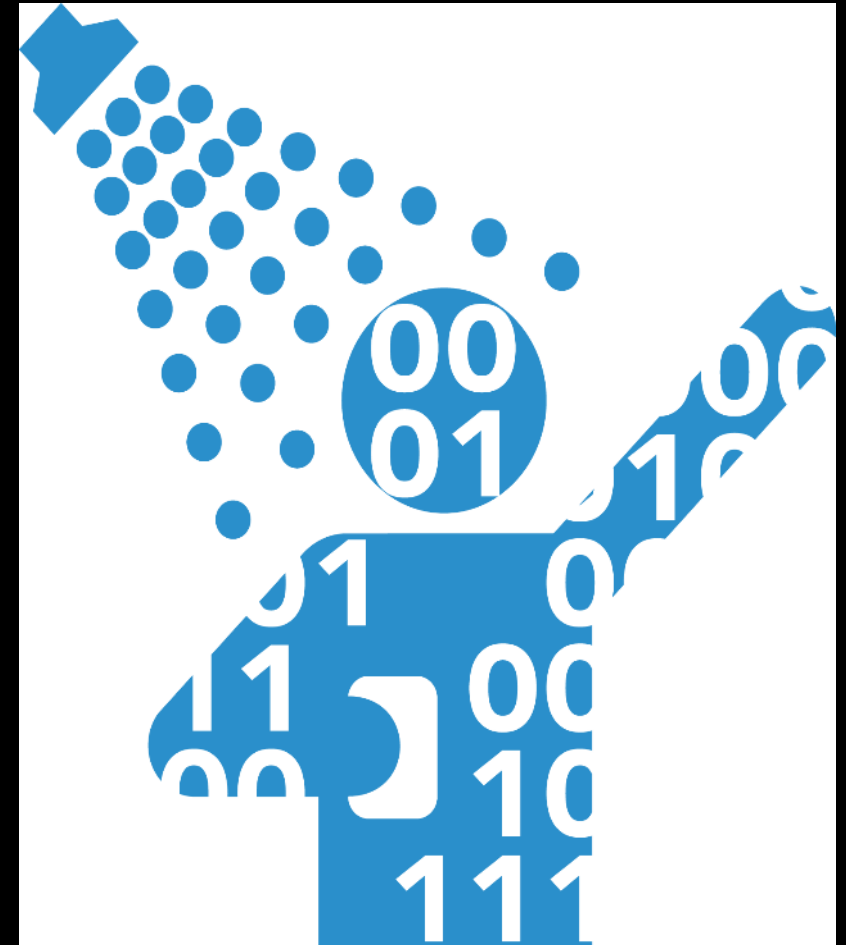
Survey Process

- If they are a soccer fan or not
- If respondents noted their viewership habits
- If respondents have viewed VAR in past matches
- If VAR influence viewership habits
- **Reddit: (Internet)**
 - Posted on US Soccer, MLS, MLS Teams, USL Team Pages



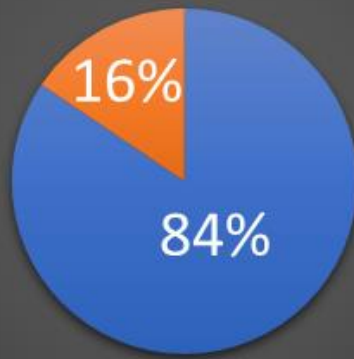
Cleaning The Data

- 420 Responses
- 399 Valid Responses
 - Soccer Fans who took more than 60 seconds to complete the survey
 - Soccer Fans who chose a favorite team
 - Soccer Fans who answered every question
 - Soccer Fans who did not “troll” with any of their responses
- 97.5% check news/highlights > once/week
- 72.4% WAL soccer matches > once/week



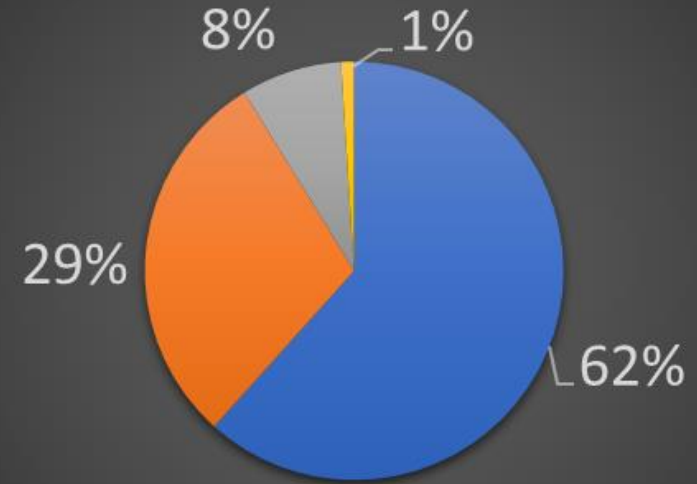
Respondent Demographics

Respondent Favorite Team Location



■ North America ■ EU

Respondents By Age



■ 18-30 ■ 31-40 ■ 41-50 ■ 51+

- Overlap of MLS fans and European soccer fans
- Younger generation of soccer fans
- Reddit allowed us to target younger fans

MLS Fans Support VAR!

Average of Support for VAR: 4.13

1 - Strongly Oppose

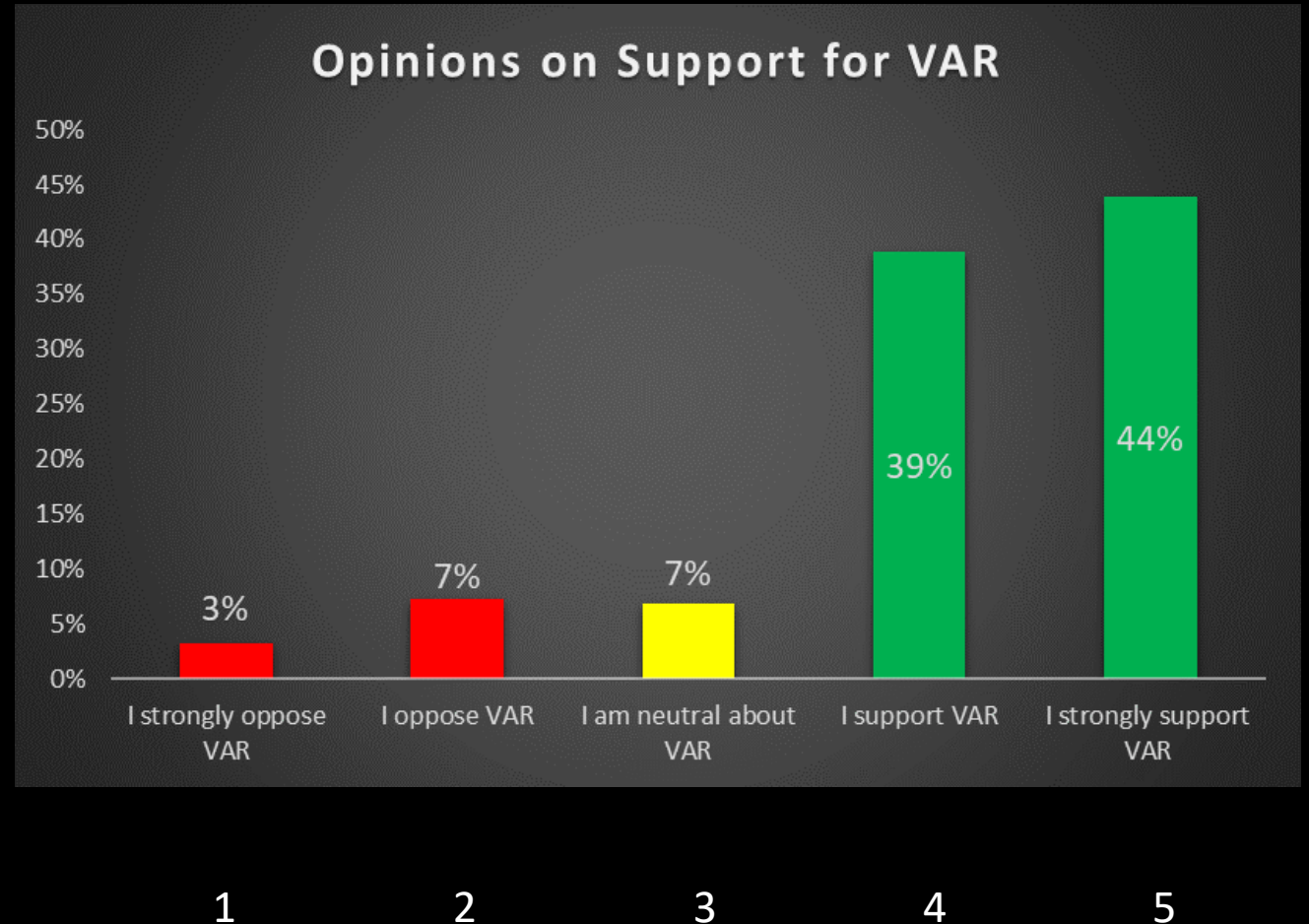
2 - Oppose

3 - Neutral

4 - Support

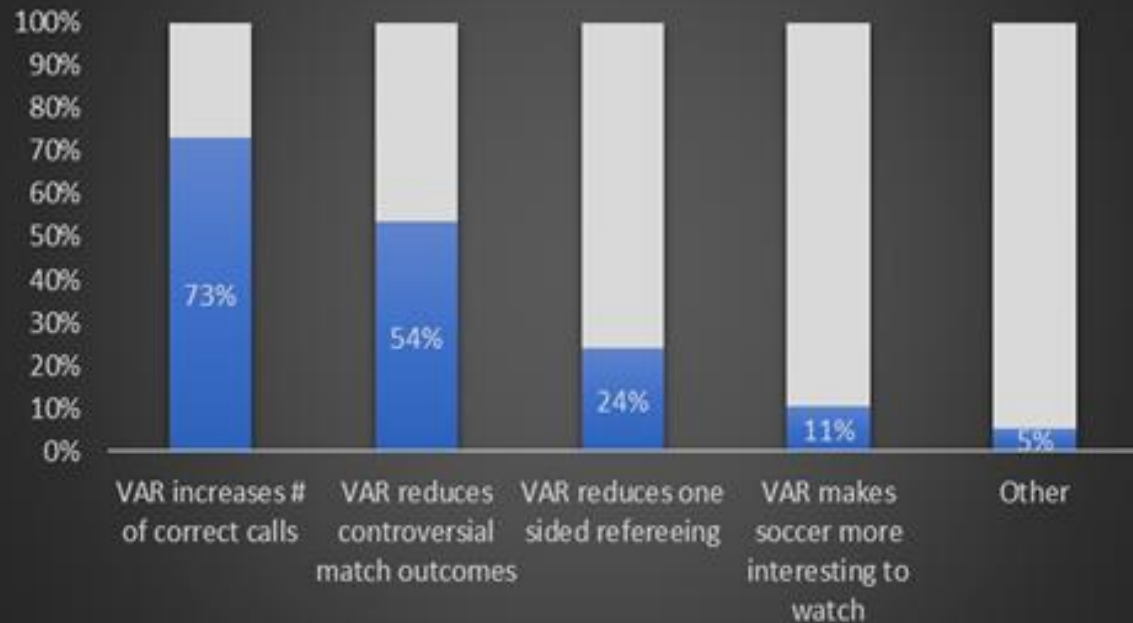
5 - Strongly Support

This contradicts our initial assumption of people primarily being opposed to VAR



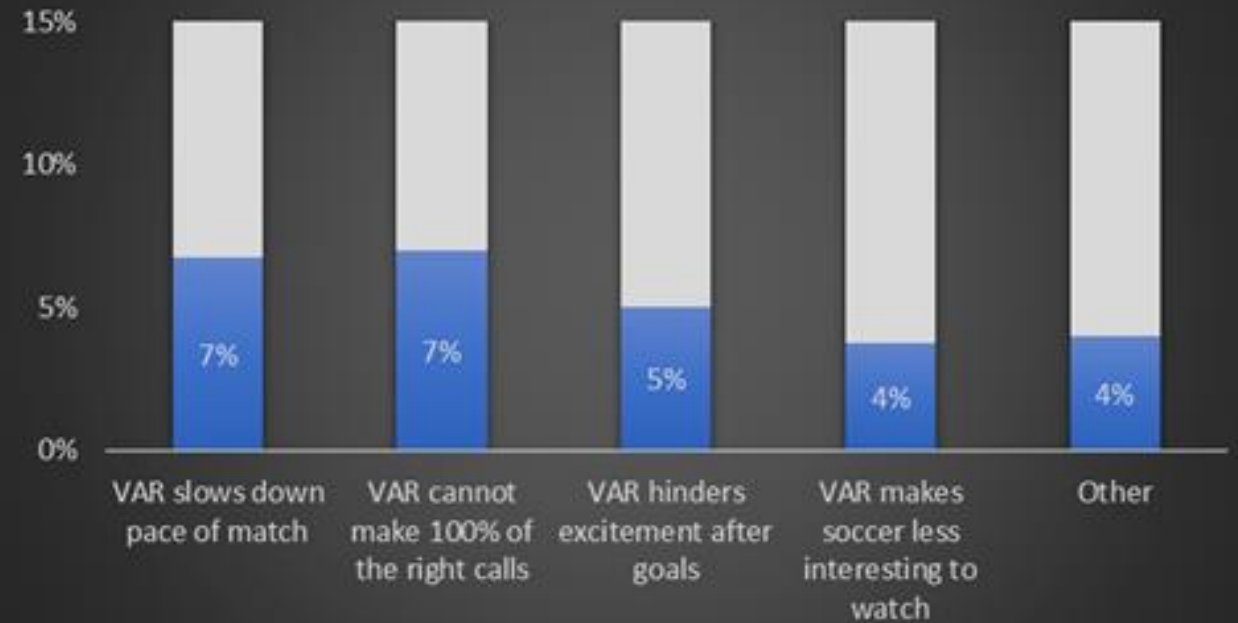
VAR Lovers and Haters

Reasons Soccer Fans Support VAR



Multiple Selections allowed

Reasons Soccer Fans Oppose VAR

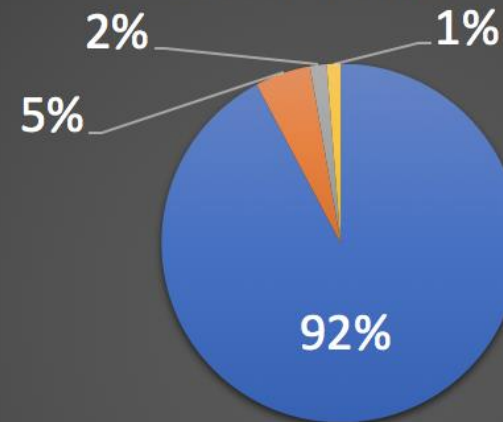


*Second Chart percentages add up to 100%

I'll Still Watch

- VAR has not impacted people's viewership habits
- A surprising amount of soccer fans advocated for implementation
- Even less soccer fans said it would reduce their viewership or end viewership

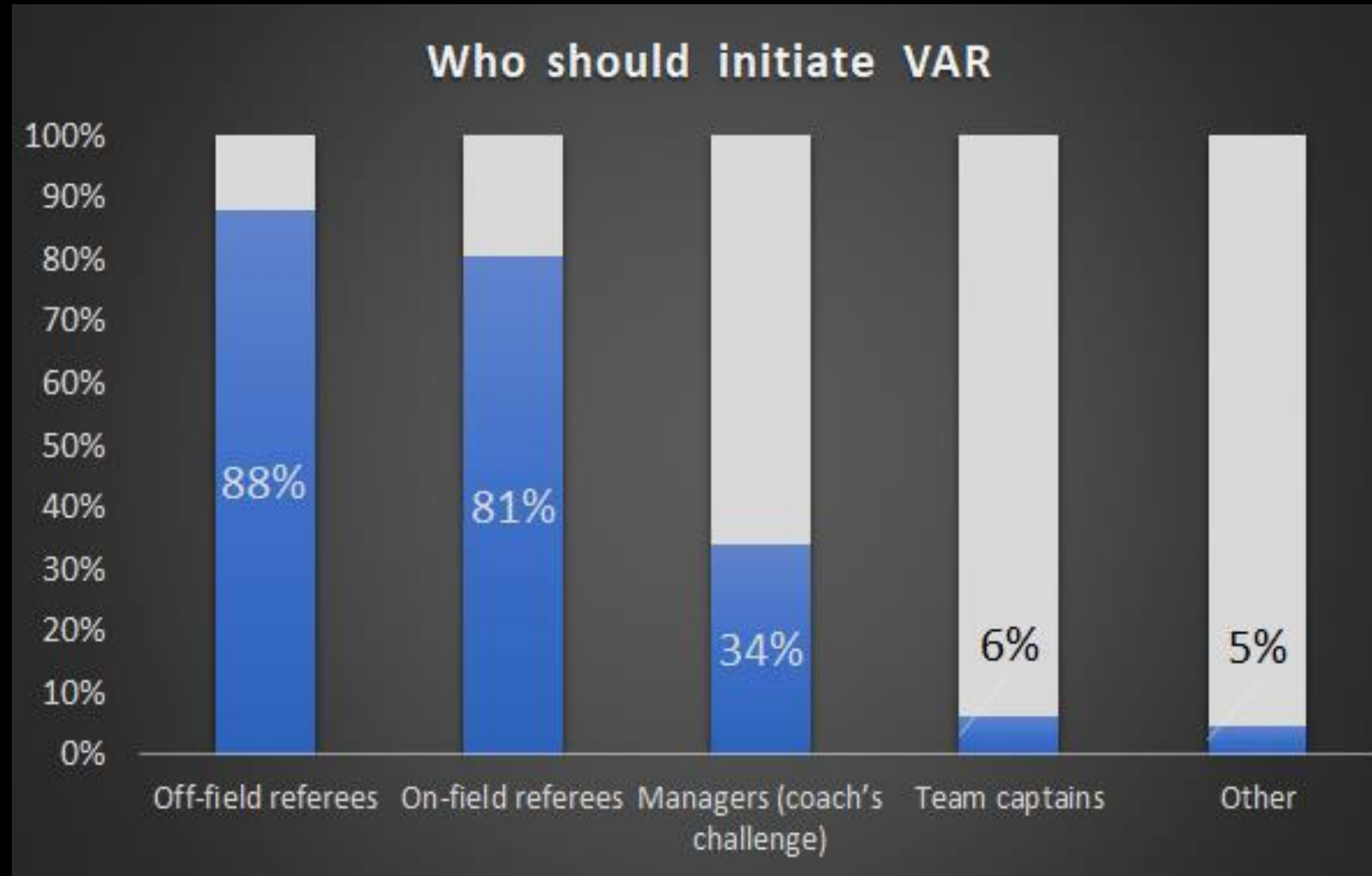
Does the use of VAR impact how often you would watch soccer matches?



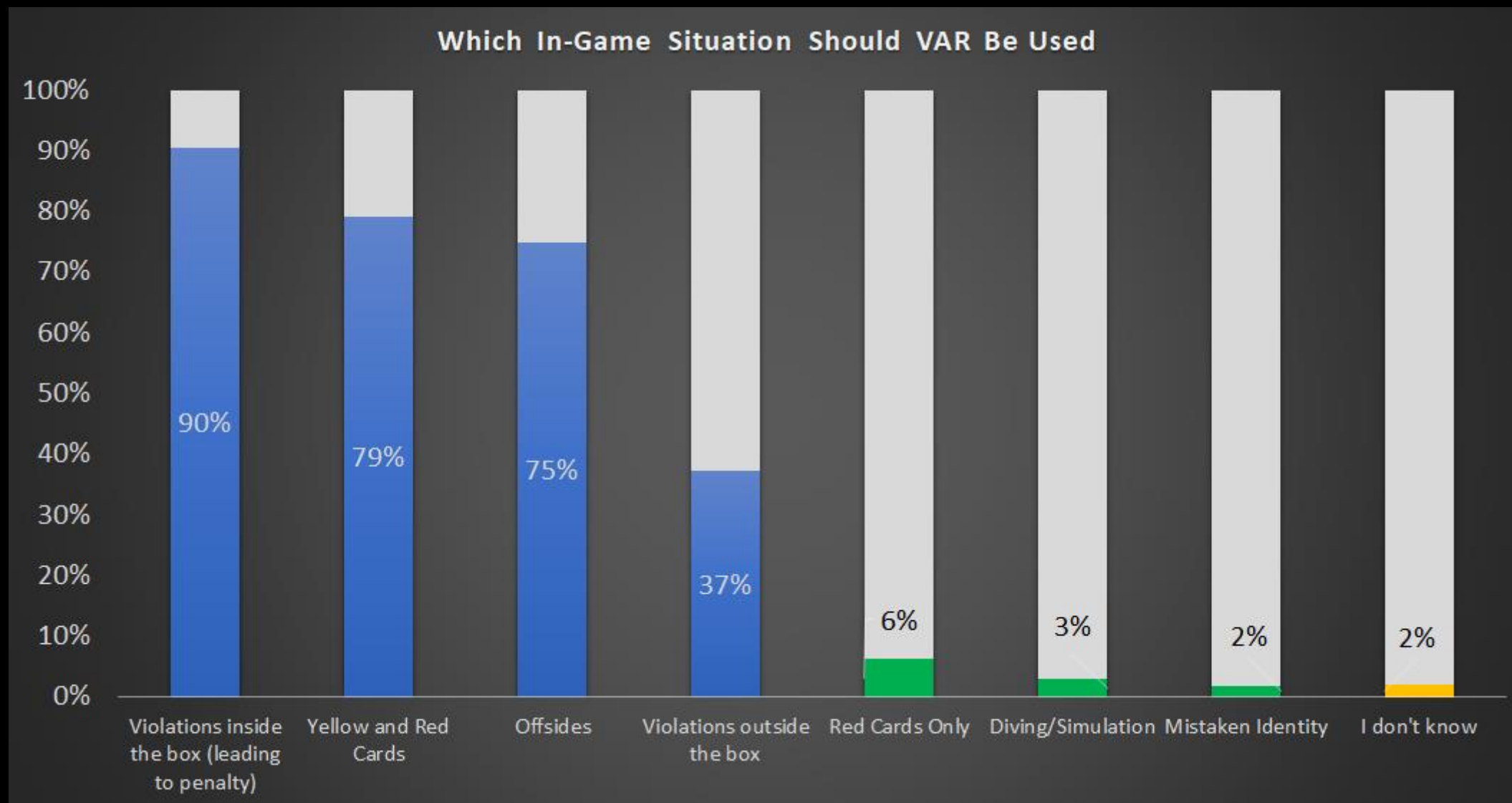
- VAR would not change my viewing frequency
- I would watch more because of VAR
- I would watch less because of VAR
- I would not watch matches because of VAR

Who Let The VAR Out?

- Fans have differing opinions on who should be able to ask for a video review (stoppage in play)
- Off-field referees review on-field decisions from a box with multiple camera angles (not sideline refs)
 - Similar to NHL/MLB model
 - **Surprisingly high support for this approach**

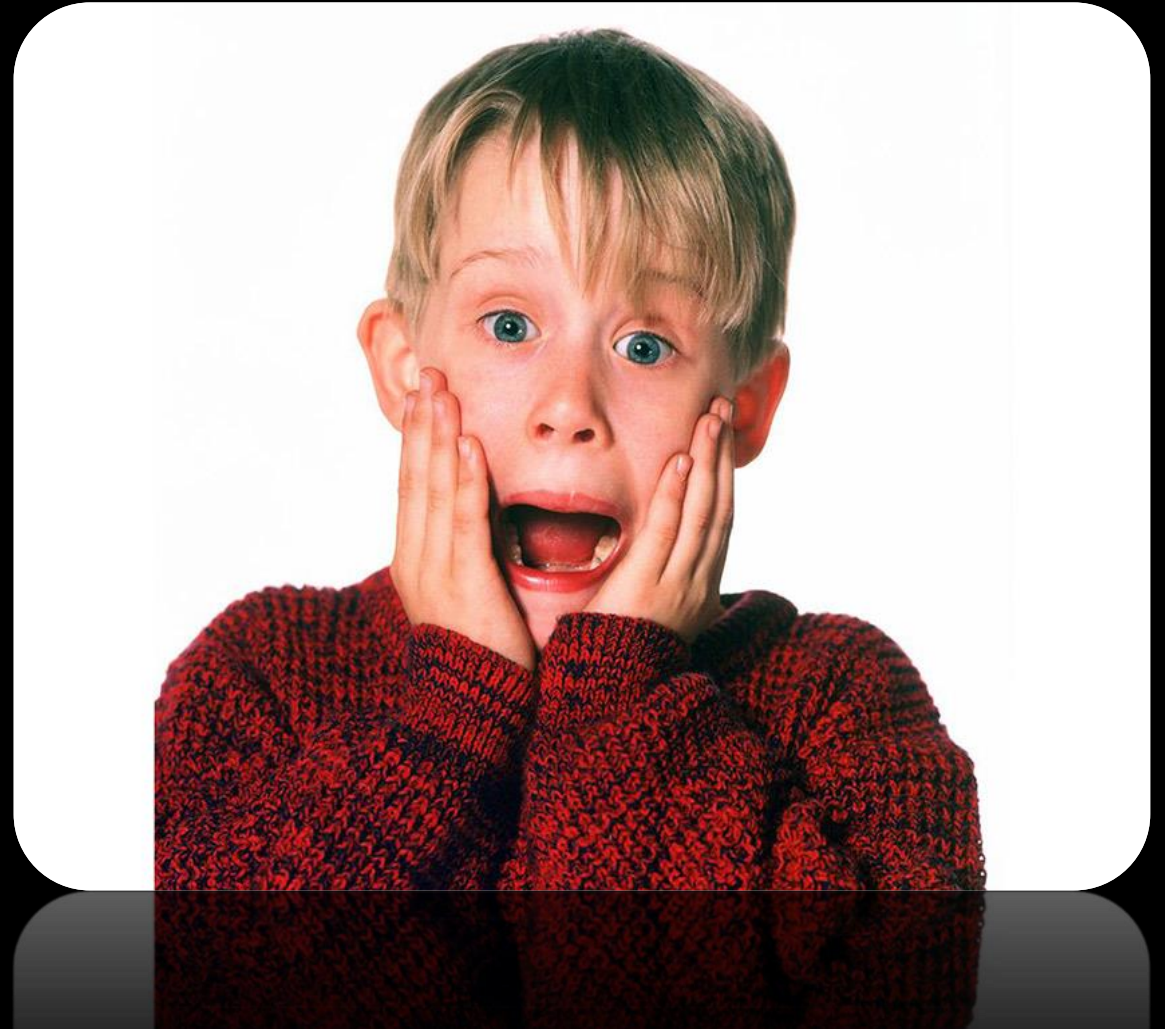


To VAR... Or Not To VAR



Initial Reactions to Survey Results

- There is an astonishing amount of respondents that support VAR usage (and little opposition)
 - 82.7% support
 - 10.5% against
 - 6.8% indifferent
- There is a higher than expected number of respondents who:
 - Support VAR usage for refereeing decisions outside box
 - Support VAR initiation by off-field officials
 - Support VAR initiation through manager's challenges



Potential For Other Leagues

- From our research, there is overwhelming evidence that fans in the U.S. are in support of VAR
- International research can be done to see fan response in other leagues



Conclusion

- Was our Assumption correct?
 - Actual response was opposite
- Opposers mainly want to keep the human error and natural flow of the match
- Opportunity for additional research to be done to establish the rules and regulations of VAR
- Respondents want VAR implemented for Fouls in Box, Red Cards, Offsides
- Majority want off-field or on-field referees to make calls



