

Goal or no goal?

Singapore were denied a goal in the 74th minute of Wednesday's first-leg semi-final against Vietnam. But were the Lions hard done by? The Straits Times speaks to several Singapore referees who offer their arguments for and against the goal.

1 & 2 Singapore's Mustafic Fahrudin swings in a cross from the left. Teammate Noh Alam Shah is already in an offside position when the ball is played.

3 Vietnam defender Le Phuoc Tu, under pressure from Alam Shah, heads into his own goal. Malaysian referee R. Krishnan rules the goal out for offside.



Noh Alam Shah (right) and Mustafic Fahrudin questioning the referee's decision to disallow the goal.

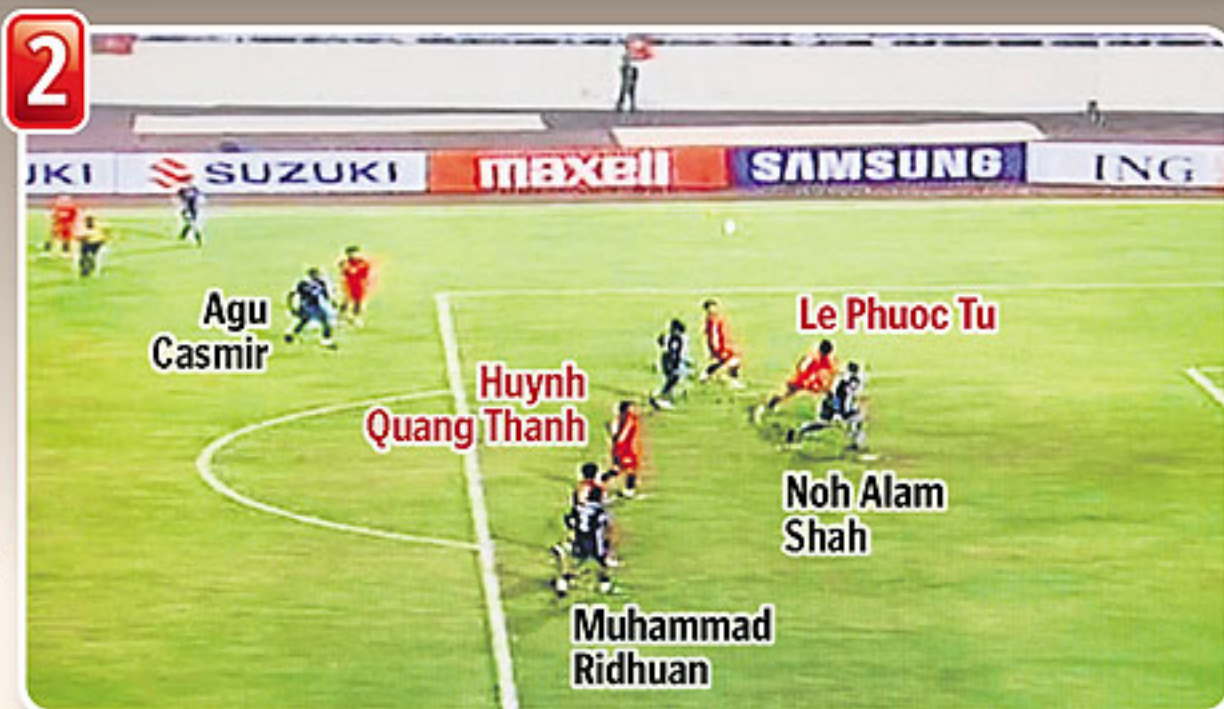


The rule

According to Law 11 of Fifa's Laws of the Game, just being in an offside position is not an offence.

A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- interfering with play
- interfering with an opponent
- gaining an advantage by being in that position



✓ Why it should be a goal

Was Alam Shah guilty of any one of the three criteria?

The striker was not interfering with play as he did not touch the ball or impede any opponent's progress. Had he been in front of the defender, then he can be penalised.

He was also not interfering with an opponent as Le had an unobstructed sight of the ball. He also gained no advantage as he neither touched the ball nor could actively influence the ball's path. The goal should have stood.

✗ Why it shouldn't be a goal

When the ball was played into the box, Alam Shah was clearly interfering in play, even if it was the defender who headed the ball into his goal.

The main thing to consider is the movement of the striker: If he moves in the direction of the ball, thereby distracting the defender, he is interfering with play.

If Alam Shah hadn't moved, then the goal should have stood. But he did make a move, and so it was the correct decision by the referee.