Before UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 got under way, I expressed the view that the tournament would set new standards for this flourishing sport. I am pleased to say that my confidence was totally justified.

Over 12 memorable days at the impressive Arena Stožice in the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, we saw just how far futsal has come, in terms of the quality of the action and as a popular spectator attraction.

In the end, Portugal emerged victorious in a gripping final against Spain to claim their first ever European futsal title, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Portuguese Football Federation and its fine team on the outstanding achievement of joining the country’s football team as reigning European champions. Congratulations also to Portugal’s Ricardinho on becoming the finals’ all-time leading goalscorer with 22 goals in total. His goals were crucial to his team’s success.

The Slovenian public turned out in impressive numbers. The Football Association of Slovenia were excellent hosts, and can be immensely proud that the finals attracted just over 100,000 fans in total – including a sell-out crowd for the final.

The unforgettable tournament in my home country took the sport a huge step forward. Now, we can look forward to even more new benchmarks being set as the UEFA Futsal EURO enters an exciting new age.

ALEKSANDER ČEFERIN
UEFA President
Technical report
The event hosted by Slovenia was the fifth and last final tournament to involve a dozen teams. It also ended a cycle embracing two decades during which final tournaments had been staged on a biennial basis, with one anecdotic exception when the switch from November to January starting dates generated a gap between 2007 and 2010. The introduction of a four-year interval, allied with an expansion to 16 finalists, had already been written into international futsal calendars when the ball started rolling in Ljubljana.

The technical report on the final tournament of the tenth official UEFA European Futsal Championship provides a permanent record of the 20 matches played at the Arena Stožice in the Slovenian capital. In addition to factual and statistical information, the report is based on the observations and analysis provided by UEFA’s two technical observers. In Slovenia, UEFA’s technical team was formed by two former national team coaches with extensive experience accumulated at EUROs and FIFA World Cups, Javier Lozano and Orlando Duarte. The observations and data that appear in this review have a similar objective – to stimulate development by offering analysis, reflections and debating points and, by highlighting trends at the peak of the European futsal pyramid, providing coaches at senior and development levels with information that may be helpful when working on the qualities required by the players and coaches who will play leading roles in shaping the future of futsal in Europe.

Tactics and trends

The event hosted by Slovenia was the fifth and last final tournament to involve a dozen teams. It also ended a cycle embracing two decades during which final tournaments had been staged on a biennial basis, with one anecdotic exception when the switch from November to January starting dates generated a gap between 2007 and 2010. The introduction of a four-year interval, allied with an expansion to 16 finalists, had already been written into international futsal calendars when the ball started rolling in Ljubljana. The technical report on the final tournament of the tenth official UEFA European Futsal Championship provides a permanent record of the 20 matches played at the Arena Stožice in the Slovenian capital. In addition to factual and statistical information, the report is based on the observations and analysis provided by UEFA’s two technical observers. In Slovenia, UEFA’s technical team was formed by two former national team coaches with extensive experience accumulated at EUROs and FIFA World Cups, Javier Lozano and Orlando Duarte. The observations and data that appear in this review have a similar objective – to stimulate development by offering analysis, reflections and debating points and, by highlighting trends at the peak of the European futsal pyramid, providing coaches at senior and development levels with information that may be helpful when working on the qualities required by the players and coaches who will play leading roles in shaping the future of futsal in Europe.

This technical report aims to provide insight and spark debate
Road to the final

Close encounters, tight defences and an increasingly even playing field were the hallmarks of a compelling tournament.

"Nowadays there is definitely more equality. There are no longer any easy opponents," Russia coach Sergei Skorovich concisely summarised a group stage in which five of the dozen matches were drawn, with Italy, Russia and Spain – the only three countries to have lifted the European futsal crown – accumulating a joint total of nine goals at a miserly average of 1.5 per game. At the same juncture of the previous final tournament, their total had stood at 23. Despite failure to attain attacking benchmarks, Russia and defending champions Spain edged into the quarter-finals. The major surprise was that Italy, title winners in 2014, did not.

GROUP A

ITALY TUMBLE OUT

The first appearance by Roberto Menichelli’s team was against Serbia who, despite suspensions to goalkeeper Miodrag Aksentijević and the influential Marko Perić, had frustrated the hosts by fighting back from a 2-0 deficit and equalising a joint total of nine goals at a miserly average of 1.5 per game. At the same juncture of the previous final tournament, their total had stood at 23. Despite failure to attain attacking benchmarks, Russia and defending champions Spain edged into the quarter-finals. The major surprise was that Italy, title winners in 2014, did not.

GROUP B

KAZAKHSTAN ON TOP

Russia suffered similar, albeit less terminal, frustration. It took 35 minutes to find a path to the net through a Poland team that competed collectively and unstintingly, probing with direct passes to the pivot or fast counters after regains. Recompense arrived with nine seconds remaining – a lapse of concentration allowing Michał Kubik to equalise during the final raid with a flying goalkeeper. Two days later, Polish resources struggled to cope with Kazakhstan’s fluent combinations. Four first-half goals and a final 5-1 scoreline put Cacau’s team in the Group B driving seat – and they stayed there by coming back to draw 1-1 with the goal-shy Russians and claim top spot, while their opponents crept into the last eight without winning a game.
GROUP C
PORTUGAL IMPRESS

Group C was alone in not featuring a draw. And Portugal were alone in winning their two group games. Romania mirrored their 1-4-0 attacking structure but struggled to match the fluent combinations and rapid rotations of their opponents. Although technically gifted, Robert Lupu’s team found it difficult to mix purpose with possession and extensive use of the flying goalkeeper led to the surrender of two goals in a 4-1 defeat. Lupu then made even more extensive use of the flying keeper against Ukraine – even when 1-0 and 2-1 ahead. The play became a poisoned chalice when, with 19 seconds remaining, Ukraine grabbed possession and won 3-2 with a fast counter. This converted the Ukraine v Portugal encounter into a jostle for first place. The young Ukrainians, unsettled by Portugal’s high-pressure combination play, reacted impressively after a 2-0 first-half deficit but had few complaints about a 5-3 defeat.

GROUP D
HOLDERS ADVANCE

Debutants France breathed fresh air into Group D. Pierre Jacky’s part-timers, uninhibited against the defending champions, defended deep in 1-1-2-1 formation and countered at breakneck speed. Capitalising on Spain’s imprecisions, they held the upper hand throughout a match bizarrely marked by interceptions and own goals. Ultimately, José Venancio López’s team were thankful to recover from 4-2 down thanks to a deflected corner and, just over two minutes from time, an equaliser by flying goalkeeper Bebe. Two days later; concentration at set plays became an issue. France conceded from two corners, a free-kick and, to rub salt into wounds, a corner in their favour, which paved the way for the counterattack that gave Azerbaijan a 3-2 advantage. The 5-3 defeat made France the second-highest scorers of the group phase. Mathematical elimination remained pending until the final whistle of the tense 1-0 victory against Azerbaijan that allowed Spain to claim the last quarter-final place at the end of an intensely competitive group stage.

RICARDINHO’S BOX OF TRICKS CONJURED IMPRESSIVE DISPLAYS FROM HIS TEAM-MATES, AND THE FOUR GOALS THAT MADE HIM THE EURO’S ALL-TIME TOP SCORER

Like the snowfalls that cast a thick blanket over Ljubljana, the action was relentless. Within 24 hours, the curtain had risen on the knockout stage where one match stood out like a sore thumb. Very sore if you happened to be a supporter of Azerbaijan. No fewer than 56% of the quarter-final goals were scored in Portugal’s 8-1 demolition of Alexio’s team who, nonetheless, took the lead within 54 seconds. The early joy was followed by 39 minutes of torment as Ricardinho’s box of tricks conjured impressive performances from team-mates such as Bruno Coelho and Pedro Cary, in addition to the four goals that made him the Futsal EURO’s all-time top scorer. Already trailing 4-1, Alexio started to inject the flying goalkeeper seven minutes before the interval. But ten spells of power play allowed Portugal to score three more goals on the break and, with almost nine minutes remaining, Alexio reverted to normality with the final result of 8-1 already on the scoreboard.

SERBIA 1-3 KAZAKHSTAN

The other three quarter-finals could hardly have offered a starker contrast. A rebound after a free-kick allowed Kazakhstan to take an early lead against Serbia and a fast break permitted Taynan to double the tally two minutes into the second period. But the second appearance of Mladen Kocić in the flying goalkeeper shirt created a goal for Slobodan Rajčević that set fire to the final minutes – only for, with 23 seconds remaining, Douglas Junior to intercept a pass and race away to put the result beyond doubt.
SLOVENIA 0-2 RUSSIA

Despite waves of enthusiasm generated by a sell-out crowd, the hosts’ story had a similarly unhappy ending. Even with Rok Mordej suspended, Andrej Dobovičnik used only seven of 11 available outfielders against Russia and, ultimately, they were unable to bear such a heavy workload against the athletic Russians. Unstinting efforts and some outstanding goalkeeping by Damir Puklar preserved the stalemate for just over 26 minutes until a counterattack through the middle by Ivan Chishkala allowed Eder Lima, drifting left to make space, to fire high by Ivan Chishkala. The deadlock held until three minutes before the break when Pola’s spectacular long-range missile hit the target. With Spain unable to translate domination into goals and, ultimately, they were unable to redress the balance when the clock had just ticked past the half-hour mark. With just over four minutes remaining, the same player, finding space to receive a corner on the right, delivered a second blow to put his team ahead.

KAZAKHSTAN 5-5 SPAIN

In the second semi-final, Kazakhstan earned support from the crowd for their spirited performance as underdogs against the defending champions in a roller-coaster ten-goal contest. With Douglas Junior conducting the orchestra, a counter allowed Taynan to put Kazakhstan ahead, only for two set plays (a corner and a kick-in) to give Spain a 2-1 halftime advantage. That was overturned in 45 seconds early in the second half thanks to a long-range shot (by goalkeeper Higuita from midfield) and a slick combination. Back came Spain. Firstly through Joselito after a kick-in on the right; then by Pola after a ball-loss by Dauren Nurgozhin. A fierce shot by Miguelín put Spain ahead again; only for another penalty shoot-out. Russia, cleverly set up to earn his team the bronze medal.

UKRAINE 0-1 SPAIN

Spain’s edgy, tense defence of the title continued against disciplined, hard-working Ukraine. Despite adding tempo and fluency to their approach play, finishing was wayward and, on the occasions when it was well directed, Yevgen Ivaniv prepared his shot to stop competencies. The deadlock held until three minutes before the break when Pola’s spectacular long-range missile hit the target. With Spain unable to translate domination into goals and with Ukraine more adept at containment than at threatening the Spanish goal, eleven ten minutes punctuated by six spells of Ukrainian power play failed to change the scoreline. Spain, despite their uncharacteristic paucity of goals, completed the semi-final line-up.

Semi-finals Review

RUSIA 1-0 KAZAKHSTAN

The two semi-finals distillated the spirit of futsal into 90 minutes of high drama, ending with sudden death in a penalty shoot-out. Russia, cleverly set up to throw a wet blanket over Portuguese panache, immediately took the upper hand, with Eder Lima creating discomfort among the Portugal defenders with his back-to-goal expertise, Robinho orchestrating attacks and Chishkala catalysing end-to-end play. First-half dominance, however, produced only one goal – Lima supplying the coup de grâce after a ball-loss by Pedro Cary had set up a fast counter. With Russia’s defensive covering keeping the lid on Ricardinho’s box of tricks, Portugal needed a long-range strike from André Coelho to redress the balance when the clock had just ticked past the half-hour mark. With just over four minutes remaining, the same player, finding space to receive a corner on the right, delivered a second blow to put his team ahead. Skorovich waited until two minutes from time to send on Sergei Abramov as flying goalkeeper mode, only for Eder Lima to heighten the drama with a second goal but Portugal hung on to edge into the final.

Third-Place Match

Russia for the bronze medal. An end-to-end spectacle allowed Higuita and Georgi Zambadse to showcase their goalkeeping skills – their shot-stopping prowess contributing to a paradoxical balance of 96 goal attempts and 1-0 to Russia on the scoreboard. Ironically, the goal when Higuita moved to the right to shuffle into flying goalkeeper mode, only for Douglas Junior to be pressurised into conceding a corner. Rapid delivery of the set play, while Higuita was scurrying back into position, allowed Eder Lima to earn his team the bronze medal.
Portugal celebrate at last

Courage, conviction and creativity finally brought Jorge Braz’s team their deserved reward

“It was a very evenly balanced final between two teams who defended high and put intense pressure on the ball,” commented UEFA technical observer Javier Lozano. “Both teams’ attacking play was based on high levels of ball possession. And, apart from having similar team characteristics, the coaches knew each other extremely well.” But one of the truths of futsal is that team talks, game plans and tactical expertise can be undermined in a matter of seconds. A massive crowd of 10,352 had barely settled into their seats when the delicately balanced contest was tilted in favour of Portugal. The intense high pressure exerted by Jorge Braz’s team paid an early dividend when Spain’s playmaker Miguelín was persuaded to surrender possession in front of his own goal. Spanish supporters would have wished for the loose ball to fall to a player with less experience, skill and aplomb than Ricardinho. It was the Portuguese captain, however, who was in the right place at the right time to calmly clip the ball past Paco Sedano and give his team a one-goal advantage after only 59 seconds.

In futsal, to concede an early goal is not necessarily disastrous. The significance of scoring it, on the other hand, fuelled Portugal’s confidence and self-belief – mental factors that had arguably undermined big-match performance levels in previous tournaments. In Slovenia, Portugal had consistently played with courage and conviction. And these qualities persuaded them they could take the game to the defending champions in uninhibited fashion. Adhering to their 1-4-0 attacking structure with only occasional uses of a pivot, Portugal were able to disrupt Spanish construction work with three-man or two-man pressing of extraordinary intensity. It was so intense that they reached the five-foul mark in both halves of the contest – most of the infractions taking place in Spanish territory. The result was an opening spell marked by uncharacteristic imprecisions in Spain’s normally fluent combination play and a hesitant edginess possibly generated by the draw with France, two 1-0 wins and one penalty shoot-out victory along a rocky path to the final. When Venancio López called a time-out with just over six minutes of the first half remaining, it was to deliver, in vociferous fashion, advice on how to break free of Portugal’s tactical tentacles. Francisco Solano, who had watched the semi-final against Kazakhstan from the bench, began to appear regularly on court as an alternative to Alex at the apex of the attack and, by dropping wide, opened up diagonal passing lines that gave Spain more valid options.

Pedro Cary, Nilson Miguel and Bruno Coelho celebrate the latter’s winning goal in the final
When the hooter sounded, Portugal ended years of frustration with scenes of unbridled jubilation.

When playing out from the back, at the same time, the Portuguese subconscious was being tempted to prioritise the defence of their advantage. Ricardinho, facing up to so many opponents who were team-mates in the Spanish league, was content to catalyse from deep positions rather than play as leading sword in the cut-and-thrust. Gradually, Spain began to play their way into the game, even though Portugal were adopting similar defensive measures to subdue Miguelín. Spain’s playmaking equivalent to Ricardinho. With their rapid recoveries of possession curtailed, Portugal showed symptoms of discomfort when deprived of the ball for longer segments of play.

However, Spain were made to wait until 66 seconds before the interval to restore equality. A slick combination on the left ended with Marc Tolrá beating the onrushing net to put Portugal 3-2 up with 55 seconds remaining. A sixth foul by Portugal on Cary allowed Bruno Coelho to fire a free-kick over the ten-metre mark. Braz changed his keeper, sending on Vítor Hugo for a brief cameo. His reappearance in the second half was to emerge as a decisive factor in the final, Portugal pressing high in, usually, a 1-1-2-2 formation. The final stretched into extra time, another figure on the scoreboard gained greater relevance. A sixth foul by Portugal afforded Miguelín a chance from the ten-metre mark. Braz changed his keeper, sending on Vítor Hugo for a brief cameo in which he made no contact with the ball; but the spot kick thumped against the junction between post and crossbar.

Spain paid a high price for committing three fouls in succession. Solano’s foul on Cary allowed Bruno Coelho to fire a ten-metre penalty low past Paco Sedano into the Spanish net for a free-kick by Miguelín met by the flying goalkeeper after 36’49”. And his second appearance 51 seconds later brought Portugal back from the brink, with a neat high-tempo circulation culminating in Bruno Coelho hooking the ball home with 102 seconds remaining.

This juncture, Portugal became intoxicated by the scent of victory – to the extent that Braz was obliged to restrain Cary as he attempted to race on again as the flying keeper. As the final stretched into extra time, another figure on the scoreboard gained greater relevance. A sixth foul by Portugal afforded Miguelín a chance from the ten-metre mark. Braz changed his keeper, sending on Vítor Hugo for a brief cameo in which he made no contact with the ball; but the spot kick thumped against the junction between post and crossbar.

Spain paid a high price for committing three fouls in succession. Solano’s foul on Cary allowed Bruno Coelho to fire a ten-metre penalty low past Paco Sedano into the Spanish net to put Portugal 3-2 up with 55 seconds remaining. With 14 to go, Bebe struck the Portugal ball home with 102 seconds remaining.

UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 Tournament review
## Results and standings

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### Results and standings

**SLOVENIA 2-2 SERBIA**

**30 JANUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Slovenia: Puškar, R Mordej, Čujec, Osredkar, Fetić; Serbia: Mammarella, Ercolessi, Fortino, Honorio, Alex Merlim

**Attendance**: 10,342

**Referees**: Barton

**Tournament review**

**RULES AND STANDINGS**

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**PORTUGAL 4-1 ROMANIA**

**31 JANUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Portugal: Bebe, Pedro Cary, Bruno Coelho, João Matos, Ricardinho; Romania: Toniţa, F Matei, Ignat, Savio Valadares, Paulo Ferreira

**Attendance**: 3,933

**Referees**: Tomić, Černy

**Tournament review**

**SLOVENIA 2-1 ITALY**

**1 FEBRUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Slovenia: Puškar, R Mordej, Čujec, Osredkar, Fetić; Italy: Mammarella, Gabriel Lima, Romano, Honorio, Murilo

**Attendance**: 7,018

**Referees**: Barton

**Tournament review**

**RUSSIA 1-0 POLAND**

**30 JANUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Russia: Ivan, Mikolaschuk, Dovgan, Higuita, Yesenamanov, Douglas Junior, Nurgozhin; Poland: Kałuża, Zastawnik, Lutecki, Mikołajewicz, Popławski

**Attendance**: 3,192

**Referees**: Pelissier

**Tournament review**

**UKRAINE 3-1 PORTUGAL**

**4 FEBRUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Ukraine: Ivan, Yaroslav, Mykolaschuk, Dovgan, Higuita, Yesenamanov, Douglas Junior, Nurgozhin; Portugal: Fábio Cecílio, 24:42 (POR)

**Attendance**: 2,060

**Referees**: Farkas, Kovács

**Tournament review**

**SPAIN 4-4 FRANCE**

**31 JANUARY 2018**

**Goal Scorers**: Spain: Paco Sedano, Ortiz, Pela, Rafa Usín, Joselito; France: Haroun, Ramires, Aigoun, A Mohammed, Mouhoudine

**Attendance**: 2,810

**Referees**: Malfer, Trujillo

**Tournament review**
UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 Tournament review

**QUARTER-FINALS**

**SLOVENIA 0-2 RUSSIA**

**KAZAKHSTAN 5-5 SPAIN**

**SEMI-FINALS**

**PORTUGAL 3-2 SPAIN**

**FINAL**

Russia took bronze by beating Kazakhstan.

---

**UEFA Futsal EURO 2018**

**QUARTER-FINALS**

**SERBIA 1-3 KAZAKHSTAN**

**RUSSIA 2-3 PORTUGAL**

**SERBIA**

**KAZAKHSTAN**

Higuita, Doxgan, Yessenamov, Douglas Junior, Nurgazhon

Goals:
- 1-0 Higuita 28:51
- 2-2 Higuita 24:14, 3-2 Taku 24:59, 3-3 Joselito 28:08, 3-4 Pola 33:01

Penalty shoot-out:
- 2-2 Higuita 24:14, 3-2 Taku 24:59, 3-3 Joselito 28:08, 3-4 Pola 33:01

**PORTUGAL**

**RUSIA**

Zamtaradze, Eder Lima, Robinho, Davydov, Chishkala

Goals:

**YELLOW CARDS**

Zhurba 21:00 (UKR)

**GOAL**

- 0-1 Pola 17:02

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**THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF**

**ERGIA 1-0 KAZAKHSTAN**

**RUSSIA 1-0 KAZAKHSTAN**

**FINAL**

Russia lifts the trophy.
All-star cast

With Ricardinho taking centre stage, champions Portugal provided four of the 14 players in the technical observers’ choice for the team of the tournament.

A long list of candidates for the team of the tournament was gradually whittled down by technical observers Orlando Duarte and Javier Lozano and, after the final, they selected five starters from an all-star squad of 14 players. Here they highlight the qualities that earned each player their place in the squad, as well as the individual performance data for the top five starters.

**Starters**

(FIGURES IN BRACKETS = AVERAGE PER GAME)

### GEORGI ZAMTARADZE

RUSIA

Consistent high-performer; good distribution with feet and excellent reflexes despite his height.

- Games: 5
- Minutes played: 155 (31.0)
- Goals: 0
- Assists: 3
- Shots: 0

### DOUGLAS JUNIOR

Colombia

Excellent defending; catalyst of team’s attacking play; outstanding long-range shooting and work rate.

- Games: 5
- Minutes played: 181 (36.2)
- Goals: 4 (0.8)
- Assists: 7 (1.4)
- Shots: 28 (5.6)

### HIGUITA

Venezuela

Exceptional technical qualities; ability to conjure up something different; takes responsibility as team leader.

- Games: 5
- Minutes played: 152 (30.4)
- Goals: 7 (1.4)
- Assists: 4 (0.8)
- Shots: 32 (6.4)

### TAYNAN

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Excellent technical qualities; good passing, good finisher, contempouously competitive.

- Games: 5
- Minutes played: 141 (28.2)
- Goals: 3 (0.6)
- Assists: 2 (0.4)
- Shots: 27 (5.4)

### POLA

Spain

Top-class defensive qualities; constant off-the-ball movement and great finishing ability from any range.

- Games: 5
- Minutes played: 91 (18.2)
- Goals: 3 (0.7)
- Assists: 0 (0)
- Shots: 13 (2.6)

### Substitutes

- **HIGUITA**
  - Venezuela
  - Exceptional technical qualities; ability to conjure up something different; takes responsibility as team leader.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 152
  - Goals: 7
  - Assists: 4
- **IVAN CHISHKALA**
  - Russia
  - Excellent technique; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 4
  - Minutes played: 91
  - Goals: 3
  - Assists: 1
- **BRUNO COELHO**
  - Portugal
  - Explosive defensive skills; good off-the-ball movement; ability to create and exploit space.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 99
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 3
- **MLADEN KOČIĆ**
  - Serbia
  - Excellent technical; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 3
  - Minutes played: 129
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2
- **PETRO CARY**
  - Portugal
  - Exceptional technical qualities; ability to conjure up something different; takes responsibility as team leader.
  - Games: 3
  - Minutes played: 27
  - Goals: 4
  - Assists: 2
- **IRGOSREDKAR**
  - Croatia
  - Exceptional technical qualities; ability to conjure up something different; takes responsibility as team leader.
  - Games: 3
  - Minutes played: 27
  - Goals: 4
  - Assists: 2
- **ANDRÉ COELHO**
  - Portugal
  - High-speed position enabled quality passing; long-range shooting; anticipation; defending without fouls.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 130
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 0
- **MIGUELÍN**
  - Spain
  - Excellent technical; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 99
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2
- **IGOR OSREDKAR**
  - Croatia
  - Exceptional technical qualities; ability to conjure up something different; takes responsibility as team leader.
  - Games: 3
  - Minutes played: 27
  - Goals: 4
  - Assists: 2
- **PÉTRO SHOTURMA**
  - Portugal
  - Exceptional technical; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 181
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2
- **MIGUELÍN**
  - Spain
  - Exceptional vision and passing ability; keen eye for goal; tremendous left-footed shot.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 152
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2
- **PEDRO CARY**
  - Portugal
  - Excellent vision; team leader; intelligent movement; scoring ability.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 152
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2
- **DOUGLAS JUNIOR**
  - Colombia
  - Exceptional technical; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 181
  - Goals: 4
  - Assists: 7
- **MIGUELÍN**
  - Spain
  - Exceptional vision and passing ability; keen eye for goal; tremendous left-footed shot.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 152
  - Goals: 2
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  - Portugal
  - Exceptional technical; dribbling skills; changes of direction; great long-range shooting; athletic qualities.
  - Games: 5
  - Minutes played: 181
  - Goals: 2
  - Assists: 2

**5 FIVE OF THE 2018 TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT WERE ALSO SELECTED IN 2016: HIGUITA, DOUGLAS JUNIOR, MLADEN KOČIĆ, MIGUELÍN AND RICARDINHO.**

**2 MIGUELÍN AND RICARDINHO HAVE MADE THE SELECTION IN THE PAST FOUR TOURNAMENTS. RICARDINHO IS THE ONLY PLAYER TO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FIVE TIMES.**

**17 THERE HAVE BEEN 17 DIFFERENT SPANISH PLAYERS SELETED IN THE SEVEN ALL-STAR TEAMS SINCE 2005, FOLLOWED BY ITALY, 12, AND RUSSIA, 11.**
In two interviews over the following pages, Portugal coach Jorge Braz and France’s Pierre Jacky look back on a tournament that will leave lasting memories for futsal in their respective countries.

UEFA technical observers Orlando Duarte and Javier Lozano drafted questions aimed at allowing two coaches to review the final tournament from different angles: the champion, Jorge Braz, and Pierre Jacky, the part-time coach of an amateur France squad who gained a first taste of a EURO in Slovenia and whose comments might be helpful to coaches aiming to make similar debuts in the future. The following pages offer abridged versions of interviews that were filmed a few weeks after the final tournament.
Thinking back, what difficulties did you encounter on and off the pitch prior to and during the tournament? I think the big advantage we had was that we didn’t view anything as a difficult obstacle. After what we’d been through in previous EUROs and World Cups, when we didn’t always deal well with difficulties, the way we looked at it was: we know it’s not all going to be smooth in the lead-up, during matches, or in our day-to-day relations. But we’re not going to let this hold us back. We’re going to find ways to overcome these difficulties. We prepared in this spirit, and that proved to be crucial. There were hiccups, but we knew we could overcome anything that came our way. This actually gave us lots of strength during the tournament.

How did you manage public and media expectations and the pressure on you to win the championship? We set ourselves the target of winning a medal and we knew exactly what colour. This was our clear goal and it didn’t add to the pressure; it was a positive. There were times when I made an effort to transmit a feeling of complete confidence and calmness from the bench. In Portugal they labelled it “calm strength” and that was exactly it. We had total confidence and each individual calmly did the job he had to do. We would have to show our quality, use our heads, and keep our emotions in check.

Talking about emotions, at the precise moment when the final whistle sounded, how did you feel? In all honesty, I don’t think what we’d just done had sunk in, perhaps because of the rational, ultra-calm approach I adopted as coach in order to transmit total confidence to the players. I’ll tell you my last words before the first match kicked off. I demanded stamina because I didn’t want shouting or emotions. “Let’s start calmly, knowing what we have to do.” When the hooter sounded at the end of extra time in the final, it was a feeling of huge happiness, the hooter sounded at the end of extra time in knowing what we have to do.” When the last words before the first match kicked off. In all honesty, I don’t think what we’d just done had sunk in, perhaps because of the rational, ultra-calm approach I adopted as coach in order to transmit total confidence to the players. I’ll tell you my last words before the first match kicked off. I demanded stamina because I didn’t want shouting or emotions. “Let’s start calmly, knowing what we have to do.” When the hooter sounded at the end of extra time in the final, it was a feeling of huge happiness, when the hooter sounded how did you feel?

Portugal scored 25% of the goals in Slovenia. Why do you think there were so few goals in this tournament? Our attacking approach is an important aspect. Teams increasingly focus on defensive discipline. You often hear teams saying, “Don’t give anything away,” because if you give nothing away you’ve got a chance of winning. Weaker teams are aware of this. Taking risks, showing attacking courage has maybe become less of a priority. As coaches, we should always try to anticipate things, think through how the game is evolving. It’s clear to me we have to be defensively sound. But we have to be very bold, aggressive, lively and positive when attacking, always with our eyes on the goal. I remember the game against Russia. In the first half, we weren’t passing sideways; we were on the front foot. At this break, I simply said we have to play with our usual boldness, liveliness, attacking spirit, because I suspected teams would be defensively tight in this EURO. We had to be defensively disciplined, but not focus on defence. Because we don’t want to be like the others. We clearly had to be defensively solid but retain our boldness, because that’s the DNA of Portuguese futsal: dynamism, creativity with and without the ball, forward-thinking, being progressive with our movement, four-man play, use of a pivot … This has always been our game. We ended up being an extremely positive team, attacking strongly without ever dropping our guard defensively. With the emphasis on defence, it was obvious there would be fewer goals and less open games. But there were many points of interest.

Talking about defensive work, did you see a tendency to move away from zonal marking? Yes, it’s vital to understand the importance of high-quality one-on-one defending. But if we develop players only to defend against their direct opponent, they won’t think about collective defending. If they only know how to defend one-on-one, we’ll be in trouble. They won’t become elite players. They have to understand all the processes. I look at the development and learning of the game by youngsters a bit differently. It’s very important that they understand what defending well means. They have to master individual duels, zonal marking, defending with a defensive line in what a switch of marking is; they have to master a range of principles and basics of the game. I hope the game doesn’t go down the road of the current fashion just because man-to-man marking is having some success. We should teach our young players much more than this. The fashion is wrong. We have to teach this game as a whole – that’s what’s important.
Pierre Jacky
‘Great pride’

What are your views on the current state of futsal in France, in terms of development and initiatives for the future of the game? At the moment there are only 30,000 registered futsal players in France, though there are a lot of registered footballers who play futsal, especially during the winter, and on top of that there are the youngsters who are playing the game. So there are more than 200,000 futsal players playing the game throughout the year. The main issue is our club structure. We’ve mainly got small clubs focused on futsal. They are very enthusiastic about the sport, though. We have a National School Sport Union, which runs competitions at high school and college level, where futsal has replaced football and handball as the number one sport. That shows the level of enthusiasm our sport generates, particularly among teenagers. Futsal has a lot going for it: there is plenty of goalmouth action, your eyes are on the ball the whole time it’s end-to-end, everyone has chances to shoot and score, and there are two or three times more goals per game.

In Slovenia, you said you’ve set your sights on joining Futsal’s elite within ten years. Do you have development plans in place? Yes, we will implement the development plan that was already in the pipeline before the EURO, but I think that will now have an added impetus in view of our results and the positive public response to our performances in Ljubljana. The plan involves creating more futsal courts, building more outdoor courts to address the shortage of sports halls. Many high schools and colleges have outdoor pitches that we would like to see resurfaced to make them suitable for futsal. We plan to open a national futsal centre to meet the needs of elite players, like the one built 20 or 30 years ago for the boys, and 16 years ago for the girls. The centre, which will be in Lyon, will bring together around 20 of our best 16 to 18-year-olds, who will train five times a week in the best conditions. We think it will take ten years for these efforts to translate into results at senior level and hopefully help France reach a World Cup or European Championship final. That’s what everyone’s dreaming about. We will also try to add more structure to the club system, by creating what we call a club licence. We’ve already done this with our leading amateur clubs. In return for financial support, we ask clubs to further develop their infrastructure, not only at technical level but also in youth team development, coaching, coaching qualifications and all the related organisational and educational work. We also hope to see some professional clubs launch futsal teams.

As a coach, what did you learn in Slovenia? I learned a lot. I think you always need to question what you are doing, which is a piece of advice I give to all the coaches I train. There’s always something new to learn; even more so in my case compared with my fellow national coaches as I’m involved in the game on a part-time basis. The players also learned how to handle this type of event, particularly on a mental level, in terms of focus, concentration and lots of other aspects; and obviously they also learned a lot in terms of tactics. The tactical trends that I noticed were similar to what we’ve seen at previous World Cups and EUROs. A lot of teams switched between 3-4-1-2 and 3-3-1-2 formations, but I was disappointed that there were a lot fewer goals than normal. It was a real shame not to see teams taking more risks in attack, and that most teams set out to force opponents into mistakes rather than impose their own way of playing and take risks in positional attacks. Even when teams broke on the counter, they often committed only one or two players. It was when they were hit on the break that teams conceded most goals. But that’s part of the game and the learning process.

Should anything be changed to improve the game as a spectacle? I noticed a lot of long clearances by goalkeepers, and they produced a very small number of goals. That probably doesn’t do much for entertainment levels. We could consider reintroducing the rule that was in force around 15 years ago, which prevented keepers from throwing the ball outside their own half. I think there would definitely be more pressing, but it would prevent all the long balls that detract from the spectacle, resulting all too often in possession being lost.

Expanding the finals to 16 teams would give other national teams the chance to see what France achieved this time around. If you could give a colleague taking part in their first EURO one piece of advice, what would it be? Follow your dream. You can never set your sights too high. When you aim high enough, you don’t finish up too low! In sport, anything is possible. I would want them to experience what I experienced with the players, which was an incredible moment that will be etched in our memories forever. It was the high point of my career, my ‘marvellous years’ as we say in France, and I hope to share it with others in the game. When we go from 12 to 16 teams, the better amateur nations like Germany could help raise the profile of the tournament even more.
Knowledge sharing

From tactical trends and developments to bringing through the next generation of talent, there was much for the coaches and technical observers to discuss in Slovenia.

The imminent introduction of the UEFA Under-19 Futsal EURO was vindicated by a statistic that caught the eye of the UEFA technical observers. When the ball started rolling in Slovenia, 46% of the players on show had passed their 30th birthday. And the only player under the age of 21 was 19-year-old Poland goalkeeper Michał Kałuża.

Sadly, maybe, it was nothing new. As long ago as EURO 2010, the observers in Hungary had noted “of the 60 most regular starters, 38 had reached or passed the age of 30”. “If so many over-30s can keep on playing at top level,” Spain coach José Venancio López remarked in Slovenia, “it is because younger talents are not finding a way through.”

Serbia coach Goran Ivančić said: “Importing Brazilians has undoubtedly raised the levels of technique. But our youngsters must get more opportunities to play because they need more international experience if they want to make the jump to the senior team.”

The lack of playing time for potential elite players was a common concern among the coaches at EURO 2018. Italy coach Roberto Menichelli, for instance, reflected: “The gap between youth and senior levels is a big problem. There are good youngsters but (they are) not yet ready for the top. They would suffer if they were thrown into a competition of this level. And many coaches are finding that a transitional phase can mean a serious risk in terms of results.”

The fact that 13 outfield players remained unused during the final tournament suggests that even some of the squad members selected may not have fully completed the pathway from development to elite levels.

Romania coach Robert Lupu, who represented his country as a player at EURO 2014, added: “We have U17 competitions but then there is a huge gap to the senior team. It’s not easy for players because the lack of opportunities to acquire international experience doesn’t help them to bridge that gap. We now have games under futsal rules in our schools, but it will take some years for that to bear fruit. This is why the introduction of a U19 competition can only be beneficial.”

Javier Lozano and Orlando Duarte, UEFA’s technical observers in Slovenia, reflected on the aspects that require educational work in helping players to bridge the gaps between generations and between domestic league and elite national team levels. Although fitness and power are highly relevant factors, they prioritised the mental and physical intensity required at the top level, allied with sustained concentration and, most importantly in their opinion, high-speed decision-making.

Serbia coach Goran Ivančić also stressed the need to work on “basics such as passing principles, the use of both feet, body positioning and so on”. Poland coach Blazej Korczynski commented: “This means that when you get the national team together you cannot overlook basics, such as the ability to visually cover ball and opponent at the same time.”

“IT’S IMPORTANT FOR FORMER PLAYERS TO MOVE INTO COACHING IN ORDER TO RAISE THE LEVEL OF COMPETITION”

The technical reports on futsal events are useful in encouraging senior players to become coaches,” Lupu added. “I think it’s important for former players to move into coaching in order to raise the level of competition.”

Romania’s Robert Lupu took part in his first Futsal EURO as a coach.

Romania coach Robert Lupu took part in his first Futsal EURO as a coach.
ALL IN THE DETAIL
Comments from the coaches in Ljubljana prompted Javier Lozano and Orlando Duarte to focus on specific details from games played in Slovenia that coaches might find useful when working with young players and equipping them with the qualities they will require at elite level.

THE FIELD OF VISION
ITALY 1-2 SLOVENIA

It is all about attention to detail – including body positioning, as mentioned by Goran Ivančić. Italy, after a rampant first half, were leading hosts Slovenia 1-0 and cruising towards top spot in Group A when the clock ticked past the 30-minute mark. Then came a critical moment that highlighted the importance of tiny details. Spectators saw Matej Fideršek deliver a low cross from the left for Slovenia skipper Igor Osredkar, totally unmarked, to tap in at the far post. Why was he totally unmarked?

On the left, No14 Fideršek had taken on Marco Ercolessi 1v1. A few metres infield, Murilo engaged in close-quarter jostling with Denis Totošković – a diversion that took the Italy player out of the area and opened a pathway for the cross. From a deeper midfield position, No7 Osredkar embarked on a run between team-mate Alen Fetić and Italy’s JÚlio De Oliveira. The latter, faced with a dilemma, opted to stay with Fetić and allow Osredkar to continue his run unaccompanied. In the centre, close to keeper Stefano Mammarella, Humberto Honorio was the only defender with a chance to pick up the Slovenia captain. The tiny but critical factor at this juncture was his body position. He was square-on to the action on the wing, visually covering the area between himself and Ercolessi. The key factor from a coaching perspective is that, had Honorio made a minute anti-clockwise adjustment to his body position, Osredkar’s back-post run would have appeared in his field of vision. In the event, he could only react with a look of surprise when the crowd erupted. A combination of tiny details had produced a goal that led to elimination for the 2014 champions. It was one of the pivotal moments of the championship.

THE ART OF DECEPTION
SLOVENIA 0-2 RUSSIA

Small details like body shape can also encourage opponents to reach an erroneous conclusion. “Futsal is a sport where you can exploit the art of deceiving your opponent,” said Javier Lozano. And, to illustrate the point, he flagged up a kick-in by Russia during the quarter-final against Slovenia. “Personally,” fellow UEFA technical observer Orlando Duarte remarked, “I prefer to spend more time in training on kick-ins than on corners. You might get eight or nine corners during a game, but you usually have more opportunities from kick-ins.” His viewpoint was statistically backed by an average of nine corners per team across the tournament.

In this case, left-footed Esquerdinha shaped up to take a seemingly innocuous kick-in for Russia midway into Slovenian territory on the right. His ‘shape’ was, in fact, deceptive. The positioning of his body and, above all, his head suggested powerfully that he was about to play a backward pass to either Romulo or Sergei Abramov with a view to retaining possession and initiating a positional attack from midfield. Russia’s No11, Artem Niyazov, added further credence to the suggestion by retreating from position at the edge of the area. With Slovenia’s defensive block edging forward in anticipation, Esquerdinha sprang the trap by, while still looking the other way, cutting the ball behind the defence while Niyazov swivelled round and met the ball at the far post. The miracle was that the art of deception and the point-blank finish failed to produce a goal.
SPLIT-SECOND THOUGHTS
UKRAINE 3-5 PORTUGAL

As clearing pathways to the goal is the major challenge in the confined spaces of the futsal court, off-ball movement and speed of decision-making are critical factors. Portugal’s fluent 1-4-0 attacking system featured frequent use of a double movement – the first aimed at provoking a positional reaction from the opponents’ defensive system and the second aimed at exploiting any space left free as a result of that first reaction. The two movements were coordinated in a way that made them almost simultaneous – but not quite.

If the first movement (the diagram, based on a move during Portugal’s match against Ukraine, shows a diagonal run through the central area) is covered by the opposing defence, there is more space in the wide area. So, in the blink of an eye, the second movement takes a player wide to receive a vertical pass with a view to exploiting the vacated space, while the player who has made the first run continues towards the far post, aiming to connect with a shot, rebound or firmly driven pass.

QUICK EXCHANGE
SLOVENIA 0-2 RUSSIA

Another play was illustrated during Slovenia’s quarter-final against Russia. The situation was an attack on the wing, aggressively pressed by opponents. In response, two players combine in a limited space, interchanging short passes and making feint runs until one gains space against the onrushing defenders to play a wall-pass into the free space on the wing and create a situation of numerical superiority. For this move to function, the pivot cleared the area in front of his two team-mates by drifting to the opposite flank or towards the back post. If the wall-pass is successful, the receiving player ideally strikes a cross-shot towards the far post.
In Slovenia, there was a diversity of approaches to attacking structures. Italy, for example, operated with a pivot only when the injury to Gabriel Lima allowed Fortino to be drafted into the squad. Russia used Eder Lima sparingly in the classic pivot role. The final showed how Spain gave depth to their attacking against Portugal’s high-press strategy by deploying Francisco Solano – a pivot who had remained on the bench for the entirety of the 50 minutes during the semi-final against Kazakhstan.

In general, the tournament highlighted a clear trend away from the use of a fairly static central pivot, with most teams, if operating with a pivot, preferring him to move into wide positions with a view to posing questions to defenders and opening spaces in central areas. As a random example, the diagram shows a typical 1-3-1 attack-building movement by Azerbaijan against France, with No5 Fineo and No6 Eduardo permuting their positions on the right of the line of three. The pivot (in that game) Everton Cardoso would run wide on the right to receive a vertical pass and would then either lay the ball into the path of the supporting run from behind or, if he was being policed by two opponents, play the ball back for his team-mate to pass into the space that his manoeuvre had opened up.

**Creating Space**

**Serbia 1-1 Italy**

As the goalscoring section of this report reveals, solo runs with the ball accounted for only half-a-dozen goals, including the first of the tournament when Alen Fetić ran clear to put the hosts ahead against Serbia. A high ball-win by Savio allowed him to put Romania 1-0 up against Ukraine. And two ‘solo’ goals stemmed from counters against flying goalkeepers – Portugal’s fourth against Romania and Ukraine’s winner against the same opponents. The debating point was whether soloists are not being developed or are being discouraged from exercising their 1v1 skills as a result of risk-management policies.

The tendency to rely on direct attacking or positional play based on passing combinations, rather than 1v1 options, implies a greater relevance of the ability to create space. One of the most frequently seen ploys was to overload one flank with a view to offering 1v1 possibilities to a solo performer on the opposite flank. Italy provided classic examples during their opening match against Serbia (Roberto Menichelli’s attacking options were enriched by the incorporation of pivot Fortino for the second match). Alex Merlim emerged as the main attacking threat – and the diagram refers to the game against Serbia, with No4 Sergio Romano and No7 Massimo De Luca making diagonal runs from left to right while No2 Marco Ercolessi dropped either wide or deep to draw his marker away. The overload on the right gave Merlim the space to exploit his solo skills on the less-populated flank. Merlim had 21 goal attempts in Italy’s two matches – far and away ahead of his team-mates in Italy’s goal-shy campaign. His nearest ‘rivals’ were Fortino with six attempts, plus Lima, De Oliveira and Romano with five apiece.
The tournament also offered diversity in terms of defensive marking systems, with France, Poland, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine generally preferring individual marking, albeit with occasional permutations of personnel. Marking at set plays also provided a debating point. After a corner on the right, for example, had allowed Pola to score the goal that secured Spain’s 1-0 win against Azerbaijan, Orlando Duarte remarked: “This could be used as evidence by those of us who believe that man-marking at set plays is a risky option.”

One of the variations that caught the eye of the technical observers was Slovenia’s defensive set-up in the crucial Group A match against Italy. During the first half, the hosts operated a 1-1-2-1 defence without exerting great pressure on the ball carrier. After the interval – until equalising – they implemented a 1-1-1-2 structure with much more aggressive pressure on the ball and faster support for defensive coverage. The salient feature, however, was the use of a mixed marking system with Osredkar dropping out of the collective defensive block to man-mark Italy’s key attacking threat, No10 Alex Merlim. As the diagram shows, this sometimes meant that the Slovenia captain was on the ‘wrong’ side of the ball and removed from the team’s defensive structure.

At a tournament where the coaches’ approach to risk management emerged as a talking point, one of Russia’s attacking plays caught the eye on account of the result it entailed. After missing the match against Kazakhstan and beginning on the bench against Slovenia, Robinho returned to the starting line-up for the semi-final against Portugal and, especially when Sergei Skorovich’s team were chasing the result, was the main protagonist of Russia’s high-risk attacking option. As the diagram shows, No10 Robinho would gain possession in his own half, wave his team-mates forward and engage in a face-off with his marker.

His three fellow outfielders would move upfield into staggered positions near the opponents’ goal, drawing defenders with them and offering Robinho a huge space for manoeuvre. If his ball skills and change of pace paid dividends against his marker, he could run into the empty area, sometimes pushing directly into a 1v1 situation against the goalkeeper. If he was caught in possession, the results could be disastrous. So the high-risk ploy is only viable when the team has a player with exceptional 1v1 abilities.

As Javier Lozano remarked: “The approach was often conservative with, sometimes, three players in balancing roles behind the ball. During the knockout games, there was a less fearful attitude and more teams were prepared to press high and provoke errors.”

Statistics on interceptions and ball-winning in the opposition half offer somewhat conflicting evidence. It could hardly be regarded as coincidence that the two finalists, Portugal and Spain, were at the head of the field when it came to winning possession in opposition territory, with fourth-placed Kazakhstan not far behind. On the other hand, bronze medallists Russia posted a modest average, whereas Italy – eliminated in the group stage – were third behind the two finalists in terms of high ball-winning.
A major talking point to emerge from the final tournament in Slovenia was the massive downturn in the number of goals scored. The total of 91 was almost 30% down on the record tally registered in Serbia two years earlier. Fluctuations can be considered normal. But such a significant discrepancy raised eyebrows. And the fact that the average number of goals per match was, by a considerable margin, the lowest ever recorded at an unprecedented five draws. Italy coach Roberto Menichelli addressed the issue from a slightly different angle. "There seems to be a greater tendency to play across the pitch," he said. "It is easy to overlook the importance of verticality. And if teams focus on defending ten metres in front of their goal, it is difficult to maintain levels of spectacle and entertainment."

"You could detect a tendency to defend deeper rather than go for the high press," Azerbaijan coach Alesio commented during the group phase, "but you have to pace the team in a heavy match schedule." Concern. When final klaxons sounded, four teams left the court after failing to find the net and four after having scored only one goal. Portugal, with a total of 23, provided one-quarter of the tournament total, and the five matches involving the eventual champions accounted for 35% of the goals. Debate volunteered various possible causes for the abrupt downturn – among them risk-management policies, especially during a group stage that produced an unprecedented five draws.

Executive director Roberto Menichelli addressed the issue from a slightly different angle. "There seems to be a greater tendency to play across the pitch," he said. "It is easy to overlook the importance of verticality. And if teams focus on defending ten metres in front of their goal, it is difficult to maintain levels of spectacle and entertainment."

"You could detect a tendency to defend deeper rather than go for the high press," Azerbaijan coach Alesio commented during the group phase, "but you have to pace the team for knockout matches in a heavy match schedule." The "powers that be" in European futsal certainly struggled to assert their supremacy. Italy, Russia and Spain – the three nations who had previously monopolised the title – came through the group stage with minimal successes in front of goal: Russia and Italy with two goals apiece; Spain with five. The latter were alone in winning a game. Portugal won the title with a ratio of one goal per 7.9 attempts – far ahead of all their opponents in terms of scoring efficiency. Spain, who won the 2016 title with a scoring ratio of 1:7.6, required an average of 19.5 attempts to hit the net in Slovenia. In 2016, Czech Republic (1:20 attempts) and Slovenia (1:25) were the least effective. In 2018, six of the contestants returned worse figures, notably Poland (1:43) and Italy (1:44.5). Was it down to worse attacking skills? Or better defending? The UEFA technical observers acknowledged proficiency in the arts of defending – and the discipline with which defensive duties were executed. The number of goal attempts blocked by defenders rose by 10% in comparison with EURO 2016. This raises questions about decision-making (i.e. when to shoot) and, bearing in mind the growing tendency for defenders to put themselves momentarily out of the game by spreading themselves horizontally on the court to block, the need to emphasise at development levels the value attachable to the arts of feinting and dummying. However, studying the other side of the coin in more detail, how much of the goalscoring decline was due to improved standards of goalkeeping?
Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin Ignat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Florin I gnat. Ukraine No14 Petro Razuvanov made a forward run to prevent lateral movement by Romania No7 Flo
WHEN THE GOALS WERE SCORED

During the final tournament, 37 goals were scored in the first half and 51 in the second. As usual, the final five minutes were the most prolific, although the total of 17 was the lowest recorded at a 12-team final tournament. It could be interpreted as a reflection of increased fitness levels. One of the salient features was a reduction in time-outs, with 61 called during the final tournament, 37 during the 2012 final and 44 in 2016.

This may not be unrelated to the fact that 16 of the tournament’s 61 time-outs were called during this period of play with consequent tactical repercussions.

When the goals were scored

During the final tournament, 37 goals were scored in the first half and 51 in the second. As usual, the final five minutes were the most prolific, although the total of 17 was the lowest recorded at a 12-team final tournament. It could be interpreted as a reflection of increased fitness levels. One of the salient features was a reduction in time-outs, with 61 called during the final tournament, 37 during the 2012 final and 44 in 2016.

This may not be unrelated to the fact that 16 of the tournament’s 61 time-outs were called during this period of play with consequent tactical repercussions.

High-quality goalkeeping caught the eye

Oriardo Duarte and Javier Lozanos had so many names on their shortlist that, at one point, the UEFA technical observers considered including three goalkeepers in their team of the tournament – as had, incidentally, the coaches of France, Portugal, Serbia and Ukraine. The other eight squads contained only two. Damir Pulkhar had impressed in the Slovenia goal – notably against Italy. Miodrag Akstengjiev, combining crowd-pleasing showmanship with effective shot-stopping, might have earned a place, had he played more than two games. Roberto Mencille might rue the fact that both produced outstanding performances against Italy, recording shot-stopping rates of 92.3% and 94.4% respectively. Elsewhere, Spain’s Paco Sedano kept two clean sheets and was decisive in the semi-final shoot-out against Kazakhstan.

The table, based on data kindly provided by Serbian goalkeeping specialist Dušan Matic, shows the percentages of shots saved by keepers.

The excellent overall level of shot-stopping spoke highly of the work done by goalkeeping coaches, although contributions to attacking play were often less eye-catching. The exception to the rule was Kazakhstan’s Higuista who, once again, combined the duties of keeper and flying keeper, pushing forward into midfield, passing intelligently, scooping passes over attackers’ heads when pressed and even contributing a goal. On the other hand, there was inconsistency among keepers when it came to distributing the ball – and France goalkeeper Djamel Haroun was among those who had no qualms about relieving pressure by playing long – or out of play. Javier Lozano reiterated his long-standing concern that “keepers sometimes use the long throw just to get rid of the ball, to put it out of play and to oblige the opposition to start again versus a reorganised and regrouped defence.” He and Orlando Duarte fully endorsed the view expressed by

Save percentage

Azerbaijan coach Alieso: “The worry is if coaches encourage goalkeepers to play long at development levels – which means the kids don’t learn to build from the back and play a passing game.” Another concern for the technical observers was the tendency for goalkeepers to allege injury with a view to ‘cooling’ the play.

In-flight entertainment?

In 2014, the total of goals scored with a flying goalkeeper on court had risen to 30, with 11 scored and 19 conceded. In 2016, only six of 19 power-play goals were scored by the team with the flying keeper. In 2018, eight were scored and ten conceded, meaning that 28% of the goals scored in open play came when a flying keeper was on court. It also meant that the number of goals scored in ‘normal’ open play was 46 in 20 matches. Sending on the flying keeper when chasing a result is seen as a legitimate and often entertaining tactical option. Debate is generated, however, when the option is, as Russia coach Sergei Skorovich commented, “employed to slow the game down in other situations. This is not good for the game.”

“The use of power play can be terrible,” Serbia coach Goran Ivanovic agreed. “I once saw a game where the flying keeper was on for about 30 minutes and killed it as a spectacle. We have to find ways to avoid this.” At EURO 2016, of the 39 minutes played with a flying keeper on court – roughly 10% of the tournament, Romania sent on the flying keeper after 10’30 when trailing Portugal 0-1, and after only 6’12 when leading Ukraine 1-0. Slovenia played out the last five minutes of the first half against Italy as a damage-limitation measure with the aircraft struggling to remain only one plane behind. Azerbaijan deployed five outfielders eight times during the first periods against Portugal and Spain.
### Azerbaijan

**Team profiles**

#### Squad

- **Goalkeepers**
  - Emin Kurzov
    - Born: 01/08/1969
    - Nationality: French
  - Alexander Karagun
    - Born: 04/12/1987
    - Nationality: Azerbaijan
  - Adil Gasmi
    - Born: 28/07/1990
    - Nationality: France
  - Vassoura
    - Born: 07/08/1989
    - Nationality: Azerbaijan

- **Outfield players**
  - Samba Kebe
    - Born: 25/03/1986
    - Nationality: France
  - Aliyev
    - Born: 10/08/1987
    - Nationality: Azerbaijan
  - Ramaz Chovdarov
    - Born: 26/04/1985
    - Nationality: Azerbaijan
  - Khatai Baghirov
    - Born: 28/07/1990
    - Nationality: Azerbaijan
  - Joévin Durot
    - Born: 25/01/1993
    - Nationality: France

#### Coaches

- **Ajax**
  - Name: Jacky Pierre
  - Nationality: French
  - Born: 05/10/1960

#### Statistics

- **Possession**
  - Average per game: 53.7%
  - Total: 69

- **Interceptions**
  - Average per game: 32

- **Balls lost**
  - Average per game: 21.7

- **Balls recovered**
  - Average per game: 23

#### Team shapes

- **Attacking**
  - Extensive use of flying goalkeeper – but speed + anticipation = interceptions and rapid counterattacks
  - Simple game plans executed by athletic defenders

- **Defending**
  - Frequent use of long supply by goalkeeper
  - Speed + anticipation = interceptions and rapid counterattacks

### France

**Team profiles**

#### Squad

- **Goalkeepers**
  - Djamel Hamou
    - Born: 06/07/1983
    - Nationality: French
  - Adil Mezguenni
    - Born: 02/06/1984
    - Nationality: French
  - Joévin Durut
    - Born: 25/11/1985
    - Nationality: French

- **Outfield players**
  - Siad Ahmed Belhaj
    - Born: 28/06/1992
    - Nationality: French
  - Elosaye Ba
    - Born: 13/05/1993
    - Nationality: French
  - Kevin Ramzy
    - Born: 10/08/1987
    - Nationality: French
  - Abdesamad Mohammed
    - Born: 21/01/1992
    - Nationality: French
  - Landry N’Gala
    - Born: 06/07/1983
    - Nationality: French
  - Azdine Aigoun
    - Born: 25/11/1985
    - Nationality: French
  - Landry J’Gala
    - Born: 08/06/1993
    - Nationality: French
  - Samba Kebe
    - Born: 27/01/1985
    - Nationality: French
  - Sania Rebe
    - Born: 04/12/1987
    - Nationality: French
  - Adrien Gamez
    - Born: 29/05/1988
    - Nationality: French
  - Noah Mostoufizadeh
    - Born: 29/03/1993
    - Nationality: French

#### Coaches

- **Ajax**
  - Name: Pierre Jacky
  - Nationality: French
  - Born: 27/05/1989
  - Nationality: Brazilian

#### Statistics

- **Possession**
  - Average per game: 62.1%
  - Total: 48

- **Interceptions**
  - Average per game: 32

- **Balls lost**
  - Average per game: 24

- **Balls recovered**
  - Average per game: 36

#### Team shapes

- **Attacking**
  - 1-3-1 vertical attacking, direct supply to left-footed pivot on right

- **Defending**
  - Frequent use of flying goalkeeper – but speed + anticipation = interceptions and rapid counterattacks
UEFA Futsal EURO 2018

Team profiles

**Italy**

**SQUAD**

**GOALKEEPERS**

1. Stefano Mammarola (02/02/1984) - Acqua e Sapone C/5
2. Marco Ercolessi (26/04/1984) - Acqua e Sapone C/5

**OUTFIELD PLAYERS**

- 15. Michele Murelli (26/04/1984) - Acqua e Sapone C/5
- 14. Stefano Mammarella (26/04/1984) - Acqua e Sapone C/5
- 9. Sergio Maroni (26/04/1984) - Acqua e Sapone C/5
- 7. Fortino (31/05/1981) - Luparense C/5
- 18. Nicolò Baron (21/07/1986) - Luparense C/5
- 17. Mario Forlini (21/07/1986) - Luparense C/5
- 11. Antonio Romano (21/07/1986) - Luparense C/5
- 10. Michele Miarelli (30/04/1983) - Luparense C/5
- 12. Gabriel Lima (21/07/1986) - Luparense C/5
- 13. Michele Belotti (21/07/1986) - Luparense C/5

**CARDS**

- Foul cards: 6

**STATISTICS**

- Goals scored: 50
- Assists: 51
- Own goals: 2
- Fouls suffered: 19
- Fouls committed: 19
- Fouls against: 20
- Fouls conceded: 14
- Fouls allowed: 12
- Fouls drawn: 11
- Fouls against: 12
- Fouls conceded: 11
- Fouls allowed: 10

**COACH**

ROBERTO MENICHELLI

**KEY FEATURES**

- 1-4-0 attacking: 1-3-1 in Slovenia when Fortino drafted into squad
- Patient higher-tempo attacking with diagonal passing to open play on flanks
- Willing movement to separate opponents’ lines, oblige them to chase ball
- Ability to switch defensively with augmented high pressure by front line of two
- Often supply from keeper or point when Fortino was in play
- Tight marking plus body and varied dribbling solutions, shot on goal
- Full possession on plays, termination of possession not converted into goals

**Kazakhstan**

**SQUAD**

**GOALKEEPERS**

1. Grigorii Sharenko (31/05/1984) - Ufa
2. Taynan (05/06/1986) - Astana-Tunpar

**OUTFIELD PLAYERS**

- 5. Albert Akbalikov (16/11/1994) - Kairat Almaty
- 7. Serik Zhaimerdy (16/01/1996) - Kairat Almaty
- 8. Dinmukhambet Suleimenov (17/10/1994) - Kairat Almaty
- 9. Aleksej Dovgan (15/10/1988) - Kairat Almaty
- 10. Serik Zhamankulov (19/10/1989) - Kairat Almaty
- 11. Mikhail Pershin (30/08/1988) - Kairat Almaty
- 14. Mikhail Pershin (30/08/1988) - Kairat Almaty

**CARDS**

- Foul cards: 6

**STATISTICS**

- Goals scored: 134
- Assists: 159
- Own goals: 26.8
- Fouls suffered: 31.8
- Fouls committed: 31.8
- Fouls against: 26.8
- Fouls conceded: 26.8
- Fouls allowed: 31.8
- Fouls drawn: 31.8
- Fouls against: 31.8
- Fouls conceded: 31.8
- Fouls allowed: 31.8

**COACH**

**KEY FEATURES**

- 1-4-1-0 attacking with keeper Sharenko as fifth outfield player
- Progression the tactical key:สวย in attacking moves, ready to shoot at goal
- Well-organised 1-1-2-2 or 1-2-2-1 defending with sustained high pressure
- Quasi-3-4-2 structure in order to combat high press by opponents
- Outlook of 3-4-2 formation ensures opponents dictating tempo
- Winging designed to provide supporting teams from playing normal game
- Experience, well-drilled plays, clear, well-designed game plans

**Tournament review**

**Interview**

**Interview with Roberto Menichelli, Italy head coach**

**Interview with Grigorii Sharenko, Kazakhstan head coach**
**Poland**

### SQUAD

**GOALKEEPERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michal Rużyca</td>
<td>22/07/1998</td>
<td>Rekord Bielsko-Biała</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Gładczak</td>
<td>10/04/1988</td>
<td>FC Toruń</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian Wojciechowski</td>
<td>17/01/1988</td>
<td>Clearex Chorzów</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OUTFIELD PLAYERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Born</th>
<th>Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiago Brito</td>
<td>07/08/1978</td>
<td>Piast Gliwice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pany Varela</td>
<td>03/09/1985</td>
<td>Red Devils Chojnice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno Coelho</td>
<td>10/05/1984</td>
<td>Clearex Chorzów</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedro Cary</td>
<td>30/04/1993</td>
<td>Rekord Bielsko-Biała</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabio Cecílio</td>
<td>10/05/1992</td>
<td>FC Toruń</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilson Miguel</td>
<td>07/01/1986</td>
<td>Red Dragons Pniewy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>André Sousa</td>
<td>25/02/1986</td>
<td>Porto Salvo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### STATISTICS

- **Posession**: 57% **Average per game**: 50.5
- **Goals in opp half**: 29.3% **Average per game**: 6.3%

### FOULS

- **Suffered**: 64 **Conceded**: 43

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3

### COACH

- **Jorge Braz**

### BLAŻEJ KORCZYŃSKI

- **Born**: 07/04/1978
- **Nationality**: Polish
- **Position**: Forward
- **Caps**: 10
- **Goals**: 5

### FOULS

- **Suffered**: 64 **Conceded**: 43

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### KEY FEATURES

- Generally 1-0-1 attacking with extensive use of direct supply to final third player
- Well-drilled positional play with emphasis on intensity
- Off-ball movement an important weapon in attacking armary

- Flanks on the overlap serve as an extra attacker at corners

### STANDS

- **Squad**: 31 **Conceded**: 0

### FOULS

- **Suffered**: 64 **Conceded**: 43

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### KEY FEATURES

- Mostly 1-4-0 attacking with long spells of possession
- Well-drilled positional play
- Effective use of ball recovery

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### STATISTICS

- **Possession**: 64% **Average per game**: 50.5
- **Goals in opp half**: 29.3% **Average per game**: 6.3%

### FOULS

- **Suffered**: 64 **Conceded**: 43

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### KEY FEATURES

- Well-drilled set plays and frequent use of direct supply to final third player
- Effective use of ball recovery

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### STATISTICS

- **Possession**: 57% **Average per game**: 50.5
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### FOULS

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### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### KEY FEATURES

- Well-drilled positional play
- Effective use of ball recovery

### TEAM SHAPES

- **Attacking**
- **Defending**

### STATISTICS

- **Possession**: 57% **Average per game**: 50.5
- **Goals in opp half**: 29.3% **Average per game**: 6.3%

### FOULS

- **Suffered**: 64 **Conceded**: 43

### CARDS

- **Yellow**: 6 **Red**: 3
**Romania**

**Team Shapes**
- **Attacking**: Extensive use of low-tempo passing play.
- **Defending**: Deep 1-1-2-1 defending; occasional spells of high-pressing.

**Key Features**
- Patient 1-4-0 attacking based on triangular passing movements.
- Constant positional rotation with emphasis on retaining possession.
- /2-3-1 free-ladder vertical runs in right flank.
- /3-1-4-0 attacking, with skills of high pressing.
- Defensive strategies to maintain pressure on opponents.

**Squad**

**Goalkeepers**
- Vladancu 03/01/1988
- A - u = Informatica Timisoara

**Outfield Players**
- Florin Mache 06/12/1983
- b b = FC Deva
- Marius Mache 12/03/1987
- b = FC Deva
- Emil Radulescu 29/06/1984
- u = Loan St Andrews FC (GB)
- Florin Iulian 28/02/1982
- u = FC Deva
- Oktavian Ciocoi 27/01/1993
- u u = United Gali
- Filip 14/12/1992
- = Informatica Timisoara
- Dumitru Neam Stanciu 30/09/1981
- u = FC Deva
- Sandu Valeriu 30/01/1994
- u = Informatica Timisoara
- Laszlo Solos 10/10/1984
- b = SK Dristor Secuiescu
- Alper Cosma 22/03/1984
- s = FC Deva
- Paul Fabregas 06/08/1985
- u = FC Deva
- Adrian Panarin 06/12/1985
- b = FC Deva

**Coach**
- Robert Lupu

**Statistics**
- Goals: 140
- Assists: 30

**Cards**
- Red: 13
- Yellow: 35

**Fouls**
- Suffered: 244
- Conceded: 130

**Attempts**
- Total: 68
- Saved: 31

**Goals**
- 31

**Interceptions**
- Total: 32.5

**Posession**
- Average per game: 32.5%

**Defending**
- Average per game: 55.8%

**Attacking**
- Average per game: 44.5%

**With Flying Goalkeeper**
- Suffered: 75
- Conceded: 55

---

**Russia**

**Team Shapes**
- **Attacking**: Three established quartets with occasional permutations between them.
- /2-3-1 structure with forward line as pivot, otherwise generally 1-4-0.
- /2-3-1 free-ladder vertical runs in right flank.
- /3-1-4-0 attacking, with skills of high pressing.
- Defensive strategies to maintain pressure on opponents.

**Squad**

**Goalkeepers**
- Georgi Zamtaradze 05/04/1973
- Nationality: Russian
- Born: 05/04/1973
- = in the starting five; B = started on the bench; U = unused sub; S = suspended; I = injured/ill;
- Overall competition: 25 / 6

**Outfield Players**
- Dmitri Lyskov 24/06/1987
- = in the starting five; B = started on the bench; U = unused sub; S = suspended; I = injured/ill;
- Overall competition: 25 / 6

**Coach**
- Sergei Skorochv

**Statistics**
- Total: 148
- Average: 29.6

**Cards**
- Red: 7
- Yellow: 79

**Fouls**
- Suffered: 212
- Conceded: 144

**Attempts**
- Total: 223
- Saved: 102

---

**Team profiles**

**Winning %**
- Romania: 52.2%
- Russia: 100%

**Goals**
- In own half: 24.3%
- In opp half: 31.6%

**Attempts against**
- Total: 26
- Average: 4.8

---

**Tournament review**
SQUAD

BORN | G | A | SUN | ITA | RUS | CLUB
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
D2-2 | D1-1 | Ll-3

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

1. Marko Perić | 01/12/1994 | S | S | Napoš CS (ITA)
3. Stefan Rakić | 28/06/1988 | U | U | KMF Nova Pazova
4. Vlatko Mišicev | 15/03/1991 | B | B | KMF Ekonomac-Krakovin
5. Goran Tanjić | 22/11/1993 | B | B | KMF Ekonomac-Krakovin
6. Alen Fetić | 08/10/1991 | B | B | KMF Nova Pazova
10. Mislav Kuzić | 22/10/1989 | B | B | KMF Nova Pazova

GOALKEEPERS

1. Miodrag Akstvenč | 22/07/1983 | S | S | KMF Nova Pazova
2. Marko Perić | 01/12/1994 | S | S | Napoš CS (ITA)

STATISTICS

POSESSION AVERAGE PER GAME 44.3% 18 mins

BALLS LOST TOTAL 99 AVERAGE PER GAME 33

BALLS RECOVERED TOTAL 58 AVERAGE PER GAME 19.3

ATTEMPTS (Total 118) 40, net 36.7

FOULS

SUFFERED 19, own 0 scored 6.3

CONCEDED 20, own 0 scored 6.7

CARDS

YELLOW 5

RED 1

SCORING 1

SQUAD

BORN | G | A | SUN | ITA | RUS | CLUB
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
D2-2 | D1-1 | Ll-3

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

1. Damir Puliker | 03/09/1987 | U | U | FK Dobovec
2. Rok Mordé | 03/03/1989 | U | U | FK Dobovec
3. Dejan Bičak | 21/04/1988 | U | U | Larič (ITA)
6. Denis Tilščič | 18/11/1987 | U | U | FK Dobovec
7. Igor Drevnik | 28/06/1986 | B | B | MNK Novo Vrijeme (CRO)
8. Tom Turk | 15/03/1995 | U | U | FK Dobovec
10. Alan Matić | 14/10/1991 | B | B | FK Dobovec
11. Tijan Stender | 08/10/1981 | U | U | ASD Prato Calc (ITA)
12. Ziga Ceh | 24/05/1995 | U | U | MNK Novo Vrijeme (CRO)

GOALKEEPERS

1. Damir Puliker | 03/09/1987 | U | U | FK Dobovec
2. Rok Mordé | 03/03/1989 | U | U | FK Dobovec
3. Dejan Bičak | 21/04/1988 | U | U | Larič (ITA)

STATISTICS

POSESSION AVERAGE PER GAME 32.2% 18 mins

INTERCEPTIONS TOTAL 102 AVERAGE PER GAME 34

FOULS

SUFFERED 20, own 0 scored 6.7

CONCEDED 22, own 0 scored 7.3

CARDS

YELLOW 1

RED 1

SCORING 1

SQUAD

BORN | G | A | SUN | ITA | RUS | CLUB
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
D2-2 | D1-1 | Ll-3

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

1. Goran Ivanić | 17/12/1971 | B | B | Futsal Euro Masters
2. Goran Ivanić | 17/12/1971 | B | B | Futsal Euro Masters
3. Goran Ivanić | 17/12/1971 | B | B | Futsal Euro Masters

FOULS

SUFFERED 110, own 0 scored 36.7

CONCEDED 1

CARDS

YELLOW 1

RED 1

SCORING 2

SQUAD

BORN | G | A | SUN | ITA | RUS | CLUB
---|---|---|---|---|---|---
D2-2 | D1-1 | Ll-3

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

1. Marko Perić | 01/12/1994 | S | S | KMF Nova Pazova
3. Stefan Rakić | 28/06/1988 | U | U | KMF Nova Pazova
4. Vlatko Mišicev | 15/03/1991 | B | B | KMF Ekonomac-Krakovin
5. Goran Tanjić | 22/11/1993 | B | B | KMF Ekonomac-Krakovin
6. Alen Fetić | 08/10/1991 | B | B | KMF Nova Pazova
10. Mislav Kuzić | 22/10/1989 | B | B | KMF Nova Pazova

GOALKEEPERS

1. Marko Perić | 01/12/1994 | S | S | KMF Nova Pazova
3. Stefan Rakić | 28/06/1988 | U | U | KMF Nova Pazova

STATISTICS

POSESSION AVERAGE PER GAME 51.2% 18 mins

ATTACKING

KEY FEATURES

1-3-1 attacking; left-footed pivot operating in centre or dropping wide on right

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING

Defending

KEY FEATURES

1-1-2-1 or 1-1-1-2 defending according to game situation

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING

Defending

KEY FEATURES

1-3-1 attacking with high-lying pivot dropping wide

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING

Defending
UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 Tournament review

Spain

Team profiles

STATISTICS

POSSESSION

AVERAGE PER GAME

BALLS LOST 31.4

Total

BALLS RECOVERED 30.6

Total

TEAM SHAPES

KEY FEATURES

■ Variety of inventive set plays; tactical
■ Use of long passing for dangerous
■ Possession game based on combinations,
■ High levels of individual technique; able
■ Alternate high-tempo 1-4-0 attacking or

Goals

Outfield players

G = goals; A = assists;

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

Goals in opp half 42.3%

in own half 24.4%

FOULS

SQUAD

Coach

JOSÉ VENANCIO LÓPEZ

BORN: 27/04/1964

Nationality: Spanish

Progress

Total: 197 matches

Coaching Achievements

- 2004 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 2017 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 2018 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 2019 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 2020 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

POSTER GAME

Attempts against

Total: 253 (in case of 50.6)

Attempts

Total: 106 (in case of 21.2)

Team profiles

Ukraine

Team profiles

STATISTICS

POSSESSION

AVERAGE PER GAME

BALLS LOST 42.5%

Total

BALLS RECOVERED 24.4%

Total

TEAM SHAPES

KEY FEATURES

■ 1-3-1 attacking with constant high-tempo positional relations.
■ Regular changes of quartet at approximately 3-minute intervals.
■ High-tempo passing game optimised by support for attacking pivot.
■ Possessions lead to forward movements and pre-empting counterattacks.
■ Young team with high energy, mental stability in all situations.

Goals

Outfield players

G = goals; A = assists;

OUTFIELD PLAYERS

Goals in opp half 30.7%

in own half 66.7%

FOULS

SQUAD

Coach

OLEKSANDR KOSENKO

BORN: 18/01/1970

Nationality: Ukrainian

Progress

- 1996 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 1997 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 1998 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 1999 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

- 2000 UEFA FUTSAL NATIONS

POSTER GAME

Attempts against

Total: 106 (in case of 33.3)

Attempts

Total: 40 (in case of 14.7)
Event report
Thank you for an unforgettable week!
ran the banner headline on the cover of sports daily EkipaSN on 6 February. Slovenia had been knocked out of the Futsal EURO by Russia the night before, but it was a measure of how the team had been taken to heart that a sense of pride outweighed any disappointment.

Pride in what the players had achieved by beating two-time champions Italy to reach the quarter-finals; pride too in Slovenia’s success at hosting a major senior UEFA competition for the first time. UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 had shown what Slovenia could accomplish from a sporting and organisational perspective, and those who experienced it now had a taste for more.

“Almost everyone in Slovenia can relate to playing ‘football’ in local schools with changing rooms meant for ten-year-olds,” wrote EkipaSN columnist Andrej Miljković. “And most of us have played tournaments for a trophy where the organisers have forgotten to take off the €12.99 price tag. That’s why UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 touched us so deeply, to the core of our sporting soul. That’s why Ricardinho’s magic touches get more clicks than ones from Messi or Ronaldo at the moment, and that’s why the atmosphere when Slovenia beat Italy on Saturday was one of the best I have ever experienced in Slovenian halls and stadiums.”

Fire and ice
As the snow fell and temperatures plummeted in Ljubljana, inside the Arena Stožice UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 was turning up the heat.

Portugal fans made themselves heard throughout the tournament (left); despite the snow, the show went on at the Arena Stožice.
That moment was the culmination of over three years of planning. The Football Association of Slovenia (NZS) was selected to host the tournament in January 2015, and, from that point on, the focus was on delivering the best possible sporting experience from the grassroots up. For the first time, the promotional strategy was widened to include children, families, clubs and schools. Success would not be measured solely in goals scored, television audiences or tickets sold, but in the legacy that UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 would leave behind – on the next generation, the sport itself and the host nation’s capacity to organise future events.

For Slovenia, that social legacy would come in many forms: from the knowledge and expertise required to run such events, to increased participation in sport and the promotion of healthy living and cultural exchange between nations.

“We wanted to emphasise that football and futsal are games for everyone, not only top names, but also recreational players, children and older people,” UEFA Futsal EURO project leader Pierre Lienhard said. “We were determined to

“Since our preparations began more than a year before the finals, and each LOC member focused mainly on their own project, it was difficult to imagine how it would all turn out. When you walk through the empty arena and determine locations for each activity, you just can’t picture how it will look, so it was amazing to watch everything come together like a puzzle. Being part of it was a great experience, thanks especially to the excellent atmosphere within our team – the LOC and UEFA – and the arena itself. The fans were among the stars of the tournament, and hearing the Slovenian anthem sung by a full arena was just amazing.

“This tournament and the activities around it raised awareness of futsal in the wider Slovenian public, mostly due to the exciting matches and fabulous entertainment programme. One of our main tasks in the future will be to maintain the public’s interest in futsal, and we will also look to raise the entertainment levels at other events. “For me, two memories stand out. First, the excellent cooperation between all members of the project in UEFA and the LOC. It’s not easy to work for 15 or more hours every day, but we came through it successfully – and this will serve as a fantastic basis for future projects.

“The second memorable aspect was the fans, who took to futsal and always created a great atmosphere. We didn’t dare dream that the final could be sold out if Slovenia weren’t involved, but the arena was full and lively. It was the ending that the tournament, the fans, the teams and the organisers deserved.”
bring futsal to a wider public, especially in the host country, and show the games' appeals and strengths. For Slovenia, one objective was to increase the number of registered futsal players and futsal clubs – for example, encouraging football clubs to set up futsal teams. In addition to promoting futsal itself, we also looked to draw attention to issues such as gender equality, fair play and respect – and sustainability. Moreover, we focused on health, using the Slovenian association’s My Game, My Life concept as a springboard. Our belief was that healthy living in a fun, sporting environment would send an important message to people young and old. Football and futsal are games that educate, develop and socialise – they are life improvers – and the Futsal EURO was a unique opportunity to draw attention to healthy lifestyle issues. Children were encouraged to get involved from the outset. In one local school, each class studied one of the competing nations and the pupils were thrilled in the run-up to the tournament when the players themselves dropped by.

Events around the tournament encouraged people to lead healthy lifestyles and play sport regularly, whatever their age or level. There was a special focus on the importance of exercise to children living in cities, with youngsters from schools near the Arena Stožice given match tickets to further encourage participation. Meanwhile, a sustainability guide highlighted the efforts made to ensure the EURO was environmentally friendly, and to educate readers on what can be done to preserve the natural environment.

The day before the semi-finals, children were given a chance to show their skills in the arena itself on a special futsal grassroots day. Futsal enthusiasts in the wider community were invited to play on the official Futsal EURO 2018 court at the Arena Stožice, with the accent placed on taking part and enjoying the game rather than simply winning. Along with boys’ and girls’ teams, Special Olympics Slovenia (SOS) players and veterans were involved, with the Heart Society (Društvo za srce) also giving a presentation of walking football for people over 60. On an organisational level, the emphasis fell on encouraging the hosts to take responsibility, to own the Futsal EURO and set their own goals, and to motivate, empower and show the highest standards off the pitch as well as on it. Now equipped with the tools to take on even bigger events in the future, the NZS has already bid to host the 2021 UEFA European Under-21 Championship final tournament. That’s why Slovenia's disappointment at losing out to Russia, though keenly felt, was not the end of the story. For Slovenia, the atmosphere generated by over 10,000 fans in the Arena Stožice that night may just have been the start of something even bigger.
Futsal may not have been a mainstream sport in Slovenia when Ljubljana was chosen to host the finals, but a buzz soon took hold thanks to a promotional campaign designed to raise awareness and generate interest. The first major event came with a year to go, when former football and futsal stars Milenko Ačimović and Mile Simeunović were announced as tournament ambassadors in the company of Serbia legend Dejan Stanković, ambassador at UEFA Futsal EURO 2016 in Belgrade. That symbolic bridge between the two host cities was reinforced as the countdown continued, notably on 26 June 2017 when children from Serbia and Slovenia came together in a giant relay to transfer a tournament ball from downtown Ljubljana to the Arena Stožice. In all, 174 people took part as the ball was juggled, dribbled and passed for 76 minutes over the 7km journey to the stadium.

UEFA Futsal EURO 2016 player of the tournament and Spain star Miguelín also got involved, wowing fans with his skills at the countdown clock in downtown Ljubljana 218 days before kick-off. “The tournament has been great, I’m very proud to have been chosen as an ambassador,” he later reflected. “These events are huge in terms of promoting the sport of futsal, increasing awareness, and helping people realise what an enjoyable and dynamic sport it is. For me, it’s key to get the media more and more on board, so that football associations everywhere continue to invest more time and money into the sport.”

If Miguelín’s presence caused a stir, so too did the UEFA Futsal EURO trophy tour. For two weeks from 14 September, the trophy visited 12 Slovenian towns, with 1,525 people attending events that made prime-time news bulletins. The trophy returned to Ljubljana on 29 September for the final tournament draw at Ljubljana Castle. Another famous face, former Olympic and world champion alpine ski racer Tina Maze, was on hand to help decide the finals line-up. “I’m always happy to see athletes thrive in any sport. That’s why I hope we can take a step forward with futsal,” she said. With the whole country getting behind the sport, UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 was about to achieve just that.

Make some noise
An all-star cast helped get the ball rolling, then affordable ticket prices and a brilliant atmosphere kept fans coming back for more.

For the second successive UEFA Futsal EURO, attendances passed the 100,000 mark as fans flocked to the Arena Stožice to take in the action live. Attendances averaged 5,097 per game and Slovenia’s quarter-final against Russia drew the biggest crowd with 10,369 fans packing out the stadium. The deafening roars of “Mi, Slovenci” (We, Slovenians) and “Kdor ne skaje, ni Slovenˇc!” (if you don’t bounce, you’re not Slovenian) provided the soundtrack to the match, even as Russia ran out 2-0 winners. Three other games reached five figures, with 10,212 watching the hosts’ opening-day draw with Serbia, 10,342 on hand to witness Slovenia’s memorable win against Italy, and 10,352 for the final between Spain and Portugal.

Tickets were competitively priced in two categories at €5 and €7 with the aim of making the experience affordable for families. One ticket provided access to both games each matchday and, in total, 39,989 were purchased – a fantastic return in a host city with a population of under 300,000. Promotional tickets were also offered to local children in a number of grassroots initiatives designed to increase participation and involvement.

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

101,934

AVERAGE PER GAME

5,097

Fans packed the Arena Stožice for the hosts’ three games and the final, Miguelín visited Ljubljana ahead of the tournament.
New partnerships for a new cycle

The tournament’s six sponsors and its new licensee provided important support and expertise during the competition.

UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 was the first event in the 2018–2022 cycle for the European governing body, and it gave an opportunity for new partners such as Booking.com and Volkswagen to experience being a part of the UEFA family.

At the same time, long-term partners such as Mondo continued their commitment and investment in UEFA futsal tournaments. The support and expertise of the six sponsors (four global and two national) and new licensee Fanatics played a pivotal role in the tournament’s success.

The Futsal EURO served as an excellent platform for the global partners to showcase their brands and reach a local audience on site as well as international audiences via television and digital coverage. The national sponsors assisted in raising awareness about the event within Slovenia (including promotion through their various networks), and this was reflected in the strong attendances.

The commercial partners contributed with their enthusiastic support and the activations that proved another noteworthy factor in the positive impact of the tournament.

GLOBAL SPONSORS

Booking.com

Booking.com announced a partnership with UEFA for all national-team competitions in October 2017, and the Futsal EURO marked the first opportunity to put it into action. As the official travel and accommodation partner, Booking.com offered fans a platform for booking places to stay in Slovenia, and there were touchpoints integrated throughout UEFA.com/futsaleuro, futsaleuro2018.si and the Eventim ticketing portal, ensuring a full service. To reinforce this new partnership, Booking.com invested in commercial airtime around key markets in Spain, the USA and France. On site, it offered a £25 discount on travel for fans booking via its website, and it also conveyed its ‘Booking.Yeah’ message via perimeter boards, giant screens and on UEFA’s Facebook page.

Hisense

Hisense began its second cycle as a UEFA partner by focusing on its strategy of raising brand awareness across Europe. In this respect, the Futsal EURO video section on UEFA.com proved an ideal opportunity, with many fans visiting the site to see highlights, goals and skills from this fast-paced competition. In addition, on social media, the Hisense Goal of the Day proved particularly successful. Away from the digital space, Hisense activated its basic rights and used tickets and hospitality to engage with key clients and consumers.

Mondo

Mondo has been a partner of the UEFA Futsal EURO since 2007, and this year it added colour to the tournament by installing a bright and cheerful green-and-blue flooring for the event, using the latest scientific developments to provide a surface conducive to fast-paced, skilful matches. It also supplied the goals and nets. In addition, Mondo activated its global partnership through giant screen ads, LED boards, tickets and participation in the official tournament programme.
Volkswagen kicked off its first event as a partner of UEFA national-team football with a number of eye-catching activations centred around its e-mobility products and services. At the Arena Stožice, fans had the opportunity to book a test drive as well as show their support using an augmented reality (AR) photo booth (left). On the pitch, the official match ball carrier programme was delivered successfully at each game and VW’s ‘Electrifying Performance’ tagline appeared prominently across the LED systems. The automotive company also reached people via its ‘e-ball’ viral campaign and association with the official photo section on UEFA.com.

The Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) was an enthusiastic participant in the Futsal EURO. Taking advantage of the possibilities presented by partnering with the event, it displayed its brand on LED boards and giant screen ads in the arena to more than ten countries broadcasting the matches. Additionally, its mascot Trigi proved hugely popular with fans at the venue and was a key part of the half-time and in-match entertainment. The STB also issued small promotional flags (premium) to spectators and featured in the official tournament programme.

Amicus is a leader of outdoor advertising in Slovenia. As part of its relationship with UEFA, it received product category exclusivity, LED board placement and VIP/Cat 1 tickets. In return, the company offered advertisement placements for the Futsal EURO on 150 billboards in Ljubljana and right across Slovenia.

For this latest edition of the Futsal EURO, UEFA had a new partner in charge of the management of the official fan shops at Ljubljana’s Arena Stožice. Fanatics, a global leader in licensed sports merchandise, sought to provide spectators with the best possible access to the official tournament merchandise by installing multiple sales points at the venue. There were products on sale at specially branded UEFA Futsal EURO corners on each floor of the arena, and Fanatics developed a range specifically for the event, comprising clothing items as well as official adidas match balls, replica balls and mini-balls.
UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 was enjoyed by television audiences around the world – and a growing number of viewers on UEFA’s own digital platforms.

More than just a thrilling spectacle, UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 also proved a ground-breaking event in broadcasting terms. For the first time, UEFA struck co-exclusive digital media rights in certain territories, allowing the action to be enjoyed via multiple platforms. Throughout the whole of the Balkan region, which included host nation Slovenia, as well as in Russia, UEFA appointed official broadcast partners while also carving out the ability to stream games ‘over the top’ (OTT) via UEFA TV and UEFA.com. In addition, every match was shown via these channels in countries where broadcast rights were not sold, giving the tournament truly global coverage for the first time.

This approach proved extremely successful, with UEFA TV receiving a total of over 22m minutes in watch time, generated by over 1.3m views. Indeed, the final between Portugal and Spain yielded 6,110,890 watch-time minutes and 303,984 views alone – a remarkable increase compared to UEFA Futsal EURO 2016 (1,674,675 minutes watched; 83,282 views).
These figures underlined the growing importance of being able to reach fans on OTT, but television still dominated, with an impressive 20 official broadcast partners covering games in over 100 territories worldwide. Even without a pan-European broadcast partner for this edition, TV viewing figures were still high, with the cumulative audience for the entire tournament reaching 30.4m. That included a group stage peak of just under 0.5m viewers for the highest performing game, between Ukraine and Portugal.

The stand-out performers both on the court and on TV were Portugal. The UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 champions pulled in an average group stage match audience of 406,400. This was followed up by Portuguese broadcasters RTP1 attracting 1.5m viewers during the final – more than any futsal match previously shown in the country, and 166,000 more viewers than for the 2017 UEFA Europa League decider.

SPORTKLUB DELIVERS
UEFA’s TV and video production team appointed SportKlub as the host broadcaster and they delivered full coverage of each of the 20 matches, utilising a ten-camera plan including crane cameras, super-slow-motion cameras, mini-cameras and remote beauty cameras, providing a varied view of every kick.

Overseeing the process was SportKlub’s production manager, Zoran Zeničić, who applied his working knowledge of previous UEFA events such as UEFA Champions League matches, albeit futsal makes different demands. “The difference with football is that everything is happening in a smaller area,” he explained. “The lighting is different, there’s a smaller number of players, the game is faster and it requires much more intensity from the players. Our camera crew have to react really quickly and maintain focus at all times.”

The impressive end product was largely possible due to the work of appointed technical supplier DVB, as well as the satellite transmission provided by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). The coverage of the tournament was facilitated also by a production and editorial workshop held by UEFA in the lead-up.

The host broadcaster likewise received support from UEFA’s on-site unit as well as from UEFA’s team at headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland. In addition, the team supplied content to the broadcasters in the form of promotional trailers, footage of the host city, footage of the trophy and archival footage from past tournaments.

The tournament drew the attention of broadcasters across the globe. Unilateral broadcast partner Fox Sports Italy also provided coverage on-site throughout the group stage, while Match TV Russia and RTP Portugal joined for the semi-finals and final. More than a dozen broadcast partners received the world feed signal to take the tournament live to their respective nations.

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TV STILL KING
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PRIME-TIME PORTUGAL
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KEY MARKETS TUNE IN
UEFA Futsal EURO debutants France also enjoyed a strong following, with L’Équipe receiving 555,000 viewers across their two group stage games. There was also cause for celebration for host broadcaster SportKlub, who achieved an average audience share of 8.4% during the group stage – a staggering 12 times higher than their typical prime-time yield. Meanwhile, Spanish live free-to-air channel DMAX attracted just under 600,000 viewers for the final. That represented a 34% increase on Spain’s four previous finals, and the highest audience on the channel since March 2017.

THE TOURNAMENT RECEIVED A TOTAL OF 1.3M VIEWS ON UEFA TV
THE CUMULATIVE TV AUDIENCE FOR THE ENTIRE TOURNAMENT REACHED 30.4M
PORTUGUESE BROADCASTERS RTP1 ATTRACTED 1.5M VIEWERS DURING THE FINAL
Follow the leader

Record numbers kept on top of the action on UEFA.com and across the competition’s social media channels

"Congratulations guys, congratulations Portugal!" Cristiano Ronaldo posted on Facebook as Jorge Braz’s side celebrated their UEFA Futsal EURO 2018 triumph.

The Real Madrid CF star may not have been in Slovenia to savour the moment, but like millions of others across the world he was able to keep up to date via UEFA’s communications channels. And it was a UEFA photo of Ricardinho lifting the trophy that he used to illustrate his post.

Coverage of the tournament was delivered by UEFA.com, with on-site reporters and photographers providing expert commentary and the highest-quality images. Reporting of each match was focused on the individual MatchCentres, which were available in seven languages, and the games were also streamed live.

The website delivered on its promise to be the premier destination for UEFA Futsal EURO content. There were 1.4m visits to UEFA.com’s Futsal EURO section during the tournament – an increase of 14% on UEFA Futsal EURO 2016, with 67.9% of them from a mobile device. France proved the biggest draw on their debut, attracting the highest audience of any of the competing nations despite bowing out after just two matches. France accounted for nearly 300,000 visits and, combined with the audience from Portugal, Spain and Italy, was responsible for 56.2% of all tournament traffic.

The goal on social media was to make the content fun and engaging, which was achieved through a variety of posts including the popular Goal of the Day, animations and skill challenges. These prompted more than 3m engagements (likes, comments, shares) and almost 10m video views.

By the end of the tournament, UEFA’s dedicated futsal social media channels had attracted 37,000 new followers.

The communications team also helped increase the social capital of UEFA’s partners through relevant, audience-focused content, promoted the broadcast partners to encourage people to tune in, and supported the local organising committee in their promotional goals. Photography and video content was also made available to the competing teams to aid their communications output.

The 56-page official printed tournament programme, meanwhile, complemented the digital output in helping promote the competition.
Tunha enjoys his moment with the trophy.

**Roll of Honour**

2018 - Portugal
2016 - Spain
2014 - Italy
2012 - Spain
2010 - Spain
2007 - Spain
2005 - Spain
2003 - Italy
2001 - Spain
1999 - Russia
1998 - Spain
Romania's Savio Valadares runs at the Ukrainian defence.