



**EHF CHAMPIONSHIP
HANDBALL**

EHF M20 CHAMPIONSHIP 2. 2022 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

16 – 24 July 2022 Varna, Bulgaria

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1. Introduction

Organization

The Men's 20 EHF Championship 2 took place in Bulgaria from 16 to 24 July 2022. The host of the Championship was Bulgaria, which took the organization of 2 consecutive EHF Championships in this summer. As a host nation, Bulgaria itself also took part in the Men's 20 EHF Championship 1. By this, Bulgaria was experienced of hosting of more competitions of this type, and the Bulgarian Handball Federation proved to be a good organizer and the competition went without any major hitches. The matches were played in Varna. Varna is a true handball city, and hosted the 2021 Beach Handball European Championship. The 'Palace of culture and sports' was the hall where all matches took place. This hall has the capacity for 5500 spectators.

Event

The matches were all played in Varna. 10 teams were invited to participate in this EHF Championship, as followed: Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Luxembourg, Great Britain, North Macedonia, Switzerland, Romania, Ukraine and Kosovo. The system of the competition was such that 2 groups were formed in the Preliminary Round. Group A consisted of Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Luxembourg and Great Britain. And group B of North Macedonia, Switzerland, Romania, Ukraine and Kosovo. After the matches played in each group, the first two teams from each group advanced to the semifinals. The other teams played for ranking between 5th and 10th place. Overall, 29 matches were played at the EHF Championship. All the results for the group phase of the competition can be found at the following link:

<https://www.eurohandball.com/en/competitions/national-team-competitions/men/m20-ehf-championship-2022/FT6gzSNBgSXN4y6xnJM0rw/bul-men-s-20-ehf-championship2-2022/>

2. Quantitative analysis

The final ranking of this tournament shows that Israel, after a thrilling finale, won the gold medal. This is a big win for the country, because this give them the way to be in the process for qualifying for the IHF 2023 World Championship. Romania won, after losing the final with a penalty shoot-out, the silver medal. Switzerland, another big handball country, secured themselves of the bronze medal after beating Greece in the bronze medal game. For Greece, reaching the bronze medal game, is another improvement of their talent development process. Something they started with a few years ago. The rest of the ranking can be found in table 1.











Ranking		
1	 Israel	4.  Greece
2	 Romania	5.  North Macedonia
3	 Switzerland	6.  Ukraine
		7.  Luxembourg
		8.  Great Britain
		9.  Lithuania
		10.  Kosovo

Table 1: Final Ranking of the M20 EHF Championship 2

The winner of this tournament, Israel, also delivered the Top scorer of this event. Or Refael Levi scored 43 goals in 6 games. A big contribution to the gold medal win of Israel. A surprising name on the list, securing the second place, is Ardin Berisha. A talented player, but the surprise is that he was playing for Kosovo, the team that became 10th and last this championship and only scored 110 goals in 5 matches. The 3th place ranked player comes from the other finalist, Romania, and scored 32 goals, Erik Leonard Pop.

Top Scorers 2022	
 Levi, Or Refael Israel	43
 Berisha, Ardin Kosovo	36
 Pop, Erik Leonard Romania	32

Table 2: Top scorers of the tournament

The All-Start Team of this events is created by the four nations who also played the semifinals.



Goalkeeper	Tal Peled	Israel
Left Wing	Noam Leopold	Switzerland
Left Back	Lionel Mirdita	Switzerland
Centre Back	Konstantinos Kotsionis	Greece
Right Back	Adrian I. Stanescu	Romania
Right Wing	Cohen Nadav	Israel
Lineplayer	Calin Dedu	Romania
Best Defender	Eleftherios Paqiatis	Greece
Top scorer	Rafael Levi Or	Israel
MVP	Jann Bamert	Switzerland

Table and figure 3; All-Star Team

Another parameter of a youth tournament is the Team Fair Play. Developing players who have respect for the opponent and the game. In this ranking Lithuania scored the best, as they, by far, had the lowest number of 2min suspensions. Also Switzerland, one of the semifinalists, scored good on this table. With only 24 2min suspensions in 6 matches, in which 1 ended up in a red card after 3rd suspension, they scored a lot better than the other semifinalists. Romania, the silver medal winner, for example ended up on the 10th place in this table. Most of this is because of 3 direct red cards, and 1 red card after 3rd suspension. But they also received, by far, the most 2min suspensions, 38 in 6 games. If we compare this to Israel, the other finalist, this is 16 minutes more with 1 player down. In this, Israel improved from their last tournament in 2021, where they received 5 more suspensions in the same amount of matches.

Team Fair Play

Rank	Team	Points		RCR	RC	RCS	2Min.	YC	MP
		Avg.	Total						
1	Lithuania	9.0	45	0	0	0	21	3	5
2	Switzerland	9.8	59	0	0	1	24	7	6
3	Great Britain	10.0	60	0	0	0	28	4	6
4	Luxembourg	10.2	61	0	0	0	29	3	6
5	Israel	11.7	70	0	0	1	30	6	6
6	Greece	12.5	75	0	0	0	34	7	6
7	Ukraine	12.5	75	0	1	0	28	4	6
8	North Macedonia	13.5	81	0	0	2	35	3	6
9	Kosovo	14.4	72	0	1	1	26	1	5
10	Romania	21.3	128	0	3	1	38	3	6

Total Points = (Direct Red Card) x 15 + (Red Card after 3rd Suspension) x 4 + (2Min) x 2 + (YC) x 1 / MP

Table 4; Team Fair Play

3. Qualitative Analyses

a. Attack

Statistics

During this tournament, all teams together scored 1533 goals in 29 matches. This is an average of 52.86 goals per match, and 26,43 goals per team. If we compare this to a Men's European Handball Championship this is a slightly lower number of goals scored. In 2021, at the 15th Men's u19 Championship the average was 28.67 goals per match, so over 2 goals more scored per match.

If we watch the individual teams, the ranking is as follows:

Top scored goals per game average		Least scored goals per game average	
Romania	33,33	Ukraine	26,17
Switzerland	32	Kosovo	22
Greece	30,67	Great Britain	20,8
Israel	30	Lithuania	20,6
North Macedonia	27	Luxembourg	20

Table 5; Average goals per game

As we can see in table 5, Romania, the silver medalist, was with 33,33 goals per match the most successful team in attack this championship. The winner of this tournament, Israel, scored average 3,33 goals less per game.

In table 6 we can see that top scoring teams of this tournament, and the semifinalists, also were the most efficient teams in scoring goals from shots on target. North Macedonia, number 5 in ranking of average scored goals per game, is an exception in the relation between those to statistics. They are ranked 9th on efficiency with only a 52.8% success rate from shots on goal. Besides Romania, who produced the most shots of this tournament (316 shots), North Macedonia was second in this list with 307 shots.

Top teams in efficiency of shots scored		Lowest teams in efficiency of shots scored	
Switzerland	63.6%	Lithuania	57.5%
Romania	63.3%	Luxembourg	56.6%
Greece	62.8%	Great Britain	54.8%
Ukraine	60.2%	North Macedonia	52.8%
Israel	59.8%	Kosovo	44.9%

Table 6; Shot efficiency per team

So, the semifinalists are all in the top ranked attacking teams, but if we focus more in detail, Israel, the gold medal winners, was the lowest team of those 4 countries in attacking statistics. So, we can conclude that the attacking efficiency and goals scoring statistics can predict the top teams of a tournament but is not a direct predictor for the winner of a match.

Top 4 teams of the Championship

If we focus more on the top 4 teams of this tournament, we see that the matches between those teams were very close in the semifinals and the finale. All the matches had a difference of maximum 3 goals, and 2 matches who ended up in a penalty shoot-out.

Semi final 1	Greece - Romania	32-32 and 33-35 after shoot-out
Semi final 2	Israel – Switzerland	32-29
Final	Israel – Romania	33-33 and 38-36 after shoot-out
3-4 place match	Switzerland - Greece	26-23

Table 7; Medal games

All these matches ended up above the 26,43 goals per team average, besides the 3-4 place match between Switzerland and Greece. Israel both times scored above their tournament average, with 32 and 33 goals in normal playing time (with an average of 30 goals per match). While Switzerland (29 and 26 goals, with a tournament average of 32) and Romania(32 and 33 goals, with a tournament average of 33,33) both of their last two matches stayed below their averages. So, Israel, for securing the win in these games, showed their best attacking performances when it was necessary.

If we look where these teams created their changes and scored their goals, the following figure (figure 8) gives us more insight.

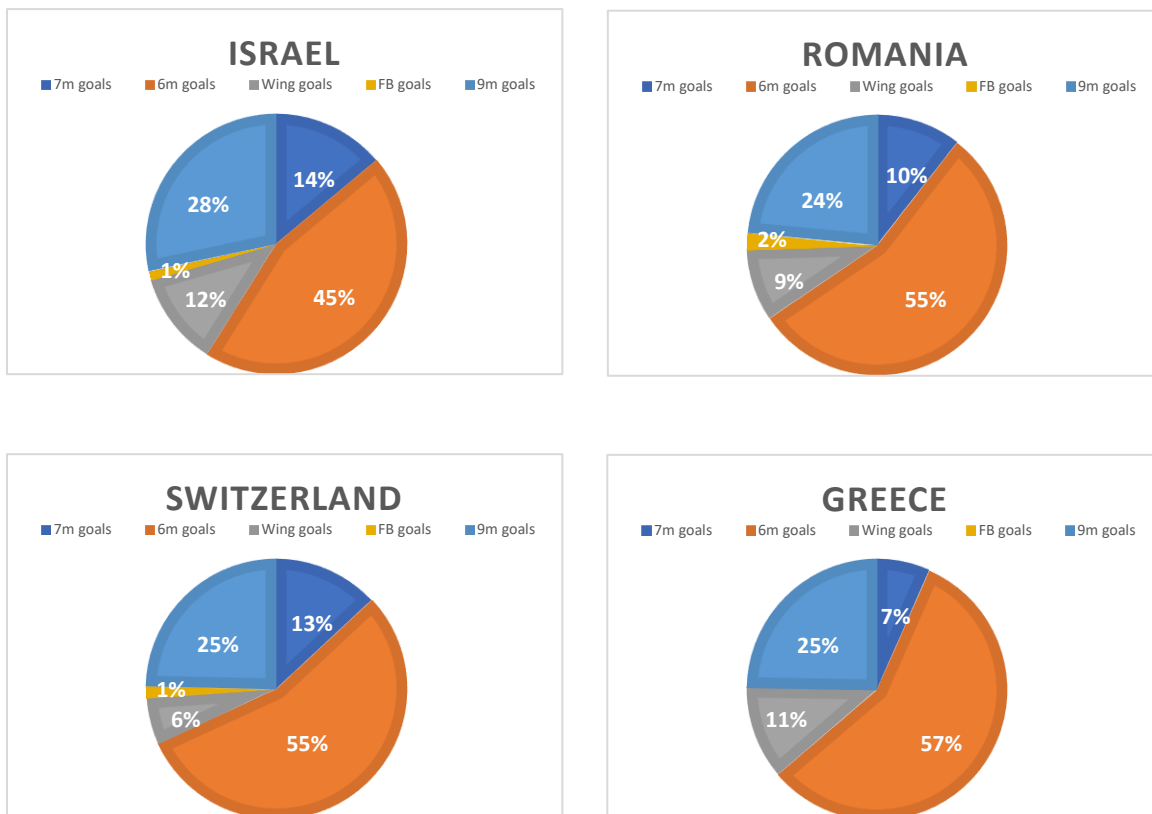


Figure 8; scoring position per team

All the top 4 teams of this tournament scored the most of their goals from 6-meter shots. But Israel, the winner of this tournament, had the best variation in scoring positions. If we focus more on the attack of Israel, the 9-meter shots is something we need to discuss. Because Israel was with the highest number of 9-meter shot goals(51 in total) the most successful of the 4 top teams. They also scored 21 goals from the wings, out of 33 shots, the best of the 4 teams. Switzerland created by far the most 6-meter shots(181 in 6 matches) and scored 114 of them. If you compare this with the winner of this tournament, Israel only scored 81 goals from 6-meter, out of 123 shots.

The 7-meter efficiency of this tournament seemingly does have a great impact on the result of the matches. A percentage of 75% would be considered as successful in top level national teams, and all medal winners are close to this percentages, as we can see in table 9.

	7-meter efficiency		7-meter efficiency
Kosovo	81.8%	Ukraine	67.9%
Romania	77.8%	Lithuania	66.7%
Switzerland	77.1%	Luxembourg	64.3%
Israel	73.5%	Greece	63.2%
Great Britain	68.0%	North Macedonia	53.3%

Table 9; 7-meter efficiency

Organized attacks

In organized attacks, mainly all the teams played structural attacks with position changes, as we know from modern senior handball. The patterns they use, are common. Most of the teams, especially the top teams of this tournament, were very strict in playing from this kind of structures. Now we will show some of these positional changes, and their most used strategies. What was obvious, is that most of the times (70% of the times) these structures were played from the left side of the attack. Some of the teams uses the 7 against 6 in attack, like Romania did in the gold medal match.

1. Lineplayer-cross

Step 1 – line players runs around the center back, gets the ball, and passes to the right back



Step 2 – the line player takes position and the right back opens to the ‘new center back’

Step 3 – the end situation – this is the most created end situation where the solutions started.



Solutions:

My observation is that most of the times, this structure is played for the following solutions;

- First of all, isolation the center defenders to get a clear 1 against 1 situation for the back player. This player made their decision of what the defender chooses to do. Did they stay down, the back player took a direct shot from 9-meter. Did the defender come up, the back player made a 1 against 1 actions.
- Second option was an extra pass to the left or right back. Depending on where the line player was, those players had a 1 against 1 or 2 against 2 situation with the line player, they most of the time took.
- Sometimes the back player who ended up in a 1-1 situation, gave a direct pass to the wing player.

- Some teams added some extra crosses (like Romania liked to do), a direct action without playing the full steps of this structure or a wing to the line transition (like Israel did), as a variation.

2. Back-cross without ball

Step 1 – the centre back and left back changes positions while the ball is in the air to the right back



Step 2 – the end situation – this is the most created end situation where the solutions started.

Solutions:

My observation is that most of the times, this structure is played mainly for the same options as *structure 1 the lineplayer-cross*. Isolating the center defenders and take decisions from that, because of the end situation with the line player was mainly the same in both structures. What we saw more in this structure was;

- Direct shots from the back players – teams use the back-cross without ball for bringing a shooter in the right position
- This structure is used a lot to add extra crosses with the back players after the back-cross without ball, and so, bringing another back in position to shoot through the center of the defense.

3. Wingplayer transition to the line

Step 1: Line player takes position between the last 2 defenders, the wing runs in



Step 2; the wing takes position on the other side, the back player gets the attention of a third defender

Solutions:

My observation is that most of the times, this structure is played for the following solutions.

- Attracting the attention of a third defender to create a numerical superiority on the other side

- A 2 against 2 situations for the back player with the wing who is on the line now. A direct shot from the back player is an option who is used a lot. Especially with teams who had a good shooter on right back
- A direct 1 against one situation for the center back against the center defender
- Putting the pressure on the wing defenders. One solution was creating space in the second phase of this attack on the outside of the field, where the wing player left his position. The other was where the wing run all the way to the other side of the field, between the last defenders, in which situation that wing defender had to make decisions in positions and timing.

4. Crossing with ball

This is the normal crossing with ball where the center back goes in front of the right or left back. My observation is that most of the times, this structure is played for two main reasons. The mostly used reason was to bring the left or right back in shooting position in the center of the field. The other reasons was to disorganize the two center defenders, in communication for who is responsible for the line player.

b. Defense

Team	Formation of organized defense
Israel	6-0 classic on 8 meter and with pressing when possible (LP position) 5+1 on the best opponent player, when +5 goals down
Romania	6-0 classic on 8-meter with pressing, especially on LB and RB 5-1 focus on LB
Switzerland	6-0 classic on 8 meter, aggressive
Greece	6-0 on 9- 9.5 meters with initiative on stealing the ball 5-1 defense putting pressure on the center back
North Macedonia	6-0 with initiative on stealing the ball 5-1 and 3-2-1
Ukraine	6-0 classic
Luxembourg	6-0 classic on 8-meter with pressing, especially on LB and RB 5+1 on the best opponent player
Great Britain	6-0 classic
Lithuania	6-0 classic on 8-meter with pressing, especially on LB and RB 5-1 classic focus on disturbing the center back
Kosovo	6-0 classic 5-1 classic focus on disturbing the center back

Table 10; Formation of organized defense per team

Tactical defense formations were mostly determined by the most common systems set in modern international top handball. The coaches mostly chose zone 6-0 and 5-1 defense, with their own modifications. The classic 6:0 defense was used by all teams at this Championship, as either a primary or secondary defense option. The option for solving the situation of cutting this zone formation was a transformation to a 5+1 defense. Other defense systems of deep defense were also used, but only in cases several minutes before the end of the match, when the team that was in score deficit would try to compensate by pressing someone out or a 3-2-1 defense.

We need to point out North Macedonia. The most dynamic team in organized defense structures, switches a lot between 6-0, 5-1 and sometimes 3-2-1 defense. In numerical superiority they sometimes defend 5+1 on the best opponent attacker. With these switches, they disturb the attack of the opponent a lot, which we can see in some 2 or 3 goals run after a switch, and Time-outs called in by the opponent.

Israel, had a strict 6-0 defense structure. They only changed sometimes, for example when they had a disadvantage in score of +5 goals against Greece in the main round. Because of this type of defense, they received a lot of 9-meter shots.

The defense of Switzerland looked the most dynamic and mobile of all, especially in turning from defense to contra-attack with the team. The cooperation with the goalkeeper looked well, as we will discuss in paragraph d. They looked to have a consistent defending team with the defense and goalkeepers.

Romania is the top 4 team with the most tactical changes in defense. They tried a lot to disturb the organized attacks of the opponent by pressing on players who need to receive the ball, and they switched sometimes to a zone defense 5-1 where they are more focused on the best player of the opponent. Sometimes on the left-back, but also 'normal' on the center back, like in the gold medal match. This resulted in receiving the fewest shots from 9-meter of the total competition, but in receiving the most near shots of all teams. Especially from the lineplayer and in 1-1 situations.



The defense of Greece looked a lot like their national Men's team. Classic on 9-meter with aggressive wing players. In some matches this resulted in good fast break opportunities for the wings. We suppose they do this to disturb the structured plays of the attack and put the shooters from the opponent under pressure.

c. Numerical Superiority

Most of the teams in this competition used some easy but effective ways to play numerical superiority in attack. Going to 2 line players, in different variations, and playing around the line player block are the most used. We will point the most used tactics out in some pictures.

1. Back player goes to line around the second defender



In the first step, the left back opens the field, goes into the 9-meter and plays the ball to the center back. The left back stays on the line between the first and second defender, the line player is between the third and fourth defender. From this, the center back makes some decisions, after catching the third defender's attention;

- a. Pass the ball directly to the left wing or right wing
- b. Pass to one of the two line players
- c. Pass the ball to the right back, the line players blocks the third defender. Now the right back have a 3 against 2 situation.

This structure is the main 6 against 5 structure of Israel, Greece and Luxembourg, and other teams also used this sometimes.

2. Line player cross, ending up in a 2 line player situation.



In this structure, the center back is substituted for a line player. In the first two steps, both line players do a cross and take position between the first and second defender, and around the fourth. Mainly the same situation as the first 6-5 structure we described. From this, the left back takes some decisions, after catching the third defenders attention;

- a. A direct shot from the left back, when the third defender doesn't foul him
- b. A pass to one of the two line players
- c. A direct pass to the left or right wing
- d. Pass the ball to the right back, the line players blocks the third defender. Now the right back have a 3 against 2 situation.

This structure is the main 6 against 5 structure of Lithuania and Switzerland, who was very effective with this

3. Playing around the line player block

In all different ways, teams play around the line player block. With only opening the field by a back player, after a change of position of the backs without ball, but also with ball. All with the same endsituation. For our example we use the change of position without ball;



In this structure, the situation effectively starts when the line player, who is between the third and fourth defender, puts a block on the third defender. From this, the (new) center back takes some decisions;

- a. Go for the direct breakthrough when the fourth defender doesn't come
- b. A direct pass to the right wing
- c. Go for the contra pass to the left wing, or left back who has a 1-1 situation
- d. Pass the ball to the right back, who has a 2 against 1 situation with the wing player.

This idea of the structure is the main 6 against 5 structure of Romania, Ukraine, and North Macedonia.

In this chapter, when we discuss the numerical superiority of teams, we need to highlight North Macedonia. They played a lot of variations and different structures with a lot of options. This kind of creativity is exciting to watch, and hard to defend against.

d. Goalkeeper Performance

Team	% of save efficiency	Number of saves
Switzerland	34.9%	73
North Macedonia	31.6%	74
Israel	30.3%	71
Romania	29.9%	75
Ukraine	29.2%	65
Luxembourg	28.7%	54
Greece	27.5%	57
Great Britain	27.5%	57
Lithuania	22.5%	33
Kosovo	18.6%	44

Table 10; Goal keeper performance per team

Statistics

Table 10 shows the overall goalkeepers' save percentage and the total number of saves. Switzerland, North Macedonia, Israel, and Romania hold the first four places. Looking at these percentages, you could say in general that this ultimately affected their final ranking in the tournament. Only Greece, compared to the other 3 semifinalists is a difference. The last two places belong to Lithuania and Kosovo, whose goalkeepers had under 25% of saves, an important benchmark to have the chance of winning matches. Switzerland, the best scoring country in this list, and the bronze medal winner, only received 209 shots in 6 matches to their goalkeeper. Comparing to Romania(251, silver medal) and Israel(234, gold medal) this is a big difference of more than 4 shots on goal per match.

Top 4 teams of the Championship

If we look closer to the best 4 teams of the competition, we see the following goalkeeper statistics per zone;

Team	# of s/s on near shots	# of s/s on 9m shots
Israel	41/138 (29.7%)	27/75 (36.0%)
Romania	52/173 (30.1%)	18/51 (35.3%)
Switzerland	44/126 (34.9%)	23/64 (35.9%)
Greece	30/112 (26.8%)	23/62 (37.1%)

Table 11; goalkeeper performance per zone of the top 4 teams.

Looking to these statistics, we see that the statement that Switzerland did a good job in defense this tournament is supported by these facts. They only received 82 goals from near shots and 41 from 9-meter shots. Romania only received 51 9-meter shots, and of that, only 33 goals. This is only 5.5 goals per match. Impressive if you look to the statistics. But they received by far the most shots (173) and goals(121) from near shots. This could implicate that their organized defense was not strong in the 1-1 and the line player, because the number of wing-shots they received(25) is not a lot more than Israel(0.8 shots per match). In this classification, Israel is not the best ranked team in what kind of statistic, an interesting conclusion for the gold medalist of the championship.

Individual goalkeepers

During this tournament, some of the individual goalkeepers did a good job. Because the main goal of a youth tournament is to develop individual talents for the future, it is good to discuss them. In this ranking, we only watch to goalkeepers who have played in 4 or more matches this championship. Ewen Hunter, the second goalkeeper of Great Britain did a good job. He played in 5 matches, he had 17 stops of 44 shots, a tremendous percentage of 38.6%, especially when we know that Great Britain was not one of the top teams this tournament.

Of the top teams, bronze medal winner's Roman Bachmann scored the best percentage with 36.3% in 6 matches played. He had some important saves during the medal match, and in total he stopped 37 shots during this tournament. What is surprising to see in this list, is that number 4 ranked is his colleague from Switzerland, Jannis Scheidiger. With 36 stops during this tournament, only 1 less comparing to Bachmann, they formed a very good goalkeeper team.

Tal Peled, Israel's goalkeeper playing with number 1, is ranked 9th in the 'goalkeeper stop-percentages-list'. But we need to discuss him because of several reasons. First because he is chosen as the best goalkeeper of this tournament, second because he was important with some stops in the decisive matches. Third because with 43 stops, he had the highest number of stops from the top 10 ranked goalkeepers. He did this in only 4 matches. There were only 3 goalkeepers in the tournament with more stops (Bampatzanidis, Greece with 46 stops; Budko, Ukraine with 47 stops; and Meyers, Luxembourg, with 45 stops) but they did this in 6 matches and with a significant lower % of stops.

Ranking	Name	Country	% stops	Saves/shots
1	Ewan Hunter	Great Britain	38.6 %	17/44
2	Roman Bachmann	Switzerland	36.3%	37/102
3	Kell Meyers	Luxembourg	33.9%	21/62
4	Jannis Scheidiger	Switzerland	33.6%	36/107
5	David Brestovac	North Macedonia	33.0%	38/115
9	Tal Peled	Israel	30.9%	43/139

Table 12; goalkeeper performance

4. Players to watch

During this tournament, some of the players showed that they have the potentials to act on a higher level. These are interesting players to follow further in their development. Some of them of course reached the All Star Team, but others are also very interesting. We pointed out some potential stars per country:

Israel: Tal Peled(GK), Cohen Nadav(RW), Rafael Levi Or(CB), Roi Avraham Solomon(RB)

Romania: Adrian I. Stanescu(Romania), Calin Dedu(LP),

Switzerland: Roman Bachmann(GK), Jannis Scheidiger(GK), Noam Leopold(LW), Lionel Mirdita(LB)

Greece: Konstantinos Kostionis(CB), Eleftherios Paqiatis(Def), Gre Nikolaos Tzortzinis(RW)

North Macedonia: Teodor Todeski(LB), Mihail Ivanoski(RB), Aleksandar Petkovski (RW), Slavcho Schuleski (CB)

Lithuania: Matas Aukstikalnis(LB), Romas Aukstikalnis(CB)

Luxembourg: Nick Peters (LB), Luca Kremer(RB), Meyers (GK)

Kosovo: Ardin Berhisha (LB)

Ukraine; Dmytro Redkyn (RW), Vladysav Shcherbina(LB)

Great Britain = Reuben Wardle (LB)

5. Trend Analysis and Summary

After this tournament I want to draw some clear conclusions. The best team won this tournament, not the best set of players. Israel was the most stable team in this tournament, with only 1 loss, but they hadn't had the best statistics in any category. They had a lot of variation in their attack, a good deviation in tempo changes in the match and they played calm and structured, especially in and against numerical superiority. And, maybe the most important thing for this tournament, they were mentally strong in the critical phases of the tournament.

The gold medal match of this tournament was a real thriller. In the first half, both team were equal all the time. 6-6 after 10 minutes, 12-12 after 20 minutes and 17-17 at halftime. Directly after halftime, Israel took a run. After 40 minutes the score was 26-22 in favor of Israel, despite the 7 against 6 attack of Romania. After 55 minutes Israel was leading with 32-28, and with only 30 seconds to play with 33-31. But Romania managed with some good play, with the two line players to score a goal and achieve a last second 7-meter, which they scored.

But this was the moment where Israel showed their brave heart and their calmness, because in 5 minutes after they 'gave away' the win in this final, they scored all their 7-meter shots. Romania misses the first shot, and so, Israel could crown themselves as the winner of the tournament.

Also, the bronze medal match was a close match with a lot of fighting spirit. Greece had a very good start, Switzerland took over the control, and at the end of the first halve Greece took the lead with their 7 against 6 attack (10-12). In the first 11 minutes of the second half Switzerland directly solved this problem had a tremendous 6-0 run (16-12) and kept Greece away from scoring for 11 minutes. This was the decisive part of the game. They even enlarged the lead with 7 goals. Greece tried their 7-6 attack, a very aggressive 5-1 defense, and even a man-to-man defense. But Switzerland stayed calm, kept scoring goals, and won the bronze medal with a 26-23 victory.

A tournament with some countries who were surprising, like North Macedonia in their defense and creativity and the performance of Ukraine in their last matches. But also some players who were surprising, like number 2 on the top scorer list Ardin Berhisha from Kosovo, but also goalkeeper Kell Meyers from Luxembourg.

Most of the teams were very strict in their defensive structures. Another striking point is that both finalists lost one time in their main round. Greece beat Israel with 8 goals difference (27-19) and Switzerland won with 6 goals from Romania (33-27). This is surprising.

Some impressions and trends during the tournament;

1. Teams mostly played in different variants of 6:0 and 5:1 zone defense formation. Other zone formations were used less or not at all.
2. The total number of scored goals was 1533 in 29 matches, and we saw a match with 80 goals scored.
3. This tournament showed that player versatility and quality of players who enter from the bench are necessary for winning a medal.
4. Goalkeepers were a key factor in the matches. What was noticeable in the top 4 national teams is that the advantage usually did not depend on one goalkeeper but the tandem of both goalkeepers, like Switzerland. Israel, with Tal Peled who reached the All Star Team, showed also that a goalkeeper can be very important, without having continuously tremendous percentages. Timing of being there for the team is even important.
5. This Championship showed that, most of the teams tried to play the modern style of handball with a lot of fast counter attacks and fast throw-offs. The number of goals between the top 4 teams show this, and in the gold medal match, Romania pushes the tempo a lot from the first second.
6. In this tournament, most of the teams used the standard structures for numerical superiority, but also in normal attack.
7. Also, in attack with a numerical disadvantage, almost all teams have a structure where wing players run in, create some traffic for the defense, and run back to position, in which one of the attacking players have extra time to substitute with the goalkeeper.
8. We see a new trends of modern senior handball back in this kind of junior Championships. For example; wing players who take position between defender 1 and 2, and go back in the play to their position. The main goal is to create some chaos for the defense in taking over roles, and to make sure that the second defender can't go high on the back player.
9. The refereeing was excellent throughout the tournament. The referees paid special attention to sanctioning defenders faking a foul with a 2-min suspension. Also, in both medal matches they were very sharp for fouls and suspensions, and the balance between punishing the teams was equal.

We can draw a clear conclusion. All the teams showed their best performances with modern and nice to watch handball, and the Bulgarian Handball Federation managed to organize a very good tournament for all the stakeholders, the second within a month.