

B1-B2 English Worksheet: AI Referees In Sport - 28 May 2026

Article

The NBA plans to use AI to help with some referee decisions. Commissioner Adam Silver said the league wants AI to make objective calls, such as deciding who touched the ball last before it went out of bounds. The aim is to speed up games and cut down on arguments.

The system would use cameras around the court. It could make some decisions faster than a human referee checking a replay. However, AI would not take over every part of the game. Human referees would still make difficult calls about contact, fouls and player behaviour.

Many sports already use technology. Tennis uses electronic line-calling, and football uses video review. Some fans think this makes sport fairer. Others think it stops the flow of the game and takes away emotion. The main question is how much sport should rely on technology.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. The NBA plans to use AI for some referee decisions.
2. AI would decide who touched the ball last before it went out of bounds.
3. The article says AI will make games slower.
4. Cameras would help the system make decisions.
5. AI would take over every part of the game.
6. Human referees would still judge fouls and player behaviour.
7. The article mentions tennis and football as sports that use technology.
8. All fans agree that technology makes sport better.

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. plans to use	A. left the playing area
2. help with	B. in different places near the playing area
3. went out of bounds	C. using video to check a decision
4. speed up	D. give support for something
5. cut down on	E. depend on
6. around the court	F. reduce
7. take over	G. removes something
8. video review	H. intends to use
9. takes away	I. become in control of something
10. rely on	J. make faster

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. plans	A. hard
2. objective	B. disagreements
3. aim	C. movement
4. arguments	D. intentions
5. replay	E. more equal
6. difficult	F. equipment
7. contact	G. factual
8. fairer	H. touch
9. flow	I. recording
10. technology	J. goal

Use the new language

Choose 5 words or phrases from the worksheet and write your own sentences.

Discussion Questions

Student A

1. Do you watch sports that use video review?
2. Do you think AI can help referees?
3. Is it more important for sport to be fair or fast?
4. Have you ever seen a bad referee decision?
5. Which sport uses technology well?
6. Does technology take away emotion from sport?
7. Would you trust AI to make simple decisions?
8. Should human referees always have the final decision?

Student B

1. Is AI a good way to reduce arguments in sport?
2. Should technology make only objective calls, or should it also judge fouls?
3. Why do some fans dislike video review?
4. Can sport still feel exciting if decisions take a long time?
5. Does technology make players respect referees more or less?
6. Could AI make sport fairer for smaller teams?
7. What could go wrong if a machine makes a mistake?
8. How will sport change in the next 20 years?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=T, 3=F, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=T, 8=F

Phrase Match: 1=H, 2=D, 3=A, 4=J, 5=F, 6=B, 7=I, 8=C, 9=G, 10=E

Synonym Match: 1=D, 2=G, 3=J, 4=B, 5=I, 6=A, 7=H, 8=E, 9=C, 10=F

Example sentences with the phrases

1. The league plans to use AI next season.
2. Technology can help with difficult decisions.
3. The ball went out of bounds near the sideline.
4. A quick AI decision could speed up the game.
5. Better systems may cut down on arguments.
6. Cameras around the court can follow the ball.
7. AI should not take over every referee decision.
8. Football fans often argue about video review.
9. Too many delays can take away excitement.
10. Modern sport may rely on technology more in the future.