

Sports Talk Media Exclusive: VAR fails Nottingham Forest, with growing calls for changes across Premier League

On a night defined by fine margins, Forest left the City Ground believing those margins were decided not by football quality, but by decisions that failed them.

NOTTINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM, December 29, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Nottingham Forest expressed fierce frustration after a series of controversial refereeing and VAR decisions overshadowed their 2-1 home defeat to Manchester City at the City Ground on Friday night.

Forest looked set to secure a crucial point before Rayan Cherki's 83rd-minute strike sealed the win for City.

The goal immediately triggered protests from Forest players and staff, who insisted a clear foul occurred in the build-up and should have disallowed the goal.

VAR Under Fire After "Clear" Foul Ignored

The defining incident came seconds before Cherki's winner, when Morgan Gibbs-White was knocked to the ground as he attempted to close down the edge of the box. Forest argued the midfielder was illegally pushed, preventing him from blocking the shot.

Forest manager Sean Dyche did not hold back in his assessment.

"Morgan Gibbs-White quite clearly gets pushed to the floor and the same player is involved in blocking the ball," Dyche said. "But he can't block it because as he jumps up, it goes through the part of his body he would have blocked it with. Whichever way you look at it, it's a foul."

Despite a VAR review, referee Rob Jones allowed the goal to stand. The decision left Forest stunned.



Nottingham Forest was left angered after its match this weekend with Manchester City was decided by dubious calls

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When you play so well and come in having to talk about officials affecting the game, that's disappointing. But they clearly did. Everyone in the stadium and everyone watching at home could see that."

Sean Dyche

"Such an easy game to referee, in my opinion. Such an easy decision for VAR," Dyche said.

"When you play so well and come in having to talk about officials affecting the game, that's disappointing. But they clearly did. Everyone in the stadium and everyone watching at home could see that."

Dyche also challenged the explanation used to justify the decision.

"They'll say, 'The ball wasn't there,'" he added. "So if the ball's not near the keeper and you push the keeper to the floor, is that not a foul? We all know it is."

"I'm a big fan of VAR. I can't work out how you can't get that right."

Second Yellow Card Incident Adds to Forest Anger

Forest's sense of injustice deepened earlier in the second half following another flashpoint. Manchester City defender Ruben Dias, already booked for dissent, brought down Igor Jesus as the Forest forward surged into space.

Jones awarded a free kick but declined to issue a second yellow card. That decision allowed City to continue with eleven men for the remainder of the match.

"They say it's an accident," Dyche said. "If that's an accident when someone is running through on goal, we all know what happens. You get a red card."

"So why is it an accident and he doesn't get a second yellow? I find it bizarre. Just give him the second yellow. 'Off you go.' I'm absolutely stunned."

High Stakes, Heavy Consequences

With Nottingham Forest hovering just above the Premier League relegation zone, Dyche stressed that the consequences of such decisions carry added weight. A point against an in-form Manchester City side would have provided valuable breathing room.

Instead, the spotlight shifted away from Forest's performance and onto officiating calls the club believes directly influenced the result.

On a night defined by fine margins, Forest left the City Ground believing those margins were

decided not by footballing quality, but by decisions that failed them at the most critical moments.

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In addition to its flagship brands, Sports Talk Media Network operates regional sports talk websites in Washington, D.C., New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, California, Michigan, Ohio, with many more markets currently in development. Each outlet maintains a strong local voice while contributing to a broader national conversation around professional, collegiate, and emerging sports.

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