



**EHF CHAMPIONSHIP
HANDBALL**

EHF M18 CHAMPIONSHIP 2022 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

07 – 13 August 2022 Tel Aviv, Israel

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Introduction

Organization

The Men's 18 EHF Championship 1 took place in Israel from 7 to 13 August 2022. The host of the Championship was Israel.

The Israelian Handball Federation proved to be a good organizer and the competition went without any major incidents. The matches were played in Tel Aviv. All games will be held in the Shlomo Group Arena, which has a capacity of 3,504 people.

Event

The matches were all played in Tel Aviv. 7 teams were invited to participate in this EHF Championship, as followed: Israel, Lithuania, Greece, Czech republic, Georgia, The Netherlands and Bulgaria. The system of the competition was such that 2 groups were formed in the Preliminary Round. Group A consisted of Cech republic, Greece and The Netherlands, and group B of Israel, Bulgaria, Georgia and Lithuania. After the matches played in the preliminary round the first two teams from each group advanced to the semifinals. The other teams played for ranking between 5th and 7th place. Overall, 15 matches were played at the EHF Championship. All he 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/m18-ehf-championship-2022/mugV0-0XFhI5Oa_Mfk9KjA/isr-men-s-18-ehf-championship1-2022/

Quantitative Aspects

The final ranking of this tournament shows that the Czech Republic, after a thrilling finale, won the gold medal. Besides the win this is also a great result in their talent development as both U20 and U18 teams won their respective Championship. The Czech Republic qualified for the IHF 2023 World Championship and for the M20 EHF European Championship 2024. Israel won, after losing the final with one point , the silver medal. Greece secured after beating Lithuania, the bronze medal. 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	 Czech Republic	4.  Lithuania
		6.  Georgia
		5.  Netherlands
		7.  Bulgaria
2	 Israel	
3	 Greece	

Table 1: Final Ranking of the M18 EHF Championship 1

Results

The top scorer of this tournament is the playmaker of Lithuania Tomas Draksas, he scored an average of almost 10 goals per game. Asaf Sharon right wing of Israel became second and Tzanos Batis of Greece became third with 38 and 37 goals respectively.




Top Scorers 2022		
	Draksas, Tomas Lithuania	48
	Sharon, Asaf Israel	38
	Batis, Tzanos Greece	37

Table 2: Top scorers of the tournament

Team Fair Play

Rank	Team	Points		RCR	RC	RCS	2Min.	YC	MP
		Avg.	Total						
1	Georgia	11.3	45	0	0	0	19	7	4
2	Bulgaria	12.0	48	0	1	0	15	3	4
3	Israel	14.2	71	0	0	0	34	3	5
4	Greece	15.8	63	0	0	1	27	5	4
5	Lithuania	17.0	85	0	1	1	33	0	5
6	Czech Republic	17.5	70	0	1	1	23	5	4
7	Netherlands	17.8	71	0	0	2	28	7	4

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

Table 3: Team Fair Play

In table 3, team fair play is shown. Both team that ended at the last two places have the lowest number of points, The Netherlands the highest, basically due to the high number of 2 minutes suspension. Remarkable to notice that this is mainly due to three players (18 times 2 min in total).

Main individual statistics

During this tournament, all teams together scored 809 goals in 15 matches. This is an average of 53,9 goals per match, and 27,0 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.

Table 4 shows the average goals scored and conceived. Both finalist have the best results on these items compared to the other teams. Please notice the Netherlands, known for their fast and dynamic game at various competitions only scored 25.5 goals on average.

Country	Average goals scored per match scored	Average goals conceived
CZE	33.5	25.0
ISR	33	25.2
GRE	31.5	31.3
LIT	31.2	32.6
NED	25.5	29.8
GEO	28.5	28.8
BUL	21.0	33.3

Table 4: Goals produced and conceived

Below in table 6 we can see the overall match statistics. Unfortunately the official match statistics are not 100% complete and correct. We can still identify that both the Czech republic and Israel have the highest scoring percentage. The table shows that the Netherlands scored 73,4% but those statistics are not complete.

Team	Abbr.	MP	Goals	Shots	Shot-Eff.	7m Penalty Shots		6m Shots (G/S)	Wings	FB	9m Shots (G/S)	Punishments				AS	TO/TF	ST	BS
						G / S	%					YC	2Min.	RC	RCR				
Bulgaria	BUL	4	84	163	51.5	17/27	63.0	49/102			18/34	3	13	1	0	0	0/37	15	0
Czech Republic	CZE	4	134	195	68.7	15/23	65.2	98/139	0/1		21/32	2	20	2	0	1	0/22	22	0
Georgia	GEO	4	98	174	56.3	11/14	78.6	73/107	3/3	0/1	11/49	4	18	0	0	1	0/23	22	0
Greece	GRE	4	104	179	58.1	10/13	76.9	83/141			11/25	4	16	0	0	4	0/24	26	0
Israel	ISR	5	165	245	67.4	16/21	76.2	96/131	1/2		45/84	1	31	0	0	3	0/31	33	2
Lithuania	LTU	5	157	242	64.9	19/24	79.2	100/163	2/5		31/45	0	31	2	0	3	0/22	25	0
Netherlands	NED	4	69	94	73.4	3/8	37.5	46/57			20/29	5	18	0	0	0	0/8	7	0

Table 5: Overall championship statistics

If we look at the shot distribution we can see that the majority of goals are scored from 6 meter. Unfortunately the shots by the line are not shown, because the way the Czech republic scores there goals was very often from the lineplayer.

Israel had the most attempts from outside the 9 meter compared to the other teams , but their efficiency on 9 meter goals is lot lower compared to the efficiency from 6m. However we see some high numbers at other teams

The low efficiency at 9 meter shots is in line with what we see at senior events (figure 1)

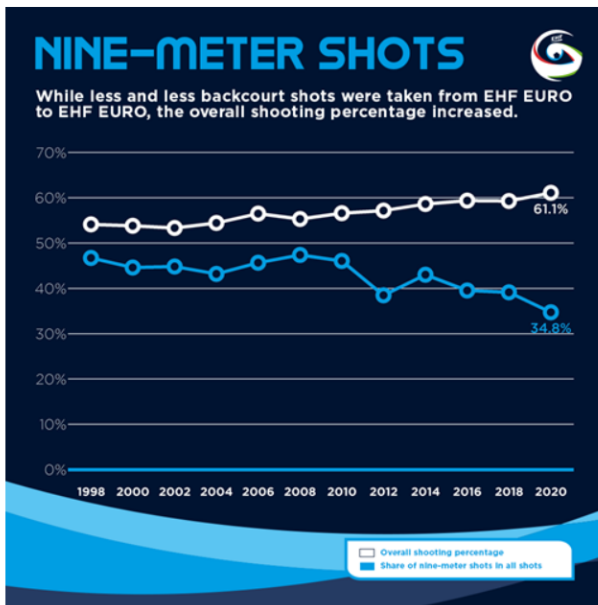


Figure 1: Shot efficiency over time for 9m shots (source www.eurohandball.com)

Goalkeeper performance

Country	Stop percentage
BUL	20.8
CZE	28.4
GEO	29.8
GRE	23.4
ISR	34.0
LIT	22.4
NED	23.9

Table 6: Goalkeeper performance

Israel's goalkeepers had an outstanding performance. Overall they had 34% stops. Tal Paled Israeliian Goalkeeper was not only in the All-star team at this tournament. He was also in the All-star team at the U20 Championship 2022 2 in Varna Bulgaria.

Qualitative aspects

Offence

Most teams played the common attack openings as we know them from modern senior handball. PM and Lineplayer cross, PM and back transition and wing transition are the three most common used attack openings by almost every team in organized attacks. The Czech Republic was very strict in their openings (PM and LP cross and back transition). Israel had a very dynamic and also a lot of variations in their openings. Only a few teams used 7 against 6 attacks. The Netherlands used it mainly in the second half against the Czech republic resulting in a lot of empty net goals against them. A specific opening was the high transition of the wing.

1. Back transition



Figure 2: Back transition

Back transition or Yugo cross is also in the Younger Age Categories played a lot.

Possible options:

Isolation of the center defenders by putting the Lineplayer(LP) between the 2nd and 3rd defender

1. Yugo cross followed by a normal cross to put the back player in a shooting position
2. LP between the 3rd and the 4rd defender. After the Yugo cross the line player will move in contra direction of the ball to isolate the number 3 or 4 defender and to create a 1 against 1
3. Figure 2 shows the attack of Israel. After the Yugo cross the leftback player (LB) puts pressure on the 2nd defender and moves a little bit of space. The left wing(LW) is running in and gets a pass behind the back of the left back

2. PM and LP cross



Figure 3: PM and LP cross

Possible options:

This is next to the back transitions one of the most common opening and used by every team in the competition against both 6-0 and 5-1. A lot of teams also use this in minority situation. Before the PM - LP cross is carried out both wings and backs make a cross to get some extra time

1. Isolation the center defenders to create 1 against 1 situation for the back player. This player made their decision of what the defender chooses to do.
2. Additional pass to the left or right back. Depending on the position of the line player a 1 against 1 or 2 against 2 situation with the line was created
3. Additionally the back player who ends up in a 1-1 situation, gives a direct pass to the wing player.
4. Israel played a number of times with a wing to line transition to create a mismatch.
5. Additional crosses after the PM - LP transition

3. Wing transition



Figure 4 Wing transition

Possible options:

1. Attracting the attention of a third defender to create a numerical superiority on the other side
2. A 2 against 2 situations for the back player with the wing who is on the line now or a 1 against 2 on the outside with back- and lineplayer
3. Direct 1 against one situation for the center back against the center defender
4. Putting the pressure on the wing defenders.

In the situation shown in figure 4, the LW moved slowly back to create a mismatch with the outside and inside defender.

4. High running in of the wing

This opening is used more often nowadays. Traditionally this was only used against 5-1 defense, but nowadays more and more also against a 6-0. The Right wing player (RW) is coming around the backplayers as shown in figure 5.

Possible Options:

1. RW goes for the 1 against 1 (figure 5)
2. RW crosses with the LB to create a shooting situation for the LB
3. RW runs back to the wing position to create a mismatch in the defense. Backplayers will pass the ball back in the direction of the right wing



Figure 5 High running in of the wing

Numerical Superiority

The two options that were mostly used in this tournament where the transition to two line players and the fake cross of the PM with the LP.

Transition to 2 line players



Figure 6 Superiority – transition to 2 lineplayers

In the first step, the left back opens the field by going very wide, passes the ball to the PM and goes as a 2nd LP to the line between the 1st and 2nd defender. In this case the LB can be a

real LB but sometimes also a LP is put in this position. The 2nd LP is between the 3rd and the 4th defender. The PM is putting pressure on the 3rd defender.

Options:

1. Pass the ball directly to the left wing or right wing
2. Pass to one of the two line players
3. Pass the ball to the right back, the line players blocks the third defender to create a 3 against 2 situation

Almost all countries used this option. In Figure 6 we see that Greece extended the option by allowing the RW to pass the ball with a Kempa pass to the PM. They used this option a number of times.

Fake transition of PM and LP



Figure 7 – Superiority Fake PM – LP cross

This opening was used besides the transition to two line players, a number of times. The PM makes a fake cross with the LP and passes the ball to the leftback. The PM runs into the line. The LB needs to choose

Options:

1. LB moves between 1 and 2 and either shoots or passes to the left wing
2. LB creates space by moving to the right and passes the ball directly to the right wing
3. Pass to one of the two line players (see figure 7)
4. Pass the ball to the right back, the line players blocks the third defender to create a 3 against 2 situation

Defense

Country	Defense system
Czech Republic	6-0 with very aggressive 2 and 5 defenders Extremely good defense, also in 7-6
Israel	Mainly 6-0 classical style on 8 meters, pressing when possible
Greece	6-0 classic 5+1 with checking of the best player 5-1 classic in superiority
Lithuania	6-0 classical 5-1 classical and under pressure it would change more into a 3-2-1
Netherlands	6-0 classical 5-1 classical 5+1 checking the best players
Georgia	Classical 6-0
Bulgaria	6-0 classical 5-1 in the situation they are some goals behind

Table 7: Various Defense systems

It is typical to see that all teams had the 6-0 as their main defense system. Traditionally but for example the defense of both Czech Republic and of Israel both were very effective. The 6-0 defense of Czech Republic was outstanding, very aggressive and with an outstanding cooperation in the defense.

Figure 8 shows the Israelian 6-0 defense against the PM - LP cross. Remarkable is the deepness of this 6-0 defense creating a very effective defense wall.



Figure 8: 6-0 defense Israel PM-LP cross

Figure 9 shows the 6-0 defense of the Czech Republic and especially the role of defender 2 and 5. They are able to close the center in such way, that the attackers are making all kind of technical errors.



Figure 9: 6-0 Defense Czech Republic

1st, 2nd, 3rd wave, Throw-off



Figure 10: 2nd wave The Netherlands

This tournament had a lot of fast breaks and fast throw offs. Technical errors and good defense resulted in a lot of opportunities to play fast.

In figure 10 we show the 2nd wave of The Netherlands. Traditionally their way to score a lot of easy goals. It is played in such way that always the LB or RB puts a lot of pressure on the outside to create a 1 against 1 or a 2 against 2 in the center.

Trend Analysis

Some impressions and trends during the tournament;

1. Teams mostly played in different variants of 6:0 and in some cases 5:1 zone defense formation. Other zone formations were used less or not at all.
2. The total number of scored goals was 809 in 14 matches, and very often the teams scored more than 30 goals
3. Percentage stops by the goalkeepers were overall not high, but this tournament sowed the importance of the cooperation between defense and goalkeepers is determining for the success.
4. 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.
5. In this tournament, most of the teams used the standard structures for normal attach and numerical superiority

6. Also, in attack in minority, almost all teams have a structure where very often a PM-LP transition is used in combination with a wing player running in, create some traffic for the defense. The wing player will then and run back to his position, to create both a mismatch and to allow extra time to substitute with the goalkeeper.
7. We see new trends of modern senior handball back in this kind of junior Championships. For example; high running in of the wing against 6-0, wing players who take position between defender 1 and 2, and go back in the play to their position.
8. 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.

Outstanding Players

All-star Team

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

Name	Country	Position
Tal Peled	Israel	Goalskeeper
Ben-OR Gonen	Israel	Left wing
Jonas Josef	Czech Republic	Left back
Tomas Draksas	Lithuania	Centre Back
Daniel Erebai	Czech Republic	Right back
Asaf Sharon	Israel	Right wing
Konstantinos Koutoulogenis	Greece	Line Player
Daniel Bláha	Czech Republic	Best Defender
Dimitrios Panagiotou	Greece	MVP
Tomas Draksa	Lithuania	Topscorer

Table 8: All-star team

Players to keep in focus

Country	Players to keep in focus
BUL	Mario Marev (LW/PM)
CZE	Jonas Josef (LB) Daniel Erebai (RB)
GEO	Sandro Darsanio (RB) Vakhtang Khelisupali (LW)
GRE	Konstantinos Koutoulogenis (LP) Dimitrios Panagiotou (PM)
ISR	Tal Paled (GK) Asaf Sharon (RW)
LIT	Tomas Draksa (PM) Titus Janusonis (RB)
NED	Jur Eussen (LB) Evan de Lange (GK)

Table 9: Focus Players

Summary/Conclusion

Host Israel eased easily through the tournament with a very dynamic and intense way of playing the game. They had 3 straight wins in the preliminary round and also in the semi-final they were able to beat Greece a team that played surprisingly interesting handball.

Czech Republic the other dominating team could also easily reach the final but applying their physical game with two outstanding back players and a very physical and intense way of defense to reach the semi-finals unbeaten, advancing from a three-team group with two wins.

In the final Israel could build a three-goal advantage (9:6) after 17 minutes and remained ahead at the break. However, the Czech Republic took control after a 3:0 run midway through the second half. When Jonas Josef scored his 10th goal to give the Czech Republic a 23:19 lead with less than 10 minutes remaining, they were seemingly heading for a comfortable victory. But with a goalless period of almost seven minutes, the Czech Republic had to prevent Israel from scoring in the last two minutes to claim the title.

Based on the description above we can conclude that this was a very intense and well organized tournament, that got the final it deserved. The Czech Republic was the most outstanding team based on a very good way of playing defense enabling them to score easy goals like in the game against The Netherlands. However we also have to compliment Israel, Lithuania and Greece with their results and their interesting way of playing a dynamic game. Something the Dutch teams are known of, but they were never able to play the game they are renowned for.

Nevertheless I believe that all teams had the right intention to participate in this tournament and we wish them all success for the future.

