AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP™

AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP™

TECHNICAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE
AFC PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

It gives me great pleasure to present the combined Technical Report for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™ and the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026™ – a publication that stands as a testament to a landmark year for women's youth football across our great Continent.

The 2026 editions marked a significant turning point in our journey toward inclusivity and excellence. For the first time, both tournaments expanded to a 12-team format, a strategic move guided by our Vision and Mission to provide more Member Associations (MAs) with the opportunity to compete at the highest level. This expansion has not only increased the volume of matches but also showcased the determination and desire of our MAs to strengthen their technical standards in the women's game.

I wish to offer once again my warmest congratulations to our champions. In Thailand, Japan displayed remarkable technical mastery to secure a record-extending seventh U20 title, while in China PR, DPR Korea reaffirmed their dominance by capturing a record fifth U17 crown. It is a truly extraordinary feat to note that these two powerhouses have now faced each other in an astonishing 14 U20 and U17 Final encounters overall. Their consistent ability to meet at the pinnacle of Asian football serves as a global benchmark for elite youth development.

Beyond the podium, the 2026 cycle was defined by historic breakthroughs that spanned the Continent. We celebrated the return of Thailand and Vietnam to the U20 Knockout Stage after more than two decades, alongside the historic first-ever Quarter-final appearance by Uzbekistan. Furthermore, the spirited debut of Bangladesh in the U20 competition and India's progression to the knockout rounds in the U17 tournament, underscore a new era of competitiveness. These milestones prove that talent development in women's football is flourishing more systemically and intentionally across our MAs.

Both tournaments served as vital pathways to the global stage, with our top performers securing their places at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Poland 2026 and the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Morocco 2026—including a debut qualification for the latter by Australia—and I am confident that our young heroines will continue to uphold Asia's reputation for excellence on the world stage.

The production of this report was made possible by the meticulous work of our Technical Observers Team, whose expertise has translated the action on the pitch into the comprehensive analysis found in these pages. I thank them for their dedication to Asian football, and I am fully confident that these data-driven insights will serve as an invaluable roadmap for coaches, technical directors, and MAs as we strive toward our collective goal of ensuring Asian women's football remains at the forefront of the global game.

Crucially, the success of these competitions also reflects the rising standards of our match officials. This report includes comprehensive analyses of our referees, and I am particularly pleased to note that a record number of officials are now emerging from the AFC Referee Academy. A major milestone was achieved when an Academy graduate was appointed to referee the U20 Women's Final for the first time in history. The consistent performance of these officials is a tribute to the Academy's world-class curriculum and our commitment to nurturing elite refereeing talent.

I am truly grateful to The Football Association of Thailand and the Chinese Football Association for their exceptional hospitality, and my thanks go to all our MAs, players, and match officials for their unwavering commitment to excellence.

Finally, I wish to express my earnest appreciation to my esteemed colleagues from the various AFC Standing Committees for their expert guidance, and all our valued stakeholders, including our commercial partners, sponsors and members of the media, for their vital contributions to these tournaments.

Through our collective efforts, we remain dedicated to expanding the competitive opportunities for our emerging stars, ensuring they have the platform to carry forward Asia's proud legacy for generations to come.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President

AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP™

AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP THAILAND 2026™

TECHNICAL REPORT



The final tournament in Thailand culminated the 12th edition of a competition launched in 2002 but the 2026 AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ was the first to feature 12 finalists as opposed to eight in previous editions. Ten of the participants in Thailand had also been on the starting grid at the very recent senior AFC Women's Asian Cup™. The U20 tournament kicked-off barely 11 days after the ball had stopped rolling in Australia. Debutants Bangladesh (the 20th different nation to appear at the U20 finals) selected nine players who had also featured on their squad list in Australia. Although the Uzbekistan playing staff also featured three members who had been at the senior event, the general policy among the other delegations was to avoid repetition.

An additional incentive for the participants was that the tournament in Thailand served to determine the four AFC participants at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup to be played in Poland in September 2026. This honour was earned by the Semi-finalists: China PR, DPR Korea, Japan and Korea Republic.

The 25-match event was staged from 1-18 April at three venues: the 25,000-capacity Thammasat Stadium; the Pathum Thani Stadium holding 15,114 spectators; and during the Group Stage, the 10,000-capacity Nonthaburi Stadium. Kick-off times, split between 16:00 and 20:00, meant that some fixtures required players to cope with humidity and temperatures as high as 38°. An average attendance figure of 132 meant that the competitors were not exposed to the major-tournament atmospheres which had been one of the salient features during the senior tournament in Australia.

The expansion to a dozen teams entailed the injection of Quarter-finals into the match schedule where the two third-placed teams with the best records joined the top two in each of the three groups. Differences in development levels within women's football were illustrated by the fact that, after two matchdays of the Group Stage, the standings in each of the three groups showed two teams with six points and two with none.

Winning margins averaged just over three goals per game and both teams were on the scoresheet in seven of the 25 matches. On their way to the Final, DPR Korea, the champions of Asia and the World at this level, scored 25 goals and conceded none. However, they failed to translate domination into goals during the Final against Japan whose solitary set-play goal allowed them to lift the trophy for a seventh time and complete a senior and U20 double. In both Finals they demonstrated that, even when prevented from displaying their trademark flowing combination football, they were able to perform efficiently when obliged to play on the back foot.

Eight of the technicians at the final tournament were coaching in their native countries. Bangladesh, China PR and India had European coaches at the helm, while the Vietnam team was led by Masahiko Okiyama from Japan. All but two of the technicians were male with Korea Republic's Park Youn-jeong and Thailand's Nuengrutai Srathongvian providing the exceptions.

Captained by AFC's Head of Women's Football, Bai Lili, the Technical Observer Team at the final tournament was formed by Luna Al-Masri (Jordan), Ip Yik Wing (Hong Kong, China) and Konomi Suzuki (Japan).



STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP THAILAND 2026™



The AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™ was held from April 1 to 18, 2026 with an expanded cast of 12 teams, four more than the previous edition.

Matches were played at the Pathum Thani, Thammasat and Nonthaburi stadiums.

Japan defeated DPR Korea 1-0 in the Final, and the two teams, together with Semi-finalists China PR and Korea Republic, qualified for the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Poland 2026.

GROUP A

China PR were the dominant side in Group A, with the 2006 champions advancing to the Quarter-finals with a perfect record of three wins.

They opened their campaign with a 3-0 defeat of Vietnam, which was then followed with a 2-0 triumph against tournament debutants Bangladesh.

A 1-0 win against Thailand confirmed them as the group winners, with the hosts also advancing following victories against Bangladesh (3-2) and Vietnam (4-1).

















GROUP B

Defending champions DPR Korea got their campaign up and running with an impressive 8-0 win against Jordan.

A 6-0 defeat of Uzbekistan set them up for a top-of-the-table clash with Korea Republic, who also sealed progression with a match to spare after defeating Uzbekistan (2-0) and Jordan (2-1).

DPR Korea, however, were in a class of their own in the group decider as the two-time champions cruised to a 5-0 win.







GROUP C

Japan kicked off their bid for a record-extending seventh title with a 6-0 defeat of India and confirmed their Quarter-final spot with a match to spare following a 2-0 win against Chinese Taipei.

Up next to decide the group winners were Australia, who defeated Chinese Taipei and India by 5-0 scorelines to also advance to the Knockout Stage early.

Japan overcame the shock of going behind in the 39th minute to roar to a 5-2 win and confirm the Group C top spot.








QUARTER-FINALS

QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS

JAPAN 4-0 VIETNAM

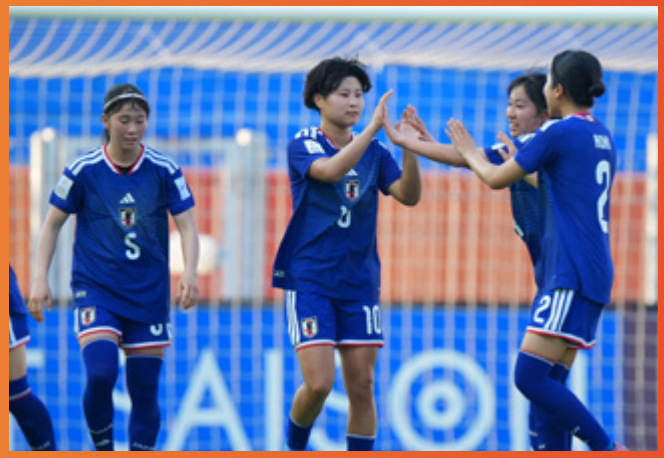
Japan cruised into the last four by overpowering Vietnam 4-0 in their Quarter-final.

Vietnam keeper Le Thi Thu weathered the early storm but could do nothing to stop Mao Itamura from opening the scoring in the 18th minute, with the midfielder picking up the loose ball in a crowded goalmouth and slamming it home.

Natsumi Tago doubled Japan's advantage a minute into added time when she picked up a pass from Rinka Higuchi, spun on her marker and fired into the bottom left corner past a rooted Le.

Noa Fukushima secured the third a minute later, coming from behind the defence to latch on to Hibari Hara's cross and heading past the lunging Vietnamese custodian from the centre of the area.





Le was beaten again in the 61st minute when Itamura notched her second goal by letting loose a beautifully-struck shot from 25 yards that crashed into the top left corner.



CHINA PR 2-1 UZBEKISTAN

China PR sealed their place in the Semi-finals after defeating Uzbekistan 2-1.

The young Steel Roses opened the scoring in the 28th minute when Yu Jiaqi sped down the left flank before delivering a curling cross into the box that was met by Zeng Yujia for a close-range headed finish.

China PR doubled their lead four minutes before the break when Xie Zongmei weaved past several defenders before unleashing a left-footed effort from the left side of the box.

While Ezoza Sevinova saved the attempt, the rebound fell kindly to an unmarked Yu, whose close-range strike grazed the Uzbekistan goalkeeper's glove before finding the bottom-left corner. Mehribon Egamberdieva scored Uzbekistan's consolation in the 70th minute, but they could not find another goal as China PR held out for victory.



DPR KOREA 3-0 AUSTRALIA

DPR Korea produced another sparkling show as they handed Australia a 3-0 defeat in their Quarter-final.

DPR Korea struck after just three minutes when Choe Rim Jong's cross from the right sailed through the Australian defence to find Pak Ok I just outside the six-yard box. The number six showed excellent control to slot the ball past goalkeeper Ilona Melegh into the left corner.





Having kept DPR Korea at bay after conceding early, Australia were dealt a blow in the 74th minute when Rubi Sullivan inadvertently turned the ball into her own net while attempting to clear Ro Un Hyang's strike from the right.

Ro confirmed the win in the final minute of regulation time, slotting the ball past Melegh after the Australia goalkeeper had strayed off her line.



THAILAND 1-2 KOREA REPUBLIC (A.E.T)

Korea Republic squeezed into the last four with a 2-1 extra-time win against a spirited Thailand.

Two-time champions Korea Republic went ahead in the 16th minute when Nam Seung-eun ghosted into the six-yard box and headed Han Min-seo's corner past Thailand goalkeeper Chonticha Panyarung.

Thailand tried to force their way back into the tie and their resourcefulness was rewarded in the 72nd minute when Madison Casteen picked up a pinpoint pass from Kurisara Limpawanich and fired a stinging shot that gave Korea Republic goalkeeper Kim Chae-been no chance at all.

Both sides had early chances in extra-time, with the winner finally arriving in the 106th minute when Park Ju-ha was the recipient of a defence-splitting pass from Jin Hye-rin, with the substitute chipping the ball over Chonticha.





SEMI-FINALS

CHINA PR 0-2 JAPAN

Japan put on a commanding performance to beat China PR 2-0 in their Semi-final clash.

Japan had China PR on the defensive from the start and their steady build-ups paid off five minutes in when Noa Fukushima teed up Mao Itamura, who coolly controlled the ball in the area and, as the opposing defence bore down on her, slammed it past goalkeeper Liu Chen.

Yu Jiaqi had a chance to reply almost immediately for China PR, breaking free of her marker and bursting down the left, but Japan custodian Uruha Iwasaki was quickly off her line to block the shot.

The young Nadeshiko doubled their advantage in the 24th minute through a brilliantly-struck free-kick from Fukushima, who curled her shot from range into the bottom right under a diving Liu.

Even though, China PR tried to force their way back into the tie, it was Japan who had the better chances in the remainder of the match, though the scoreline remained unchanged as they advanced to a fifth consecutive Final.











SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS



DPR KOREA 3-0 KOREA REPUBLIC

DPR Korea breezed into the Final with a 3-0 win against Korea Republic.

A revamped Korea Republic side, with only Kim Chae-been, Yoon Ah-yeong and Cheon Si-woo retained from the team that suffered a 5-0 defeat to DPR Korea in the Group Stage, were able to absorb the early pressure.

The breakthrough for DPR Korea came in the 24th minute with Pak Il Sim catching Korea Republic goalkeeper Kim out of position with a stinging strike from outside the box.

Korea Republic were left further behind in the 34th minute after a neat exchange between Pak Ok I and So Ryu Gyong put Kang Ryu Mi through on goal, with the forward slipping the ball past a rooted Kim.

The tie was put to bed in the 84th minute with Choe Yon A finishing from inside a packed penalty box.




FINAL

JAPAN 1-0 DPR KOREA

Japan edged a dominant DPR Korea 1-0 to emerge champions of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™.

Momoka Sano struck the winner as Akira Ijiri's side clinched a record-extending seventh title at the Thammasat Stadium.

DPR Korea dominated the opening exchanges, going close in the 12th minute when So Ryu Gyong's strike from the edge of the area was pushed out by a diving Uruha Iwasaki and fell to Kang Ryu Mi, whose cut-back to Choe Rim Jong ended with the forward stabbing just wide of the right post from close range.

Iwasaki made an easier save from Choe's tentative shot from the right eight minutes later and collected a similar effort in the 29th minute from So as DPR Korea tightened their grip on the tie.

The Japan goalkeeper then went low to save a point-blank strike from skipper Pak Ok I in the 33rd minute as the Japan defence, scrambling to deal with the continuous pressure, did just enough to go into the break still on level terms.

DPR Korea maintained their offensive approach in the second half, with Choe's floating shot from the right flying across the face of the goal, and Iwasaki making a timely interception to prevent Kang from reaching the ball.

However, Japan turned the match on its head in the 56th minute when Sano came from behind the DPR Korea defence to head home Noa Fukushima's cross off a free-kick past a despairing DPR Korea custodian Pak Ju Gyong.





Buoyed by the goal, Japan pushed forward only to be denied time and time again by their opponents' steady backline. DPR Korea, on their part, went in search of the equaliser, with Kang's attempt from the right in the 71st minute punched away by Iwasaki.

Substitute Choe Yon A's shot from distance five minutes later off Iwasaki's poor goal-kick almost caught the Japan custodian off her line, but the forward's dipping shot hit the woodwork and went out of play as time ran out on DPR Korea.

Japan midfielder Fukushima was named the Most Valuable Player while DPR Korea's Pak won the Top Scorer award with her haul of seven goals. Her compatriot Ju Gyong was named Best Goalkeeper, having conceded only once in the tournament.








WINNING
COACH

IJIRI SEES THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE MOON



"It was quite an emotional moment for me." This might sound like a stock comment from a coach who has stepped onto the podium to receive a winner's medal. But Japan's Akira Ijiri had spoken the words after his team's 4-0 Quarter- final victory over Vietnam. "During the final tournament in Uzbekistan two years ago," he explained, "I was Vietnam's head coach when we played against Japan. And most of the Vietnam players who took the field against us here in Thailand were under my supervision when they were 12 years old. So, emotionally, this match was a little bit complicated."

In Uzbekistan, Ijiri had a glimpse of the dark side of the moon. "We lost 10-0," he reminisced with the AFC Technical Observers, "because I asked my players to go for a result. I think that has been the big difference from one tournament to the next. Many developing teams are focusing on trying not to lose by big margins by defending deep with everybody back. I think the general level has improved, but some teams didn't really challenge us by going for goal."

Asked to comment on the qualities underlying Japan's double at senior and U20 levels, he pointed to "our basic identity and philosophy. Our aim is to display our strengths – technique and high intensity – and to express them consistently. Not only in our national teams but also to all the players in Japan." The follow-up question was whether he had approached the U20 event as a development tournament rather than a quest for gold medals. "I think it's possible to pursue both objectives," was his response. "The basic development idea is for our players to experience six matches – which means achieving results. Because the important thing at this age is to accelerate the speed of decision-making and execution in a high-intensity environment."

WINNING COACH





Although a relative newcomer on the JFA coaching staff, Ijiri had made his debut as assistant coach to the U16 team way back in 2010 before the move to Vietnam. His six-year engagement with grassroots, academy and youth-development work, alongside experience in AFC competitions as head coach of the Vietnam U19 and U20 national teams, have laid solid foundations for the current success story. "I also learned that, because we have limited activities with our national teams, the daily training at clubs is so important. We need close cooperation with clubs and it's important to improve our domestic leagues. We also have to encourage players individually, motivating them to improve themselves, not to feel satisfied with their status quo and to keep trying to reach a level that will make them members of the senior national team."

"The squad here," Ijiri added, "includes 17 players from the WE League – about two-thirds of them are regular starters – two who play in the [second-tier] Nadeshiko League, two high school players who belong to the JFA Academy, one from a WE Academy and one playing abroad at Feyenoord."

The Technical Observers asked for his views on the extensive use of technology by the top teams at the tournament in Thailand. "In terms of data and visual information," he commented, "it's all very detailed and accurate. The important thing is not to overwhelm the players by delivering too much. We try to make it simple and clear. Also, because the players can be very sensitive to this sort of thing, we need to decide what can be shared among the whole group and what can be better delivered individually. We are very careful about selecting what is good to deliver and what is best not to show."

WINNING COACH WINNING COACH





As for the final itself, Ijiri admitted that "the first half was not what we wanted, as we always like to take the initiative in offence and defence. But they played a physical game, were stronger, very collective and pressed us hard. I told my players that despite having a tough time in the first half, we had defended well and not conceded. I also told them to be more offensive and used videos to show them how to do it. The players performed very well, but I'm not satisfied with the result because if we are, they won't become better. They are very young and need to develop more if they are to challenge at the FIFA World Cup. This trophy is not only for us but for the entire football family in Japan who played a big part in developing these players."

The immediate result, however, was that after the painful 10-0 defeat in Uzbekistan, Akira Ijiri was given a glimpse of the bright side of the moon in Thailand.







TECHNICAL TOPICS

TECHNICAL TOPICS

The final tournament in Thailand replicated many of the stand-out features of the senior AFC Women's Asian Cup™ played a few weeks earlier in Australia. During the Group Stage of both competitions, low-block defensive structures were the common denominator among teams facing opposition from a top tier formed by Australia, China PR, DPR Korea, Japan and Korea Republic. For the other seven participants, success was not defined solely by results but rather by performance levels and progression in relation to the past. Reaching the Quarter-finals at both tournaments represented a reward for development work in Uzbekistan, for example, while the AFC Technical Observers, after watching Thailand's performance in the Quarter-final against Korea Republic, noted "Thailand demonstrated both defensive resilience and attacking intent, holding them to a draw in regular time and creating genuine scoring opportunities. Although they ultimately conceded in extra-time, their performance suggested that the gap between top-tier and mid-tier teams is narrowing—not only structurally, but also in terms of playing philosophy and execution". Their view was endorsed by the DPR Korea head coach Han Chol Hak who, in a conversation with the Technical Observers, praised "their ability to maintain tactical shape, perform positional roles consistently and produce moments of individual quality throughout their matches ."





CONSTRUCTION METHODS

Approaches to ball possession were broadly classified into two primary categories: structured build-up play and direct attacking. Teams adopting the former included DPR Korea, Japan, Korea Republic, China PR, Australia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and India. In contrast, Uzbekistan, Jordan, Chinese Taipei, and Vietnam predominantly utilised a direct playing style. This distinction was especially evident during the Group Stage, where competitive demands influenced tactical behaviour. Teams who prioritised a low defensive block sought to progress the ball immediately toward a designated advanced player with minimal numerical support. Uzbekistan, for instance, demonstrated notable effectiveness due to the individual quality of their attacking players. Their vertical and fast-paced attacking transitions were particularly impactful in the Quarter-final against China PR when, in the second half, they generated multiple scoring opportunities.



The four Semi-finalists were teams who dominated possession – except when they met each other. DPR Korea and Japan recorded high average possession rates of 71.5% and 69.4%, respectively, though their approaches to structured build-up differed. Japan demonstrated a high level of tactical adaptability, continuously adjusting their build-up structure in response to the opponent's pressing configuration. Against two opposing strikers, they built with three backs to secure numerical superiority, while against a solo opponent, central defenders took the ball forward to break a first line. This reflected their advanced decision-making abilities and a strong collective understanding of space-exploitation. DPR Korea combined lateral ball circulation with effective use of high-quality long distribution from their right centre-back Ri Kuk Hyang, enabling rapid progression into advanced wide areas.

Despite lesser shares of the ball, Thailand also demonstrated commitment to a possession-based approach, maintaining a proactive playing style regardless of the opponent's defensive organisation. Their build-up was initiated through short-passing combinations involving technically proficient players, with attacking progression frequently led by the central striker Kurisara Limpawanich, with second and third runners enabling effective forward penetration and dynamic attacking transitions.

Japan Build Up Structure

TECHNICAL TOPICS

LOW BLOCK AND HIGH PRESS

During the Group Stage, teams such as Uzbekistan, Jordan, Bangladesh and Chinese Taipei primarily used compact defensive organisations to impede opponents with greater attacking potential. Jordan, for example, deployed a low defensive block and frequently used clearances in response to DPR Korea's high pressing intensity and varied attacking patterns. Then, against Korea Republic, they adjusted to a mid-block structure, maintaining compactness while creating opportunities for quick attacking transitions, particularly by exploiting space behind the defensive line through the pace of their wingers.

Bangladesh adopted a similar approach against China PR, maintaining a compact, disciplined defensive shape while Chinese Taipei, with a minimal share of the ball (17% and 13% against Australia and Japan, respectively), also prioritised defensive organisation. Averages of 36% and 33% of the two teams' passes were of 30m or more, illustrating their emphasis on direct play.

DPR Korea High Press & Transition

Usage of high-intensity collective pressing and counter-pressing was influenced by climatic factors with daytime humidity hovering around 65%-70% and accentuating the effects of high temperatures. The evening matches offered better conditions for high-energy performance. Even so, teams such as DPR Korea, Japan, and Thailand applied a high-pressing approach with constant defensive engagement in advanced areas and rapid ball recovery. However, both Japan and DPR Korea maintained their high-pressing approach even in afternoon matches against strong opponents like Korea Republic and Australia, demonstrating that this is a core aspect of their playing philosophy, supported by strong physical preparation and collective discipline.

Conversely, teams' ability to play out of the high press (or lack of it) emerged as one of the key take-home messages for many of the contestants.

MAKING COUNTERS COUNT

In a tournament where deep defending was such a frequent feature, it was maybe not surprising that counterattacking produced 18% of open-play goals. The eye-catching fact, however, was that only one was a classic back-to-front counterattack from a deep position and, furthermore, it was not scored by one of the defence-minded teams but by silver medallists DPR Korea. It put them 3-0 ahead in the Group Stage victory over Korea Republic when, with defenders chasing back, a vertical pass sent Pak Ok I through on goal.

The most productive category of counterattacking successes was the collective counter after midfield regains – a variety which generated seven goals. Three were derived from advanced counters after high regains; and two stemmed from individual actions. Australia had two successes: the goals by Peta Trimis and Danella Butrus against Chinese Taipei and India, respectively, while champions Japan recorded one advanced and one collective counterattacking success. In other words, even the top possession-based sides were also alert to the possibility of hitting opponents with a fast break before their defensive block could be assembled.

Effective Counters

USING THE WIDTH

As mentioned in the Goalscoring Analysis, Japan and DPR Korea jointly delivered 327 crosses representing 43% of the tournament total. At the same time, they were the two most efficient teams in terms of preventing opponents from crossing the ball. The statistics illustrate the importance of work in the wide areas and the relationships between full-backs and wide midfielders or wingers.



At a tournament where Vietnam were alone in fielding a back line of five as their default setting (although China PR and Korea Republic made occasional use of a three-centre-back set-up), it was generally a question of full-backs rather than wing-backs and their involvement, particularly among the higher-performing teams, was a prominent feature of the tournament. While the dual responsibility of defending and attacking is now a well-established requirement for full-backs in the modern game, a key characteristic observed was the increasing diversity in their attacking roles and functions.

Quality Crosses

Australia provided a clear example of this trend, with left-back Alexia Apostolakis showcasing strong defensive capability while consistently contributing to attacking phases. Both full-backs were required to operate not only in wide areas but also in more central zones, effectively functioning as holding midfielders. When the wingers maintained width, the full-backs moved into an inverted position to support the holding midfielder, adding to central stability. From this structure, the full-back executed underlapping movements to support attacking progression once the ball was circulated to the wide channel. Or, when strikers stretched opponents at the top, wingers came into the middle and full-backs overlapped them. This required a high level of tactical understanding and role clarity within the team's build-up play.

Australia Fullback Movement in Attack

China PR also demonstrated variability in full-back involvement, adjusting the depth and timing of their attacking contributions based on the opponent's characteristics. Their tactical structure allowed full-backs to adopt more advanced positions when appropriate. The goal by right-back Zeng Yujia against Uzbekistan exemplified this approach, as she advanced into the attacking third to meet and convert a cross from the opposite flank. This action highlighted the expectation for full-backs to contribute not only to build-up and progression, but also to final-third effectiveness, including goal-scoring.

Tactical adaptability also formed part of the full-backs' roles and responsibilities – as illustrated when China PR and Korea Republic shifted from a 1-4-3-3 to a 1-3-5-2 structure according to match situations. DPR Korea were also effective in integrating their full-backs into the attack with the left full-back often taking on an inverted role, moving inside to create additional passing options, contribute to chance creation and support goal-scoring actions.

BRINGING THE DEAD BALL TO LIFE

At a tournament where set plays accounted for 22% of the goals and in six matches the deadlock-breaking opening goal was from a set play. And Japan won the title thanks to a free kick when coordinated blocking left the target player free to head into the net. This was ironic as DPR Korea had caught the eye with a wide variety of set-piece options. Their second goal against Australia, for instance, was from a short corner, where they effectively engineered and exploited numerical superiority in a small area.

At free kicks, many teams employed strategies to obstruct the goalkeeper's view, including positioning a few players directly in front of the defensive wall. At corners, there was great diversity, including coordinated blocking movements and compact player groupings around the goalkeeper to create spatial disruption. Success depended on well-rehearsed initial positioning, timing of movement and the effective use of designated target players. Korea Republic's opening goal against Thailand was a clear example of a goal resulting from these coordinated actions.



However (and this was one of the talking points to emerge from the senior tournament which had produced only 10 goals from corners and free kicks) all those actions become irrelevant if the delivery is not good enough. In Thailand, China PR's Wang Aifang, Thailand's Rinyaphat Moondong, and Japan's Noa Fukushima not only scored directly from free kicks but also consistently supplied high-quality deliveries of set plays – as did DPR Korea's Pak Il Sim who scored directly from a corner. At development levels, the importance of training-ground work on the art of striking a dead ball is not to be underestimated.

RAISING THE BAR FOR GOALKEEPERS

"At U20 level, goalkeepers can be expected to demonstrate a level of readiness comparable to senior football. However, inconsistencies in performance, decision-making, and confidence suggest that this expectation is not yet consistently met." The comment by the AFC Technical Observers summarised a tournament punctuated by some brilliant shot-stopping and some errors which had a direct impact on the outcome of matches. Several teams, such as India, Chinese Taipei and Thailand, rotated their goalkeepers and there were also in-game substitutions which appeared to be performance-related.

"From a development perspective," the Observers remarked, "key areas for improvement not only include basic techniques but also the speed of decision-making, particularly when controlling space behind the defensive line, along with the ability to function as an additional outfield player contributing to build-up play and initiating attacks." They also felt that confidence and communication emerged as critical factors with hesitant body language and unclear communication with defenders observed in several matches. "In many countries," they added, "young goalkeepers have limited access to senior match experience, which is essential for building these qualities and the separation of goalkeeper training from team sessions often limits exposure to realistic game scenarios, including decision-making under pressure and involvement in team tactical structures."



TECHNICAL TOPICS
AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP
AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP

THE LAST WORD

Asked to summarise the tournament, the Technical Observers responded "it underscored the growing importance of cognitive skills, high-intensity experience, and specialised positional development.

"For Member Associations, the challenge is to align competition structures, coach education programmes, and development pathways with the evolving demands of the game. This includes investing in coach education that emphasises decision-making and game intelligence, creating opportunities for players to gain senior-level experience, and addressing positional development. The 2026 edition should not be viewed solely as a competition, but as a reference point for future planning and development across the region."







GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

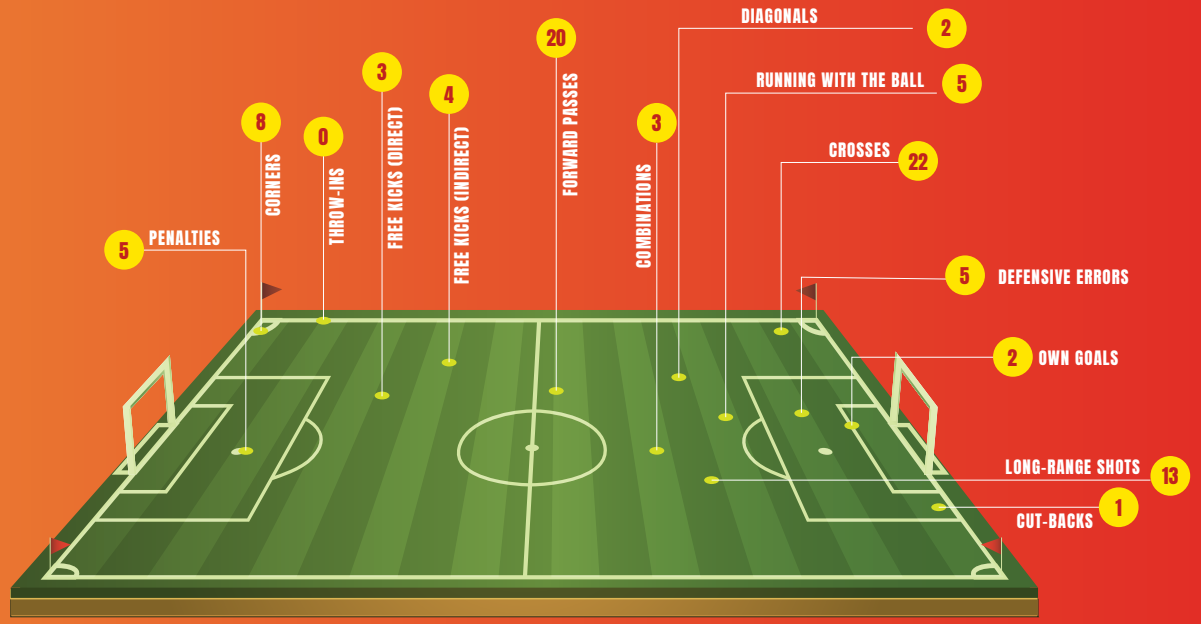
GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

CROSSES, THROUGH PASSES AND LONG-RANGE SHOOTING

Logic was not the winner. The 50% increase in the number of participants did not produce a 50% increase in the number of goals. A total of 93 in Thailand represented an average of 3.72 per game compared with the exceptional 4.375 at the eight-team tournament in Uzbekistan two years earlier. On the other hand, the figure aligns more closely with the 3.64 per match that had been posted a few weeks earlier at the senior AFC Women's Asian Cup™. The accuracy of finishing was not dissimilar either: with roughly two of every five goal attempts on target, the ratio of 1: 2.53 in Thailand was marginally better than the 1:2.6 in Australia. In fact, the average of one goal per 7.34 attempts showed a more significant improvement on the one per 8.39 at the senior event. But the two finalists DPR Korea (25) and Japan (20) supplied almost one-half of the tournament's goals and, as in Australia, the scoring was very unevenly spread – to the extent that while Japan and DPR Korea recorded 20-2 and 25-1 respectively in their goalscoring columns, fellow FIFA World Cup qualifiers China PR's figures were 8-3 and Korea Republic ended with a negative goal-difference of 6-10.

In Thailand, the Group Stage generated 74 goals at 4.11 per fixture, while the overall average was pulled downwards by 19 during the seven knockout ties. After the senior tournament had produced only one draw, the total at the 25-match U20 event was zero, the nearest approximation being the Quarter-final between the hosts and Korea Republic when extra-time was required to break a 1-1 stalemate.

The graphic illustrates how the 93 goals were broken down into 14 open-play and set-play categories.



GOALS FROM SET PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Corners	Direct from / following a corner	8
Free kicks (direct)	Direct from a free kick	3
Free kicks (indirect)	Following a free kick	4
Penalties	Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)	5
Throw-ins	Following a throw-in	0

TOTAL GOALS SCORED : 93

GOALS FROM OPEN PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Combinations	Wall pass / combination move	3
Crosses	Crosses from the wing	22
Cut-backs	Pass back from the bye-line	1
Diagonals	Diagonal pass into the penalty box	2
Running with the ball	Dribble and close-range shot / dribble and pass	5
Long-range shots	Direct shot / shot and rebound	13
Forward passes	Through pass or pass over the defence	20
Defensive errors	Bad back-pass / mistake by the goalkeeper	5
Own goals	Goal by the opponent	2

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

SET PLAYS

The dead ball seems to be bouncing all over the place. In the AFC's Technical Review of the senior tournament, a set-play downturn from 33% to 21% was one of the talking points. A few weeks later, it emerged that the set-play percentage at the Women's U20 event had shot up to 22% from the eye-catching low of 14% in Uzbekistan (where, it has to be said, the dead-ball tally was affected by a total absence of goals from the penalty spot). In Thailand, incidentally, five of six spot kicks were converted. The bottom line is that, while the ball has been bouncing around, the senior and U20 tournaments of 2026 met in mid-air, albeit at a fairly modest level below averages that traditionally oscillate between 25% and something over 30%.

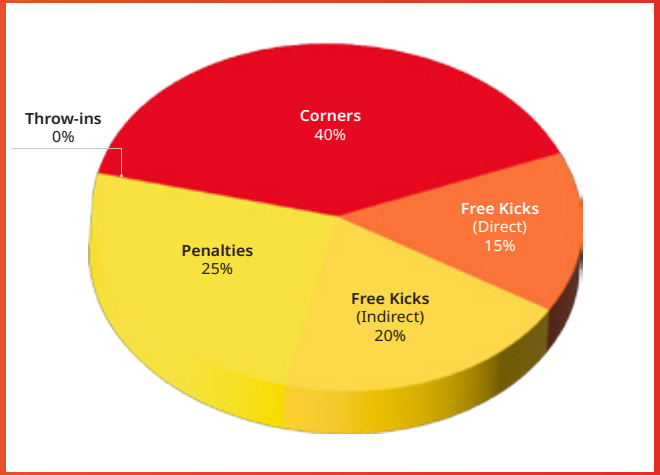
Corner kicks were the most productive of the tournament's dead-ball situations, accounting for 40% of the set-play total. The pick of the eight was arguably the left-footed delivery from the right by DPR Korea's Pak Il Sim which swung in at the far post to put her side 4-0 ahead in the Group game against Korea Republic. Indeed, the inswinging delivery with the 'wrong' foot was the default setting for most teams and contributed to six of the eight successes. The overview, however, has to mention quantity as well as quality. DPR Korea (52) and Japan (38) delivered 45% of the tournament's corners whereas the beaten Semi-finalists China PR and Korea Republic won 29 and 12 respectively in their five matches. Bangladesh earned none. But the overall outcome was that 201 corners yielded eight goals at a success rate of one in 25 – slightly better than the 1:29 ratio posted at the senior women's event in Australia.



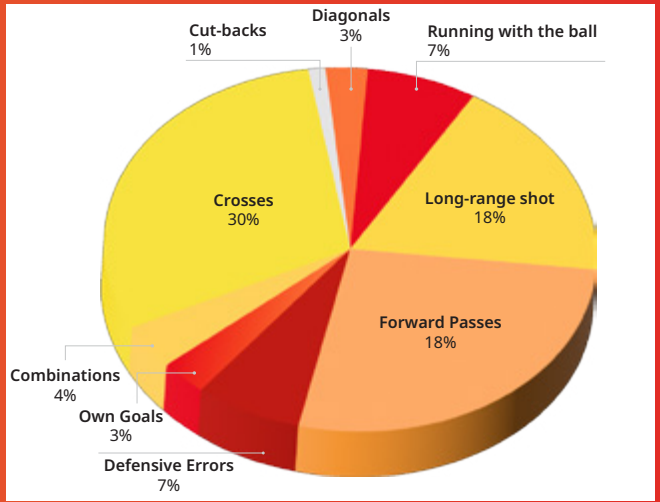


Free kicks produced seven goals. Three of them were from impressively-hit direct free kicks – an expertise which had become a rarity across the majority of the AFC men's and women's competitions. Rinyaphat Moondong's striking of the ball from around 30m made it move in the air en route to the Vietnam net to round off a 4-1 win; China PR's Wang Aifang sealed a 2-0 victory over Bangladesh with a stunning strike from a central area; and Noa Fukushima's right-footed shot from the right beat the China PR keeper at her near post in the Semi-final. And it was the same player's right-footed delivery of a free kick on the left which underscored the importance of set-play practice by setting up the Momoka Sano header which won the title for Japan. This important aspect of the game has also warranted a mention in the Technical Topics section of this Review.

HOW THE GOALS WERE SCORED (SET PLAYS)



HOW THE GOALS WERE SCORED (OPEN PLAYS)



GOALSCORING ANALYSIS GOALSCORING ANALYSIS



OPEN PLAY

As usual, deliveries from wide areas were the ingredients for the largest slice of the goalscoring cake. But there was a stark contrast between the women's U20 and senior tournaments. In Australia, one of the keynote features had been a greater variety of deliveries (high and low crosses from different areas; cut-backs; and diagonals) rather than the traditional high cross. In Thailand, this trend was reversed. The only goal from a cut-back – there had been 11 in 2024 – was Uzbekistan's opener against Jordan, while the two telling diagonals were supplied by Japan midfielder Miki Kimura (against India and Australia). DPR Korea, although they displayed a variety of goalscoring options, relied heavily on wing play, delivering 186 crosses in their six matches – 25% of the tournament total. At the same time, one of their major defensive weapons was the capacity to prevent opponents from crossing the ball, restricting them to just 11 (yes, 11) in six matches while, at the other end, they were delivering 30 per game. Japan's total of 141 included 61 while attempting to break down Chinese Taipei's defensive block and, otherwise, their average was roughly 16 per game – until DPR Korea restricted them to only three in the Final.

Forward passing, frequently leading to 1v1 situations in front of goal, originated 27% of open-play goals – as illustrated by Japan's opening three goals against Australia's high back line. Or by the two Bangladesh goals that left the hosts trailing 0-2 at half-time during their opening fixture. But the overall figures in Thailand contrasted quite sharply with the senior event in Australia, where through passes had accounted for only 18% of open-play goals.

Another statistic which differed from the data collected in Australia was the success rate from long-range shooting, which, in Thailand accounted for 18% of open-play goals. The two finalists, with four goals apiece, highlighted the relevance of shooting from distance when confronted by deep defensive blocks. Levels of power and accuracy hinted at worthwhile training-ground work on this aspect of the game – as illustrated by Ri Kuk Hyang strike that put DPR Korea 7-0 up against Jordan. Or the stunning first-time left-footed shot by So Ryu Gyong into the far corner of the net from very wide on the right after a corner had been cleared in her direction.

On a more negative note, goals from combination play through central areas were disappointingly scarce – twice as scarce as they had been during the eight-team tournament in 2024. Again, the finalists were the leading exceptions and exponents. Although DPR Korea's penetrative attacking along the flanks paid huge dividends, it was their readiness to also play through the centre of the Korea Republic defence that created their second and third goals in the Semi-final. Even though Japan resorted to that huge number of crosses in their bids to break through the Chinese Taipei lines, it was ultimately a neat central combination that allowed them to seal a 2-0 win after a long-range strike from wide on the left had broken the deadlock.

All in all, it was a tournament where the benchmarks were set by two finalists with multiple attacking options who set out to dominate possession; to play a passing game (DPR Korea averaged 500 per game; Japan 601); and who posted the most impressive pass completion rates in their opponents' half of the pitch. Coincidence?





Ranking	Player	No.	Country / Region	Match	Time	Type
1	Pak Il Sim	14	DPR Korea	DPR Korea v Korea Republic	24'	Long-range Shot
2	Avaani Prakash	16	Australia	Japan v Australia	39'	Solo effort
3	Ri Kuk Hyang	17	DPR Korea	DPR Korea v Jordan	49'	Long-range Shot
4	Natsumi Tago	11	Japan	Japan v India	75'	Long-range Shot
5	Mao Itamura	10	Japan	China PR v Japan	5'	Forward pass



Ranking	Player	No.	Country / Region	Match	Time	Type
1	Rinyaphat Moondong	7	Thailand	Vietnam v Thailand	90 + 3'	Direct Free-kick
2	Momoka Sano	22	Japan	Japan v DPR Korea	56'	Indirect Free-kick
3	Noa Fukushima	21	Japan	China PR v Japan	24'	Direct Free-kick
4	Pak Il Sim	14	DPR Korea	DPR Korea v Korea Republic	48'	Direct Corner Kick
5	Wang Aifang	10	China PR	Bangladesh v China PR	82'	Direct Free-kick



TALKING POINTS

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT?

A perennial talking point at all levels of the women's game is how to bridge the gap between the leading nations and the ones below them on the development ladder. Using Japan as the benchmark, the most plausible answer is a well-structured long-term project climbing from grassroots to the top of the tree via good work in the elite youth sector. But when it comes to the U20 level – the last lap on the route to the senior national team – another talking point is the Results v Development issue.

For some – notably in the AFC's stronger MAs – it is not a confrontation. The head coaches of the finalists maintained that the two objectives could be pursued in parallel. DPR Korea's Han Chol Hak commented "development and results are simultaneous goals. Players who are not yet at the level of the main starters receive structured substitution time to gain meaningful international experience while the team maintains its competitive standards." The objective for Japan's Akira Ijiri was to expose his players to six matches – which involves winning most, if not all, of them. But, for those who struggled to match the standards of the top teams, what is the answer to the results v development conundrum?

As the Technical Observers remarked, "a critical factor was that the best two third-placed teams would advance to the next stage. It meant that every goal conceded carried weight, so teams tended to prioritise defensive stability and risk management. This strategy promoted a growing tactical awareness among teams that were previously more open and vulnerable. But it also raises an important question for development. While defensive improvement is positive, does it come at the expense of attacking creativity and initiative?" Is there a risk that 'development' is focused on making life difficult for opponents?

What can be done by coaches and technical directors to balance competitiveness with long-term development, ensuring that players are not overly conditioned to reactive football?



CREATING THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE?

A few pages back, this review of the final tournament commented "an average attendance figure of 132 meant that the competitors were not exposed to major-tournament atmospheres". The remark raises a thought-provoking question: what is the best way of creating a 'major tournament atmosphere' in age-limit competitions?

It could have been interesting to ask the players if they enjoyed the experience of playing in a big stadium. Or whether they found it disconcerting to play to a three-figure audience at a venue with five-figure capacity – sometimes, especially where athletics tracks are involved, with spectators at a distance from the field of play. OK, in Thailand temperatures well in excess of 30° for matches with afternoon kick-off times meant that heat was a handicap for teams with high-intensity pressing in their repertoire. But was the atmosphere 'cold'?

Would it be an idea to take a leaf out of the FIFA book? When the first 48-team U-17 World Cup was (very successfully) staged in Qatar in 2025, matches were played on pitches within the so-called Aspire Zone at the famous academy in Doha. Perimeter boards and strong branding helped to create a real tournament atmosphere and spectators were close to the action. Is it better to play age-limit tournaments at big 'adult' stadiums or is it more attractive to custom-design smaller venues at places like training centres? What do you think? Or, maybe more importantly, what do your players and supporters think?







FOOTBALL IQ?

The China PR head coach Colin Bell remarked "football ability is game understanding, decision-making and execution. And Japan are, in these three areas, superior at the moment. They have a fantastic way of playing football and their match IQ is very high." The concept of 'football IQ' or 'game intelligence' could be defined as a player's ability to perceive, interpret and respond to dynamic game situations where time and space are limited and performance levels are often determined by the speed and quality of decision-making. The talking point is simple: what is the best way of developing 'football IQ'?





TEAM TALK

TEAM TALK TEAM TALK TEAM TALK TEAM TALK

"In the first match, the players were nervous as it was their first time playing as hosts, and they simply forgot the tactics and conceded goals. While I commend their ability to make a comeback and win the match, it was an unnecessarily difficult game. In comparison, the team was very confident today. They followed the game plan we prepared and executed it well. They also ensured that everything we had worked on in training was put into practice."

Thailand head coach **Nuengrutai Srathongvian** after beating Vietnam in the second game





"I regret the scoreline, but I think those were just personal mistakes and a temporary loss of attention and control. After half-time, it got a bit cooler, so the girls could show who they are, and that makes me happy. I think they defended well after the break, and I was pleased to see them taking chances while also maintaining a steady backline."

Vietnam head coach **Masahiko Okiyama** after defeat by China PR





"I was not at all satisfied with how we played. I don't think the players moved well, and we didn't make good use of space. I wanted them to be creative and maintain possession, which did not happen, perhaps partly due to the heat, but there was also a lack of focus."

Korea Republic head coach **Park Youn-jeong**, despite the victory over Uzbekistan

"We showed our spirit, but this was a big lesson playing against the defending champions, and we learned a lot as we have not played on this stage for 20 years."

Jordan head coach **Hussam Abu-Raiyyash** after defeat by DPR Korea

"In the second half, it was always going to be difficult because it takes a lot of energy to play against a team like Japan. They move the ball very well, and that was the biggest difference. We weren't able to defend them as effectively as we did in the first half. We were also a bit sloppy in possession when we won the ball, and that made it a tough game for us."

India head coach **Joakim Alexandersson** after defeat by the champions

"I expected them to play a lot better. I don't think the cooperation and communication between the players were very good, and they could not translate all the instructions that we had discussed before the match."

DPR Korea head coach **Han Chol Hak**, despite a 6-0 win against Uzbekistan



"When you play against such a strong opponent, it is always mentally challenging. But the girls understood the importance of the match, stayed focused and competed well. We couldn't create chances because it was hard for the girls to deal with the high pressing game that DPR Korea played."

Uzbekistan head coach **Vladimir Panov** after the same match

"We lost duels in really serious situations and made it too easy for Australia to win the ball. Our decision making was also lacking - we weren't sure when to clear the ball or when to play."

India head coach **Joakim Alexandersson** after the loss against Australia

"It is true that overall there is a lack of technical skill, most notably in finishing. But this cannot be improved in a day or two. Even if it is slight, improvement is needed, and our training sessions will be based on increasing our chances of scoring."

Vietnam head coach **Masahiko Okiyama** after victory over Bangladesh secured a Quarter-final place

"Learning processes can be a very challenging and painful journey. In this competition, we were beaten by better teams, but the learning experience has been great, and we need to take the learnings, study them in the cold light of day, and not make knee-jerk decisions."

Bangladesh head coach **Peter Butler** after elimination

"They are World Cup runners-up for a reason, and we need to learn from the way the team pressed. It showed that our technical quality has to improve. We tried to play through their press and we had prepared for it, but didn't quite nail it. Even though we knew what was coming, executing our plans was a whole other thing. So truthfully, we fell a bit short while Japan were superb."

Australia head coach **Alex Epakis** after defeat by Japan





"Our defending was not too bad but we did not play well because we could not get our positioning together. We were pressing high in the first half and the players' stamina was so affected that, at the end of the half, we conceded three goals in eight minutes."

Korea Republic head coach **Park Youn-jeong** after Semi-final defeat by DPR Korea

"Football ability is game understanding, decision-making and execution. Japan are, in these three areas, superior at the moment. Hopefully China PR, in the next few years, can decide which direction they want to go and work in these areas, especially the football understanding and how the game works."

China PR head coach **Colin Bell** after the Semi-final defeat by Japan



TEAM PROFILES

AUSTRALIA

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	ILONA MELEGH	02-07-2008	Goalkeeper
2	AMELIA BENNETT	22-05-2008	Defender
3	TEGAN BERTOLISSIO	01-08-2006	Defender
4	ALEXIS COLLINS	10-03-2008	Forward
5	DAISY BROWN	13-07-2006	Midfielder
6	EMMA DUNDAS	29-05-2007	Midfielder
7	INDIA BREIER	30-04-2006	Forward
8	AMELIA CASSAR	09-02-2008	Forward
9	SKYE HALMARICK	13-02-2008	Forward
10	TIANA FULLER	28-07-2007	Forward
11	POPPY O'KEEFFE	17-08-2007	Midfielder
12	JASMINE BLACK	03-05-2006	Goalkeeper
13	SHELBY MCMAHON	13-05-2008	Midfielder
14	ZARA KRUGER	29-05-2006	Midfielder
15	ALEXIA APOSTOLAKIS	16-05-2006	Defender
16	AVAANI PRAKASH	13-12-2006	Midfielder
17	CALEY HENNIKER	17-02-2006	Forward
18	GEORGIA RITCHIE	11-03-2008	Goalkeeper
19	TALIA YOUNIS	26-10-2008	Forward
20	DANELLA BUTRUS	13-02-2007	Forward
21	PETA TRIMIS	18-05-2006	Forward
22	RUBI MAYE SULLIVAN	07-01-2009	Defender
23	SIENNA DALE	19-04-2007	Forward



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3



COACH

ALEXANDER GEORGE EPAKIS (AUS)



Following stints as an assistant coach with teams such as Canberra United and Sydney University, Alex Epakis led Perth Glory's women's team from 2020 to 2024, while also briefly joining the coaching staff of the Philippines women's national team during their maiden FIFA Women's World Cup appearance in 2023.

Taking charge of Australia's U20 women's national team in 2025, the 35-year-old guided the Young Matildas to the Quarter-finals at Thailand 2026 after they finished as runners-up in Group C. However, their campaign came to an end in the last eight as two-time champions DPR Korea recorded a 3-0 victory.

PLAYING STYLES

- Fluid possession football, supported by the goalkeeper's very high attacking position
- Balanced attack between flanks and center

ATTACK

- Structured build-up: play starts from the back with goalkeeper involvement, maintaining a high line, while wingers stay wide to stretch the opposition with three strikers and rotations
- Full-back dynamics: one full-back moves inside to support midfield, allowing the holding midfielder to push forward; full-backs often underlap rather than overlap
- The team combines quality crossing with a clear focus on central penetration

DEFENCE

- High defensive line: The team defends high, with the goalkeeper effectively covering space.
- Collective pressing: Intense, coordinated pressing is applied to regain possession quickly.

TRANSITIONS

- The team reacts quickly upon losing possession, applying pressure to regain the ball.
- Once possession is regained, they exploit space behind the defensive line with quick forward runs, often creating scoring opportunities.

TOP SCORER



SKYE HALMARICK

5
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

15	Alexia Apostolakis	A leader in the team with a strong mindset, contributes to attack linking well with the teammates, has excellent 1on1 duels in defense.
16	Avaani Prakash	Agile and skilful player. Able to keep the ball in tight spaces. Well-linked with team-mates to penetrate crowded defence.

CHINA PR

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	LIU CHEN	30-06-2006	Goalkeeper
2	LIU XIABING	04-12-2006	Defender
3	LI KE	27-08-2006	Defender
4	HUANG JIAXIN	25-01-2006	Defender
5	LIU LING	11-07-2006	Defender
6	ZHENG LU	21-05-2006	Forward
7	ZHOU XINYI	26-02-2008	Midfielder
8	YANG YIFAN	17-01-2007	Defender
9	LU JIAYU	18-01-2006	Forward
10	WANG AIFANG	15-01-2006	Midfielder
11	YU XINGYUE	24-12-2006	Midfielder
12	GUO XINYU	14-03-2006	Goalkeeper
13	XIAO YAFEI	28-05-2007	Midfielder
14	ZHANG JIE	13-12-2008	Forward
15	ZHANG YIQIAN	02-02-2006	Midfielder
16	LI YUHAN	08-06-2007	Defender
17	XIE ZONGMEI	26-04-2006	Defender
18	WU JIAXUAN	17-12-2006	Defender
19	ZENG YUJIA	07-07-2006	Defender
20	YU JIAQI	04-04-2006	Forward
21	LUO LUO	12-10-2006	Forward
22	HOU SHUMEI	30-12-2007	Goalkeeper
23	CHENG WANDI	06-11-2009	Midfielder



FORMATION:
1-3-5-2 / 1-4-4-2



COACH

COLIN BELL (ENG)



A former defender, Colin Bell's managerial career spans over three decades across teams from Europe and Asia. Notably, he led Germany's 1. FFC Frankfurt to the UEFA Women's Champions League title in 2015 and Korea Republic to their maiden AFC Women's Asian Cup™ Final in 2022.

The 64-year-old has been in charge of China PR's U20 women's national team since 2024 and guided them to the Knockout Stage of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ for the first time in three editions at Thailand 2026, where they were defeated in the Semi-finals by eventual champions Japan.

PLAYING STYLES

- Structured build-up with emphasis on the wing play and crosses
- Height advantage giving arial power in both attack and defence

ATTACK

- Build from the back with active GK involvement and positional rotations through the thirds
- Focus on wing play with full-back involvement in combination play and 1v1 duels
- Wing-back #19 delivered good crosses, made well-timed runs into box which led to a goal
- #20 as the target player with her mobility and speed to exploit spaces

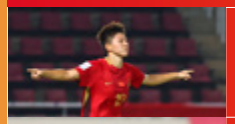
DEFENCE

- High and midfield Pressing with collective efforts, the GK covers the wide space well
- Good aerial duels in defence

TRANSITIONS

- High awareness of "counter-pressing"
- Quick forward movement to exploit the space behind the defensive once regaining the ball

TOP SCORER



ZENG YUJIA



ZHENG LU

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

10	Wang Aifang	Controlled game tempo with composure on the ball, made valuable contributions in both attack and defence, including excellent delivery of free kicks.
20	Yu Jiaqi	Very mobile player to receive the ball right and left with a good timing, created crucial attacking opportunities.

DPR KOREA

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	PAK JU GYONG	07-11-2007	Goalkeeper
2	KIM JU HYANG	11-11-2006	Forward
3	JONG POK YONG	20-01-2007	Defender
4	RI YE GYONG	10-11-2007	Defender
5	PAK OK I	12-04-2007	Midfielder
6	JON IL CHONG	12-03-2007	Midfielder
7	SO RYU GYONG	10-11-2007	Midfielder
8	RI SU JONG	07-01-2007	Forward
9	CHOE YON A	01-01-2007	Forward
10	CHOE RIM JONG	27-01-2007	Forward
11	KANG RYU MI	20-09-2007	Forward
12	HO KYONG	28-02-2007	Forward
13	PAK IL SIM	20-05-2007	Defender
14	CHOE CHONG GUM	15-09-2007	Defender
15	YOM CHOL NIM	13-01-2007	Defender
16	RI KUK HYANG	07-10-2007	Defender
17	CHOE KYONG MI	17-07-2007	Goalkeeper
18	RO UN HYANG	18-05-2007	Midfielder
19	AN KYONG YONG	27-08-2007	Midfielder
20	RI OK	05-01-2006	Goalkeeper
21	RI POM	03-03-2007	Midfielder



FORMATION: 1-4-4-2



COACH

HAN CHOL HAK (PRK)



Han Chol Hak had already established himself as a respected figure in DPR Korea's domestic football scene as head coach of the April 25 women's team before taking charge of the senior national team during the AFC Women's Olympic Qualifying Tournament 2024 and the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026™ Qualifiers.

Turning his attention to the U20 side, he led DPR Korea to a stellar qualifying campaign, during which they scored 36 goals and finished top of Group B. However, the dream of becoming only the third DPR Korea head coach to lift the coveted title remained elusive as his side were edged 1-0 by Japan in the Final.

PLAYING STYLES

- High-intensity approach, applying constant pressure on the opponent in and out of possession.
- Quick progression into the attacking third through a combination of fast passing and strong individual actions.

ATTACK

- Quick switches in build-up, aiming for fast and dynamic progression to the attacking third.
- Diverse finishing options: combos, crosses, cut-backs, long-range strikes etc.
- Well-organized set-piece attacking.

DEFENCE

- Intense high press, with the goalkeeper covering space behind the defensive line.
- Committed physical contact and challenges.

TRANSITIONS

- Immediate pressure after losing the ball, quickly creating numerical superiority around it.
- Strong counter-attacking mindset with forward runs and quick exploitation of space, supported by team-mates with the whole team moving up to maintain good distances.

TOP SCORER



PAK OK I

7

NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

6	Pak Ok I	Strong scoring ability in various situations, able to make effective runs behind opposing defenders, linking well with team-mates.
12	Kang Ryu Mi	High intensity in both attack and defence, able to create crucial chances with her good positioning.

JAPAN

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	URUHA IWASAKI	13-03-2006	Goalkeeper
2	YUNA AOKI	07-07-2008	Defender
3	MITSUKI OTA	20-01-2007	Defender
4	TAMAMI ASO	26-10-2007	Defender
5	HARUKO SUZUKI	11-01-2007	Defender
6	RINKA HIGUCHI	09-05-2006	Midfielder
7	MIYU MATSUNAGA	08-06-2006	Midfielder
8	ASAKO FURUTA	23-04-2007	Forward
9	ANON TSUDA	08-11-2007	Forward
10	MAO ITAMURA	06-08-2006	Midfielder
11	NATSUMI TAGO	05-08-2006	Forward
12	HINAHA ISHIDA	28-11-2006	Goalkeeper
13	MIKI KIMURA	30-05-2006	Midfielder
14	KONOHA NAKAMURA	27-07-2008	Midfielder
15	MOMOKA HONDA	12-06-2007	Midfielder
16	MOKA ARAI	21-10-2006	Midfielder
17	YURA HONDA	01-02-2006	Midfielder
18	HIBARI HARA	17-05-2007	Defender
19	NATSUME KINGETSU	21-07-2007	Defender
20	MONE SATO	15-11-2008	Defender
21	NOA FUKUSHIMA	12-12-2008	Midfielder
22	MOMOKA SANO	17-04-2008	Midfielder
23	SAKO NAWA	29-08-2006	Goalkeeper



FORMATION:
1-4-4-2/1-4-3-3



COACH

AKIRA IJIRI (JPN)



With a strong background in grassroots football, Akira Ijiri served as an assistant coach for Japan's U16 national team in 2010 before spending more than five years developing young talent within Vietnam's U17 and U20 women's national team setup.

The 55-year-old led both sides to the Finals of the U17 and U20 women's continental competitions in 2024, having also contributed as a technical adviser to the senior national team during the Qualifiers for the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Tokyo 2020.

As head coach of the Young Nadeshiko, Ijiri clinched his first continental title when Japan defeated defending champions DPR Korea 1-0 in the Final of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™, securing the crown for a record-extending seventh time.

PLAYING STYLES

- Possession-based with excellent ball control, and intelligent decision-making
- Fluid and dynamic movement, with constant positional rotations
- Collective and disciplined structure, strong team cohesion, and coordinated pressing.

ATTACK

- Build-up from the back involving the goalkeeper, with attacking full-backs advancing either alternately or simultaneously.
- Effective use of space to stretch the opposition and break lines with high-quality passing.
- Combination play through central areas to create and exploit spaces.

DEFENCE

- High pressing on opponent's build-up, executed through coordinated collective efforts.
- Disciplined and well-organized defensive structure, with the goalkeeper effectively covering space behind the defensive line.

TRANSITIONS

- Immediate pressure upon loss of possession, quickly creating numerical superiority.
- Strong counter-attacking awareness, while remaining composed in retaining possession

TOP SCORER



NOA FUKUSHIMA

5
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

21	Noa Fukushima	Skilful midfielder who likes to receive in pockets and make well-timed runs into the box. Able to shoot with both feet and execute great deliveries of set pieces.
10	Mao Itamura	Agile midfielder who can operate in tight spaces with high game intelligence. Able to create chances for team-mates or score by herself.

KOREA REPUBLIC

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	KIM CHAE-BEEN	14-04-2008	Goalkeeper
2	MAENG HUI-JIN	13-09-2006	Defender
3	YOON AH-YEONG	14-09-2007	Defender
4	JUNG DA-BIN	04-01-2006	Defender
5	NAM SEUNG-EUN	10-01-2006	Defender
6	HAN MIN-SEO	22-06-2006	Midfielder
7	CHOI JU-HONG	23-07-2007	Midfielder
8	JIN HYE-RIN	29-06-2006	Midfielder
9	LEE HA-EUN	21-01-2006	Forward
10	LEE HA-EUN	20-07-2006	Forward
11	CHO HYE-YOUNG	18-02-2006	Forward
12	CHEON SI-WOO	09-08-2006	Defender
13	KIM MIN-SEO	24-08-2009	Midfielder
14	PARK JI-YU	06-09-2007	Midfielder
15	PARK GA-YUN	05-09-2007	Midfielder
16	LEE HA-NEUL	10-03-2006	Forward
17	SEO MIN-JEONG	31-01-2007	Forward
18	WI HYE-BEEN	25-11-2006	Goalkeeper
19	PARK JU-HA	10-10-2007	Forward
20	KANG HYE-SOOK	27-04-2006	Defender
21	KIM GYU-RIN	24-07-2007	Goalkeeper
22	HAN CHE-RIN	08-12-2007	Defender
23	OH DAN-BI	01-04-2008	Defender



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3/1-3-5-2



COACH

PARK YOUN-JEONG (KOR)



With her appointment as head coach of the Korea Republic U20 women's national team, Park Youn-jeong became the youngest coach ever to take charge of a national team setup in the country.

A former Seoul WFC defender, Park began her coaching career in 2011 and had her first involvement with the national team setup in 2019 when she joined the backroom staff of the U17 women's national team before moving to the U20 side in 2022.

Recognised with the AFC Coach of the Year (Women) award at the AFC Annual Awards Seoul 2023, her appointment as head coach in November 2023 made her the youngest-ever national team head coach in Korea Republic. She subsequently led her side to a fourth-place finish at the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup 2024™ before repeating the feat at the 2026 edition in Thailand.

PLAYING STYLES

- Possession-based style with fluid forward movement
- Wide dynamics with attacking full-backs
- Tactical flexibility according to the players and opponents

ATTACK

- Building from the back through centre-backs and midfielders, with attacking midfielders positioned between the lines to control tempo.
- Wingers moving inside to create space for overlapping full-backs, with effective switches of play.
- Striker dropping to link play and create space, supporting combination play and progression through central areas.

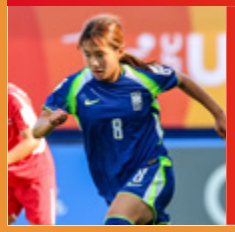
DEFENCE

- Applied high and mid pressing to disrupt build-up and force opponents into long balls.
- Maintained tight shape, effectively closing passing lanes and limiting opposition options.
- Holding midfielders key elements in shielding the back line, winning duels, and maintaining balance.
- Against DPR Korea applied mid-low block because of opponent's high pressure.

TRANSITIONS

- Immediate counter-pressing to regain possession, with coordinated pressure on the ball and rapid reorganization to restore defensive balance.
- After regaining possession, the team prioritized ball retention.

TOP SCORER



JIN HYE-RIN

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

13	Kim Minseo	Good target player to hold up play, score goals and create chances.
6	Han Minseo	A complete all-rounder with good link-up play and ability to dictate tempo

THAILAND

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	ATIMA BOONPRAKANPAI	13-03-2007	Goalkeeper
2	PORNTITA SITTHISAN	03-02-2007	Defender
3	VIVIEN CHONTICHA DIETER	19-01-2009	Defender
4	ALISSADA YUTTAKAS	20-03-2008	Defender
5	MANITA NOYVACH	15-11-2007	Defender
6	PINYAPHAT KLINKLAI	26-01-2008	Defender
7	RINYAPHAT MOONDONG	19-06-2007	Midfielder
8	PICHAYATIDA MANOWANG	17-11-2006	Midfielder
9	ACHIRAYA YINGSAKUL	13-12-2007	Midfielder
10	KURISARA LIMPAWANICH	05-02-2009	Forward
11	PHATCHARAPHORN KHUCHUEA	23-10-2007	Forward
12	THANCHANOK CHEUNAROM	30-06-2006	Defender
13	NATCHA KAEWANTA	03-12-2006	Defender
14	RASITA TAOBAO	06-06-2007	Forward
15	PRICHAKORN KRUECHUENCHOM	04-12-2008	Midfielder
16	NACHANOK KOSONSAKSAKUN	22-09-2008	Forward
17	KESSIRIN BOONMATUN	18-02-2008	Midfielder
18	CHONTICHA PANYARUNG	30-12-2008	Goalkeeper
19	MADISON JADE CASTEEN	15-10-2007	Forward
20	CAYDEN ILLIANA	29-01-2008	Forward
21	PARICHAT THONGRONG	14-05-2006	Defender
22	NONGNUCH RITTHAKON	29-04-2006	Goalkeeper
23	CHIRARAK KHAMTAN	09-07-2008	Forward



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3



COACH

NUENGRUTHAI SRATHONGVIAN (THA)



A former hockey player and footballer, Nuengruthai Srathongvian has been involved in the Thailand women's national team setup across various age groups since 2013, when she served as an assistant coach before taking the reins as the first female head coach of the senior women's national team.

Under her watch, Thailand finished fifth at the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ in 2014 and fourth in the 2018 edition, thereby qualifying for their first-ever FIFA Women's World Cup in 2015 and repeating the feat in 2019.

The 54-year-old took over the U20 side in 2025 and guided the Southeast Asians to second place in Group A of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™, before being narrowly beaten on penalties by Korea Republic in the Quarter-finals.

PLAYING STYLES

- Possession-based build-up with rotations
- Combination play in tight spaces
- Good individual players with 1v1 ability and good speed

ATTACK

- Build-up from the back using short passes, rotating midfielders and full-backs to create space and stretch the opposition's midfield.
- Quick 1-2 passing under pressure, exploiting half-spaces through the centre; combinations between strikers and midfielders and frequent switches of play.
- Vertical penetration through forward runs; wingers and midfielders (especially Nos. 7 & 8) running behind the defensive line.

DEFENCE

- High and midfield pressing forcing opponents to play long or wide.
- Occasional losses of defensive shape; lack of compactness allowing opponents to exploit spaces behind.

TRANSITIONS

- Immediate pressure after losing possession, while other players recover to maintain defensive balance.
- Rapid forward movement at high speed upon regaining possession
- Effective transition play creating many chances

TOP SCORER





KURISARA LIMPAWANICH

RINYAPHAT MOONDONG

3
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

10	Kurisara Limpawanich	Threatened the opponent's goal; technically proficient with both feet.
7	Rinyaphat Moondong(C)	Delivered quality free kicks; mobile and composed in link-up play.
19	Madison Jade Casteen	Skilful fast player, good in 1v1 and a threat in front of goal.

UZBEKISTAN

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	EZOZA SEVINOVA	23-04-2007	Goalkeeper
2	MARIYA DAKHOVA	17-02-2010	Defender
3	NARGIZA ESHTEMIROVA	15-04-2006	Defender
4	MADINA SHOVKATOVA	07-04-2007	Defender
5	KARINA GAMADEEVA	05-05-2007	Defender
6	UMIDAKHON YIGITALIEVA	12-06-2006	Midfielder
7	OYDINOY TURGUNOVA	15-03-2006	Forward
8	ETIBOR SHODIEVA	02-02-2008	Midfielder
9	DIYORA BAKHTIYAROVA	29-08-2007	Midfielder
10	ASALKHON AMINJONOVA	22-04-2007	Midfielder
11	MEHRIBON EGAMBERDIEVA	09-10-2007	Midfielder
12	JUMAGUL YOKUBJONOVA	07-12-2007	Goalkeeper
13	CHAROS KHAYRULLAEVA	30-12-2007	Goalkeeper
14	NAZIRA SAYFIDDINOVA	17-03-2007	Defender
15	MERUERT RAKHMATULLAEVA	02-03-2008	Defender
16	DILNOZA TOLIBOVA	26-11-2007	Midfielder
17	RUKHSHONA OLIMJONOVA	01-01-2007	Midfielder
18	SHAHNOZA DEKANBAEVA	18-01-2008	Forward
19	DILNURA MAMATKULOVA	16-10-2007	Midfielder
20	ZARINA NORBOEVA	16-01-2006	Forward
21	NILUFAR NURMUHAMMADOVA	12-04-2007	Midfielder
22	RUKHSHONA USAROVA	26-07-2007	Defender
23	DINORA BAZARBAEVA	30-10-2006	Forward



FORMATION: 1-4-4-2



COACH

VLADIMIR PANOV (UZB)



Having started out in futsal, where he obtained his first AFC certificate at 20, Panov has steadily established a presence in Uzbekistan's coaching circles and spent the recent years supporting the development of women's football.

The 33-year-old was part of the coaching staff when FC Bunyodkor became the first Uzbek women's side to participate in an AFC competition at the AFC Women's Club Championship 2021, before going on to helm the U16, U17 and U18 women's national teams from 2022 to 2024. Panov also had a head coaching stint with the senior side in 2024, and served as assistant at the Asian Games 2022 as well as the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ Qualifiers.

Having been to the previous AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ as a coach in 2024, Panov stepped into Thailand 2026 as head coach and led Uzbekistan to the Knockout Stage for the first time in tournament history.

PLAYING STYLES

- Physical and aggressive, good at duels
- Mixed long and short quick passes to progress

ATTACK

- Utilizing main attacking player #10 and #11 who combine their physicality with skills,
- Focus on wing play to exploit spaces behind the defence line

DEFENCE

- Low to mid block with, mostly, good structural stability
- Occasional use of collective press on the ball
- Applied aggressive individual marking according to the opponents

TRANSITIONS

- Quick transition to put pressure on the ball and reorganize defence
- Counterattacking using direct passing to target attackers

TOP SCORER



TURGUNOVA OYDINOY

2

NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

11	Mehribon Egamberdieva	Very physical forward or attacking midfielder, using her presence to pose threats to opponent's defence
10	Asalkhon Aminjonova	Skilful playmaker able to keep the ball and use it well. Starting point of most attacks

VIETNAM

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	LE THI THU	01-08-2007	Goalkeeper
2	TA THI HONG MINH	13-01-2008	Defender
3	NGUYEN THI THUY LINH	29-06-2006	Defender
4	NGUYEN THI THUONG	02-06-2007	Defender
5	LE HONG YEU	24-07-2007	Midfielder
6	NGUYEN THI THUY NHI	20-02-2006	Midfielder
7	NGUYEN THU TRANG	18-04-2007	Midfielder
8	NGUYEN NGO THAO NGUYEN	05-02-2008	Midfielder
9	LUU HOANG VAN	09-04-2006	Forward
10	LE THI TRANG	21-12-2007	Forward
11	DAU NGUYEN QUYNH ANH	01-01-2007	Forward
12	LO THI HUYEN TRANG	06-09-2006	Goalkeeper
13	NGUYEN THI HONG HUE	16-09-2007	Midfielder
14	Y ZA LUONG	04-07-2008	Midfielder
15	DAO KHANH VY	24-04-2006	Defender
16	NGUYEN THI QUY	15-04-2006	Midfielder
17	DUONG TRAN BAO TRAN	03-04-2006	Defender
18	LE THI NHU QUYNH	18-02-2006	Defender
19	NGAN THI THANH HIEU	13-02-2007	Midfielder
20	LUC THI TUYET LAN	16-04-2007	Defender
21	PHAM NGOC ANH	17-06-2007	Goalkeeper
22	DO THI THUY NGA	22-02-2008	Midfielder
23	AN HOANG CUC	29-01-2006	Midfielder



FORMATION:
1-5-4-1



COACH

MASAHIKO OKIYAMA (JPN)



Hailing from Japan, Masahiko Okiyama's coaching experience spans over three decades and includes roles with various Asian national and club teams, including a stint as head coach of the Jordan women's national team from 2012 to 2014.

In March 2025, the 58-year-old took charge of Vietnam's U20 women's national team and guided them to the Finals of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™ after maintaining an unbeaten record in the Qualifiers. In the competition proper, his side booked their place in the Quarter-finals by finishing third in the Group stage, before they suffered a 4-0 defeat to Japan.

PLAYING STYLES

- Focus on fast forward passes and forward runs rather than prolonged possession play.
- Operates with a well-organized, compact defensive block, prioritizing structure, teamwork, and limiting central spaces.

ATTACK

- Build from the back but switch to direct long balls targeting the forward if under pressure.
- Deploy wingers and fullbacks to stretch the opposition and deliver crosses into the box.

DEFENCE

- Maintaining short distances between units and limit central progression.
- Prioritises denying penetration through central areas, forcing opponents wide and relying on numerical superiority in the defensive line.

TRANSITIONS

- Upon losing possession, the team drops quickly into shape and reorganises, prioritising structure over immediate pressure, especially against stronger opponents.
- Quick attacking transition, direct forward runs to exploit space behind the opposition.

TOP SCORER



NGUYEN THI THÙY LINH

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

19	Ngan Thi Thanh Hieu	Hardworking winger who is actively involved as a target player in attacking
23	An Hoang Cuc	Key player for the side attack, won 1 on 1 at the flank and provided quality crosses to the teammates

BANGLADESH

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	MST FARDOSI AKTER SHONALE	25-11-2007	Goalkeeper
2	NABIRAN KHATUN	18-12-2006	Defender
3	MST JOYNOB BIBI RITA	18-06-2008	Defender
4	AFEIDA KHANDAKER	18-11-2006	Defender
5	MST SURMA JANNAT	01-01-2006	Defender
6	ARPITA BISWAS	07-05-2009	Defender
7	SAPNA RANI	09-05-2006	Midfielder
8	MST MOMITA KHATUN	01-12-2009	Defender
9	SREE MOTI TRISHNA	21-01-2008	Forward
10	MST SAGORIKA	01-12-2007	Forward
11	UMEHLA MARMA	14-08-2007	Forward
12	SHANTI MARDI	23-10-2008	Midfielder
13	MAMONI CHAKMA	20-04-2009	Midfielder
14	ALPI AKTER	31-12-2010	Forward
15	MOST MUNKI AKHTER	05-12-2008	Midfielder
16	NADIA AKTER JUTI	15-05-2007	Midfielder
17	SOROVI RANI	27-12-2010	Forward
18	PUJA DAS	31-12-2008	Defender
19	SINHA JAHAN SHIKHA	07-05-2007	Midfielder
20	SAURAVI AKANDA PRITY	31-12-2009	Forward
21	MST SUROVI AKTER ARFIN	05-06-2008	Defender
22	SWARNA RANI MANDAL	06-06-2006	Goalkeeper
23	MILE AKTER	14-09-2006	Goalkeeper



TOP SCORER



MOSAMMAT SAGORIKA

2

NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH

PETER JAMES BUTLER (ENG)



Boasting an illustrious playing career with clubs such as West Ham United and West Bromwich Albion, Peter Butler has enjoyed an equally impressive coaching career, having managed close to 20 teams across three continents over the past 25 years.

The 59-year-old created history in 2025 by leading the Bangladesh senior women's national team to their maiden appearance at the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ in Australia earlier this year, then also achieved the same feat with the U20 side for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™. Despite a spirited performance, the debutants exited at the group stage after finishing fourth in Group A.

TEAM PROFILES TEAM PROFILES

CHINESE TAIPEI

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	JIAN YU-JIE	22-09-2006	Goalkeeper
2	CHIAN WEI-TONG	07-01-2006	Forward
3	LI CHUN-MEI	03-08-2006	Defender
4	LO YU-HSIU	20-11-2006	Forward
5	MA HO-YA	02-05-2007	Defender
6	CHEN YING-XUAN	27-07-2009	Defender
7	LIN PIN-YUN	24-10-2007	Midfielder
8	LIN SZU-YING	10-06-2007	Midfielder
9	CHUAN TZU-YU	04-11-2008	Forward
10	KAO HSIN	06-04-2007	Forward
11	LIAO JIE-NING	24-09-2008	Midfielder
12	LI PEI-YAO	05-02-2007	Forward
13	FU CHIH-LING	06-04-2007	Defender
14	HUANG HUI-SHAN	24-10-2007	Forward
15	LI YONG-SHAN	22-04-2008	Midfielder
16	SHAO TZU-I	12-10-2007	Defender
17	LIN YU-HUI	26-04-2006	Defender
18	WANG RUO-PING	07-03-2006	Goalkeeper
19	HSU TZU-HAN	13-06-2008	Midfielder
20	LIN PIN-HSIN	24-10-2007	Midfielder
21	HUANG I-PING	07-02-2008	Forward
22	CHEN YI-FEI	20-10-2008	Midfielder
23	PENG PEI-QING	15-07-2008	Goalkeeper



TOP SCORER



KAO HSIN

1
NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH

HSIEH CHIH-CHUN (TPE)

Involved in women's football in Chinese Taipei for the past 38 years, Hsieh Chih-Chun started out as an assistant coach to the National Taiwan University of Sport's women's team during his time there as a student.

Having devoted much of his early coaching career to developing the school football scene, Hsieh turned his focus to the national team set-up and led Chinese Taipei's women's national teams at U14, U16, U19 and U20 level. The 64-year-old secured a return to the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup™ in 2024 for the first time since 2009, and followed up with a second straight qualification at Thailand 2026.



TEAM PROFILES TEAM PROFILES

INDIA

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	MONALISHA DEVI MOIRANGTHEM	03-07-2006	Goalkeeper
2	SAHENA TH	14-03-2006	Defender
3	SHRUTI KUMARI	25-02-2006	Defender
4	THOIBISANA CHANU TOIJAM	07-03-2007	Defender
5	NISHIMA KUMARI	13-07-2007	Defender
6	ARINA DEVI NAMEIRAKPAM	04-03-2008	Midfielder
7	NEHA SILLAY	19-05-2006	Midfielder
8	POOJA JAKHAR	07-02-2007	Midfielder
9	BABITA KUMARI	02-08-2008	Midfielder
10	SIBANI DEVI	13-01-2007	Forward
11	LHINGDEIKIM KIPGEN	23-01-2008	Forward
12	BHUMIKA DEVI KHUMUKCHAM	15-02-2007	Midfielder
13	RIBANSI JAMU	16-12-2008	Goalkeeper
14	REMI THOKCHOM	14-03-2008	Defender
15	RUCHI YADAV	01-01-2006	Defender
16	SHUBHANGI SINGH	11-06-2006	Defender
17	SHILJI SHAJI	13-03-2007	Forward
18	MONISHA SINGHA	13-01-2007	Midfielder
19	ANJU CHANU KAYENPAIBAM	02-03-2007	Midfielder
20	DEEPIKA PAL	22-01-2008	Forward
21	SULANJANA RAUL	04-06-2007	Midfielder
22	CINDY REMRUATPUII COLNEY	26-03-2007	Defender
23	NANDINI MATTU	06-06-2007	Goalkeeper



TOP SCORER



SIBANI DEVI NONGMEIKAPAM

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH

JOAKIM BERNT ALEXANDERSSON (SWE)

A prominent defender for several clubs in Sweden's Allsvenskan, Joakim Alexandersson began his coaching career in his homeland with spells at Dalstorps IF, Grimsås IF, Bollebygds IF and IF Elfsborg before arriving in Asia to take charge of both India's U17 and U20 women's national teams.

Under his watch, the Young Tigresses enjoyed a successful qualifying campaign for the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™, finishing as winners of Group D. In the Finals, India suffered back-to-back defeats to eventual champions Japan and Australia but, despite bouncing back with a 3-1 win over Chinese Taipei, fell short of a place in the Knockout Stage.



TEAM PROFILES TEAM PROFILES

JORDAN

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	CILEEN ADEL SEIF	22-01-2008	Goalkeeper
2	SARA LOUISE AMJED RA	29-01-2009	Defender
3	PANAR TAIMUR N. SHAM	12-02-2009	Defender
4	RANEEM MAHER DAOUD	28-06-2006	Defender
5	RAYANA ISSA	16-05-2009	Midfielder
6	DEANNA HANI ALKHAWAJA	30-06-2008	Midfielder
7	ARWA AMER BATAYNEH	20-05-2007	Forward
8	MARAH MU'TAZ ABBAAS	26-11-2006	Midfielder
9	DANA MINWER ABU HAZEEM	20-08-2009	Forward
10	HALA BADAWI MARAR	08-05-2007	Midfielder
11	RAMA MOAYAD ALKHASHOOK	02-07-2007	Forward
12	SAJIDA RAMADAN ISSA	16-03-2008	Goalkeeper
13	MIRA JARRAR	12-01-2009	Forward
14	LAMAR SALEH IBRAHIM	03-02-2006	Midfielder
15	ALMA ALSAIFY	08-11-2010	Forward
16	KINDA YAHYA ALTITI	11-08-2006	Forward
17	RAGHAD ALTARAWNEH	17-07-2006	Midfielder
18	YASMEEN AL ZURIKAT	20-05-2007	Forward
19	HAYA ABU ALI	03-03-2009	Forward
20	MAYA KHALID AWADALLAH	02-01-2007	Defender
21	NADIN OMAR SALHA	07-03-2010	Midfielder
22	CELINE SHANNAK	26-08-2006	Goalkeeper
23	SIWAR KHALED OBEID	15-06-2006	Midfielder



TOP SCORER

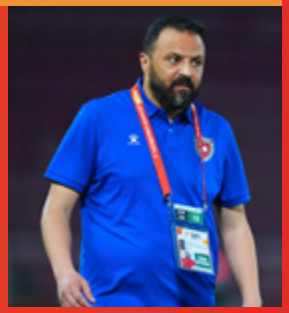


YASMEEN AL ZURIKAT

1
NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH

HUSSAM HUSSAIN MOHAMMAD ABU-RAIYYASH (JOR)



A promising defender who played for Jordan at U20 level, Hussam Abu-Raiyyash came through the youth ranks at top-flight men's side Shabab Al-Ordon SC and later helped Al Ahli SC achieve promotion from the second tier in 2009, before turning to coaching in after his career was cut short by a knee injury.

Working his way up from coaching age-group teams, Abu-Raiyyash returned to Shabab Al-Ordon as assistant coach post in 2018 and rejoined another former side in Al Ahli as a coach in 2020. Head coaching spells in the third tier followed, before he led Amman FC to the final of the 2023 Jordanian-Saudi Women's Clubs Championship.

Appointed to lead Jordan's U20 women's national team at the end of 2023, the 39-year-old oversaw a runners-up finish at the 2024 WAFF U-20 Girls Championship and orchestrated their successful qualification to the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup Thailand 2026™ – only their second Finals appearance since debuting in 2006.



RESULTS

RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS

GROUP A

Group A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
CHINA PR	3	3	0	0	6	0	6	9
THAILAND	3	2	0	1	7	4	3	6
VIETNAM	3	1	0	2	2	7	-5	3
BANGLADESH	3	0	0	3	2	6	-4	0

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
01 Apr,26	16:00:00	CHINA PR	3-0 (2-0)	VIETNAM
01 Apr,26	20:00:00	THAILAND	3-2 (0-1)	BANGLADESH
04 Apr,26	16:00:00	BANGLADESH	0-2 (0-0)	CHINA PR
04 Apr,26	20:00:00	VIETNAM	1-4 (0-3)	THAILAND
07 Apr,26	20:00:00	THAILAND	0-1 (0-1)	CHINA PR
07 Apr,26	20:00:00	VIETNAM	1-0 (0-0)	BANGLADESH

GROUP B

Group B	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
DPR KOREA	3	3	0	0	19	0	19	9
KOREA REPUBLIC	3	2	0	1	4	6	-2	6
UZBEKISTAN	3	1	0	2	4	8	-4	3
JORDAN	3	0	0	3	1	14	-13	0

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
02 Apr,26	16:00:00	KOREA REPUBLIC	2-0 (1-0)	UZBEKISTAN
02 Apr,26	20:00:00	DPR KOREA	8-0 (5-0)	JORDAN
05 Apr,26	16:00:00	JORDAN	1-2 (0-2)	KOREA REPUBLIC
05 Apr,26	20:00:00	UZBEKISTAN	0-6 (0-4)	DPR KOREA
08 Apr,26	20:00:00	DPR KOREA	5-0 (3-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC
08 Apr,26	20:00:00	UZBEKISTAN	4-0 (3-0)	JORDAN

GROUP C

Group C	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JAPAN	3	3	0	0	13	2	11	9
AUSTRALIA	3	2	0	1	12	5	7	6
INDIA	3	1	0	2	3	12	-9	3
CHINESE TAIPEI	3	0	0	3	1	10	-9	0

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
02 Apr,26	16:00:00	AUSTRALIA	5-0 (2-0)	CHINESE TAIPEI
02 Apr,26	20:00:00	JAPAN	6-0 (1-0)	INDIA
05 Apr,26	16:00:00	INDIA	0-5 (0-2)	AUSTRALIA
05 Apr,26	20:00:00	CHINESE TAIPEI	0-2 (0-2)	JAPAN
08 Apr,26	16:00:00	JAPAN	5-2 (1-1)	AUSTRALIA
08 Apr,26	16:00:00	CHINESE TAIPEI	1-3 (0-2)	INDIA



QUARTER-FINALS

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
11 Apr,26	16:00:00	JAPAN	4-0 (3-0)	VIETNAM
11 Apr,26	20:00:00	CHINA PR	2-1 (2-0)	UZBEKISTAN
12 Apr,26	16:00:00	DPR KOREA	3-0 (1-0)	AUSTRALIA
12 Apr,26	20:00:00	THAILAND	1-2 a.e.t. (1-1,0-1)	KOREA REPUBLIC

SEMI-FINALS

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
15 Apr,26	16:00:00	DPR KOREA	3-0 (2-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC
15 Apr,26	20:00:00	CHINA PR	0-2 (0-2)	JAPAN

FINAL

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
18 Apr,26	18:00:00	JAPAN	1-0 (0-0)	DPR KOREA









AWARDS

AWARDS

AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS



BEST GOALKEEPER
NO.1 | PAK JU GYONG (PRK)

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
NO.21 | NOA FUKUSHIMA (JPN)

TOP GOAL SCORER
NO.6 | PAK OK I (PRK)

AFC FAIR PLAY AWARD : JAPAN



PLAYERS TO WATCH

PLAYERS TO WATCH

GOALKEEPERS



NO.1
PAK JU GYONG
DPR KOREA



NO.1
URUHA IWASAKI
JAPAN



NO. 1
LIU CHEN
CHINA

PLAYERS TO WATCH
AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP
AFC U20 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP

DEFENDERS



NO.15
ALEXIA APOSTOLAKIS
AUSTRALIA



NO.2
YUNA AOKI
JAPAN



NO.17
RI KUK HYANG
DPR KOREA



NO.4
JUNG DA-BIN
KOREA REPUBLIC



NO.4
TAMAMI ASO
JAPAN



NO.19
ZENG YUJIA
CHINA PR

PLAYERS TO WATCH

MIDFIELDERS



NO.19
RO UN HYANG
DPR KOREA



NO.10
MAO ITAMURA
JAPAN



NO.7
MIYU MATSUNAGA
JAPAN



NO.10
WANG AIFANG
CHINA



NO.7
RINYAPHAT MOONDONG
THAILAND



NO.11
CHOE RIM JONG
DPR KOREA

PLAYERS TO WATCH

FORWARDS



NO.6
PAK OK I
DPR KOREA



NO.12
KANG RYU MI
DPR KOREA



NO.21
NOA FUKUSHIMA
JAPAN



NO.20
YU JIAQI
CHINA



REFEREEING

1. SUMMARY

1.1 AFC MATCH OFFICIALS

A total of 22 match officials from 21 different Member Associations (MAs) were appointed to officiate in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Indonesia 2026 who were committed to ensuring fair play, enforcing the rules of the game, building confidence and upholding the integrity of the competition. Five Referee Assessors and one Fitness Instructor comprised the dedicated team responsible for maintaining performance and physical standards, ensuring the highest officiating standards throughout the tournament.

Referees	MA
Haydar Jana	LBN
Tshering Choden	BHU
Wen Lili	CHN
Wu Qiaoli	CHN
Malika Hathlahawatta Muhandiramalage	SRI
Islam Awwad Abed Al-Abadi	JOR
Miu Sone	JPN
Yoon Eun-hee	KOR
May Thet Phyu	MYA
Nur Akmal Binti Anuar	MAS
Battsetseg Unurjargal	MNG
Merlo Silva Albano	PHI
Suwida Wongkraisorn	THA
Dilshoda Rahmanova	TJK
Yang Chen Yen	TPE
Nguyen Thi Hang Nga	VIE
Standby Assistant Referees	**MA**
Saki Nakamoto	JPN
Munirah Binti Ha Ali	MAS
Technical Instructors/Referee Assessors	**MA**
Ali Ahmed I Altraifi	KSA
Cui Yongmei	CHN
Widiya Habibah Binti Shamsuri	MAS
Etsuko Fukano	JPN
Maria Piedade Rebello	IND
Fitness Instructors	**MA**
Yuliya Tarasova	UZB
Sarraa Fahad S Alosaimi	KSA

1.2 SUPPORT TEAM

Referees' Liaison Officers (RLOs): A dedicated team of four (4) RLOs was assigned to support and facilitate all match official-related arrangements, including transportation, venue access, daily logistics, and daily operation.

Players' Team: Local teams participated in practical training sessions for referees.

Medical Team: Masseurs supported the referees' physical conditioning and recovery. In addition, an ambulance and paramedic team were deployed daily at the training venue to provide emergency and first aid services as required.



2. PREPARATORY COURSE

A four-day preparatory course was held from March 28 to 31, 2026, with the fitness check held on March 29. The topics covered were: positioning & reading, challenges, tactical fouls, offside, handball, teamwork, penalty area incident & match management.

2.1 FITNESS CHECK RESULTS

The following fitness checks were conducted to assess the physical readiness of the match officials and ensure they were adequately prepared for the demands of the competition:

- **Referees:** Dynamic Yo-Yo Test (Level 17.8)
- **Assistant Referees:** ARIET (Level 14.5.3)

Following the fitness assessment, the final list of match officials was updated based on the results.

2.2 PRACTICAL SESSIONS

Players, together with a coach, assisted in simulating match incidents in line with the instructors' training objectives, providing match officials with realistic practical scenarios. Concurrently, fitness training sessions were conducted alongside Instant Feedback sessions to ensure that match officials remained physically prepared and ready for their upcoming appointments.

2.3 THEORETICAL SESSIONS

Theoretical sessions were designed to enhance the match officials' technical knowledge and promote greater consistency in the application and interpretation of the Laws of the Game. Video clips previously presented during the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™ were reviewed and discussed to reinforce consistent decision-making standards across all women's match officials.





3. DURING COMPETITION

3.1 PRACTICAL SESSIONS

Daily practical training sessions were conducted with a focus on fitness conditioning and maintaining the physical readiness of match officials. Referees and Assistant Referees appointed for matches on the following day undertook customised training programmes tailored to their preparation requirements. In addition, gymnasium-based conditioning and pool recovery sessions were incorporated into the post-match programme to support recovery, reduce fatigue, and ensure optimal performance throughout the competition.

3.2 MATCH ASSESSMENT

All matches were analysed in real time by a video referee assessor based in the Remote Monitoring Room at the referees' hotel. The assessor monitored key match situations and compiled comprehensive details, including the timing and nature of incidents, decisions and disciplinary actions, and other relevant observations for review.

In addition, referee assessors were assigned to observe performances in person at the match venues. They closely evaluated the officials' decision-making and overall teamwork throughout the matches to provide immediate, first-hand feedback.

The fitness instructors were also present physically at the matches to check on the overall fitness levels of the match officials and to tailor the fitness programmes for the referees during the competition.



3.3 MATCH DEBRIEFING SESSIONS

of their ongoing development. Significant incidents from previous matches were analysed and discussed, enabling officials to reflect on decision-making processes and prepare for future challenges. The instructors provided constructive feedback and highlighted key learning points to promote consistency, accuracy, and uniformity in foul recognition.

4. TECHNICAL SUMMARY

4.1 GENERAL PERFORMANCE

Across 25 matches, referee assessors and instructors assessed the overall performances of the match officials positively.

4.2 GENERAL MANAGEMENT

A total of 48 cautions (yellow cards) were shown during the entire competition. On average, matches saw 1.92 yellow cards per game.



EXTRA TIME

EXPECTED GOALS FOR

Rank	Team	Expected Goals	Goals	Differential (Goals - Expected Goals)
1	DPR Korea	18.8	25	6.2
2	Japan	13	20	7
3	China PR	7.4	8	0.6
4	Thailand	6.5	8	1.5
4	Australia	6.5	12	5.5
6	Korea Republic	4.8	6	1.2
7	Uzbekistan	3.2	5	1.8
8	India	2.3	3	0.7
9	Vietnam	2.2	2	-0.2
10	Chinese Taipei	2.1	1	-1.1
11	Bangladesh	1.5	2	0.5
12	Jordan	0.5	1	0.5

DISCIPLINARY RECORD

Team	Total Fouls Conceded	Yellow Cards	2nd Yellow Cards	Straight Reds
Korea Republic	46	7	0	0
Uzbekistan	37	7	0	0
DPR Korea	46	4	0	0
China PR	35	6	0	0
Australia	36	5	0	0
Bangladesh	35	3	0	0
India	35	3	0	0
Jordan	19	7	0	0
Japan	23	2	0	0
Thailand	19	2	0	0
Vietnam	9	2	0	0
Chinese Taipei	8	0	0	0

SQUAD INFO

Team	Average Starting Age (Y, D)	Total Starting XI Changes	Total Players Used	Total Goal Scorers (excl OGs)	Total Games
DPR Korea	18y 302d	12	18	11	6
Japan	18y 357d	16	21	8	6
China PR	19y 219d	3	20	6	5
Korea Republic	19y 81d	19	21	5	5
Vietnam	19y 329d	7	19	1	4
Thailand	18y 189d	9	20	4	4
Australia	18y 271d	5	18	6	4
Uzbekistan	18y 195d	1	17	4	4
Bangladesh	18y 56d	2	17	1	3
Chinese Taipei	18y 236d	4	17	1	3
Jordan	18y 86d	2	18	1	3
India	18y 350d	1	16	2	3

Team	Possession (%)
DPR Korea	71.66
Japan	70.84
China PR	59.16
Australia	54.55
Korea Republic	54.16
Thailand	46.68
India	45.55
Bangladesh	39.81
Uzbekistan	34.57
Vietnam	30.53
Jordan	25.6
Chinese Taipei	19.68

Team	Average Shots per match
DPR Korea	27.33
Japan	23.50
Thailand	17.50
China PR	15.60
Australia	13.25
Korea Republic	10.80
Uzbekistan	10.00
India	7.67
Vietnam	6.75
Chinese Taipei	6.33
Bangladesh	2.33
Jordan	2.33

Team	Passing Accuracy (%)
Japan	85.36
DPR Korea	80.38
China PR	78.57
Australia	78.48
India	73.27
Korea Republic	70.23
Thailand	66.98
Uzbekistan	57.34
Vietnam	55.18
Chinese Taipei	50.54
Bangladesh	46.08
Jordan	41.8

Team	Average Shots on Target per match
DPR Korea	12.00
Japan	8.33
Thailand	6.50
Australia	6.25
China PR	5.80
Uzbekistan	4.50
India	3.67
Korea Republic	3.40
Chinese Taipei	2.67
Vietnam	1.75
Bangladesh	1.67
Jordan	0.67

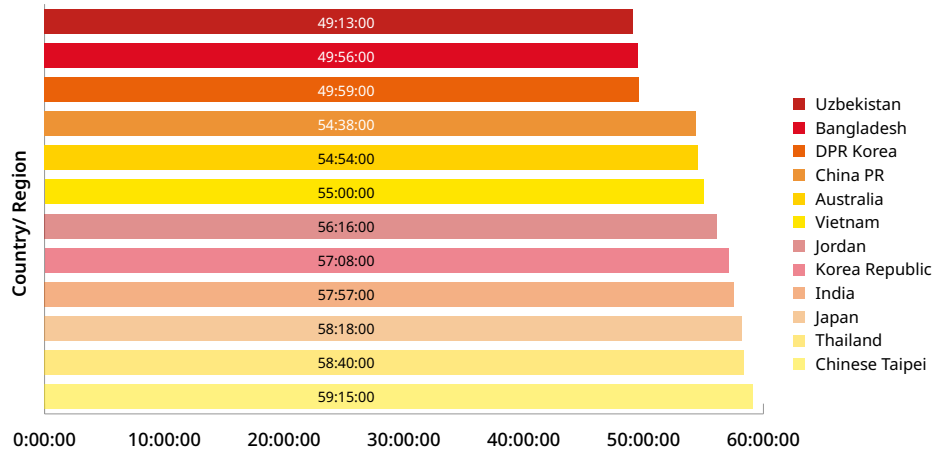
Team	Passing Accuracy in Final Third (%)
Japan	81.22
DPR Korea	70.19
Australia	67
Korea Republic	62.06
China PR	61.28
India	60.25
Uzbekistan	47.43
Chinese Taipei	46.3
Thailand	46.25
Vietnam	40.74
Bangladesh	27.85
Jordan	21.97

Team	Average Crosses (inc. Corners) per match
DPR Korea	31.00
Japan	23.67
China PR	20.80
Thailand	17.00
Australia	14.25
Vietnam	13.00
India	11.00
Korea Republic	8.80
Chinese Taipei	7.67
Uzbekistan	6.50
Jordan	3.67
Bangladesh	3.00

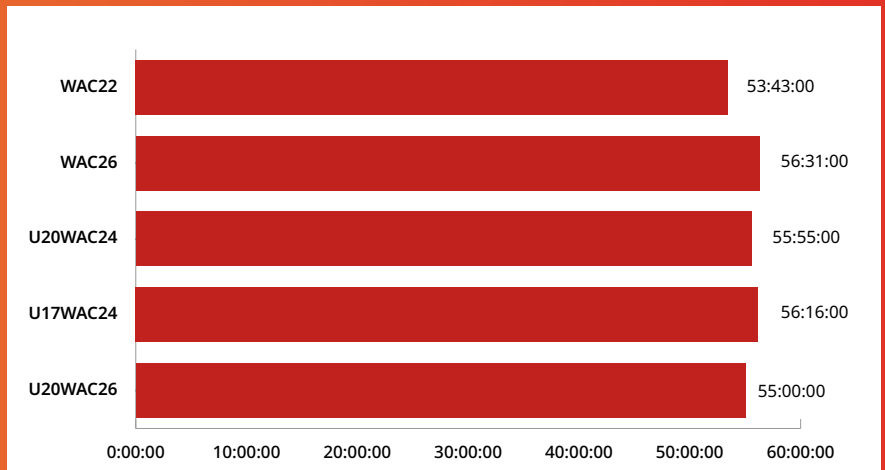
Team	Duel Success (%)
Australia	56.67
Thailand	55.56
Vietnam	53.01
Japan	51.7
DPR Korea	51.33
Korea Republic	50.23
Jordan	48.39
India	48.15
Bangladesh	47.06
China PR	44.81
Uzbekistan	44.27
Chinese Taipei	43.72

Team	Aerial Duel Success (%)
DPR Korea	66.36
Australia	65.63
Japan	61.45
China PR	57.14
Bangladesh	50
Korea Republic	48.39
Thailand	41.67
Vietnam	40
Jordan	38.89
India	29.41
Uzbekistan	19.15
Chinese Taipei	13.33

U20WAC26 AVERAGE IN-PLAY TIME (by teams)



U20WAC26 AVERAGE IN-PLAY TIME (by tournaments)





WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

24 MILLION
IMPRESSIONS
49% DECREASE

12 MILLION
VIDEO VIEWS
44% INCREASE

734 K
ENGAGEMENTS
38% DECREASE

768
TOTAL POSTS

THE-AFC.COM

297,283
USERS
1477% INCREASE

497,928
PAGE VIEWS
484% INCREASE

AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP™

AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP CHINA 2026™

TECHNICAL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION INTRODUCTION



The final tournament staged in China from May 1-17 provided a ground-breaking conclusion to the 10th edition of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup. As had been the case at the U20 event played a few weeks earlier, it heralded an expansion from eight teams to twelve. There were also additional innovations. Notably the switch to a formula successfully adopted for the FIFA U-17 World Cup hosted by Qatar in 2025, when matches were played on various pitches at the Aspire Academy complex. In China, the same 'Grassroots Festival' scenario was created within the Suzhou Taihu Football Sports Centre where three of the eight pitches were used for matches and the other five were assigned to the teams for their training sessions. Six of the 25 matches – the Opening Game, two Quarter-finals, both Semi-finals and the Final – were played at the 35,000-capacity Suzhou Sports Centre Stadium.

China PR were hosting the final tournament for the fourth time and, in the historic city of Suzhou, all 12 teams and the match officials were housed within the hotel complex within walking distance of the matchplay and training pitches.

The participants were divided into three four-team groups with, as in the other women's competitions, the top two in each group qualifying for the Quarter-finals, along with the best two third-placed teams. In the Knockout Rounds extra-time was to be played if scores were level after 90 minutes – but this situation did not occur. Importantly, the four Semi-finalists qualified as the AFC representatives at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, to be hosted by Morocco in October-November 2026. This privilege was earned by Australia (for the first time), China PR, DPR Korea and Japan. The last two met in the Final, where the 5-1 win allowed DPR Korea to successfully defend the title and to take pride of place in the all-time ranking with five victories to their credit.

The squads of 23 featured players with dates of birth spanning three years (2009-2011). Ten teams were totally home-based, the exceptions being debutants Lebanon (two players in Europe, one apiece in Australia and USA) while the majority of the Philippines squad were based in North America.

Eight of the technicians at the final tournament were coaching in their native countries. But the India head coach, Pamela Conti from Italy, was the only one from a non-AFC territory. Vietnam's Japanese technician Okiyama Masahiko was alone in coaching both the U17 and U20 teams in their respective final tournaments. Four of the dozen coaches in Suzhou were female.

With the AFC's Head of Women's Football, Bai Lili, at the helm, the Technical Observer Team at the final tournament was formed by Konno Yuiko (Japan), Houriya Al Taheri (UAE) and Li Dongna (China PR), a trio of AFC Pro Licence holders with extensive coaching experience at senior and age-limit levels of the women's game.



STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

AFC U17 WOMEN'S ASIAN CUP CHINA 2026™

The AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026™ was played between May 1 and 17, 2026.

Matches were contested at the Suzhou Taihu Football Sports Centre, with DPR Korea defeating Japan 5-1 in the Final for a record-extending fifth title.

The two teams, together with Australia and China PR, also qualified for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Morocco 2026 and the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2027™ in China PR.



STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

GROUP A

China PR were the dominant team in Group A, with the hosts kicking off their campaign with an emphatic 6-0 win against Myanmar.

Vietnam's challenge was also easily brushed off with a 3-0 triumph before a 6-0 victory against Thailand confirmed the East Asians as the group winners.

Vietnam also advanced, finishing ahead of Thailand after both sides accumulated four points. The two played to a 2-2 draw in their opening encounter, with Vietnam's 2-1 defeat of Myanmar sealing their Quarter-final spot; the Thais progressed as the best-ranked third-placed team.











STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

GROUP B

Japan seized control of Group B from Matchday One, with the three-time winners sailing to a 13-0 win against Lebanon.

A 3-0 win against India and 5-0 triumph over Australia secured them the top spot.

Australia also advanced, courtesy of their 2-0 win against India and 1-1 draw with Lebanon, while India progressed as the second-best third-placed side.









GROUP C

Defending champions DPR Korea were unstoppable in Group C, opening their campaign with a 10-0 defeat of Chinese Taipei.

That was followed by an 8-0 win against Philippines and 3-0 triumph against Korea Republic to swagger into the Quarter-finals.

Korea Republic joined them in advancing following their 5-0 win against Philippines and 4-0 defeat of Chinese Taipei.



QUARTER-FINALS

QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS

VIETNAM 0-2 AUSTRALIA

Two goals in three minutes secured Australia a 2-0 win against Vietnam in their Quarter-final.

Frideriki Karaberis put Australia ahead in the 28th minute, with Leyla Hussein adding the second shortly after as Vietnam's challenge was doused in the first half.







JAPAN 1-0 KOREA REPUBLIC

In what was the toughest test Japan faced, Korea Republic held their own in this tie with both sides having opportunities to open the scoring.

Japan's quality, however, ultimately prevailed as Rara Higuchi's 74th-minute strike settled the absorbing contest.







QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS QUARTER-FINALS





CHINA PR 3-0 INDIA

China PR proved too strong for India, with the hosts opening the scoring through Huang Qinyi's 38th-minute goal.

Liu Yuxi doubled the advantage in first-half added time, and Li Qixian ensured an emphatic win with her 90th-minute goal.



DPR KOREA 6-0 THAILAND

Yu Jong Hyang starred with a brace as DPR Korea continued their title defence with a 6-0 win against Thailand.

Yu scored in the 17th and 20th minutes, with Arisa Tamsakul's own goal giving them a healthy advantage going into the break.

Ri Kyong Im then added to the haul just two minutes into the second half, with So Ye Rim's brace completing another splendid DPR Korea performance.









SEMI-FINALS

SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS

JAPAN 4-0 AUSTRALIA

Japan marched into the Final with a 4-0 win against Australia, with three first-half goals effectively sealing the contest.

Japan only needed three minutes to go in front when Charlotte Bradshaw inadvertently headed into her own net in trying to clear Mashiro Yamaji's corner delivery.

Japan doubled their advantage through a clever set-piece routine in the 24th minute, Yamaji driving her low free-kick to the near post for Nanami Kurita to flick the ball past a rooted Dali Gorr Burchmore.

Kurita netted her second in the 38th minute, ghosting in behind Bradshaw to nod home Misaya Takeda's pinpoint cross from the left.

Japan continued to dictate terms after the break but had to wait till the 74th minute for their fourth, with Asuka Tanaka picking out Arisu Ota at the edge of the box for a clinical strike to seal the impressive win.





SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS SEMI-FINALS

CHINA PR 2-4 DPR KOREA

Defending champions DPR Korea overcame a valiant China PR 4-2 in their Semi-final battle.

Having kept DPR Korea at bay for most of the first half, China PR were finally undone in the 28th minute when a pass out from goalkeeper Niu Ziqi to Zhao Siqing saw DPR Korea's Yu Jong Hyang dispossess the latter before firing the ball home.

DPR Korea doubled their advantage five minutes later when Ri Kyong Im exchanged passes with Ri Ui Gyong before blasting the ball into the top corner.

China PR fought back, and their positive play was rewarded in the 43rd minute with Liu Yuxi planting the ball in the back of the net from Wu Yichen's cross as the DPR Korea defence was breached for the first time in the competition.

The hosts were level five minutes into the second half with Zhao slipping Liu into space, and the forward dinked the ball over advancing DPR Korea goalkeeper Kim Son Gyong for her second of the match.

Parity didn't last too long as DPR Korea were galvanised into action, regaining the lead in the 65th minute thanks to a surging run from Ri Ye Rim, who bested Xu Yue before driving into the box and finding Yu for her 10th goal of the campaign.

The irrepressible Yu made sure of the win in the 75th minute, rising highest to thump Won Sol Gyong's cross onto the underside of the bar before the ball landed over the goal line to send DPR Korea through to a ninth successive Final.











FINAL

FINAL FINAL FINAL FINAL FINAL FINAL FINAL FINAL



DPR KOREA 5-1 JAPAN

DPR Korea retained their title with an emphatic 5-1 win against Japan in the Final.

Yu Jong Hyang struck four times, with Kim Won Sim adding the other to render Yumi Hayashi's effort immaterial as DPR Korea moved past Japan to land a record-setting fifth title.

DPR Korea controlled proceedings from the start but had to wait till the 30th minute for the opener as Yu teed Won Sim for a scuffed shot, which was retrieved by the former before sidefooting it home.

The second came in the 50th minute following a long clearance from Pak Kyong Ryong, which was chased down by Yu, who then lobbed it over the stranded goalkeeper Ayaka Miyaji.

Hayashi reduced the deficit in the 53rd minute, but it was a momentary respite as Yu chested down a long pass in the 55th minute before setting up Won Sim for a swerving strike from outside the box that flew past the outstretched Miyaji.

Yu capped a wonderful tournament for herself and DPR Korea when she was sent racing towards goal in the 81st minute by Won Sim before adding another eight minutes later as the prolific player put the result beyond doubt.

Yu took the Most Valuable Player and Top Goalscorer awards, with her 15-goal haul setting a new single-edition record, while teammate Kim Son Gyong was named the Best Goalkeeper.


WINNING
COACH

JI'S UNSTOPPABLE MACHINE

Which of the coaches in Suzhou was the scorer of the national team's only goal at a FIFA World Cup? The appearance of the question on this page gives away the answer that Ji Yun Nam struck DPR Korea's 89th-minute consolation goal during the 2-1 defeat by Brazil in Johannesburg in 2010. At that moment in a distinguished playing career as left-back or holding midfielder, he could hardly have imagined that, 16 years later, he would be heading back to another FIFA World Cup at the helm of a women's Under-17 team which, in Suzhou, overpowered all its opponents during a record-breaking defence of the AFC title.

"Our success in women's football in our country is not by luck," he said after the Final. "We have a football school with good players coming through – and there will be more in years to come." And, before the summit meeting with Japan, he had talked to the AFC Technical Observers about the principles which have made DPR Korea a major force at Asian and world levels in women's age-limit competitions.

"It was February of this year when we first formed this team," he told them. "For us, this was not normal. It was late. But since then, the team has stayed together. We focused on our method of preparing, which is speed-based game training. We put a strong focus on physical conditioning, trying to balance it with tactical conditioning because they are not mature. The core identity of our women's football is the speed training method. Fast football. Beyond that, our players always try to win against themselves – to improve themselves and to overcome difficulties. We always try to reach a higher level. And we always focus on developing mental strength."



WINNING COACH WINNING COACH



Asked about talent identification criteria, Ji responded, "I think about what kind of player I need in each position, what skills that person must have, and how she will meet the demands of the team design. Beyond the position-specific characteristics, the key qualities I look for are, if I put them in order, firstly physical strength, secondly intelligence, thirdly fast thinking and decision making."

The Technical Observers asked Ji to comment on his team's impressive blend of physical intensity and technical precision. "It's difficult to talk about percentages for each aspect," he replied, "because it's important to always keep our physical condition very firm. To implement our tactical game, we need to be fully prepared physically. In football, we run for 90 minutes in the game. To cope with that, we must be physically fit. If we have new tactics, we cannot implement them if we are not fully ready physically. That is why balancing the two elements is very important. When we talk about high intensity in training, I always give importance to several elements like speed and strength training and fast thinking in any kind of circumstances. Because if a player gets the ball, it's always about thinking straight and not hesitating. I think it's the main factor in training. And when we come to agility and specific position training, I would say my method is based on about 40% without the ball and 60% with the ball. When developing a U17 player, I give the most importance to physical conditioning. Second is tactical methods. Third is developing individual skills."

Ji admitted that the biggest test in Suzhou had been the Semi-final against the hosts, played before a large crowd in the big stadium. "The Chinese team played a really good game and we felt pressurised because we had played the other games at the training centre and it was the first time that the players entered a stadium with a very different atmosphere. It was a really hard game. Our mental strength was very strong, but the atmosphere with so many spectators backing China PR meant that we didn't focus on our strength and team tactics at first. But later we gained our focus and came to our senses. From this game, we could learn a lesson: we should always stay focused, and then we can truly display our real strength."

WINNING COACH WINNING COACH

DPR Korea were visibly shaken when China PR came back from 2-0 down to equalise – with the first two goals they had conceded. “We didn’t expect the Chinese team to score. But after the two goals, our players were shaken. The reason we were pegged back was the loss of focus after we went two up. The players started getting too comfortable. So I had to make them come to their senses. We changed our tactics to focus more on the overall defending model. In this game, the players in defensive roles lacked experience, which is why we couldn’t defend firmly. We found out the reason, and we will consistently work to change our tactics and organise our collective defensive roles better. This kind of game will be very useful for the development of the team going forward, including for the World Cup. We see this as a development stage, a step-by-step process of improvement. I try to tell our players they should always trust their mental strength, which is trained in our country. We always call it Korean spirit. We should always focus on maintaining the Korean spirit.”

Finally, the Technical Observers asked Ji what is needed for the Asian teams to compete on the global stage with the top teams from other Confederations. “On what is needed to compete with teams like the USA, England, and France,” he said, “I would focus on defensive methods. I think defending is the main factor we lack right now. We will improve that phase going forward.”







TECHNICAL TOPICS



"The tournament showcased a wealth of attacking talent," was the verdict from the AFC Technical Observers in Suzhou. "In particular, the Semi-finalists featured attackers with exceptional individual skills — strikers with exceptional scoring ability, wingers with absolute confidence in one-on-one situations, and lone strikers capable of creating time and space for their team-mates through hold-up play."

DPR Korea's Yu Jong Hyang took the headlines – and AFC awards – with 15 goals and 6 assists. Her prolific scoring covered all the bases. She met crosses with four headers and two finishes with her feet; she scored five with her right foot, four with her left. She created chances with sharp runs behind the defence and harmonised off-ball movements with Kim Won Sim, her mobile accomplice in the champions' 1-4-4-2 structure. The effectiveness of their front-line attacking, coupled with the comments by their head coach Ji Yun Nam about the relevance of position-specific work in training camps, provoked reflections on the evolution, now visible at Under-17 level, of the role of the striker.

PRK Yu Jong Hyang #10

FRONT RUNNERS

Among the teams who operated with a single striker, the Technical Observers signalled Ju Zhitong – the most advanced attacker in China PR's 1-3-4-3 formation – as a prime example of a target player who, as they put it, "excelled at holding up the ball and was a real aerial threat around the goal." In a similar mould, Korea Republic's Lim Ji-hye, the main target player in a 1-4-4-2 set-up, was a strong, physical presence who demanded close attention from centre-backs and opened spaces for her attacking accomplices. Thailand's No10 Kurisara Limpawanich was good at holding up the ball, as was Australia's leading scorer Theodora Mouithys – another physically powerful target player who led the line in a team which oscillated between 1-4-2-3-1 and 1-4-4-2 structures.





Others tended towards a more flexible interpretation of the role, more akin to the Sam Kerr model of a striker who not only scores goals but is prepared to operate near the touchlines, to drop deep to participate in build-up play and to be the key figure in triggering the high press. The observers noted that Japan's No20 Nanami Kurita was deeply involved in linking her team's approach play with excellent levels of technique, vision and passing ability. Vietnam's No10 Nguyen Thi Minh Anh, although playing the lone-striker role in her team's 1-5-4-1 formation, operated as a key transition outlet, linking with forward-running midfielders and wing-backs in the construction of attacking moves. The tournament illustrated that, while a strong target player is still a valuable asset, the striker's role was not exclusively about goalscoring but also about contributing to approach work and operating as an all-rounder rather than a one-mission specialist.

The Role of CHN Huang Qinyi #9

DEVELOPING THE ALL-ROUND GOALKEEPER

A similar trend was visible at the other end of the pitch, where goalkeepers are still considered to be specialists but are expected to contribute more than shot-stopping. The Technical Observers cited Japan as an example. "Their three goalkeepers, especially the No23 Kou Kadowaki," they commented, "were particularly effective in build-up play, consistently supporting circulation from the back and connecting well with the defensive line under pressure. Their ability to distribute accurately with both short and medium-range passing allowed the team to progress play through organised build-up structures."

TECHNICAL TOPICS TECHNICAL TOPICS

Japan, however, were something of an exception at a tournament where goalkeeper rotation was limited – as mentioned in the Talking Points pages. Most teams – DPR Korea among them – maintained a clear first-choice goalkeeper with a view to preserving defensive communication and organisational stability. Only four teams rotated goalkeepers during the group stage, with Japan adeptly using all three without any loss of collective organisation or quality in build-up play.

The Observers acknowledged that many of the other teams preferred a more direct approach - including from goal kicks – frequently using long distribution to by-pass pressure, with outfielders prepared to compete for second balls in advanced areas. In other words, the goalkeeper's strategy was clearly influenced by tactical approaches and technical levels.

At this point on learning curves – and especially at a tournament where so many goals were conceded – goalkeeping errors can be expected and, arguably, may prove beneficial in the long term. But not in terms of immediate results. Several goals were scored when shots were parried or dropped (as opposed to being caught or turned to safety), such as Australia's opener in the Quarter-final against Vietnam. Korea Republic's first goal against the Philippines came when the goalkeeper failed to gather a through pass. And errors in the build-up phase were costly in situations such as the pass to an opponent that allowed Australia to respond with a through pass and a finish to open the scoring against India. In their Semi-final, China PR conceded following a build-up situation in which the goalkeeper's decision under high pressure allowed DPR Korea to regain possession in the central attacking area and score. The situation highlighted the importance of decision-making, scanning, and execution during build-up under pressure. Even so, the Technical Observers commented "compared with the U20 competition, goalkeepers demonstrated greater composure in possession and more consistent decision-making during defensive organisation and build-up phases."

PRK High Pressing and Transition to Attack



Eight of the 12 teams primarily used a back four; the others, a back five. Lebanon and Myanmar oscillated between the two, using a back four against similarly matched teams to provide greater attacking support. Vietnam often maintained a back five even during attacking phases, prioritising defensive stability and preparing for transitions. Defensive approaches across the tournament showed clear differences in intensity and structure. Japan and DPR Korea consistently applied aggressive high pressing throughout the competition. Their collective pressure in the final third and midfield forced opponents into long passes, rushed decisions, and turnovers, allowing quick regains and immediate attacking opportunities close to goal.

China PR and Korea Republic frequently attempted to apply high pressure, but against opponents using direct long distribution, they often shifted into organised mid-block defensive structures while maintaining compact spacing between lines and coordinated pressure in midfield areas. This allowed them to regain possession in midfield areas. Most of the remaining teams relied on middle-to-low defensive blocks, emphasising compact defensive lines, central protection and penalty-area coverage. Their priority was to force opponents wide or into direct long balls, then rely on aerial duels and clearances.

PASSING UNDER PRESSURE

The ability to withstand the coordinated pressing by the top teams was confirmed as one of the development challenges for the other teams. Pass completion rates in the opponents' half could be used as a gauge. Chinese Taipei, for instance, posted figures of 21% and 20% against DPR Korea and Korea Republic. In other words, four out of five passes were either intercepted by an opponent or went out of play. Thailand's rate, well over 50% against Vietnam and Myanmar, fell to 20% against China PR and 28% against the champions. India registered 29% and 28% against Japan and China PR, respectively. Vietnam's rate was 18% against China PR. And only 16% of Lebanon's passing in the Japan half was received by a teammate. At the other end of the scale, Japan's completion rate reached 80% in two of their six games.

PRK Combination - Third Man Run



TECHNICAL TOPICS



STRAIGHT FORWARD?

As in the other women's competitions, there was a mix of teams who set out to build attacks and those who, when faced by powerful opponents ready to exert high pressure, chose to play directly and pragmatically to avoid losing possession in their own half, frequently opting for simple long balls to the front line. No less than 58% of the passes by Chinese Taipei and Vietnam were of 30m or more against Korea Republic and China PR, respectively, followed by 48% by the Philippines against DPR Korea and 43% by Myanmar against China PR.

Among the teams who favoured more elaborate build-up styles, Japan, China PR, Australia, and the Philippines had their goalkeepers play high up the field, working alongside centre-backs to support attacks from behind. They played a crucial role not only in facilitating switches of play but also, at times, in playing penetrating passes through the middle to link up with attackers or delivering accurate long balls to players up front.

Structured Build up with GK involvement

For example, China PR, playing with a three-back system, had the central component of the trio push forward to act as a holding midfielder, which in turn allowed their screening midfielders to move higher up the field, creating a numerical advantage in the attacking third and energising offensive play. Similarly, Japan and Australia had one full-back move inside to act as a central midfielder, creating numerical superiority up front to pose problems for the opponent's defence and create spaces for wingers. Australia also featured full-backs who actively took up high positions, while central midfielders dropped into the space vacated by the full-backs to participate in build-up play. As outlined in the Goalscoring Analysis, 37.5% of open play goals were created by deliveries from the wide areas – a facet made especially relevant by opponents who prioritised deep, compact defending. Many top-tier teams were able to establish a strong dynamic between their full-backs and wingers, constantly adjusting positions to create width during attacks. Japan's approach work was characterised by neat, creative combination play on the flanks, often followed by a low, powerfully driven cross, as opposed to the high delivery. Only two of Japan's open-play goals were headers.



China PR also demonstrated that the top teams had more than one string to their attacking bow, scoring with a wide range of crosses, cut-backs, through passes, long-range shooting and solo running. And, of course, DPR Korea's 33 open-play goals offered a prime illustration of the importance of diversity in attacking options.

RAPID-RESPONSE ATTACKING

One of the common denominators of the three women's tournaments played in the first half of 2026 was that the teams who prioritised defending in deep blocks were, surprisingly, not the ones who most successfully exploited the counterattack.

The tournament in Suzhou produced 12 goals clearly attributable to fast counters – 14% of open-play goals. But the main beneficiaries were the top teams. And six of the successes were generated during the last two matches. During the second Semi-final, DPR Korea opened the scoring with an advanced counter, striking immediately when China PR ran into difficulties in their build-up. The hosts' equaliser at 2-2 was a classic back-to-front counter, as was the champions' third goal when, with defenders chasing back, a low, driven cross from the right was turned into the net. In the Final, DPR Korea's second goal was a classic counter culminated with a through pass that left the Japan goalkeeper stranded off her line. Japan's goal was a similar move with two defenders fruitlessly pursuing Yumi Hayashi into the box. And the champions' fourth goal was a collective counterattack in rapid response to a wayward pass in midfield. Yet maybe their most telling example was the advanced counter that created their 10th and final goal against Chinese Taipei. A high

regain was rapidly followed by a short cross swept in from the right and a diving header which allowed Yu Jong Hyang to take her tally to five. Apart from the effectiveness and beauty of the goal itself, it illustrated that, even at 9-0 up, the champions were relentless in their high pressing and their hunger for goals.

The overall balance for the tournament was five goals from classic counters; four after regains in advanced areas; and three collective counters after ball-winning in midfield.

Decisive Counters

SET-PLAY MECHANISMS

The tournament's set-play goals (and their importance) are discussed in the Goalscoring Analysis section. But the Technical Observers also pointed out that training-ground time had evidently been spent on this facet by the top teams and that strategic approaches were influenced by player profiles and physical characteristics. Teams with aerial power preferred direct deliveries into the penalty area, targeting the players with physical presence and looking to capitalise on second-ball situations. Eight of the set-play goals were headed into the net.





Other teams – notably Japan – used short-corner combinations to create improved crossing angles, to invite defenders towards the ball and to potentially distort marking structures in the box. A commonly used attacking pattern involved deliveries into the near-post zone where multiple players were creating congestion and restricting movement by defenders – a challenging scenario for goalkeepers. Several teams also attempted to create space for key players through rehearsed blocking movements and coordinated runs across the defensive line. "Japan consistently used well-rehearsed set-piece routines," the Technical Observers noted, "with precise delivery, coordinated movement and strong collective understanding."

MIND GAMES?

How important is it to pay attention to mental and emotional aspects at this stage of player development? The question was prompted by Japan's head coach Sadayoshi Shirai during a conversation with the AFC Technical Observers. He mentioned the underlying tension created by the Quarter-final against Korea Republic when, after a smooth passage through the Group Stage, the heightened intensity attached to a fixture with a FIFA World Cup place at stake meant that some of his players experienced troubles to sleep.





"As the players prepared to take the field for this decisive World Cup qualifier," he said, "they were clearly more nervous than we adults could have imagined. Their movements were stiff, and their bodies weren't responding as well as expected. Looking back at the game footage after the match, the first half wasn't that bad, and it wasn't a match where we were completely unable to perform. However, the players' frustration at being unable to execute the plays they had executed so well in the Group Stage led them to react as if things weren't going well—as if they were failing. I felt that, psychologically, they were playing with far too much pressure on their shoulders. Even in situations where they would normally have applied pressure, I got the impression that in this match they often held back a bit and were slow to react."

In another conversation, the Technical Observers heard the China PR head coach Ma Xiaoxu say, "Football is inherently unpredictable, especially at the U17 level, where uncertainty and fluctuations are common. The start of the match is crucial. If we get off to a good start, we can seize the initiative; if we start poorly, young players tend to get nervous. This is a psychological challenge we focus on and try to help our players overcome – especially as young Chinese players are generally introverted and not accustomed to expressing themselves freely on the pitch."

She also referred to the special pressures attached to the role of host nation and the need to perform well in front of large crowds. "To help the players adapt to the home atmosphere and avoid feeling overwhelmed by the crowd," she explained, "we did specific preparation during our camp in Tai'an. We organised for the team to watch a local men's match live, experiencing the atmosphere with over 20,000 spectators. They walked out with the teams and listened to the national anthems to get used to the ceremony of a big match. We also played a friendly against a local women's team in front of about 5,000-6,000 spectators, which simulated the environment very well. In addition, we conducted psychological counselling and communication sessions to help the players let go of distractions and focus entirely on the game itself."

Back to the question: how important is it to pay attention to these aspects?



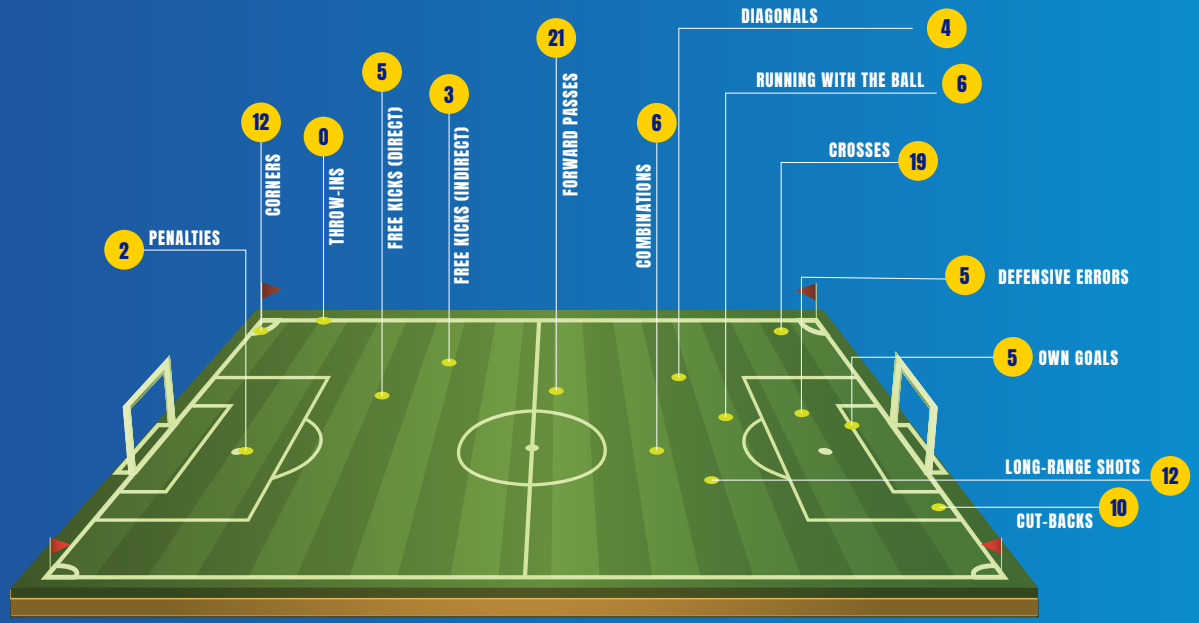
GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

A GOALSCORING FEAST

In 2024, the Technical Report on the final tournament in Bali described the goalscoring as 'exceptionally prolific'. The same can be said of the 2026 event, where the 50% increase in the number of participants was matched by the inflated goal tally of 110 at an average of 4.4 per game, with 82 attempts hitting the net during the Group Stage and 28 in the seven Knockout Stage matches. Both teams scored in only five of the 25 fixtures, and only two games were drawn – one of them the goal-less encounter between Chinese Taipei and Philippines. As had been the case in 2024, the uneven distribution of goals illustrated the gaps between participants in terms of development, with three of the four Semi-finalists sharing 83 of the goals. In other words, one quarter of the teams accounted for three-quarters of the goalscoring, and the other nine teams shared only 27 goals. Chinese Taipei and Philippines went home without scoring, while Lebanon and Myanmar enjoyed one success apiece. By contrast, Yu Jong Hyang's extraordinary individual total of 15 goals in six matches earned DPR Korea's No10 the unusual honour of combining the AFC Top Goalscorer and Most Valuable Player awards.

The overall tournament average was 28 goal attempts per match, with one in 2.48 hitting the target - an accuracy ratio in line with the 1:2.53 at the women's U20 event in Thailand and somewhat better than the 1:2.6 at the senior AFC Women's Asian Cup™ in Australia. The average of one goal per 6.39 attempts compared with 1:7.34 and 1:8.39 at the other two tournaments. Goalkeepers might prefer not to know that one per 2.58 on-target attempts hit the net.



GOALS FROM SET PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Corners	Direct from / following from a corner	12
Free kicks (direct)	Direct from a free kick	5
Free kicks (indirect)	Following a free kick	3
Penalties	Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)	2
Throw-ins	Following a throw-in	0

TOTAL GOALS SCORED : 110

GOALS FROM OPEN PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Combinations	Wall pass / combination move	6
Crosses	Crosses from the wing	19
Cut-backs	Pass back from the bye-line	10
Diagonals	Diagonal passes into the penalty box	4
Running with the ball	Dribble and close-range shot / dribble and pass	6
Long-range shots	Direct shot / shot and rebound	12
Forward passes	Through pass or pass over the defence	21
Defensive errors	Bad back-pass / mistake by the goalkeeper	5
Own goals	Goal by the opponent	5

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

SET PLAYS

As had been the case in the previous U17 tournament, dead-ball situations accounted for a low figure of 20% of the goals. But, as in Bali, a major contributing factor was the scarcity of goals from the penalty spot – just two (both converted by China PR). The statistical panorama was also influenced by the fact that DPR Korea obtained only three of their 36 goals from dead-ball scenarios – all of them corners. Runners-up Japan, on the other hand, scored eight of their 27 from set plays.

Corner kicks led to just over half of the set-play total with a success rate of one goal per 18.6 – a figure which compares favourably with the 1:29 ratio posted at the senior women's event in Australia. Japan reaped the highest dividend on their training-ground work, a prime example being the fifth goal in their Group Stage fixture against Australia when a well-rehearsed short corner on the left was returned to the taker; crossed right-footed; and headed into the net. Short corners generated two of Japan's five successes from their tournament total of 35 corner kicks.

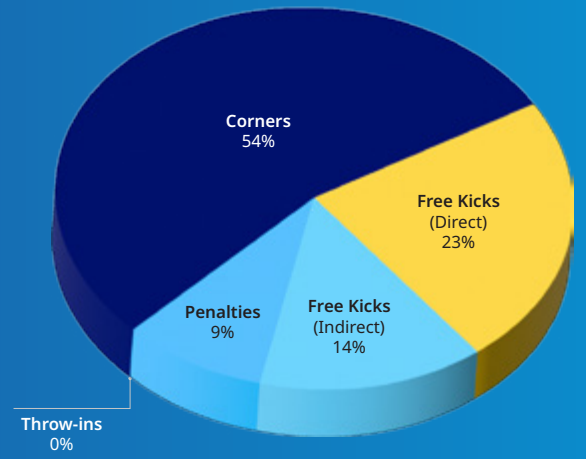




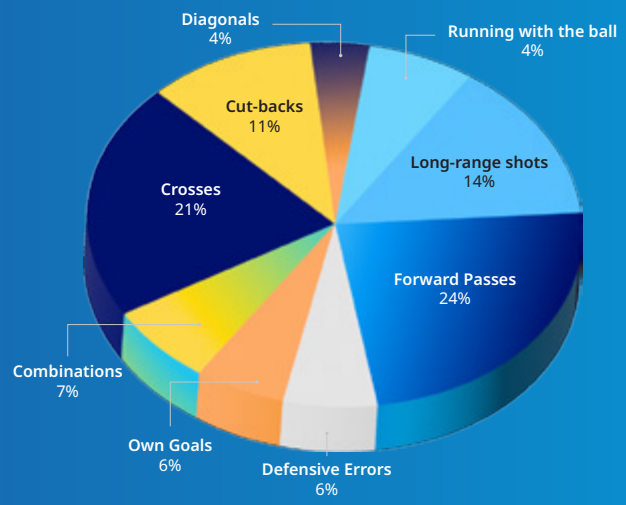
Five free kicks were struck directly into the net – largely thanks to Vietnam, who exploited this speciality to score three of the team's four goals – the exception being the cut-back from the left which secured their 2-2 draw with Thailand. The three successful strikes were delivered by three different players: Phan Thi Thu Phuong against Thailand; Nguyen Thi Linh Chi, a well-hit delivery against Myanmar from very long range in a central area; and Nguyen Thi Ngoc Anh, who clinched a Quarter-final place in the same match with a right-footed strike from the left. Another impressive strike from very long range was the Wu Yichen free kick that put China PR 4-0 up against Myanmar, while, arguably, the most crucial success from a direct free kick gave Japan their 1-0 Quarter-final victory over Korea Republic, with Rara Higuchi bending a right-footed delivery from the left into the net.

Japan also claimed two of the three goals derived from indirect free kicks – notably their second goal during the Semi-final against Australia when Mashiro Yamaji drove a right-footer from the left towards the near post for Nanami Kurita to apply the finish. The bottom line, however, is that a majority of contestants went home without having exploited dead-ball situations.

HOW THE GOALS WERE SCORED (SET PLAYS)



HOW THE GOALS WERE SCORED (OPEN PLAYS)



GOALSCORING ANALYSIS GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

OPEN PLAYS

The increase in the number of matches generated higher numbers in all but one of the categories of open-play goals (the exception being 'defensive errors', which dropped from six to five) in comparison with the previous edition. The salient features, however, remained essentially unchanged. Deliveries from the wide areas led to 37.5% of the open-play goals. Once again, the top teams were the ones who crossed the ball with the greatest frequency. China PR averaged 35 per match; DPR Korea 29; Japan 22; Korea Republic 21.5; and Australia's average was pulled down from 22 to 14 when, in each of their two defeats by Japan, they were restricted to three. One of DPR Korea's many strengths was the capacity to stifle their opponents' wing play, limiting them to 33 crosses in six matches. Japan had permitted 16 in the five games leading up to the Final – where Ji Yun Nam's team managed to deliver 28 crosses while restricting Sadayoshi Shirai's side to six. China PR were also efficient in protecting the wide areas. Against Ma Xiaoxu's team, Myanmar and Vietnam delivered no crosses; Thailand one; and India four. In terms of defensive work in wide areas, they were also the most successful of the champions' six opponents, restricting DPR Korea to 18 crosses.

Elsewhere on the open-play scene, diagonal deliveries from deeper wide areas, conspicuous by their total absence in 2024, made a reappearance, notably when two examples allowed Australia to defeat Vietnam in the Quarter-finals – the second a pass by Claire Corbett rounded-off by Leyla Hussein's delightful chip over the goalkeeper. Through passes created almost a quarter of open-play goals (23.9% to be precise) at a tournament where the leading teams complemented their wing play with readiness to penetrate through central areas. DPR Korea, who scored seven goals from crosses, converted the same number via direct forward passing.





The champions also accounted for almost half of the successes derived from long-range shooting. China PR also offered a spectacular example when Ju Zhitong completed the hosts' 6-0 victory over Myanmar, while Japan, who had produced an outstanding combination to take a 3-0 lead during their Group Stage meeting with Australia, contributed another exhibit when the teams met again in the Semi-finals. Arisu Ota's final goal in the 4-0 win went into match statistics as a long-range shot. But that was scant recognition for a 13-pass back-to-front attack that epitomised Japan's trademark combination play.

However, the goalscoring narrative at the tournament in Suzhou was dominated by a DPR Korea team which exhibited an outstandingly diverse attacking repertoire in scoring 33 open-play goals shared by 11 different players.



TOP GOALS TOP GOALS TOP GOALS TOP GOALS



Ranking	Player	No.	Country / Region	Match	Time	Type
1	Li Qixian	13	China PR	China PR v Thailand	54'	Cross
2	Yu Jong Hyang	10	DPR Korea	DPR Korea v Chinese Taipei	90'+4'	Cross
3	Yu Jong Hyang	10	DPR Korea	DPR Korea v Japan	50'	Long-range Shot
4	Yumi Hayashi	19	Japan	DPR Korea v Japan	53'	Through Pass
5	Liu Yuxi	11	China PR	China PR v DPR Korea	50'	Through Pass



Ranking	Player	No.	Country / Region	Match	Time	Type
1	Nanami Kurita	20	Japan	Japan v Australia	24'	Free kicks (indirect)
2	Rara Higuchi	7	Japan	Japan v Korea Republic	74'	Free kicks (direct)
3	Phan Thi Thu Phuong	7	Vietnam	Thailand v Vietnam	35'	Free kicks (direct)
4	Wu Yichen	18	China PR	China PR v Myanmar	66'	Free kicks (direct)
5	Cheng Wandi	7	China PR	Vietnam v China PR	49'	Corners (direct)



TALKING POINTS

TALKING POINTS

TALKING POINTS TALKING POINTS



THE INS AND OUTS OF ROTATION?

"Super excited about the opportunity. It's a great achievement "All 23 team members are equally powerful and competent. Of course, they have their own personal characters and style – all of which are used for my judgements and decisions when selecting the team." Sadayoshi Shirai's words confirm that he remained faithful to Japan's philosophy of sharing playing time among as many players as possible at development tournaments. He made nine changes to his starting line-up for the Semi-Final and five for the Final. By the end of the Group Stage, he had already used all three goalkeepers.

"Players at this age have tremendous potential," he commented to the AFC Technical Observers, "so I believe it's our job to help them realise that potential. That's why, rather than assuming a player can only play in a certain position, I place great importance on showing them that they can play in different positions and that they can excel in those roles as well." China PR head coach Ma Xiaoxu also told them, "I have always emphasised that all 23 players in the squad possess starting-calibre ability – there is no absolute distinction between starters and substitutes. I want every player to step onto the pitch, feel the tournament atmosphere and accumulate match experience."

Someone at the debating table would undoubtedly smile and say something like "that's fine if you have a squad with such strength in depth". The voice might even belong to Myanmar's Japanese head coach Kumiko Tashiro, who, with a squad containing six players born in 2011 (China PR, DPR Korea and Vietnam had none), used only six of her 15 options to make substitutions. Incidentally, the Myanmar and India squads featured only nine players born in 2009, highlighting additional factors such as physical development and stamina.

Interestingly, only four individuals were on the pitch for every single minute of their teams' campaigns. And all four played for the champions: the goalkeeper, one full-back and the two central defenders. Ji Yun Nam's policy was evidently based on maintaining stability in defence while permuting his options in more advanced areas.

At this critical stage of player development, how important is it to design a clear philosophy with regard to player rotation at a final tournament?





ON THE SPOT?

The AFC Technical Observers at the previous final tournament had wondered whether a 75% increase in the number of yellow cards gave cause for concern. The statistics from Suzhou allayed a few fears. The number of fouls dropped from 15 to just under 11 per game. A total of 23 yellow cards meant that the average fell to less than one per match – even at the most competitive stage of the competition. The two Semi-finals produced one caution; the Final, none. Red cards remained untouched in referees' pockets. And penalty spots didn't require a great deal of re-painting. Only two penalties were converted (both by China PR) and a third was saved by Japan goalkeeper Ayaka Miyaji in the Quarter-final against Korea Republic.

Around the debating table, the challenge is to look for reasons behind the low number of spot kicks – and don't even be tempted to say 'because there was no VAR'. Maybe the fact that only six of 88 open-play goals stemmed from solo running at opponents indicates a scarcity of situations susceptible to producing a penalty? From a defender's point of view, was it a tribute to well-timed tackling?

TALKING POINTS

TALKING POINTS TALKING POINTS

Comments by the head coaches of the two finalists could be thrown onto the debating table. "I believe that in order to compete on equal footing with the world's top nations, we need to focus on improving our physical strength moving forward," said Japan's Sadayoshi Shirai. "I think it might come down to biological differences," DPR Korea's Ji Yun Nam remarked. "We are Asians, and historically it has been acknowledged that Asians face physical differences compared to Europeans, Africans, or Americans. That is exactly why we always give such importance to physical conditioning because we believe we will face a gap there compared to other continents, and we must close it through training." Lurking behind the round of applause for the teams' levels of respect for The Beautiful Game is a whispered message about physicality.

A FUTURISTIC FESTIVAL?

The final tournament represented a switch to a hybrid format – a mix of matches played on training-centre pitches and Big Matches played in a Big Stadium. The Technical Observers applauded the change. "By eliminating travel between sites," they commented, "the festival format directly supported physical load management, reduced cumulative fatigue, and allowed players and coaching staff to direct their full energy toward preparation and performance. With all twelve squads living and training in the same environment, the tournament became a shared experience."

DPR Korea's head coach Ji Yun Nam agreed with them. "I really liked this idea of accommodating all the teams in one place, seeing each other's training," he said. "We learn a lot from them, even while competing. Apart from the games, we always observe and always learn. For Under-17s, who are so young, I prefer this kind of atmosphere of always being with each other, seeing each other, greeting each other. It is a very good experience." Do you agree that this is the way forward?





TEAM TALK

TEAM TALK

TEAM TALK TEAM TALK TEAM TALK

"Super excited about the opportunity. It's a great achievement to reach the semis, and we won't let the experience get by us. Every game is an opportunity to learn."

Australia head coach **Michael Cooper** after the 2-0 Quarter-final victory over Vietnam

"We have to analyse the mistakes and correct them. Overall, this game was difficult, but we have to get over it. We need to work on improving our concentration."

Thailand head coach **Thidarat Wiwasukhu** after the 2-2 draw with Vietnam



"Many of our players have never played in games like these. A few went to the last U-17 World Cup but got very few minutes. So for young players, it's important to play in big games like these to gain more experience and improve. I told them before the match that since we have achieved World Cup qualification, they should enjoy the match, especially against a team like DPR Korea, and to take it as a chance to gain experience."

China PR head coach **Ma Xiaoxu** after the Semi-final defeat



"We're disappointed with the outcome, conceding three goals before half time – the timing of them and conceding two from set-pieces. That's something we can control better, but we didn't. This tournament - in context - has been a successful one for us because we qualified for the World Cup, something our country has never been able to achieve. And we had six younger girls who got minutes against Japan. So we will go back to improve and come again next year."

Michael Cooper after the 4-0 loss to Japan in the Semi-final





TEAM TALK

TEAM TALK TEAM TALK TEAM TALK

"We want to keep improving our level and the best way to do that is to play against the best teams. DPR Korea are one of them. Our strength is our pressing game and playing in the opponents' half, and that is something that DPR Korea also do. We want to play in a way that allows us to create opportunities in those areas. The opponents are very organised, and we have to stop them from doing what they want to do and look to play more aggressively in attack. It will also be vital for us to defend solidly, so a lot of focus is needed there."

Japan head coach **Sadayoshi Shirai** prior to the Final against DPR Korea

"We wanted to approach the game in a positive way, but the manner in which DPR Korea played put us under a lot of pressure, and we just couldn't cope. Yes, we scored one goal, but right after that we started making mistakes. That caused the team to concede again. Because of that, we had to focus more on offence and readjust the team again, which made the game difficult. Japan will face teams with a lot of intensity and pressure, just like DPR Korea, and we need to cope with that, and we need to do that by playing our football and improving the quality of our attack."

Sadayoshi Shirai after defeat in the Final

"These trophies are for everybody in the team. It's because of them I can be happy, and I dedicate this to my teammates and the coaching staff. I was very tired but to see the fans from our country who are very enthusiastic about football, that gave us a lot of energy. They brought a breath of home with them, which really re-energised me as I've been away from home for a month now and I really miss my family and friends."

DPR Korea striker **Yu Jong Hyang**, winner of the AFC Top Goalscorer and MVP Awards











TEAM PROFILES

AUSTRALIA

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	ANNABELLE GRACE CROLL	07-07-2009	Goalkeeper
2	WILLA ELEANOR CLARE PEARSON	24-12-2010	Defender
3	CHARLOTTE JOSEPHINE WENDY BRADSHAW	17-04-2009	Defender
4	KEIRA AVA SARRIS	24-09-2009	Midfielder
5	LIANA KRISTINE LUONG	05-01-2009	Defender
6	FRIDERIKI KARABERIS	07-03-2011	Midfielder
7	CLAIRE LOUISE CORBETT	18-02-2010	Midfielder
8	KAYA JUGOVIC	23-01-2009	Forward
9	IZABELLA CHARLIE RAKO	26-06-2009	Forward
10	LEYLA HUSSEIN	29-03-2009	Forward
11	MATILDA DIAS WADEWITZ	20-05-2009	Midfielder
12	ALYSE OPPEDISANO	26-02-2009	Goalkeeper
13	MAEVE JOAN NICHOLAS	03-05-2009	Midfielder
14	JADA BRONTE TAYLOR	31-07-2010	Forward
15	TYRA BAGIANTE	25-09-2009	Forward
16	TEHYA LOUISE ASPLAND	07-04-2009	Defender
17	MARY DAL BROI	05-05-2010	Defender
18	DALI BLOSSOM ODETTE GORR BURCHMORE	01-03-2010	Goalkeeper
19	HARPER ASHLEY PELL	06-03-2010	Defender
20	SAKURA YENG LENG LEONG	25-05-2009	Defender
21	THEODORA JOY EXHAUSIA MOUITHYS MICKALAD	05-02-2009	Forward
22	HAYLEY ASHLEY MUIR	09-01-2009	Defender
23	ABBIE SKYE PUCKETT	02-06-2009	Midfielder

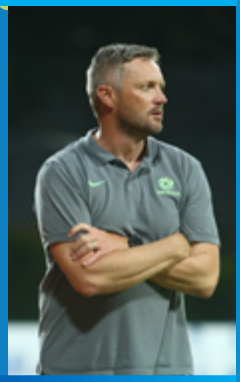


FORMATION:
1-4-3-3/1-4-4-2



COACH

MICHAEL COOPER (AUS)



A prominent figure in Australia's elite youth football landscape, Michael Cooper served as Football South Australia's Technical Director for three years while also acting as assistant coach of the men's U17 national team from 2019 to 2025.

Bringing a wealth of experience in youth development, Cooper took over the women's U17 side in March 2025 and guided Australia to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2026™ as winners of their qualifying group. The 43-year-old took the Junior Matildas to the Semi-finals, where they exited following a defeat to Japan while at the same time securing a maiden qualification to the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup.

PLAYING STYLES

- A possession-based style that utilises positional interchanges and prioritises attacking through the wings.

ATTACK

- Structured build-up: Play starts from the back with goalkeeper involvement, while the wingers remain wide to stretch the opposition.
- Full-backs provide support in the attacking third through overlaps or underlaps, with one full-back also moving into central areas to support the midfield and frequently contributing to the finishing phase.

DEFENCE

- Presses high or organises a compact middle/low block.
- Generally, keeps compact lines and maintains positional discipline.

TRANSITIONS

- Immediate pressure on the ball after losing it and team quickly recovers defensive balance.
- Looks to play forward passes towards the goal or keep possession if the situation is not appropriate

TOP SCORER



THEODORA MOUITHYS

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

12	Pritika Barman	Has pace and is agile; can go up and down the line and is willing to make runs from midfield in attacking transitions.
16	Redima Chingkha-mayum	Heavily involved in attacking by finding available spaces or making a run in behind opponent defensive line. High work rate.

TEAM PROFILES TEAM PROFILES TEAM PROFILES

CHINA PR

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	NIU ZIQI	02-06-2009	Goalkeeper
2	OUYANG RONGXIN	29-01-2009	Defender
3	CAI XINLIN	18-05-2009	Defender
4	CHEN JIACHUN	01-09-2010	Defender
5	YANG YUXUAN	17-05-2010	Defender
6	ZHENG NIMAN	11-10-2010	Defender
7	CHENG WANDI	06-11-2009	Forward
8	ZHAO SIQING	01-03-2009	Midfielder
9	HUANG QINYI	29-07-2009	Forward
10	YANG LAN	03-07-2010	Midfielder
11	LIU YUXI	12-05-2010	Forward
12	BAI SHUILING	19-10-2009	Goalkeeper
13	LI QIXIAN	26-02-2009	Forward
14	LI YAQI	04-03-2009	Defender
15	XU XIAOTANG	04-01-2010	Midfielder
16	HU CUIPING	19-06-2009	Midfielder
17	WANG CHENXI	26-02-2010	Forward
18	WU YICHEN	18-03-2010	Forward
19	LIU YUCHEN	12-05-2010	Defender
20	JU ZHITONG	08-09-2009	Forward
21	XU YUE	07-04-2010	Defender
22	YU QIANNA	08-03-2009	Goalkeeper
23	YANG RUIXUE	08-01-2009	Defender



FORMATION:
1-3-4-3



COACH MA XIAOXU (CHN)



Capped more than 150 times for the China PR women's national team, Ma Xiaoxu boasts a playing career laden with impressive accolades, including being named the Most Valuable Player at the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ 2006, where China PR were crowned champions, and winning the Golden Ball at the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Russia 2006.

The former striker, who was named both the AFC Player and Young Player of the Year in 2006, turned her attention to coaching after hanging up her boots in 2022, beginning a new chapter in her career as assistant coach of Beijing United. The 38-year-old was appointed head coach of the U17 women's national team earlier this year and, despite the short preparation period, guided her charges to the Semi-finals of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ on home soil, where they were defeated by reigning champions DPR Korea.

PLAYING STYLES

- Structured build-up with a strong emphasis on wing play and crossing opportunities, supported by quick and dynamic wingers.
- Height advantage provides strong aerial presence and effectiveness in both attacking and defensive situations.

ATTACK

- Building from the back through centre-backs and midfielders, utilising positional interchanges.
- Switching play from side to side to exploit space down the flanks.
- Eager to take on defenders in 1v1 situations and deliver quality crosses from wide areas.

DEFENCE

- High and midfield pressing with collective efforts, the GK covers the wide space well
- Wing-backs drop into the defensive line under pressure to strengthen defensive stability.
- Good aerial duels in defence.

TRANSITIONS

- Soon after losing the ball, the nearest players press the ball carrier, while others try to retreat into the defensive unit.
- Looks to play forward to seek target player #20 or #9 as priority, keeps possession when there is no clear forward opportunity.

TOP SCORER



LIU YUXI



HUANG QINYI

4
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

11	Liu Yuxi	Fast and excels in 1v1 situations and delivers quality crosses on the flank. Also, the team's main scoring threat.
8	Zhao Siqing	Often picks up the ball in pockets of space and looks to drive forward or deliver effective forward passes.

DPR KOREA

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	KIM SON GYONG	19-03-2009	Goalkeeper
2	KIM SO YON	22-08-2009	Defender
3	PAK KYONG RYONG	15-10-2010	Defender
4	KIM SOL SONG	22-04-2010	Defender
5	RI POK RIM	06-02-2009	Defender
6	EH CHONG GUM	21-01-2009	Midfielder
7	RI UI GYONG	19-07-2009	Defender
8	UH YON CHONG	25-10-2010	Midfielder
9	RI KYONG IM	26-03-2009	Midfielder
10	YU JONG HYANG	18-08-2009	Forward
11	SO YE RIM	22-01-2009	Forward
12	WON SOL GYONG	23-02-2009	Midfielder
13	RI HYO YANG	20-02-2009	Defender
14	PAK MI SONG	20-04-2009	Defender
15	KIM WON SIM	13-05-2010	Forward
16	RI YU SONG	02-01-2009	Midfielder
17	RI YE RIM	26-12-2010	Forward
18	RI SU JONG	25-01-2010	Goalkeeper
19	JO RYONG YONG	19-02-2009	Defender
20	KIM JU GYONG	09-01-2010	Midfielder
21	HONG RYU MI	02-06-2009	Goalkeeper
22	JO KUM YONG	18-02-2009	Midfielder
23	SONG WON YONG	07-01-2010	Midfielder



FORMATION:
1-4-4-2



COACH JI YUN NAM (PRK)



Best known for scoring against Brazil at the FIFA World Cup in 2010, Ji Yun Nam made more than 230 appearances for DPR Korea's April 25 Sports Club during his playing days.

Taking over from Pak Song Jin in 2025, the former defender continued his predecessor's legacy by leading the East Asians to a successful title defence as the reigning FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup champions scored a remarkable 37 goals en route to claiming the title for a record-extending fifth time.

PLAYING STYLES

- High-intensity and pragmatic playing style with continuous pressure.
- Used width and depth through quick passing combinations and individual actions.
- Aggressive approach both in and out of possession.

ATTACK

- Quick switches of play with midfielders supporting forward progression.
- Full-backs and wingers combined well to create 1v1 situations and crosses.
- Attacked through central penetration, cut-backs, crosses, and long-range shots.

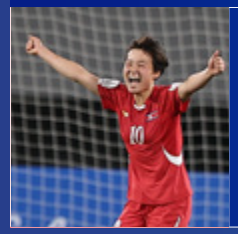
DEFENCE

- Applied intense high pressing with goalkeeper covering space behind the line.
- Maintained a compact and coordinated defensive structure.
- Strong and aggressive in duels and second-ball situations.

TRANSITIONS

- Applied immediate pressure after losing possession.
- Attacked space behind the defensive line quickly after regaining possession.
- Created chances through fast forward runs and direct attacks.

TOP SCORER



YU JONGHYANG

15
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

10	Yu Jong Hyang	Dangerous attacker with strong finishing and key passes.
15	Kim Won Sim	Clinical finisher who kept possession under pressure. Made dangerous runs in behind and into channels.
7	Ri Ui Gyong	Aggressive wide player, strong in 1v1s and crosses.

INDIA

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	MUNNI BHAMBHU	02-04-2010	Goalkeeper
2	ALENA DEVI SARANGTHEM	20-05-2009	Defender
3	TANIYA DEVI TONAMBAM	18-05-2010	Defender
4	ELIZABED LAKRA	16-06-2009	Defender
5	DIVYANI LINDA	01-01-2009	Defender
6	THANDAMONI BASKEY	09-03-2010	Midfielder
7	JULAN NONGMAITHEM	15-02-2011	Midfielder
8	ANUSHKA KUMARI	09-12-2010	Midfielder
9	PEARL FERNANDES	09-06-2009	Forward
10	OLIVIA CHANU NINGTHOUJAM	02-04-2009	Midfielder
11	RITU BADAIK	05-06-2011	Defender
12	PRITIKA BARMAN	11-03-2010	Midfielder
13	TAMPHASANA DEVI	14-05-2009	Goalkeeper
14	VALAINA JADA	03-09-2009	Forward
15	JOYSHINI CHANU	17-01-2010	Defender
16	REDIMA DEVI CHINGKHAMAYUM	03-03-2011	Midfielder
17	ABHISTA BASNETT	11-03-2011	Defender
18	ALVA DEVI SENJAM	12-11-2010	Forward
19	ALISHA LYNGDOH	23-11-2009	Defender
20	ANWITA RAGHURAMAN	17-01-2010	Forward
21	JOYA YADAV	20-02-2011	Forward
22	BONIFILIA SHULLAI	02-02-2010	Midfielder
23	SURAJMUNI KUMARI	12-03-2009	Goalkeeper



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3



COACH

PAMELA CONTI (ITA)



Hailing from Italy, Pamela Conti is a former striker who enjoyed an illustrious playing career across Europe, earning 90 caps for the national team and representing clubs including Espanyol, Levante and Sassari Torres.

A winner of two league titles and four national cups, Conti began her managerial career with Atlético Madrid's U17 women's side in 2018 and, in the following year, took charge of the Venezuela women's national team and later their U20 side, whom she led to the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in 2024.

Taking over the India U17 women's team in January 2026, the 44-year-old created history with the young Blue Tigresses by guiding them to their first-ever Quarter-final appearance, where they were defeated by China PR.

PLAYING STYLES

- Structured build up mix with direct play when facing intense pressure.
- Balanced attack between flanks and centre.

ATTACK

- Building from the back whenever possible, with holding midfielder #6 serving as a key link player to connect defensive and attacking lines.
- Attacking from the flanks through wingers (#12 and #18), while full-backs (#5 and #11) advanced high up to threaten the opponent.

DEFENCE

- Pressing high and regain possession in advanced areas but lacked collective coordination in doing so.
- Used a mid-to-low block as an alternative strategy when facing stronger sides

TRANSITIONS

- After losing the ball, the nearest players pressed the ball carrier while the rest of the team recovered quickly into the defensive unit.
- After winning the ball back, the team looked to either counterattack or build up depending on the level of opponent's pressure.

TOP SCORER



BARMAN PRITIKA

2
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

12	Pritika Barman	Has pace and is agile; can go up and down the line and is willing to make runs from midfield in attacking transitions.
16	Redima Chingkha-mayum	Heavily involved in attacking by finding available spaces or making a run in behind opponent defensive line. High work rate.

JAPAN

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	MIKAN YAMANAKA	05-01-2010	Goalkeeper
2	WARA SHIMIZU	21-02-2009	Defender
3	ANRI ITO	13-03-2010	Defender
4	REI KITAMURA	01-05-2009	Defender
5	MISATO MAEDA	05-01-2009	Defender
6	MISAYA TAKEDA	21-03-2009	Defender
7	RARA HIGUCHI	11-01-2009	Midfielder
8	HARURA MATSUSHITA	16-11-2009	Midfielder
9	YUZUHA IKEDA	01-05-2009	Forward
10	ARISU OTA	25-04-2009	Midfielder
11	FUTABA NODA	09-04-2009	Midfielder
12	AYAKA MIYAJI	11-06-2010	Goalkeeper
13	RUNA SUMIYA	09-05-2009	Midfielder
14	MEI HANASHIRO	23-06-2009	Midfielder
15	KEIKO KITAJIMA	26-02-2010	Defender
16	MAHO KUBOTA	02-01-2009	Defender
17	MINO TAMAMURA	04-09-2009	Midfielder
18	MASHIRO YAMAJI	31-01-2011	Midfielder
19	YUMI HAYASHI	11-06-2010	Midfielder
20	NANAMI KURITA	24-03-2010	Midfielder
21	ASUKA TANAKA	31-05-2010	Forward
22	AKINA MASAKI	14-12-2009	Defender
23	KOU KADOWAKI	10-02-2011	Goalkeeper



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3/1-4-4-2



COACH

SADAYOSHI SHIRAI (JPN)



Sadayoshi Shirai began his coaching career in 2001 with Yamagata-based club Ascy FC, after spending his playing career with Brazilian clubs such as Ituano FC and Rio Claro FC.

He then spent the next four years serving on the coaching staff of Japan's Thespa Gunma U15s before being promoted to head coach in 2012. He subsequently guided the club's women's team from 2013 to 2020 while simultaneously coaching Gunma Prefecture's U15 side.

Taking charge of the young Nadeshiko in 2023, the 45-year-old led the U16 side to the title at the Torneio de Montaigu Féminin U16 in 2024 before guiding Japan to a runners-up finish at both the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ 2024 and 2026.

PLAYING STYLES

- Fluid possession football, supported by the goalkeeper's high attacking position
- Balanced attack between flanks and centre

ATTACK

- Attacked through structured progression, utilising fluid positional interchanges and third-man movements to break defensive lines.
- Consistently used the half-spaces, always looking for penetrating passes and combination play to create scoring opportunities. Created attacking points through both central and wide areas
- Wide play featured inverted full-backs moving inside to form a 3–2 structure, creating 1v1 situations for wingers.
- The right winger frequently drifted centrally to create numerical superiority in attacking areas.

DEFENCE

- Pressed high with two forwards at the top of the opponent's box, aiming to win the ball early and as close to the opponent's goal as possible.
- Applied collective, intense pressure with a compact shape and well-coordinated movement, consistently creating numerical advantages around the ball.

TRANSITIONS

- Demonstrated strong counter-pressing awareness, minimising the opponent's possibilities to progress forward through collective unit efforts.
- Once possession was regained, they exploited space behind the defensive line, when possible, but showed good game understanding to keep the ball if a clear chance was not available.

TOP SCORER



HIGUCHI RARA

5
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

20	Nanami Kurita	Strong technical skills and game intelligence, excellent ball control and ability to link play. Frequently delivers key passes and shows effective finishing in attack.
10	Arisu Ota	Technically skilled and intelligent defensive midfielder, balanced in attack and defence, organising play with quality short or long passes
13	Runa Sumiya	With strong 1v1 ability capable of dribbling past defenders, delivering dangerous crosses, cutting inside for shots and consistently posing a threat in the final third.

KOREA REPUBLIC

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	KI PPEUM	20-03-2009	Goalkeeper
2	KIM JIE-UN	18-10-2009	Defender
3	KOO SE-YOUNG	21-04-2009	Defender
4	CHOO JI-YEON	09-09-2009	Defender
5	JEON AH-HYUN	20-08-2010	Defender
6	CHOI SE-EUN	16-01-2009	Midfielder
7	KIM HE-ENA	01-08-2009	Midfielder
8	HAN GUK-HEE	21-08-2009	Midfielder
9	CHO AN	28-04-2010	Forward
10	KIM MIN-SEO	24-08-2009	Forward
11	BAEK SEO-YEONG	16-05-2009	Midfielder
12	KO HA-EUN	01-01-2010	Goalkeeper
13	WOO SEO-YEON	03-04-2010	Defender
14	JANG YE-JIN	15-02-2009	Midfielder
15	JANG HAN-NA	05-05-2009	Midfielder
16	PARK NA-YOUNG	15-06-2010	Defender
17	KANG GYU-EUN	07-06-2010	Defender
18	LEE SEUNG-A	12-12-2010	Goalkeeper
19	KWON HYO-RI	20-11-2010	Midfielder
20	KIM HEE-JIN	05-05-2010	Forward
21	KANG JI-YUN	02-02-2010	Midfielder
22	KO JI-EUN	08-12-2010	Midfielder
23	LIM JI-HYE	02-05-2011	Forward



FORMATION:
1-4-4-2



COACH

LEE DA-YOUNG (KOR)



Having honed her coaching skills during spells with youth and school teams such as Suwon Samsung Bluewings' U12, Chungnam Internet High School and UIDuk University, Lee Da-young joined the Korea Football Association in 2022 and took turns to lead the U13 and U15 women's national teams.

As assistant coach, the 38-year-old helped to guide Korea Republic through the Qualifiers to the previous AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ Finals in 2024 and was appointed as head coach in July 2025. Having gained experience as part of the coaching staff at the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Morocco 2025, Lee then steered the Taegeuk Girls to a Quarter-final finish at China 2026.

PLAYING STYLES

- Dynamic positional rotations to break defensive organisation.
- Strong technical quality with effective passing combinations.
- Good ball circulation and control of attacking tempo.

ATTACK

- Short build-up with holding midfielders supporting the ball.
- Rotations between midfielders created mobility and passing options.
- Attacked through wide areas with overlapping full-backs and early crosses.

DEFENCE

- Pressed in high and mid blocks while closing central areas.
- Maintained a compact and aggressive defensive structure.
- Strong in aerial duels and second-ball situations.

TRANSITIONS

- Applied immediate and coordinated counter-press after losing possession.
- Looked for quick counterattacks after regaining the ball.
- Transitioned forward quickly through direct passing and movement.

TOP SCORER



BAEK SEO-YEONG

4
NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

23	Lim Ji-hye	Strong and physical striker capable of progressing the ball individually, creating chances, and attacking spaces behind the defence.
11	Baek Seo-yeong	Good dribbler, cutting inside and creating attacking opportunities.

THAILAND

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	PIMLAPAT AEEWONG	09-09-2009	Goalkeeper
2	ARISA TAMSAKUL	09-06-2009	Defender
3	ATITAYA NUTHONG	29-10-2009	Defender
4	SIMILIN WONGSUBAN	15-08-2009	Defender
5	BUNYAPHON SONSI	15-04-2009	Defender
6	SURACHA TANAWAT	23-07-2009	Defender
7	PATTARAMON SAENGTA	09-08-2009	Midfielder
8	AUNCHIDTHA HOMTAGO	29-01-2009	Midfielder
9	THIDAWAN WANGCHIN	09-01-2009	Forward
10	KURISARA LIMPAWANICH	05-02-2009	Forward
11	MONTHIDA NUMNUAN	12-03-2009	Forward
12	SUPANSA DANIQUE	21-12-2009	Forward
13	KAWINTHIDA KIKUNTOD	16-01-2010	Midfielder
14	WARANTORN PONGKOKSI	31-10-2011	Midfielder
15	WARITTHA JANYA	01-04-2009	Defender
16	NAPATSAWAN SUEBSUAN	03-06-2009	Defender
17	MIRICAH SHEALAGH MURDOCH	06-08-2010	Defender
18	DEENARA KORDEM	11-02-2010	Goalkeeper
19	NATTATIDA TIRAPALIKA	07-01-2009	Forward
20	ZUZANA KORDEM	11-02-2010	Midfielder
21	PAPITCHAYA KRAJANGSAENG	05-05-2009	Midfielder
22	THANAPHON SINSAIRAM	31-05-2010	Goalkeeper
23	PRAWNAPA WISADCHAT	19-08-2011	Forward

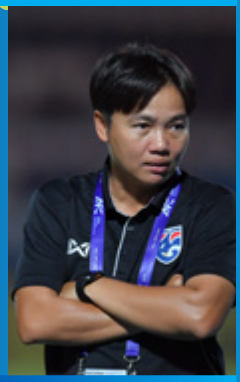


FORMATION: 1-4-3-3



COACH

THIDARAT WIWASUKHU (THA)



As a player, Thidarat Wiwasukhu represented the Thailand women's national team in several prestigious competitions, including the FIFA U-19 Women's World Championship, the SEA Games, and the 2008 and 2010 editions of the AFC Women's Asian Cup™.

Previously an assistant coach of the Thailand senior women's national team, Wiwasukhu took over as head coach of the U17 side in September 2025 and led her team to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ finals as Group F winners. Under her watch, the Southeast Asian side secured a Quarter-final berth but were knocked out by DPR Korea following a 6-0 defeat.

PLAYING STYLES

- Possession-based build-up with short passing from the back.
- Attacked through wide areas using winger movement and midfield rotations.
- Defended in a high-to-medium block with aggressive pressing and quick transitions.

ATTACK

- Midfield rotations created passing options and supported build-up.
- Attacked mainly through wide areas with early crosses into the box.
- Created 1v1 situations through winger movements and combinations.

DEFENCE

- Defended in a high-to-medium block to force long balls.
- Strong in defending aerial duels and second balls.
- Lost compactness at times, allowing spaces between the lines.

TRANSITIONS

- Applied immediate pressure after losing possession.
- Attacked quickly after regaining the ball with direct forward play.
- Used individual actions to progress during transition moments.

TOP SCORER



MURDOCH MIRICAH SHEALAGH

2

NUMBER OF GOALS

KEY PLAYERS

8	Aunchidtha Homtago	Linking player who controlled the tempo in the middle third.
10	Kurisara Limpawanich	Strong in holding the ball and creating attacking threats.
7	Pattaramon Saengta	Progressed the ball effectively through passing and individual actions.

VIETNAM

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	LU THI THUY	08-04-2009	Goalkeeper
2	NGUYEN DUONG PHUONG NGHI	09-05-2009	Defender
3	HOANG THI GIANG	01-03-2009	Defender
4	TRUONG YEN LINH	14-03-2010	Defender
5	HA YEN NHI	24-06-2010	Midfielder
6	NGUYEN THI NGOC ANH	16-02-2010	Midfielder
7	PHAN THI THU PHUONG	13-03-2010	Midfielder
8	PHAM THI TRANG	04-02-2009	Defender
9	NGUYEN THI LINH CHI	03-12-2009	Defender
10	NGUYEN THI MINH ANH	29-07-2009	Forward
11	NGUYEN THI NGOC ANH	28-08-2009	Midfielder
12	TRAN THI CAM MY	01-07-2009	Goalkeeper
13	NGO HAI YEN	17-08-2009	Defender
14	NGUYEN THI THANH LAM	19-05-2009	Forward
15	NGUYEN THI PHUONG THAO	11-10-2010	Midfielder
16	DOAN THI THU HUONG	02-09-2009	Forward
17	LE THI HONG THAI	03-03-2010	Midfielder
18	DANG HO THANH PHUONG	03-09-2009	Defender
19	DO THI HA VI	09-09-2010	Midfielder
20	NGUYEN KHANH LY	20-04-2009	Midfielder
21	BUI PHUONG THAO	19-02-2010	Goalkeeper
22	NGUYEN ANH THU	20-04-2010	Defender
23	TRAN THI AN	10-04-2009	Defender

TOP SCORER


NGUYEN THI LINH CHI


NGUYEN THI NGOC ÁNH I


NGUYEN THI THANH LAM


PHAN THI THU PHUONG

1
NUMBER OF GOALS



FORMATION: 1-5-4-1



COACH

MASAHIKO OKIYAMA (JPN)



Hailing from Japan, Masahiko Okiyama's coaching experience spans more than three decades and includes roles with various Asian national and club teams, including a stint as head coach of the Jordan women's national team from 2012 to 2014.

In March 2025, the 58-year-old took charge of Vietnam's U17 women's national team and guided his side to the last eight of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026™, where, after finishing runners-up in Group A, the Southeast Asian side suffered a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Australia.

PLAYING STYLES

- Disciplined team with emphasis on defending
- Direct and fast forward passes and forward runs rather than prolonged possession play

ATTACK

- Goal kicks were often played long, with multiple players ready for the second ball
- Attacks were mainly developed down the left side
- #11 maintained a high attacking position, frequently rotated with #10, and made deep forward runs into advanced areas.
- #9 and #11 good at delivering set pieces.

DEFENCE

- Defended with 1-5-4-1 middle and low block
- All players involved in defending with #10 staying high as counterattacking outlet
- All players disciplined in applying defensive principles

TRANSITIONS

- After losing possession immediate pressure; when unable to press, the defensive line quickly recovered
- Launched quick counterattacks if possible after regaining the ball

KEY PLAYERS

10	Nguyen Thi Minh Anh	Key attacking link and transition outlet. Effectively connected midfield through movement between the lines, creating threats in both organised attacks and counterattacks.
11	Nguyen Thi Ngoc Anh	Played an important role in both attack and defence. Showed good ball control under pressure, linked play effectively between midfield and attack, and frequently delivered key passes in advanced areas.

CHINESE TAIPEI

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	LIN PIN-YU	01-06-2009	Goalkeeper
2	WU YEN-YU	03-04-2009	Defender
3	YANG, YU-QING	17-11-2009	Defender
4	CHEN YING-XUAN	27-07-2009	Defender
5	CHEN XIN-YI	26-12-2009	Defender
6	LU CAI-XUAN	11-09-2010	Forward
7	WANG YU-HSIN	27-11-2009	Midfielder
8	HSIAO YU-CHIEN	23-11-2010	Midfielder
9	WOO CAI-XUAN	13-09-2009	Forward
10	CHUNG YUN-CHIEN	15-07-2010	Defender/ Midfielder/ Forward
11	CHANG YU-HSIN	15-02-2011	Forward
12	YANG YI-AI	03-09-2010	Midfielder
13	PAN, YA-NI	27-02-2009	Forward
14	HSIAO YU-HUI	23-11-2010	Forward
15	CHEN PIN-YEN	09-10-2009	Forward
16	CHEN JING-YUN	09-05-2010	Forward
17	LIN YA-CHENG	13-10-2011	Midfielder
18	LAI YI-JEN	27-09-2009	Goalkeeper
19	CHEN YOU-YU	22-12-2011	Forward
20	LIN, ZI-XUAN	21-04-2009	Midfielder
21	CHUANG YUNG-HSIN	27-09-2009	Midfielder
22	HO SERENA VERA	19-07-2011	Defender/ Midfielder/ Forward
23	PENG HSIANG-CHIN	18-09-2009	Goalkeeper



COACH CHENG YA-HSUN (TPE)



A month shy of turning 17, Cheng Ya-Hsun was part of the Chinese Taipei squad at the AFC Women's Asian Cup™ in 2008 as well as their side for the Qualifiers of the 2014 edition, while the defender also featured at the AFC U-19 Women's Championship 2009.

After her playing days, Cheng worked her way through the national team set-up by starting as a trainer to the senior women's side for the 2016 Olympic qualifiers and a physiotherapist at the AFC U-14 Girls' Regional Championship 2015. She also had coaching stints at the women's teams of Taichung Municipal WuChuan Junior High School, Kaohsiung Sunny Bank and top-flight side Taichung Blue Whale, before orchestrating Chinese Taipei's return to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ for the first time since their last involvement in 2015 via a perfect qualifying campaign.

LEBANON

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	MARIE JOE CHEBLY	14-02-2009	Goalkeeper
2	YASMINA NASSAR	01-04-2011	Defender
3	CHRISTINA CHEBLY	16-09-2011	Defender
4	JOYA BOU ASSAF	15-10-2009	Defender
5	GIANNA FRANGIEH	11-11-2009	Defender
6	GAELLE ABOU MALHAB	04-03-2010	Midfielder
7	CALINA OSMAN	25-05-2009	Defender
8	SARA KARNIB	19-08-2010	Midfielder
9	SARA ISSA	18-02-2009	Forward
10	YARA GEITANI	24-09-2010	Forward
11	YASMIN EL HAFFAR EL HABBAL	16-06-2009	Forward
12	YARA ABI FADEL	28-05-2010	Defender
13	RAMA KHARROUBI	27-07-2010	Midfielder
14	ZAHRA ASAAD	30-05-2009	Midfielder
15	LAYANE KALKAS	26-09-2009	Midfielder
16	MARITA CHEBLY	16-09-2011	Midfielder
17	ANABEL RAFKA ZIHENNI	12-01-2009	Midfielder
18	ANGY BOUSTANY	09-09-2010	Forward
19	AVY BAKHOS DOUAIHY	09-09-2009	Forward
20	ESRAA JAAFAR HAMZEH	06-12-2009	Midfielder
21	RAMA MOGHRABI	20-10-2010	Midfielder
22	GHINWA KARAM	04-12-2010	Goalkeeper
23	NOURHAN RAFEH	25-07-2010	Goalkeeper



TOP SCORER



SARA KARNIB

1
NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH JOSEPH MOUAWAD (LBN)

A native of Zgharta, Joseph Mouawad has been an integral part of Lebanon's youth football setup, serving as head coach of the U17 women's national team while also acting as technical director of Salam Zgharta Academy in his hometown.

In February 2025, he managed the squad to glory—via an unbeaten campaign—at the WAFF U-17 Girls Championship in Saudi Arabia, before leading them to the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ for the first time by progressing through the Qualifiers. The 29-year-old, who was assistant during their previous qualifying campaign in 2023 and also served as assistant to both the U20 and senior Lebanon women's sides in 2025, oversaw a spirited debut in China 2026 as they finished with one point in the Group Stage.



MYANMAR

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	SAUNG PWINT PHYU	06-06-2011	Goalkeeper
2	THAE EI HLAING	18-06-2009	Defender
3	CHIT PWINT AUNG	01-12-2009	Forward
4	MYAT MOE SAN	21-04-2011	Forward
5	WIN YUPAR	04-01-2011	Forward
6	PIN MYINT YAN	10-01-2009	Defender
7	MIN HTONE MAY ZITAR	28-09-2009	Midfielder
8	SAN SAN HTWE	21-08-2011	Midfielder
9	SAUNG THAZIN OO	05-09-2010	Forward
10	SHIN THANT PHYU SIN PYONE	06-06-2010	Forward
11	YEE YEE PHYO	27-12-2010	Forward
12	HNIN WINT WAR KYAW	21-03-2009	Midfielder
13	KHIN MYAT BHONE HTUT	07-02-2011	Forward
14	PYAE PAING HMUE EAIN	21-01-2010	Defender
15	THAW DAR HNIN	12-09-2009	Defender
16	L L SAI HWAL NAN	03-02-2009	Forward
17	MAY THINZAR	29-06-2009	Midfielder
18	AYE WATHAN TOE	10-01-2010	Goalkeeper
19	HONEY PHOO WAI	18-04-2010	Midfielder
20	KHAING ZIN MYINT	08-02-2009	Midfielder
21	THET THET WAI	08-03-2011	Midfielder
22	KYAWT KAY KHINE	11-10-2010	Goalkeeper
23	INGYIN MAY	18-05-2010	Forward



TOP SCORER



THAW DAR HNIN

1
NUMBER OF GOALS

COACH

KUMIKO TASHIRO (JPN)

A former defender for some of Japan's most renowned clubs, including Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies, Kumiko Tashiro gained valuable experience in various coaching roles such as assistant for Japan's women's team at the 2019 Summer Universiade and head coach of top-flight AC Nagano Parceiro Ladies.

Taking charge of Myanmar's U17 women's national team in 2025, the 45-year-old Japanese tactician led them to only their second AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™ after they finished as Group C winners in the Qualifiers, but they failed to progress to the Knockout Stage after ending their Group Stage campaign with three defeats.



PHILIPPINES

	SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH	Position
1	LEAH BRADLEY	07-04-2009	Goalkeeper
2	BROOKLIN GLEASON	27-05-2010	Defender
3	MAEVA JAVIER	10-10-2010	Defender
4	KHLOE RIVERA	23-08-2010	Midfielder
5	YURIKA VALDEVIESO	27-07-2009	Midfielder
6	KAIDA MIZZO	16-02-2009	Midfielder
7	ALYSSA CROMWELL	23-06-2009	Defender
8	ADDISON SUBALA	21-01-2010	Defender
9	CHIARA MIZZO	16-02-2009	Forward
10	LUNA RIVERA	10-12-2009	Defender
11	SACHIKO DAVIS	13-04-2010	Forward
12	ARIANA ENDERES	10-04-2010	Forward
13	ZADA GOSLEE	10-08-2009	Defender
14	ZAYLA LINTAG	31-08-2009	Defender
15	AVA GARCIA	29-06-2009	Forward
16	BETHANY KINGSBURY	27-05-2009	Defender
17	AISELYN SIA	23-02-2009	Defender
18	AVA STRAUSS	14-10-2009	Goalkeeper
19	MAYA CECILLE MARTEJA PENE-TRANTE	10-02-2009	Forward
20	QUINN KELLOGG	17-12-2009	Forward
21	SAVANNAH CHHENG	16-10-2011	Midfielder
22	BROOKE ANIKA SOLIS	29-09-2009	Goalkeeper
23	LOURAINE EVANGELISTA	07-01-2009	Forward



COACH NAHUEL ARRARTE (AUS)



A former midfielder for clubs in Australia, Malaysia and Fiji after moving from his native Argentina to Australia at eight, Nahuel Arrarte began his coaching career in 2013 with the Southern Districts Soccer Football Association. He then joined Wollongong Wolves and moved on to Western Sydney Wanderers FC, before serving as assistant coach of the Australia women's national team and subsequently A-League side Central Coast Mariners.

Arrarte joined the Philippines senior women's national team as assistant in 2021 and took charge of the U20 side in 2023, before heading back Down Under for assistant coaching stints with Perth Glory and the Wanderers. The 45-year-old was appointed head coach of the Philippines' U17 women's national team in January 2026 but was unable to guide his side beyond the Group Stage of the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup™.



RESULTS

RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS

GROUP A

Group A	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
CHINA PR	3	0	0	15	0	15	9	9
VIETNAM	1	1	1	4	6	-2	4	6
THAILAND	1	1	1	3	8	-5	4	3
MYANMAR	0	0	3	1	9	-8	0	0

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
01 May,26	15:30:00	THAILAND	2-2 (2-1)	VIETNAM
01 May,26	19:30:00	CHINA PR	6-0 (3-0)	MYANMAR
04 May,26	15:30:00	MYANMAR	0-1 (0-1)	THAILAND
04 May,26	19:30:00	VIETNAM	0-3 (0-2)	CHINA PR
07 May,26	19:30:00	CHINA PR	6-0 (3-0)	THAILAND
07 May,26	19:30:00	VIETNAM	2-1 (1-0)	MYANMAR

GROUP B

Group B	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JAPAN	3	3	0	0	21	0	21	9
AUSTRALIA	3	1	1	1	3	6	-3	4
INDIA	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
LEBANON	3	0	1	2	1	18	-17	1

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
02 May,26	15:30:00	JAPAN	13-0 (7-0)	LEBANON
02 May,26	19:30:00	AUSTRALIA	2-0 (1-0)	INDIA
05 May,26	15:30:00	LEBANON	1-1 (0-1)	AUSTRALIA
05 May,26	19:30:00	INDIA	0-3 (0-0)	JAPAN
08 May,26	15:30:00	JAPAN	5-0 (3-0)	AUSTRALIA
08 May,26	15:30:00	INDIA	4-0 (2-0)	LEBANON

GROUP C

Group C	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
DPR KOREA	3	3	0	0	21	0	21	9
KOREA REPUBLIC	3	2	0	1	9	3	6	6
PHILIPPINES	3	0	1	2	0	13	-13	1
CHINESE TAIPEI	3	0	1	2	0	14	-14	1

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
02 May,26	15:30:00	KOREA REPUBLIC	5-0 (3-0)	PHILIPPINES
02 May,26	19:30:00	DPR KOREA	10-0 (4-0)	CHINESE TAIPEI
05 May,26	15:30:00	CHINESE TAIPEI	0-4 (0-2)	KOREA REPUBLIC
05 May,26	19:30:00	PHILIPPINES	0-8 (0-2)	DPR KOREA
08 May,26	19:30:00	DPR KOREA	3-0 (1-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC
08 May,26	19:30:00	PHILIPPINES	0-0 (0-0)	CHINESE TAIPEI



RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS RESULTS

QUARTER-FINALS

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
11 May,26	15:00:00	JAPAN	1-0 (0-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC
11 May,26	15:00:00	VIETNAM	0-2 (0-2)	AUSTRALIA
11 May,26	19:30:00	CHINA PR	3-0 (2-0)	INDIA
11 May,26	19:30:00	DPR KOREA	6-0 (3-0)	THAILAND

SEMI-FINALS

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
14 May,26	15:00:00	JAPAN	4-0 (3-0)	AUSTRALIA
14 May,26	19:30:00	CHINA PR	2-4 (1-2)	DPR KOREA

FINAL

Date	Time	Team A	Score	Team B
17 May,26	19:30:00	DPR KOREA	5-1 (1-0)	JAPAN








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CUP

AWARDS

AWARDS

AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS



MOST VALUABLE PLAYER / TOP GOAL SCORER

NO.10 | YU JONG HYANG (PRK)



BEST GOALKEEPER

NO.1 | KIM SON GYONG (PRK)

AFC FAIR PLAY AWARD : DPR KOREA



PLAYERS TO WATCH

PLAYERS TO WATCH PLAYERS TO WATCH

GOALKEEPERS



NO.1
KIM SON GYONG
DPR KOREA



NO.1
NIU ZIQI
CHINA PR



NO. 12
AYAKA MIYAJI
JAPAN

PLAYERS TO WATCH PLAYERS TO WATCH

DEFENDERS



NO.3
CAI XINLIN
CHINA PR



NO.19
LIU YUCHEN
CHINA PR



NO.5
MISATO MAEDA
JAPAN



NO.3
PAK KYONG RYONG
DPR KOREA



NO.2
KIM SO YON
DPR KOREA



NO.2
KIM JI-EUN
KOREA REPUBLIC

PLAYERS TO WATCH PLAYERS TO WATCH

MIDFIELDERS



NO.7
RI UI GYONG
DPR KOREA



NO.8
ZHAO SIQING
CHINA PR



NO.11
BAEK SEOYEONG
KOREA REPUBLIC



NO.8
HARURA MATSUSHITA
JAPAN



NO.6
EH CHONG GUM
DPR KOREA



NO.7
CLAIRE LOUISE CORBETT
AUSTRALIA

PLAYERS TO WATCH PLAYERS TO WATCH

FORWARDS



NO.10
YU JONG HYANG
DPR KOREA



NO.15
KIM WON SIM
DPR KOREA



NO.11
LIU YUXI
CHINA PR



NO.23
LIM JI-HYE
KOREA REPUBLIC



REFEREEING

1. SUMMARY

1.1 AFC MATCH OFFICIALS

A total of 14 referees and 16 assistant referees, along with one (1) standby referee and two (2) standby assistant referees, were appointed to officiate the AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup China 2026™. The list also included one (1) Referee and one (1) Assistant Referee who were both invited from UEFA.

Referees	MA
Om Choki	BHU
Yu Hong	CHN
Keomany Phengmeuangkhoun	LAO
Haneen Khaled Ahmad Murad	JOR
Park Se-jin	KOR
Jon Sol Mi	PRK
Anjana Rai	NEP
Alesarl Baddour	SYR
Sunita Thongthawin	THA
Wang Chieh	TPE
Khuloud Khudoum Bakhit Juma Alzaabi	UAE
Roziyabonu Yusupova	UZB
Tran Thi Thanh	VIE
Maïka Vanderstichel	FRA
Standby Referee	**MA**
Supiree Testhomya	THA

Assistant Referees	MA
Laura Soledad Moya	AUS
Salma Akter Mone	BAN
Wen Lili	CHN
Chan Sin Man	HKG
Debala Devi Elagbam	IND
Lee Soo-bin	KOR
Riiohlang Dhar	IND
Sabreen Awwad Abed Ala'badi	JOR
Saki Nakamoto	JPN
Eman Almadany	KSA
Hyon Un Mi	PRK
Phutsavan Chanthavong	LAO
Wint War Tun	MYA
Merina Dhimal	NEP
Roba Zarka	SYR
Mélissa Rossignol	FRA
Standby Assistant Referees	**MA**
Wu Qiaoli	CHN
Merlo Silva Albano	PHI
Technical Instructors/ Referee Assessors	**MA**
Fang Yan	CHN
Niu Huijun	CHN
Sachiko Yamagishi	JPN
Thein Thein Aye	MYA
Mai Hoang Trang	VIE

Fitness Instructors	MA
Praew Semaksuk	THA
Park Youn-young	KOR

1.2 SUPPORT TEAM

Referees' Liaison Officer (RLO): A dedicated RLO was assigned to oversee and coordinate all logistical, operational, and administrative arrangements for the match officials throughout the tournament, providing end-to-end support to ensure the smooth delivery of all referee-related activities.

Players' Team: Local football teams of 20 players as well as two (2) coaches participated in the practical training sessions, providing essential support for the referees' on-field exercises, match simulations, and decision-making drills.



Medical Team: An ambulance and medical team were stationed at all referee practical training sessions to provide immediate medical assistance, first-aid support, and emergency response services whenever required, ensuring a safe training environment for all participants. A dedicated Medical Doctor was stationed at the official AFC HQ throughout the tournament, providing medical assistance when needed.

Masseurs: Two masseurs were available throughout the competition to support the match officials' recovery and physical conditioning needs. Their services contributed to the well-being of the officials by assisting with post-training and post-match recovery, helping them maintain optimal fitness levels and performance throughout the tournament.



2. PREPARATORY COURSE

A three-day preparatory course was held from April 28 to 30, 2026, with the fitness check held on April 28. The topics covered were: positioning & reading, challenges, tactical fouls, offside, handball, teamwork, penalty area incident & match management

2.1 FITNESS CHECK RESULTS

The following fitness checks were conducted to assess the physical readiness of the match officials and ensure they were adequately prepared for the demands of the competition:

- Referees: Dynamic Yo-Yo Test (Level 17.8)
- Assistant Referees: ARIET (Level 14.5.3)

Following the fitness assessment, the final list of match officials was updated based on the results.

2.2 PRACTICAL SESSIONS

Twenty players and two (2) coaches brought the training objectives to life, simulating realistic match incidents to give match officials real-time experience. These situations were captured with the Instant Feedback system to ensure that the match officials received feedback on their decision making. Alongside these practical scenarios, officials underwent rigorous fitness training to ensure they are fully prepared, both physically and tactically.

2.3 THEORETICAL SESSIONS

Theoretical sessions focused on deepening the match officials' technical expertise and fostering greater consistency in interpreting and applying the Laws of the Game. By reviewing and analysing key video clips from the recent AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026™, instructors reinforced uniform decision-making standards across the entire cohort of women's match officials.



3. DURING COMPETITION

3.1 PRACTICAL SESSIONS

Daily practical sessions focused heavily on fitness conditioning to maintain the match officials' peak physical readiness. Referees and Assistant Referees scheduled for upcoming matches underwent customised training programmes tailored to their specific preparation needs. Furthermore, the post-match regimen incorporated gymnasium-based conditioning and pool recovery sessions to mitigate fatigue, accelerate recovery, and ensure optimal performance throughout the tournament.

3.2 MATCH ASSESSMENT

All matches were analysed in real time by a video referee assessor based in the Remote Monitoring Room at the referees' hotel. The assessor monitored key match situations and compiled comprehensive details, including the timing and nature of incidents, decisions and disciplinary actions, and other relevant observations for review.

In addition, referee assessors were assigned to observe performances in person at the match venues. They closely evaluated the officials' decision-making and overall teamwork throughout the matches to provide immediate, first-hand feedback.

The fitness instructors were also physically present at the matches to check on the overall fitness levels of the match officials and to accordingly tailor the fitness programmes for the referees during the competition.



3.3 MATCH DEBRIEFING SESSIONS

Match debriefing sessions served as an integral component of the officials' ongoing development. By analysing and discussing significant incidents from previous matches, officials reflected on their decision-making processes to better prepare for upcoming challenges. Instructors provided constructive feedback and highlighted critical learning points, directly promoting consistency, accuracy, and uniformity in foul recognition.



4. TECHNICAL SUMMARY

4.1 GENERAL PERFORMANCE

Across 25 matches, referee assessors and instructors assessed the overall performances of the match officials positively.

4.3 GENERAL MANAGEMENT

A total of 23 cautions (yellow cards) were shown during the entire competition. On average, matches saw 0.92 yellow cards per game.




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EXTRA TIME

EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME

EXPECTED GOALS FOR

Rank	Team	Expected Goals	Goals	Differential (Goals - Expected Goals)
1	DPR Korea	15.9	36	20.1
2	Japan	15.4	27	11.6
3	China PR	14.2	20	5.8
4	Korea Republic	9	9	0
5	Australia	3	5	2
6	Thailand	2	3	1
7	India	1.9	4	2.1
8	Vietnam	1.3	4	2.7
9	Myanmar	1.1	1	-0.1
10	Philippines	0.9	0	-0.9
10	Lebanon	0.9	1	0.1
12	Chinese Taipei	0.4	0	-0.4

DISCIPLINARY RECORD

Team	Total Fouls Conceded	Yellow Cards	2nd Yellow Cards	Straight Reds	Disciplinary Points
India	29	6	0	0	47
DPR Korea	39	1	0	0	42
Australia	38	1	0	0	41
Philippines	26	4	0	0	38
Japan	22	2	0	0	28
Myanmar	16	3	0	0	25
China PR	19	1	0	0	22
Korea Republic	19	1	0	0	22
Vietnam	18	0	0	0	18
Thailand	14	1	0	0	17
Lebanon	10	2	0	0	16
Chinese Taipei	13	1	0	0	16

SQUAD INFO

Team	Average Starting Age (Y, D)	Total Starting XI Changes	Total Players Used	Total Goal Scorers(excl OGs)	Total Games
Japan	16y 197d	37	23	10	6
DPR Korea	16y 237d	4	21	11	6
China PR	16y 161d	25	23	8	5
Australia	16y 238d	16	22	3	5
Thailand	16y 252d	8	22	2	4
Vietnam	16y 162d	8	16	4	4
Korea Republic	16y 128d	3	20	4	4
India	15y 308d	3	19	3	4
Myanmar	16y 140d	3	16	1	3
Philippines	16y 227d	6	17	0	3
Lebanon	16y 78d	3	18	1	3
Chinese Taipei	16y 28d	7	21	0	3

Team	Possession (%)
China PR	69.39
Japan	67.34
DPR Korea	66.61
Korea Republic	61.83
Australia	50.39
Myanmar	40.19
Thailand	40.15
Lebanon	36.15
Philippines	36.14
Vietnam	35.6
India	30.95
Chinese Taipei	26.03

Team	Average Shots per match
China PR	27.60
DPR Korea	26.00
Japan	23.00
Korea Republic	21.50
Australia	8.00
Thailand	7.75
Myanmar	7.67
Philippines	7.33
Vietnam	6.75
India	5.25
Lebanon	4.00
Chinese Taipei	3.00

EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME

Team	Passing Accuracy (%)
Japan	81.07
Australia	77.67
China PR	77.6
DPR Korea	74
Korea Republic	73.92
Lebanon	63.24
Thailand	60.04
India	58.18
Philippines	57.6
Vietnam	52.81
Chinese Taipei	52.22
Myanmar	52.1

Team	Average Shots on Target per match
Japan	11.00
DPR Korea	10.67
China PR	10.20
Korea Republic	9.50
India	3.25
Australia	3.20
Vietnam	2.75
Thailand	2.50
Myanmar	2.00
Lebanon	1.67
Philippines	0.67
Chinese Taipei	0.67

Team	Passing Accuracy in Final Third (%)
Japan	70.27
China PR	69.45
DPR Korea	66.83
Korea Republic	64.3
Australia	59.96
India	48.02
Thailand	47.63
Lebanon	44.17
Vietnam	43.06
Philippines	42.36
Chinese Taipei	34.91
Myanmar	33.33

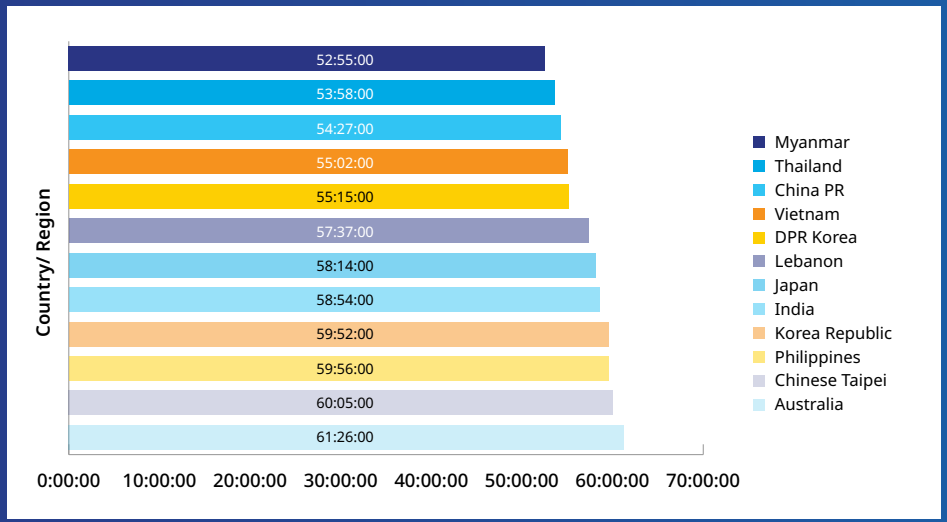
Team	Average Crosses (inc. Corners) per match
China PR	34.80
DPR Korea	28.83
Japan	21.83
Korea Republic	21.50
Australia	14.40
Philippines	12.33
Myanmar	8.67
Lebanon	8.00
Vietnam	8.00
Thailand	7.25
India	6.75
Chinese Taipei	4.00

EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME

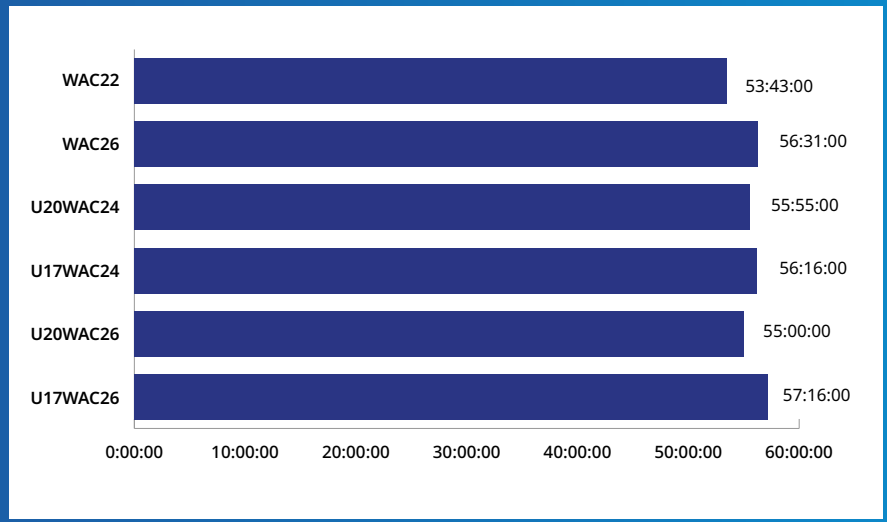
Team	Duel Success (%)
DPR Korea	56.84
Myanmar	53.94
Korea Republic	53.31
Chinese Taipei	52.58
Japan	51.44
India	50.43
Lebanon	48.95
Australia	48.18
Thailand	48.03
Vietnam	47.51
China PR	46.83
Philippines	38.5

Team	Aerial Duel Success (%)
China PR	63.24
DPR Korea	62.18
Korea Republic	51.11
Myanmar	48.84
Japan	47.62
Lebanon	46.67
Vietnam	45.28
Thailand	42
India	41.38
Australia	41.3
Chinese Taipei	38.1
Philippines	29.63

U17WAC26 AVERAGE IN-PLAY TIME (by teams)



U17WAC26 AVERAGE IN-PLAY TIME (by tournaments)



EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME EXTRA TIME



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

53.7 MILLION
IMPRESSIONS

26.9 MILLION
VIDEO VIEWS

652,743
ENGAGEMENTS

495
TOTAL POSTS

THE-AFC.COM

725,511
USERS

1,783,913
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