



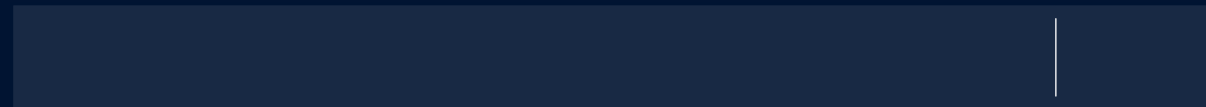
**MEN'S EHF EURO 2022**

HUNGARY • SLOVAKIA  
13-30 JANUARY

**EHF**  
**COMPETENCE**  
**ACADEMY &**  
**NETWORK**

# **MEN'S EHF EURO 2022**

## **QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS**



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# INTRODUCTION

The Men's EHF EURO 2022 saw Sweden win their first title in 20 years, beating Spain in the final in Budapest. The following analyses of Sweden's victory and the performances of the competing teams and players were made by EHF Methods Commission member Monique Tijsterman, using official championship statistics together with the expert observations from a team of Hungarian observers:

Dr. Zoltán Marczinka (EHF Master Coach)

Dr. Csaba Ökrös (EHF Master Coach)

János Hajdu (EHF Master Coach)

Zoltán Kólya (CEO My Handball System Hungary Kft.)

As well as individuals and teams, the team also analysed attack and defensive styles. A more in-depth view of topics for the analysis the competition has been introduced with the aim of developing the approach in the future – therefore the analysis focuses on proving increased visual aids for coaches to be able to put the knowledge gathered into practices. For the graphics used, the software 'My Handball System' was used.

The analysis covers coaching, tactical and technical elements.

Further information and full statistics can be found on the [official Men's EHF EURO 2022 website](#).

Throughout this analysis you can find links to selected scenes of the Men's EHF EURO 2022 by clicking on this symbol



# FACTS & FIGURES

The opening match of the tournament between Hungary and the Netherlands on 13 January was watched by 20,000 fans inside the Budapest Arena.

The main round consisted of the best two teams from each preliminary round group and was played in Budapest and Bratislava.

Champions Sweden were the only team to win all four matches in the main round, defeating Russia, Poland, Germany and Norway.

The final and third place match were watched by 14,238 fans inside the Budapest Arena.

The Men's EHF EURO 2022 was hosted and organised by the Hungarian and Slovakian handball federations, between 13-30 January with 24 teams divided into six preliminary round groups in five cities. In total 65 matches were played.

As well as Sweden, Spain, Denmark and France competed in the final weekend with Spain playing in their sixth successive Men's EHF EURO semi-final – a sequence that began in Belgrade in 2012.



# TEAM PERFORMANCE — BRIEF OVERVIEW

The tournament threw up a number of surprises, which began on the opening day of competition when the Netherlands beat hosts Hungary. In the main round, arguably one of the biggest shocks was Iceland's 29:21 victory over France. The result was the French's biggest ever defeat at an EHF EURO in history.

In other points of note, it was only the second time since 2002 that Croatia did not qualify for the final weekend, while the final match of the main round group I between Sweden and Norway saw both teams needing a positive result to reach the final weekend. Norway led 14:9 at the break, before the Swedes stormed back to win the game by one goal, progressing thanks to a 24:23 win.



That led to a hugely exciting final weekend in the Hungarian capital, especially the second semi-final where Sweden once again triumphed by one goal, beating France 34:33. The theme of exciting, close and one-goal wins also helped Sweden in the final thanks to their 27:26 win over reigning Spain.



# MATCHES & PLAYERS — IN BRIEF

The number of international matches decreased from 61.1 in 2020 to 48.3 in 2022. Due to Covid-19 most teams used more players at this EHF EURO. Several countries have implemented rejuvenation in the team after, for example, the Olympic Games.

On average, each team had 3.1 players under the age of 23 in their squads, 13.4 aged between 23 and 30 and 4.8 aged over 30.

Germany (26), Hungary and Poland (both 16) had the most players playing from their domestic league at the tournament. Only Germany reached the main round. Montenegro reached the main round despite have no players playing their trade in their domestic league.

Denmark and Spain – the teams with the highest average number of international appearances – reached the final weekend.



# COACHES — A SUMMARY

There were nine nations who employed foreign coaches at Men's EHF EURO 2022, equating to 37.5 per cent – an increase from the 16.7 per cent – or four – at the 2020 edition. Of those nine coaches, four hailed from Scandinavia, three from central Europe, one from south east Europe and one from west Europe.

Why are nations not employing homegrown coaches? Is it because of education? Or do domestic coaches do not have enough high-level experience. However, this seems not to be the answer, as the level of coaching education is harmonised by the EHF RINCK Convention.

If more players are playing in foreign leagues at the top level and are used to dealing with foreign coaches and culture, then what do we need to do to change this?

Another question is whether or not there is a problem of communication between coaches and players when a coach's native language is not the same as the players? It would be a plausible explanation of the defeats recorded by those teams. Problems can arise in team timeout at critical moments but we do see a domestic assistant trainer employed with these teams.

Furthermore, it was evident in situations where the coaches had a greater influence during matches and timeouts but also where players took the responsibility upon themselves and spoke up during timeouts.



# DEFENCE



During the Men's EHF EURO 2022 we saw various defensive styles and within these different tactics were used, as outlined below:

- Almost every team played fast and attractive handball with the aim to win the ball and play on the counter-attack. Successful defence started with good retreats and we were able to witness that the best teams applied this particular well during the final weekend.

V1

V2

- The way teams are defending were also changing with a clear difference in defence styles. Instead of opting for the overly aggressive 6-0 defence, we are now seeing a more agile form of defence when players defend further forward and are able to receive possession of the ball quicker. Centre back players were also defending in more of an outside position. This is possibly because they have an important role in the transition of play and can be more explosive in attack.
- Most of the teams operated a zonal defensive system. However, all have their own interpretation of the 6-0 formation. Compare the examples of the top 4 teams.

V3

V4

V5

V6

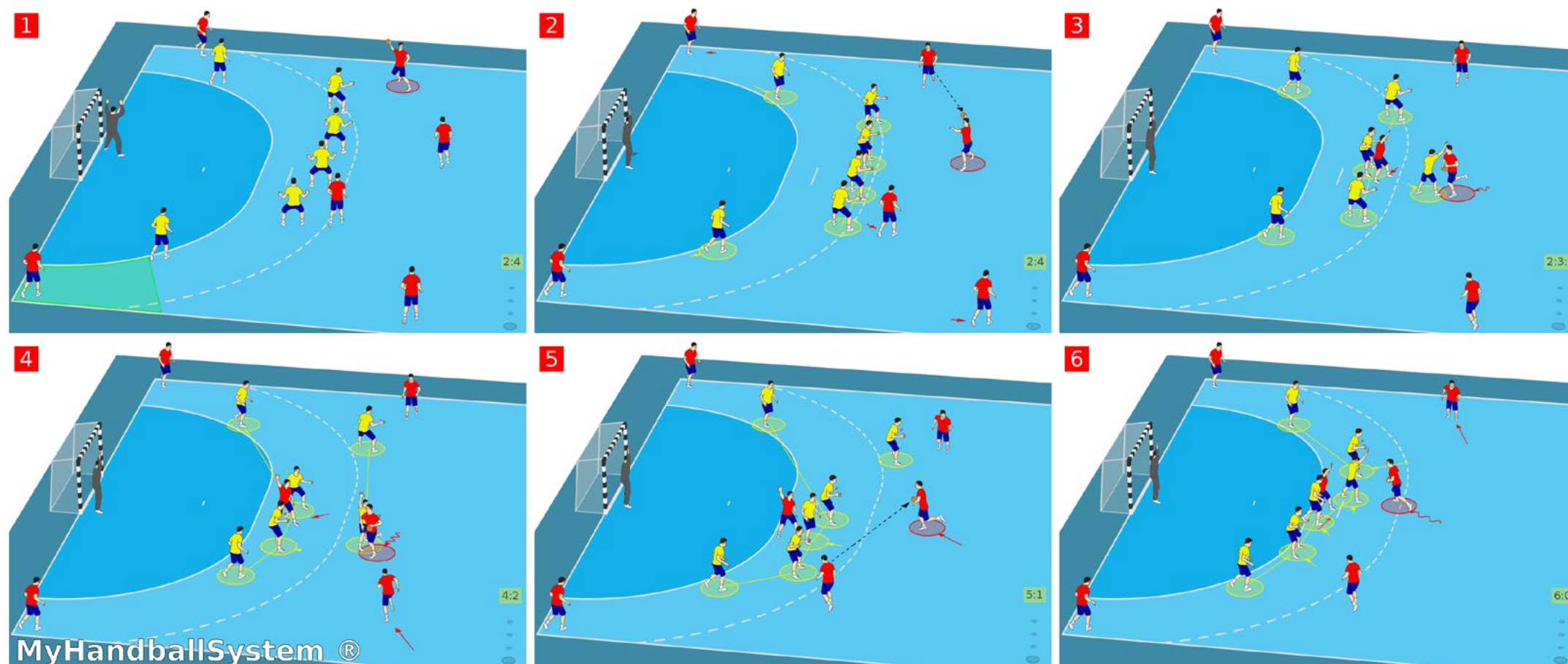




# DEFENCE

We saw a very interesting example from Sweden in the final, where in the beginning the four defensive players in the middle step out to a deeper position, trying to keep the back players out of shooting range. The defenders are refusing to focus on the wings and move closer to the middle and thus give more support and strength to their teammates in the centre of defence. The zonal defence is instead a basic 2-4 formation which changes into a 3-3 when the opposition line player is at the 6-metre line. This clearly visible in the analysis of Sweden's defence.

V7



# DEFENCE

- Teams rarely used combined defence or individual marking as it is weakening their defence in the middle of the court. Also man-to-man marking was only used at the end of games when the teams were behind as a last option.

V8

- We also looked at defending in numerical superiority and inferiority situations, i.e. when there is a two-minute suspension. In this case, most of the teams attacked by substituting the goalkeeper for a court player and thus defending six against five is very rare.
- When defending shorthanded, five versus six, the teams tended to give up on defending the wings for the sake of not losing strength in the middle of the court.

V9

V10

This could be one reason why teams had more shots from the wings. In 2020, the percentage of wing shots was 61 per cent – in this tournament that number increased slightly to 64 per cent (746 goals from 1,159 shots).

- There were less shots from long range – which meant more breakthrough and six-metre attempts and thus more significance was placed on defending one against one.

V11

V12

- Most teams used a defensive specialist. The teams changed one or two players between attack and defence. Spain utilised this in the final when operating with three players and a defensive specialist. This, naturally, can have consequences for transition into attack.
- When we look at the ‘best defender’ we tend to only look at the number of blocks and steals. However, this time, especially during the final weekend, we also saw a number of attacking faults because a good defender is not all about blocking and stealing the ball.



# ATTACK



Just like in defence, we saw many different attacking styles during the tournament with various tactics used by the competing teams.

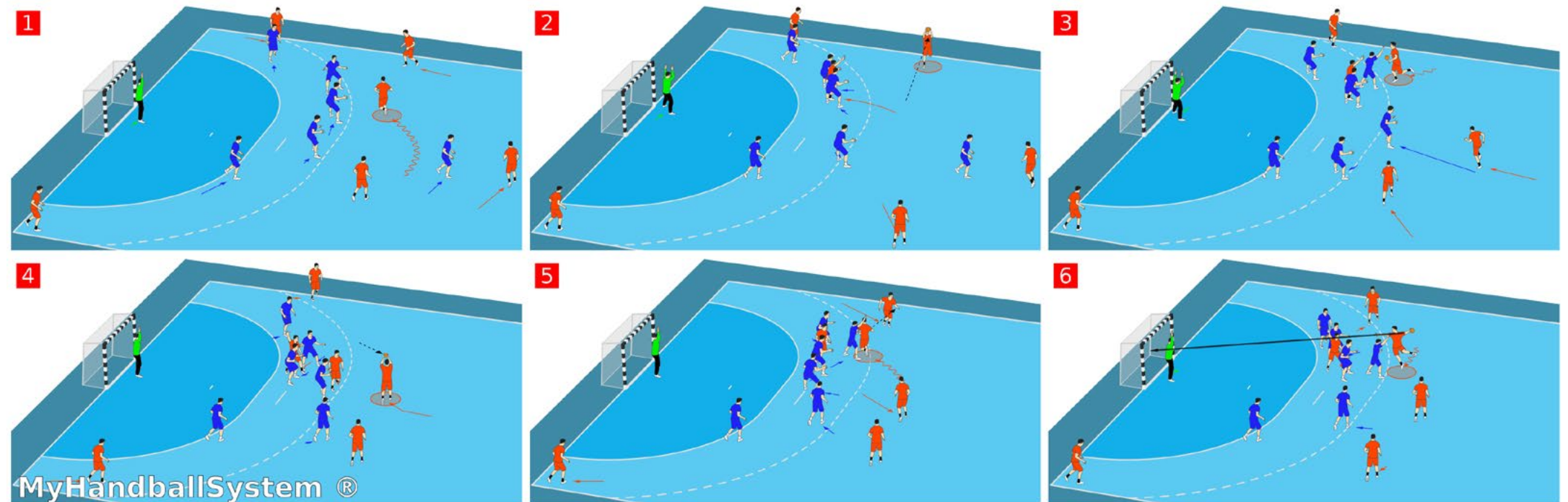
Generally, the teams alternated between static (where the players held their positions) and mobile (when they changed) attacks when they were building an offensive move on their opponents. The players also used their own individual skills to develop their own different attacking style for their teams.

- Crossing with wing, back and line players was striking.



V1

V2



# ATTACK

- Positional changes between the back players followed by a cross: During the long build-up of mobile attacks, teams either relied on a lot of crosses or mixed the position change with parallel thrust and waving-counter attacks to create a strong scoring position. That ensured attacks were completed from a two against two or three against three situation.

V3

V4

V5

- Transition using wing players was a tactic when playing six against six, but also in minority attack (five versus six) where teams took up a second line player or went back to their own positions after the transition. Many teams utilised the line player's blocking to aid a break-through, thus enabling them to score from close range. Similarly, the back court players often set up the line player, freeing himself with a bounced pass between, or next to, the defender's legs.

V6

V7

- It has become important to use a variety of faking techniques in one against one situations. At this championship, players primarily preferred arm swinging fakes when swinging their arm over the defender's head. The move was usually finished by bouncing the ball and breaking through. When beating the facing defender, the attacker often applied passing fakes or carried out another fake to draw the other defender's attention.

V8

V9

V10



- We witnessed many in-flight shots, usually set-up between the back player and wing player, but also between the wing players.

V11

- There were also more passes behind the back from back player to wing player and line player during the tournament.

V12

V13

V14

- There was also more focus during the games on the right side, especially from the right back position where before the focus was on the left side. Here, right backs were able to shoot from nine metres but also play one against one and play good passes (normal or behind the back) to the wing players and/or line player. These players have become more important and become more of a 'total' player. The reason for this could be due to the fact that most of the centre backs are right-handed and therefore after crossing or after waving the ball it is easier to play the ball to the right side and setting up the right backs.

V15

V16

# ATTACK

- Looking at the overall team statistics, we can conclude that the fast break (78 per cent) and fast throw off (79 per cent) had important roles at the EHF EURO. Those teams who attacked with an extra court player – instead of a goalkeeper – often conceded a fast goal from a quick start-off or directly from the opposition goalkeeper’s throw.

V17

V18

- When the teams played in majority attack (six versus five and seven against six) they almost always played with two line players standing between the first and second defender or between the second and third defender.

V19

- The seven against six without a goalkeeper is played more often as a normal attacking tactic. Portugal and Denmark played this in the most effective way, combining static and mobile attack well to create shooting positions.

V20

V21

V22

- Overall 3,633 goals were scored from 5,747 shots (63.22 per cent)

GOALS AND ATTEMPTS BY POSITION 2018-2022				
	G/S	PERCENTAGE		
	2022	2022	2020	2018
6m centre shots	855/1282	67%	67%	71%
Wing shots	746//1159	64%	61%	61%
9m shots	706/1566	45%	46%	43%
7m penalty shots	367/466	79%	83%	75%
Fast breaks	427/546	78%	75%	80%
Breakthroughs	498/685	73%	73%	75%
Fast throw off	34/43	79%		

- Compared to previous tournaments, we saw the same percentage of shots from all positions. Only shots from the wings and fast breaks increased by three per cent, while the penalty shots decreased by four per cent.
- When playing quick counter-attacks, the initiating teams try to complete the attack at the defending position of the player who finished the previous attack and lags behind. Against counter-attacking teams without a goalkeeper, the opposition often had a successful shot from distance into an empty goal.

V23

V24

- Top goalscorer, Iceland’s Omar Ingi Magnusson, scored 59 goals from 80 shots – equating to 74 per cent efficiency. 21 of those goals came from 25 penalty shots.

V25

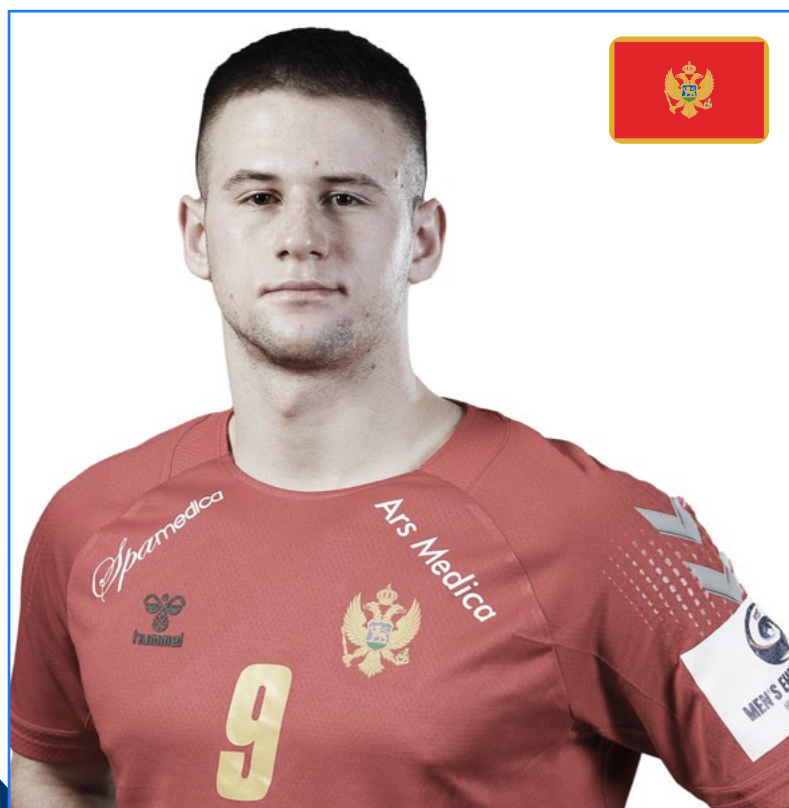
V26

- Among the top 10 top scorers were four back players – of which were three right backs- six wing players and no line players. We can conclude from this that the teams are getting more focused on the right side, especially the right back position, which as we have noted, is becoming more important in recent years – not only in the game itself but also when taking penalty shots.
- Another general observation is that when attackers try to score with a jump shot, defenders often tackle the shooter. Since these hampered jump shots are often less effective, shots from the ground have become more important.



# PLAYERS FOR THE FUTURE

Launched in 2019 by the EHF, the Respect Your Talent programme promotes the holistic development of talented players' careers, both on and off the handball court. Young athletes are inspired and mentored by some of Europe's best handball players and supported by leading field experts. Some of these rising stars of our sport were in action at Men's EHF EURO 2022 and are earmarked to follow in the future.



## RADOJICA CEPIC

The 19-year-old centre back was one of the players from the Respect Your Talent 2021 programme. He played seven times during the championship, scoring 19 goals. He understood the movement of his teammates well and broke impressively between defenders in the direction of the shooting arm and, attacking advantage of the offensive-blocking of the line player, he was able to score goals despite physical contact.

In one versus one situations, he showed dangerous bursts when going through defenders in the opposite direction to his shooting arm. Despite being a right-handed player, he was able to score a goal in a displaced right-back position after such breakthroughs.

Although his running motion was energetic, the rapid overcoming of the distances run was due to his long stride lengths. In the event of an extended fast break of his team, Radojica boldly brought up the ball and finished the action with a shot. He also proved his versatility where he was also familiar in a line player position after running into the wall.



## TOMAS SMETANKA

Another 19-year-old centre back, Tomas Smetanka was also part of the 2021 Respect Your Talent programme. Tomas played two games during the tournament, scoring six times from seven shots (86 per cent).

A dynamic player with energetic movement, he kept the opponent's defence on high alert and despite his short stature (1.83m), he was able to score a goal in the middle of the court against a higher defensive wall and was also successful from the ground.

His shots were explosive, using a short and quick technique, which surprised both defenders and the goalkeeper. Tomas felt at home on the court, playing in all three back positions where he was able to face defenders at a good pace and was able to select mature shooting choices.



## DMYTRO HORIHA

Left back Dmytro Horiha, played three games during the championship, scoring 16 goals from his 20 shots (80 per cent). The 24-year-old was one of the most dangerous shooters in the tournament with his unique shooting technic and accuracy.

He was able to build momentum both in a straight line and in a circular motion before shooting. He loved a passing feint before shots, making defenders insecure and was also able to shoot from the ground through defenders. His main strength, however, was the jump-shot at each back post. His shooting repertoire did not miss a jump-shot from both legs.



# PLAYERS FOR THE FUTURE



## BRANKO VUJOVIC

The 1.96m-tall right back played seven matches, totalling 248 minutes, during the championship, scoring 38 goals from 61 shots (62 per cent). His greatest strength was his long-range shots from 10 and 11 metres, with which he could both score against the outgoing defender or beside or over a defensive block.

In addition to gain a long, circular movement, the 23-year-old was also able to jump and shoot from a short, straight movement. Branko also played a key role in defensive organisation and recorded an average of five steals per game. In attack, he was well aware of the opportunities offered by defenders and was able to take advantage of the empty space between them and took an active finishing role in extended fast breaks.







## ARKADIUSZ MORYTO

The 24-year-old right wing played seven times at the tournament, scoring 46 goals from 61 shots (75 per cent). He was successful with 21 penalty shots and was a master at completing direct fast-breaks with his pace particularly impressive.

Arkadiusz's shots from the wing position showed a varied picture, on one hand waiting in the air (shooting in the descending phase of the jump, i.e. delayed), during which he searched for the goalkeeper's sensitive points near the body or around the head – while on the other hand he was able to shoot the ball into the goal during the take-off phase of the jump with a small and swift movement.

When the Polish team was using winger running-in tactics, Arkadiusz was not afraid of the opportunity even when in the line player position – he hit the goalkeeper with a very gentle movement of the wrist when he shot at goal.



# PLAYERS FOR THE FUTURE



## JOHANNES GOLLA

German line player Johannes Golla played seven games at the EHF EURO, scoring 28 times from 36 attempts (78 per cent), recorded an average of five steals and 67.14 passes per game. The 24-year-old understood the game well with his teammates and was ready to receive the ball even in the most unexpected situations, where he was able to get the ball even from the strong grip of a defender.

He handed the ball perfectly with either hand, plus, with his body – and ‘free arm’ – he held off defenders from areas where the ball had arrived for him. This also happened in ‘pick and roll’ actions. If it wasn’t necessary, he never made a dive-shot shot because he didn’t want to waste time on quick retreatment. Johannes is a player with acrobatic dexterity who can score a goal even from the most difficult posture.



# PLAYERS FOR THE FUTURE



## VIKTOR HALLGRIMSSON

At just 21 years old, Viktor Hallgrímsson's impressive performances throughout the championship saw him named in the All-star Team. In the eight matches he played, the young keeper saved 51 of 168 shots (30 per cent), propelling him into the spotlight as one of Europe's elite goalkeepers.

Despite his height, he competed with shorter goalkeepers in terms of agility, dexterity and possessed a high level of coordination. Here we saw a fast-moving, well-advanced player who created well to unexpected and tricky shots. Starting from a widespread position, he was also able to defend the side he has chosen from a wide, outstretched position and, if necessary, deflected the ball to the ground for a fraction of a moment.

Against shots from close range, Viktor followed and focused on the attacker's movements, did not trick and did not show his opponents at the last-minute what his intentions were. Finally, the goalkeeper also focused on closed, full-body protection against shots from wingers.



# CONCLUSIONS & FINDINGS



- Unfortunately, Covid-19 had a big influence on the championship. It hindered teams' preparation due to the protocols in their respective countries. Teams also had to deal with infected players, which forced them into changes in tactics and personnel. The end of the Olympic cycle also led to several personnel changes. As a result, the tournament saw nations give experience to young and talented players.
- It was a successful organisation between two countries in five host cities.
- The opening match saw 20,000 fans watch Hungary v Netherlands. The bronze medal match and the final were watched by 14,238.
- Sweden won their fifth Men's EHF EURO title and first since 2002.
- The Instant Video System was used 55 times across the 65 matches at the championship, at an average of 0.85 times per match. The average time spent on reviewing a video replay was one minute and forty seconds per situation.
- The research of real-time data is once again crucial to the development of handball because it can modify training methods and help players improve their qualities.
- The most important development in the approach to this analysis was the focus on providing increased visual aids for coaches.

The All-Star Team was chosen through a fan vote attracting over 10,000 votes via the Home of Handball App, combined with the views of a panel of EHF experts. None of this year's All-Star Team was named in the team in 2020.



**GOALKEEPER**

Viktor Hallgrímsson



**LEFT BACK**

Mikkel Hansen



**RIGHT BACK**

Mathias Gidsel



**LINE PLAYER**

Johannes Golla



**MVP**

Jim Gottfridsson



**LEFT WING**

Milos Vujović



**CENTRE BACK**

Luc Steins



**RIGHT WING**

Aleix Gómez



**BEST DEFENDER**

Oscar Bergendahl



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