TOURNAMENT REVIEW

UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2017
THE NETHERLANDS
The FC Twente Stadion in Enschede was a sea of orange as the Dutch team and their delighted fans savoured the thrill of winning UEFA Women’s EURO 2017. The hosts’ outpouring of joy after the final whistle was a fitting way to bring the curtain down on a football festival that made history.

Over 22 days, we were captivated by a tournament that epitomised why the women’s game is now so firmly established on the European football landscape.

We were privileged to see Europe’s top players show their skills in front of record attendances for a Women’s EURO final round. Interest was high from start to finish, and the number of TV viewers and people who kept in touch with the event on digital platforms also rose to unprecedented levels.

These facts go to show that women’s football has arrived as a significant attraction. The tournament shone brightly, thanks to the quality of the football, the brilliance of individual performances and a host of excellent matches and high-calibre goals. The final itself was exhilarating, the Netherlands and Denmark providing a wonderful showpiece with the accent on attack and entertaining a packed crowd.

UEFA’s decision to increase the tournament field to 16 certainly proved its worth. More players and associations than ever relished the opportunity to perform on such a prominent stage. New teams have joined the established countries as European women’s football powers, new stars have stepped into the limelight, and the overall quality of the 16 participants emphasised the splendid development work that is taking place across the continent.

I have identified the further progress of women’s football as a major priority, and UEFA will continue to work in tandem with its member associations to promote and nurture the women’s game at all levels. It is our firm belief as well that the Together #WePlayStrong campaign, launched by UEFA ahead of the Women’s EURO, will convince an increasing number of women and girls to play and become involved in football.

As we reflect on a memorable tournament, I would like to close by extending my heartfelt thanks to the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB), its president Michael van Praag, the host venues and everybody in the Netherlands who joined forces to make UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 such a resounding success.

New standards were set in sporting, infrastructure and organisational terms – and I have no hesitation in predicting that the development curve of women’s football will continue onwards and upwards in the years to come.

Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President

The Netherlands hosted the UEFA Women’s EURO for the first time in 2017, and with 240,000 visitors attending matches, we can certainly say it was a very successful tournament. It was also the biggest UEFA Women’s EURO ever held, with 16 teams taking part in 31 matches across seven host cities.

From the opening match in Utrecht to the final in Enschede, we enjoyed the terrific atmosphere in the stadiums, as well as great support from the fans. The many visitors to the seven host cities were warmly welcomed in the fan zones, and the large groups of supporters that gathered there before walking together to the stadiums to watch the matches were a memorable feature of the tournament. In Enschede on the day of the final, an incredible 10,000 people took part in the fan walk to the stadium.

The tournament was also avidly followed on television. They say records are meant to be broken, and never before has a UEFA Women’s EURO attracted so many viewers. More than 5,476,000 people tuned in for the final in the Netherlands, but the competition’s popularity was not confined to the host country, with 165 million viewers overall watching the tournament from around the world.

I would like to thank everybody who was involved in UEFA Women’s EURO 2017. I am very grateful that the Netherlands was selected to host this great tournament. I would also like to give a special thank you to UEFA for its cooperation – we enjoyed sharing all those great moments with you!

Michael van Praag
KNVB President
Sweden midfielder Caroline Seger addresses her teammates ahead of the quarter-final against the Netherlands.
“Life has its ups and downs. And so does football.” Sweden’s Pia Sundhage, one of only two coaches to have survived from Women’s EURO 2013, was not alone in switching to reflective mode after elimination from a final tournament that yielded unexpected ups for some and unwelcome downs for others.

The hosts rode the crest of an orange wave all the way to the final of a tournament full of surprises.

Vivianne Miedema scores the hosts’ second goal in their 2-0 quarter-final win against Sweden.
GROUP A

The eventual finalists take top spots as Norway draw a blank

Norway were among those who fell into the category of a team enduring an unwelcome downturn. The 2013 finalists, having been handed the poisoned chalice of an opening game against the hosts, could hardly have imagined the worst-case scenario of zero goals, zero points and last place in a Group A where six fixtures produced nine goals and only one game in which both teams found the net.

The battle between the Netherlands’ broad 1-4-3-3 and Norway’s narrow 1-4-4-2 was settled by the hosts’ wingers. Like Martens’ cross from the left was headed home by Shanice van de Sanden, who had cut in from the right to get across a surprised defender. Norway’s downhill start was accelerated by Belgium’s courageous midfield, a solo run by Pernille Harper and, belatedly, an early goal conceded after a ball-bounce untouched across the Norway goal area until the head of Janice Cayman nudged it into the net.

This left Norway the challenge of putting a hatful of goals past Denmark in a Group B that respected the form book – but only just. Antonio Cabrini’s side, struggling to retain possession against Russia’s compact 3-4-1-4-1, defend-and-counter structure, fell 0-2 behind thanks to the opportunism of striker Elena Danilova and a conclusive header by Elena Morozova from a corner. Losing influential right-back Sara Gama to injury after barely 25 minutes was a further blow. Switching to 1-4-4-2 for the last half-hour by injecting Cristiana Girelli as second striker, Italy rallied after the break but could score only once against the flagging Russians.

A glaring defensive error then put them 0-1 down to Germany and increased the feeling that everything was going against them. But Italy replied with a copybook counter, Barbara Bonansea rounding off a long sprint on the left with a low cross met superbly by striker Ilaria Mauro at the near post. But the hard-luck story continued when Mauro limped off injured. Germany regained the lead from the penalty spot, and Elisa Bartoli was red-carded. In the face of adversity, Italy still pressed forward – but failure to find a second equaliser spelt elimination.

In theory, this converted their final game against Sweden into a formality. Pia Sundhage’s team had opened their campaign with a point against Germany in a high-intensity match that had just about everything except goals. They had then defeated the compact, industrious Russian team thanks to the misjudged handling of a free-kick and an intercepted goal-kick that let in Stina Blackstenius. But Sweden’s normally impermeable defensive tapestry was unstitched by the vertical attacking and counterattacking of a re-shaped Italy who, even though Sweden battled back to equalise twice, took the three points with three finishes of exceptional technical quality.

Fortunately for Sweden, Germany defeated Russia 2-0 in a game that, as Elena Fomina commented afterwards, “could have become more exciting without the two penalties”. Steffi Jones’ side, without scoring in open play, topped the group while Sweden finished second at the expense of two teams that had made a positive contribution to a fascinating group.

GROUP B

Holders Germany take their chances as Italy rue their luck

The hard-luck blues were sung by Italy in a Group B that respected the form book – but only just. Antonio Cabrini’s side, struggling to retain possession against Russia’s compact 3-4-1-4-1, defend-and-counter structure, fell 0-2 behind thanks to the opportunism of striker Elena Danilova and a conclusive header by Elena Morozova from a corner. Losing influential right-back Sara Gama to injury after barely 25 minutes was a further blow. Switching to 1-4-4-2 for the last half-hour by injecting Cristiana Girelli as second striker, Italy rallied after the break but could score only once against the flagging Russians.

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GROUP C
Debutants Austria impress to force France into second

A similar tale unfolded in Group C where the favourites, France, failed to score in open play and two teams went unrewarded for impressive efforts. In the opening match, Austria’s high pressing pre-empted Switzerland’s attempts to construct and condensed play into one half of the pitch for the opening 45 minutes, during which an intercepted clearance by the goalkeeper allowed striker Nina Burger to score what turned out to be the only goal of the game.

Swiss coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg admitted: “I tried to get the message across to the players that we couldn’t keep trying to play the ball out from the back under such pressure.” Despite a positive response, Switzerland’s fate seemed to be sealed when defender Rahel Kiwic was dismissed after an hour. On the contrary, the ten threw off their shackles – but failed to break down Austria’s obdurate 1-5-4-1 deep defensive block.

Other opponents were to encounter similar problems. France needed a corner to take a point after an Austria throw-in had nudged them into a 1-0 lead. And Iceland’s hitherto solid structure was demolished by two Austrian crosses and a corner.

Fielding three centre-backs and two wing-backs, Freyr Alexandersson’s team had countered French technique in their opening game with industry, intensity and organisation, only to be defeated by a penalty. Despite taking the lead against Switzerland, they were caught out twice by deliveries from the wide areas and a final switch to 1-3-4-3 failed to avoid a 1-2 defeat. That result kept Swiss hopes alive.

Progress depended on defeating France – and a surprise appeared to be on the cards when a through pass led to a red card for Eve Perisset and a superb header by Ana-Maria Crnogorčević from the ensuing free-kick. With urgency bred of necessity, Olivier Echouafni’s side pushed forward in 1-4-2-3 formation and scraped into the quarter-finals when a Camille Abily free-kick found its way into the roof of the net via a dejected Gaëlle Thalmann. Their 3-0 win against Iceland meant that debutants Austria topped the group.

GROUP D
Dominant England take control while Spain scrape through

Group D was a story of domination by one team – England – and topsy-turvy results among the other three. Mark Sampson’s team ran up the largest winning margin of the tournament by converting total control and one-on-one superiority into a 6-0 win against Scotland that included some spectacular moves and a hat-trick by striker Jodie Taylor. In the other opening fixture, Francisco Neto set Portugal up in deep-defending mode but failed to prevent Spain from piercing the armour twice. Jorge Vilda’s team then enjoyed a similar share of possession (74%) against England in rain-drenched Breda but, after falling behind within two minutes, were unable to find a way through a compact, narrow defensive block and conceded a second five minutes before time.

Portugal posted their first-ever victory in a final tournament when a defensive lapse and a fast counter earned them a 2-1 win against Scotland and, with morale reinforced, fought back to equalise at 1-1 against England – a score that would have sent them into the last eight. But they conceded a second soon after the break while Scotland were springing a surprise, capitalising on a lofted through pass and a rebound to take the lead against Spain and then stoutly defending their advantage. One more goal could have taken Anna Signeul’s team through.

In the event, however, Scotland and Portugal were the goal-difference losers in a three-way tie on three points after a nerve-wracking denouement to the final fixtures of the group phase.
Quater-finals

Underdogs show their teeth as heavyweights bow out

Had anyone predicted that Germany, France, Spain and Sweden would emerge victorious from the quarter-finals, few eyebrows would have been raised. But the eyebrow-stretching outcome was that the opposite occurred. This turned out to be the casualty list as the quarter-finals unfolded.

Pia Sundhage’s cycle in charge of Sweden came to an end at a packed stadium in Doetinchem. Her set-up was a clear declaration of attacking intent, with Fridolina Rolfo and Stina Blackstenius as the striking partnership with Lotta Schelin ready to burst forward from the right side of midfield. The Netherlands faced the opponents’ 1-4-4-2 by remaining loyal to their 1-4-3-3 structure with two wingers starting from flank-on-the-boots positions and Jackie Groenen and Danielle van de Donk ready to support from midfield.

The game-changing moment came after just over half an hour of cut and thrust, during which neither goalkeeper had been unduly troubled. After Vivianne Miedema had fallen, the German referee, Bibiana Steinhaus, awarded the hosts a free-kick on the edge of the box. Amid questionable positioning of the goalkeeper and defensive wall, Lieke Martens hit the ball calmly into the far corner to secure the crucial opening goal. The 2-0 victory was secured by a coaching-manual counterattack in the second half. Martens hit a perfectly weighted diagonal pass into the box at full gallop and enabling 1-3-5-2 attacking, with Nadia Nadim to head an equaliser. Then, with seven minutes remaining, Nielsen played the ball to the right, continued her diagonal run into the box, and headed the decisive goal.

For the Dutch, it was not as heavy a defeat as predicted beforehand. After a regain in midfield, right-back Lucy Bronze made a central run, feeding a pass between centre-back and full-back for striker Jodie Taylor to beat Manuela Zinsberger at her near post. But the eyebrow-stretching final whistle blows for England against France to signal victory for the hosts.

The final whistle blows

Amandine Henry keeps a close eye on Jordan Nobbs

Amandine Henry keeps a close eye on Jordan Nobbs

Manuela Zinsberger: saved Silvia Meseguer’s penalty (above) to set up Austria’s shoot-out victory against Spain after their goalless quarter-final.

Manuela Zinsberger saved Silvia Meseguer’s penalty (above) to set up Austria’s shoot-out victory against Spain after their goalless quarter-final.

Nils Nielsen’s game plan based on right-back Theresa Nielsen pushing into midfield and enabling 1-3-5-2 attacking, with right-side midfielder Sanne Troelsgaard tucking in to create midfield overloads and open spaces for Nielsen to exploit. With Pernille Harder posing questions with well-timed movements between German lines, Denmark’s endeavours were rewarded shortly after the break.

With the troops assembled in the box for a corner, a clearance was picked up by Denmark centre-back Stine Larsen on the right. With two German players paying attention to the assistant referee’s flag rather than the referee’s application of the advantage rule, Larsen crossed for Nadia Nadim to head an equaliser. Then, with seven minutes remaining, Nielsen played the ball to the right, continued her diagonal run into the box, and headed in the cross. Germany’s 22-year reign as champions of Europe was over.

Next on stage: Austria v Spain in Tilburg. As opposed to the thrilling dialogue between Germany and Denmark, the fixture was essentially a monologue with Spain bashing their attacking heads against the brick wall of Austria’s deep 1-5-4-1 defending. Jorge Vilda’s team were comfortably ahead on points (20 goal attempts to 4) but failed to find a knockout blow and, after 120 goalless minutes, were defeated 5-3 in the shoot-out after Manuela Zinsberger had saved from Silvia Meseguer.

A similar chapter was written in Deventer, where France dominated England in terms of possession and goal attempts but failed to break through stalwart 1-4-1-4-1 deep defending. But, unlike Austria, England found a decisive counterattack to break the deadlock. After a regain in midfield, right-back Lucy Bronze made a central run, feeding a pass between centre-back and full-back for striker Jodie Taylor to beat Sarah Bouhaddi and extend France’s record of falling at quarter-final hurdles.

England had, as Mark Sampson put it, “ground out another result” and earned a semi-final against the hosts.

To the final
**SEMI-FINALS**

**DENMARK 0-0 AUSTRIA**  
(In: Denmark win 3-0 on penalties)

Denmark survived an early scare in Breda when Sarah Puntigam, scorer of Austria’s winning penalty in the shoot-out against Spain, struck a spot kick over the bar. With Nadia Nadim and Pernille Harder trying to find chinks between the compact lines of Austria’s defensive armour, Nils Nielsen’s team looked the more likely to score against opponents who focused on setting striker Nina Burger off on counterattacking runs. But hurried passing and off-target long-range shooting undermined their efficiency in the final third and, with Denmark failing to deliver telling blows at the other end, extra time was required. With Nicole Billa having added to Austria’s injury list during the first half, Dominik Thalhammer made only two of his four permitted substitutions and conceded “our game is very physical and we were tired”. In a shoot-out where only three of seven penalties hit the net, Austria accounted for three of the four misses and ran out 0-3 losers.

**THE DUEL BETWEEN BRONZE AND MARTENS WAS ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING IN THE TOURNAMENT**

**NETHERLANDS 3-0 ENGLAND**

A crowd of just over 27,000 created a superb atmosphere for the Netherlands v England semi-final in Enschede – a fascinating contest that could easily have passed for the grand finale. Against England’s 1-4-4-2, the hosts’ 1-4-3-3 coped effectively with theoretical numerical inferiority in midfield with intelligent positional play by wingers and full-backs. The individual duel between Lucy Bronze and Lieke Martens emerging as one of the most fascinating contests of the tournament.

Danielle van de Donk produced a commanding performance alongside Jackie Groenen in the engine room of Sarina Wiegman’s team, linking vertical attacking transitions and providing support in the final third. England relied on accurate diagonals to switch play from flank to flank and on direct attacking with sharp movements, with Francesca Kirby dropping to receive in the slipstream of the threatening deep runs by Jodie Taylor.

The hosts made the crucial breakthrough when Martens played a diagonal to the right flank, where Groenen had switched positions with winger Shanice van de Sanden. Her cross was met by a looping far-post header by Vivianne Miedema that opened the game. Although they hit the woodwork from a corner during a surging second-half, England’s search for a reply was undermined by a defensive error; when Jade Moore attempted to head the ball to her keeper from long range. Van de Donk accepted the gift and a deceptive scoreline was confirmed when a cross was deflected into her own net by centre-back Millie Bright during added-time. After all the ups and downs, the hosts had earned a second match against Denmark – this time with the European crown at stake.
It was an unexpected one-night stand at the end of a protracted concert season. As if to harmonise with a sudden switch from Gregorian chant to rock’n’roll, the grey skies and rain that had dogged – but not dampened – the tournament gave way to radiant sunlight, adding a warm glow to the red-and-orange tide that flowed into the stadium in Enschede. More than 28,000 fans were witnesses to a final that was not the culmination of a story related by 30 previous matches. It was a thrilling stand-alone event.

It took no more than a couple of minutes for this to become obvious. Denmark, holding a high line with goalkeeper Stina Lykke Petersen prowling outside the penalty area, fired a warning shot across the hosts’ advancing bows with a fast, menacing counterattack. It took only three more minutes to demonstrate that the threats were not empty. Katrina Veje sped down the left flank and her cross found Pernille Harder. The Denmark captain extended the pass to midfielder Sanne Troelsgaard who, when swivelling away, was brought down. Nadia Nadim struck the penalty.
firmly into the back of the Netherlands net. The hosts were behind for the first time in the tournament. And the scene had been set for a final that showcased, as Denmark coach Nils Nielsen put it, “two teams trying with everything they had to score more than the other.”

The adversaries expressed their attacking intentions with different lexicons. In some ways, Denmark had the loudest voice during the first 45 minutes of dialogue. They displayed fluent transitions to attacking play – threatening quickly whenever opportunities arose. As in previous matches, during the construction phase, right-back Theresa Nielsen pushed forward to give her team a 1-3-5-2 attacking shape with Trioelsgaard cutting in to open spaces for her to occupy. Centre-back Simone Boye Sørensen showed her ability to carry the ball forward and prompt forward movement with well-weighted passes. On the left, the high-speed dribbling skills of Veje caused problems. Striker Nadim was a threat when given space to turn, dribble and shoot. And, above all, Harder interrogated the Netherlands’ defensive set-up with her ability to win possession in seemingly impossible situations, to drive at opponents and to cleverly find exploit spaces between lines. Offensively, Nielsen’s team rapidly regrouped in 1-4-3-3 formation, countering counters with immediate recovery runs and narrowing passing channels. When pressing higher, the two forwards efficiently controlled the hosts’ centre-backs and the wide midfielders tucked neatly into a narrow defensive block. But, as an exception to the tournament norm, the final was not about the efficiency of defensive blocks. Sarina Wiegman’s team, although

Second, another combination on the right culminated in a square pass to Lieke Martens who turned and drove a shot from outside the area into the corner of the Denmark net. Five minutes later, effective pressing by Trioelsgaard and Maja Kildemoes allowed the latter to dribble past the advanced Kika van Es and loop a pass into the area left vacant by the left-back. Harder, peeling off intelligently to avoid an offside flag, ran clear to beat Sari van Veenendaal. At the end of a tournament marked by a goal famine, four goals within 33 minutes. But no more before Swiss referee Esther Staubli whistled for half-time.

Wiegman had work to do during the interval. Despite the goals, the Dutch machinery was misfiring. Although the wingers in the 1-4-3-3 structure looked threatening in the final third, Nielsen’s advanced position forced Martens to drop deeper than usual. Veje was challenging right-back Desiree van Lunteren. And Harder’s dangerous prowling between the lines pulled screening midfielder Spitse deeper than usual, stretching the midfield triangle, allowing Kildemoes and Sofie Pedersen to shackle the linking play by Groenen and Danielle van den Dock. While tactical adjustments were being implemented, the deadlock was broken by a set play. Defending a free-kick outside the box, Denmark erected a five-player wall with Dutch centre-back Anouk Dekker sticking in as booked on the far-post side. Spitse, as she had done against Sweden, sidefooted her shot between Dekker and the out-reaching Kildemoes, making it 3-2 to the Netherlands.

The goal prompted Nils Nielsen to withdraw Kildemoes and insert Frederikke Thagersen as the right-sided element. And with their new tactical formation with their Harder slipstreaming Nadim to form an attacking diamond. Curiously, the hosts appeared to be more comfortable against a formation they were more familiar with – left-back Van Es, for example, at greater ease facing a winger than when required to patrol a vacant zone. The Netherlands machine eased into top gear with a good supply of diagonal openings from centre-backs to wings; neat passing and quick support from midfield; and effective running and ball-shielding from Miedema, offering fans her most influential performance of the tournament.

With the crowd roaring them on, the adversaries threw everything at each other. Veje, in black shirts and shorts, constantly delivered advice from the touchline. Cameras, on the other hand, and, above all, Harder interrogated the Netherlands’ defensive set-up with her ability to win possession in seemingly impossible situations, to drive at opponents and to cleverly find exploit spaces between lines. While the Dutchians’ defensive back four were given a standing ovation for their contribution to a thrilling spectacle. When Wiegman, extending the tradition of victorious female coaches at EUROs, had to score more than the other”, “two teams trying with everything they had to score more than the other.”

Denmark’s coach, Nils Nielsen, put it another way: “It was not Gregorian chant. During the wait for the final whistle, the occupants of the Netherlands bench linked arms along the touchline. When it sounded, Nielsen and Wiegman embraced. When Harder led the Danish team up for the silver medals, they were given a standing ovation for their contribution to a thrilling spectacle. When Wiegman, extending the tradition of victorious female coaches at EUROs, had to score more than the other”, “two teams trying with everything they had to score more than the other.”

When Wiegman was Handed Her Gold Medal She looked at it with an Expression of Disbelief

Nielsen applied the finishing touch. to the far post, where striker Vivianne Sørensen was bracing gears and deliver a low cross for Shanice Groenen after winning the ball wide on the right. The Netherlands’ No.4 lofted a pass over the left-back for Shanieke van de Sanden to move through her sprinting gear and deliver a low cross to the far post, where striker Vivianne Miedema applied the finishing touch.
Before the finals, we spoke about our aims. We agreed to show who we are, show what we can do and show that we can play together as a team. The Netherlands showed who they were by winning all six games, scoring 13 goals and conceding three, to become the fourth country to lift the trophy and the first host nation to do so since Germany in 2001. It represented a major achievement for Sarina Wiegman, who had been in charge of the team for only six months. However, that is not the whole story about a person whose national team experience started with 104 caps as midfielder or defender between 1987 and 2001. Wiegman’s name also appeared on the teamsheets of North Carolina, where she sampled the more professional world of women’s soccer in the United States. She then became the third woman in the Netherlands, after Vera Pauw and Hesterine de Reus, to earn the UEFA Pro licence, doing her reality-based learning with the men’s team at Sparta Rotterdam. Before taking the helm of the national team, Wiegman had been assistant coach from August 2014. When she was promoted to head coach on 13 January 2017, she set about welding a solid team-behind-the-team. To assist her, she drew on the big-tournament experience of veteran coach Foppe de Haan, winner of the UEFA Under-21 Championship in 2006 and 2007, along with the more youthful enthusiasm of FC Twente coach Arjan Veurink. She also absorbed wisdom from other sporting disciplines via performance managers Minke Booij and Peter Blangé, Olympic medalists in hockey and volleyball respectively. Leiden University chipped in with analytical work on player performance. And the KNVB’s coach education specialists contributed with analysis of potential opponents.

Wiegman was also aware that the preparation of a host team is something special. “Playing on home soil means there is pressure. So we took a mental coach on board. We prepared well and the players knew their tasks. But if you also prepare them for the things that can go on around the tournament, that already does a lot.” She invested a lot of time in the collective preparation of a strong fighting unit, but also tailored pre-tournament work to the individual needs of her players. After a nervous opener against the 2013 silver-medallists Norway, Wiegman said: “There was teamwork, there was fighting spirit and we also wanted to play good football.” She described the victory over Norway as a breakthrough – and it was certainly a major step on a pathway that had begun in 2007 and continued with the laying, at UEFA Women’s EURO 2009, of defensive foundations on which traditional Dutch attacking qualities had been built in time for 2017. “We grew up with 4-3-3,” Wiegman said. “But at times it’s a 4-4-2 or a 4-5-1, then something else. We start with a 4-3-3 but it always changes. You have to be able to adapt.” The same applied to her team selection, where brave decisions needed to be made – such as dropping her captain, Mandy van den Berg. “She wasn’t in the team but she was always there for the team and for the media. She was an example of why we were such a strong team.” Wiegman also kept feet on the ground, keeping a calm demeanour in the technical area. “We tried to take the pressure off throughout, saying we were just going to do our best and to show ourselves in our best light. That took us all the way. But the important thing is that people started to love the women’s game and I hope this adds to the development of women’s football.” The team showed itself in its best light – and so did Sarina Wiegman.

**WIEGMAN’S SUDDEN IMPACT**

After only six months in charge, Sarina Wiegman inspired the Netherlands to their first senior title.
Defences dominated a low-scoring tournament, but UEFA’s technical observers found plenty of positives to take from the Netherlands.

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

Ball domination fails to result in more goals.

“The tournament confirmed a steady trend towards a possession-based combination game.” The observation, culled from the technical report on UEFA Women’s EURO 2013, was bluntly contradicted by a EURO 2017 of a very different complexion. Spain’s Jorge Vilda summarised a tournament that showcased “two different approaches. One is collective combination football based on possession and passing with the emphasis on playing your way into scoring positions. The other approach sees teams who focus on staying compact, shutting down spaces, defending quite close to their own goal and then trying to hit opponents with counterattacks. The more defensive style was generally getting the edge over the teams who prefer the more attacking approach and who, in my opinion, try to offer the fans a more attractive way of playing.”

This polarisation emerged as the main topic from the tournament. As UEFA technical observer Jarno Matikainen remarked: “The defensive discipline we saw in Sweden was already good. In the Netherlands, it was even better.”

First: the facts. France, Germany and Spain were the only nations who comfortably wore the label of ‘possession teams’ in that their share of the ball never dropped below 50%. The champions could be added to that list, as Sarina Wiegman’s side averaged 53% of possession.
On the other hand, the fact that the Dutch had 50-50 shares with England and Denmark in the semi-final and final suggests that possession was not an objective. Of the 26 games that produced a result, eight were won by the team with a lesser share of the ball – nine if the Austria v Spain quarter-final (0-0 plus shoot-out) is included. The differences were not marginal. England beat Spain with 26% possession; Scotland did the same with 31%. Denmark eliminated Germany with 38%, Russia beat Italy with 39%. Austria reached the semi and went home unbeaten with an average that was hauled up to 40% by a 51% share against Iceland.

In their 12 games, the trio of eminently possession-based teams scored ten goals – seven of which were set plays. All three were eliminated in the quarter-finals. As the table shows, the possession teams: “If they want to beat us, they will have to give 110 per cent.” The comment can be traced back to 2013 and to Italy’s Antonio Cabrini, one of only two coaches to survive from EURO 2013. But it was equally applicable to the 2017 event. “The tournament demonstrated high levels of preparation and discipline in terms of defensive structures,” Patricia González said, “and Austria provided a prime example of implementing this in 2013 and trained it a lot. The problem, of course, is that you cannot sustain it for a long time. An alternative was to mix high pressure with a deep defensive block. We started training this in blocks of ten minutes of high pressure and ten of deep block during training matches and, during the weeks before the tournament, we helped the players to recognise the right moments – the trigger points – for the start of the pressure. And I think it worked out well.”

Austria’s more advanced pressure was based on two lines of four with striker Nina Burger supported by Nicole Billa in the vanguard of attempts to disrupt the opponents’ build-up. Transitions to the deep block were fast and disciplined, with players prepared to sprint back into positions behind the ball. Screening midfielder Sarah Punitgam slotted quickly into the space between the left-back and the left centre-back to constrict the line of five. The four midfielders set up shop close to the defensive line, with Burger maintaining a position ten metres inside her own half. With good one-on-one defenders to cope with penetrations, the block shifted and tilted well, making it difficult for opponents to break through. In 910 minutes of football, Austria conceded one goal – from a corner, when Amandine Henry was allowed to head France’s equaliser.

**ANALYSIS**

**OPTIONS GOING FORWARD**

**New ideas were needed to break down improving defences**

The coaches of the teams who set out to dominate games via possession acknowledged their frustrations. “We play an offensive game,” said France coach Olivier Echouafni. “But other teams refuse to play and concentrate only on defending. It’s very difficult to play against them. We try to find solutions against low blocks by animating our attacking, varying the execution and working on set plays that might give us the breakthrough,” Spain’s Jorge Vida said. “The problem is that when you have an opponent who shuts it down at the back and is able to sustain pace and power over the 90 minutes, you have to find solutions to the lack of space in the final third. You can go back and start again, maybe switching to the other flank. Then, when you manage to get a centre across, they are stronger and jump higher than you do.”

Denmark coach Nils Nielsen neatly described the antidote to the possession teams: “If they want to pass it around, we can wait for them to make a mistake, we can sit back and we can score.”

Hestére de Reus agreed: “I felt that the possession teams didn’t have enough changes of pace in their attacking game – whereas teams like Denmark and, especially, England were able to do a lot of damage with direct, fast-forward attacking.”

**LEARNING TO KEEP IT TIGHT**

**A focus on defending in training made teams tougher to beat**

“We’ve got to make life as hard as possible for our opponents. If a team wants to beat us, they will have to give 110 per cent.” The comment can be traced back to 2013 and to Italy’s Antonio Cabrini, one of only two coaches to survive from EURO 2013. But it was equally applicable to the 2017 event. “The tournament demonstrated high levels of preparation and discipline in terms of defensive structures,” Patricia González said, “and Austria provided a prime example of implementing this in 2013 and trained it a lot. The problem, of course, is that you cannot sustain it for a long time. An alternative was to mix high pressure with a deep defensive block. We started training this in blocks of ten minutes of high pressure and ten of deep block during training matches and, during the weeks before the tournament, we helped the players to recognise the right moments – the trigger points – for the start of the pressure. And I think it worked out well.”

Austria’s more advanced pressure was based on two lines of four with striker Nina Burger supported by Nicole Billa in the vanguard of attempts to disrupt the opponents’ build-up. Transitions to the deep block were fast and disciplined, with players prepared to sprint back into positions behind the ball. Screening midfielder Sarah Punitgam slotted quickly into the space between the left-back and the left centre-back to constrict the line of five. The four midfielders set up shop close to the defensive line, with Burger maintaining a position ten metres inside her own half. With good one-on-one defenders to cope with penetrations, the block shifted and tilted well, making it difficult for opponents to break through. In 910 minutes of football, Austria conceded one goal – from a corner, when Amandine Henry was allowed to head France’s equaliser.

The Netherlands and England reap rewards from going direct

The ability to counterattack is almost a given with deep defensive strategies and almost one-quarter of open-play goals could be directly attributed to counters. In Austria’s case, possession was not about a patient build-up. Rather, it was about simply clearing the ball. There was a naturally designed counterattacking strategy. The preference was to play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEAM</th>
<th>PASSES</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>ACCURACY</th>
<th>PPP</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Spain*</td>
<td>627</td>
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<td>3.60</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Austria*</td>
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<td>1.56</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>1.37</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*Figures from matches with extra time have been adjusted to 90-minute values. PPP = passes per phase of possession.
High and Wide

Width offers the key to finding a way through defensive blocks. "Crosset" exclaimed Pia Sundhage. "The quality has not been good enough. So we need to look for other solutions."

"The quality has not been good enough. Crosses!" exclaimed Pia Sundhage. "We should have passed to the transition player instead of clearing the ball away. We gave the ball away too easily," in a tournament where direct attacking paid greater dividends than more elaborate approach work, semi-finalists England were among the teams who most frequently hit the fast-forward button. "When England played the long ball," said Sarina Wiegman after the semi-final, "it was not a game we were used to playing against. So we had to focus on winning the second ball and keeping possession with the ball on the ground from there."

As Jarmo Matkainen said: "Netherlands and England scored 24 goals between them. The speed factor was present for both nations when attacking – speed of thought, change of direction, tempo, movement, technique, final ball or finishing touch. For me, attacking – speed of thought, change of routes through deep defensive blocks highlighted the need to go round them. In build-up play, opening the game via passes from centre-backs to wide areas was almost standard procedure. What happened after that was critical. "Once there, we counted on our two wide players to give us depth in attack – which, ultimately, we did not achieve," said Spain's Jorge Vilda. "The supply to the wide areas was generally very good," added Hestienne de Reus. "Nowadays we see teams, such as Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Spain who switch play efficiently from wing to wing. Players are equipped to hit 40-metre passes which was not always the case in the past.""}

The technical observers highlighted the Netherlands wingers – Shanice van de Sanden and Lieke Martens – as prime examples of players equipped not only to deliver crosses but also to make penetrating runs at high speed and use their one-on-one skills to reach the byline through inside channels and supply cut-backs. Training-ground work on relationships between wingers, wide midfielders and full-backs also emerged as an important element in the defence-dominated tournament. "Job descriptions could easily focus on the contributions by England right-back Lucy Bronze or, in a different way, her Denmark equivalent Theresa Nielsen. The latter appeared as right-back in her team's 1-4-4-2 defensive structure but, when in possession, she pushed into midfield to create a 3-5-2 attacking structure, with the left-back stepping in as third centre-back. Wide midfielder Sanne Troelsgaard tucked in to overload the midfield and open spaces for Nielsen to exploit with overlapping or underlapping runs. Her attacking role was illustrated by the winning goal against Germany. Nielsen, working the inside channel, won a second ball and fed a short forward pass to Nadim. The striker opened play to Frederikke Thøgersen on the right and her cross was headed in by Nielsen who, with courage of convictions, had prolonged her run to appear, unmarked, in the German penalty box."

Catching the Nettle

Keepers emerge as a ‘weaker link’ despite impressing in 2013

UEFA’s technical reports do not set out to be critical. Mistakes happen. But, in an honest review of UEFA Women’s EURO 2017, goalkeeping is a nettle that has to be grasped. But for goalkeepers’ errors, the goal tally would have fallen even further below its record low. A compilation of important – many of them match-changing – errors might give goalkeepers coach sleepless nights. Crosses misjudged or mishandled; shots palmed into the net; questionable positioning of keeper and wall; passes directly to the opposition striker. On the other hand, the tournament was painted in chiaroscuro – light and shade – as the errors were mixed with a large number on the standing saves. On the positive side: the mental fortitude exemplified by Denmark’s Stina Lykke Petersen who, after an error had allowed Germany to take the lead in the third minute, bounced back and contributed to her team’s victory with a string of strong saves. Even the same applied to many others. But, in terms of goalkeeping technique, the overall reaction among the UEFA technical observers was one of surprise – especially bearing in mind the benchmarks set at EURO 2013 where, to quote the technical report, “narrowing the field to three for UEFA’s All-Star Squad proved to be problematical” and a keeper – Germany’s Nadine Angerer – had been named UEFA’s Player of the Tournament. The observers in the Netherlands were therefore puzzled when goalkeeping emerged as one of the tournament’s ‘weaker links’, as they put it. There was debate about whether deeper defending equals less visibility and more obstacles; when to go and how far; when in to overload the midfield. There was debate about the coaching received at club level (if any). And there was debate about whether the growing emphasis on playing with feet and initiating build-up from the back had subtracted from work on other basics. The proliferation of incidents where keepers opted to parry or punch instead of catching the ball was thought-provoking as, apart from the errors that led directly to the net, failure to catch the ball often prolonged the opposition’s attack by keeping the ball in play and creating scenes of chaos in the box. France coach Olivier Echouafni commented: “Goalkeepers now have good technique and athletic qualities but they still have to improve their vision and reading of the game. And they still struggle with crosses.”

UEFA technical observer – and former international goalkeeper – Anne Noé said: “Goalkeeper development has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years. But we mustn’t overlook the importance of catching the ball properly.”

Structural Changes

Flexible approaches provided greater variety in formations

One of the salient features of EURO 2017’s 12 teams was that Sweden accentuated the preference for a 1-4-2-3-1 formation, with half of the dozen finalists using it as a default setting. In the Netherlands, this trend was comprehensively reversed. Flexibility was the name of the game. But half the teams preferred 1-4-4-2 or variations thereupon. Italy’s structure, for example, often metamorphosed into 1-4-5-1 according to opponents or match situation. Portugal’s 1-4-4-2 featured a midfield diamond and some eyes would register it as 1-4-3-3. And so on, Belgium, Russia and Scotland could be listed as 1-4-1-4-1; Iceland were alone in fielding a back line of three in a 1-3-5-2 structure when playing with Denmark when they moved into attacking mode with right-back Nielsen advancing.
**The Art of Scoring**

Quality of finishing leaves room for improvement as goals dry up

Even though the shortage of goals could be regarded as a homage to the art of defending, the quality of finishing evidently came into the equation. The number of goal attempts (773) represented an increase of 18.5% in relation to EURO 2013 yet the goalscoring average – despite the six-goal final – reached an all-time low. The ratio between on-target and off-target finishing was of some concern for France, Spain, Sweden, Scotland and – especially – Iceland, while Austria’s statistics were inflated by playing a full hour of extra time. The champions needed 5.77 attempts to score a goal; England 5.18; Germany 4.57; France 3.71; while Austria’s statistics were inflated by playing a full hour of extra time. The champions needed 5.77 attempts to score a goal; England 5.18; Germany 4.57; France 3.71; while Austria’s statistics were inflated by playing a full hour of extra time. The champions needed 5.77 attempts to score a goal; England 5.18; Germany 4.57; France 3.71; while Austria’s statistics were inflated by playing a full hour of extra time. The champions needed 5.77 attempts to score a goal; England 5.18; Germany 4.57; France 3.71; while Austria’s statistics were inflated by playing a full hour of extra time.

**Growing Intensity**

Tournament conditions put spotlight on player demands

“During the run-up to the final tournament, the emphasis was on physical preparation. The players had to get used to intensity.” England coach Mark Sampson was by no means alone in highlighting the physical and psychological demands of a high-intensity event. England’s five-times programme paid dividends in terms of their ability to sustain very aggressive forward pressing throughout the 90 minutes. Finland’s Jarmo Matikainen remarked: “Most teams were equipped to sustain game intensity. It meant that concentration had to be maintained and, in most games, players could not afford to switch off for a single moment.”

Technical observer Hesterine de Reus highlighted the emotional intelligence required by players who had not previously experienced such big-match conditions. “The tournament demonstrated that the environment can be difficult to handle. I think that mental coaching support becomes really important in these circumstances. Attitudes can be crucial on the pitch. The Netherlands No7 Shanice van de Sanden illustrated how you channel environmental pressures into positive energy. The Italian players were totally unaccustomed to such big crowds – but they liked the attention and performed really positively except for the first half against Russia.” On the other hand, Iceland’s Freyr Alexandersson admitted that his players had been “a little bit overwhelmed” and felt that this had affected performance: “When we had the ball, we should have relaxed a bit more.”

Apart from champion Sarina Wiegman (see pages 24-25), other coaches had placed importance on psychological aspects. Dominik Thalhammer, for example, said: “We paid a lot of attention to the mental preparation of our players – and having had a mental coach since 2011 has been a valuable asset. She comes in during training camps and has an hour a day with the players. Apart from working on mental strengths, she also helps with visualisations of some technical topics, which is also a positive contribution.”

Bearing in mind the parameters of club football in many areas of the women’s game, mental preparations for stepping up to the big stage arguably assume even greater relevance.

**Wet Behind the Ears?**

Fourteen of the 16 coaches were in charge for their first EURO

Could similar observations be applied to coaches? The fact that Antonio Cabrini and Pia Sundhage (both of whom stepped down immediately after UEFA Women’s EURO 2017) were the only survivors from 2013 meant that 14 coaches were gaining their first experience of a EURO. The issue is not to question coaching abilities – far from it – but rather to debate the value of experience in women’s football when it comes to a major international event. Importing professional elements from the men’s game has undoubtedly been beneficial. The tournament, however, raised questions about coaches’ behaviour in terms of engaging in mind games with colleagues when they become the next opponent. “For me, the principles of fair play are very important,” Pia Sundhage said. “We don’t want to be like the men’s game.”

The special camaraderie among coaches was illustrated by Nils Nielsen and Sarina Wiegman after the final whistle in Enschede. Apart from their embrace on the pitch, they were generous of spirit. “At times we were like Bambi on ice,” Nielsen told the media, “struggling to both defend and attack. The Dutch were the team of the tournament. They deserved to win. I enjoyed being part of this.”

Sarina Wiegman declared: “Denmark deserved to be here. Both teams wanted to play football and six goals in an exciting final was a great advert for the women’s game.” The climax of a tournament that showcased the arts of defending was a final that showcased the arts of attacking.
The Netherlands 2017

DEFENCES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE
Better fitness and focus caused the goal rate to drop

One of the salient features of UEFA Women’s EURO 2013 had been a 25% downturn in scoring to the lowest average of goals per game since the group stage was introduced in 1997. At the expanded 16-team tournament in the Netherlands, the downward trend continued with a further reduction, which was masked by the six-goal final that hauled the average up from 2.07. “I think this illustrates the high levels of preparation in defensive mechanisms,” UEFA technical observer Patricia González said, “along with the continued improvement in discipline and the ability to focus throughout games.”

To put EURO 2017 into context, the figure compares with 3.21 goals per game in the knockout rounds of the 2016/17 UEFA Women’s Champions League or the average of 2.31 at the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup. In the Netherlands, the host team and England accounted for 35% of the goals, due largely to the latter’s 6-0 victory over Scotland in their opening game. In other words, the other 14 contestants shared 65 goals at an average of 3.14 apiece. The expanded final tournament produced three goalless draws, two of them involving Austria who played four hours of football in the knockout rounds without scoring or conceding. In route to the final, the hosts and Denmark had conceded one and two goals respectively in their five fixtures. Apart from the three 0-0 draws, both teams scored in only 11 of the remaining 28 fixtures.

FIRST GOAL WINS?
88% of games with goals were won by the team that scored first

Only three teams came back from 0-1 down to win: Switzerland against Ireland; Denmark in the quarter-finals against Germany; and the Netherlands in the final against Denmark. In other words, 23 of the 26 games that produced victories were won by the team scoring first. Even though this represented an improvement on the previous EURO in Sweden, where nobody rebounded from 0-1 down to win, the statistic strongly suggests that teams were equipped to defend advantages. As the first goal in half of those matches hit the net during the opening half-hour (six in the first ten minutes), it cannot be argued that there was no time for opponents to find a reply.

The statistic that ten of the crucial opening goals were scored from dead-ball situations (five penalties and five free-kicks) and a further two spot kicks were awarded with the score still at 0-0 (to Norway v Denmark and to Austria in the semi-final, also against Denmark) highlights the fact that the referees – many of them as unaccustomed to the big-match atmospheres as the players themselves – were required to take big, game-changing decisions.

GOAL TYPES
A rise in penalties and goals from crosses caught the eye

Set-play goals
Almost a third of the goals (32%) scored in the Netherlands stemmed from set plays, compared with just under 27% at UEFA Women’s EURO 2013 and 33% at the 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup. The most notable increase, however, was the number of goals scored from the penalty spot: eight, a leap from the two in 2013. The beneficiaries were Germany (three), the hosts (two), France, Denmark and Sweden.

As opposed to 2013, when no direct free-kicks were converted, three goals were scored in this fashion in the Netherlands. However, the successes, it has to be said, were not alien to defensive errors – the handling by the keeper that allowed France to equalise against Switzerland and the positioning by keepers and defensive walls that led to the hosts’ opening goal in the quarter-final against Sweden and the important third against Denmark in the final. Goalkeeping coaches will also have taken note of the situations that allowed five indirect free-kicks to find their way into the net.

Another category that had registered a zero on the scoring chart in Sweden was the throw-in. In the Netherlands, a number of goals could, in theory, be traced back to throw-ins but two could clearly be attributed to them. Belgium cashed in against Norway when a long throw from the right was allowed to bounce into the Norway goal area for Janice Cayman to nod into the net. France, despite having nine players in the box, then allowed a long throw by Verena Aschauer on the left to reach Lisa Makas, whose right-footed drive put Austria 1-0 ahead. “These were by no means the only examples,” UEFA observer Jarmo Matikainen remarked, “and it’s good to see something of a renaissance. Other types of dead-ball situations might have been thoroughly scouted but maybe not the throw-ins.”

The other salient feature in the set-
play category was the decline in the number of successful corners – a facet mentioned elsewhere in this report.

Set-play goals

Once again, wing-play was the most fertile route to the net, with crosses and cut-backs providing almost one-third (32.61%) of the tournament’s open-play goals, as they had done in 2013. However, cut-backs led to only two goals for Switzerland against Iceland – rebound included – and Portugal against England. Through passes enjoyed a lesser degree of success than in Sweden, with England’s direct attacking account for half the 2017 total and Scotland achieving an historic debut win with a long pass over the Spain defence followed by rebounds. Otherwise, penetration through or over dense defensive blocks proved to be problematic. The same applied to long-range shooting. With defences dropping back to spring the offside trap set by a high defensive line and embarking on breaks with offences. The total could be interpreted as evidence to support theories that, night across the board, fitness levels have risen sufficiently to avoid fading symptoms in terms of physical performance – and offered vindication to the coaches who, aware of the demands at top international level, had prioritised collective and individual fitness programmes prior to the event.

Counterattacking generated 24% of the open-play goals, though most teams were equipped to counter the counter by keeping balancing players behind the ball while attacking or defusing fast breaks with offences. The total could even be inflated, as some goals were difficult to clearly assign to this category, especially in matches marked by rapid turnovers in possession. Italy, however, provided some classic counterattacks based on the left-wing solo gallops by Barbara Bonansea (not a starter in the opening defeat by Russia), which set up the equaliser against Germany and the winner against Sweden. The former was an end-to-end counter; the latter derived from a regain in midfield. A coaching-manual break also sealed the Netherlands’ 2-0 win against Sweden; a piercing diagonal pass by Lieke Martens; a perfect first touch that allowed Shanice van de Sanden to race into the box in top gear; and a deadly low cross for Vivianne Miedema to tap into the net. The hosts’ equaliser in the final adhered to a very similar script, while Denmark’s equalising goal was derived from a counterattack of a different nature – Pernille Harder peeling away to spring the offside trap set by a piercing diagonal pass by Lieke Martens; and a deadly low cross for Vivianne van de Sanden to race into the box in top gear. The partners in both incidents were shared between the first and second half-time intervals. In 2013, the goals were evenly shared between the first and second periods. And the trend continued in the Netherlands, where 55% of the goals were scored during the first half and 40% hit the net during the opening 30 minutes. After the break, the most fertile quarter-hour was the first and the fact that the final 15 minutes were among the least productive segments could be interpreted as evidence to support theories that, night across the board, fitness levels have risen sufficiently to avoid fading symptoms in terms of physical performance – and offered vindication to the coaches who, aware of the demands at top international level, had prioritised collective and individual fitness programmes prior to the event.

Analysis of the scorers

England’s Jodie Taylor, topping the charts after a flying-start hat-trick against Scotland, symposed the dominance by strikers in the list of goal scorers. The tournament’s goals were shared among 46 players, 13 of whom put their names on scoresheets more than once. Excluding penalties, 32 goals were scored by strikers; 13 by central midfielders; ten by wingers; three by full-backs; and one by central defenders. The own goal attributed to England defender Millie Bright during added-time of the semi-final against the hosts was the only one of the tournament. Only five goals were scored by substitutes and only two of those five (Italy’s Cristiana Girelli against Sweden and Portugal’s Ana Leite against Scotland) were match-winners.

Goals

22

Counterattacking

5

Free-kick (direct)

3

Free-kick (indirect)

4

Cross

1

Penalty

2

Throw-in

2

Combination

10

Open play

TOTAL SET-PLAY GOALS

22

TOTAL OPEN PLAY GOALS

48

TOTAL

68

Category

Action

Guidelines

Goals

Set play

Corner

Direct from or following a corner

4

Free-kick (direct)

Direct from a free-kick

2

Free-kick (indirect)

Following a free-kick

5

Penalty

Spot kick (or follow-up)

8

Throw-in

Following a throw-in

2

Open play

Combination

Wall pass or combination move

Cross

Cross from the wing

Cut-back

Cross from the byline

Diagonal

Diagonal pass into the penalty box

Run with the ball

Dribble and cross-range shot or dribble and pass

Long-range shot

Direct shot or rebound

Forward pass

Pass or pass over the defence

Defensive error

Bad pass back or mistake by the keeper

Own goal

Goal by the opponent

Minutes

Goals

% of

1-15

13

19

16-30

16

21

31-45

34

50

45+

58

84

46-60

18

26

61-75

12

18

76-90

11

16

90+

2

3

Decimal points account for the extra 1%
The success of set pieces and how to bridge the gap between Under-19 and senior football were up for discussion.

Statistics reveal that almost one-third of the goals came from set plays. And that, in a tournament where only three teams came from 0-1 down to win, ten of the opening goals were scored from dead-ball situations. A survey among the coaches in the Netherlands revealed that most of them understandably devoted large chunks of their training-ground time to rehearsals of set plays.

France coach Olivier Echouafni went through set-play routines “in great detail”, regarding them as “a key element”. Francisco Neto included dead-ball rehearsals in all the Portugal training sessions. Antonio Cabrini estimated that around one-third of Italy’s training-ground work was on set pieces. Martin Sjögren said Norway had placed “lots of emphasis on set plays from pre-camp onwards” and that they “played a major part in every third practice session”. Scotland provided something of an exception by dedicating only around 10% of training time to dead-ball situations, while England’s Mark Sampson used “a combination of work on the training field and sessions in the meeting room” on an aspect of play where the players themselves were encouraged to assume responsibilities. And so it went on.

Sweden, however, deserve special mention. After the draw against Germany, the feedback from UEFA’s technical observers included comments on “a very interesting team regarding set plays” and “five different options for corners in attack”, among them a novel ploy of situating four good headers of the ball in a line beyond the far post. Pia Sundhage explained: “During the tournament it was a big
part of training – very important to me, so we worked on that quite a bit."

By this stage, you might be wondering why this is being presented as a talking point. The explanation is in the statistics for set-play goals. Only two goals were scored directly from set plays, the first (Switzerland’s equaliser against Sweden) on the first matchday, the second (France’s equaliser against Austria) on the third; four of them stemmed from corners: three by France and one by Sweden. The tournament’s success rate at set plays was 1:29, which nudged 1:76. To put the stats into perspective, the success rate at EURO 2013 had been 1:29.

Apart from discussing the time dedicated to set plays, the coaches had also stressed the relevance of thorough scouting of opponents. In-depth analysis evidently included mechanisms at corners. Once a strategy had been used, it was unlikely to surprise opponents again – which makes it understandable that, after the opening matchday, only two goals resulted from corners. The tournament suggested strongly that teams had efficiently done their homework on defending against corner-kicks.

The talking point is therefore quite simple. If 76 corners are necessary for a goal to be scored, is it worth investing training-ground time to rehearsing them? Would this time be better dedicated to aspects such as finding attacking antidotes to deep defensive blocks?

MIND THE GAP

How can players be helped to make the step up to senior level?

In the Netherlands, one in seven of the players had yet to reach her 22nd birthday. The England and Germany squads contained no players aged 21 or younger; Sweden fielded one. Final tournament debutants Austria and Switzerland accounted for 29% of the under-22 contingent.

During the group phase, when all 36 teams were in action, 17 of the 52 players in that age bracket remained unused. Six played 45 minutes or less. A further six accumulated fewer than 90 minutes. The statistics highlighted one of the major concerns among the coaches at the final tournament. As England’s Mark Sampson remarked: “Our biggest challenge is bridging the gap between the Under-19s and the senior team.”

After Iceland’s elimination, Freyr Alexandersson admitted: “The gap between players at 19 and senior levels is too large and we need to address it.”

Some national associations are addressing or are planning to address the issue. Belgium’s Ives Sermeets, for example, said: “Up until now, players with real talent have come straight into the A team. But we now realise that we have more talented players coming through in the ages of 19, 20 or 21 and that’s a thing we’re planning to discuss with a view to working on players with talent who are still at a level a little below the standard of the A team. We don’t have this project in place at the moment but it’s one of the things we want to implant after this EURO.”

Italy coach Antonio Cabrini added: “We have attempted during this last year to fill the gap with a new U23 side.” Sweden’s Pia Sundhage said: “Our U23 team is very important for this aspect of development.”

Others have nothing to plug the gap. Scotland’s Anna Signeul said: “We have no teams nor activities.” France coach Olivier Echouafni commented: “We have our U20s and then nothing.”

It has to be said that the alternatives to ‘nothing’ are limited. The national associations who have intermediate teams often run into problems when it comes to organising, for example, U23 games of a truly competitive nature. Another aspect is that such games tend to lack pulling-power among the public, which leads to a shortfall in terms of preparing players for high-profile matches played before large crowds on the big international stage. Those with no intermediate teams underline the risk of drop-outs. “We have to do something to avoid players leaving the game completely,” said Spain coach Jorge Vilda. “We are starting to build a pyramid,” Russia coach Elena Fomina agreed, “because after the U19s we often lose players who are not immediately ready for the senior team.”

A further perspective to fuel debate is to define the aspects for coaches to work on during an age-bracket that is not generally regarded as a ‘development phase’. In the Netherlands, there was, at the same time, diversity and consensus. Ives Sermeets, on one hand, pointed out: “It’s not easy for players to make the step up. This is something we’ve been addressing in recent years. We were working with players who were training three times a week. We knew that if we wanted to have realistic chances of qualifying for a EURO we had to increase this. If we want to maintain our level, we need to have players who train five or six times a week at their clubs.”

Despite very diverse parameters, even Germany are on a similar wavelength. “The challenge for the players,” Steffi Jones said, “is the increase in tempo and power. Though domestic competition in Italy differs substantially from the Bundesliga, Antonino Cabrini agreed: “The greatest challenge is to enhance the playing level from the physical and tempo points of view.” Switzerland coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said: “We need to help players to make the jump in terms of athletic ability, reaction times and the increase in the level of intensity.”

In other words, there was general recognition of the need to guide players through a period described by Olivier Echouafni as “the transition phase towards professional level at their clubs and the standards required in the senior national team”. The debating point to emerge from their comments is quite simple. In the absence of an U21 championship, what more can be done to help players to bridge the crucial gap between U19 football and the high-intensity senior-team football displayed at UEFA Women’s EURO 2017?
BEST OF THE BEST
Lieke Martens led the way as Dutch players dominated the honours board

TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT

UEFA’s technical observers faced the challenge of choosing a ‘starting XI’ from the array of talent on display. In-depth discussions were required to prune a list of 68 outfield players (20 defenders, 32 midfielders and 16 attackers). By contrast, Sari van Veenendaal had little opposition in a tournament where the level of goalkeeping emerged as a talking point. The elimination of outstanding players was a source of regret – the jury feeling that no fewer than 15 of them warranted special mention. Deliberations resulted in a team to play in 1-4-4-2 formation with Denmark right-back Theresa Nielsen in her more advanced attacking position.

For the second time, UEFA’s technical observers named a single Player of the Tournament and the custom-designed award was presented on the pitch in Enschede to Netherlands midfielder Lieke Martens. The tournament statistics reveal that she scored three and provided assists for two more of her team’s 13 goals. The award, however, was a reward for her overall contribution to the Netherlands’ success. Apart from being a creative, skillful left-winger eager to use her one-on-one abilities against opposing full-backs, she made incisive diagonal runs into shooting positions; played quick combinations with striker Vivianne Miedema or left-side midfielder Danielle van de Donk; made an impact with intelligent runs on and off the ball; and opened the game with some superb diagonal crossfield passes to right-winger Shanice van de Sanden. Martens was always ready to drop deep and make herself available to receive passes during the build-up phase. She also displayed great tactical awareness during epic battles with England’s Lucy Bronze and Denmark’s Theresa Nielsen in the semi-final and final, with both opponents making heavy demands on her concentration and defensive potential. The UEFA award signified a recognition of her creative talents and reading of the game, which allowed her to make a sustained impact throughout the tournament.

PLAYER OF THE MATCH

At least two members of the UEFA technical team were responsible for selecting a Player of the Match at each of the 31 fixtures. The winner was announced by the stadium speaker immediately after the final whistle and, up until the semi-finals, the award was presented pitchside by one of the UEFA technical observers.

The awards signified recognition of an important or decisive contribution to the outcome of the particular game. In the Netherlands, 14 of the awards went to midfielders, ten to forwards, five to defenders, and two to goalkeepers – by coincidence to the two keepers who went on to dispute the final.

There were, evidently, shades of meaning to be drawn about categorisation into playing categories with, for example, Theresa Nielsen ‘officially’ a right-back but, in practice, operating for much of the tournament in an advanced role. Ramona Bachmann and UEFA Player of the Tournament Lieke Martens were the only two players to win the award more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MATCH</th>
<th>PLAYER OF THE MATCH</th>
<th>POS.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands v Norway</td>
<td>Lieke Martens</td>
<td>FW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark v Belgium</td>
<td>Sanne Troelgaard</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy v Russia</td>
<td>Elena Morozova</td>
<td>DF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany v Sweden</td>
<td>Dzsenifer Marozsan</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France v Iceland</td>
<td>Wendie Renard</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria v Switzerland</td>
<td>Sarah Puntigam</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England v Scotland</td>
<td>Jodie Taylor</td>
<td>FW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain v Portugal</td>
<td>Amanda Sampedro</td>
<td>FW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway v Belgium</td>
<td>Theresa Wallaerts</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands v Denmark</td>
<td>Sari van Veenendaal</td>
<td>MF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden v Russia</td>
<td>Lotta Schelin</td>
<td>FW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany v Italy</td>
<td>Linda Dallmann</td>
<td>MF</td>
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<td>Iceland v Switzerland</td>
<td>Ramona Bachmann</td>
<td>MF</td>
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<td>France v Austria</td>
<td>Nicole Billa</td>
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<td>Dolores Silva</td>
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<td>England v Spain</td>
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<td>Belgium v Netherlands</td>
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<td>Switzerland v France</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands v Denmark</td>
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## Group A

### Netherlands

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<tbody>
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### Norway

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</thead>
<tbody>
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### Belgium

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 0 3 4 0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### The Netherlands 1-0 Norway

- **Scores**: 0-2
- **Goals**: Belgium (Kildemoes 60), Nadim (Thøgersen 71)
- **Players**: Troelsgaard, Jensen; Nielsen, Harder, Veje; Larsen
- **Referee**: Kulkur Zulcic AFRs J. Kulcica, Bakic

### Results

**Belgium**
- 3 2 0 1 2 1 6

**Norway**
- 3 2 1 0 4 1 7

### Yellow cards

- Deloose 54 (BEL); Dekker, Van der Gragt, Van Es; Groenen (Roord 57), Onzia (Daniels 76), De Caigny, Philtjens; Coutereels (Vanmechelen 46); Van Gorp (Coryn 82)

## Group B

### Germany

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### Russia

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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Iceland

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 0 3 6 0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Yellow cards

- Deloose 54 (BEL); Dekker, Van der Gragt, Van Es; Groenen (Roord 57), Onzia (Daniels 76), De Caigny, Philtjens; Coutereels (Vanmechelen 46); Van Gorp (Coryn 82)

### Red cards

- Kulkur Zulcic AFRs J. Kulcica, Bakic

## Group C

### Austria

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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### France

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<tbody>
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</tr>
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</table>

### Iceland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P W D L F A PTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 1 1 3 3</td>
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</table>

### Yellow cards

- Deloose 54 (BEL); Dekker, Van der Gragt, Van Es; Groenen (Roord 57), Onzia (Daniels 76), De Caigny, Philtjens; Coutereels (Vanmechelen 46); Van Gorp (Coryn 82)

### Red cards

- Kulkur Zulcic AFRs J. Kulcica, Bakic

## Tournament review

**Belgium**
- 1-0 Van de Sanden 66
- 0-1 Van Gorp 59, 0-2 Cayman 67

**Norway**
- 0-1 Veje 67

**Netherlands**
- 3 0 0 4 19

**England**
- 3 1 0 2 10 1 9

**Scotland**
- 3 1 0 2 3 2 3

**Portugal**
- 3 1 0 2 3 2 3

**Austria**
- 3 1 0 2 0 1 0

**France**
- 3 1 1 3 3

**Iceland**
- 3 0 3 6 0

**Sweden**
- 3 2 0 1 2 1 6

**Netherlands**
- 3 0 3 4 0

**Belgium**
- 3 0 3 4 0

**The Netherlands 1-0 Norway**

- **Scores**: 0-2
- **Goals**: Belgium (Kildemoes 60), Nadim (Thøgersen 71)
- **Players**: Troelsgaard, Jensen; Nielsen, Harder, Veje; Larsen
- **Referee**: Kulkur Zulcic AFRs J. Kulcica, Bakic

**Results**

**Belgium**
- 3 2 0 1 2 1 6

**Norway**
- 3 2 1 0 4 1 7

### Yellow cards

- Deloose 54 (BEL); Dekker, Van der Gragt, Van Es; Groenen (Roord 57), Onzia (Daniels 76), De Caigny, Philtjens; Coutereels (Vanmechelen 46); Van Gorp (Coryn 82)

### Red cards

- Kulkur Zulcic AFRs J. Kulcica, Bakic
England 2-0 Spain Donorila, 23 July
Goals 1-0 Kirby 2, 2-0 Taylor 95
England Barbíley, Hounslow, Bright, Stokes, Moore, Scott, Nobbs, Kirby, Christiansen 65, White (Duggan 79); Taylor (Picker 88)
Spain Paños; Torrejón, Pereira, Paredes, Latorre (García 73), Messi, Alba, Álvarez, Gómez, Torrecilla 112
Yellow cards Paredes 31, Pereira 69 (ESP)

Netherlands 2-0 Sweden, Deventer, 29 July
Goals 1-0 Martens 33, 2-0 van der Veenendaal 64
Netherlands van der Veenendaal, van Lunteren, Dekker, Van der Graaf (van den Berg 46), van Es, Bremer, Van den Donk, van den Sanden (Jansen 76), Miedema, Martens (Leyzerovich 87)
Sweden Lindahl; Svanberg, Fischer, Smærter, Anderson Larsson 81, Schelin, Dahlkroger, Seger, Blackstenius, Roofs (Folkesson 77)
Yellow cards Svanberg 43, Asllani 90+1 (SWE)

Quarter-finals

Netherlands 1-0 Germany, Enschede, 6 August
Goals 1-0 Martens 33
Netherlands van der Veenendaal, van Lunteren, Dekker, Van der Graaf (van den Berg 46), van Es, Bremer, Van den Donk, van den Sanden (Jansen 76), Miedema, Martens (Leyzerovich 87)
Germany van den Berg (saved), 3-0 Boye Sørensen 90, Le Sommer

Netherlands 3-0 England, Enschede, 1 August
Goals 1-0 Miedema 22, 2-0 van de Donk 62, 3-0 Däbritz (DG 90+3)
Netherlands van Veenendaal, van Lunteren, Dekker, Van der Graaf (van den Berg 46), van Es, Bremer, Van den Donk, van den Sanden (Jansen 76); Martens, Miedema, Engels, Stoever; Moore (van der Veer 75); Williams (Duggan 67)
England Kirby 2, 2-0 Taylor 85

Yellow cards Le Sommer 11, van den Berg 90, 1-1 Miedema 10, 2-1 Martens 33, 2-2 Taylor 85, 3-0 van der Donk 89

Referee Frappart (France)
Assistant referees Jana Adámková (Czech Republic) and Anna Dabrowska (Poland)

Assistants Chrysoula Kourompylia (Greece), Christina Biehl (Czech Republic)

Assistant referee with VAR: Manuela Nicolosi (Italy)

Assistant referees with VAR: Lucia Abruzzese (Italy), Oleksandra Ardasheva (Ukraine)

Respect Fair Play ranking

Germany topped UEFA's Respect Fair Play ranking in the Netherlands. Points are awarded for criteria such as cards, positive play, fan behaviour and respect shown to opponents and referees.

1 Germany 12= 8.900 3
2 Netherlands 11= 8.800 3
3 Austria 10= 8.700 4
4 Sweden 9= 8.600 5
5 Russia 8= 8.550 4
6 Norway 7 8.320 5
7 Spain 6 8.200 6
8 Denmark 5 8.133 3
9 Belgium 4 8.000 6
10 Scotland 3 7.723 4
11 Iceland 2 7.550 3
12 Portugal 1 7.320 4
13 England 0 7.000 5

Results and standings

For the expanded final tournament, a team of 11 referees was selected, with two more acting as fourth officials. A total of 21 assistant referees were also in the Netherlands to add to their international experience. Eight of the officials appointed (six referees and two assistants) had been at UEFA EURO 2021 in Sweden, and three (Katelyn Moate, Bibiana Steinhaus, along with assistant referee Judith Kulcsár) had also been selected for UEFA EURO 2021 in Finland. During the tournament in the Netherlands, referees awarded 748 free-kicks for fouls at an average of 24.12 per match. They were punished by 90 yellow cards at an average of one per 8.31 fouls. There were also three red cards, for Italy (v Germany), Switzerland (v England) and France (v Italy) players, all in the group phase.

MATCH OFFICIALS

REFEREES

Jana Adámková (Czech Republic)
Stéphanie Frappart (France)
Riem Hussein (Germany)
Katalin Kulcsár (Hungary)
Pernilla Larsson (Sweden)
Katerina Monzui (Ukraine)
Monika Pustovoitova (Russia)
Esther Staubli (Switzerland)
Bibiana Steinhaus (Germany)
Carina Vitullo (Italy)

Assistant referees

Lucia Abruzzese (Italy)
Oleksandra Ardasheva (Ukraine)
Nicolet Bakker (Netherlands)
Christina Biehl (Germany)
Svetlana Bilić (Croatia)
Maria Sukenikova (Slovakia)
Katerina Kulcsár (Hungary)
Ekatëna Kurochkina (Russia)
Angela Kyriakou (Cyprus)

Assistant referees with VAR

Manuela Nicolosi (Italy)
Oleksandra Ardasheva (Ukraine)
Nicolet Bakker (Netherlands)
Christian Biehl (Germany)
Svetlana Bilić (Croatia)
Maria Sukenikova (Slovakia)

Fourth officials

Lorraine Clark (Scotland)
Lina Lehtovaara (Finland)

Sian Massey (England)
Manuela Nicolosi (France)
Michelle O’Neill (Rep. of Ireland)
Katrin Parisal (Germany)
Lucie Ratajová (Czech Republic)
Sanja Rodjak (Croatia)
Maryna Striletska (Ukraine)
Maria Sukhnikova (Slovakia)
Nicolet Bakker (Netherlands)

Points for matches

Points

Country

7

Netherlands

6

Germany

5

Austria

4

Sweden

3

England

2

Scotland

1

Finland
**TEAM PROFILES**

**AUSTRIA**

**COACH**

DOMINIK THALHAMMER

**GROUP** G

**TOTAL POINTS**

5

**PLAYER SHAPES**

**KEY FEATURES**

- Team organization based on 1-4-0-1-2; high press or 1-4-2-1; high press in defensive zone
- Strong team spirit, work ethic, commitment; stayed focused in all situations
- Good deliveries from wings by able, talented wide players
- 8 Onzia in key anchor role; intelligent movement, useful high-intensity runs
- Wide midfielders 7 Van Gorp, 2 Philtjens making full use of their attacking potential
- Both full-backs active in supporting attacks; good use of aerial presence
- Fast transitions to compact defending, pressing ball, attacking反击
- Equipped to operate in 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-4-1-3-2 formation; 261 v Netherlands
- Forward options in front of high defensive line
- 8 covering in front of high defensive line

**SQUAD**

- **GOALKEEPERS**
  - Manuela Zinsberger 16/10/98 7
  - Nadine Prohaska 19/10/95 90 90 90 120 FC Bayern München
  - Jasmin Pfeiler 28/07/90 1 51

- **DEFENDERS**
  - Nina Burger 27/12/97 2 90 75 90 120 SC Sand
  - Sabrina Melzer 11/04/95 1 90 89 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Barbara Dunst 04/01/91 13
  - Julia de Groot 26/05/95 FC Bayern München

- **MIDFIELDERS**
  - Jasmin Eder 16/10/98 7
  - Barbara Dunst 04/01/91 13
  - Julia de Groot 26/05/95 FC Bayern München
  - Lindsey Himpele 26/05/95 RSC Anderllicht
  - Natascha Ronay 07/10/96 RSC Anderllicht
  - Niky Van Den Abbeele 19/02/94 1 90 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Sarah Papen 11/04/95 1 90 89 90 90 RSC Anderllicht

- **ATTACK**
  - Tessa Wullaert 26/05/95 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Jasmin Pfeiler 28/07/90 1 51
  - 8 Onzia in key anchor role; intelligent movement, useful high-intensity runs
- Fast transitions to compact defending, pressing ball, attacking反击
- Equipped to operate in 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-4-1-3-2 formation; 261 v Netherlands
- Forward options in front of high defensive line
- 8 covering in front of high defensive line

**STATISTICS**

- **TEAM SHAPES**
  - 1-4-0-1-2; high press or 1-4-2-1; high press in defensive zone
  - Effective use of collective high pressing to win ball, allowing team to dominate in both areas
  - Midfielder 17 Puntigam in beside left centre-back to support reference point in central area
  - Deep, watchful defensive block of nine; 15 Billa back
  - Collective movement defending and attacking
  - Fast transitions on wings; 15 quickly up to support reference point in central area

**Tournament review**

- **GROUP C**
  - **AUSTRIA** (7pts) – **BORN** G A SUI FRA ISL ESP DEN CLUB
  - **W1-0 D1-1 W3-0 D0-0* D0-0**
  - **GROUP A**
    - **NETHERLANDS** (9pts) – **BORN** G A DEN NOR NED CLUB
      - **L0-1 W2-0 L1-2**

**BELGIUM**

**COACH**

IVES SERRINES

**GROUP** G

**TOTAL POINTS**

3

**PLAYER SHAPES**

**KEY FEATURES**

- Equipment to operate in 1-4-0-3-1 or 1-4-2-2 formations
- Fast transitions to compact defending, pressing ball, attacking反击
- Effective use of collective high pressing to win ball, allowing team to dominate in both areas
- Midfielders 8 De Groot, 15 Cayman
- Well-made side passes and intelligent combinations
- Good options in front of high defensive line
- 8 covering in front of high defensive line

**SQUAD**

- **GOALKEEPERS**
  - Julie Biesmans 06/06/97 90 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Laura Deneve 06/06/97 90 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Tessa Wullaert 26/05/95 90 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Sara Yuceil 08/10/92 5

- **DEFENDERS**
  - Tessa Wullaert 26/05/95 90 90 90 90 90 RSC Anderllicht
  - Jasmin Pfeiler 28/07/90 1 51
  - 8 Onzia in key anchor role; intelligent movement, useful high-intensity runs
  - Fast transitions to compact defending, pressing ball, attacking反击
  - Equipped to operate in 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-4-1-3-2 formation; 261 v Netherlands
- Forward options in front of high defensive line
- 8 covering in front of high defensive line

**STATISTICS**

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**Tournament review**

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  - **W1-0 D1-1 W3-0 D0-0* D0-0**
  - **GROUP A**
    - **NETHERLANDS** (9pts) – **BORN** G A DEN NOR NED CLUB
      - **L0-1 W2-0 L1-2**
### Denmark

**Coach:** Nils Nielsen

**Squad:**
- **Born:**
  - 02/01/88
  - 03/03/92
  - 14/10/84
  - 01/08/87
  - 03/03/94
  - 01/08/87
  - 02/01/88
  - 21/08/93
  - 15/08/97
  - 23/04/88
  - 18/10/82
  - 23/04/88
  - 06/02/94
  - 18/05/95

- **Goals Scored:**
  - 6

**Impressive Features:**
- Well-organised resilient team; character,
- Set plays well planned and executed; good timing of
- Compact defensive; good interceptions, ability to read
- 10 Harder linking play, breaking lines with
- Striker 9 Nadim an excellent target for long diagonal
- Passing game with back three initiating construction
- 1-4-4-2 defending with high line, changing the shape to 1-3-5-2 attacking
- Excellent off-ball movement, well-timed line-
- Also combination play, building from back; centre-
- 1-4-4-2 the default formation; direct, quick attacking
- Excellent athletic qualities

**Key Statistics:**
- 304 total passes attempted
- 18 completed long passes
- 165 total key passes
- 23 supporting striker 9 in direct attacking

### England

**Coach:** Mark Sampson

**Squad:**
- **Born:**
  - 18/10/82
  - 01/08/87
  - 23/04/88
  - 03/03/94
  - 15/08/97
  - 21/08/93
  - 12/12/91
  - 23/04/88
  - 15/08/97
  - 23/04/88

- **Goals Scored:**
  - 11

**Impressive Features:**
- 1-4-4-2 the default formation, direct, quick attacking
- Flat combination play building from back, crosses
- Executive ball-winning
- Compact defensive block holding high line
- 1-4-4-2 the default formation; direct, quick attacking
- Excellent athletic qualities

**Key Statistics:**
- 26% vs Spain
- 23 supporting striker 9 in direct attacking
- Well-organised, efficient ball-winning
- Balanced pressing attacking blocks
- Well-organised, efficient ball-winning
- Balanced pressing attacking blocks

---

**Notes:**
- Numbers in match columns represent minutes played. * = goals; A = assists; T = brought on; ↓ = taken off; S = suspended; so = same off
- Team profiles for The Netherlands 2017
- Tournament review for The Netherlands 2017
This text contains information about football teams and statistics. Please let me know if you need any specific information extracted from this text.
STATISTICS

ICELAND DEFENDING

■ Outstanding team ethic, mental resilience in adverse situations
■ Technically well-executed finishing; 11 Bonansea fast solo runs on wings
■ 5 Linari the strong leader in defence; holding high holding/organising role in both structures
■ Tried to play out from back with neat combinations, delivering neat play
■ Fast attacks with full-backs supporting, advanced full-backs
■ Wide movement with central forwards split, attacking/defending
■ Outstanding team ethic, mental resilience in adverse situations
■ Fast, precise combination play, holding/organising role
■ Tried to play out from back with neat combinations, delivering neat play
■ Wide movement with central forwards split, attacking/defending
■ Good positional and overlapping interchange in back play
■ Effective pressing/transition, good motivation, defensive positioning role
■ Effective pressing/transition, good motivation, defensive positioning role
■ Outstanding team ethic, mental resilience in adverse situations
■ Fast, precise combination play, holding/organising role
■ Tried to play out from back with neat combinations, delivering neat play
■ Wide movement with central forwards split, attacking/defending
■ Outstanding team ethic, mental resilience in adverse situations

ITALY ATTACK

■ 1-3-4-3 with switches to 1-4-4-2, single midfield screen in transitional structures
■ Quick transitions into 1-1-3-1 defending with two lines compacted back
■ Fast counter-attack supply to either flanks in 4-4-2 variant structure
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ITALY STRENGTHS

■ 1-3-4-3 with switches to 1-4-4-2, single midfield screen in transitional structures
■ Quick transitions into 1-1-3-1 defending with two lines compacted back
■ Fast counter-attack supply to either flanks in 4-4-2 variant structure
■ Effective pressing/transition, good motivation, defensive positioning role
■ Outstanding team ethic, mental resilience in adverse situations

ITALY TEAM SHAPES

ATTACK: Fast attacks with full-backs supporting, advanced full-backs
DEFENCE: Quick transitions into 1-4-4-2 with 4 operating in close proximity to back four

ICELAND TEAM SHAPES

ATTACK: Direct supply to front, leaving two balancing players in精选back three
DEFENCE: Quick transitions with wing-backs forming an axis of two, protected by narrow midfield

TEAM SHAPES

ICELAND

ATTACK: Direct supply to front, leaving two balancing players in精选back three
DEFENCE: Quick transitions with wing-backs forming an axis of two, protected by narrow midfield

ITALY

ATTACK: Fast attacks with full-backs supporting, advanced full-backs
DEFENCE: Quick transitions into 1-4-4-2 with 4 operating in close proximity to back four

TEAM PROFILES

ICELAND

COACH
FREYR ALEXANDERSSON

NATIONALITY: Icelandic

TEAM SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
1 Guðbjörg Gunnarsdóttir 18/03/95 10 90 90 VfL Wolfsburg
2 Sandra Sigurðardóttir 02/10/86 90 90 90 Breiðablik
3 Sonej Thráinsdóttir 09/12/86 90 90 90 Breiðablik

TEAM SHAPE
1-3-4-3

DEFENDERS
8 Árnadóttir 15/07/85 90 90 90 Kristianstads DFF
9 Hólmfrídur Magnúsdóttir 30/08/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik
10 Rakel Hönnudóttir 14/10/89 90 90 90 IF Limhamn Bunkeflo
11 Gudbjörgin Hjartardóttir 14/09/86 90 90 90 Djurgården IF DFF
12 Sigrídur Gardarsdóttir 19/03/87 90 90 90 Breiðablik
13 Dagný Brynjarsdóttir 14/12/86 90 90 90 Olimpia Lech Piszczek
14 Sáló Gunnulsdóttir 01/08/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik
15 Sigríður Ingibjörg Guðrúndsdóttir 17/01/89 90 90 90 Breiðablik
16 Sveinbjörn Ólafsson 24/06/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik
17 Stína Sænsund 10/01/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik

ATTACKERS
19 Elín Jensen 15/12/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik
21 Hallbera Gísladóttir 30/10/86 90 90 90 Breiðablik
22 Anna Björk Kristjansdóttir 15/09/88 90 90 90 Breiðablik
23 Málfrídur Erna Sigurdardóttir 09/12/86 90 90 90 Breiðablik

COACH
ANTONIO CABRINI

NATIONALITY: Italian

TEAM SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
1 Donatella Perretta 03/05/87 61 90 90 ASD Verona
2 Christiana Girelli 22/06/91 73 90 90 ASD Verona
3 Anna Di: Quaranta 30/10/86 90 90 90 ASD Verona
4 Lucia Massetti 22/05/88 45 90 45 Fiorentina Women’s FC
5 Elisa Bartoli 07/05/91 69 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
6 Chiara Mancini 10/04/94 90 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
7 Sara Gare 23/07/89 271 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
8 Aurora Gori 15/04/89 90 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
9 Barbara Bonansea 13/12/96 90 90 90 ASD Verona
10 Ilaria Mauro 09/05/92 84 90 90 ASD Verona
11 Sandy Galasso 19/08/97 90 90 90 ASD Verona
12 Barbara Bonansea 13/06/91 19 90 90 ASD Verona
13 Giada Giugliano 06/06/93 90 90 90 SC Freiburg
14 Laura Iannella 01/10/87 7 90 90 ASD Verona
15 Federica Di Cosimo 22/05/88 90 90 90 ASD Verona
16 Barbara Bonansea 12/05/93 2 90 90 ASD Verona
17 Giada Giugliano 01/10/87 7 90 90 ASD Verona
18 Gemma Bellini 15/04/94 90 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
19 Gabriella Petri 20/07/88 3 90 90 ASD Verona
20 Valentina Carna 22/06/91 73 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
21 Marta Carissimi 03/05/87 90 90 90 Fiorentina Women’s FC
22 Ilaria Mauro 09/05/92 84 90 90 ASD Verona
23 Chiara Mancini 20/07/88 3 90 90 ASD Verona

SQUAD

TEAM SHAPE
1-3-4-3
**NETHERLANDS GROUP A**

**COACH**

SARINA WIEGMAN

*Johannes, Dutch*

**STATISTICS**

**PLAYERS VIRED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Goals Scored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Groenen</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Janssen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desiree van Lunteren</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liza van der Most</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie van der Gragt</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivianne Miedema</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheila van den Bulk</td>
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<td>Anouk Dekker</td>
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<td>Mandy van den Berg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lieke Martens</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanity Lewerissa</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NETHERLANDS FORWARDS**

- **DEFENCE**: 14 quickly back alongside 8 in front of high line, winger breaking into narrow infield. 6 up
- **ATTACK**: Fast build-up to wide areas, full-backs supporting wingers, 10 + 14 supporting striker
- **TEAM SHAPES**: 4-2-3-1 attacking middle-to-front positional changes
- **WING PLAY WITH OVERLAPPING FULL-BACKS; SHOT-BLOCKING**
- **STRIKER**: 9 up supporting wingers; 10 + 14 supporting striker
- **TEAM PROFILES**
- **NETHERLANDS ATTACK**
- **NETHERLANDS DEFENCE**
- **FORWARDS**
- **DEFENDERS**
- **MIDFIELDERS**

---

**NETHERLANDS INTERNATIONAL MATCHES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Score</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10/04/90</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3-0</td>
<td>Amsterdam ArenA</td>
<td>Win</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20/03/95</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>4-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>24/04/95</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>4-0</td>
<td>Amsterdam ArenA</td>
<td>Win</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**NETHERLANDS NATIONALITY: WIEGMAN**

**SENT TO THE ARENA: 60%**

**SQUAD**

**BORN G A NOR DEN BEL SWE ENG DEN CLUB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Born</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NOR</th>
<th>DEN</th>
<th>BEL</th>
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---

**ATTACK: Fast build-up to wide areas, full-backs supporting wingers, 10 + 14 supporting striker**

---

**NETHERLANDS GROUP A**

**COACH**

MARTIN S. JØRGENSEN

*Johannes, Danish*

**STATISTICS**

**PLAYERS VIRED**

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<tr>
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**NETHERLANDS FORWARDS**

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**NETHERLANDS NATIONALITY: JØRGENSEN**

**SENT TO THE ARENA: 60%**

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*Johannes, Danish*

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PORTUGAL

KEY FEATURES
- Strong team spirit, mental strength and tactical
- Hard-working midfield with 11 Pinto screening the
- Full-backs ready to advance (notably 9 Borges on
- Quick transitions to 1-4-5-1 or 1-4-3-3 defence
- Dangerous counters via two fast strikers supported
- Keeper invariably playing long to crowded midfield
- 1-4-3-3 or 1-4-4-2 with 7 Neto as cutting edge of

SQUAD

COACH
FRANCISCO NETO
CRO: 11/07/61
NATIONALITY: Portuguese

TEAM SHAPES

STATISTICS
- PLAYS SHADES
- GOALS SCORED

GOALKEEPERS
1. Jancia Marenco 30/06/84
2. Patrícia Moraes 17/06/92
22. Ana Costa 01/06/94

DEFENDERS
3. Monika Mendes 16/04/93
3. Raquel Infante 19/04/90
5. Matilde Filipe 05/15/94
8. Ana Borges 12/05/90
14. Dooreno Silva 27/06/91
15. Carla Costa 03/05/90

MIDFIELDERS
6. Andreia Norton 15/08/92
7. Clara Roque 18/04/93
10. Ana Leite 23/02/91
11. Tatiana Pinta 28/03/94
13. Patima Priego 14/03/96
15. Vanessa Marques 10/06/90
19. Amanda De Costa 07/09/90
21. Diana Gomes 26/07/98
23. Melissa Antunes 08/05/90

FORWARDS
8. Laura Lou 15/04/92
15. Diana Silva 04/04/95
18. Carolina Mendes 27/11/97
24. Susana Pires 10/06/95

RUSSIA

KEY FEATURES
- Committed tackling, fast transitions, strong work
- Kozhnikova the leader in defence; positional sense,
- Compact structure: 3 Kozhnikova, 2 Morozova,
- Deep 1-4-5-1 defending when high or midfield
- 1-4-1-4-1 with late switch to 1-4-4-2 when trailing

SQUAD

COACH
ELENA FOMINA
CRO: 01/04/65
NATIONALITY: Russian

TEAM SHAPES

STATISTICS
- PLAYS SHADES
- GOALS SCORED

GOALKEEPERS
1. Tatiana Golovkova 22/10/97
12. Alena Belyakova 13/02/92
21. Yuliya Grichenko 10/03/91

DEFENDERS
3. Anna Kozlochova 15/07/97
5. Viktoriya Dédova 21/12/99
6. Daria Makarova 07/03/92
13. Anna Belomutova 24/11/96
19. Ekaterina Morozova 26/03/91

MIDFIELDERS
2. Natalya Solodkova 04/04/95
4. Yelena Shepeleva 14/11/91
7. Anastasia Puzheva 12/06/93
9. Anna Chechyzhay 08/06/92
20. Nadezhda Smirnova 22/02/96
21. Ekaterina ستاره 12/06/81
22. Rustia Zaynova 15/12/94
23. Margarita Chernomynova 03/06/96
25. Elena Morozova 15/03/97

FORWARDS
2. Nadzhda Karamov 09/03/96
15. Elena Danilova 17/06/92
16. Marina Fedorova 10/06/97
17. Ekaterina Pantyukhina 09/04/93
19. Marina Kuchman 19/03/94

Numbers in match columns represent minutes played, G = goals, A = assists, T = taken off, S = suspended, so = sent off.

The Netherlands 2017
Tournament review
SCOTLAND

GROUP D ENGLAND (9PTS), SPAIN (3), PORTUGAL (3), SCOTLAND (3)

TEAM SHAPES

GOALKEEPERS

- Gemma Fay (09/12/81)
- Joanne Love (04/06/90)
- Leanne Ross (08/07/81)
- Hayley Lauder (15/09/87)

MIDFIELDERS

- Vaila Barsley (09/04/92)
- Sophie Howard (17/09/93)
- Christie Murray (17/08/89)
- Jane Ross (31/03/95)

FORWARDS

- Erin Cuthbert (04/07/91)
- Joelle Murray (07/11/86)
- Lana Clelland (19/07/98)
- Fiona Brown (31/03/95)

TUFTON REVIEW

COACH

ANNA SIGNEUL

NATIONALITY: Swedish

TEAM ANALYSIS

LEXI GLADIS

LEXI GLADIS

STRENGTHS:

- Quick transitions to well-organised defence, holding opponents back four.
- Good movement, positional switches by front five; options for player on ball.
- Attacking strategy based on wing play supported by width.
- Possession-based game; excellent individual through passes, solo runs.

WEAKNESSES:

- 1-8-1-4-1 lacking some shape in attacking and defensive modes.
- Deep block; midfield aligning with 6 in front of back four; dribbling skills.
- Keeper often opting to play long; strong second-ball defence.
- 1-4-1-4-1 retaining same shape in attacking and defensive modes.
- Keeper often opting to play long; strong second-ball defence.

STATISTICS

- Min: 76% v Portugal
- Max: 62% v Spain
- Min: 46% v Portugal
- Max: 86% v Spain
- Min: 65% v Scotland
- Max: 73% v Portugal

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

- Compact, disciplined midfield, defence lines with good lateral movements.
- Deep vertical, diagonal runs by main striker behind screening midfielder.
- Deep block; midfield aligning with 6 in front of back four; dribbling skills.
- Deep block; midfield aligning with 6 in front of back four; dribbling skills.

SPAIN

GROUP D ENGLAND (9PTS), SPAIN (3), PORTUGAL (3), SCOTLAND (3)

TEAM SHAPES

GOALKEEPERS

- Marta Corredera (27/02/90)
- Irene Paredes (04/07/90)
- Andrea Portalà (19/07/90)
- Marta Torrejón (17/08/89)

MIDFIELDERS

- Marta Torrejón (17/08/89)
- Irene Paredes (04/07/90)
- Andrea Portalà (19/07/90)
- Marta Corredera (27/02/90)

FORWARDS

- Virginia Torrecilla (04/09/94)
- Alexia Putellas (01/02/88)
- Amanda Sampedro (01/06/90)
- Irene Paredes (04/07/90)

TUFTON REVIEW

COACH

JORGE VILDA

NATIONALITY: Spanish

TEAM ANALYSIS

LEXI GLADIS

LEXI GLADIS

STRENGTHS:

- 1-4-1-4-1 lacking some shape in attacking and defensive modes.
- Deep block; midfield aligning with 6 in front of back four; dribbling skills.
- Keeper often opting to play long; strong second-ball defence.
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***The Netherlands 2017***
**KEY FEATURES**
- Classic 1-4-4-2 with twin screen; excellent fast transitions to deep same-shape defending by two compact lines pressing ball
- Direct attacking; long from centre-backs to wide areas, well-used by full-backs
- Variations on 1-4-4-2 (midfield diamond v Iceland); midfield diamond v France
- Forward play crucial, supporting attacking play in striker or support roles
- Full-backs, wide midfielders tucking into deeper 1-4-1-4-1 v France

**STATISTICS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>COMPETITION</th>
<th>MIN:</th>
<th>POSSESSION %</th>
<th>PASSING ACCURACY %</th>
<th>AVG. PASSES ATTEMPTED</th>
<th>GOAL SCORING</th>
<th>GOAL CONCESSION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Tournament</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>71%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Tournament</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Tournament</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coaching**

- Pia Sundhage: Experience: Swedish

**Coaching**

- Martina Voss-Tecklenburg: Experience: German

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**SWITZERLAND**

**Group C**

**BORN G A AUT ISL FRA CLUB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assists</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>L. Wälti</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>FC Bayern München</td>
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</tbody>
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**Tournament Review**

- Variations on 1-4-4-2 (median diamond variation); 1-4-4-2 is a dynamic shape.
- Wide attacking play from full-backs to wide areas, well-used by full-backs.
- Full-backs and wide midfielders tucking into deeper 1-4-1-4-1 v France.
- Full-backs and wide midfielders tucking into deeper 1-4-1-4-1 v France.
- Full-backs, wide midfielders tucking into deeper 1-4-1-4-1 v France.

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**SWEDEN**

**Group B**

**BORN G A GER RUS ITA NED CLUB**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Age</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assists</th>
<th>Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>J. Semmelquist</td>
<td>30/05/92</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>FC Rosengård</td>
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<td>H. Glas</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>V. Bernauer</td>
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<td>FC Rosengård</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>C. Seger</td>
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<td>O. Schirch</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>I. Rubensson</td>
<td>11/05/93</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Koppartjen/Göteborg FC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Tournament Review**

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EVENT REPORT
LET’S CELEBRATE!

The tournament lived up to its slogan as the hosts organised a party that acclaimed the women’s game.
The Aim was to Create a Festive Atmosphere and to Offer a Sporting Incentive for the New Generation

The tournament slogan ‘Let’s celebrate’ expresses the philosophy. Apart from successfully organising 31 games of football, the aim was to create a festive atmosphere, to invite all and sundry to join the fun, to create a legacy and, maybe most importantly, to offer a sporting incentive for the new generation of women.

Encouraging girls to play football is not a 90-minute fixture. The project can be traced back to 4 April 2017, when a 100-day warm-up programme was launched in all seven host cities – or even earlier if the countdown takes into account the 14 football festivals aimed at giving girls – and their mums – a first taste of football.

The KNVB certainly had plenty to be proud of, beyond their team’s exceptional results and the record crowds that flocked to the matches. Notably, there was a huge appetite for the campaigns that were launched to broaden interest in the women’s game. A football lessons pack that focused on women’s football was taken up by some 1,000 primary schools all over the Netherlands, while the Share Your Talent programme enabled around 2,000 students at the universities in the host cities to take a good look at the organisational skills required to stage a major international tournament. Via internships or volunteer work they were also able to gain practical experience of how the event worked. In all, 1,500 volunteers, many of whom were young professionals and students, contributed to the success of the tournament, and will hopefully have been inspired to go on and further the development of the game – particularly women’s football.

As well as the concrete legacy provided by stadium upgrades at the tournament venues, on an organisational level KNVB and stadium staff will have benefited from the experience of hosting such a major tournament, which also helped to increase cooperation between the seven host cities, particularly in terms of promotion and ticket sales. Other events included a national
The tournament set new benchmarks for attendances at a UEFA Women’s EURO with the 240,045 total surpassing the record 216,888 set four years previously in Sweden. Three of the top six single-match UEFA Women’s EURO record attendances took place during the tournament while the Netherlands became the first UEFA Women’s EURO hosts to sell out all their matches. Their six games were watched by a total of 110,897 people, with the 27,093 crowd in Enschede for their victory against England on 3 August a record for a UEFA Women’s EURO semi-final. “It really gives you a massive boost,” Netherlands forward Vivianne Miedema said. “They helped throughout the tournament. You can feel it. Everywhere you look you see orange and they cheer every time we’ve got the ball.”

The festivities stepped up several gears when the tournament kicked off on 16 July. Pictures of the fan zones are worth many more than a thousand words. Set up in prime locations at the heart of the host cities, they offered live music, DJs, giant screens, father-daughter tournaments, pole soccer, football clinics and, above all, interaction between the fans and every possible opportunity to share the visual identity prominent in the stadiums, host cities and TV graphics, advertising backdrops and brand elements created for everything from print materials to microphone heads.

The aggregate attendance for group matches during the 2017 tournament was 27,093, a record for a UEFA Women’s EURO.

**TOP SIX UEFA WOMEN’S EURO CROWDS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Stadium</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Sweden, Norway</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>Stockholm</td>
<td>240,045</td>
</tr>
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</table>
FANS TAKE HEALTH CHALLENGE TO HEART

UEFA's football and social responsibility efforts during the tournament focused most sharply on the 'A Healthy Heart Your Goal' programme led by its core partner, the World Heart Federation (WHF).

The aim of the campaign was to get women and girls to take better care of themselves, as UEFA and the World Heart Federation teamed up with the Dutch Heart Foundation, the Royal Netherlands Football Association (KNVB) and the European Healthy Stadia Network to promote active, healthy lifestyles.

With heart disease and strokes being major causes of death for women across Europe – and most cardiovascular disease is preventable, with even 30 minutes’ moderate daily exercise helping to keep hearts healthy – ‘A Healthy Heart Your Goal’ offered advice and fitness tips, as well as #MatchFitWoman activity challenges.

And since children who exercise from an early age reduce their chances of heart disease and strokes in later life, a supplementary ‘Speel je Fit’ (Play Yourself Fit) campaign enlisted Dutch celebrities and international athletes to get kids active – including in the tournament’s fan zones.

‘A Healthy Heart Your Goal’ was complemented by a no-smoking policy at all seven championship arenas, which guaranteed a tobacco free tournament. The no-smoking message was reiterated on both the big screens at matches and by the stadium announcer, as were appeals to stay #MatchFit and to Respect Diversity.

A dedicated No To Racism page appeared in the official UEFA Women’s EURO programme, and team captains wore No to Racism armbands. UEFA also worked with the local organising committee (LOC) and its disability partner organisation, the Centre for Access to Football in Europe (CAFE), to ensure proper accessibility at games, with wheelchair and easy-access tickets a staple of the ticketing programme.

Away from the stadiums, perhaps the greatest burst of activity witnessed at the final tournament came courtesy of the fan walks initiative. Dovetailing with the ‘Healthy Heart’ programme, a free-to-use ‘Active Match App’ encouraged fans to walk – or cycle – to games. Developed by the European Healthy Stadia Network in partnership with UEFA and the World Heart Federation, the mobile app not only helped users boost their activity levels, but also gave directions and, upon arrival, details of distance travelled, calories burned and CO2 emissions saved.

Indeed, it was thanks in part to the app that approximately 10,000 people participated in the fan walk held on the day of the Netherlands-Denmark final.
INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION

A series of popular activities and social media campaigns generated widespread interest in UEFA’s drive to get girls playing the game.

If lifting the trophy was the ultimate goal, there was also a wider ambition for Europe’s elite players during UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 – inspiring girls and women to take up the game.

That is the aim of UEFA’s Together #WePlayStrong campaign, and with the tournament showcasing the best of European women’s football, the stars were happy to lend a hand.

“The Women’s EURO is really important to us, because it creates role models in our country and all over the world where people are watching,” Sweden striker Kosovare Asllani said. “Our hope is to inspire a whole generation. To me personally, it means so much that women’s football is getting bigger and bigger. We’ve seen the development over the years that I’ve been playing, and the sport has clearly progressed enormously since then. And it’s a great joy to see, because I believe it’s very important for young girls to have role models and goals to aspire to.”

Together #WePlayStrong was launched on 1 June 2017, ahead of the UEFA Women’s Champions League final. Research shows that playing football can significantly boost confidence, happiness and self-image among girls, and the campaign encourages them to take up – and continue – playing the game, with the target of making football the No1 sport for women across Europe by 2020.

An inspirational film premiered at the UEFA Women’s Champions League final has already been viewed by 25 million people, and activities around the campaign were stepped up during UEFA Women’s EURO 2017.

Each player wore a badge of the #WePlayStrong logo on their shirts, and the branding also appeared prominently at the seven venues on pitchside advertising boards, as well as on a banner displayed in front of the teams before kick-off. A new film entitled I Am a Footballer conveyed the strong message that all girls can play football, and it was promoted by the players themselves with video pieces to camera.

A Photo of the Day focusing on skill, fun, friendship and aspiration reinforced the #WePlayStrong values, while animated skills video compilations highlighted the quality of the women’s game, with 350,000 people watching the most popular goalkeeper saves montage. This was complemented by skills films created by freestyle world champion Liv Cooke, whose trick tutorials were viewed on average 150,000 times across Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and Musical.ly.

Social media played a key role in promoting the campaign, which really caught the imagination. The #WePlayStrong Squad – a grassroots team of 45 superfans from the 16 competing nations – created 4,200 pieces of content, generating 61,500 interactions that reached 1.7 million people. The #SheShootsSheScores activation, meanwhile, encouraged youngsters to film themselves scoring a goal, before then posting their content on Musical.ly for the chance to win an all-expenses-paid trip to the final. Around 2,200 pieces of user-generated content were created.

As Dutch forward Lieke Martens explained, there is no better platform than the EURO to show what women’s football in Europe is all about. “It’s great for women’s football,” the player of the tournament said. “You see young girls starting out now and training a lot more and at a higher level, which can only be good for the development of women’s football. There’s more strength in depth now, and we’re trying to help the Netherlands reach the top. The game is constantly improving and it’s so great to be part of all that.”

To make your own #WePlayStrong posters, watch a skills tutorial, find a club near you and much more, visit WePlayStrong.org.
The commercial programme for UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 consisted of nine global sponsors and five national sponsors. This approach allowed the global sponsors, each with a longstanding commitment to national team football, extensive worldwide marketing rights to associate with and promote the championship. It also secured the support of a strong group of national sponsors who came on board to lend a special insight into the host market. Together, the two sets of sponsors generated awareness of the tournament in order to attract fans to the stadiums, while also supplying vital products and services to produce a well-run finals.

GLOBAL SPONSORS

In supplying the official match ball for UEFA Women’s EURO 2017, adidas took the best elements from its Brazuca FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO 2016 balls while making further improvements to the surface structure and paneling to offer improved grip and enhanced in-flight visibility for players. Meanwhile the visibility of the actual adidas brand was heightened by the manufacturer providing quality sportswear for the tournament’s youth programme participants, volunteers and staff. Additionally, adidas designed and produced the official licensed products sold at INTERSPORT fan shops within all seven stadiums. The sports brand was also presenting partner of the adidas Golden Boot, creating a bespoke award for England’s five-goal finals top scorer Jodie Taylor.

The global brewer’s partner in the Netherlands, De Kikvorsch, activated its sponsorship of the tournament, with the Carlsberg brand prominent throughout the three weeks of action. Thus Carlsberg’s core brand messaging featured heavily on perimeter boards, and the brewer supplied Carlsberg products and branded service materials to key areas at all seven stadiums. Carlsberg also made sure neither fans nor staff went thirsty via on-site refreshment stalls and other equipment. In fact, Carlsberg’s contribution went as far as producing and presenting custom-made player of the match awards at both semi-finals – to the Netherlands’ Danielle van de Donk and Denmark’s Stina Lykke Petersen – and the final, to Dutch star Sherida Spitse.
After a hugely successful debut at UEFA EURO 2016, Hisense carried on its partnership with UEFA national team football by activating all its key rights for this edition of the Women’s EURO. Since the consumer electronics brand seeks to continue expanding its footprint across Europe, the competition represented an ideal window to develop yet further its brand recognition and awareness. It followed then that Hisense used assets such as tickets for the purpose of B2B and B2C engagement.

One of the biggest supporters of women’s football worldwide, Coca-Cola was again a key sponsor for the UEFA Women’s EURO. As a long-term UEFA national team football partner, the multinational beverage corporation purveyed a high standard of service and products to all stakeholders on site – from participating squads to staff, media representatives and fans. The Coca-Cola team even contributed products to help the competing teams and referees rehydrate during the tournament. Its brand was afforded strong visibility on perimeter boards, as well as online and offline, while the Coca-Cola festival mobile trailer experience kept fans entertained in several fan zones – offering the chance to win an assortment of prizes.

For Continental, this event was a wonderful opportunity to continue its backing of women’s football, complementing its partnerships with the English and Dutch sides. Continental duly developed its brand association with the finals via on-site activation in the fan zones, giant screen spots, an official programme advert and perimeter-board publicity. It also produced a video series about England’s participation in the tournament, which was hosted by ex-England goalkeeper David James and featured UEFA women’s football advisor Nadine Kessler.

One of the driving forces behind the Women’s EURO, the automotive manufacturing company continues to strengthen its relationship with the female game.
The official airline partner of UEFA national team football, Turkish Airlines was particularly proud to be a global partner of the Women’s EURO in the Netherlands. This status made the airline a significant presence at the championship, courtesy of pitchside brand exposure and on-site visibility on key tournament and other promotional materials. Turkish Airlines also benefited from considerable exposure on social media via its digital sole and exclusive promotion: the ‘Turkish Airlines Magic Moment’ comprised a match footage video clip with graphic overlays of one of the best moments of each matchday.

A seasoned partner of UEFA national team football, McDonald’s lent its customary backing to the Women’s EURO – centring its energies around the well-established McDonald’s Player Escorts programme. This gave a unique and exclusive chance to children to experience the build-up to the big game and walk hand-in-hand with star players on to the field, then line up with them as the national anthems were played. The lucky children were recruited mainly in the host country although some were invited from the UK as part of McDonald’s partnership with Community Football in the UK.

Not only was global employment agency Adecco involved in the recruitment and selection of volunteers, it also provided tournament organisers with essential expertise and technology by using an advanced planning tool to manage the approximately 1,500 volunteers helping out the various stakeholders on site. Moreover, Adecco handled the training of volunteers to welcome fans and guests, and also ran a number of events and activities including an end-of-tournament farewell party at which the CEO of Adecco’s Dutch operation acted as DJ.

SOCAR’s involvement with UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 was another way for the Azerbaijani energy company to keep building its brand awareness and identity on a global stage. The competition brought substantial visibility to SOCAR at the stadiums – via LED boards, giant screen spots and official programme adverts – as well as on TV. Throughout the event, SOCAR also pushed its official statistic provider status and received added visibility for its brand and logo thanks to official videos posted by UEFA on the Women’s EURO social media channels, teasing fans with key tournament stats.
A proud supporter of Dutch football and KNVB partner, ING enriched the finals with eye-catching activations – chief among them, the chance for 496 children to carry the national-team flags on the pitch ahead of the teams’ entrance. Supplementing the flag-bearers programme, ING set up a dedicated branded hospitality truck for the Netherlands’ matches. The banking and financial services corporation also drafted photographers into the grounds to take souvenir photos which fans could share on social media platforms; posted tournament content on its ‘Only Football’ YouTube channel; and provided punters with the opportunity to play pole football in the fan zones. ING had also helped fill the stadiums with ticket sales and exclusive offers via its loyalty scheme.

As national sponsor, INTERSPORT seized the chance to interact with fans through a series of pre-finals ticket promotions that served to intensify the tournament build-up. As the event’s official sports shop of licensed products, meanwhile, the retailer sold products through specially branded areas within its classic retail stores as well as having dedicated shops at every venue of the championship. The official licensed product range – developed specifically for the finals – consisted of striking adidas items as well as the replica shirts of the participating teams, official match balls and charming fan bracelets from official licensee Brappz.

PricewaterhouseCoopers is a long-term sponsor of the KNVB and supports all aspects of the game in the Netherlands. For UEFA Women’s EURO 2017, its splendid hospitality programmes gave clients and customers a truly special experience. PwC’s commitment was also underlined when, together with Persgroep/AD, the professional services network arranged a seminar about diversity at the FC Twente Stadion, in keeping with the values promoted by the tournament.
The first UEFA Women’s EURO Panini sticker album was a highlight of an extensive licensed product range.

UEFA’s successful licensing programme for the Women’s EURO in the Netherlands was especially notable for its link-up with the Panini Group – meaning that for the first time the tournament had its own dedicated sticker collection. As a result of this major innovation, all participating teams and players were featured in the championship’s album and stickers. Moreover, the UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 sticker album – available at retailers and newsagents across the continent – was supplemented by a digital equivalent for the online market: a collection of Panini Adrenalyn trading cards. It was a promotional coup to have football fans collecting and swapping the best players from the tournament before, during and after the finals. If Panini stickers are a traditional staple of big championships, so too is the presence of the adidas brand. For this Women’s EURO, adidas was responsible for the official licensed product range – comprising various attractive items of clothing – as well as the official match ball range. The ball itself took the best elements from its best-selling UEFA EURO 2016 predecessor and added new performance-improving features.

There was novelty too in the component parts of the licensing programme, through the involvement of emerging Swiss company Brappz and British publisher Trinity Media. It was Brappz that produced the eye-catching official fan bracelets that enabled supporters to display their team colours in a stylish but subtle way. Trinity Media’s role was to work in tandem with the UEFA communications team to deliver the official match programme and subsequently guarantee its widespread availability in both the Netherlands and assorted markets throughout Europe. Meanwhile, INTERSPORT again signed up as the official sports shop of licensed products for the UEFA Women’s EURO – and duly offered fans the best possible access to licensed merchandise. The international sporting goods retailer used both its brick-and-mortar stores and dedicated shops at each tournament venue to achieve this purpose.
TV viewing figures were higher than ever in a number of key markets as across the world fans tuned in to the EURO

A global cumulative live audience of 178 million people followed the action at UEFA Women’s EURO 2017, with 33 broadcasters screening matches in 154 territories around the world. Record viewing figures were achieved in a number of markets, notably in the Netherlands where the hosts’ six matches were the most-viewed women’s games ever broadcast in that country. In countries where no broadcast partner was appointed, fans also watched live streams and highlights of every game on UEFA’s official YouTube channel UEFA.tv and on UEFA.com, ensuring the tournament was a truly global experience.

5.1m viewers (44.1% share) watched Germany play Russia on ZDF, an increase of 36.7% on Germany’s group games in 2013. Germany’s other Group B games against Sweden and Italy on ARD drew 6.1m (22.4% share) and 5.8m (23.2% share) viewers respectively.

In the UK, 1.7m viewers (8.8% share) watched England v Scotland on Channel 4 – a bigger audience than for any England game at the 2009 and 2013 Women’s EUROs, including the 2009 final loss to Germany on BBC2 (1.4m viewers, 10.3% share).

In France, viewing figures were well up on the 2013 tournament as well as 90% higher than for any of Les Bleues’ 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup group matches. There were 3.3m viewers on France 2 for their opening match against Iceland, then 3.2m for both their matches against Austria and Switzerland.

In Scandinavia, Sweden (TV4) and Norway (TV2) consistently achieved market shares between 40% and 50% for their group games. Denmark’s market share on DR1 increased as the group stage progressed, with a 29% share (416,000 viewers) for their opening match against Belgium growing to 38.4% (555,000 viewers) for their third match against Italy.

Viewing figures in Iceland were reminiscent of UEFA EURO 2016, with market shares for each match topping 80% and peaking at 92.9% for Iceland’s opening match against France.

Debutants Belgium (VRT/RTBF), Portugal (RTP), Austria (ORF), Scotland (Channel 4) and Switzerland (SRG SSR) also attracted significant interest: 900,000 viewers (30% share) watched Austria’s final group game against Iceland on ORF; SRG’s Swiss-German channel SRF achieved a 23.4% share for Switzerland v Austria (complemented by a 9% share on both the French and Italian language channels operated by SRG); an impressive 43.7% share (900,000 viewers) watched Belgium’s game against the Netherlands on Belgian Dutch language channel VRT. This was complemented by a 14.4% share (200,000 viewers) on Belgian French language channel La Deux.
The match was watched by 2.4m people (11.8% share) in the UK on Channel 4, more than any audience of the previous two tournaments and 62.9% higher than England’s 2015 FIFA Women’s World Cup quarter-final win against hosts Canada on BBC1 (1.5m viewers, 33.3% share).

**SEMI-FINALS**

**NETHERLANDS v ENGLAND**

England’s semi-final against the Netherlands on Channel 4 attracted a British record 3.2m viewers for a women’s game. 2.9m (50.7% share) watched the match on NPO1 in the Netherlands, an increase of 84.8% on the 2009 semi-final between the same teams, also broadcast on NPO1 (1.6m viewers, 36.6% share).

**DENMARK v AUSTRIA**

TV2 in Denmark enjoyed an exceptional audience of a little over 1m viewers (66.6% share) for their nation’s win against Austria, 49.8% up on Denmark’s 2013 semi-final against Norway on DR1 that attracted around 700,000 viewers (41.1% share). There were also impressive neutral market audiences for the two semi-finals, with over 3.2m viewers in Germany watching the Netherlands v England and 55.9% and 61.8% shares on RUV in Iceland for the two games.

**FINAL**

**NETHERLANDS v DENMARK**

The final set audience records in both the Netherlands and Denmark. In the Netherlands 4.1m viewers (83.2% share) watched the final live, with a peak of 5.4m viewers (85.3% share) tuning in for the trophy lift. Denmark’s first UEFA Women’s Euro final appearance attracted approximately 1.4m viewers (82% share): 0.8m viewers, 46.7% share on DR1 and 0.6m viewers, 35.4% share on TV2. ZDF attracted its highest neutral audience of the tournament in Germany for the final, with 3.4m viewers (32.1% share) – 91.3% higher than the 2017 German women’s Cup final on ARD (1.8m viewers, 17.2% share). Other neutral markets also enjoyed good audiences for the final: 800,000 viewers (6.3% share) for Channel 4 in the UK; 1.1m viewers (11.4% share) for France; 2.643m viewers (36.9% share) on SVT in Sweden and a 21% share (180,000 viewers) for Canvas in Belgium.

**BROADCAST NETWORK**

The tournament was screened in 154 territories across the world.

### EUROPE

- **Albania**: Eurosport
- **Andorra**: France Télévisions
- **Armenia**: Eurosport
- **Austria**: ORF
- **Azerbaijan**: Eurosport
- **Belarus**: Eurosport
- **Belgium**: RTBF
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**: Eurosport
- **Bulgaria**: Eurosport
- **Croacia**: Eurosport
- **Cyprus**: Eurosport
- **Czech Republic**: Eurosport
- **Denmark**: TV2
- **Faroe Islands**: DR
- **Finland**: YLE
- **France**: France Télévisions
- **FYR Macedonia**: Eurosport
- **Georgia**: Eurosport
- **Germany**: ARD/DTV
- **Greece**: Eurosport
- **Hungary**: Eurosport
- **Iceland**: RUV
- **Israel**: Israel
- **Italy**: Nuovo+1
- **Kazakhstan**: Eurosport
- **Kuwait**: Eurosport
- **Latvia**: Eurosport
- **Lichtenstein**: Eurosport
- **Lithuania**: Eurosport
- **Luxembourg**: Eurosport
- **Malta**: Eurosport
- **Moldova**: Eurosport
- **Monaco**: France Télévisions
- **Montenegro**: Eurosport
- **Netherlands**: NOS
- **Norway**: TV2
- **Poland**: Eurosport

### NON-EUROPE

- **Africa and the Middle East**: Eurosport (Northern Africa) – Saudi SPORTS (KSA); Kwese (Sub-Saharan Africa)
- **Americas**: ESPN (USA and Caribbean) – Golbolos (Brazil); Univision (USA)
- **Asia**: Astro Mesat (Malaysia), i-Cable (Hong Kong), MNC (Indonesia)

### LIVE STREAMS WATCHED ON UEFA.tv

- **NETHERLANDS v ENGLAND**: 178m people watched the tournament worldwide.
- **DENMARK v AUSTRIA**: 15m people watched the final live.
- **NETHERLANDS v DENMARK**: 5.9m minutes of live stream watched on UEFA.tv.
Eurosport and UEFA teamed up to provide the images from the Netherlands

LIGHTS, CAMERAS, ACTION!

A global television audience was able to follow all the drama of UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 thanks to a prolific partnership between the tournament’s host broadcaster Eurosport and UEFA TV Production. This operation relied on the successful dovetailing between two production teams overseen by TV match directors Jean-Marc Stabler and Danny Meijer, with support from a broadcast manager working at each of the seven tournament venues. The images delivered were the fruits of a 12-camera production for every game from group stage to final, with 14 cameras used for the Netherlands-Denmark showpiece itself. Viewers enjoyed this offering in full HD with Dolby 5.1 surround sound.

Prior to the tournament, UEFA had also provided broadcasters with a preview show and additional programming material, including team profiles and host city promos. Update packages and social media vignettes were supplied, and there was an equally comprehensive in-tournament offering that featured behind-the-scenes filming as well as interview and training packages. This additional programming owed to the combined efforts of a number of different on-site crews, including one dedicated to the women’s football promotional campaign, Together #WePlayStrong.

In tandem, Eurosport and UEFA’s broadcaster services team furnished broadcasters with unilateral services that enabled them to tailor their own specific coverage. In total, 45 broadcasters, comprising 33 TV and 12 radio outlets, were serviced during the tournament. Meanwhile, 600 bookings were taken for the world feed service, at an average of nearly 20 per match – indicating the burgeoning popularity of the Women’s EURO.

Broadcasters were also provided with unprecedented live and 360° virtual reality coverage, including Matchday-1 activities. Their reach spanned everything from pre- and post-match action to behind-the-scenes activities on a matchday – and ultimately the trophy lift earned by the winning Dutch side.

For UEFA, there was also the satisfaction of the successful implementation of a new digital remote delivery platform for the distribution of images to broadcasters around the world from the very heart of the stadiums.
In the four years since the previous UEFA Women’s EURO tournament in Sweden, women’s football had enjoyed a veritable boom on the back of a hugely successful FIFA Women’s World Cup in Canada and the subsequent expansion of the 2017 UEFA Women’s EURO from 12 to 16 teams.

The challenge had been set for UEFA to again raise the bar in terms of coverage, reaching as many fans as possible and promoting the competition in the best way. By the end of the tournament in the Netherlands, if the swathes of Oranje fans celebrating the hosts’ triumph didn’t paint a picture of success, the numbers certainly did.

In line with a booming TV audience, UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 made major strides on UEFA’s digital platforms, with over four million visits to the official website during the course of the tournament – more than double the total number from 2013.

Coverage was revamped, with specialist women’s football reporters providing insight and analysis from every match and visiting the teams in their camps, interviewing the players and coaches to build a rapport that resulted in behind-the-scenes access and exclusive content.

Following on from the hugely successful men’s equivalent in 2016, UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 focused around the UEFA.com MatchCentres, with live data, photography and insight from reporters. Three games attracted six-figure visits, with Germany’s quarter-final against Denmark attracting the largest number of users, closely followed by England’s semi-final clash with the Netherlands.

#WEURO2017 was also a massive success on social media, generating more than 560,000 interactions across the official Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels, as well as over 4.4 million video views.

Highlights included Austria’s superbly entertaining crossbar challenge, former Arsenal and Netherlands star Anouk Hoogendijk joining our reporter Laure James to preview the opening game and plenty of match action, all delivered in a fresh tone of voice more appealing to the younger generation of female football fans.

Put simply, UEFA Women’s EURO 2017 was the biggest ever in every sense, setting a new standard for digital coverage of a women’s football event and reflecting a growing movement to make football the No1 women’s sport across Europe by the next tournament in 2021.
ROLL OF HONOUR

2017 Netherlands
2013 Germany
2009 Germany
2005 Germany
2001 Germany
1997 Germany
1995 Germany
1993 Norway
1991 Germany
1989 West Germany
1987 Norway
1984 Sweden

Player of the tournament
Lieke Martens on the run against Denmark.

CREDITS

Technical report editorial
Ioan Lupescu, Graham Turner
Managing editor
Michael Harrold
Production editor
Anthony Naughton
Editorial
Mark Chaplin, Patrick Hart, Andy James, Élodie Masson
Design
Fernando Pires, Oliver Meikle, James Willsher
Production
Emily Meikle, Aleksandra Sersnikova, Stéphanie Tétaz
Photography
Getty Images, Sportsfile, UEFA

The UEFA Technical Observers Group in Enschede (from left): Ioan Lupescu, Hesterine de Reus, Anne Noé, Patricia González and Jarmo Matikainen

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