



UEFA
UNDER21TM
CHAMPIONSHIP
POLAND 2017

TOURNAMENT REVIEW





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TOP QUALITY

The final epitomised the tournament as a whole – excellence on and off the pitch

BUILDING ON PAST SUCCESS

Inspired by UEFA EURO 2012, Poland was proud to take centre stage once again

As we stood under the rain in Krakow presenting medals to Germany and Spain after a final of enormous quality and intensity, it was a moment to reflect on a tournament that had provided so many positives.

Congratulations were due, not only to the gold and silver medallists, but also to all the other teams who had travelled to Poland for the first 12-nation Under-21 final tournament with a will to win and an attacking vocation.

The result was an event rich in goals and entertainment for the many thousands of fans who made the journey to Poland to support their teams. These fans mingled happily with their hosts at stadiums, in cities and even on the beaches of the country's north coast.

Special and heartfelt thanks are due to the Polish Football Association – the PZPN – and to its president Zbigniew Boniek for offering the teams and the fans such a magnificent scenario. The cooperation between UEFA and the PZPN was superb. The result was an impeccably organised event that took football into a wide area of the country, backed by social



and grassroots activities that will doubtless leave a lasting legacy from a highly successful and memorable tournament.

Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President



It was great to have such a well-organised Under-21 final tournament here in Poland – we showed both UEFA and a watching worldwide audience that we can successfully host these events. We were able to repeat the organisational success of UEFA EURO 2012, which Poland co-hosted with Ukraine. Once more we proved we are more than capable – that whatever UEFA asks of us, we can deliver. It was also really pleasing to see both the local Polish fans and supporters from other nations create such a special atmosphere, amid plenty of capacity crowds in the stadiums.

Not only did we have the pleasure of viewing the stars

of tomorrow, we actually saw them shine in the present – the likes of Marco Asensio and Dani Ceballos really caught the eye. In the final reckoning it was teamwork that prevailed, and Germany lifted the trophy.

In a sense, the tournament also represented a link with UEFA EURO 2012 and its legacy. The fantastic atmosphere and spirit of that tournament was felt here again in June.

Even though the Polish team were unable to get beyond the group stage, it was by no means a lost cause – some of these Poland players already have senior international experience and I am confident about their long-term career prospects.

Overall, then, I will look back on this championship as a very enjoyable and well-organised event, which ran smoothly in every possible way.

Zbigniew Boniek
Polish Football Association President



TECHNICAL REPORT

FYR Macedonia looked at home on their first final tournament appearance

THE ROAD TO KRAKOW

There are different ways to reach a final, and while Spain left nothing to chance, Germany were delighted to ride their luck at times

More teams, more thrills and spills, more disappointments. Whereas the top two teams in each group of the previous eight-nation format progressed to the semi-finals, whittling the dozen contestants in Poland down to four semi-finalists was a process conducive to hard-luck stories. Luck, the dictionary definition tells us, is "success or failure apparently brought by chance rather than through one's own actions". And, as they made their way home after the group stage, many of the coaches must have been scratching their heads and wondering if alternative courses of action could have changed their fortunes.



Germany defender Niklas Stark keeps a close eye on Italy's Federico Bernardeschi

GROUP A

Hosts Poland and holders Sweden fall at the first hurdle

Fortune certainly seemed to smile on the hosts when, after 53 seconds of the opening game, right-winger Przemysław Frankowski fed overlapping full-back Tomasz Kędziora, whose cross was met by a thumping near-post header by Patryk Lipski, ending a powerful run after linking the build-up in the centre-circle. The start seemed too good to be true – and it was. Poland coach Marcin Dorna might have wished otherwise, but his team instinctively took a step back and handed the initiative to Slovakia, whose controlling midfielder Stanislav Lobotka lived up to his job description as the leader in a 1-4-1-4-1 attacking shape. Slovakia hit back with goals from Martin Valjent and substitute Pavol Šafranko and their 2-1 win signified an initial setback for the hosts.

The second chapter followed a similar script. Dorna switched from 1-4-2-3-1



Patryk Lipski (10) put Poland ahead against Slovakia after only 53 seconds

POLAND'S START SEEMED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE – AND IT WAS

England midfielder Lewis Baker



Martin Chrien heads Slovakia in front against Sweden



to a more overt 1-4-4-2 to mirror the Sweden formation and, within six minutes, an end-to-end combination initiated by the keeper allowed Łukasz Moneta to drill in a cut-back from the right. Sweden, however, capitalised on a neat combination through the middle and a corner on the left to hit back twice before half-time. They defended the advantage right through until added-time before conceding a penalty that Dawid Kownacki converted to earn the hosts 2-2 a draw. It was a goal of crucial importance, as it kept Poland mathematically alive.

This was because, on the opening day, Sweden and England had battled out a goalless draw. The latter made a dominant start, set up in 1-4-4-1-1 formation but the defending champions, relentlessly pressing ball-carriers and defending in depth, gradually wore them down. With both teams defending narrowly, space was at a premium. And, when the stalemate seemed destined to be broken, England keeper Jordan Pickford, diving to his right, raised a providential arm to beat out a spot-kick that Linus Wahlqvist had driven towards the centre of the net.

England coach Aidy Boothroyd switched to a midfield diamond for the next game against Slovakia only to see his team concede from a corner. However, a short corner and a counterattack down the left earned three points and converted England v Poland into a must-win match for both sides. Sticking to the diamond, England converted domination into a 3-0 win against the hosts, while in the other match, Slovakia surprisingly eliminated Sweden by the same score. Coach Håkan Ericson, in his last game on the Under-21 bench, was "shocked when I realised after ten minutes that we didn't have any strength, especially in midfield". The defending champions were out.

GROUP B

In-form Spain prove too hot to handle

The 2015 silver-medallists Portugal suffered a similar fate to Sweden in Group B. Rui Jorge's side switched from their traditional 1-4-3-3 to 1-4-4-2 and then 1-4-5-1 structures after taking the lead against Serbia. Bruno Fernandes's late goal gave them a 2-0 win and seemingly put them on track ahead of the group's watershed fixture against Spain. Portugal matched the Spaniards in many aspects of play, but fell behind to a brilliant solo goal by Saúl Ñíguez and a fast counter finished by Sandro Ramírez at the near post. The margin narrowed after a stunning long-range volley by Bruma pulled Portugal to within one with 13 minutes to play, but as they pressed for an equaliser, substitute Iñaki Williams ran from his own half to complete a solo counterattack and a 3-1 win. After Spain's 5-0 victory over FYR Macedonia on the opening day – which included a hat-trick from Marco Asensio – it also confirmed their place in the semi-finals. FYR Macedonia bounced back from that heavy defeat by drawing 2-2 with Serbia – a result that spelt elimination for both teams.

The scenario invited Spain coach Albert Celades to change his entire starting XI for the final game, in which a single goal from Denis Suárez was enough to beat a Serbia team reduced to ten just before the break. In the meantime, Rui Jorge could afford no such luxuries. Portugal took on FYR Macedonia with the crystal-clear objectives of scoring a hatful of goals and hoping for the best in the race for the best-runner-up status that would earn a semi-final place. The hatful, in this case, meant at least the three that would allow them to equal Slovakia's goal difference of +3. Although eliminated, Blagoja Milevski's uninhibited team refused to throw in the towel, even when 2-0 and 3-1 behind. Bruma's third goal of the tournament, and second of the game, made it 4-2 at 90+1, but when the referee called a halt at 90+7, the 2015 finalists had fallen a goal short of their target.

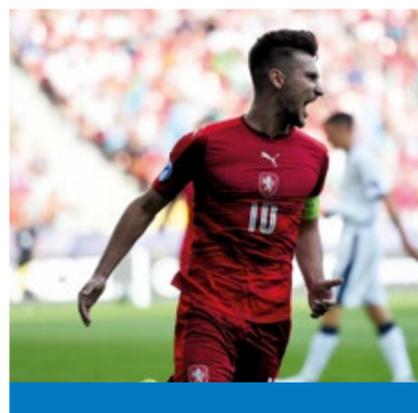


A 2-2 draw between Serbia (in red) and FYR Macedonia was not enough for either side



Portugal coach Rui Jorge

Denmark's Kenneth Zohore struck twice against the Czech Republic (right); Michal Trávník celebrates the Czech Republic's opener against Italy (below)



THE CZECHS' LOSS TO DENMARK OFFERED GERMANY THE CONSOLATION PRIZE AS BEST RUNNER-UP

GROUP C

Italy take top spot, but Germany survive

Portugal's near miss also set clear targets for the contenders who brought the curtain down on the group phase 24 hours later. Italy had to beat Germany. Not necessarily by a hatful, but anything less would leave them at the mercy of the Czech Republic's result against Denmark.

It was an unexpected denouement to a Group C that had kicked off in seemingly orderly fashion. Germany, basing their game on a potent midfield triangle and two highly adventurous full-backs, were good value for a 2-0 win over the Czech Republic, whose net result was a single on-target attempt in the 90 minutes. Denmark harvested the same total (and lost by the same score) against Italy, pitting a compact 1-4-4-2 against Luigi Di Biagio's 1-4-3-3.

The Czechs, however, threw a cat among the pigeons on the second matchday against Italy. Vítězslav Lavička shrewdly manipulated his team structure three times in response to situations during a game in which powerful long-range finishing proved decisive. Their 3-1 victory, coupled with another comfortable 3-0 win for Stefan Kuntz's Germany against Denmark, signified elimination for the Danes. It also fuelled speculation about a potential three-way tie on six points that prompted onlookers to apply a magnifying glass to the tournament regulations.

But the outcome proved to be as unexpected as the scenario. Denmark coach Niels Frederiksen inserted Kenneth Zohore as the main striker in his 1-4-4-2 formation, and the Danes struck on two successful counterattacks to go 1-0 and 2-1 ahead. Although the Czechs twice equalised, they failed to get within reach of their target of a four-goal win. While making their last throws of the dice, they were caught twice more, allowing Zohore to complete a creditable tally of two goals and one assist and for Denmark to achieve the consolation of third place.

While Frederiksen was drafting in a striker, Di Biagio drafted one out. Target man Andrea Petagna was left on the bench in a 1-4-1-4-1 structure featuring the pace and skills of Federico Bernardeschi as the attacking spearhead. Disturbing German build-ups with collective high pressing gave them control of the game – and the only goal, when a high ball-win on the left wing allowed Bernardeschi to slide ball past Julian Pollersbeck in a one-on-one situation. Germany failed to find a response – or even a shot on target. The Czechs' loss to Denmark, however, offered the consolation prize as best runner-up thanks to a goal difference of +4.



Germany squeezed through in second place

SEMI-FINALS

Julian Pollersbeck saves
Nathan Redmond's penalty to
win the shootout for Germany



Germany rush to congratulate
goalkeeper Julian Pollersbeck

ENGLAND 2-2 GERMANY

(aet; Germany win 4-3 on penalties)

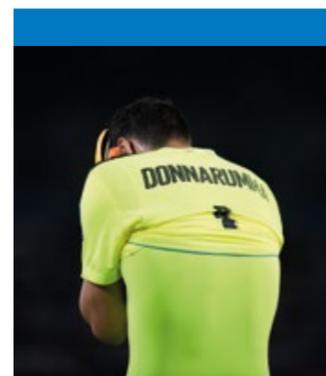
Germany's prize for finishing as the best runner-up was a semi-final against England in which Boothroyd's team enjoyed 60% of the ball and a series of scoring opportunities during the opening 20 minutes. But, with a potent midfield and full-backs ready to run round the edges of the England diamond, Germany turned the tide with a sequence of assaults on the right-hand angle of the England penalty area. One of them

allowed an unmarked Davie Selke to head in a lofted cut-back by right-back Jeremy Toljan. England equalised through Demarai Gray after a partially-cleared corner and Tammy Abraham gave them the lead just after the break, only for substitute Felix Platte to restore parity with an unstoppable near-post header from another corner. Both coaches availed themselves of the experimental fourth substitution during extra-time, but failed to modify the 2-2 scoreline, allowing Germany, after overturning the ball-possession tally to 65-35 in their favour, to clinch a penalty shoot-out win.



Maximilian Philipp
holds off his
England markers

Italy goalkeeper
Gianluigi Donnarumma
feels the pain of defeat



SPAIN 3-1 ITALY

Di Biagio reinstated Petagna as the percussive element in the Italy attack but maintained his high-pressing approach in a bid to disrupt Spain's elaborate combination play, leaving Roberto Gagliardini to protect an ample area in front of his side's back four. Spain's exceptional technique allowed them to emerge from the Italian minefield unscathed and, gradually, Marcos Llorente, Saúl Níguez and Dani Ceballos began to weave a spider's web. The latter delivered a neat pass for Saúl to score after

53 minutes and, when Gagliardini's efforts earned him a second yellow card five minutes later, 'game over' seemed likely to appear on the giant screen. However, a deflected shot by Federico Bernardeschi allowed the ten men to equalise. With coach Albert Celades urging his team to react to the damaging psychological blow, Saúl produced a long-range shot to tranquilise twitching nerves and, when a breathtaking counter along the left allowed Saúl to apply a firm, one-touch finish to the cut-back, the contest was over with a quarter of an hour to spare. Spain were to meet Germany in the final.



Saúl Níguez
claims the match
ball after his
matchwinning
hat-trick



Marco Asensio and
Roberto Gagliardini
compete for the ball



Germany celebrate their triumph

GERMANY SPRING SPANISH SURPRISE

Physical application, discipline and courage – and Mitchell Weiser’s goal – ensured it was Germany singing in the rain in Krakow

It was the 21st game in the 21st competition for Under-21s. Citing the association of the magic number with creative spirits, experts in numerology might easily have predicted a victory for Spanish improvisation over German order. But the final played on a warm, humid evening in Krakow confirmed that football and numbers do not always travel comfortably together.

The form book certainly attached the label of favourite to Albert Celades’ team. They had won all their games en route to the final; Germany had won only two of their four fixtures. But both received vociferous encouragement from the travelling supporters among the 14,059 spectators who filled the stadium with noise and colour. When the French referee signalled for the ball to start rolling, it started

rolling in the way the pundits might have predicted, with the red-shirted Spaniards easing it fluently across the surface and using the dribbling skills of Gerard Deulofeu and Marco Asensio to test the German full-backs.

This lasted five minutes. Then, little by little, Germany rolled up their sleeves and set to work on erasing the script. Or rather, imposing their own. The first warning shot was, to be pedantic, a header, left-back Yannick Gerhardt crossing for Max Meyer’s head to send the ball smacking against Kepa Arrizabalaga’s right-hand post. Spain attempted to reply in kind, with right-back Héctor Bellerín ending an underlapping run by heading wide. But it was along that flank that one of the key strategic battles was to be disputed, with Meyer constantly drifting left from his central midfield role to create overloads in the area around Bellerín and oblige Deulofeu to drop deep to search for numerical equality.

Elsewhere, similar scenarios were being created by Stefan Kuntz’s astute game plan. It required physical application, discipline and courage of convictions – qualities rarely lacking in German teams and certainly not here in Krakow as the first half unfolded. Kuntz watched approvingly, not needing to fine-tune a smoothly running machine, only unfolding his arms to applaud individual actions. The solid platform on which his structure was built was a high defensive line, wavering around 40 metres from the German goal. Goalkeeper Julian Pollersbeck unhesitatingly advanced to sweep the area behind his back four and was rewarded by being constantly brought into play as a passer of the ball.

One of his preferential targets was ‘Maxi’ Arnold, always prepared to drop deep to receive and perform a valuable linking role with the front five, who relentlessly applied aggressive high pressure on Spain’s construction workers. Their screening midfielder, Marcos Llorente, struggled to cope with the shower of arrows fired into his territory, with the result that Saúl Níguez felt compelled to man the defences alongside him, while Dani Ceballos, on the Spanish left, felt equally obliged

to double back as a counterfoil to the running of Mitchell Weiser and full-back Jeremy Toljan. In the central zone, striker Maximilian Philipp, drafted in for the injured Davie Selke, toiled manfully as the first line of the high defence.

Pushed deeper and deeper, the Spanish formation struggled to offer any semblance to the team that had stamped their possession-play hallmark on their previous games. Italy had also based their game plan on obliging Spain to play long, yet Celades' team had found second-ball solutions. Against Germany, they defended so deep that there was no support for striker Sandro Ramírez, who found himself ploughing a lonely furrow. Forward passes were efficiently intercepted – and back came Germany again. As if not recognising his own team, Celades watched aghast, shuffling ideas to identify the key messages for his half-time team talk.

But, before he could reload his weapons in the dressing-room, one of the German arrows had found its mark. During the period of sustained pressure, Toljan found space high on the right to deliver a lofted cross. Way before the near post, Weiser got across centre-back Jesús Vallejo to duck under the ball and then raise his head to connect. Arrizabalaga watched aghast as the ball looped high across the goal and into the far corner of the net.

It was just reward for the German endeavour, concentration and positional intelligence that had effectively prevented Spain from playing their game. As they trooped off the field at half-time, the Spanish players were well aware that they had failed to find ways of expressing themselves and that they were emerging second-best from the individual duels in midfield.

The cast was the same when the curtain rose on the second act, but the Spanish actors began to deliver their lines with greater conviction. Ceballos threatened to thread his way from midfield to the edge of the box; Asensio and Deulofeu began to deliver from the wings; and Níguez finally appeared in a more advanced central position to snap in a left-footed shot that Pollersbeck was relieved to turn round the post for a corner. It was



Spain goalkeeper Kupa Arrizabalaga looks on as Mitchell Weiser's goal flies in

one of a dozen earned by Celades' team but fruitlessly executed, as if to illustrate Spain's readiness to threaten but inability to deliver telling blows during a sustained spell of domination and promising combination play.

Germany conceded ground but maintained their positional order, defended the key areas of their territory and produced speedy counterattacks – one of which provoked an error in control by Spain centre-back Jorge Meré and offered left-winger Serge Gnabry a golden opportunity to double the lead. His tame finish, however, was comfortably dealt with by Arrizabalaga. By this time, Celades had replaced Jonny Otto with the more adventurous left-back José Gayà and, midway through the half, made another straight swap by sending on striker Iñaki Williams to replace Sandro, who had been denied opportunities to receive with his face to



Héctor Bellerín gets reacquainted with former Arsenal team-mate Serge Gnabry

GERMANY'S WIN WAS NOT ABOUT EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS, BUT A REALLY GOOD COLLECTIVE TEAM PERFORMANCE



goal. The final throw of the dice was to withdraw the exhausted Llorente from the screening role and to send on Borja Mayoral as a second striker. Kuntz, by contrast, waited until the final minutes before replacing three of his front five without disturbing the hard core of a team that, after Spain's purple patch at the beginning of the half, had regained its composure, compactness and speed of transition after losses of possession.

When the final whistle sounded, the heavens opened. But when Kuntz walked on to the pitch with a hand on his head, it was not to protect against the rain. The gesture signalled disbelief that his debut tournament had ended in victory. A victory that, in the opinion of UEFA technical observer Mixu Paatelainen, had been "due to their success in preventing Spain from playing. In terms of football, it probably wasn't their best performance. But they were efficient and the defensive structure won them the game." Thomas Schaaf agreed: "The coach designed a perfect structure. The win was not about exceptional individuals but about a really good collective team performance and, in particular, winning all those duels in midfield." The Germany coach who, during the pre-match press conference, had sung "Mister Sandman, bring me a dream" might have been forgiven for singing in the rain and thanking the sandman for having delivered as efficiently as his players.

MATCH STATISTICS

GERMANY 1-0 SPAIN

30 June 2017
Krakow Stadium, Krakow

GOAL
1-0 Weiser 40

GERMANY
Pollersbeck; Toljan, Stark, Kempf, Gerhardt; Haberer (Kohr 82); Weiser, Meyer, Arnold, Gnabry (Amiri 81); Philipp (Öztunali 87)

SPAIN
Arrizabalaga; Bellerín, Meré, Vallejo, Jonny (Gayà 51); Níguez, Llorente (Mayoral 83), Ceballos; Asensio, Ramírez (Williams 71), Deulofeu

REFERREE
Benoit Bastien (FRA)

ATTENDANCE
14,059

1	GOALS	0
41	POSSESSION %	59
18	TOTAL ATTEMPTS	13
4	ON TARGET	1
10	OFF TARGET	6
1	BLOCKED	6
1	WOODWORK	0
4	CORNERS	12
4	YELLOW CARDS	3
375	PASSES	567
83%	PASSING ACCURACY	86%
16	FOULS COMMITTED	12

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

Man-management and team-building skills more than made up for Stefan Kuntz's lack of coaching experience

In the dressing-room, after the tactically thorny group game against Italy, Stefan Kuntz told his players they had just gained experience that money couldn't buy. Despite the defeat that had consigned Germany to second place, he congratulated his team and reassured them that they deserved to be in the semi-finals. After the penalty shoot-out win that earned a place in the final, he reflected that, if England had sent them home, it would not have made him better or worse as a coach.

The balance and maturity seemed at odds with a track record of just three qualifying games in charge of the team after several years in administrative, rather than coaching roles within the game. New at the job, he had evidently travelled to Poland to embark on his first major tournament.

Well, not quite. As one of the relatively few strikers to move into coaching, he was backed by first-hand experience as a player, notably at EURO '96 – a tournament where he learned that man-management of a squad has a prime importance and that players who might not have been regular starters may be called upon to play a final.

This was in the baggage he took to Poland at the head of a squad hurriedly reshaped after the inclusion of nine eligible players in Germany's FIFA Confederations Cup squad. His selection had also been influenced by club form, alignment with the German Football Association's player profiles and personalities amenable to team-building – ahead of pure technical and tactical qualities. As remarked by Thomas Schaaf, a UEFA technical



observer in Poland: "He has a good relationship with the senior team. He likes working with young players and he realises the importance of bringing them together to attain high levels of team performance."

His modus operandi in Poland was to encourage rather than chastise, to be ready with a smile rather than a frown. His body language as he patrolled technical areas exuded composure and reassurance. His style was to follow the game attentively, to be alert, focused and concentrated – and to offer advice and instructions without being strident.

"I was happy with the performances in the first two games and, against Denmark, they implemented a lot of the things we'd had in mind before the game. But at half-time, there was still room for improvement and we did well in making those adjustments in the second half." After the defeat by Italy, he remarked: "There were a lot of things I didn't like – especially the risky build-up play. That match also underlined that football is not only about technique and tactics – there are also mental challenges to meet."

These are the issues he addressed during the preparations for the sudden-death confrontations with England and Spain. "We stressed that we had to be at the top of our game physically and technically," he said. "But we also had to keep cool heads and remain loyal to our playing philosophy."

Apart from designing a game plan based on spiking the wheels of the Spanish ball-playing machine, he underlined the importance of the team spirit he had been at pains to create and promote. "I knew that every player wanted to win the cup for his teammate," he recalled. "It was not easy to disrupt Spain's build-up play and it required a lot of courage. But they did it with a high level of team spirit. There was happiness in the dressing-room afterwards and that makes a coach's job worthwhile. The joy was more than the joy as a player because, apart from feeling happy about yourself, you feel happy for a lot of other people as well."

Italy coach Luigi Di Biagio addresses his players



TECHNICAL TOPICS

From tactical flexibility and the high press to debating the value of possession, UEFA's technical observers tackled a variety of issues in Poland

APPROACHING THE SUMMIT

There was still much to learn – even at this level

“The technical and tactical levels of this tournament are coming, in all aspects, closer and closer to the level of the A tournaments. Most of the players compete in the best leagues in Europe and the overall standard is very high.” The comment by Serbia coach Nenad Lalatović highlighted the status of a final tournament that featured a significant percentage of players capped at senior level and served to prepare the U21s for the demands endemic to a major, high-profile international tournament.

Much the same applied to the coaches. Portugal's Rui Jorge, Sweden's Håkan Ericson and Italy's Luigi Di Biagio were the only three who had patrolled technical areas in the Czech Republic two years earlier. Apart from preparing for contests against top-level opponents, the coaches also had to address the management issues associated with long spells in a major-tournament context. There were also non-footballing aspects to consider, such as media activities that, although they may be of a sporadic nature in the daily domestic life of an U21 squad, gain intensity when reporters are permanently adjacent to the team in an international tournament.

Although the event in Poland represented an approximation to the summit levels of the senior game, the coaches stressed educational values. Denmark coach Niels Frederiksen was left to reflect on a four-year unbeaten run in qualifying but shortfalls in performances against elite opposition. After the semi-final against Spain, Di Biagio mused: “We have players who have appeared in Serie A. But take Saúl, for example, who has played 20 or 30 games in the UEFA Champions League, or Gerard Deulofeu, who has played in Spain, England and Italy. This is not

being critical, but one of the realities we have to face is that the international game is another level compared to the national league.” After ruminating on Portugal's elimination, Rui Jorge said: “I was disappointed by the outcome but not by our performances. My players deserved more for the passion they put into their game. I was asked whether, if I could go back, I would have been more conservative against Spain. But, well, we are not like that.” In other words, even though the U21 tournament cannot be regarded as a development event, its educational value is undeniable.

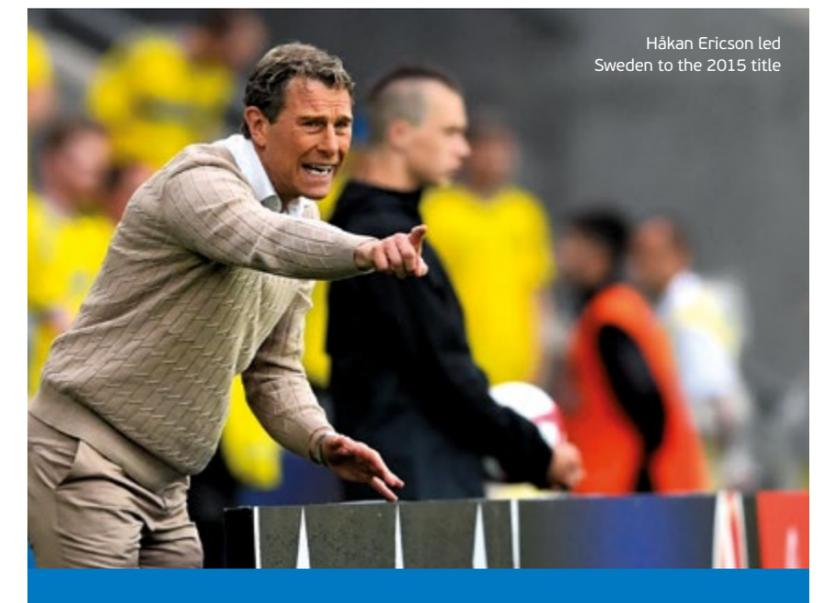
UEFA's technical observer Mixu Paatelainen said: “I felt that the 12-team format encouraged attacking play, whereas at UEFA EURO 2016 we saw what happened when even third place in the group was enough to see you through.” The result was a free-scoring tournament where the only goalless draw was the opening game between England and the defending champions, Sweden. “We set ourselves a target of four points from our first two games,” England manager Aidy Boothroyd said. “We didn't adopt a defensive approach. On the other hand, it was important not to lose.” For the second game against Slovakia,

England switched from a 1-4-2-3-1 structure to 1-4-4-2 with a midfield diamond – and this illustrated the tactical flexibility that provided one of the salient features of the tournament.

PLAN B AND PLAN C

Teams were quick to adapt as the situation demanded

After UEFA EURO 2016, Wales manager Chris Coleman said “the best Plan B is to execute Plan A efficiently”. But, in Poland, most teams were equipped to execute a Plan A and a Plan B with equal degrees of efficiency. “For me,” said UEFA technical observer Peter Rudbæk, “the tournament was all about flexibility rather than what you might call ‘one-concept’ football. There was flexibility match to match; and there was flexibility during matches. I saw the game between Italy and Czech Republic where both teams changed their structure three times. I would say that maybe Spain and Sweden were the only teams to stick to the same playing system throughout.”



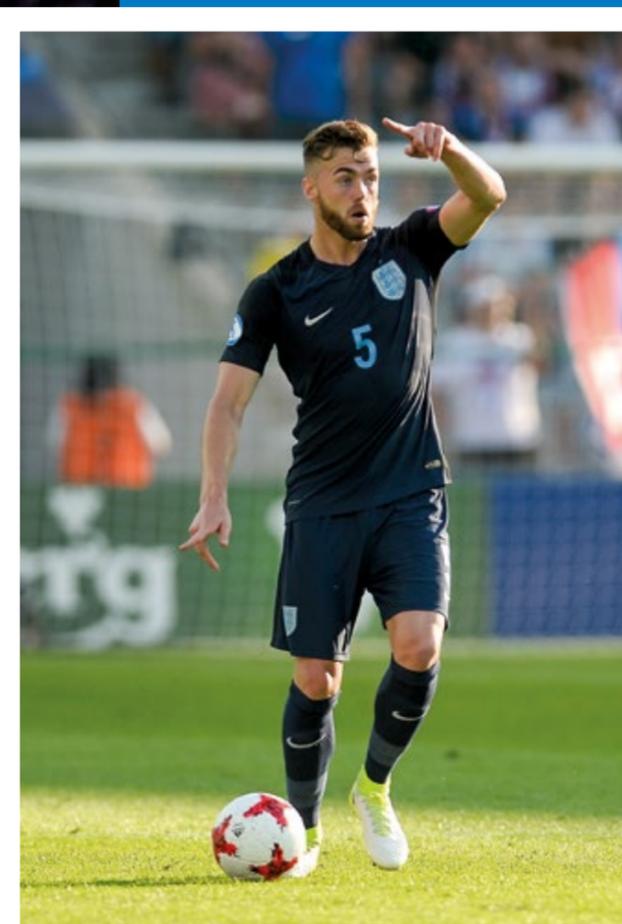
Håkan Ericson led Sweden to the 2015 title

Boothroyd remarked that “with the national teams, you have limited time to practise in different styles. But what the coach can do is to look carefully at the formations used at the players’ clubs and adapt according to what they are familiar with. We picked a squad that had attacking balance so that we could attack in a variety of ways, using a variety of systems.” Sweden coach Ericson agreed that time was short at the final tournament. However, he had trained with a Plan B during the preparation period and the players had also been invited to work on a ‘what to do in this situation’ document based on eight different scenarios.

The structural mutations made it difficult to play the numbers game. But, to summarise default settings, four teams operated in 1-4-2-3-1 formation; four in 1-4-4-2; two in a clear 1-4-1-4-1 structure; and the two Iberian contestants in their traditional 1-4-3-3. None of the teams operated with three at the back. But, even when structures remained unchanged, coaches used different players to vary playing patterns. Di Biagio, for instance, withdrew target striker Andrea Petagna from his starting line-up against Germany, replacing him with the more mercurial Federico Bernardeschi, whose pace and movement constantly asked questions of the German centre-backs. Boothroyd’s switch to the midfield



Portugal's attack-minded full-back João Cancelo



Calum Chambers led England with most passes

diamond allowed England to pressurise the Slovakia playmaker Stanislav Lobotka, while the twin strikers not only drew the attention of the centre-backs but also encouraged the full-backs to devote more time to defensive covering than to attacking forays. Flexible structures provided the

norm rather than the exception. Serbia, for example, switched from 1-4-1-4-1 to 1-4-4-2 against Spain and for the last 20-odd minutes against Portugal. And then changed to 1-4-2-3-1 early in the second half against FYR Macedonia. The Czech Republic were equipped to play 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-5-1 or 1-4-1-3-2 ...

PUSHING ON

Attacking full-backs were a tournament trademark

“The full-backs were especially attack-minded,” said UEFA technical observer Stefan Majewski, “and this was an attractive feature because they often left open spaces that offered opponents good chances to counterattack.” The final between Germany and Spain underlined the importance of the full-back role in team mechanisms, with Albert Celades’ team also demonstrating the value

of the ‘underlapping’ run through the inside channel in addition to the more traditional overlapping runs along the touchline. As Dany Ryser remarked: “We did not just see the full-backs running up the line and hitting high crosses. More and more moves take them right into what we might call the ‘cut-back areas’ between the two vertical lines of the penalty area.” A prime example was provided during the Germany v England semi-final, when Jeremy Toljan reached the byline and delivered the lofted cut-back that allowed Davie Selke

to head his team into a 1-0 lead.

Slovakia left-back Róbert Mazáň, for example, emerged as his side’s main passer of the ball with an average of 67 passes per game. Portugal right-back João Cancelo averaged 54; Toljan and Héctor Bellerín, opponents in the final, were among the right-backs whose participation in team play could be measured by 40 or so passes per game. In terms of positional play, they also played key roles by occupying advanced areas and allowing the wide players to move inside and offer support to the strikers.

BUILDING FROM THE BACK

Centre-backs often cut out the middle man

The full-backs’ role in building from the back was, in most cases, a question of taking advanced positions on the flanks. The most standard procedure was for centre-backs to split, opening a central area for a screening midfielder to drop deep to receive. In some cases, the centre-back provided a simple pass to the deep midfielder – who then either played through the middle or opened play with a view to exploiting the relationships between full-backs and wingers or wide midfielders. In other cases, the centre-backs distributed directly, without the middle man, to the wide areas. In four sides, a centre-back was the team’s main passer of the ball: Italy’s Daniele Rugani, England’s Calum Chambers, Serbia’s Miloš Veljković and Poland’s Jan Bednarek all delivered more passes than any of their team-mates. Germany’s Marc-Oliver Kempf was only marginally behind the deep midfielder Max Arnold in his team’s distribution pattern.

In teams operating with twin screening midfielders, coaches sought to achieve balance with one of them generally assuming greater responsibility in terms of pushing forward to link middle-to-front play and offer support to the main attackers. Denmark sent Lasse Christensen forward while Christian Nørgaard held the zone; for England, Nathaniel Chalobah sat behind the two box-to-box midfielders; Italy relied heavily on Roberto Gagliardini to patrol a wide area behind the front five; Poland were prepared to launch Karol Linetty into an attacking role; Rúben Neves was the covering element for Portugal; Lobotka performed that function for Slovakia. And so on. As Thomas Schaaf remarked: “There were some very impressive examples of efficient rotation among the midfielders during the build-up phase.”



Germany full-back Jeremy Toljan (left) impressed in attack as much as defence

PASSING TIME

Teams based their games on short combination play

As the preceding paragraphs suggest, teams generally focused on playing through the thirds. “Almost all the teams set out to play a passing game,” said Rudbæk. “As it happened,” Paatelainen added, “quite a few teams fielded a tall striker. But, in general, I would say that there was very limited use of direct supply to the target man.” Tournament statistics indicate that just over one-quarter of the goals were scored by main strikers.

This provided a contrast to UEFA EURO 2016 where one of the salient features had been a tendency towards more direct attacking via long back-to-front supply to the strikers, followed by second-ball follow-up. Serbia provided an exception to the general rule by frequently playing long to the striker during their opening game against Portugal, but reverted to combination play in their remaining two fixtures.

“In the games that I saw,” Paatelainen remarked, “the fact that there was so little direct supply to the striker meant that the screening players were generally not under pressure to stay so far back. The emphasis on short combination play through the thirds clarified the situation for many of the teams in terms of their pressing strategies. We saw a lot of teams prepared to press hard from midfield rather than withdraw into the defensive block.”

Rudbæk concurred, saying: “We saw a majority of teams prepared to go high with their first line of defence – and I



Italy's Lorenzo Pellegrini (in white) puts the Czechs under pressure

would pick out the high pressing by Italy as a prime example.” Di Biagio's side posed serious problems to Germany and Spain by pressing with five players in advanced areas and, even if ball-winning was not successful, effectively disrupted the opposition's build-up pattern. Indeed, it was regaining the ball in Germany's right-back area that immediately put Bernardeschi into a one-on-one situation against the goalkeeper and allowed him to score the goal that sent Italy to the top of the group. “At the same time,” Ryser added, “the Italian team was also very competent at what I call ‘rest defence’. They had three or four balancing players who were ready to anticipate the next step in those ‘what if we lose the ball now?’ situations.”

MOST TEAMS WERE PREPARED TO GO HIGH WITH THEIR FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

Spain goalkeeper Kupa Arrizabalaga



KEEPER'S BALL

Goalkeepers were pressed into playing the long ball

“When we discuss ‘high pressing’, we need to draw a distinction between the instant reactions to loss of possession and the sort of high pressing we saw when the ball was with the opposing team's goalkeeper,” said Mixu Paatelainen. “Many teams were prepared to take up high positions, to encourage the keeper to play long – or, if he made a pass to a wide area, to immediately go in and press hard.”

In Poland, the marked tendency was for opponents to cut off short or medium passing options with the evident aim of forcing the keeper to play long and assume a greater risk of loss of possession.

The ploy emphasised the requirement for the goalkeeper to be equipped to play with his feet – and to refine decision making in terms of ball distribution. In Poland, the top teams were unafraid to use the goalkeeper as a passing option when building from the back. Spain's Kupa Arrizabalaga averaged around 40 passes per game; Julian Pollersbeck, his opposite number during the final, averaged 38. Among the other semi-finalists, England's Jordan Pickford made 34 passes on average, Italy's Gianluigi Donnarumma, 28. Attempts to oblige them to play long bore fruit in the sense that, in three of the four cases, one in four passes was intercepted by an opponent. Pollersbeck, following the trail blazed in Germany by Manuel Neuer, played significant periods of each match in sweeping positions outside his penalty area – and the success rate in his passing was significantly higher at 82%.

THE PASSING GAMES

A high number of passes is no guarantee of success

The finalists were the teams who made the highest number of passes per game during the tournament in Poland and, at the same time, registered the highest averages of ball possession. Coincidence? Curiously, the Spain and Germany senior teams had also topped the chart at UEFA EURO 2016 with averages of 641 and 639 passes per game. On the other hand, the average among the top eight teams in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League was 548 passes per match – and all but one of the national teams at the tournament in Poland fell below that mean – even though the totals of Germany and England were somewhat inflated by the half-hour of extra-time they disputed in the semi-final.

At the U21 final tournament in 2015, Sweden had provoked debate on the pros and cons of direct play by taking the title with an average of only 330 passes per game. In Poland, Ericson's team upgraded that figure by a massive 35% – only to bow out in the group stage. "I think that Sweden's statistics are a bit misleading," Rudbæk commented, "because they tended to go for possession play in the midfield areas, to let their game breathe a bit." Sweden's upturn sent the Czech Republic to the foot of the table – their passing accuracy also leaving them well short of the opposition.

The comment underlined the fact that sheer quantity is not everything. Paatelainen acted as spokesman for the entire team of UEFA technical observers by stating: "We didn't see much possession play for possession's sake. The tournament was excellent in terms of dynamic possession and positive passing. That was a very good factor."

At UEFA EURO 2016, one of the features to raise eyebrows was the fact that only 15 of the 51 fixtures were

	COUNTRY	PASSES	ACCURACY
AVERAGE COMPLETED PASSES	Spain	611	89%
	Germany	508	88%
	Slovakia	463	87%
	Portugal	461	83%
	Sweden	444	84%
	Serbia	415	80%
	Italy	407	81%
	England	406	84%
	Denmark	397	83%
	Poland	384	84%
	FYR Macedonia	341	83%
	Czech Republic	335	75%

won by the team that enjoyed a greater share of ball possession. In Poland, that trend petered out. Four of the 21 matches were drawn and, of the other 17, 12 were won by the team who had dominated possession. The wins for the team with a lesser share of the ball were for Slovakia (v Poland), Czech Republic (v Italy), Portugal (v Serbia), Italy (v Germany) and Germany (v Spain in the final). The Czech Republic and FYR Macedonia were alone in having less of the ball in each of their games. Spain and Germany were the only two to consistently enjoy the lion's share of possession until they met in the final.

COUNTER-PUNCHING

Creating danger from high ball-regains

Although possession-based combination moves were the most fertile source of goals, 22% of the open-play goals could be attributed to counterattacking. The percentage, however, was a conservative estimation. As the technical observers pointed out, there was room for debate about definitions of the counterattack, fuelled by a need to differentiate between the traditional counter from deep and the high ball-regains derived from the high pressing that was one of the main trademarks of the tournament. In the latter category,

examples would include Italy's winner against Germany (pressing in the Germany right-back area), Spain's fourth against FYR Macedonia, Portugal's second against Serbia or the Czech Republic's opener against Italy.

On the other hand, the majority of the more traditional counters adopted the form of a regain and a pass to release a player on a high-speed solo run. Spain, despite their reputation for patient possession play, underlined the value of counterattacking in their

armoury with two goals against FYR Macedonia (regains and solo runs by Marco Asensio) and the third against Portugal, when substitute Iñaki Williams set off on a solo run from within his own half. England's second against Poland was slightly more elaborate: Jacob Murphy and Lewis Baker starting the solo run by Demarai Gray that ended with a tap-in by Murphy. Denmark's opening two goals against the Czech Republic stemmed from individual breaks by Rasmus Nissen and Mads Pedersen that were similarly rounded off from close range. The number of successful counters based on long solo runs highlighted the importance of working on off-the-ball movement triggered by ball regains.

USING THE HEAD

Germany scored five of the tournament's 12 headed goals

One of the topics to emerge from recent seasons in UEFA's age-limit tournaments had been a lack of headed goals, prompting questions about the coaching of aerial abilities at development levels. In Poland, 12 of the 65 goals (18%) were headers,

though one of them (Italy's equaliser against the Czechs) was a reflex action to a rebound. It was one of only five open-play goals to be scored with the head, with Germany supplying two of them. Germany underlined the value of aerial ability by scoring all three of their semi-final and final goals with the head. Of the seven headed goals from set plays, one was the far-post header by Serbia's Uroš Djurdjević from a free-kick on the right. The other six, curiously, were from corners on the left.

The high success rate from corners, as mentioned in the goalscoring section of this report, focused attention on the diverse methods of defending them. Portugal were among the minority who preferred zonal marking, along with Germany, who split their players in 4-3-2 lines with one player protecting the near post. Denmark also deployed two players at the posts, with the rest setting up three lines of defence at approximately five, ten and 15 metres from the line. Most set themselves up in a mix of zonal and individual marking, such as the Italian preference for four marking individually and six covering zones. As those numbers indicate, they were among the many teams who defended corners with all players back and, in consequence, limited chances of mounting a counterattack while the opponents' centre-backs, in all probability, were out of position.

England, with two on the posts and the others marking, were alone in leaving two players up, while Poland also left a potential target upfield while they were defending. It was one of the few conservative aspects in a tournament dominated by attacking vocations.



Denmark's Marcus Ingvartsen (9) scored from close range after a quick counter against the Czechs



Davie Selke celebrates his headed goal against England

Saúl Ñíguez was the top scorer with five goals



HITTING THE TARGET

The new 12-team format resulted in the most goals per game since 2004

The expansion to a dozen teams evidently gave rise to a significant increase in the number of goals scored at the final tournament. The event in Poland nevertheless posted the second highest average since the group stage became part of the final tournament in 2000. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, UEFA's technical observers felt that the change of format – with only the group winners assured of a place in the semi-finals, offered an incentive to a more attacking approach. Poland certainly provided a contrast to the previous final tournament in the

Czech Republic, where the paucity of goals during the group stage emerged as a major talking point.

The 65 goals were shared among 51 players, nine of whom found the net more than once. As a general indicator, just under

YEAR	GOALS	AVERAGE
2017	65	3.10
2015	37	2.47
2013	45	3.00
2011	36	2.25
2009	38	2.53
2007	34	2.13
2006	34	2.27
2004	52	3.25
2002	35	2.33
2000	40	2.90

30% of the goals were scored by strikers, 14 by wingers, 9 by wide midfielders, 17 by midfielders operating more centrally, 5 by centre-backs and 2 by full-backs. The caveat about the 'general indicator' is because there are nuances between wingers and wide midfielders and because, to quote an example, Italy's Federico Bernardeschi scored one of his two goals when operating as central striker against Germany and the other from a wide-right role against Spain. Seven goals were scored by substitutes.

HOW THE GOALS WERE SCORED

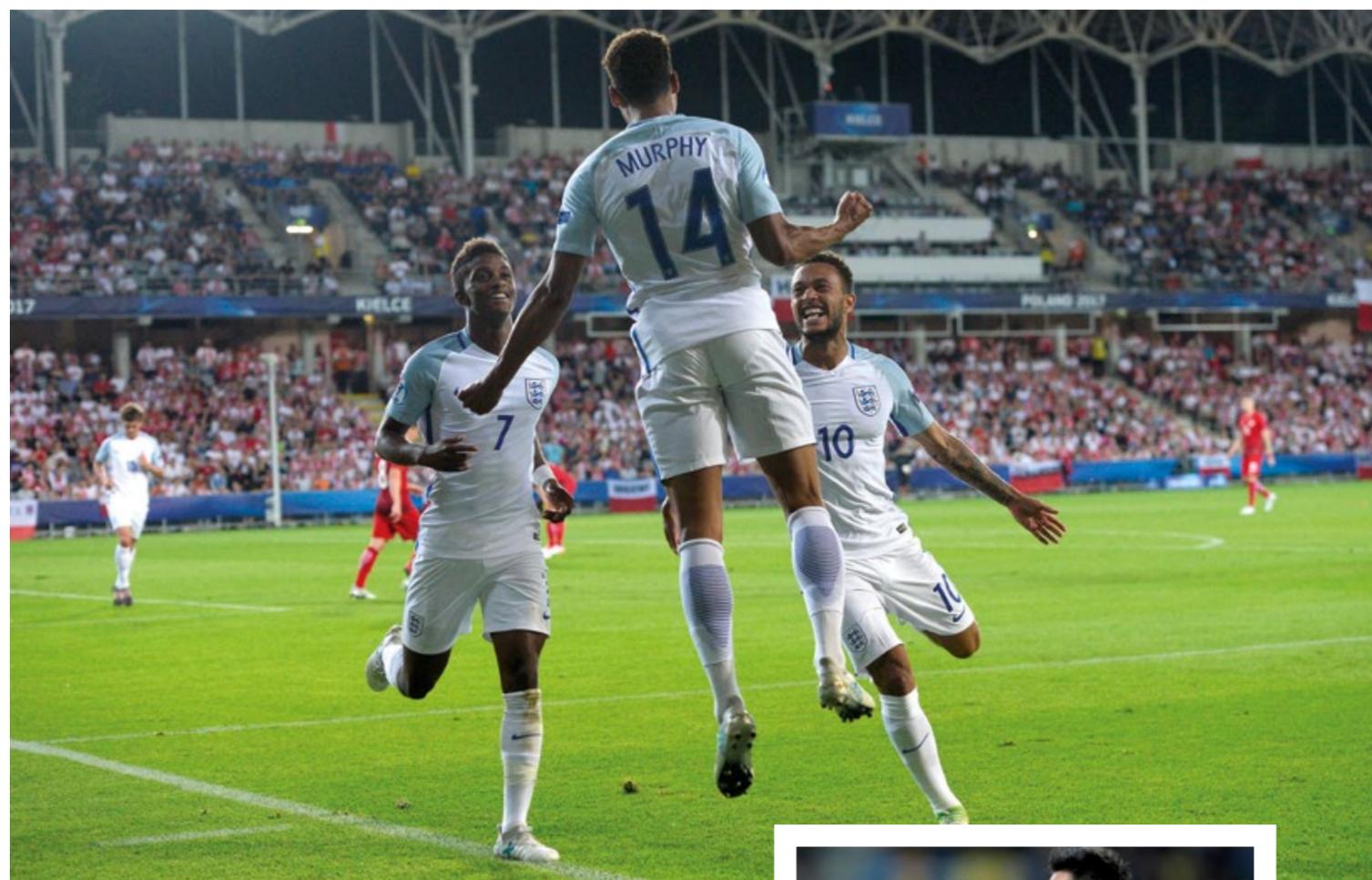
Corners were the most productive set play, while from open play, combination moves and solo runs were the most successful route to goal

Set-play goals

In Poland, set plays accounted for 21.5% of the goals. This confirmed a downward progression in comparison with 27% in 2015 and 31% in Israel in 2013. Conspicuous by their absence were goals derived from free-kicks. The only success was the free-kick on the right and the back-post header that earned Serbia a 2-2 draw against FYR Macedonia. Efforts by direct free-kick specialists went unrewarded. In 2013, half of the set-play goals had been penalties, but only three were converted in 2015 and, despite the increase in the number of matches, only four of five spot-kicks hit the net in Poland – the save by England’s Jordan Pickford thwarting Sweden in the opening game of the tournament.

This meant that corners emerged as the main source of set-play goals. The 2015 tournament had produced a total of 147 corners and the success rate worked out at 1 in 37 – very similar to that season’s UEFA Champions League success rate of one goal per 38.42 corners. But, in 2017, the two competitions trod divergent paths. A success rate of one goal per 51.8 corners in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League (and 1:45 at EURO 2016) was followed by contrasting figures in Poland where nine successes in 217 attempts signified a 1 in 24.1 ratio. England were involved in four of them – scoring from two and conceding copy-and-paste near-post headers against Slovakia and Germany. Apart from this trio – each of them successful twice – the Czech Republic, Portugal and Sweden could attribute goals to corners.

This could be regarded as a poor return on training-ground time dedicated to set plays – as much as 40% of sessions in the case of Italy, 25% for Poland, in addition to



Jacob Murphy (top centre) celebrates his goal in England’s 3-0 win against Poland; Kire Markoski (above left) is mobbed after scoring for FYR Macedonia against Portugal

CATEGORY	ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
SET PLAY	Corner	Direct from or following a corner	9
	Free-kick (direct)	Direct from a free-kick	0
	Free-kick (indirect)	Following a free-kick	1
	Penalty	Spot kick (or follow-up)	4
	Throw-in	Following a throw-in	0
TOTAL SET-PLAY GOALS			14
OPEN PLAY	Combination	Wall pass or combination move	13
	Cross	Cross from the wing	8
	Cut-back	Pass back from the byline	8
	Diagonal	Diagonal pass into the penalty box	0
	Run with the ball	Dribble and close-range shot or dribble and pass	10
	Long-range shot	Direct shot or shot and rebound	8
	Forward pass	Through pass or pass over the defence	2
	Defensive error	Bad back pass or mistake by the keeper	2
	Own goal	Goal by the opponent	0
TOTAL OPEN-PLAY GOALS			51
TOTAL			65

theoretical work in the meeting room. Other teams, such as Serbia or FYR Macedonia, preferred to work on four or five options while, on the other hand, Sweden shunned set-play work in Poland, having done their spadework on the training pitch at home.

Open-play goals

The lack of dividends from dead-ball situations meant that 78.5% of the tournament’s goals were scored in open play. The greater number of matches allowed greater patterns to emerge – with combination play and solo runs with the ball accounting for 45% of the open-play goals. Portugal put together combination moves that lasted 25 and 19 seconds respectively in scoring two of their four goals against FYR Macedonia. Solo runs created goals, even though they were not necessarily finished by the same player. For example, Mads Pedersen’s solo run was the origin of Denmark’s second goal against the Czechs, though he then squared the ball for striker Kenneth Zohore to tap in. Similarly, it was the individual run by FYR Macedonia midfielder Eljif Elmas that set up Kire Markoski to score the second goal against Portugal. Curiously – or frustratingly for the technical observers – a number of the goals blurred the dividing lines between categories and generated doubts about how to attribute, for example, a solo run culminating in a long-range shot. The chart, however, provides orientation and highlights the lack of successes from diagonal deliveries from wide areas into the box and the difficulties in finding routes to goals via forward passes through or over compact defensive blocks. Instead, 31% of the open-play goals stemmed from crosses and cut-backs – including crucial goals in the key knockout matches. Germany right-back Jeremy Toljan, for instance, highlighted the relevance of overlapping and underlapping runs by providing the lofted cut-back that allowed Davie Selke to make it 1-0 in the semi-final against England and by then providing the cross that set up Mitchell Weiser’s winning goal in the final against Spain.

WHEN THE GOALS WERE SCORED

Although the four goals scored during added time make it legitimate to argue that 23% of the goals were scored after the 75th minute, the final quarter-hour of normal time was not the most productive segment of the 21 matches played. Indeed, the final 15 minutes of the first half yielded one more goal, with the period between 61 and 75 minutes proving to be the most fertile, providing 20% of the tournament total. Cagey starts were reflected by a low total of half a dozen goals during the opening 15 minutes but, later in games, the relatively even distribution of goals could be used to argue that fitness levels were uniformly high.

MINS	GOALS	%
1-15	6	9
16-30	10	15
31-45	12	18
45+	0	0
46-60	9	14
61-75	13	20
76-90	11	17
90+	4	6

Decimal points account for the missing 1%



Poland midfielder Dawid Kownacki

ATTEMPTS ON GOAL



Portugal striker Bruma featured twice in the tournament's top ten goals; Germany's Maximilian Arnold challenges Czech Republic forward Patrik Schick (right)

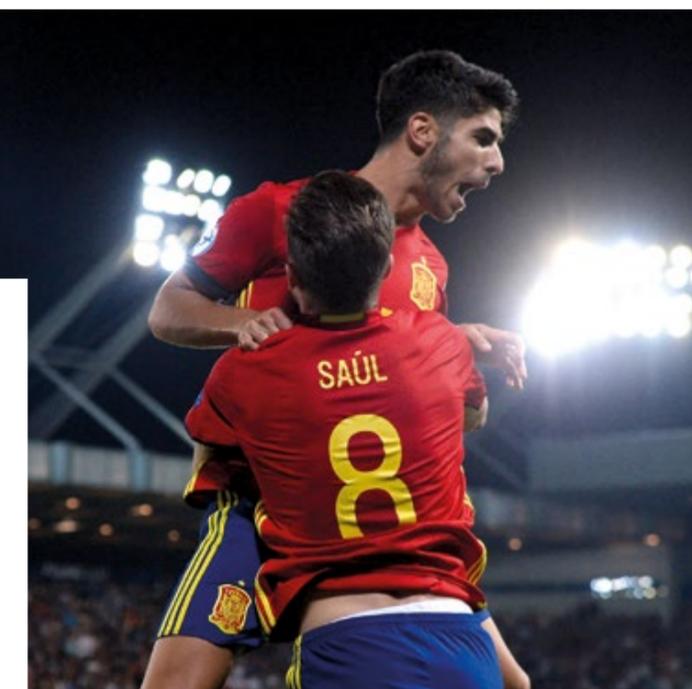
Italy and Slovakia were alone in getting more of their finishing on target than wide of the mark during a tournament that produced 641 goal attempts at an average of 30.5 per game – a significant increase on the 26.6 registered in 2015 and the 20.3 in 2013. Whereas in 2015, two of the eight contestants had averaged fewer than 10 attempts per game (including the champions, Sweden), none of the dozen in Poland registered single figures. However, in the 2017 tournament, 173 were blocked by opponents and, of the remainder, 44% were on target.

TEAM	ATTEMPTS	AVERAGE	ON TARGET	AVERAGE	OFF TARGET	BLOCKED	WOODWORK	GOALS
Germany	113	22.6	30	6	48	35	1	8
Portugal	57	19	18	6	24	15	2	7
Czech Republic	48	16	15	5	18	15	0	5
FYR Macedonia	46	15.33	13	4.33	17	16	1	4
Spain	72	14.4	23	4.6	24	25	0	12
England	54	13.5	21	5.25	23	10	0	7
Slovakia	40	13.33	13	4.33	11	16	0	6
Italy	52	13	24	6	18	10	1	5
Denmark	38	12.67	14	4.67	17	7	0	4
Poland	38	12.67	11	3.67	17	10	1	3
Serbia	32	10.67	12	4	13	7	1	2
Sweden	31	10.33	10	3.33	14	7	1	2

Note: attempts striking the woodwork are included in the on-target total if deflected by goalkeeper or defender and in the off-target total if the attempt strikes the woodwork directly

TOP TEN GOALS

Spanish pair Saúl Ñíguez and Marco Asensio accounted for four of the tournament's top ten strikes



The 65 goals scored in Poland included some net-bursting strikes from long range, five of which found their way into the top ten selected by UEFA's technical observers. Some of them had a massive impact on the outcome of matches, such as the strike by Michael Lüftner that clinched the Czech Republic's shock 3-1 win over Italy or the left-footed drive by Saúl Ñíguez that put Spain 2-1 ahead in the semi-final against the same opponents just after Italy had delivered a psychologically-damaging blow by equalising while down to ten men. Saúl's overhead kick to open the scoring against FYR Macedonia was an example of consummate skill, as was the long-range left-footed volley by Bruma that pulled Portugal back to within a goal at 2-1 during the group game against Spain. The selection also includes the two German headers that put Stefan Kuntz's team 1-0 up in the semi-final against England and provided the winning goal in the final against Spain.

- 1 SAÚL ÑÍGUEZ**
 SPAIN 5-0 FYR MACEDONIA
 Brilliant overhead kick from Gayà's cross from the left put Spain in front in their opening game
- 2 MARCO ASENSIO**
 SPAIN 5-0 FYR MACEDONIA
 The first of Asensio's three goals, this 25-metre strike left goalkeeper Igor Aleksovski rooted to the spot
- 3 MARCO ASENSIO**
 SPAIN 5-0 FYR MACEDONIA
 Asensio runs from his own half, cuts inside and coolly finishes from the edge of the area
- 4 NATHAN REDMOND**
 SLOVAKIA 1-2 ENGLAND
 Redmond collects James Ward-Prowse's deep pass on the left, cuts into the area and fires in at the far post
- 5 BRUMA**
 PORTUGAL 1-3 SPAIN
 Perfect timing from the substitute who volleys in from the edge of the area after Spain fail to clear a corner
- 6 MICHAEL LÜFTNER**
 CZECH REPUBLIC 3-1 ITALY
 Pin-point and powerful low drive from distance with five minutes to play that sealed the Czechs' triumph
- 7 BRUMA**
 FYR MACEDONIA 2-4 PORTUGAL
 This time the forward breaks in from the left, twists past a defender then curls a shot into the far corner
- 8 DAVIE SELKE**
 GERMANY 2-2 ENGLAND (AET; GERMANY WIN 4-3 ON PENS)
 Germany pass their way through England's defence before Jeremy Toljan cuts the ball back for Selke to head in
- 9 SAÚL ÑÍGUEZ**
 SPAIN 3-1 ITALY
 Saúl takes one touch and drills past Donnarumma from 25 metres for the second goal of his hat-trick
- 10 MITCHELL WEISER**
 GERMANY 1-0 SPAIN
 A delicate and perfectly placed looping header off another Toljan cross wins Germany the title

Slovakia celebrate their victory against Sweden – but it wasn't enough to take them through as the best runner-up



TALKING POINTS

The new 12-team format, player availability and tactical flexibility were all hot topics in Poland

participants in major championships," he said after the three matches in Poland. "My players lacked high-level experience and, with that sort of experience, I think they would be better."

Curiously, the eight finalists from 2015 all managed to qualify in 2017. But the expansion opened the door to Poland, Slovakia and Spain as well as to FYR Macedonia. Again, overwhelmingly positive. So how could anybody dare to whisper a preference for the old eight-team tournament?

The answer, of course, can be traced to hang-ups endemic to the 12-team format. What is the best way of getting four semi-finalists from three groups? In Poland, the answer was to include 'the best runner-up' alongside the three group-winners. The criteria were clearly set out in the tournament regulations: number of points, goal difference, number of goals scored and so on, right down to the teams' disciplinary records.

So far, so good. The tournament diary, however, reveals that by approximately 22:40 on Thursday 22 June, England had beaten Poland to top Group A. And Slovakia had posted a 3-0 win against Sweden to claim the runner-up position with a goal difference of +3. Poland and Sweden travelled home, but Slovakia couldn't. They would have to tread water for 48 hours and head coach Pavel Hapal would need to train and prepare for a semi-final that might or might not materialise.

On the Friday, Portugal kicked off against already-eliminated FYR Macedonia with a clear game plan. Rui Jorge and his players had the target of winning by at least three goals. As it happened, they fell a goal short. They went home. Slovakia stayed in the waiting room.

BIGGER AND BETTER?

Opinion was split on the pros and cons of a 12-team tournament

As talking points go, they don't come much better. Against some undeniable pros, debate can be fuelled by some legitimate cons. Expanding the final tournament to 12 teams could only be a positive advance on the previous eight-nation format. Ask Blagoja Milevski, the head coach of FYR Macedonia, debutant at a men's final tournament. "I believe that, in the future, we can be regular

This left Group C subject to all sorts of permutations among Germany, Italy and Czech Republic with the top two places at stake. On the Saturday, Italy had to beat Germany. But the required margin of victory depended on the Czechs. And so on. With Italy 1-0 ahead, news of how the Czech balloon was being punctured by Denmark was relayed to the benches. Reassured by a status quo that signified semi-final places for both Italy and Germany, the closing minutes were dedicated, amid whistling from the spectators, to some anodyne possession play. Slovakia gloomily packed their bags.

Being drawn in Group A had obliged Slovakia to start their final game without a target whereas the teams in the other two groups, playing on later dates, knew exactly what they had to do. Is that fair? Was it coincidence that the last group to kick off provided the 'best runner-up'?

Another angle was that the structure, as one of the coaches put it, "held a knife to our throats". "The groups were so tough that you wanted to field your best players all the time," said another. "And the high level of intensity meant that they were running risks of fatigue, whereas you had players unused on the bench." On the other hand, UEFA's technical observers argued that the format may have influenced the sharp increase in the number of goals. "When two teams qualify from four," said Mixu Paatelainen, "there's a temptation to be more cautious. But if you know you've got to win the group to guarantee a place in the semi-finals, you have strong motives for playing to win."

Bearing all this in mind, it may be easier to understand the degree of discomfort among the coaches. Germany's Stefan Kuntz, eventually to graduate from 'best runner-up' to champion, expressed a widely-held view among his colleagues. "The 12-team format is not the optimal solution," he said. "Eight or 16 teams would be much better." Do you agree? Would it be desirable – or feasible – to manipulate the fixture list so that the final group games could be played at the same time?

The varied styles of Andrea Petagna (pictured) and Federico Bernardeschi gave Italy options in attack



STICK OR TWIST?

How much should a coach adapt his team and tactics to the opposition?

Tactical flexibility is a useful weapon in the coaches' armoury. In Poland, scouting was thorough and meticulous, with the coaches stressing the importance of watching future opponents

during the final tournament rather than basing judgements on performances during the qualifying rounds – a perspective endorsed by the number of enforced squad changes mentioned opposite. But how far do you bend to the qualities of the opposition? As one of the UEFA technical observers at the tournament remarked: "The

coach needs to decide how much to change in order to counter the opposition without running the risk of destroying the team's own style." One of the coaches succinctly commented: "We looked at our opponents, but only to see how best we could play our own football." How easy is it to achieve that balance?

THE LATE DECISION ON THE SQUAD LIST AFFECTED GERMANY'S TRAINING SCHEDULES AND TEAM STRATEGY FOR THE TOURNAMENT



Stefan Kuntz managed his depleted resources brilliantly

MISSING IN ACTION

With player availability different from team to team, how level was the playing field?

Stefan Kuntz also voiced another source of concern among the coaches in Poland. No fewer than nine players whose dates of birth made them eligible for his squad were away on senior team duty at the FIFA Confederations Cup. England coach Aidy Boothroyd found himself in a similar situation in that, in agreement with the senior team coach and the FA technical director, some eligible players had been selected for FIFA World Cup qualifying duties, while other players who might have been selected had only just returned home after winning the FIFA U-20 World Cup in the Korea Republic. Similarly, Rui Jorge travelled to Poland without three players who had been selected for the senior squad

in Russia. Kuntz acknowledged that the late decision on the squad list had affected his training schedules and the team strategy for the tournament. He might, for example, have preferred to operate with two strikers rather than one striker plus two wingers.

Other coaches also remarked that, in terms of squad selection, the playing field was not exactly level – but for different reasons. Nenad Lalatović and Marcin Dorna, head coaches of Serbia and Poland respectively, pointed to one country where all players had been released for the U21s, but where clubs had blocked the release of Serbian and Polish players. This is a relatively widespread issue bearing in mind that, even without the release problems, the squads in Poland averaged half-a-dozen players enrolled at clubs outside their native countries. What's more, the reason behind refusals to release players was that the days in June "were not FIFA dates". As the U21 tournament in Poland was being staged concurrently with the official FIFA Confederations Cup in Russia, is this logical?



Dani Ceballos on the ball and with his trophy as the player of the tournament

MAKING THEIR MARK

Dani Ceballos was named player of the tournament, but his ten teammates in the all-star XI also showed plenty of promise for the future



PLAYER OF THE TOURNAMENT

 **Dani Ceballos**
Spain

At the UEFA European Under-19 Championship finals in 2015, Dani Ceballos was selected for the UEFA Team of the Tournament, alongside fellow midfielder Marco Asensio and central defender Jesús Vallejo. All three played important roles in Poland and, coincidentally, all three have joined Real Madrid since lifting the U19 trophy in Greece. Ceballos, born with Andalusian love of the ball in his blood and educated at the Real Betis Balompié academy in Seville, travelled to Poland on the back of 30 Liga appearances in the 2016/17 season. He took the top award at the U21 tournament as a prime example of a footballer with outstanding individual qualities dedicated to the collective needs of his team. Operating mostly through the inside-left channel of the Spanish team, he used his technical skills to twist and turn away from aggressive pressure and to link attacking play through midfield and into the final third with outstanding control, vision, creativity and ability to see and deliver the telling through pass.

TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT

For only the second time at the final tournament of the UEFA U21 competition, UEFA's technical observers were given the challenging brief of selecting a

'starting list' of 11 players rather than a full 23-man squad. Meeting after the final, their daunting task was to eliminate outstanding performers from the 'short' lists

of 33 and then 22 that they had drawn up while the competition was unfolding. The result was an all-star select XI that could be fielded in a 1-4-4-2 formation.



SCORES AND TABLES

The games, goals and line-ups from Poland

Group A							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
England	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Slovakia	3	2	0	1	6	3	6
Sweden	3	0	2	1	2	5	2
Poland	3	0	1	2	3	7	1

Poland 1-2 Slovakia Lublin, 16 June
Goals 1-0 Lipski 1, 1-1 Valjent 20, 1-2 Šafranko 78
Poland Wrąbel; Kędziora, Bednarek, Jach, Jaroszyński; Dawidowicz, Linetty; Frankowski, Lipski (Niezgoda 82), Kapustka (Moneta 59); Stepiński (Piątek 84)
Slovakia Chovan; Valjent, Niňaj, Škriniar, Mazáň; Lobotka; Rusnák, Bero (Bénes 90+2), Chrien, Mihalík (Haraslín 82); Zreťák (Šafranko 73)
Yellow cards Škriniar 71, Šafranko 81 (SVK)
Referee Gözübüyük **ARs** Van Dongen, Van Zuilen
Man of the match Lobotka (SVK)

Sweden 0-0 England Kielce, 16 June
Sweden Cajtoft; Wahlqvist, Larsson, Dagerstål, Lundqvist; Tibbling (Tankovic 85), Hallberg, Fransson (Mrabti 73); Olsson; Cibicki, Engvall (Strandberg 59)
England Pickford; Holgate, Mawson, Chambers, Chilwell; Ward-Prowse, Baker, Chalobah, Murphy (Gray 70); Redmond, Abraham
Referee Stieler **ARs** Foltyn, Seidel
Man of the match Chalobah (ENG)

Poland 2-2 Sweden Lublin, 19 June
Goals 1-0 Moneta 6, 1-1 Strandberg 36, 1-2 Larsson 41, 2-2 Kownacki 90+1 (P)
Poland Wrąbel; Kędziora, Bednarek, Jach, Jaroszyński; Linetty, Dawidowicz (Piątek 88); Frankowski, Kownacki, Moneta (Lipski 74); Stepiński (Niezgoda 58)
Sweden Cajtoft; Wahlqvist, Larsson, Dagerstål, Lundqvist; Tibbling (Tankovic 61), Hallberg, Fransson (Mrabti 87); Olsson; Cibicki, Strandberg (Engvall 69)
Yellow cards Kownacki 46, Niezgoda 65, Bednarek 71, Linetty 86 (POL); Olsson 19, Strandberg 24, Cibicki 29, Hallberg 89, Dagerstål 90, Wahlqvist 90+5 (SWE)
Referee Vinčić **ARs** Klančnik, Kovacic
Man of the match Olsson (SWE)

Slovakia 1-2 England Kielce, 19 June
Goals 1-0 Chrien 23, 1-1 Mawson 50, 1-2 Redmond 61
Slovakia Chovan; Valjent, Niňaj, Škriniar, Mazáň; Lobotka; Rusnák, Bero, Chrien (Bénes 66), Mihalík (Haraslín 73); Zreťák (Šafranko 65)
England Pickford; Holgate (Murphy 46), Chambers, Mawson, Chilwell; Ward-Prowse, Chalobah; Swift (Gray 79), Baker, Redmond; Abraham (Woodrow 88)
Yellow cards Bero 13, Mazáň 65 (SVK); Ward-Prowse 27, Murphy 86, Baker 90+4 (ENG)
Referee Mažeika **ARs** Šimkus, Kazlauskas
Man of the match Redmond (ENG)

England 3-0 Poland Kielce, 22 June
Goals 1-0 Gray 6, 2-0 Murphy 69, 3-0 Baker 82 (P)
England Pickford; Holgate, Chambers, Mawson, Chilwell; Ward-Prowse (Abraham 72), Chalobah (Hughes 39), Swift, Baker, Redmond (Murphy 46); Gray
Poland Wrąbel; Kędziora, Bednarek (82 so), Jach, Jaroszyński; Frankowski, Linetty, Murawski, Moneta (Lipski 46); Kownacki (Stepiński 73); Piątek (Niezgoda 64)
Yellow cards Mawson 65 (ENG); Bednarek 79, 82 (POL)
Red card Bednarek 82 (POL)
Referee Lechner **ARs** Heidenreich, Kolbitsch
Man of the match Gray (ENG)

Slovakia 3-0 Sweden Lublin, 22 June
Goals 1-0 Chrien 5, 2-0 Mihalík 22, 3-0 Šatka 73
Slovakia Chovan; Šatka, Niňaj, Škriniar, Mazáň; Lobotka; Rusnák, Bero (Bénes 85), Chrien, Mihalík (Haraslín 90); Zreťák (Šafranko 69)
Sweden Cajtoft; Wahlqvist, Larsson, Brorsson, Binaku; Mrabti, Hallberg (Tankovic 46), Olsson (Asoro 72), Fransson; Strandberg, Cibicki (Eliasson 46)
Yellow cards Mrabti 56, Wahlqvist 86 (SWE)
Referee Manzano **ARs** Rodriguez, Sevilla
Man of the match Lobotka (SVK)

Group B							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Spain	3	3	0	0	9	1	9
Portugal	3	2	0	1	7	5	6
Serbia	3	0	1	2	2	5	1
FYR Macedonia	3	0	1	2	4	11	1

Portugal 2-0 Serbia Bydgoszcz, 17 June
Goals 1-0 Guedes 37, 2-0 Fernandes 88
Portugal Varela; Cancelo, Ié, Semedo, Rodrigues; Carvalho (Sanches 59), Neves, Fernandes; Guedes, Podence (Medeiros 68), Jota (Bruma 46)
Serbia Milinković-Savić; Gajić, Jovanović, Veljković, Antonov; Živković, Grujić (Radonjić 68), Maksimović, Gačinović; Djurdjević (Ožegović 74), Čavrić (Plavšić 46)
Yellow cards Semedo 19, Bruma 78, Fernandes 81 (POR); Grujić 4, Gačinović 51, Antonov 55, Gajić 70 (SRB)
Referee Bastien **ARs** Zakrani, Haquette
Man of the match Fernandes (POR)

Spain 5-0 FYR Macedonia Gdynia, 17 June
Goals 1-0 Níguez 10, 2-0 Asensio 16, 3-0 Deulofeu 35 (P), 4-0 Asensio 54, 5-0 Asensio 72
Spain Arrizabalaga; Bellerín, Meré, Vallejo, Gayà; Llorente; Deulofeu (Ceballos 63), Suárez, Níguez, Asensio (Oyarzabal 81); Ramírez (Williams 74)
FYR Macedonia Aleksovski; Bejtulai, Zajkov, Velkoski, Demiri; Nikolov, Bardi; Radeski, Babunski (Kostadinov 76), Markoski (Gjorgjev 46); Angelov (Elmas 46)
Yellow card Meré 2 (ESP)
Referee Lechner **ARs** Heidenreich, Kolbitsch
Man of the match Asensio (ESP)

Portugal 1-3 Spain Gdynia, 20 June
Goals 0-1 Níguez 21, 0-2 Ramírez 65, 1-2 Bruma 77, 1-3 Williams 90+3
Portugal Varela; Cancelo, Ié, Semedo, Rodrigues; Carvalho (Paciência 66), Neves, Sanches (Horta 73); Guedes, Fernandes, Podence (Bruma 57)
Spain Arrizabalaga; Bellerín, Meré, Vallejo, Jonny; Llorente; Deulofeu (Suárez 82), Níguez, Ceballos, Asensio (Merino 90); Ramírez (Williams 75)
Yellow cards Neves 4, Fernandes 70, Paciência 75, Semedo 79 (POR); Ceballos 57 (ESP)
Referee Stieler **ARs** Foltyn, Seidel
Man of the match Vallejo (ESP)

Serbia 2-2 FYR Macedonia Bydgoszcz, 20 June
Goals 1-0 Gačinović 24, 1-1 Bardi 64 (P), 1-2 Gjorgjev 83, 2-2 Djurdjević 90
Serbia Milinković-Savić; Gajić (Filipović 46), Jovanović, Veljković, Antonov (Ožegović 77); Živković, Grujić (Ristić 52), Maksimović, Gačinović; Djurdjević, Plavšić
FYR Macedonia Aleksovski; Murati, Zajkov, Velkoski, Demiri; Nikolov, Bardi; Radeski (Pivkovski 86), Babunski (Elmas 58), Markoski (46); Avramovski (Gjorgjev 46)
Yellow cards Grujić 23, Plavšić 85, Jovanović 85, Veljković 90+4, Milinković-Savić 90+5, Pankov 90+5* (SRB); Markoski 14, Elmas 60 (MKD)
Red card Pankov 90+5* (SRB)
Referee Madden **ARs** McGeachie, Mather
*Not on field of play
Man of the match Gačinović (SRB)

FYR Macedonia 2-4 Portugal Gdynia, 23 June
Goals 0-1 Ié 2, 0-2 Bruma 22, 1-2 Bardi 40, 1-3 Podence 57, 2-3 Markoski 80, 2-4 Bruma 90+1
FYR Macedonia Siskovski; Popzlatanov, Zajkov, Bejtulai, Murati; Babunski (Markoski 74), Bardi, Nikolov; Gjorgjev, Radeski (Musliu 28), Angelov (Elmas 57)
Portugal Varela; Cancelo, Ié, Figueiredo, Rebocho (Rodrigues 18); Neves, Sanches (Horta 55); Medeiros, Podence (Jota 69, 90+2 so), Bruma; Paciência
Yellow cards Babunski 49, Musliu 63, Siskovski 88, Bardi 90+5 (MKD); Paciência 86, Figueiredo 90+7 (POR)
Red card Jota 90+2 (POR)
Referee Kružliak **ARs** Somolani, Hancko
Man of the match Bruma (POR)

Serbia 0-1 Spain Bydgoszcz, 23 June
Goal 0-1 Suárez 38
Serbia Manojlović; Filipović, Jovanović, Veljković, Antonov; Lukić (Plavšić 87), Maksimović, Gačinović; Radonjić (Ristić 71), Djurdjević (41 so), Živković
Spain Pau; Odrizozola, González, Merino, Gayà; Soler, Hernández, Suárez; Williams, Mayoral, Oyarzabal
Yellow cards Djurdjević 21, 41, Jovanović 40 (SRB); Merino 90 (ESP)
Red card Djurdjević 41 (SRB)
Referee Mažeika **ARs** Šimkus, Kazlauskas
Man of the match Suárez (ESP)

Group C							
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Italy	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Germany	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
Denmark	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
Czech Republic	3	1	0	2	5	7	3

Denmark 0-2 Italy Krakow, 18 June
Goals 0-1 Pellegrini 54, 0-2 Petagna 86
Denmark Højbjerg; Holst, Banggaard, Maxsø, Rasmussen; Hjulsgager, Nørgaard, Christensen, Børsting (Duelund 79); Andersen (Hansen 80), Ingvartsen (Zohore 72)
Italy Donnarumma; Conti, Rugani, Caldara, Barreca; Pellegrini, Gagliardini, Benassi (Grassi 73); Berardi (Chiesa 67), Petagna (Cerri 88), Bernardeschi
Yellow cards Nørgaard 26, Holst 83 (DEN)
Referee Kružliak **ARs** Somolani, Hancko
Man of the match Pellegrini (ITA)

Germany 2-0 Czech Republic Tychy, 18 June
Goals 1-0 Meyer 44, 2-0 Gnbry 50
Germany Pollersbeck; Toljan, Stark, Kempf, Gerhardt; Dahoud (Jung 66), Arnold (Haberer 86); Weiser (Philipp 76), Meyer, Gnbry; Selke
Czech Republic Zima; Sáček (Chorý 81), Lüftner, Simič, Havel; Souček; Černý (Hašek 72), Trávník, Ševčík (Barák 56), Jankto; Schick
Yellow cards Trávník 83, Jankto 89 (CZE)
Referee Manzano **ARs** Rodriguez, Sevilla
Man of the match Max Meyer (GER)

Czech Republic 3-1 Italy Tychy, 21 June
Goals 1-0 Trávník 24, 1-1 Berardi 70, 2-1 Havlík 79, 3-1 Lüftner 85
Czech Republic Zima; Havel, Lüftner, Simič, Holzer; Hubínek (Chorý 77); Hašek (Havlík 66), Trávník, Souček, Jankto; Schick (Sáček 83)
Italy Donnarumma; Conti, Ferrari, Rugani, Calabria; Grassi (Chiesa 54), Cataldi (Cerri 83), Pellegrini; Berardi, Petagna, Bernardeschi (Gagliardini 75)
Yellow cards Hubínek 18, Havlík 76 (CZE); Berardi 29, Cataldi 34, Conti 73, Cerri 87 (ITA)
Referee Bastien **ARs** Zakrani, Haquette
Man of the match Souček (CZE)

Germany 3-0 Denmark Krakow, 21 June
Goals 1-0 Selke 53, 2-0 Kempf 73, 3-0 Amiri 79
Germany Pollersbeck; Toljan, Stark, Kempf, Gerhardt; Dahoud, Arnold (Amiri 65); Weiser (Jung 66), Meyer, Gnbry (Öztunali 80); Selke
Denmark Højbjerg; Holst, Maxsø, Banggaard, Blåberg (Pedersen 62); Hjulsgager (Jensen 80), Christensen, Nørgaard, Nielsen (Zohore 56); Duelund, Ingvartsen
Yellow cards Jung 76, Toljan 84, Stark 90+2 (GER); Christensen 13, Duelund 46, Banggaard 63 (DEN)
Referee Gözübüyük **ARs** Van Dongen, Van Zuilen
Man of the match Toljan (GER)

Referees	Ángel Nevado Rodríguez (ESP)	Tomaž Klančnik (SVN)	Dennis Higler (NED)
Harald Lechner (AUT)	Diego Barbero Sevilla (ESP)	Andraž Kovacic (SVN)	Jeroen Manschot (NED)
Jesús Gil Manzano (ESP)	Hicham Zakrani (FRA)	Frédéric Haquette (FRA)	Andrew Dallas (SCO)
Benoît Bastien (FRA)	Rafael Foltyn (GER)	Jan Seidel (GER)	Donald Robertson (SCO)
Tobias Stieler (GER)	Jan Seidel (GER)	Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	Peter Královič (SVK)
Gediminas Mažeika (LTU)	Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	Bobby Madden (SCO)	Rade Obrenović (SVN)
Serdar Gözübüyük (NED)	Bobby Madden (SCO)	Ivan Kružliak (SVK)	Roberto Ponis (SVN)
Bobby Madden (SCO)	Ivan Kružliak (SVK)	Slavko Vinčić (SVN)	
Assistant referees	Ángel Nevado Rodríguez (ESP)	Tomaž Klančnik (SVN)	Fourth officials
Andreas Heidenreich (AUT)	Diego Barbero Sevilla (ESP)	Andraž Kovacic (SVN)	Roy Hassan (ISR)
Maximilian Kolbitsch (AUT)	Hicham Zakrani (FRA)	Frédéric Haquette (FRA)	Marcin Borkowski (POL)
	Rafael Foltyn (GER)	Jan Seidel (GER)	Michał Obukowicz (POL)
	Jan Seidel (GER)	Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	Igor Demeshko (RUS)
	Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	Bobby Madden (SCO)	
	Bobby Madden (SCO)	Ivan Kružliak (SVK)	
	Slavko Vinčić (SVN)	Slavko Vinčić (SVN)	
	Assistant referees	Ángel Nevado Rodríguez (ESP)	
	Andreas Heidenreich (AUT)	Diego Barbero Sevilla (ESP)	
	Maximilian Kolbitsch (AUT)	Hicham Zakrani (FRA)	
		Rafael Foltyn (GER)	
		Jan Seidel (GER)	
		Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	
		Bobby Madden (SCO)	
		Ivan Kružliak (SVK)	
		Slavko Vinčić (SVN)	
	Assistant referees	Ángel Nevado Rodríguez (ESP)	
	Andreas Heidenreich (AUT)	Diego Barbero Sevilla (ESP)	
	Maximilian Kolbitsch (AUT)	Hicham Zakrani (FRA)	
		Rafael Foltyn (GER)	
		Jan Seidel (GER)	
		Vytautas Šimkus (LTU)	
		Bobby Madden (SCO)	
		Ivan Kružliak (SVK)	
		Slavko Vinčić (SVN)	

Czech Republic 2-4 Denmark Tychy, 24 June
Goals 0-1 Andersen 23, 1-1 Schick 27, 1-2 Zohore 35, 2-2 Chorý 54, 2-3 Zohore 73, 2-4 Ingvartsen 90+1
Czech Republic Zima; Havel, Lüftner, Simič, Holzer (Havlík 78); Souček, Hašek (Chorý 46); Černý, Trávník, Jankto (Juliš 64); Schick
Denmark Højbjerg; Nissen, Maxsø, Banggaard, Pedersen (Blåberg 74); Hjulsgager (Ingvartsen 65), Christensen (Nielsen 57), Nørgaard, Jensen; Zohore, Andersen
Yellow cards Černý 79, Simič 82, Souček 88 (CZE); Ingvartsen 69 (DEN)
Referee Madden **ARs** McGeachie, Mather
Man of the match Andersen (DEN)

Italy 1-0 Germany Krakow, 24 June
Goal 1-0 Bernardeschi 31
Italy Donnarumma; Conti, Caldara, Rugani, Barreca; Chiesa (Petagna 78), Gagliardini, Pellegrini, Benassi; Berardi (Locatelli 86), Bernardeschi
Germany Pollersbeck; Toljan, Stark, Kempf, Gerhardt; Dahoud (Jung 72), Arnold; Weiser (Amiri 76), Meyer (Philipp 67), Gnbry; Selke
Yellow cards Berardi 32, Chiesa 34, Bernardeschi 38, Conti 45+1 (ITA); Kempf 25, Arnold 32, Gerhardt 84 (GER)
Referee Vinčić **ARs** Klančnik, Kovacic
Man of the match Bernardeschi (ITA)

SEMI-FINALS

England 2-2 Germany Tychy, 27 June (Germany win 4-3 on penalties)
Goals 0-1 Selke 35, 1-1 Gray 41, 2-1 Abraham 50, 2-2 Platte 70
Penalty shoot-out 0-1 Arnold, 1-1 Baker, 1-1 Gerhardt (saved), 1-1 Abraham (saved), 1-2 Philipp, 2-2 Chilwell, 2-3 Meyer, 3-3 Ward-Prowse, 3-4 Amiri, 3-4 Redmond (saved)
England Pickford; Holgate (Iorfa 106), Chambers, Mawson, Chilwell; Ward-Prowse, Hughes (Swift 86), Chalobah (Murphy 66), Gray (Redmond 73); Baker, Abraham
Germany Pollersbeck; Toljan, Jung (Kehrer 80), Kempf, Gerhardt; Haberer (Kohr 102); Philipp, Meyer, Arnold, Gnbry (Amiri 87); Selke (Platte 63)
Yellow cards Hughes 11, Chilwell 59, Holgate 84 (ENG); Selke 19, Gnbry 81, Kempf 108, Arnold 113
Referee Mažeika **ARs** Šimkus, Kazlauskas
Man of the match Pollersbeck (GER)

Spain 3-1 Italy Krakow, 27 June
Goals 1-0 Níguez 53, 1-1 Bernardeschi 62, 2-1 Níguez 65, 3-1 Níguez 74
Spain Arrizabalaga; Bellerín, Meré, Vallejo, Jonny; Llorente; Ceballos (Oyarzabal 88), Níguez; Deulofeu (Suárez 82), Ramírez (Williams 78), Asensio
Italy Donnarumma; Calabria, Caldara, Rugani, Barreca; Benassi (Garritano 87), Gagliardini (58 so), Pellegrini, Chiesa (Locatelli 61); Petagna (Cerri 72), Bernardeschi
Yellow cards Benassi 45+1, Gagliardini 50, 58, Calabria 56, Cerri 77 (ITA)
Red card Gagliardini 58 (ITA)
Referee Vinčić **ARs** Klančnik, Kovacic
Man of the match Níguez (ESP)

FINAL

Germany 1-0 Spain Krakow, 30 June
Goal 1-0 Weiser 40
Germany Pollersbeck; Toljan, Stark, Kempf, Gerhardt; Haberer (Kohr 82); Weiser, Meyer, Arnold, Gnbry (Amiri 81); Philipp (Öztunali 87)
Spain Arrizabalaga; Bellerín, Meré, Vallejo, Jonny (Gayà 51); Níguez, Llorente (Mayoral 83), Ceballos; Asensio, Ramírez (Williams 71), Deulofeu
Yellow cards Arnold 47, Haberer 50, Stark 52, Meyer 78 (GER); Níguez 43, Llorente 54, Vallejo 89 (ESP)
Referee Bastien **ARs** Zakrani, Haquette
Man of the match Weiser (GER)

TOP SCORERS

5	SAÚL NÍGUEZ <div> SPAIN</div>	
1 assist 360 minutes played		

3	MARCO ASENSIO <div> SPAIN</div>	
1 assist 351 minutes played		

3	BRUMA <div> PORTUGAL</div>	
0 assists 167 minutes played		

CZECH REPUBLIC

GROUP C ITALY (6PTS), GERMANY (6), DENMARK (3), CZECH REPUBLIC (3)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	GER LO-2	ITA W3-1	DEN L2-4	CLUB	
GOALKEEPERS								
1	Luděk Vejmola	03/11/94					FK Mladá Boleslav	
16	Lukáš Zima	09/01/94		90	90	90	Genoa CFC	
23	Patrik Macej	11/06/94					MFK Zemplín Michalovce	
DEFENDERS								
2	Stefan Simič	20/01/95		90	90	90	R. Excel Mouscron	
6	Michael Lüftner	14/03/94	1	90	90	90	SK Slavia Praha	
15	Patrizio Stronati	17/11/94					FK Mladá Boleslav	
19	Milan Havel	07/08/94		90	90	90	Bohemians Praha 1905	
21	Daniel Holzer	18/08/95			90	78↓	AC Sparta Praha	
22	Filip Kaša	01/01/94					MŠK Žilina	
MIDFIELDERS								
3	Marek Havlík	08/07/95	1		24↑	12↑	1. FC Slovácko	
4	Michal Sáček	19/09/96		81↓	7↑		AC Sparta Praha	
5	Tomáš Souček	27/02/95		90	90	90	SK Slavia Praha	
8	Antonín Barák	03/12/94		34↑			SK Slavia Praha	
10	Michal Trávník	17/05/94	1	90	90	90	FK Jablonec	
11	Jakub Jankto	19/01/96	1	90	90	64↓	Udinese Calcio	
12	Michal Hubínek	10/11/94			77↓		Bohemians Praha 1905	
13	Jakub Nečas	26/01/95					FK Mladá Boleslav	
17	Václav Černý	17/10/97	1	72↓		90	AFC Ajax	
18	Petr Ševčík	04/05/94		56↓			FC Slovan Liberec	
20	Martin Hašek	03/10/95		18↑	66↓	45↓	Bohemians Praha 1905	
FORWARDS								
7	Lukáš Juliš	02/12/94				26↑	AC Sparta Praha	
9	Tomáš Chorý	26/01/95	1	1	9↑	13↑	45↑	SK Sigma Olomouc
14	Patrik Schick	24/01/96	1	1	90	83↓	90	UC Sampdoria

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

VÍTĚZSLAV LAVIČKA

BORN: 30/04/63
NATIONALITY: Czech



STATISTICS

18 PLAYERS USED	5 GOALS SCORED
335 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 415 v Denmark Min: 292 v Germany
75% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 80% v Denmark Min: 77% v Germany
43% POSSESSION	Max: 49% v Denmark Min: 39% v Germany

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Under pressure, build by central midfielder to striker; 10 linking midfield with attack; 17, 11 solo runs into middle



DEFENCE: Two close lines of four; 10 supplementing 14 as first line against attacks through the middle

KEY FEATURES

- Variations on 1-4-2-3-1; late switch to 1-3-4-1-2 v Denmark
- Tactical flexibility; three changes of structure during match v Italy
- Frequent use of direct supply to front by screening midfielder Souček
- Powerful, hard-working midfield; aggressive pressure; second ball
- Combinations on wings with overlapping full-backs, wide players cutting in
- Spells of high pressing; direct attacking, long-range shooting after ball win
- Well-organised unit with strong work ethic, discipline, team spirit

DENMARK

GROUP C ITALY (6PTS), GERMANY (6), DENMARK (3), CZECH REPUBLIC (3)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	ITA LO-2	GER LO-3	CZE W4-2	CLUB	
GOALKEEPERS								
1	Jeppe Højbjerg	30/04/95		90	90	90	Esbjerg fB	
16	Thomas Hagelskjær	04/02/95					AGF Aarhus	
22	Daniel Iversen	19/07/97					Leicester City FC	
DEFENDERS								
2	Frederik Holst	24/09/94		90	90		Brøndby IF	
3	Andreas Maxsø	18/03/94		90	90	90	FC Nordsjælland	
4	Patrick Banggaard Jensen	04/04/94		90	90	90	SV Darmstadt 98	
5	Jakob Blåbjerg	11/01/95		62↓	16↑		Aalborg BK	
12	Rasmus Nissen Kristensen	11/07/97				90	FC Midtjylland	
13	Joachim Andersen	31/05/96					FC Twente	
15	Mads Pedersen	01/09/96	1	28↑	74↓		FC Nordsjælland	
20	Jacob Rasmussen	28/05/97		90			FC Schalke 04	
MIDFIELDERS								
6	Christian Nørgaard	10/03/94		90	90	90	Brøndby IF	
7	Andrew Hjulsager	15/01/95		90	80↓	65↓	RC Celta de Vigo	
8	Lasse Vigen Christensen	15/08/94		90	90	57↓	Fulham FC	
14	Casper Nielsen	29/04/94		56↓	33↑		Odense BK	
17	Mathias Jensen	01/01/96			10↑	90	FC Nordsjælland	
18	Emiliano Marcondes Hansen	09/03/95			10↑		FC Nordsjælland	
19	Frederik Børsting	13/02/95		79↓			Aalborg BK	
23	Mikkel Duelund Poulsen	29/06/97		11↑	90		FC Midtjylland	
FORWARDS								
9	Marcus Ingvartsen	04/01/96	1	72↓	90	25↑	FC Nordsjælland	
10	Lucas Andersen	13/09/94	1	80↓		90	Grasshopper Club Zürich	
11	Kenneth Zohore	31/01/94	2	2	18↑	44↑	90	Cardiff City AFC
21	Kasper Junker	05/03/94					AGF Aarhus	

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

NIELS FREDERIKSEN

BORN: 05/11/70
NATIONALITY: Danish



STATISTICS

19 PLAYERS USED	4 GOALS SCORED
397 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 415 v Italy Min: 386 v Czech Republic
83% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 88% v Germany Min: 80% v Italy, Czech Republic
46% POSSESSION	Max: 51% v Czech Republic Min: 44% v Italy

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Full-backs up; 8 supporting attacks with 6 in holding role; 10 dropping short to receive; 9 playing in depth



DEFENCE: 10 dropping off to defend against opposition's deep midfielder

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-4-2 with quick transitions to compact 1-4-4-1-1 defending
- Emphasis on building from back with one central midfielder back
- The other pushing forward to open play to wings, support attacks
- Second striker Andersen dropping off to receive – and to defend
- Right-back Holst overlapping; less adventurous wing-play on left
- Strong midfield pressing; quick pass to Andersen or wide players after ball-win
- Well-organised, compact unit; rational attacking with four players balancing

ENGLAND

GROUP A ENGLAND (7PTS), SLOVAKIA (6), SWEDEN (2), POLAND (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	SWE	SVK	POL	GER	CLUB
	DO-0	W2-1	W3-0	D2-2*				
GOALKEEPERS								
1	Jordan Pickford	07/03/94		90	90	90	120	Sunderland AFC
13	Angus Gunn	22/01/96						Manchester City FC
21	Jonathan Mitchell	24/11/94						Derby County FC
DEFENDERS								
2	Mason Holgate	22/10/96		90	45↓	90	106↓	Everton FC
3	Ben Chilwell	21/12/96	1	90	90	90	120	Leicester City FC
5	Calum Chambers	20/01/95		90	90	90	120	Arsenal FC
6	Jack Stephens	27/01/94						Southampton FC
12	Matt Targett	18/09/95						Southampton FC
16	Rob Holding	20/09/95						Arsenal FC
17	Kortney Hause	16/07/95						Wolverhampton Wanderers
18	Dominic Iorfa	24/06/95					14↑	Wolverhampton Wanderers
23	Alfie Mawson	19/01/94	1	90	90	90	120	Swansea City AFC
MIDFIELDERS								
4	Nathaniel Chalobah	12/12/94		90	90	39↓	66↓	Chelsea FC
7	Demarai Gray	28/06/96	2	1	20↑	11↑	90	Leicester City FC
8	James Ward-Prowse	01/11/94	1	90	90	72↓	120	Southampton FC
10	Lewis Baker	25/04/95	1	90	90	90	120	Chelsea FC
11	Nathan Redmond	06/03/94	1	90	90	45↓	47↑	Southampton FC
15	John Swift	23/06/95			79↓	90	34↑	Reading FC
19	Will Hughes	17/04/95	1			51↑	86↓	Derby County FC
20	Jack Grealish	10/09/95						Aston Villa FC
FORWARDS								
9	Tammy Abraham	02/10/97	1	90	88↓	18↑	120	Chelsea FC
14	Jacob Murphy	24/02/95	1	70↓	45↑	45↑	54↑	Norwich City FC
22	Cauley Woodrow	02/12/94			2↑			Fulham FC

* After extra time; Germany won 4-3 on penalties
 Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists;
 ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off



COACH

AIDY BOOTHROYD

BORN: 08/02/71
 NATIONALITY: English



STATISTICS

16 PLAYERS USED	7 GOALS SCORED
406 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 449 v Slovakia Min: 337 v Germany
84% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 86% v Slovakia, Poland Min: 78% v Germany
48% POSSESSION	Max: 53% v Poland Min: 35% v Germany

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Full-backs up at every opportunity; midfield diamond; 7, 11 making runs behind defence



DEFENCE: Transitions with strikers dropping level with 15 to form first line of defence

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-4-2 with midfield diamond with Chalobah as single screen
- Controlled possession play; elaborate build-ups; skill in tight situations
- Quick transitions to compact 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-4-3-3 defending
- Varied attacking options with one striker or two; overlapping full-backs
- Keeper playing short, even under pressure, or opening to high full-backs
- Excellent middle-to-front linking play, passes behind defence
- Immediate press after ball-loss; high press only at opposition goal-kicks

FYR MACEDONIA

GROUP B SPAIN (9PTS), PORTUGAL (6), SERBIA (1), FYR MACEDONIA (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	ESP	SRB	POR	CLUB
		LO-5	D2-2	L2-4			
GOALKEEPERS							
1	Igor Aleksovski	24/02/95		90	90		FK Vardar
12	Damjan Siskovski	18/03/95				90	FK Rabotnicki
13	Filip Ilic	26/01/97					FK Metalurg Skopje
DEFENDERS							
3	Jovan Popzlatanov	06/07/96				90	FK Pelister
4	Visar Mustiu	13/11/94				62↑	FK Renova
5	Gjoko Zajkov	10/02/95		90	90	90	R. Charleroi SC
6	Aleksa Amanovic	24/10/96					FK Javor
14	Darko Velkovski	21/06/95		90	90		FK Vardar
15	Egzon Bejtulai	07/01/94		90		90	KF Shkendija
19	Besir Demiri	01/08/94		90	90		KF Shkendija
21	Mevlan Murati	05/03/94			90	90	KF Shkendija
MIDFIELDERS							
2	Eljif Elmas	27/09/99	1	45↑	32↑	33↑	FK Rabotnicki
7	Enis Bardi	02/07/95	2	90	90	90	Újpest FC
8	Boban Nikolov	28/07/94		90	90	90	FK Vardar
10	David Babunski	01/03/94		76↓	58↓	74↓	Yokohama Marinos
11	Daniel Avramovski	20/02/95			45↓		NK Olimpija Ljubljana
20	Tihomir Kostadinov	04/03/96		14↑			FC ViOn Zlaté Moravce
FORWARDS							
9	Marjan Radeski	10/02/95	1	90	86↓	28↓	KF Shkendija
16	Petar Petkovski	03/01/97					FK Vardar
17	Kire Markoski	20/05/95	1	45↓	90	16↑	FK Rabotnicki
18	Viktor Angelov	27/03/94		45↓		57↓	Újpest FC
22	Nikola Gjorgjev	22/08/97	1	45↑	45↑	90	Grasshopper Club Zürich
23	Filip Pivkovski	31/01/94			4↑		Landskrona BoIS

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists;
 ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off



COACH

BLAGOJA MILEVSKI

BORN: 25/03/71
 NATIONALITY: Macedonian



STATISTICS

20 PLAYERS USED	4 GOALS SCORED
341 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 403 v Spain Min: 301 v Serbia
83% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 88% v Spain Min: 78% v Serbia
43% POSSESSION	Max: 48% v Serbia Min: 40% v Portugal

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Full-backs up; 18 drifting wide, 9 cutting in. Systematic counters; 7 more offensive; solo runs, long-range shots



DEFENCE: Compact lines, either deep or from midfield; 10 players behind ball

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 with fast transitions to midfield or deep 1-4-4-1-1 defending
- Emphasis on combination play; some good individual technique
- Screening midfielder Nikolov dropping deep to initiate attacking play
- Aggressive pressure on ball-carrier; direct counterattacking after ball-win
- Strong running with the ball and long-range shooting, often by Bardi
- Fluid positional interchanging among middle-to-front players
- Hardworking team; positive attitude; mental resilience (behind in every game)

GERMANY

GROUP C ITALY (6PTS), GERMANY (6), DENMARK (3), CZECH REPUBLIC (3)



SQUAD

BORN	G	A	CZE	DEN	ITA	ENG	ESP	CLUB
			W2-0	W3-0	L0-1	D2-2*	W1-0	

GOALKEEPERS								
1	Marvin Schwäbe	25/04/95						TSG 1899 Hoffenheim
12	Julian Pollersbeck	16/08/94	90	90	90	120	90	1. FC Kaiserslautern
23	Odisseas Vlachodimos	26/04/94						Panathinaikos FC
DEFENDERS								
2	Jeremy Toljan	08/08/94	3	90	90	90	120	90 TSG 1899 Hoffenheim
3	Yannick Gerhardt	13/03/94		90	90	90	120	90 VfL Wolfsburg
4	Waldemar Anton	20/07/96						Hannover 96
5	Niklas Stark	14/04/95		90	90	90		90 Hertha BSC
6	Gideon Jung	12/09/94	24↑	24↑	18↑	80↓		Hamburger SV
14	Lukas Klünter	26/05/96						1. FC Köln
15	Marc-Oliver Kempf	28/01/95	1	90	90	90	120	90 SC Freiburg
16	Thilo Kehrer	21/09/96				40↑		FC Schalke 04
MIDFIELDERS								
7	Max Meyer	18/09/95	1	1	90	90	67↓	120 90 FC Schalke 04
8	Mahmoud Dahoud	01/01/96			66↓	90	72↓	VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach
10	Maximilian Arnold	27/05/94	2	86↓	65↓	90	120	90 VfL Wolfsburg
11	Serge Gnabry	14/07/95	1	90	80↓	90	87↓	81↓ SV Werder Bremen
17	Mitchell Weiser	21/04/94	1	1	76↓	66↓	76↓	90 Hertha BSC
18	Nadiem Amiri	27/10/96	1		25↑	14↑	33↑	9↑ TSG 1899 Hoffenheim
20	Levin Öztunali	15/03/96			10↑			3↑ 1. FSV Mainz 05
21	Dominik Kohr	31/01/94					18↑	8↑ FC Augsburg
FORWARDS								
9	Davie Selke	20/01/95	2	1	90	90	63↓	RB Leipzig
13	Felix Platte	11/02/96	1				57↑	SV Darmstadt 98
19	Janik Haberer	02/04/94			4↑		102↓	82↓ SC Freiburg
22	Maximilian Philipp	01/03/94			14↑		23↑	120 87↓ SC Freiburg

* After extra time; Germany won 4-3 on penalties
 Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists;
 ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

STEFAN KUNTZ

BORN: 30/10/62
 NATIONALITY: German



STATISTICS

19 PLAYERS USED	8 GOALS SCORED
508 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 557* v England Min: 375 v Spain
88% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 92% v Denmark Min: 83% v Spain
55% POSSESSION	Max: 65% v England Min: 41% v Spain

* Pro rata figure based on 90 mins

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: One central midfielder deep to build with centre-backs; 7 moving in forward areas; 9 staying central; wingers looking for 1v1



DEFENCE: 7 ready to attack opponents in central area; wide players sometimes dropping deep to form line of four

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 with fast transitions to compact 1-4-4-1-1 defending
- Patient build-up using defensive midfielders and two advanced full-backs
- Freedom of movement in upper midfield; penetrating runs behind defence
- Meyer the middle-to-front link; dangerous runs from below main striker
- Dahoud, Arnold box-to-box players, alternating in supporting attacks
- High defensive line; instant collective pressing after loss of possession
- Strong, athletic players; high-tempo passing aiming to dictate pace of game

ITALY

GROUP C ITALY (6PTS), GERMANY (6), DENMARK (3), CZECH REPUBLIC (3)



SQUAD

BORN	G	A	DEN	CZE	GER	ESP	CLUB
			W2-0	L1-3	W1-0	L1-3	

GOALKEEPERS								
1	Gianluigi Donnarumma	25/02/99		90	90	90	90	AC Milan
17	Alessio Cragnò	28/06/94						Benevento
19	Simone Scuffet	31/05/96						Udinese Calcio
DEFENDERS								
2	Davide Calabria	06/12/96			90		90	AC Milan
3	Antonio Barreca	18/03/95		90		90	90	Torino FC
4	Daniele Rugani	29/07/94		90	90	90	90	Juventus
12	Andrea Conti	02/03/94		90	90			S Atalanta BC
13	Mattia Caldara	05/05/94		90		90	90	Atalanta BC
14	Davide Biraschi	02/07/94						Genoa CFC
22	Alex Ferrari	01/07/94			90			Hellas-Verona FC
23	Giuseppe Pezzella	29/11/97						US Città di Palermo
MIDFIELDERS								
5	Danilo Cataldi	06/08/94			83↓			Genoa CFC
6	Lorenzo Pellegrini	19/06/96	1	1	90	90	90	US Sassuolo Calcio
8	Alberto Grassi	07/03/95			17↑	54↓		Atalanta BC
15	Marco Benassi	08/09/94			73↓		90	87↓ Torino FC
16	Luca Garritano	11/02/94						3↑ AC Cesena
18	Roberto Gagliardini	07/04/94		90	15↑	90	58so	FC Internazionale Milano
21	Manuel Locatelli	08/01/98					4↑	29↑ AC Milan
FORWARDS								
7	Domenico Berardi	01/08/94	1		67↓	90	86↓	S US Sassuolo Calcio
9	Alberto Cerri	16/04/96			2↑	7↑		18↑ Pescara Calcio
10	Federico Bernardeschi	16/02/94	2		90	75↓	90	90 ACF Fiorentina
11	Andrea Petagna	30/06/95	1		88↓	90	12↑	72↓ Atalanta BC
20	Federico Chiesa	25/10/97	2		23↑	36↑	78↓	61↓ ACF Fiorentina

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists;
 ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

LUIGI DI BIAGIO

BORN: 03/06/71
 NATIONALITY: Italian



STATISTICS

19 PLAYERS USED	5 GOALS SCORED
407 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 506 v Czech Republic Min: 285 v Spain
81% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 85% v Germany Min: 78% v Spain
49% POSSESSION	Max: 59% v Czech Republic Min: 37% v Spain

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: High midfield line with full-backs ready to support front five



DEFENCE: Transitions by disciplined midfielders; strong pressing by five front players

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 or 1-4-1-4-1 with Gagliardini as single holding midfielder
- Attacking options: classic striker Petagna or free-moving Bernardeschi
- Well-balanced team with fast transitions in both directions
- Dynamic runs by central midfielders and full-backs; good-quality crosses
- High collective pressing led to ball-winning in advanced areas
- Strong centre-backs with aerial power; dangerous set plays
- Tactically disciplined, hard-working unit with strong team ethic

POLAND

GROUP A ENGLAND (7PTS), SLOVAKIA (6), SWEDEN (2), POLAND (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	SVK L1-2	SWE D2-2	ENG L0-3	CLUB
GOALKEEPERS							
1	Bartłomiej Drągowski	19/08/97					ACF Fiorentina
12	Jakub Wrąbel	08/06/96	90	90	90		WKS Śląsk Wrocław
22	Maksymilian Stryjek	18/07/96					Sunderland AFC
DEFENDERS							
2	Paweł Jaroszyński	02/10/94	90	90	90		MKS Cracovia Kraków
4	Tomasz Kędziora	11/06/94	1	90	90		KKS Lech Poznań
5	Igor Łasicki	26/06/95					SSC Napoli
6	Jan Bednarek	12/04/96	90	90	82so		KKS Lech Poznań
15	Jarosław Jach	17/02/94	90	90	90		Zagłębie Lubin
23	Przemysław Szumiński	24/06/94					Wisła Płock
MIDFIELDERS							
3	Krzysztof Piątek	04/01/98					Arsenal FC
7	Karol Linetty	02/02/95	90	90	90		UC Sampdoria
8	Radosław Murawski	22/04/94					GKS Piast Gliwice
10	Patryk Lipski	12/06/94	1	82↓	16↑	45↑	Unattached
11	Przemysław Frankowski	12/04/95	90	90	90		Jagiellonia Białystok
13	Łukasz Moneta	13/05/94	1	31↑	74↓	45↓	Ruch Chorzów
14	Dawid Kownacki	14/03/97	1	1	S	90	KKS Lech Poznań
17	Paweł Dawidowicz	20/05/95	90	88↓			VfL Bochum 1848
18	Jarosław Niezgodą	15/03/95	8↑	32↑	26↑		Legia Warszawa
19	Bartosz Kapustka	23/12/96	59↓				Leicester City FC
20	Jarosław Kubicki	07/08/95					Zagłębie Lubin
FORWARDS							
9	Mariusz Stepniński	12/05/95	84↓	58↓	17↑		FC Nantes
16	Krzysztof Piątek	01/07/95	6↑	2↑	64↓		MKS Cracovia Kraków
21	Adam Buksa	12/07/96					Zagłębie Lubin

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

MARCIN DORNA

BORN: 17/09/79
NATIONALITY: Polish



STATISTICS

16 PLAYERS USED	3 GOALS SCORED
384 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 404 v Slovakia Min: 362 v England
84% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 89% v England Min: 78% v Sweden
48% POSSESSION	Max: 51% v Slovakia Min: 47% v England, Sweden

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Full-backs up when possible; 11 more adventurous on right; 7 linking in midfield



DEFENCE: Quick transitions to deep block, looking to counter at speed

KEY FEATURES

- Variations on 1-4-4-2 after initial 1-4-2-3-1 v Slovakia
- Build-up from centre-backs through central midfielders to wings
- Good penetration on flanks and crossing, especially Frankowski on right
- Quick transitions to deep defending; fast counters after possession regains
- Effective overlapping by full-backs a key component in attacking play
- Spells of aggressive high pressing; dangerous set plays delivered by Lipski
- Strong team ethic, work-rate, commitment, mental resilience

PORTUGAL

GROUP B SPAIN (9PTS), PORTUGAL (6), SERBIA (1), FYR MACEDONIA (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	SRB W2-0	ESP L1-3	MKD W4-2	CLUB
GOALKEEPERS							
1	Bruno Varela	04/11/94		90	90	90	Vitória FC
12	Miguel Silva	07/04/95					Vitória SC
22	Joel Pereira	28/06/96					Manchester United FC
DEFENDERS							
2	João Cancelo	27/05/94	90	90	90		Valencia CF
3	Edgar Lé	01/05/94	1	90	90		CF Os Belenenses
4	Tobias Figueiredo	02/02/94			90		CD Nacional
5	Rúben Semedo	04/04/94	90	90			Sporting Clube de Portugal
13	Kevin Rodrigues	05/03/94	1	90	90	72↑	Real Sociedad de Fútbol
14	Rebocho	23/01/95			18↓		Moreirense FC
15	Fernando	14/03/97					FC Porto
MIDFIELDERS							
6	Rúben Neves	13/03/97	90	90	90		FC Porto
7	Daniel Podence	21/10/95	1	68↓	57↓	69↓	Moreirense FC
8	Francisco Gerdades	18/04/95					Moreirense FC
10	Bruno Fernandes	08/09/94	1	90	90		UC Sampdoria
16	Renato Sanches	18/08/97	1	31↑	73↓	55↓	FC Bayern München
17	Francisco Ramos	10/04/95					FC Porto
23	João Carvalho	09/03/97	59↓	66↓			Vitória FC
FORWARDS							
9	Gonçalo Paciência	01/08/94			24↑	90	Rio Ave FC
11	Iuri Medeiros	10/07/94	2	22↑		90	Boavista FC
18	Gonçalo Guedes	29/11/96	1	90	90		Paris Saint-Germain
19	Diogo Jota	04/12/96	45↓		21↑so		FC Porto
20	Bruma	24/10/94	3	45↑	33↑	90	Galatasaray AŞ
21	Ricardo Horta	15/09/94			17↑	35↑	SC Braga

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

RUI JORGE

BORN: 27/03/73
NATIONALITY: Portuguese



STATISTICS

18 PLAYERS USED	7 GOALS SCORED
461 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 505 v FYR Macedonia Min: 417 v Serbia
83% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 88% v FYR Macedonia Min: 76% v Serbia
52% POSSESSION	Max: 60% v FYR Macedonia Min: 47% v Serbia

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: High-tempo combinations with positional interchanging in midfield



DEFENCE: Two lines of four with wingers dropping back to cover full-backs

KEY FEATURES

- Attack-minded 1-4-3-3; switches to 1-4-4-2 when protecting result
- Possession-based game with high levels of technique in all departments
- Emphasis on building through thirds with short-passing combinations
- Strong attacking via wide areas, deep overlapping runs by both full-backs
- Collective high pressing or quick transitions to 1-4-1-4-1 defending
- Distribution to wings by two wide midfielders with Neves in holding role
- 1v1 or through-pass solutions in final third; low crosses or cut-backs



SERBIA

GROUP B SPAIN (9PTS), PORTUGAL (6), SERBIA (1), FYR MACEDONIA (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	POR	MKD	ESP	CLUB
GOALKEEPERS							
1	Filip Manojlović	25/04/96				90	FK Crvena zvezda
12	Djordje Nikolić	13/04/97					FC Basel 1893
23	Vanja Milinković-Savić	20/02/97		90	90		KS Lechia Gdańsk
DEFENDERS							
2	Milan Gajić	28/01/96		90	45↓		FC Girondins de Bordeaux
3	Nemanja Antonov	06/05/95		90	77↓	90	Grasshopper Club Zürich
4	Nikola Milenković	12/10/97					FK Partizan
5	Miloš Veljković	26/09/95		90	90	90	SV Werder Bremen
6	Radovan Pankov	05/08/95			so*	S	FC Ural Sverdlovsk Oblast
13	Miroslav Bogosavac	14/10/96					FK Partizan
14	Vukašin Jovanović	17/05/96		90	90	90	FC Girondins de Bordeaux
15	Aleksandar Filipović	20/12/94			45↑	90	FK Voždovac
MIDFIELDERS							
8	Nemanja Maksimović	26/01/95		90	90	90	FC Astana
10	Mijat Gaćinović	08/02/95	1	90	90	90	Eintracht Frankfurt
16	Marko Grujić	13/04/96		68↓	52↓	S	Liverpool FC
18	Dejan Meleg	01/10/94					FK Vojvodina
19	Saša Lukić	13/08/96				87↓	Torino FC
20	Mihailo Ristić	31/10/95			38↑	19↑	FK Crvena zvezda
22	Srdjan Plavšić	03/12/95		45↑	90	3↑	FK Crvena zvezda
FORWARDS							
7	Ognjen Ožegović	09/06/94		16↑	13↑		FK Čukarički
9	Uroš Djurdjević	02/03/94	1	74↓	90	41so	FK Partizan
11	Aleksandar Čavrić	18/05/94		45↓			ŠK Slovan Bratislava
17	Andrija Živković	11/07/96	1	90	90	90	SL Benfica
21	Nemanja Radonjić	15/02/96		22↑		71↓	FK Čukarički

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off; so* = sent off from bench



SLOVAKIA

GROUP A ENGLAND (7PTS), SLOVAKIA (6), SWEDEN (2), POLAND (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	POL	ENG	SWE	CLUB	
GOALKEEPERS								
1	Adrián Chovan	08/10/95		90	90	90	FK AS Trenčín	
12	Marek Rodák	13/12/96					Fulham FC	
23	Adam Jakubec	02/01/97					FC Spartak Trnava	
DEFENDERS								
2	Branislav Niňaj	17/05/94		90	90	90	KSC Lokeren OV	
3	Milan Škriniar	11/02/95		90	90	90	UC Sampdoria	
4	Martin Valjent	11/12/95	1	90	90		Ternana Calcio	
13	Ľubomír Šatka	02/12/95	1			90	Newcastle United FC	
14	Róbert Mazáň	09/02/94	1	90	90	90	MŠK Žilina	
16	Lukáš Skovajsa	27/03/94					FK AS Trenčín	
19	Denis Vavro	10/04/96					MŠK Žilina	
MIDFIELDERS								
5	Tomáš Huk	22/12/94					FC DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda	
6	Stanislav Lobotka	25/11/94		90	90	90	FC Nordsjælland	
7	Jaroslav Mihalík	27/07/94	1	82↓	73↓	89↓	MKS Cracovia Kraków	
8	Martin Chrien	08/09/95	2	1	90	66↓	90	MFK Ružomberok
10	Albert Rusnák	07/07/94	1	90	90	90	Real Salt Lake	
11	Nikolas Špalek	12/02/97					MŠK Žilina	
17	Lukáš Haraslín	26/05/96		8↑	17↑	1↑	KS Lechia Gdańsk	
20	Miroslav Káčer	02/02/96					MŠK Žilina	
21	Matúš Bero	06/09/95	2	89↓	90	85↓	Trabzonspor	
22	László Bénéš	09/09/97		1↑	24↑	5↑	VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach	
FORWARDS								
9	Tomáš Vestenický	06/04/96					MKS Cracovia Kraków	
15	Adam Zreťák	05/05/94	1	73↓	65↓	69↓	FK Jablonec	
18	Pavol Šafranko	16/11/94	1	17↑	25↑	21↑	FC DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda	

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off

COACH

NENAD LALATOVIĆ

BORN: 22/12/77
NATIONALITY: Serbian



STATISTICS

18 PLAYERS USED	2 GOALS SCORED
415 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 481 v Portugal Min: 379 v FYR Macedonia
80% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 84% v Spain Min: 76% v FYR Macedonia
47% POSSESSION	Max: 53% v Portugal Min: 37% v Spain

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Preference for right side; relationship between 2 and 17. Striker ready to receive direct pass after ball win



DEFENCE: Compact lines with strong pressing as from midfield; ten behind the ball

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-1-4-1 with Maksimović as single screening midfielder
- Combination play when not pressed; good passing between lines
- When pressed, direct supply to striker and second-ball support from midfield
- Plentiful supply of crosses with full-backs high to support
- Good combinations on right, with left-footed winger cutting inside
- Dangerous runs, through passes between centre-backs and full-backs
- Fierce pressure on ball-carrier normally from midfield; occasional high press

COACH

PAVEL HAPAL

BORN: 27/07/69
NATIONALITY: Czech



STATISTICS

15 PLAYERS USED	6 GOALS SCORED
463 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 533 v Sweden Min: 376 v Poland
87% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 88% v Sweden Min: 76% v England, Poland
51% POSSESSION	Max: 55% v Sweden Min: 49% v England, Poland

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: Full-backs up; 6 the playmaker; combinations in midfield



DEFENCE: 3 the leader of strong back four, ready to break forward; 6 controlling in front

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-1-4-1 with Lobotka as controlling midfielder and playmaker
- Quick transitions in both directions; compact movements by middle four
- Patient build or, when pressed, direct supply to target striker Zreťák
- Compact disciplined defending; wide midfielders supplementing back four
- Excellent passing game with good options for player in possession
- High press at opponents' goal-kicks; instant pressure after ball loss
- Strong team and work ethics; disciplined defence backed by influential keeper



SPAIN

GROUP B SPAIN (9PTS), PORTUGAL (6), SERBIA (1), FYR MACEDONIA (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	MKD	POR	SRB	ITA	GER	CLUB
GOALKEEPERS									
1	Kepa Arrizabalaga	03/10/94		90	90		90	90	Athletic Club
13	Rubén Blanco	25/07/95							RC Celta de Vigo
16	Pau López	13/12/94				90			Tottenham Hotspur FC
DEFENDERS									
2	Héctor Bellerín	19/03/95		90	90		90	90	Arsenal FC
3	José Gayà	25/05/95	1	90		90	39↑		Valencia CF
4	Jorge Meré	17/04/97		90	90		90	90	Real Sporting de Gijón
5	Jesús Vallejo	05/01/97		90	90		90	90	Real Madrid CF
17	Álvaro Odriozola	14/12/95	1			90			Real Sociedad de Fútbol
19	Jonny Castro Otto	03/03/94			90		90	51↓	RC Celta de Vigo
23	Diego González	28/01/95				90			Sevilla FC
MIDFIELDERS									
6	Dani Ceballos	07/08/96	1	27↑	90		88↓	90	Real Betis Balompié
8	Saúl Ñíguez	21/11/94	5	1	90	90	90	90	Club Atlético de Madrid
10	Denis Suárez	06/01/94	1	90	8↑	90	8↑		FC Barcelona
11	Marco Asensio	21/01/96	3	1	81↓	89↓	90	90	Real Madrid CF
14	Mikel Merino	22/06/96				1↑	90		Borussia Dortmund
18	Mikel Oyarzabal	21/04/97		9↑			90	2↑	Real Sociedad de Fútbol
20	Carlos Soler	02/01/97					90		Valencia CF
21	Rodrigo Hernández	22/06/96					90		Villarreal CF
22	Marcos Llorente	30/01/95	1	90	90		90	83↓	Deportivo Alavés
FORWARDS									
7	Gerard Deulofeu	13/03/94	1	2	63↓	82↓	82↓	90	AC Milan
9	Borja Mayoral	05/04/97					90	7↑	VfL Wolfsburg
12	Sandro Ramírez	09/07/95	1	74↓	75↓		78↓	71↓	Málaga CF
15	Iñaki Williams	15/06/94	1	16↑	15↑	90	12↑	19↑	Athletic Club

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off



COACH

ALBERT CELADES

BORN: 29/09/75
NATIONALITY: Spanish



STATISTICS

22 PLAYERS USED	12 GOALS SCORED
611 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 731 v Serbia Min: 521 v Portugal
89% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 92% v Serbia Min: 84% v Portugal
59% POSSESSION	Max: 63% v Serbia, Italy Min: 52% v Portugal

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: High-tempo combinations with positional interchanging in midfield



DEFENCE: Two lines of four with wingers dropping back to cover full-backs

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 with single screening midfielder and two wingers
- Possession game; short-passing combinations, control in tight situations
- High-tempo ball circulation; one- or two-touch passing moves
- Fast attack-to-defence transitions; high pressing in numbers
- Excellent use of wide areas; full-backs high-speed overlapping, underlapping
- Attacks based on strong middle-to-front 1v1 abilities, solo runs
- Attacking vocation, clear playing philosophy, talent in all departments



SWEDEN

GROUP A ENGLAND (7PTS), SLOVAKIA (6), SWEDEN (2), POLAND (1)



SQUAD

	BORN	G	A	ENG	POL	SVK	CLUB
GOALKEEPERS							
1	Tim Erlandsson	25/12/96					AFC Eskilstuna
12	Anton Cajtoft	13/02/94		90	90	90	Jönköpings Södra IF
23	Pontus Dahlberg	21/01/99					IFK Göteborg
DEFENDERS							
2	Linus Wahlqvist	11/11/96		90	90	90	IFK Norrköping
3	Jacob Une Larsson	08/04/94	1	90	90	90	Djurgårdens IF
4	Joakim Nilsson	06/02/94					IF Elfsborg
5	Adam Lundqvist	20/03/94		90	90		IF Elfsborg
13	Isak Ssewankambo	27/02/96					Molde FK
14	Filip Dagerstål	01/02/97		90	90		IFK Norrköping
15	Franz Brorsson	30/01/96				90	Malmö FF
20	Egzon Binaku	27/08/95				90	BK Hacken
MIDFIELDERS							
6	Simon Tibbling	07/09/94		85↓	61↓		FC Groningen
7	Alexander Fransson	02/04/94	1	73↓	87↓	90	FC Basel 1893
8	Kristoffer Olsson	30/06/95	1	90	90	72↓	AIK
9	Muamer Tankovic	22/02/95		5↑	29↑	45↑	AZ Alkmaar
16	Melker Hallberg	20/10/95		90	90	45↓	Kalmar FF
17	Kerim Mrabti	20/05/94		17↑	3↑	90	Djurgårdens IF
19	Niclas Eliasson	07/12/95				45↑	IFK Norrköping
21	Joel Asoro	27/04/99		S		18↑	Sunderland AFC
22	Amin Affane	21/01/94					AIK
FORWARDS							
10	Carlos Strandberg	14/04/96	1	31↑	69↓	90	KVC Westerlo
11	Gustav Engvall	29/04/96		59↓	21↑		Djurgårdens IF
18	Paweł Cibicki	09/01/94		90	90	45↓	Malmö FF

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played; G = goals; A = assists; ↑ = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = sent off



COACH

HÅKAN ERICSON

BORN: 29/05/60
NATIONALITY: Swedish



STATISTICS

18 PLAYERS USED	2 GOALS SCORED
444 AVE. PASSES ATTEMPTED	Max: 452 v Slovakia Min: 431 v Poland
84% PASSING ACCURACY	Max: 86% v Slovakia Min: 81% v England
49% POSSESSION	Max: 53% v Poland Min: 45% v Slovakia

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACK: 16 dropping to build alongside centre-backs; balanced attacking with great discipline



DEFENCE: Narrow compact set-up with two lines very close together

KEY FEATURES

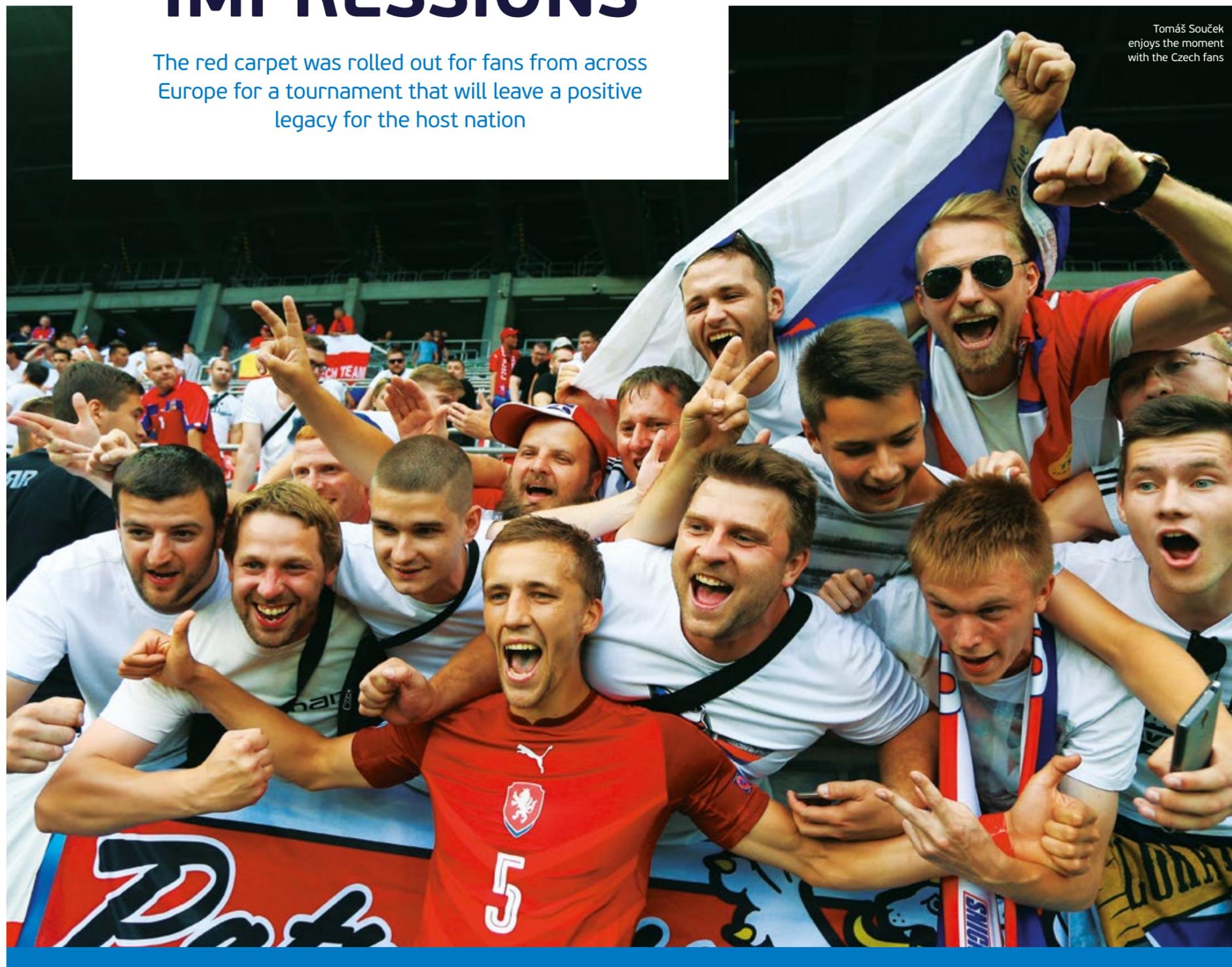
- Highly structured 1-4-4-2 with narrow, dense defensive block
- Fast counterattacks based on direct supply from back to front
- When opting to build, fluent passing moves, good diagonals to wide areas
- Full-backs ready to push up while building through thirds
- Fierce pressure on ball carrier; forwards the hardworking first line of defence
- Well-drilled creative set plays; good deliveries; mixed marking when defending
- Clear playing philosophy implemented with discipline and commitment



EVENT REPORT

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

The red carpet was rolled out for fans from across Europe for a tournament that will leave a positive legacy for the host nation



Tomáš Souček enjoys the moment with the Czech fans

The red-and-white flag of Poland waved happily in a breeze of success as the national association, the PZPN, encouraged the host cities to lay out a red carpet for the competition's first 12-team tournament. After the final whistle in Krakow, there were many reasons to feel proud.

Statistics spelled out a success story. Within hours of tickets going on sale in February, all three of Poland's group games and the final were sold out. The final balance revealed a cumulative audience of almost a quarter of a million – to be precise, 244,085 spectators at an average of 11,623 per match.

But reasons for pride stretched beyond statistics. The PZPN adopted an expansive, dynamic approach aimed at engaging the public in a huge event organised by the citizens of Poland. Hence the decision to give the tournament a geographical spread involving six cities of great diversity in terms of character, qualities and cultures. If pressed to select a single preference among the motives to feel proud, the PZPN would highlight the way the organisation of the tournament brought the cities together – to the extent that the six mayors met regularly to interchange information and knowledge.

The results were outstanding. In

practical terms, some examples include new pitches in Kielce and Tychy; a refurbished main stand in Bydgoszcz; a roof in Lublin; upgraded media facilities at all venues, along with investment in giant screen technology – the event left a clear infrastructural legacy.

Equally important is the social legacy the tournament will leave behind. Bringing the U21 EURO to smaller cities allowed UEFA and the PZPN to have a greater impact on the communities in which the games were played. The six cities will all have benefited in numerous ways from hosting the event, such as key lessons in stadium management on an organisational level, for example, or help promoting football – and sport in general – within the community. Having helped set a high benchmark in terms of organising the tournament, the PZPN will have played a part in enabling the cities to push for similar events in the future.

Of course, the PZPN already have a successful track record when it comes to organising the biggest sporting events. UEFA EURO 2012 provided Polish football a springboard on and off the pitch and its impact is still being felt in a number of ways. For example, fans attending Poland's national-team matches can travel for free on public transport simply by displaying a match ticket – an



The tournament logo was prominently displayed at every game



Fans from all the visiting nations added to the vibrant atmosphere

initiative from EURO 2012. Benefits are also evident on the pitch, where Poland moved from 70th place in the FIFA rankings in 2012 to fifth in August 2017. "In qualifying for UEFA EURO 2016, we had the second-best crowd figures in Europe with an average of 50,000. That has continued into our European Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup," said PZPN general secretary Maciej Sawicki.

The PZPN has also embraced UEFA's GROW initiative, which, among other things, aims to help member associations expand both grassroots participation and financial revenues. The PZPN has doubled its budget over the past four years, and 350,000 Poles are actively playing the game. And while Poland is now blessed with state-of-the-art stadiums, the PZPN is striving to ensure that top-notch facilities exist for grassroots players too. There are more than 2,600 artificial mini-pitches, with the association also intending to construct covered pitches, enabling football to be played in all conditions.

The shorter-term benefits this summer, meanwhile, were equally rewarding – not least to the thousands of volunteers who made the tournament tick. The atmosphere in the stadiums and cities was as warm as the midsummer weather. The event generated extraordinary social energy and colour – especially in Bydgoszcz where the lack of a top-level club team created a huge

appetite for taking part in a football event. In Gdynia, the fixture list was mirrored by beach games between sets of supporters. Kielce organised a Sweden Day when fans could be forgiven for thinking they could hear ABBA. Followed by Slovakia Day. And England Day. The citizens of Tychy happily greeted a massive Czech invasion of their famous parks. The people of Lublin applauded the Swedish fans' friendship march from the city centre to the stadium ... The people of Poland rolled out a red carpet – with levels of professionalism, proficiency and public engagement that added up to an event to be proud of.



The tournament branding was highly visible in the stadiums and host cities



ON BRAND

Walk around the host cities and there was no mistaking the EURO had landed. From city signage to the stadium dressing, the UEFA European Under-21 Championship's vibrant blue-and-white visual identity caught the eye and reinforced the competition's standing and prestige. TV graphics, advertising backdrops and the brand elements for printed materials such as the official tournament programme helped ensure a consistent look-and-feel whether watching a game in the stadium or on television halfway around the world.



Branded graphics promoted each of the six host cities

SPREADING THE WORD

A large media presence and a successful promotional campaign kept fans in the know

The tournament generated huge media interest, with 475 press and non-rights holding TV and radio staff accredited for the tournament and 147 media present at the final.

The efforts of the PZPN to promote the Under-21 EURO, meanwhile, took various successful forms, from an online presence to a publicity tour, with much other engagement besides.

Certainly, the work of building a buzz about the tournament benefited from a formidable online presence, with an official u21poland website and Twitter account launched in late summer 2016 and reinforced by promotional activities on the PZPN's multimedia platform – Łączy Nas Piłka (United by Football) – which reaches 3 million football fans nationwide per month.

Particularly impressive was the creation of a 12-part TV series 'Nasze EURO' (Our EURO). Broadcast on Łączy Nas Piłka's YouTube channel and Facebook page, plus the u21poland channels, this magazine show heightened public interest in the finals and raised anticipation levels as the tournament approached.

Catching the eye on a grander scale was the promotional EURO truck that delivered both a trophy tour and an exciting range of activities including an exhibition, interactive football challenges, competitions and sponsor activities. The truck travelled over 15,000km, spanning 47 stops from March onwards.

The 'One year to go' countdown event – featuring tournament ambassador Marek Koźmiński – and April's official trophy handover in Gdynia were other major milestones, two of numerous events publicised by the PZPN, primarily through media releases, for a network of more than 500 media representatives. Between 1 September 2016 and the final whistle there were more than 40,000 mentions of the tournament in the Polish press and on television, radio, websites, forums and social media channels.

RESPECT

Respect was a key byword at the final tournament in Poland. Respect advertising boards were located around the pitches at each stadium, and the Respect logo was visible on players' bibs as they came out onto the pitch to warm up, as well as on their shirt sleeves for the match itself. Team captains wore No to Racism-Respect branded armbands, while the pre-match line-up of the teams and match officials for the national anthems also involved youngsters carrying the Respect flag and wearing Respect T-shirts.

Accessibility for disabled people was also a priority. Dedicated ticketing measures were in place, with disabled people able to request a complimentary ticket for a companion to support them in attending matches. A total of 138 disabled people and 57 companions purchased their tickets online or at stadium ticket booths. A no-smoking policy was in operation at each of the tournament venues, with spectators reminded of the tobacco ban via messages on the stadium giant screens and speaker announcements over the stadium public address system. No-smoking signs were prevalent throughout the stadiums, and stewards were instructed to ask spectators not to smoke in stadium public areas.



Germany and Spain line up ahead of the final in Krakow (above); UEFA's Respect campaign was well publicised in Poland

244k
TOTAL ATTENDANCE

11,623
AVERAGE PER GAME

81%
OF STADIUM CAPACITY



VENUES AND ATTENDANCES

From Gdynia in the north to Krakow in the south, the final tournament was played in six cities spanning the length of Poland. And with big crowds at each of the venues – and a total attendance of 244,085 – the nation got behind the event as much as its team.

GDYNIA STADIUM, GDYNIA
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 14,769

MATCHES
GROUP B
Spain 5-0 FYR Macedonia, **8,269**
Portugal 1-3 Spain, **13,862**
FYR Macedonia 2-4 Portugal, **7,533**
AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 29,664

KIELCE STADIUM, KIELCE
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 14,733

MATCHES
GROUP A
Sweden 0-0 England, **11,672**
Slovakia 1-2 England, **12,087**
England 3-0 Poland, **13,176**
AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 36,935

LUBLIN STADIUM, LUBLIN
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 15,247

MATCHES
GROUP A
Poland 1-2 Slovakia, **14,911**
Poland 2-2 Sweden, **14,651**
Slovakia 3-0 Sweden, **11,203**
AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 40,765

BYDGOSZCZ STADIUM, BYDGOSZCZ
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 11,585
(increased to 12,897 for Serbia v Spain)

MATCHES
GROUP B
Portugal 2-0 Serbia, **10,724**
Serbia 2-2 FYR Macedonia, **5,121**
Serbia 0-1 Spain, **12,058**
AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 27,903

TYCHY STADIUM, TYCHY
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 14,805

MATCHES
GROUP C
Germany 2-0 Czech Republic, **14,051**
Czech Republic 3-1 Italy, **13,251**
Czech Republic 2-4 Denmark, **9,047**

SEMI-FINAL
England 2-2 Germany, **13,214**
(Germany win 4-3 on pens)

AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 49,563

KRAKÓW STADIUM, KRAKÓW
TOURNAMENT CAPACITY 14,715

MATCHES
GROUP C
Denmark 0-2 Italy, **8,754**
Germany 3-0 Denmark, **9,298**
Italy 1-0 Germany, **14,039**

SEMI-FINAL
Spain 3-1 Italy, **13,105**

FINAL
Germany 1-0 Spain, **14,059**

AGGREGATE ATTENDANCE 59,255



Marco Asensio fields questions at a Spain press conference

PERFECT PARTNERSHIPS

The support of the 11 sponsors was felt throughout the tournament and was a major factor in its success

The commercial programme for the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship final tournament consisted of ten global sponsors and one national sponsor. It was an approach that allowed the global sponsors extensive worldwide marketing rights to associate with and promote the tournament,

while the national sponsor offered crucial access and insight into the host market. This combination helped generate awareness of the finals – key to attracting fans to the stadiums – and the various sponsors also contributed vital products and services to facilitate the smooth running of the showpiece event.



As is custom, adidas supplied the official match ball – a product that offered both superior in-flight visibility through its striking design and colour scheme, and improved grip for players courtesy of a premium surface structure. The adidas brand was also highly visible in the quality apparel it provided for tournament staff, volunteers and youth-programme participants. Moreover, adidas produced the official licensed products sold at official Intersport fan shops at all six stadiums during the finals. Meanwhile, its ballboys/girls initiative gave a once-in-a-lifetime experience to local youngsters at the semi-finals and final. Closer still to the action, as presenting partner of the U21 EURO adidas Golden Boot award, the brand created a bespoke award presented to five-goal final-tournament top scorer Saúl Ñíguez of Spain.



Carlsberg's sponsorship of the UEFA European U21 Championship in Poland was a fitting sequel to its involvement at UEFA EURO 2012 in the same country – with the Carlsberg name markedly visible throughout the two-week tournament. Carlsberg's core brand messaging was promoted on perimeter boards, and its products made available at key areas within all stadiums. Certainly, thanks to the various refreshment stalls on site as well as the VIK programmes that the organisation helped to run, Carlsberg ensured nobody went thirsty at these finals.



Cinkciarz came on board as a global sponsor for the first time, with the online currency exchange brand delivering an extensive programme of fan engagement – including activation of commercial display, stadium tours and an innovative digital marketing campaign encouraging fans to create content linking the brand to the tournament. In the local market Cinkciarz leveraged its sponsorship of Poland's national team to further widen the scope of its efforts; internationally, the company used parent brand Conotoxia to engage additional markets.



Already a presence in Polish football by virtue of its activities at UEFA EURO 2012 and the Copa Coca-Cola tournaments, Coca-Cola utilised the U21 EURO to reinforce its involvement in the international game. It offered hundreds of people the chance to win match tickets and gave key customers a unique experience with the 'Ultimate Access tour' – a behind-the-scenes tour that included watching the teams warm up (left). Its contribution to a successful event also entailed providing Coca-Cola products, making sure participating teams and on-site staff were kept hydrated throughout – with fans also able to buy drinks at the assorted refreshment stands.



Continental played its part in driving the success of the Polish finals. The company's logo could be seen vividly on perimeter boards at the various venues – in fact the bright 'Continental yellow' boards assisted in lighting up the stadiums, just as the numerous goals, skills and tackles illuminated the on-field action. Continental also showed its support by purchasing several VIP booths, with top management figures coming to take in the performances of these top European teams.





Hisense

After a hugely successful debut at UEFA EURO 2016, Hisense continued its fruitful partnership with UEFA national team football by activating all its basic rights as sponsor. With the consumer electronics brand seeking to expand its footprint across Europe, the championship proved an ideal opportunity to further develop its recognition and awareness, while Hisense also fully exploited its assets such as tickets for the purpose of B2B and B2C engagement.



A longstanding partner of UEFA national team football, McDonald's was once again a valued presence at, and supporter of, the showpiece finals. As with so many previous tournaments, the company enabled more than a hundred children to have a once-in-a-lifetime experience by being part of the pre-match ceremony – walking on to the pitch hand in hand with their heroes via the exclusive 'McDonald's Player Escorts' programme. For this edition, McDonald's also recruited several children from abroad, highlighting the championship's international appeal.



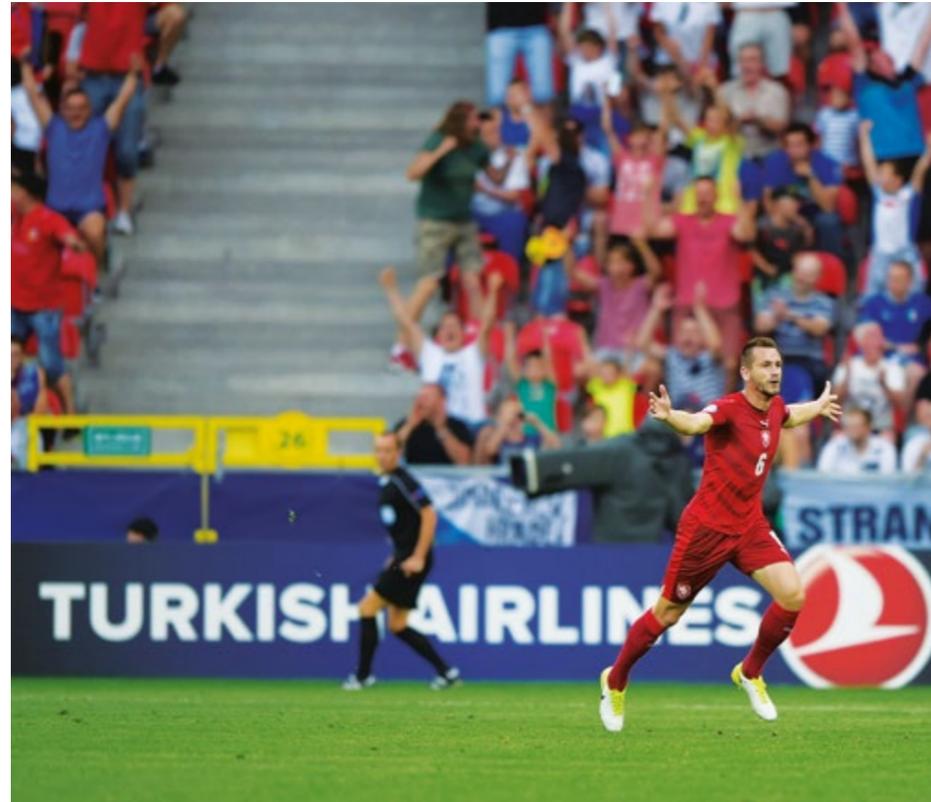
The tournament was an ideal occasion for Hyundai to intensively activate its brand, with UEFA national team football – and the U21 competition in particular – long established as a major part of the automotive company's global sponsorship strategy, and Poland considered an important market. In this context, Hyundai not only supplied over 100 vehicles to support final-tournament operations but also ran nationwide test drive/ticket promotions to help attract fans to matches. Upon arriving at the venues, the public could visit the brand's commercial display stands, which featured activities such as driving simulators, photo booths and table football in addition to Hyundai 'noise sticks', which were distributed for fans to show their support.



UEFA national team football is a core component of SOCAR's sponsorship strategy. Having promoted its innovative 'Make Your Debut' campaign around UEFA EURO 2016, the Azerbaijani energy company had the perfect opportunity, with the U21 EURO, to continue building brand awareness. There was significant visibility on site, on TV and across digital media – indeed, UEFA's digital platforms posted 'SOCAR Top Stats' videos throughout the tournament and thus invited further engagement with fans. By these efforts, SOCAR took another step forward in developing its brand and deepening its footprint across European football.



Turkish Airlines combined its role as official airline partner of UEFA national team football with its proud status of global partner of the U21 finals. Consequently it was strongly visible around the tournament with pitchside brand exposure and on-site visibility on backdrops, giant screens, stadium dressing and other promotional material. Turkish Airlines also profited from considerable exposure on social media via its digital sole and exclusive 'Moment of the Day presented by Turkish Airlines' – comprising a match-action video clip with graphic overlays of the best moment of each matchday.



As national sponsor of the U21 EURO, INTERSPORT seized the chance to engage with local supporters in the lead-up to the finals through a selection of ticket promotions that served to heighten anticipation levels. INTERSPORT was the official sports shop of licensed products for the championship, and to make sure fans had the best access to merchandise, it sold products through specially branded U21 areas within its classic retail stores in the host cities as well as dedicated shops at every finals venue. The official licensed product range, developed specifically for the event, included various eye-catching adidas items, replica shirts of the participating teams and, of course, match balls, replica balls and mini-balls.



Player escorts accompany the Serbia and FYR Macedonia teams out on to the pitch in Bydgoszcz



MUST-SEE TV

Huge television audiences emphasised how the tournament has established itself on the global sporting calendar



Poland's 2-2 draw with Sweden was watched by nearly 4m people on Polsat

The final tournament for the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship was broadcast in over 150 territories by 26 broadcast partners, with impressive numbers following the action throughout the two-week competition. That included a 15% increase in the group stage alone across seven of the nations that competed in both the 2015 and 2017 tournaments – the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Sweden and the UK. The UEFA.tv channel on YouTube and the UEFA.com website and social media outlets complemented broadcast coverage by providing historical clips, interviews and many in-tournament features, as well as live streams of all matches to viewers in markets where no broadcast partner had been appointed.

HIGHLIGHTS

The key viewing figures from Poland

GROUP STAGE

Poland's matches averaged between **25 and 30%** market share, with matches against Slovakia and Sweden attracting **3.7m** viewers.

2.9m watched Spain's game with Portugal on Cuatro, a **21.3%** share.

Germany v Denmark on ZDF attracted **5.7m viewers (22.9% share)**, compared to Germany's opening match in the FIFA Confederations Cup that week (6m viewers, 39% share).

Rai's broadcast of Italy v Germany was **the most-watched programme** in Italy that day (**5.4m viewers, 32% share**).

Both domestic and neutral matches performed well in Slovakia, where **0.5m viewers (28.7% share)** tuned in to Markíza for the decisive last group stage match against Sweden – **four times more** than the 2015 final.

In Sweden, Poland v Sweden attracted **0.8m viewers (29.2% share)** across Kanal5 and Eurosport 1, **68% up** on the average domestic interest group stage match in 2015.

SEMI-FINALS

England v Germany

Twice as many people watched England's semi-final against Germany on Sky Sports 1 (**0.6m viewers, 4% share**) than the British and Irish Lions tour match that day (**0.3m viewers, 5.9% share**). In Germany, **the 5.3m**

audience was 50% higher than their semi-final against Portugal in 2015 on ARD (**3.5m viewers, 20.8% share**). Both matches were early kick-offs.

Spain v Italy

In Italy, **7.9m** watched the Azzurri take on Spain on Rai 1, almost double the number that watched the 2013 final between the two sides on the same channel (**4m viewers, 29.8% share**). The figure is comparable to the average neutral-match audience in Italy during UEFA EURO 2016 on free-to-air channels. In Spain, the **4m audience** on Cuatro was double the size compared to the 2013 semi-final against Norway (**2m viewers, 18% share**) and **27% higher** than the 2013 final between Italy and Spain (**3.2m viewers, 28.1% share**). The match attracted **57% more** viewers than the Clásico between Barcelona and Real Madrid in April 2017, which was the most watched Liga match of the 2016/17 season (**2.6m viewers, 16.7% share on Movistar**).

FINAL

In Germany, **8.7m viewers watched the final on ZDF** – a 30.7% share – which equalled the average domestic match audience for the senior team's European Qualifiers for the 2018 FIFA World Cup up to that point. **In Spain, Cuatro attracted 4.2m viewers** (33.7% share), the highest audience in three tournaments and **up 30.9% on Spain's 2013 final win against Italy** (3.2m viewers, 28.1% share), which was also on Cuatro. **Audience figures also exceeded expectations in neutral markets** with, for example, 2.1m tuning in to Rai 3 in Italy, 2.1m watching in Poland and over 600,000 in France on L'Équipe.



Spain's run to the final attracted huge figures on Cuatro

UEFA.tv

UEFA's official YouTube channel is key to its media rights strategy

Live streaming and video-on-demand (VOD) coverage on UEFA.tv increased massively compared to 2015, in part because of the number of matches covered increasing by six to 21, but also because of the growing popularity of UEFA.tv as a channel for football content. UEFA.tv had close to 700,000 subscribers by the end of the tournament, six times more than in 2015. Live streaming minutes watched (23,124,360) and total views (1,655,928) were up by 1,424% and 1,831% respectively compared to 2015 with an average viewing time of 13:57 minutes. Highlight clips, meanwhile, generated 1,155,866 views and 2,449,289 minutes watched on VOD by 10 July 2017. UEFA.tv was most-watched in Vietnam (11% of total views), followed by the Netherlands (10%), Russia (8.4%), Thailand (7.4%) and India (6.5%).

BROADCAST NETWORK

Europe

- Bosnia and Herzegovina** Arena Sport
- Bulgaria** Nova
- Croatia** Arena Sport
- Czech Republic** Czech TV
- Denmark** Discovery
- Finland** Discovery
- France** L'Équipe
- FYR Macedonia** TV Nova, Arena Sport
- Germany** ARD, ZDF
- Hungary** DIGI Sport
- Israel** Charlton
- Italy** Rai
- Montenegro** Arena Sport
- Norway** Discovery
- Poland** Polsat
- Portugal** Sport TV
- Romania** DigiSport
- Serbia** Arena Sport
- Slovakia** Markíza
- Spain** Mediaset
- Sweden** Discovery
- United Kingdom** Sky UK

Outside Europe

- Australia** beIN SPORTS
- Brazil** Globosat
- Canada** RDS, TSN
- Caribbean** ESPN
- Hong Kong** i-Cable
- Indonesia** MNC/RCTI
- Latin America** ESPN
- Malaysia/Brunei** Astro
- Middle East/North Africa** beIN SPORTS
- Sub-Saharan Africa** Econet (Kwesé Sports)
- United States** ESPN



IN THE PICTURE

Host broadcaster Polsat and UEFA TV Production teamed up to deliver the images from Poland

A cameraman gets up close to the Germany celebrations



A minimum of 13 cameras covered every game

The images from the 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship in Poland were produced in partnership between the final tournament's host broadcaster Polsat and UEFA. There was a production team at every one of the six venues, with a minimum of 13 cameras covering each game, including two super-slow-motion cameras, a steadicam and an in-goal mini-camera. In addition, a flycam (similar to an aerial camera system but mounted on a single cable) was used for the opening match, while the final was a 17-camera affair, including an additional Steadicam, a high reverse camera and two extra super-slow-mo cameras. UEFA TV Production also provided a full suite of graphics for Polsat to complement the coverage.

What's more, UEFA TV Production staff were on site throughout the tournament to support both Polsat and all visiting broadcasters. This service was complemented by full quality control completed off site on all matches, with feedback promptly shared with the host broadcaster as the tournament progressed.

Leading up to the finals, UEFA had also delivered to broadcasters

comprehensive additional programming material, including tournament and host city promos, plus an update package comprising interviews, rushes, raw host city material, play-off highlights and more. In-tournament behind-the-scenes filming was also carried out for UEFA and its sponsors.

Broadcasters were able to customise their own coverage thanks to a series of unilateral facilities made available by UEFA and coordinated by the governing body's unilateral services team.

In all, 155 commentary positions were booked, supplemented by 68 post-match flash interview positions and 58 pitch-presentation positions, as well as 189 unilateral cameras (including electronic news gathering, bonded mobile broadband, team filming and UEFA filming).

By directing the U21 final from London, as well as on the ground in Krakow, UEFA was able to prove the technical viability and effectiveness of a UHD 4K remote production – representing a major milestone ahead of UEFA EURO 2020, a tournament that will be spread across 13 different European host cities.

DIGITAL FIRST

The tournament's social media accounts and UEFA.com's live MatchCentres proved huge hits in keeping fans up to date on the action

The UEFA European Under-21 Championship attracted a sizeable digital audience once again for the 2017 edition in Poland, with increasing numbers of fans eager to see the next generation of stars, many of whom are already playing at Europe's top clubs.

A shift to the responsive, mobile-friendly design so successful at UEFA EURO 2016 was implemented for the Under-21 section of UEFA.com, with users directed to the hugely popular live MatchCentres, which generated over a million page views during the course of the tournament.

The decline in consumption of longer-form editorial such as reviews, match reports and features meant the content was instead pushed to key traffic areas – with the MatchCentres taking centre stage alongside the official information, data and statistics for which UEFA.com is the only official source.

In addition, reporters delivered text, photo and video updates live from every match, making the most of their behind-the-scenes access with a constant stream of first-hand colour and insight. In all, the 2017 edition resulted in almost 2.2 million visits to the Under-21 section of UEFA.com, an increase of around 15% on the

previous tournament in 2015. There were also major gains on social media, with the conversation driven by the likes of Spanish duo Marco Asensio and Saúl Ñíguez – each of whom had featured prominently in their clubs' respective UEFA Champions League campaigns. Player of the Tournament Dani Ceballos was also at the centre of the discussion, particularly after he was snapped up by Real Madrid on the back of his impressive displays in Poland.

Much of the competition's charm lies in its history, with several established stars having made their first international impression on the Under-21 stage. This reflected in users' interactions on social media, with archive content featuring Under-21 graduates such as Luís Figo, Mesut Özil and Cristiano Ronaldo contributing to increased fan engagement.

On Facebook, the Under-21s generated upwards of 244,000 interactions and 12 million video views, increasing the channel's overall follower count by some 77,000 in the process. Meanwhile on Twitter, constant updates from the team in Poland drove 188,000 interactions and attracted 14,000 new fans all centred around the official competition hashtag #U21EURO.



Davie Selke takes time out with Germany fans (above); players shared tournament content (top right); social media graphics alerted fans to key information (right)



REPORTERS DELIVERED TEXT, PHOTO AND VIDEO UPDATES LIVE FROM EVERY MATCH, MAKING THE MOST OF THEIR BEHIND-THE-SCENES ACCESS

UEFA.COM

2.2M

VISITS TO THE UNDER-21 SECTION

↑15%

INCREASE ON THE 2015 TOURNAMENT

FACEBOOK

244k

INTERACTIONS

12M

VIDEO VIEWS

TWITTER

188k

INTERACTIONS



Italy celebrate their 2004 triumph, the last time they lifted the trophy

MATCH DATES

QUALIFYING GROUP STAGE

- 20-28 March 2017
- 5-13 June 2017
- 28 August-5 September 2017
- 2-10 October 2017
- 6-14 November 2017
- 19-27 March 2018
- 3-11 September 2018
- 8-16 October 2018

PLAY-OFFS

- 12-20 November 2018

FINAL TOURNAMENT

- 16-30 June 2019

FINAL TOURNAMENT VENUES

ITALY

- Stadio Renato Dall'Ara, Bologna
- Stadio Città del Tricolore, Reggio Emilia
- Stadio Dino Manuzzi, Cesena
- Stadio Nereo Rocco, Trieste
- Stadio Friuli, Udine

SAN MARINO

- San Marino Stadium, Serravalle

COUNTDOWN TO 2019

A record 54 teams are involved in qualifying, but only co-hosts Italy are guaranteed a place in the 2019 final tournament

Italy and San Marino will co-host the 2019 UEFA European Under-21 Championship final tournament, with a record 54 teams competing in qualifying.

It will be the first time that Italy stage the U21 EURO, despite boasting a glorious history in the competition:

the Azzurrini have won the title a record five times, though they have not lifted the trophy since 2004, when a team including the likes of Andrea Barzagli, Daniele De Rossi and Alberto Gilardino beat Serbia and Montenegro 3-0 in the final in Bochum.

This time round, the qualifying

competition kicked off even before the 2017 finals had begun, with Kosovo's first match at this level ending in a 1-0 defeat by the Republic of Ireland in Dublin on 25 March. Gibraltar are the other debutants for this 2017-19 edition which will involve all 55 UEFA member associations for the first time. Italy have a bye to the finals but co-hosts San Marino must qualify – the nine group winners advance to the 12-team final tournament automatically, with the remaining two places decided by a pair of two-legged play-off ties featuring the four best runners-up. The 2019 U21 EURO will also serve as the qualifying competition for the football event at the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo.



ROLL OF HONOUR

- 2017 Germany
- 2015 Sweden
- 2013 Spain
- 2011 Spain
- 2009 Germany
- 2007 Netherlands
- 2006 Netherlands
- 2004 Italy
- 2002 Czech Republic
- 2000 Italy
- 1998 Spain
- 1996 Italy
- 1994 Italy
- 1992 Italy
- 1990 USSR
- 1988 France
- 1986 Spain
- 1984 England
- 1982 England
- 1980 USSR
- 1978 Yugoslavia

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