



**AFC U23
ASIAN CUP™**
UZBEKISTAN 2022

TECHNICAL REPORT



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Once again, the UFA exemplified the solidarity of the Asian football family and their willingness to stage the tournament as replacement hosts

And, finally, a big thank you to all the AFC's commercial partners, broadcasters and members of the media and, I am sure all of you will enjoy this excellent Technical Report.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President



AFC U23
ASIAN CUP™
UZBEKISTAN 2022

STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

AFC U23 ASIAN CUP™ UZBEKISTAN 2022

The AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022 was held on June 1-19 with 16 of the Continent's top sides vying to lift the title.

The Group Stage matches were played in the cities of Tashkent and Qarshi with four stadiums - Bunyodkor, Lokomotiv, Pakhtakor (all Tashkent) and Markaziy (Qarshi) - utilised.

GROUP STAGE

GROUP A

Hosts Uzbekistan booked their Knockout Stage spot with a match to spare after defeating debutants Turkmenistan 1-0 and Qatar 6-0, with their final Group A tie against Islamic Republic of Iran finishing 1-1.

Turkmenistan joined Uzbekistan in the Quarter-finals from Group A as they bounced back from their opening day defeat to Uzbekistan to stun IR Iran 2-1.

Turkmenistan then showed amazing grit as they fought back from two goals down to hold Qatar 2-2 to finish on four points as they made the Quarter-finals in their debut appearance in the Continental showpiece.



GROUP B

Australia had to wait till Matchday Three to confirm their position as Group B winners, edging Jordan 1-0 for top spot.

The Australians opened their campaign with a 2-0 win over Kuwait before playing to a 1-1 draw with Iraq.

Iraq, the 2013 champions, advanced as Group B runners-up, finishing on five points after a 3-1 come-from-behind Matchday Three win over Kuwait, having opened their campaign with a 1-1 draw against Jordan.



STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT



GROUP C

Defending champions Korea Republic opened their Group C campaign with a 4-1 win over Malaysia.

That was followed by a 1-1 draw with Vietnam in a match Korea Republic dominated but couldn't win, but a 1-0 triumph over Thailand on Matchday Three confirmed their position as Group C winners.

Vietnam, the 2018 AFC U23 Asian Cup™ runners-up, advanced in second place on five points with their other matches ending in a 1-1 draw with Thailand on Matchday One and a 2-0 win over Malaysia in their final group game.



GROUP D

Saudi Arabia and Japan stamped their superiority in Group D with impressive wins on Matchday One.

Japan carved out a 2-1 victory over the United Arab Emirates while Saudi Arabia cruised to a 5-0 win over Tajikistan.

The Matchday Two meeting between the two frontrunners ended in a 0-0 draw with Saudi Arabia confirming themselves as Group D winners on goal difference with a 2-0 defeat of the UAE and Japan beating Tajikistan 3-0.





QUARTER-FINALS

The Quarter-finals saw Uzbekistan facing Iraq, Australia playing Turkmenistan, Korea Republic taking on Japan and Saudi Arabia facing off against Vietnam.

AUSTRALIA 1-0 TURKMENISTAN



Australia advanced to their second successive AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Semi-final with a 1-0 win over a valiant Turkmenistan.

After a goalless first half at the Bunyodkor Stadium, Australia sealed victory through an own goal by Oraz Orazov in the 74th minute.

Although Turkmenistan exited the competition, their fighting spirit won many admirers over the course of the tournament.



UZBEKISTAN 2-2 IRAQ

(Uzbekistan win 3-2 on penalties)



Uzbekistan were tested to the brim by Iraq, with the hosts reduced to 10 men following goalkeeper Abduvohid Nematov's sending off inside 13 minutes.

Wakaa Ramadhan gave Iraq the lead from the subsequent penalty, but Uzbekistan fought back to draw level through Jasurbek Jaloliddinov's stoppage time spot-kick with the Central Asian side then taking the lead following an own goal by Iraq defender Hussein Ammar.

Iraq, however, forced extra-time through Ammar Ghaleb's equaliser but Uzbekistan were the more composed side in the penalty shoot-out, winning 3-2.

STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT

KOREA REPUBLIC 0-3 JAPAN

Japan produced their best performance of the tournament to defeat Korea Republic 3-0 in their Quarter-final.

In an entertaining affair at the Pakhtakor Stadium, Japan richly deserved their victory against defending champions Korea Republic, with head coach Go Oiwa's side cruising to victory through goals from Yuito Suzuki (21st, 80th) and Mao Hosoya (65th).



SAUDI ARABIA 2-0 VIETNAM



Saudi Arabia, seeking to win the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ for the first time after finishing as runners-up in 2013 and 2020, advanced to the Semi-finals with a 2-0 win over Vietnam.

Motzeb Al Harbi put Saudi Arabia ahead in the 41st minute at the Lokomotiv Stadium, with Firas Albrikan - included in the squad for the Knockout Stage - sealing the win in the 65th minute when he headed home from close range.

SEMI-FINALS

Australia faced Saudi Arabia in the first Semi-final while the second last four tie was a meeting between two former AFC U23 Asian Cup™ champions, with Japan having won the title in 2016 and Uzbekistan two years later.



STORY OF THE TOURNAMENT



AUSTRALIA 0-2 SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia continued their fine run with a well deserved 2-0 win over Australia in their Semi-final.

The young Green Falcons were quick to seize control of the tie at the Pakhtakor Stadium, with Australia having to defend deep and rely on counter-attacks to penetrate.

The Australian resistance was broken in the 20th minute when a speedy Faris Albrikan surged up the



left flank before cutting back into the six-yard-box for an advancing Hussain Al Eisa to strike the ball into the top left corner.

Australia looked to respond and had their best chance at the half-hour mark, but captain Tyrese Francois saw his effort from just outside the area denied by the woodwork.

The Olyroos suffered another setback in the 39th

minute when Jay Rich-Baghuelou was sent off for a challenge on Ayman Yahya.

The one-man advantage saw Saudi Arabia dictating terms in the second half and their second successive appearance in the final was confirmed when Albrikan turned provider again in the 72nd minute when he burst into the six-yard-box before cutting back to Yahya to score with a powerful shot past Australia keeper Joe Gauci.

UZBEKISTAN 2-0 JAPAN

Second half goals from Jasurbek Jaloliddinov and Husain Norchaev secured Uzbekistan a 2-0 win over Japan in their Semi-final encounter.

Both sides had chances in the first half, but the match burst into life after the break with Uzbek skipper Jaloliddinov's audacious strike from over 30 yards out beating an outstretched Japanese goalkeeper Zion Suzuki on the hour mark.

Forced to attack in search of the equaliser, Japan began leaving gaps at the back and Norchaev took full advantage a minute from the end of regulation time to score Uzbekistan's second to confirm their place in the Final.



THIRD PLACE PLAYOFF



JAPAN 3-0 AUSTRALIA

With both teams suffering disappointing defeats in the Semi-finals, Japan and Australia were determined to play for pride when they faced off in the Third Place Playoff.

Japan started the brighter as they dominated the early proceedings and were duly rewarded when Kei Sato pounced on the loose ball, letting loose a cracking shot from just inside the box that deflected off the crossbar before settling into the back of the net.

Japan's persistence saw them double their lead in the 40th minute when Rihito Yamamoto curled in a



corner kick over a sea of players with the unfortunate Kai Trewin turning the ball into his own net.

Australia looked determined to mount a fightback in the second half but were disappointed again in the 63rd minute when Kuryu Matsuki picked out an unmarked Shota Fujio in the area, with the substitute making no mistake with his close-range effort.

Australia continued to search for a way back, but the Japanese defence stood firm to take home the bronze medal.



FINAL



UZBEKISTAN 0-2 SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia won the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022 title after beating the hosts 2-0 in the final as the West Asian side lifted the trophy for the first time after finishing runners-up in 2013 and 2020.

Victory was richly deserved as Saudi Arabia did not concede even one goal in the six matches they played in Uzbekistan 2022.

Cheered by some 30,000 fans at the Bunyodkor Stadium, Uzbekistan were aiming to become the first team to win the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ twice but despite some early chances, they couldn't find a way past the Saudi Arabian defence.

The final looked to have turned in Saudi Arabia's favour in the 39th minute when they were awarded a penalty, only for the decision to be overturned following a VAR review.



Saudi Arabia adopted a more aggressive approach in the second half, and it paid off as Ahmed Alghamdi finished off Hamad Al Yami's pass from the edge of the penalty box.

Uzbekistan thought they had equalised in the 71st minute when Ruslanbek Jiyanov collected Jasurbek Jaloliddinov's through pass to beat goalkeeper Nawaf Alaqidi, but was flagged offside.

Saudi Arabia remained cool despite the Uzbekistan pressure and Firas Albrikan confirmed the title was theirs when he finished off Turki Alammar's perfectly weighted through ball in the 74th minute.

There was to be more joy for Saudi Arabia as forward Ayman Yahya was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player while Alaqidi's six clean sheets saw him picked as the Best Goalkeeper.

Saudi Arabia also won the Fair Play Award while Korea Republic's Cho Young-wook won the Top Scorer award.



WINNING COACH

FROM BANGKOK TO TASHKENT

Saudi Arabia's first title at this level could be interpreted as a victory for continuity. There are not many coaches who appear at an AFC U23 tournament and reappear at the next one two years later. Even fewer reach the final at both. In Bangkok in 2020, Saad Al Shehri had maintained "you need to have a good defence rather than a good attack". And his team had endorsed that principle by conceding only two goals in their six matches – while scoring only five. A solitary extra-time goal earned Korea Republic the title.

In Uzbekistan, Al Shehri's team achieved a winning balance, scoring 13 goals and, in the 540 minutes of play, conceding none. "I think we were the best team," he said after the 2-0 win against the hosts in the Final, "with the right strategies in the games we played." After a relatively comfortable Semi-final victory over Australia, he commented: "I'm very happy with the victory and the way we played against a good team. We thought that our high-pressing strategy would give them problems – and it did."

Despite the impeccable record, he didn't pretend that winning the title had been a walk in the park. After the Quarter-final against Vietnam, he admitted "we just scratched the surface of our performance levels against a side with good organisation and a counterattacking strategy. We played much better in the second-half, increasing our possession and creating better chances." There was a similar tale to tell in the Final where, after an indifferent first period, he used his half-time team talk to remind his players of Uzbekistan's weak points. "They played with determination and concentration to get the result. On the first day we had a meeting and I told them to keep one goal in mind – to win the title. And I told them to aim for individual awards as well." That objective was also achieved.

Al Shehri, a former midfielder who played at the FIFA World Youth Championship in Nigeria in 1999, had made his national team coaching debut as assistant with the U20 side back in 2012 at the age of 32, stepping up to head coach status with the U19 team



in 2015 – and winning a silver medal at the AFC U19 Championship in Bahrain in the following year. His tenure of the U23 bench dates back to March 2018 and an Asian Games campaign in the same year. The silver medal in Bangkok earned Saudi Arabia a first appearance at the Olympic Games since 1996. But, in the meantime, he had been forging a reputation as a youth development specialist with age-limit teams at Al Qadsia, Al Nassr, Al Nahda and Al Ettifaq.

His experience told him that mental preparation was a vital component in a Final played before a large crowd against the host nation. Firas Al Brikan, MVP at the Final and a member of the squad that had lost in Bangkok, said "the head coach helped us a lot throughout the tournament. We understood

what we needed from each other and we were determined to win the title for him."

Al Shehri, as an accomplished age-limit coach, was reluctant to compare with the past. "This generation is different from the last," he said in Tashkent. "We started preparing six months before the tournament started and we travelled to Uzbekistan with pressure on us to make people happy. But it was good for us because it made the players aware that they needed to concentrate, to run and to fight for results. But this was just the start. The important thing is the future – and our preparations for Paris 2024." Victory in Tashkent was a just recompense for a coach dedicated to the development of young talent.



TECHNICAL TOPICS

CLIMBING THE LADDER

When the ball started rolling in Uzbekistan, it was easy to forget that the cast consisted of footballers who had yet to reach the top rung of the ladder. The AFC U23 Asian Cup™ is essentially a development tournament where players can measure their progress against opponents from diverse cultures and assess their potential to climb the final rung between age-limit football and the senior international game. On the AFC ladder, the gap is slimmer than in a majority of confederations where the penultimate rung is generally at U21 or U20 levels. Whereas Europe's U21 championship dates back to 1978, the final tournament in 2022 was only the fifth U23 event to be played under the AFC's auspices. Although football of a high standard can be expected, it is unrealistic to regard it as a benchmarking competition like a FIFA World Cup or the AFC Asian Cup™. The tournament, nevertheless, offered a fascinating insight into current practice among teams who, in alternate editions, compete for places at the Olympic Games. This incentive, however, was not a factor at the 2022 event.

Like many others, the tournament had to meet pandemic-induced challenges. China PR, originally chosen to host the finals, was obliged to stand down



– and withdrew its team from the competition. Uzbekistan stepped into the breach, having taken part in the qualifiers, where their team's results were ultimately erased. With June temperatures sometimes exceeding 30°, climatic elements were conditioning factors – especially at the afternoon kick-offs – when assessing tactical aspects such as high-energy collective pressing.

RE-WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

In a tournament that showcased the evolution of playing roles, goalkeepers, such as IR Iran's Parsa Jafari were frequently expected to position themselves to operate as sweepers behind a high defensive line and, as technical observer Nair Sivaji reported after watching Australia's Joe Gauci in action, "to participate actively in confident build-

up play from the back". Vietnam relied similarly on keeper Quan Van Chuan to combine with centre-back Nguyen Thanh Binh to initiate construction through the thirds, while Takeshi Ono, observer at UAE's game against Saudi Arabia, described Suhail Abdullah as "an influential goalkeeper, not only saving from danger but also covering the back of a pushed-up line and also contributing to the team in attack." In addition, many keepers were technically equipped to deal with the pressure by opponents, with the result that team-mates were unafraid to bring the keeper into play. Times are changing!

Full-backs continued to catch the eye, as much for their attacking contributions as for defensive qualities, with the pairings of Australia and Uzbekistan especially active in this facet of the game – both full-backs advancing simultaneously to support attacks. This interacted with the changing role of wingers and wide midfielders who increasingly moved infield to create space for the full-backs. Laszlo Szalai picked out the relationship between Saudi Arabia's left-back Moteb Al Harbi and wide midfielder Turki Al Ammar as a prime example: "they built more attacks on the left," he said after watching them against Japan, "with the defender making overlapping runs while the No. 10 moved a long way inside to operate more as a fast and skilful playmaker." Moteb exploited the space to contribute two goals – one, a right-footed finish after appearing in the centre of the Tajikistan box; the other, a left-footed shot from the left of the area.

In the meantime, strikers – often operating as a lone spearhead – tended to be well-policed by centre-backs and, as the goalscoring section of this report mentions, did not make headlines as prolific goalscorers. There was a noticeable trend away from strikers' traditional back-to-goal play.

Instead, the tendency was illustrated by Japan's Mao Hosoya who, as the observer at the game against UAE, Laszlo Szalai, reported, "stepped back from the opponent's defence line, dropping off to exploit space in the centre to receive the ball and extend attacking construction with passes to the wings."

BUILDING BLOCKS

The tournament displayed a strong emphasis on structural compactness. The two finalists set out to operate a high block, whereas the general tendency was to set up a compact block in midfield and press forward from there. Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, on the other hand, opted for deep or very deep defending. "The emphasis was on retreating quickly to form a defensive block deep in their own half," Takeshi Ono commented after watching the former's game against IR Iran, "intentionally drawing opponents into their defensive third and aiming for a quick counter after winning the ball. They were happy for the opposition to have possession and focused on preventing them from finishing." Similarly, Tajikistan preferred to set up a 1-5-4-1 defensive block close to their goal and counter at speed.

HARD-PRESSED TO SUCCEED

"Many teams tried to defend in the opposing half," technical observer Islam Akhmedov reflected, "using the compact location of players around the ball to press immediately after losing possession. But we saw different levels of efficiency... Saudi Arabia were the most effective and they were also well-coached in finding the appropriate moments to press high and when to drop deeper into a midfield block." Japan and Korea Republic applied similar criteria to their well-structured high pressing, although with mixed levels of success in terms of earning high regains.



The general tendency was, however, for a 'high press' to feature positional pressing on the ball as a mechanism aimed at hindering the opponent's build-up or counterattacking possibilities while buying time for transitions into defensive shape. Teams could often be pictured pressing the ball in advanced areas while high regains were few and far between.

BEATING THE PRESS

From a development perspective, the technical observers found it heartening to see AFC teams moving towards the global trend of high-pressing strategies. The other side of the coin is preparing players and teams to cope with it. Laszlo Szalai, for example, saw Qatar struggle to deal with Uzbekistan's aggressive forechecking and settle into their possession game. Islam Akhmedov, the observer when Vietnam took on Korea Republic,

commented: "Vietnam could never really start building their attacks through combination play and had to use long balls beyond the opponent's defensive block, pushing up to try to win the second ball." In that game, Vietnam were restricted to 228 passes, of which 25% were long. Takeshi Ono, after UAE v Saudi Arabia, reported "under their Spanish manager, you could see UAE trying to use the full width of the pitch to build-up play. However, the opponent's tough high pressing did not allow them to do that effectively."

By contrast, Saudi Arabia and Japan showed eye-catching ability to dance away when the high press was employed, with players quickly making themselves available to receive the ball in crisp short-passing exchanges. But a small minority of teams consistently exhibited ability to find constructive solutions, rather than dispatch a long ball which, much more often than not, signified an immediate loss of possession.

FORWARD THINKING

Malaysia, Tajikistan and Quarter-finalists Turkmenistan could comfortably be labelled as transition teams, set up to use a deep defensive block as the launching pad for fast counters. Jordan were also equipped to use this *modus operandi* with, as Nair Sivaji observed during their game against Iraq, "quick transitions from defence to attack, looking to release Mohammad Aburiziq for runs into channels or for him to retain possession while teammates take up advanced supporting positions. Good chances were created in this way – but they were let down by a poor final pass or decision." Takeshi Ono remarked that fast vertical attacks were a major feature of Vietnam's play. "All the players seemed alert to the possibilities of very quick transitions

with, in particular, deep running by the full-backs." Saudi Arabia were also alert for opportunities to launch quick individual counters.

As the goalscoring section of this report points out, counterattacks accounted for one-quarter of the tournament's open-play goals – but only one stemmed from a classic back-to-front counter from deep in the defensive third. Three could be attributed to high-pressing regains, but most were collective counters launched from the middle third.

PLAYING THE BALL

Although Jordan had the counterattacking card up their sleeve, the emphasis was on playing through the thirds. The same could be said of teams like Australia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Korea Republic, Qatar, UAE or Thailand. Centre-backs were often key figures, opening play with diagonals or, with opponents so often operating with one striker, looking for opportunities to run into midfield.

Various passages from technical observers' notebooks described how teams constructed their attacking moves. For example, "Australia built confidently from the back with the goalkeeper participating; the full-backs pushing up into wing positions; the wide players moving inside; and good ball circulation with mobility in attack, as players interchanged positions to take opponents out of key areas". Or "Korea Republic built their attacks through ball control and assured combination play among attackers and midfielders. The wingers changed flanks many times and moved inside to open spaces for the wide defenders. They played neat combinations in front of the opponent's box and always looked for the cut-back pass".

Korea Republic led the possession chart by an ample margin – though the table conceals some interesting nuances. Qatar's average, for instance, benefits from 68% of the ball against Turkmenistan after surprising shares of 42% and 46% against IR Iran and Uzbekistan. Bearing in mind their reputation for combination play, it raised eyebrows when Japan had less than 50% of the ball in three of their six matches. The technical observers noted that a clear playing philosophy does not guarantee accuracy of passing or tempo of ball circulation which, they commented, often led to a high number of turnovers.

TEAM	BALL
Korea Republic	64%
Saudi Arabia	58%
Jordan	57%
IR Iran	56%
Australia	54%
Uzbekistan	53%
Qatar	52%
Japan	51%
Thailand	51%
UAE	49%
Iraq	48%
Vietnam	45%
Tajikistan	39%
Kuwait	36%
Malaysia	35%
Turkmenistan	33%

WHERE IS THE PLAYMAKER?

"Organised the team both offensively and defensively with good technique and vision. Composed in possession, making positive passes to team-mates in advanced positions." If that seems to add up to a concise job description for the playmaker, the only problem is that the players in question were both centre-backs. The tournament in Uzbekistan corroborated evidence that 'playmaking' is in a phase of transition.

Shuffling through the pack of players who impressed with 'playmaking' qualities, a considerable majority were also midfielders whose starting positions were in the screening roles. In Uzbekistan, goalkeepers or centre-backs were often expected to initiate build-up play with diagonal passing to wide midfielders or advanced full-backs. Or, with the centre-backs spreading wide, it would be a screening midfielder who dropped into a central slot to start construction. With so many teams fast enough in transition to set up compact midfield defensive blocks, 'playmakers' find it increasingly problematical to find room to manoeuvre in traditional areas from the centre-circle upwards. Coaches of development teams are now being challenged to pinpoint the most appropriate zones for 'playmakers' to exercise their talents – and the response is increasingly to drop them into areas where they have better chances of finding enough space.

APPLAUSE FOR THE SOLOIST?

Should the emphasis be on the orchestra rather than a soloist? That is another issue that the coach at development levels is required to address. The value of the soloist was illustrated by the host nation's No. 10 Jasurbek Jaloliddinov whose enthusiasm in the opening game against Turkmenistan prompted the

AFC technical observer to remark "he wanted to be everywhere and do everything". His ability to pull rabbits out of hats proved crucial as Uzbekistan made their way to the Final. He was ready to attempt the outrageous, such as a direct free-kick from about 40m against Iraq or the explosive long-range shooting which shell-shocked Qatar in the opening minutes and then provided the vital opening goal in the Semi-final against Japan.

His team-mate Hojimak Erkinov was among the soloists capable of creating chaos with exceptional dribbling runs. "A key player, strong in duels and with fantastic speed and explosive capacity," Laszlo Szalai said of him after watching his contribution to the 6-0 win over Qatar. Much of the same was said by Islam Akhmedov about the champions' right-winger Hussain Al Eisa who "with individual actions created many dangerous moments near the opponent's goal." The soloist, if his individual talents can be channelled into team-play, can make the difference, win games – and win tournaments.



REQUIEM FOR THE DEAD BALL?

The Goalscoring section of this report reveals that 22% of the tournament's goals were derived from set plays – contrasting with 32% at the senior AFC Asian Cup™ in 2019. If the nine converted penalties are subtracted, the 32 matches in Uzbekistan produced only nine goals from set plays. In 2,910 minutes of football. In other words, one success per 323 minutes of play. Excluding penalties, three of the top four teams enjoyed no dead-ball successes at all – the exception being Japan with the Kuryu Matsuki strike following a corner against Tajikistan and Yuito Suzuki's direct free-kick in the Quarter-final against Korea Republic. The latter was the only goal scored in this way during the entire tournament.

What's more, none of the top eight conjured a goal from an indirect free-kick. The only two successes – both with excellent volleyed finishes – were supplied by IR Iran and UAE. Erfan Shahriari volleyed home Saman Fallah's header to earn a 90th-minute equaliser for the former against Qatar. And Hassan

Al-Balooshi also put (albeit momentarily) 1-1 on the scoreboard in the latter's game against Japan.

Overall, the crop of corners was meagre: six goals from 283 corner-kicks at a ratio of 1: 47.

This compares unfavourably with 1: 40 at the senior event in 2019. And, stepping outside AFC territory, even more unfavourably with 1: 29 at the last FIFA World Cup in 2018.

The technical observers in Uzbekistan included well-drilled defending among the possible explanations, with a large majority of teams operating a mix of zonal and individual marking when defending



corners. The obvious question is what more can be done to increase dividends from corners (and to bring AFC figures up to world standards)? But the counter-question is whether it is worth investing training-ground time in rehearsing corners in attack if the success rate is 1: 47 and, in Uzbekistan, the average number of corners each team could expect worked out at 4.4 per game.

On the other hand, it was a corner that allowed Turkmenistan to draw with Qatar; a clean header from a corner put Jordan 1-0 up against Iraq; a deep corner headed back across the goal provided the only goal of their game against Kuwait; a corner allowed Iraq to seal a 3-1 comeback victory (also against Kuwait); and Matsuki's strike for Japan was the crucial opening goal. The fact that corners were decisive probably answers that question about training-ground time.

As for direct free-kicks providing one goal in almost 1,000 minutes of football, the question is whether enough is being done to develop skills in this speciality?

A WORD FROM THE BENCH

From a coaching perspective, the tournament registered a number of structural adjustments from game to game, but not many while the ball was rolling. Substitutions were mostly straight swaps – although some of them influenced the outcome – none more so than the late strike by Teymur Charyyev which ultimately sent Turkmenistan into the Quarter-finals and eliminated IR Iran.

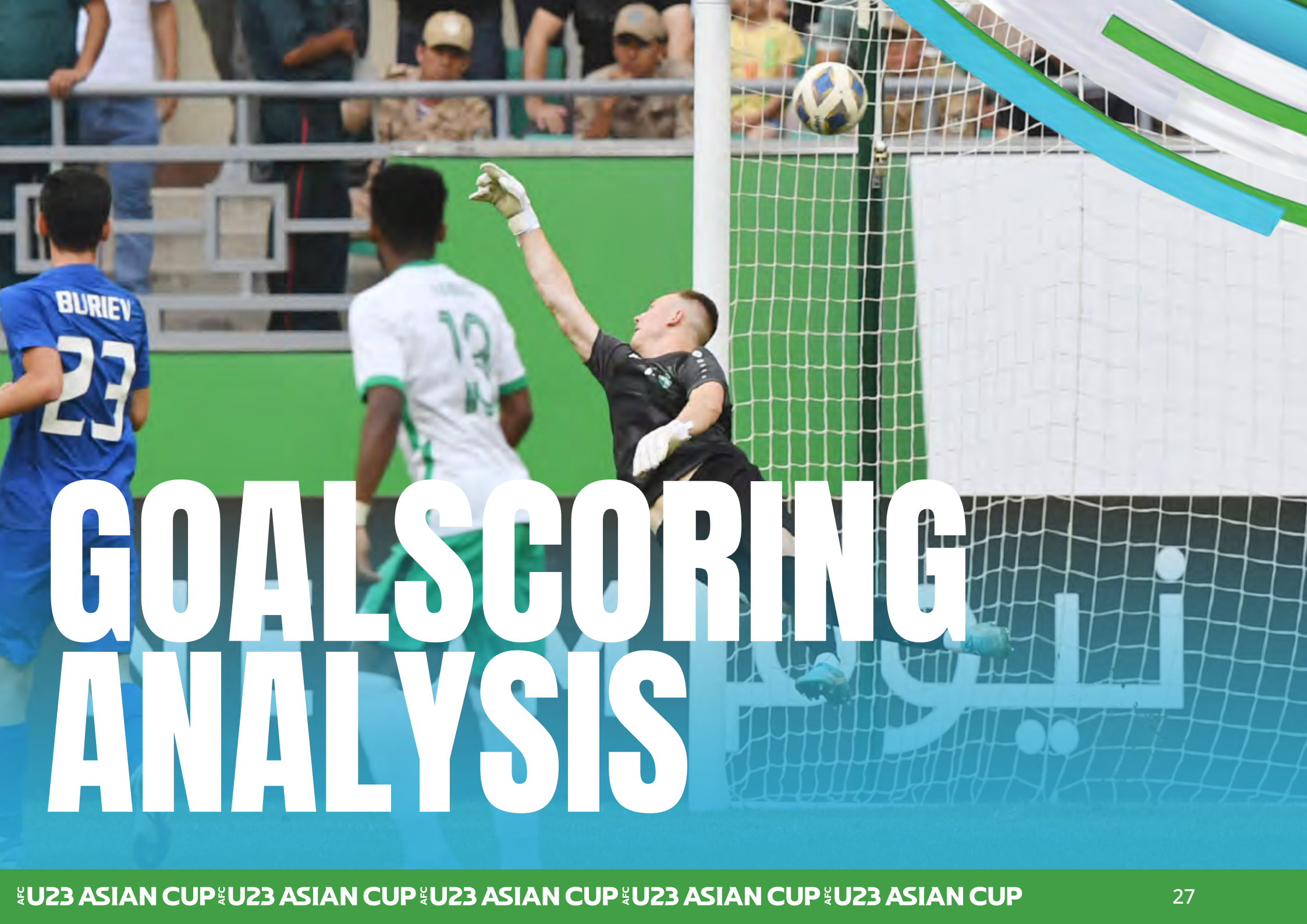
Among the coaching decisions which made an impact, Nair Sivaji highlights the move made by Iraq's Czech coach Miroslav Soukup after barely half an



hour against Kuwait. "He saw that the midfield was all at sea, so he switched from four to three at the back and dropped the wide player on the left a bit deeper. Suddenly, the midfield began to click. They equalised within minutes and went on to win 3-1."

Korea Republic coach Hwang Sun-hong also made an influential adjustment at half-time during the group game against Vietnam, injecting Oh Se-hun into the striker role. "It changed the tactics and dynamics of the game," Islam Akhmedov recalled. "He basically began to organise the team's attacking on the flanks."

"One thing the tournament demonstrated," said Nair Sivaji, "was that if the coach remains calm and composed, he is able to read the game better..."



GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

THE GOAL AVERAGE



The interpretation of statistics provides a fertile subsoil for debate. On the face of it, a total of 81 goals at an average of 2.53 per game is a motive for satisfaction – especially as it signifies a 17% increase on the total posted from the previous tournament. The scoring pattern was fairly constant with two high-scoring matches lifting the Group Stage total to 62 goals at 2.58, while the eight Knockout Stage ties produced 19 goals at 2.38.

On the other hand, comparisons can be deceptive, as the 2020 event in Thailand had generated concern. The goal tally had plummeted to 69 at 2.16 per match. The subsequent increase registered in Uzbekistan served only to restore the balance from 2018 – an almost identical harvest of 82 goals at a 2.56 match average. The technical report on that tournament in China PR reflected a worrying 20% downturn in comparison with the 2016 tournament in Qatar which had generated 103 goals.

In Uzbekistan, both teams scored in 12 of the 32 games. Goalkeepers could congratulate themselves for clean sheets on 21 occasions – a third of them during the knockout phase. Although there were some plucky recoveries to draw, the importance of scoring first was underlined by the fact that the tournament produced only two comeback victories (Turkmenistan 2 IR Iran 1 and Iraq 3 Kuwait 1).

Subtracting the four own goals from the equation, the remaining 77 were shared among 57 different

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

players. As had been the case in 2020, no individual scored more than three goals. Again, there are two perspectives. Is this a healthy sign that 'goals can come from all round the team'? Or is it a sign that specialist goalscorers are not being developed?

The statistics raise perennial questions about whether young Asian players are being given enough chances to develop goalscoring talents at the club level when a significant percentage of goals are scored by imported players, while local attackers frequently struggle for access to first-team places. Or whether, at academies or youth development levels, training ground time focuses on work 'between the boxes' as opposed to the delivery of an end product.

The tournament in Uzbekistan produced 732 goal attempts at an average of just under 23 per match – 22.875 to be pedantic. However, 232 were on target – which works out at 7.25 per game (as opposed to per team). It means that less than one-third of the finishing was accurate. The eight knockout matches yielded 53 on-target attempts (6.6 per match), with the final producing only five. The top four teams were above average in terms of accurate finishing with Uzbekistan registering 70 attempts, of which 29 were on target; Saudi Arabia 63/30; Japan 47/23 and Australia 44/19. But how many coaches travelled home wondering whether a handful of on-target attempts was a fair recompense for the teamwork invested?

Extrapolating penalties, the overall balance was one goal per 10.2 attempts. This compares favourably with the figure of 11.33 posted in 2020 – but compares unfavourably with the 1: 8.96 ratio at the last edition of the senior championship in 2019.

SET PLAYS

The impact of VAR continued to be notable as the nine penalties (eight struck directly into the net + one from a rebound off the keeper) represented 50% of the tournament's set-play goals. The total was two short of the figure posted when VAR was first introduced in Thailand, but still significantly higher than the pre-VAR tally of four in 2018.

This meant that, in 32 matches, only nine goals could be attributed to the rehearsed dead-ball scenarios and the success rate from direct and indirect free-kicks continued to dwindle towards negligible levels. In fact, the only success from a direct free-kick was the strike by Japan midfielder Yuito Suzuki which opened the scoring in the Quarter-final against Korea Republic. The low return on set plays was so eye-catching that the subject is addressed as a technical topic elsewhere in this report.



GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

OPEN PLAY

The shortfall in set-play goals meant that 78% of the tournament's goals stemmed from open play, compared with 72% in Thailand in 2020 and 68% of the scoring at the last senior AFC Asian Cup™ in 2019.

Crosses were the most fertile source of goals – but only marginally. The total of 13 represented just over one-fifth of open-play goals. The salient feature in this field, nonetheless, was a sharp trend away from crossing in relation to the previous final tournament. In Thailand, 1,016 crosses had been delivered. In Uzbekistan, the total fell abruptly to 604 – a massive 40% reduction. Among the 16 contestants there was considerable diversity. At one end of the scale were IR Iran (15.67 crosses per game including 20 v Qatar) and Korea Republic (15.5 with 23 against Vietnam). At the other end, Kuwait, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan averaged 4.6, 5.0 and 7.0 respectively, followed by – as an illustration of playing strategies – Qatar (7.3) and Australia (7.5). The latter delivered the fewest crosses among the top four teams, behind Japan (11), Uzbekistan (10.5) and the champions Saudi Arabia (8.75). The hosts' average, by the way, is misleading. One-third of their 63 crosses were supplied during the opening match against Turkmenistan. Their other five games produced an average of 8.4. The punchline at the end of this chapter is that 604 crosses yielded 13 goals at a success ratio of 1:46.

Nevertheless, wing play – including cut-backs and diagonals into the box – generated exactly one-third of the tournament's open-play goals.

The forward pass, through or over the defensive line, provided 12 goals. The figure is the same as in 2020 – which means that the percentage dropped from 24% to 19%. The technical report on 2020 highlighted an “upward surge of goals scored from long range”

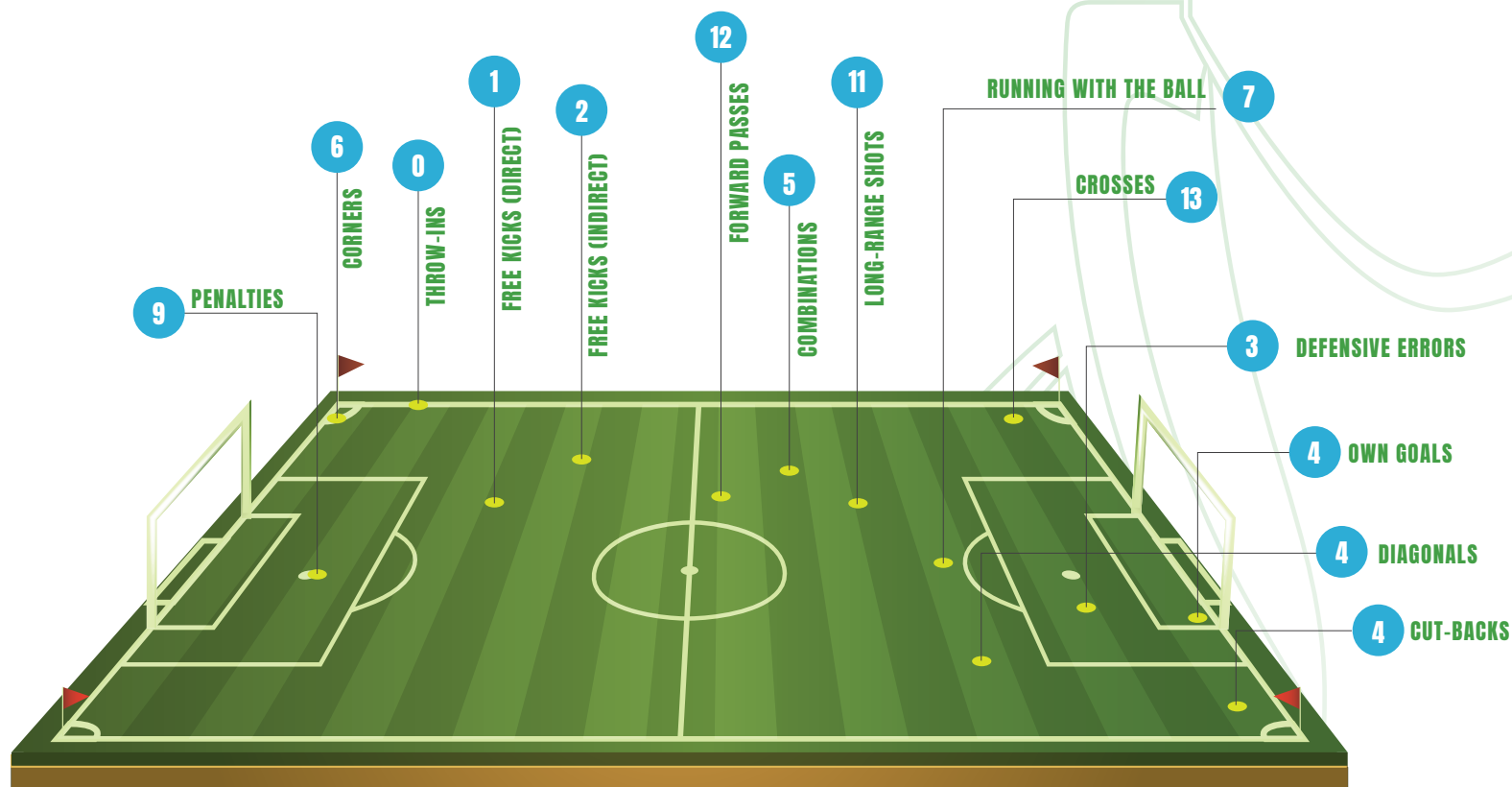


and this tendency was underscored in 2022 when a number of spectacular (and crucial) strikes from outside the box found the net – a prime example being when the Uzbekistan No.10 Jasurbek Jaloliddinov, always ready to fire from long range, produced a stunning strike to give his team a vital opening goal in a Semi-final that had been dominated by Japan.

The 2020 technical report linked the proliferation of long-range shooting with the rarity of successes from combination play against compact defensive blocks. In 2022, despite a modest increase, combination moves accounted for only 8% of the open-play total – and lagged behind the combined total for defensive errors and own goals...

In the meantime, counterattacking was paying significantly higher dividends. Whereas in Thailand they provided 10% of the open-play total, they prospered in Uzbekistan to the extent of originating one quarter. Ten of the total of 16 (compared with only five in Thailand) were collective counters, generally derived from winning the ball in the mid-third. Three were attributable to regains in advanced areas; two were solo efforts; and the only classic back-to-front counterattack ironically culminated in the own goal by Iraq defender Hussein Ammar which put Uzbekistan 2-1 ahead. This solitary example endorsed evidence from Thailand, where no goals originated in counterattacks from deep positions.

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS



GOALS FROM SET PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Corners	Direct from / following a corner	6
Free kicks (direct)	Direct from a free kick	1
Free kicks (indirect)	Following a free kick	2
Penalties	Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)	9
Throw-ins	Following a throw-in	0

GOALS FROM OPEN PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Combinations	Wall pass / combination move	5
Crosses	Cross from the wing	13
Cut-backs	Pass back from the byline	4
Diagonals	Diagonal pass into the penalty box	4
Running with the ball	Dribble and close-range shot / dribble and pass	7
Long-range shots	Direct shot / shot and rebound	11
Forward passes	Through pass or pass over the defence	12
Defensive errors	Bad back-pass / mistake by the goalkeeper	3
Own goals	Goal by the opponent	4

TOTAL GOALS SCORED: 81



TALKING POINTS

MIXED EMOTIONS?

The tournament illustrated that, at this final stage of player development, learning curves are not exclusively about tactics, teamwork or transitions. AFC technical observer Takeshi Ono, after watching IR Iran in Group A against Turkmenistan, reflected “sometimes emotions surpass technical tactics and determine a game”. Post-match statistics revealed that IR Iran had 64% of the ball, led 17-4 in goal attempts and played 61% of the game in Turkmenistan territory. “They dominated the game,” Ono added, “both in attack and defence, from the very first kick.” When Alireza Bavieh scored an early goal from long range, the writing seemed to be on the wall.

But the writing began to go wobbly in the 28th minute, when VAR endorsed the referee's decision to award Turkmenistan a penalty which put 1-1 on the scoreboard. Within eight minutes, there was a penalty call at the other end – and VAR ruled there was no case for a spot-kick. Early in the second half, shortly after an offside decision had gone against them, IR Iran's left-side attacker Erfan Shahriari went to ground in the box...and was yellow-carded for simulation. In the meantime, the emotional temperature had been steadily rising towards boiling point. The team discarded the qualities that had earned footballing dominance and endorsed the adage that ‘if you cannot control emotions, emotions will control you’. To put it bluntly, they lost the plot, translating emotional instability into unnecessary fouls – one of which earned Bavieh a



red card with almost half an hour still to play. A VAR review confirmed the midfielder's dismissal.

Substitute Teymur Charyyev then conjured up a long-range effort that flew into the top corner: 2-1 to Turkmenistan. The writing on the wall had been obliterated. Closing minutes fragmented by enough fouls to expand IR Iran's collection of cards to five yellows and a red, failed to change a score which, in the final reckoning, was to signify premature elimination at the end of the Group Stage. As Ono reflected, "it was a game that really made us realise the importance of emotions".

Uzbekistan, bearing the emotional burden of public expectations, showed the other side of the coin in the Quarter-final against Iraq when, in the 13th minute, VAR upgraded a penalty + caution punishment into a red card for goalkeeper Abduvohid Nematov. One

goal and one man down, the hosts did not lose the plot. They re-wrote it. Pushing forward and pressing high, they responded with a penalty and a counterattack and, ultimately, won the penalty shoot-out to provide an example of channeling an emotional response to adversity into positive energy.

Just as Japan's senior team had done en route to victory at the AFC Asian Cup™ in 2019, champions Saudi Arabia deserved credit for staying cool in moments of emotional tension – epitomised by the sight of goalkeeper Nawaf Al Aqidi walking behind his goal to ask the home supporters to calm down during a moment of high tension during the Final.

The tournament illustrated that the ability to master emotions is an important item in the footballer's tool-box – and one that needs to be put there during the crucial stages of player development.

SHORT OF TIME?

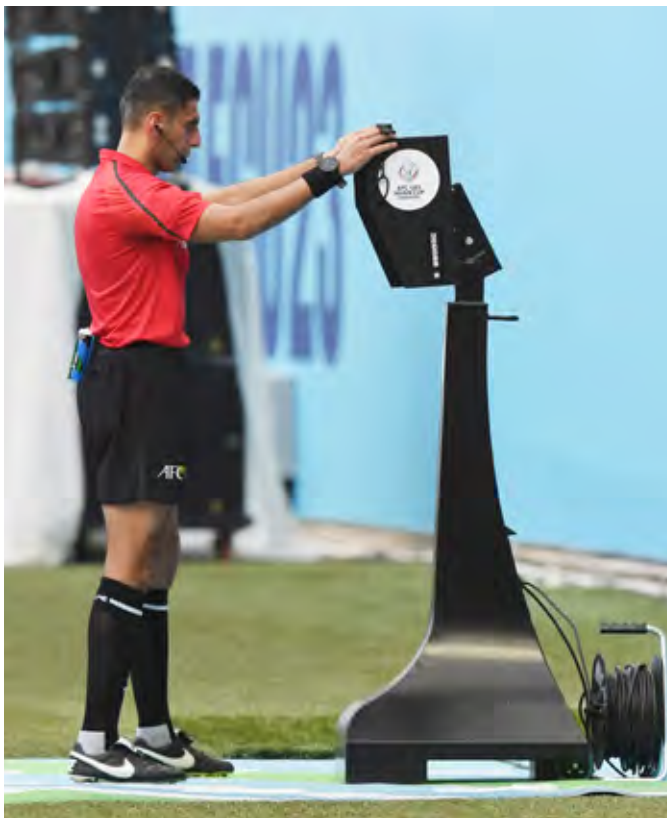
Facts are sometimes difficult to swallow. Can it really be true that the actual playing time at Jordan v Iraq was 33 minutes and 24 seconds? Or that the ball was rolling for 41m33s of Tajikistan v UAE? Or 45m14s of Saudi Arabia v UAE? Or, if we look closely at the Uzbekistan v Iraq Quarter-final that went to extra-time and convert to 90-minute values, the calculator flashes up 40m48s? Or that in one-third of the group games, the ball was in play for less than 50 minutes? Is this acceptable?

This is not just about the basic – and highly important – question of whether enough entertainment value is being offered to fans and sponsors. It is also a question of paramount sporting aspects. Are the disturbing facts from the tournament in Uzbekistan a symptom of an ailment that puts Asian football at a disadvantage on the world stage?

To put the statistics into perspective, a glance at the equivalent figures for the European Championship played in 2021 reveals a totally different picture. Of the 51 matches played, only one registered a real playing time below 50 minutes. In 21 games, the figure exceeded 60 minutes. Belgium v Portugal, for example, doubled the real playing time of Jordan v Iraq. In fact, Portugal had the ball for 37 minutes – more than the entire duration of that abbreviated match in Tashkent. In other words, the alarming statistics from the AFC tournament strongly suggest a negative impact on player development in terms of the capacity to deliver performances of a sustained high intensity.

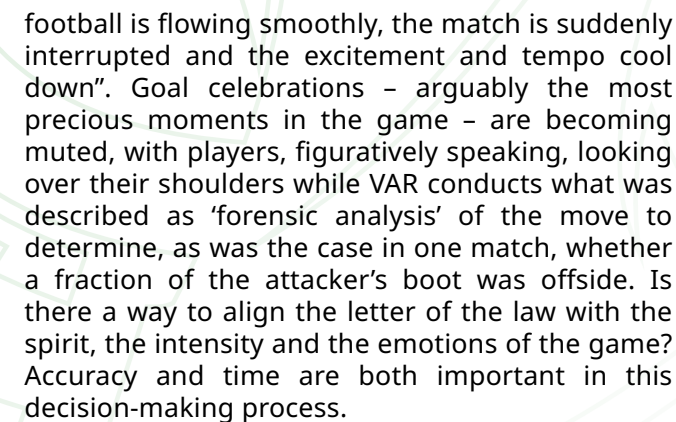
Although the technical observers pointed to time-wasting as a ploy to disrupt the opponent's rhythm, along with the feigning of injuries that has become so much of a norm as the easily identified among





finger at an earpiece while a lengthy review was being conducted; leaving the pitch to consult a monitor; and returning to the pitch to announce a decision and organise the resumption of play. Is this time always added? Should there be a time-limit on VAR reviews – for example, if a decision cannot be reached within 30 seconds, should the referee's decision be allowed to stand? This, of course, is a question for FIFA as the authority responsible for VAR protocols.

Secondly, there is the emotional element. One of the technical observers commented “even when the





TEAM PROFILES



SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 ABDUVAKHID NEMATOV	20-03-2001
12 VLADIMIR NAZAROV	08-06-2002
21 KHAMIDULLO ABDUNABIEV	20-08-2002
DEFENDER	
2 SAIDAZAMAT MIRSAIDOV	19-07-2001
3 DOSTONBEK TURSUNOV	03-01-2001
4 ABUBAKR RIZO TURDIALIEV	04-02-2001
5 MUHAMMADKODIR HAMRALIEV	06-07-2001
13 ELDORBEG BEGIMOV	29-01-2001
15 ODILBEK ABDUMAJIDOV	01-06-2001
16 TAIROV SHAKHZOD	27-09-2001
18 ALIBEK DAVRONOV	28-12-2002
MIDFIELDER	
6 SODIKOV JALOLIDDIN	17-01-2002
7 HOJIMAT ERKINOV	29-05-2001
8 IBROKHIM IBRAGIMOV	12-01-2001
9 ULUGBEK KHOSHIMOV	03-01-2001
10 JASURBEK JALOLIDDINOV	15-05-2002
14 ABBOSBEK FAYZULLAEV	03-10-2003
17 DIYOR KHOLMATOV	22-07-2002
23 ABDURAUF BURIEV	20-07-2002
FORWARD	
11 OTABEK JURAKUZIYEV	02-04-2002
19 KHUSAIN NORCHAEV	06-02-2002
20 RUSLANBEK JIYANOV	05-06-2001
22 ALISHER ODILOV	15-07-2001



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3



HEAD COACH

TIMUR KAPADZE

Capped 119 times by Uzbekistan from 2002 to 2015, the former midfielder won the Uzbekistan League title 12 times with four different clubs - Neftchi (one), Lokomotiv (two), Bunyodkor (three) and Pakhtakor (six). He appeared in the 2003 and 2004 AFC Champions League™ Semi-finals with Pakhtakor and in 2008 with Bunyodkor.

Kapadze featured for the national team in four editions of the AFC Asian Cup™, making the Semi-finals in 2011. He was appointed the interim Uzbekistan national team coach prior to Hector Cuper taking charge in 2018 before taking the reins of the U-23 side in 2021.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3; attacking full-backs with two balancing midfielders protecting central area
- Mix of purposeful possession play and direct back-to-front attacking
- Penetrating wing play, notably explosive, skilful No7 Erkinov on left
- Both full-backs pushing forward to create overloads in wide areas
- No10 Jaloliddinov the free electron; pace, 1v1 skills, passing, long-range shooting
- Well-organised transition play; high press or fast retreat into midfield block
- Dynamic, attack-minded team with physical and mental strength

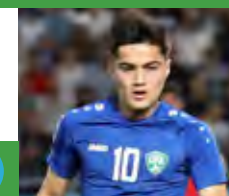
STATISTICS

6	12	5	70	29	2	7	29	110	71	10	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

JASURBEK JALOLODDINOV
NUMBER OF GOALS

3



TURKMENISTAN

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 GAYLYYEV BATYR	26-02-2000
16 AHALLYEV RUSTEM	16-11-2002
22 CHARYYEV RASUL	30-09-1999
DEFENDER	
2 YHLAS TOYJANOV	08-01-2001
3 ORAZ ORAZOV	27-01-2002
4 JUMAYEV VEPA	18-12-2000
6 GALKIN ROMAN	14-02-2000
12 AMBYAR MAHMUDOV	03-09-1999
15 BERDIYEV DOVRAN	27-12-2000
19 SAPARGULYEV ARZUVGULY	28-07-2001
21 ARBATOV BEGMYRAT	20-02-1999
MIDFIELDER	
5 RUSLAN TAJIYEV	08-07-2000
8 MIRZA BEKNAZAROV	15-05-2000
10 DINIYEV MEYLIS	11-07-2000
14 CHARYYEV TEYMUR	26-11-2000
18 BAYLYYEV ROVSHEN	25-01-2000
20 GURBANOV HOJANAZAR	19-04-2002
23 VELMYRAT BALLAKOV	04-04-1999
FORWARD	
7 RAHMAN MYRATBERDIYEV	31-10-2001
9 BEGENCHMYRAT MYRADOV	09-08-2001
11 SHAMAMMET HYDYROW	20-01-2001
13 ARSLAN SAPAROV	22-03-2003
17 MEREDOV DAYANCH	15-02-2003



FORMATION:
1-5-4-1



HEAD COACH

AHMET AGAMYRADOW

Agamyradov has earned his reputation as a commendable youth coach, having guided the Turkmenistan's age-group sides in the Qualifiers of the AFC U-16 Championship in 2014, the AFC U-19 Championship in 2016 as well as the AFC U-23 Championship in 2018.

But his crowning achievement came in the qualification campaign leading up to the 2022 edition after a victory over Palestine earned the Central Asians their first-ever appearance in the AFC U23 Asian Cup™.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-5-4-1 the default setting with switch to 1-4-4-2 v Uzbekistan
- Two central midfielders shielding back five in deep defensive structure
- Set out to draw opponents forward, focusing ball-winning near own box
- Counterattacks based on direct supply to striker, with cautious support
- Comfortable without the ball; very small shares of possession
- Centre-back No4 Jumayev the calm defensive leader with tactical awareness
- Well-organised transition team with strong work ethic, mental resilience

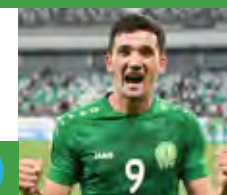
STATISTICS

4	4	5	27	13	1	4	15	45	45	14	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

BEGENCHMYRAT MYRADOV
NUMBER OF GOALS

2





ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 REZA KAKHSAZ	21-01-1999
12 PAYAM PARSA	21-07-2002
22 PARSA JAFARI	09-07-1999
DEFENDER	
2 MAHDI HASHEMNEZHAD	27-10-2001
3 MILAD KOR	10-10-2003
4 SAMAN FALLAH	12-05-2001
5 AMIN HAZBAVI	06-05-2003
13 MOHAMMADMAHDI AHMADI	10-01-2001
14 AMIR JAFARI SEIGHALANI	18-01-2002
16 MOHAMMAD GHORBANI	07-10-2001
18 ALIREZA KHODAEI	02-03-2001
MIDFIELDER	
6 ALIREZA BAVIEH	21-08-2002
7 MOHAMMAD KHODABANDEHLO	07-09-1999
8 MOHAMMADHOSSIEH ZAVVARI	11-01-2001
10 YASIN SALMANI	27-02-2002
15 MOHAMMADHOSSEIN ESLAMI	13-04-2001
17 YADEGAR ROSTAMI	02-01-2004
19 BELAL ARAZI	30-10-2001
21 ERFAN SHAHRIYARIKHALAJI	19-05-2002
23 ARYA YOUSEFI	22-04-2002
FORWARD	
9 AMIRALI SADEGHI	09-02-2001
11 AHMAD SHARIAT ZADEH	01-07-2002
20 ALI KALMARZY SABET	30-10-2001



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

MEHDI MAHDAVIA

Mahdavia is one of the most-capped Iranian footballers of all time, having represented Team Melli at the 1998 and 2006 editions of the FIFA World Cup as well as four AFC Asian Cup™ editions from 1996 to 2007.

The 2003 AFC Player of the Year also enjoyed an outstanding eight-year spell with German side Hamburg SV where he worked as a youth coach in the club's academy after retiring before taking charge of the IR Iran U-23 side in 2021.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 with rapid transitions to compact 1-4-4-2 defensive block
- Frequent use of long ball behind defence + attacking from second ball
- Aggressive pressure on the ball during transitions to mid-block defending
- Strong defending with goalkeeper covering behind high back four
- Centre-back No4 Fallah organising defensive play, initiating build-up from back
- Fast attackers with 1v1 skills; shadow striker No10 Yasin the free spirit
- Powerful, hardworking team with physical presence, aerial power

STATISTICS

3	3	4	34	12	0	8	15	42	38	11	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORERS



ALIREZA BAVIEH,
ERFAN SHAHRIYARIKHALAJI,
ARYA YOUSEFI

NUMBER
OF GOALS

1



SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER		
1	MAHMOUD IBRAHIM ABUNADA	05-02-2000
21	MARWAN SHERIF BADRELDIN	17-04-1999
22	SALAH ZAKARIA	24-04-1999
DEFENDER		
2	ALI MALOLAH	26-02-1999
3	DIYAB HAROON TAHA	15-05-2001
4	MOHAMED EMAD AIASH	27-02-2001
5	YOUSSEF AYMAN FARAHAT	21-03-1999
12	ABDULLA ESSA AL-SULAITI	11-08-2002
13	MOHAMMED KHALID	25-03-2000
15	JASSEM GABER ABDULSALLAM	20-02-2002
19	AHMED SUHAIL	08-02-1999
MIDFIELDER		
6	OSAMAH ABDULKARIM ALTAIRI	16-06-2002
8	MOUSTAFA TAREK MASHAL	28-03-2001
11	JASSIM MOHAMMED AL-MEHAIRI	30-08-2002
14	ANDRI SYAHPUTRA	29-06-1999
16	FAISAL MOHAMMAD	13-01-2001
17	KHALED WALID MANSOUR	25-12-1999
20	AHMED ALGANEHI	22-09-2000
23	JASSEM MOHAMMED ALSHARSHANI	02-01-2003
FORWARD		
7	ABDULRASHEED UMARU	12-08-1999
9	YUSUF ABDURISAG	06-08-1999
10	HASHIM ALI	17-08-2000
18	MEKKI TOMBARI	15-02-2001



FORMATION:
1-4-3-3



HEAD COACH

NICOLAS CORDOVA

The former Chilean international started his coaching career with the Chile U-15 side in 2015 before taking the reins at Chilean side Santiago Wanderers and Peruvian club Universitario. He was handed the task of guiding the Qatar U-23 side in 2020.

Most recently, Cordova replaced French FIFA World Cup winner Laurent Blanc as head coach of Qatari giants Al Rayyan SC who he led to the Round of 16 of the AFC Champions League 2022™ after successfully navigating past defending champions Al Hilal SFC in the Group Stage.



KEY FEATURES

- Variations on 1-4-3-3 with striker No10 Hashim creating space, leading attacks
- Game based on fluid movement in attack with both full-backs active on wings
- Goalkeeper No22 Salah influential in organising defence, launching build-up play
- Incisive runs from midfield with striker dropping deep to open pockets
- Set out to press high, but often retreated into 1-4-5-1 midfield block
- No6 Osamah the key midfielder; vision, passing, controlling tempo
- Well-organised unit with excellent technical skills in all departments

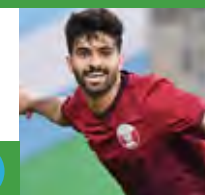
STATISTICS

3	3	9	22	11	0	4	11	28	44	6	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

OSAMAH ABDULKARIM ALTAIRI
NUMBER OF GOALS

2





SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 JOE GAUCI	04-07-2000
12 JACOB CHAPMAN	22-10-2000
18 NICHOLAS BILOKAPIC	08-09-2002
DEFENDER	
2 LEWIS MILLER	24-08-2000
3 JAY RICH-BAGHUELOU	22-10-1999
4 JORDAN COURTNEY-PERKINS	06-11-2002
5 JORDAN BOS	29-10-2002
13 KAI TREWIN	18-05-2001
15 HOSINE BILITY	10-05-2001
20 JOSHUA RAWLINS	23-04-2004
23 JACOB FARRELL	19-11-2002
MIDFIELDER	
6 TYRESE FRANCOIS	16-07-2000
8 PATRICK YAZBEK	05-04-2002
10 RAMY NAJJARINE	23-04-2000
14 JOSHUA NISBET	15-06-1999
16 LOUIS D'ARRIGO	23-09-2001
17 CAMERON PEUPION	23-09-2002
FORWARD	
7 LACHLAN BROOK	08-02-2001
9 ALOU KUOL	05-07-2001
11 KUSINI YENGI	15-01-1999
19 PATRICK WOOD	16-09-2002
21 BERNARDO OLIVEIRA	16-03-2004
22 TRISTAN HAMMOND	05-01-2003



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

TREVOR MORGAN

Morgan has been a part of Football Australia's youth development coaching setup over the past decade, having been the Director of Football at Westfield Sports High and the National Youth League Head Coach for the Western Sydney Wanderers.

He also led Australia to the Knockout Stage of the FIFA U17 World Cup in Brazil in 2019, before taking on the role of interim National Technical Director in 2020 prior to being entrusted with guiding the Olyroos in Uzbekistan.



KEY FEATURES

- Compact 1-4-2-3-1 with No6 Francois the stable organiser in front of back four
- Emphasis on confident build-up with high-tempo ball circulation
- Both full-backs active in attack; wide players inside to permit overlapping
- Fluid movement, positional interchanging among middle-to-front players
- Equipped for immediate high collective pressing after ball loss in advanced areas
- Strong, aggressive defending with goalkeeper covering behind high line
- Compact, well-organised unit with strong work ethic, team spirit

STATISTICS

6	5	6	44	19	2	10	19	72	59	10	3
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORERS



JAY NOAH RICH, ALOU KUOL,
RAMY NAJJARINE,
LOUIS D'ARRIGO

NUMBER
OF GOALS

1



IRAQ

SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER		
1	MUSTAFA ATHAB AL-SALLAMI	02-03-1999
12	HUSSEIN ALI JOOLI	08-10-2000
22	HASAN AHMED HUSSEIN	14-03-1999
DEFENDER		
2	ABBAS BADEEA ALFURAJJAT	09-01-2000
3	AHMED HASAN AL-REESHAWEE	24-09-2001
4	HUSSEIN AMMAR ALSAWAD	18-08-1999
6	CARDO KAMARAN AFRACIAB	21-09-2002
14	MERCHAS GHAZI SALIH	07-12-1999
15	MOHAMMED ALBAQER GHURAIBAWI	14-05-2000
19	HASAN RAED MATROOK	23-09-2000
23	AHMED NAEEM ALKHAFAJI	29-01-1999
MIDFIELDER		
8	MOAMEL ABDULRIDHA OGAILI	28-03-2000
10	HASAN ABDULKAREEM SAYYID	01-01-1999
11	MUNTADHER MOHAMMED	05-06-2001
13	ALI MAJID AL-RUBAYE	22-10-2000
16	MUNTADHER ABDULAMEER ALHASAN	06-10-2001
20	ALEXANDER MOAID GORIA	17-01-2003
21	AMMAR GHALEB FALIH	13-03-2001
FORWARD		
5	BAQER ATTWAN AL-MAGSOOSI	20-01-2002
7	AMIN RAAFAT AL-HAMAWI	17-12-2003
9	WAKAA RAMADHAN JUMAAH	17-04-1999
17	MAYTHAM WAAD	28-04-2002
18	HIRAN AZAD RAFIQ	06-04-2000



FORMATION:
1-4-2-2



HEAD COACH

MIROSLAV SOUKUP

Hailing from the Czech Republic, Soukup is a vastly experienced tactician, having coached at numerous clubs and national teams. Soukup led the Czech Republic U-20 team to the Final of the 2007 FIFA U-20 World Cup, which is regarded as one of his biggest achievements.

Since then, he has helmed various teams in Asia and was most recently head coach of the Bahrain national team, which he led to the Knockout Stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ for the first time since 2004.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 or 1-4-4-2 with fast transitions to mid or low defensive block
- Emphasis on building through midfield; but goal-kicks taken long
- Attacks built from midfield to flanks; left-footed right winger with 1v1 skills
- Full-backs high with wingers cutting inside; mobile striker dropping deep
- Occasional use of fast counterattacking from deep defensive positions
- Technically equipped to retain possession even when aggressively pressed
- Good 1v1 defensive abilities; athletic team with pace, commitment, work ethic

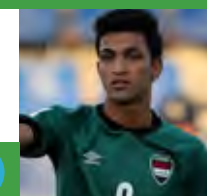
STATISTICS

4	7	5	49	23	1	6	22	42	49	7	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

WAKAA RAMADHAN JUMAAH
NUMBER OF GOALS

2





SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 ABDALLAH ALFAKHORI	22-01-2000
12 AHMAD MOHANNAD JUAIDI	09-04-2001
22 QAIS JEHAD ABASSI	24-05-2001
DEFENDER	
2 HUSAM ALI ABUDAHAB	13-05-2000
3 YAZAN ABDELAAL	07-01-1999
4 DANIAL AHMED AFANEH	24-03-2001
5 HADI OMAR ALHOURANI	14-04-2000
13 SHOQI GHASSAN AL-QU'ZA	14-01-1999
14 BASSAM ATA DALDOOM	13-10-1999
18 MOHANNAD ABU TAHA	02-02-2003
23 YOUSEF ABUALJAZAR	25-10-1999
MIDFIELDER	
6 NIZAR AL-RASHDAN	23-03-1999
7 OMAR HANI ALZEBDIEH	27-06-1999
8 IBRAHIM SA'DEH	27-04-2000
15 ABDEL RAHMAN ABUALKAS	07-01-1999
16 FADEL NEDAL HAIKAL	14-02-2000
17 AMIN FARID AL SHANAINEH	07-04-2003
19 AHMAD ABU SHA'IREH	29-02-2000
FORWARD	
9 KHALED RADI SAYAHEEN	05-06-2000
10 MOHAMMAD ABURIZIQ	01-02-1999
11 HAMZA FOUAD ALSAIFI	03-02-1999
20 BASHAR ALDIABAT	29-04-2001
21 ABDALLAH ALSHUAYBAT	19-02-2000



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

AHMAD HAYEL

Hayel was brought into the Jordan Football Association (JFA)'s coaching ranks in 2019 after enjoying a successful spell as a player, representing the West Asians on the Continent's ultimate stage – the AFC Asian Cup™ – in Australia in 2015.

He enjoyed an equally successful club career, having represented Syria's Al Jaish in the 2011 AFC Cup™ as well as Jordan's Al Faisaly in the 2012 and 2018 editions of the AFC Cup™ before transitioning into coaching as the Jordan U-23 side head coach in 2020.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 with emphasis on short-passing combination building through thirds
- When pressed, direct passing to striker No10 Aburiziq; good hold-up play
- Aerial power at both ends; threatening set plays; mix of long and short corners
- Effective wing play with full-backs supporting; good supply of high crosses
- Strong defending with instant pressure on the ball after loss of possession
- Compact midfield defensive block quick to close off central area
- Excellent understanding between goalkeeper and two strong centre-backs

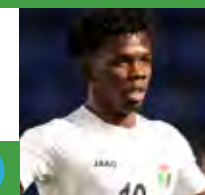
STATISTICS

3	2	2	28	12	0	1	17	27	34	6	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

MOHAMAD ABURIZIQ
NUMBER OF GOALS

2





SQUAD		DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER		
1	KHALED ALFADHLI	18-03-1999
22	ABDULRAHMAN ALFADHLY	23-03-2001
23	MOHAMMAD ALHUSAINAN	25-06-2000
DEFENDER		
2	ABDULLAH ALJAZZAF	20-06-2000
4	YOUSEF ALHAQAN	05-03-2002
6	ABDULAZIZ MAHRAN	19-08-2001
12	SALEH ALMEHTAB	18-11-2003
13	ALI MUHAISEN	13-01-1999
15	SALEH ALBANNAY	16-03-2003
17	MOHAMMAD ALRASHED	02-04-2003
21	ABDULAZIZ MARZOAQ	08-10-2000
MIDFIELDER		
5	OTHMAN ALSHEMERI	04-04-2000
8	NASER JAZAA	04-12-1999
14	KHALED ALMERSHED	06-04-1999
16	MAHDI DASHTI	26-10-2001
18	BADER ALMUTAIRI	26-09-2003
20	FAHAD ALFADHLI	04-02-2001
FORWARD		
3	OMAR ALRASHIDI	09-10-2002
7	YOUSEF ALRASHEEDI	18-03-2000
9	FAWWAZ ALEMBAILESH	08-01-1999
10	AQEEL ALHAZEEM	08-12-1999
11	MOHAMMAD ALSHAMMARI	19-09-1999
19	FAHAD ALAZMI	01-01-2003



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

ABDULAZIZ HAMADA

Hamada is one of the most experienced tacticians in Kuwait, having guided Qadsia SC as assistant coach during their 2006 and 2008 AFC Champions League™ campaigns. Hamada was subsequently appointed as assistant coach of the national team and was part of the backroom staff of the Kuwait side that qualified for the AFC Asian Cup™ 2011 in Qatar.



He was appointed head coach of the Kuwait U-22 side in 2013 before leading domestic giants Kuwait SC to the AFC Cup™ Quarter-finals in 2014. Hamada was eventually entrusted to guide the U-23 side again after the West Asians registered impressive victories against Saudi Arabia and Bangladesh to clinch their spot at Uzbekistan 2022.

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 with one screening midfielder (No16 Dashti) ready to support attacks
- Keeper trying to build via centre-backs but often pressured into playing long
- Attacks focused on exploiting 1v1 skills of left-winger No7 Alrasheedi
- No8 Jazaar the attacking central midfielder linking defence with attack
- Fast transitions to midfield defensive block with all players behind the ball
- No14 Almershed shielding back four, occasionally dropping in beside centre-backs
- Well-organised defensive play; dangerous counterattacks

STATISTICS

3	1	6	10	2	1	1	4	23	29	4	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

YOUSEF ALRASHEEDI
NUMBER OF GOALS

1





KOREA REPUBLIC

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 GOH DONGMIN	12-01-1999
21 MIN SEONGJUN	22-07-1999
23 PARK JIMIN	25-05-2000
DEFENDER	
2 CHOI JUN	17-04-1999
3 LEE KYUHYUK	04-05-1999
4 LEE SANGMIN	30-08-1999
5 KIM JUSUNG	12-12-2000
12 CHO HYUN TAEK	02-08-2001
15 PARK JAEHWAN	11-10-2000
20 KIM HYUNWOO	07-03-1999
22 KIM TAEHWAN	25-03-2000
MIDFIELDER	
6 GO JAEHYEON	05-03-1999
8 HONG HYUNSEOK	16-06-1999
13 LEE KANGIN	19-02-2001
14 EOM JISUNG	09-05-2002
16 KWON HYEOKKYU	13-03-2001
17 LEE JINYONG	01-05-2001
18 JEONG SANGBIN	01-04-2002
19 GOH YOUNGJUN	09-07-2001
FORWARD	
7 CHO YOUNGWOOK	05-02-1999
9 OH SEHUN	15-01-1999
10 PARK JEONGIN	07-10-2000
11 YANG HYUNJUN	25-05-2002



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

HWANG SUN-HONG

Hwang is a former national team player who played as a forward. During his career, he featured for numerous clubs in Germany, Japan and Korea Republic before joining the coaching ranks at Jeonnam Dragons and Busan IPark FC.

He subsequently went on to clinch the K League title with his former club Pohang Steelers in 2013 and was named the K League Manager of the Year. He also guided them to two FA Cup trophies in 2012 and 2013 before securing the domestic title again in 2016 with FC Seoul.



KEY FEATURES

- Variations on 1-4-3-3 with strong emphasis on wing play and crosses or cut-backs
- Assured combination play with neat short-passing triangles in attack
- Extensive positional interchanging among middle-to-front players
- Wingers often opting for infield runs, opening spaces for adventurous full-backs
- Fast transition play with high-intensity pressure after losses of possession
- Attacking central midfielder No13 Lee Kang-In the skilful playmaker and leader
- Well-organised unit with tactical flexibility, work ethic, athleticism

STATISTICS

4	6	5	50	19	0	9	42	45	38	3	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

CHO YOUNGWOOK
NUMBER OF GOALS

3





SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 NGUYEN VAN TOAN	26-11-1999
12 DANG TUAN HUNG	06-11-2000
21 QUAN VAN CHUAN	07-01-2001
DEFENDER	
3 LUONG DUY CUONG	07-11-2001
4 BUI HOANG VIET ANH	01-01-1999
5 NGUYEN THANH BINH	02-11-2000
6 VU TIEN LONG	04-04-2002
7 LE VAN DO	07-08-2001
19 NGUYEN THANH NHAN	25-10-2000
20 DOAN ANH VIET	15-08-1999
MIDFIELDER	
2 PHAN TUAN TAI	07-01-2001
8 KHUAT VAN KHANG	11-05-2003
13 HUYNH CONG DEN	19-08-2001
14 NGUYEN VAN TRUONG	10-09-2003
15 DUNG QUANG NHO	01-01-2000
16 VO DINH LAM	10-01-2000
17 NGUYEN HAI LONG	27-08-2000
22 LY CONG HOANG ANH	01-09-1999
23 TRAN VAN CONG	15-02-1999
FORWARD	
9 NGUYEN VAN TUNG	02-06-2001
10 TRAN DANH TRUNG	03-10-2000
11 LE MINH BINH	25-12-1999
18 NHAM MANH DUNG	12-04-2000



FORMATION:
1-4-4-2



HEAD COACH

GONG OH-KYUN

Gong was previously the assistant head coach for the Korea Republic U-17, U-20 and U-23 national teams from 2016 to 2020 before taking charge of the Vietnam U-23 side in May 2022.

He also worked as assistant to Shin Tae-yong in the Indonesia senior squad. During his playing days, he featured as a striker for Korea Republic sides Daejeon Citizen FC, Gyeongnam FC and Australian club Sunshine Coast FC.



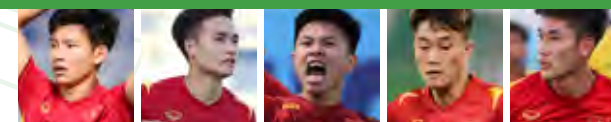
KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 or 1-4-4-2 with one or two screening midfielders
- Frequent use of fast, vertical attacking, mostly along the flanks
- Good relationship between keeper and centre-backs in launching build-up
- Wide players cutting inside to open space for full-backs, notably No2 Tuan Tai on left
- Spells of high pressing but usually deeper defensive block + fast counters
- Good second-ball support when playing long to central striker
- Well-organised set plays in both areas; mix of zonal, individual marking in defence

STATISTICS

4	5	5	36	12	1	2	12	39	41	3	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORERS



PHAN TUAN TAI, BUI HOANG VIET ANH, VU TIEN LONG, NGUYEN VAN TUNG, NHAM MANH DUNG

NUMBER OF GOALS

1



SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 NOPPHON LAKHONPHON	19-07-2000
20 SUPANUT SUADSONG	25-02-1999
23 KIADTIPHON UDOM	26-06-2000
DEFENDER	
2 NAKIN WISETHAT	09-07-1999
3 R.CHATMONGKOL	09-05-2002
4 JONATHAN KHEMDEE	09-05-2002
5 KRITSADA KAMAN	18-03-1999
12 LOOK SAA MICKELSON	24-07-1999
13 YANNICK NUSSBAUM	30-08-2003
15 SONGCHAI THONGCHAM	09-06-2001
16 WANCHAT CHOOSONG	01-02-2000
MIDFIELDER	
6 PURACHET TODSANIT	09-05-2001
7 EKANIT PANYA	21-10-1999
10 THANAWAT SUENGCHITTHAWON	08-01-2000
11 CHANNARONG PROMSRIKAEW	17-04-2001
18 SITTICHOK PASO	28-01-1999
19 CHAYAPIPAT SUPUNPASUCH	25-02-2001
21 JAKKIT PALAPON	01-07-1999
22 BENJAMIN DAVIS	24-11-2000
FORWARD	
8 KORAWICH TASA	07-04-2000
9 PATRIK GUSTAVSSON	19-04-2001
14 ACHITPOL KEEREEROM	01-01-2001
17 SUPHANAT MUEANTA	02-08-2002



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

WORRAWOOT SRIMAKA

Worrawoot enjoyed a distinguished playing career, winning the Thai League on seven occasions with three different clubs, as well as back-to-back AFC Champions League™ titles in 1994 and 1995.

He spent most of his playing days in Thailand, Vietnam and Malaysia before making the transition to a coaching role. As a manager, he led the Thai U-23 team to a gold medal at the 2017 Southeast Asian games. Worrawoot has also taken the helm of the U-21 Thai national team on separate occasions.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 with single screening midfielder; switch to 1-4-2-3-1 v Vietnam
- Game based on assured, sometimes one-touch, combination play
- Fluent passing and positional interchanges between the four front players
- Technically equipped to retain possession when under pressure
- Quick transitions: pressure on ball while assembling compact midfield block
- Centre-back No5 Kraitsada a key contributor in defence and build-up
- Skilful, agile team with attacking vocation, self-belief, individual talent

STATISTICS

3	5	3	25	13	0	5	8	29	48	0	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

SUPHANAT MUEANTA
NUMBER OF GOALS

3





MALAYSIA

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 AZRI GHANI	30-04-1999
22 MUHAMMAD RAHADIAZLI RAHALIM	29-05-2001
23 MUHAMMAD FIRDAUS IRMAN	23-07-2001
DEFENDER	
2 QUENTIN CHENG	20-11-1999
3 MUHAMMAD FAIZ RUNNIZAR	15-01-2003
4 MUHAMMAD AZRIN AFIQ	01-01-2002
5 HARITH HAIQAL ADAM	22-06-2002
14 AHMAD ZIKRI KHALILI	25-06-2002
15 MUHAMMAD UBAIDULLAH SHAMSUL	30-11-2003
17 MUHAMMAD SAFWAN MAZLAN	24-01-2002
19 MUHAMAD UMAR HAKEEM	26-08-2002
MIDFIELDER	
6 MUHAMMAD AZAM AZMI	12-02-2001
7 MUHAMMAD MUKHAIRI AJMAL	07-11-2001
8 NIK AKIF SYAHIRAN	11-05-1999
12 MUHAMMAD HAIRIEY HAKIM	14-01-2000
16 MUHAMMAD SYAHIR BASHAH	16-09-2001
FORWARD	
9 MUHAMMAD HADI FAYYADH	22-01-2000
10 LUQMAN HAKIM SHAMSUDIN	05-03-2002
11 MUHAMMAD SYAFIK ISMAIL	01-03-2000
13 MUHAMMAD NUR AZFAR	05-02-2000
18 AHMAD DANIAL ASRI	01-04-2000
20 AIMAN AFIF	18-02-2001
21 MUHAMMAD SHAFI AZSWAD	09-03-2001



FORMATION:
1-5-2-3



HEAD COACH

BRAD MALONEY

After several coaching stints with the Malaysian age-group national teams, Maloney was appointed the U-23 head coach. He was previously the assistant coach in the Malaysian senior national team and the U-23 squad before taking charge of the U-19 team where he led them to a second-place finish at the AFF U-19 Youth Championship.

As a player, Maloney started his career in his native Australia where he featured for several clubs including Perth Glory, Newcastle Breakers and Sydney Olympic.



KEY FEATURES

- Variations on 1-5-3-2 with switch to four at back v Korea Republic
- Extensive use of long passes; attacks often launched by right-back No2 Quentin
- Attacking threat based on creative 1v1 skills of right-winger No7 Mukhairi
- Compact midfield or deep defensive block with tight cover of central area
- Back line marshalled by No5 Harith; blocks, tackles, aerial power
- Counterattacks based on rapid delivery to central striker No9 Fayyadh
- Pace of defensive transitions sometimes allowed space between lines

STATISTICS

3	1	9	20	5	0	5	7	34	22	3	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

MUHAMMAD MUKHAIRI AJMAL
NUMBER OF GOALS

1





SAUDI ARABIA

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 NAWAF DHAHI ALAQIDI	10-05-2000
21 ABDULRAHMAN ALSANBI	03-02-2001
22 ABDULRAHMAN ANWAR ALSHAMMARI	09-07-2000
DEFENDER	
2 SAAD YASLAM BALOBAID	27-01-2000
3 WALEED ALAHMAD	03-05-1999
4 KHALIFAH ALDAWSARI	02-01-1999
5 HASSAN TAMBAKTI	09-02-1999
12 MOTEB ALHARBI	20-02-2000
13 HAMAD AL YAMI	17-05-1999
18 MESHAL SIBYANI	11-04-2001
23 SAUD ABDULHAMID	18-07-1999
MIDFIELDER	
6 IBRAHIM MAHNASHI	18-11-1999
7 AIMAAN YAHYA	14-05-2001
8 HAMED ALGHAMDI	02-04-1999
10 TURKI ALAMMAR	24-09-1999
14 AWAD ALNASHRI	15-03-2002
15 HUSSAIN ALEISA	29-12-2000
16 ZIYAD ALJOHANI	11-11-2001
17 HAITHAM ASIRI	25-03-2001
FORWARD	
9 FERAS ALBRIKAN	14-05-2000
11 AHMED MAZEN ALGHAMDI	20-09-2001
19 ABDULLAH HADI RADIF	20-01-2003
20 MOHAMMED MARRAN	15-02-2001



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

SAAD AL SHEHRI

Al Shehri has earned several accolades as head coach for the youth teams of Al-Qadsiah and Al-Nassr, winning the U-17 and U-19 Premier League championships. He also led the young Green Falcons to the 2016 AFC U-19 Championship Final, where they lost to Japan on penalties.

His U-23 side qualified for the Olympics for the first time since 1996 after finishing second at the AFC U23 Championship in 2020, losing to Korea Republic in the Final. They made amends by winning the latest edition, brushing aside hosts Uzbekistan 2-0 in the Final.



KEY FEATURES

- Mostly a classic 1-4-4-2 with occasional switches to 1-4-2-3-1
- High-intensity game with aggressive pressing in opponent's half by compact unit
- Speed and 1v1 skill in attacking play; No7 Yahya a constant threat
- Wingers inside to make room for full-backs, cooperate in central combinations
- Well-organised defending; compact block; strong back four with aerial power
- Screening midfielder No6 Mahnashi a key component in defence and attack
- Strong unit with all-round technique, athleticism, work ethic, team spirit

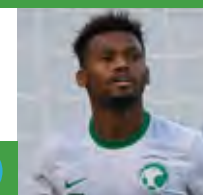
STATISTICS

6	13	0	63	30	3	7	30	55	69	10	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

AIMAAN YAHYA
NUMBER OF GOALS

3





SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 LEO KOKUBO	23-01-2001
12 ZION SUZUKI	21-08-2002
23 MASATO SASAKI	01-05-2002
DEFENDER	
2 RIKU HANDA	01-01-2002
3 SEIYA BABA	24-10-2001
4 KAITO SUZUKI	25-08-2002
5 SEIJI KIMURA	24-08-2001
15 TAIGA HATA	20-01-2002
16 TAKASHI UCHINO	07-03-2001
17 HIJIRI KATO	16-09-2001
22 ANRIE CHASE	24-03-2004
MIDFIELDER	
6 DAIKI MATSUOKA	01-06-2001
7 RIHITO YAMAMOTO	12-12-2001
8 JOEL CHIMA FUJITA	16-02-2002
10 KOKI SAITO	10-08-2001
13 KEIN SATO	11-07-2001
14 FUKI YAMADA	10-07-2001
19 KURYU MATSUKI	30-04-2003
20 SHUNSUKE MITO	28-09-2002
FORWARD	
9 SHOTA FUJIO	02-05-2001
11 MAO HOSOYA	07-09-2001
18 YUITO SUZUKI	25-10-2001
21 TAIKA NAKASHIMA	08-06-2002



FORMATION:
1-4-2-3-1



HEAD COACH

GO OIWA

Oiwa led Kashima Antlers to the AFC Champions League title in 2018, defeating Persepolis from IR Iran in the two-legged Final, which remains his biggest achievement as head coach to date.

As a player, he won the J1 League four times with Kashima Antlers and the Emperor's Cup twice with Nagoya Grampus before transitioning to take on an assistant coach role with the former in 2011.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-2-1 or 1-4-3-3 with high levels of technique in all departments
- Fluid construction through thirds with short-passing combination play
- Striker No11 Hosoya dropping deep, distributing play to flanks
- Penetrating wing play; frequent use of vertical passes, delivery of high crosses
- Quick transitions in both directions; aggressive pressing in opponents' half
- Composed under pressure; equipped to play out from tight situations
- Agile, athletic squad committed to clear playing philosophy

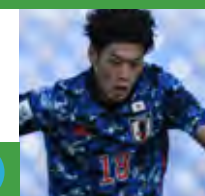
STATISTICS

6	11	3	47	23	1	7	35	97	47	8	2
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORER

YUITO SUZUKI
NUMBER OF GOALS

3





UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 EISA AHMED HOUTI	16-12-2000
17 SUHAIL ABDULLA ALMUTAWA	26-08-1999
22 RAKAAN WALEED ALMENHALI	27-03-2001
DEFENDER	
2 ABDULLA IDREES ALHAMMADI	16-08-1999
3 YOUSIF ALI ALMHEIRI	30-11-1999
5 SAEED SULAIMAN MUBARAK	18-04-1999
6 EID KHAMIS ALNUAIMI	20-05-1999
12 AHMAD ABDULLA SUROOR	16-01-1999
13 FARIS KHALIL ALMARZOOQI	08-10-2000
18 ZAYED SULTAN ALZAABI	11-04-2001
20 MOHAMED ABDELRAHMAN	16-01-2001
MIDFIELDER	
4 AHMED MAHMOUD ALHAMMADI	06-01-2001
8 ABDELAZIZ ALBLOOSHI	03-03-2002
16 HUSSAIN MAHDI SADEQ	24-07-2000
21 ABDALLAH SULTAN ALBLOOSHI	21-03-1999
23 MAJID RASHID ALMEHRZI	16-05-2000
FORWARD	
7 RASHED SALEM MUBARAK	08-03-1999
9 ABDALLA ABDELRAHMAN ALNAQBI	25-01-2000
10 SAEED ALKAABI	25-11-1999
11 YASER HASSAN ALBLOOSHI	25-04-2001
14 FAHAD BADER BAROUT	09-03-2001
15 MANSOOR SAEED ALMENHALI	29-09-2003
19 EISA KHALFAN AL HARASI	12-03-2003



FORMATION:
1-4-1-4-1

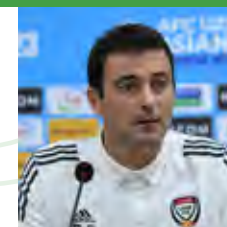


HEAD COACH

DENIS SILVA

Silva began his coaching career in FC Barcelona as a youth coach. During his time at the La Liga side, the Spaniard showed great promise and was appointed the UAE U-23 head coach in April 2021.

With an emphasis of following the FC Barcelona blueprint, UAE's youth team won three of their four qualifier matches to advance to the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022.



KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-1-4-1 with single or twin screening midfielders
- Short-passing build-up aiming to penetrate through wide areas, deliver crosses
- Good combination play, dribbling skills among middle-to-front players
- Controlling midfielder No4 Mahmoud the key element in construction play
- Rapid transitions to compact defensive block in midfield with pressure on ball
- Emphasis on retaining possession after regains in middle third
- Well-organised unit with fluent movement, clear playing philosophy

STATISTICS

3	3	4	23	8	2	2	10	26	44	4	1
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS

TOP SCORERS



ABDELAZIZ ALBLOOSHI,
YASER HASSAN ALBLOOSHI,
MANSOOR SAEED ALMENHALI

NUMBER
OF GOALS

1



SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 AZIZOV DALER	19-05-2000
16 SHOHRUKH QIRGHIZBOEV	01-05-2002
23 HABIBULLOEV AHLIDDIN	11-08-2000
DEFENDER	
2 SAFAROV OYATULLO	19-12-2000
3 NASKOV MUHAMMADJON	27-05-1999
5 SANGOV SHOHRUKH	31-10-2002
6 NA'IMDZHON IBROGIMZODA	11-07-1999
12 ALINAZAROV FIRDAVS	06-11-2001
15 ALISHER BAROTOV	10-09-1999
19 NURMATOV KHUSEYN	18-09-2000
MIDFIELDER	
4 EMOMALI AHMADKHON	04-05-2002
7 KAROMATULLO SAIDOV	12-10-1999
8 ZABIROV ABDULMUMIN	04-08-2001
9 SHARAFJON SOLEHOV	14-12-1999
10 ISLOM ZAIROV	12-01-2002
13 KAMOLOV AMADONI	16-01-2003
14 SHARIFBEK RAHMATOV	01-09-2002
18 DALER YODGOROV	01-05-2000
20 SHARIPOV UMARJON	05-06-2000
21 SORBON AVGONOV	29-11-2000
FORWARD	
17 MUHAMMADALI AZIZBOEV	04-01-2003
22 ISMOILOV SUNATULLO	28-04-2002



FORMATION:
1-4-5-1



HEAD COACH

ASLIDIN KHABIBULOEV

Khabibuloev is a former national team goalkeeper who made 24 appearances for Tajikistan from 1999 to 2006 and was part of the national side that secured the AFC Challenge Cup in 2006.

He was named the Tajikistan Player of the Year in 2003, the same year he won the Tajikistan Cup with FC Vakhsh. He was also part of the FC Vakhsh side that finished runners-up in the AFC President's Cup in 2006.



KEY FEATURES

- Mostly low defensive blocks in compact 1-4-5-1 formation
- Occasionally tried to press higher in more open, stretched structure
- Attacking play based on playing to flanks, seeking 1v1 penetration
- Wide midfielders No21 Avgonov, No20 Sharipov the main threats in attack
- Determined defending in numbers with aggressive pressure on the ball
- Occasional fast counterattacks from deep positions with limited success
- Hard-working unit playing with commitment against strong opponents

STATISTICS

3	0	10	9	1	0	3	7	32	27	6	0
MATCHES PLAYED	GOALS SCORED	GOALS AGAINST	SHOTS	ATTEMPTS ON TARGET	PENALTIES	OFFSIDES	CORNERS	FOULS COMMITTED	FOULS AGAINST	YELLOW CARDS	RED CARDS



TOURNAMENT RESULTS

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
UZBEKISTAN	3	2	1	0	8	1	7	7
TURKMENISTAN	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
QATAR	3	0	2	1	3	9	-6	2

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
01 Jun,22	ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN	1-1 (0-0)	QATAR
01 Jun,22	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (0-0)	TURKMENISTAN
04 Jun,22	TURKMENISTAN	2-1 (1-1)	ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
04 Jun,22	QATAR	0-6 (0-3)	UZBEKISTAN
07 Jun,22	UZBEKISTAN	1-1 (1-0)	ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN
07 Jun,22	QATAR	2-2 (0-0)	TURKMENISTAN

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
AUSTRALIA	3	2	1	0	4	1	3	7
IRAQ	3	1	2	0	5	3	2	5
JORDAN	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
KUWAIT	3	0	0	3	1	6	-5	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
01 Jun,22	AUSTRALIA	2-0 (1-0)	KUWAIT
01 Jun,22	JORDAN	1-1 (0-0)	IRAQ
04 Jun,22	IRAQ	1-1 (0-1)	AUSTRALIA
04 Jun,22	KUWAIT	0-1 (0-0)	JORDAN
07 Jun,22	AUSTRALIA	1-0 (0-0)	JORDAN
07 Jun,22	IRAQ	3-1 (1-1)	KUWAIT

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
KOREA REPUBLIC	3	2	1	0	6	2	4	7
VIETNAM	3	1	2	0	5	3	2	5
THAILAND	3	1	1	1	5	3	2	4
MALAYSIA	3	0	0	3	1	9	-8	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
02 Jun,22	KOREA REPUBLIC	4-1 (1-0)	MALAYSIA
02 Jun,22	THAILAND	2-2 (1-1)	VIETNAM
05 Jun,22	VIETNAM	1-1 (0-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC
05 Jun,22	MALAYSIA	0-3 (0-1)	THAILAND
08 Jun,22	KOREA REPUBLIC	1-0 (1-0)	THAILAND
08 Jun,22	VIETNAM	2-0 (2-0)	MALAYSIA

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
SAUDI ARABIA	3	2	1	0	7	0	7	7
JAPAN	3	2	1	0	5	1	4	7
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	3	1	0	2	3	4	-1	3
TAJIKISTAN	3	0	0	3	0	10	-10	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
03 Jun,22	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	1-2 (0-0)	JAPAN
03 Jun,22	SAUDI ARABIA	5-0 (1-0)	TAJIKISTAN
06 Jun,22	JAPAN	0-0 (0-0)	SAUDI ARABIA
06 Jun,22	TAJIKISTAN	0-2 (0-1)	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
09 Jun,22	SAUDI ARABIA	2-0 (0-0)	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
09 Jun,22	JAPAN	3-0 (1-0)	TAJIKISTAN

TOURNAMENT RESULTS

QUARTER-FINALS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JAPAN	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
SAUDI ARABIA	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
AUSTRALIA	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
UZBEKISTAN	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
IRAQ	1	0	1	0	2	2	0	1
TURKMENISTAN	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	0
VIETNAM	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
KOREA REPUBLIC	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
11 Jun,22	AUSTRALIA	1-0 (0-0)	TURKMENISTAN
11 Jun,22	UZBEKISTAN	2-2 a.e.t. (2-2,1-1) 3-2 PSO	IRAQ
12 Jun,22	KOREA REPUBLIC	0-3 (0-1)	JAPAN
12 Jun,22	SAUDI ARABIA	2-0 (1-0)	VIETNAM

SEMI-FINALS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
SAUDI ARABIA	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
UZBEKISTAN	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
AUSTRALIA	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0
JAPAN	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
15 Jun,22	AUSTRALIA	0-2 (0-1)	SAUDI ARABIA
15 Jun,22	UZBEKISTAN	2-0 (0-0)	JAPAN

3RD/4TH PLACING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JAPAN	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
AUSTRALIA	1	0	0	1	0	3	-3	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
18 Jun,22	JAPAN	3-0 (2-0)	AUSTRALIA

FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
SAUDI ARABIA	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	3
UZBEKISTAN	1	0	0	1	0	2	-2	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
19 Jun,22	UZBEKISTAN	0-2 (0-0)	SAUDI ARABIA





AFC U23 ASIAN CUP™ UZBEKISTAN 20

REFEREES

1. SUMMARY

A total of 63 Match Officials from the AFC Elite Panel were appointed for the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022, including one Standby Referee and two Standby Assistant Referees. Nine Referee Instructors and Assessors were appointed alongside three Fitness Instructors providing Match Officials with the highest level of training and preparation.

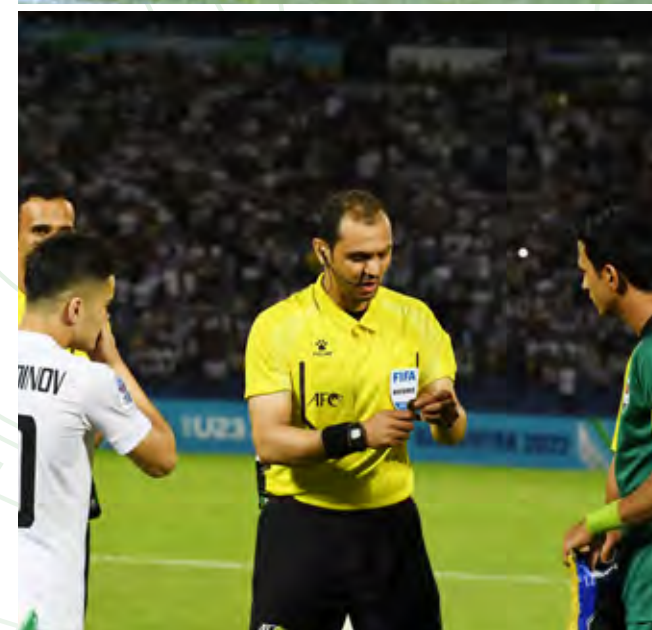
A focus was placed on promising Referees for the 2022 competition, providing recent additions to the AFC's Elite Panel the opportunity to gain experience at one of AFC's top age-group competitions.

Futhermore, for the first time ever in an AFC competition, two graduate Referees from the AFC Referee Academy were among the delegation underlining the strength of the AFC's refereeing development programmes.

1.1 AFC Match Officials

REFEREES	MA
Alexander George King	AUS
Shaun Robert Evans	AUS
Jonathan Adam Barreiro	AUS
Fu Ming	CHN
Ma Ning	CHN
Ali Sabah Adday Al-Qaysi	IRQ
Mohanad Qasim Eesee Sarray	IRQ
Araki Yusuke	JPN
Iida Jumpei	JPN

REFEREES	MA
Yamamoto Yudai	JPN
Kim Heegon	KOR
Kim Woosung	KOR
Khalid Saleh H Alturais	KSA
Majed Mohammed H Alshamrani	KSA
Mohammed Khled S Al Hoish	KSA
Ahmad Kh Y Y A Alali	KUW
Ali M H M T Shaban	KUW
Ammar E S A M Ashkanani	KUW
Ahmed Abu Bakar Said Al Kaf	OMA
Abdulla Ali A A Al-Marri	QAT
Salman Ahmad Falahi	QAT
Saoud Ali H J Al-Adba	QAT
Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari	SGP
Hettikankanamge Crishantha Dilan Perera	SRI
Hanna Hattab	SYR
Pechsri Mongkolchai	THA
Sivakorn Pu-Udom	THA
Adel Ali Ahmed Khamis Alnaqbi	UAE
Omar Mohamed Ahmed Hassan Alali	UAE
Yahya Ali Mohammad Hassan Almulla	UAE
Asimov Aziz	UZB
Riskullaev Akhrol	UZB
Rustam Lutfullin	UZB
Tantashev Ilgiz	UZB



ASSISTANT REFEREES	MA
George Lakrindis	AUS
Owen Goldrick	AUS
Shi Xiang	CHN
Cao Yi	CHN
Hayder Abdulhasan Ali Ubaydee	IRQ
Watheq Mdallal Obaid Al-Swaiedi	IRQ
Nishihashi Isao	JPN
Takagi Takumi	JPN
Jang Jongpil	KOR
Song Bongkeun	KOR
Alshammari Khalaf Zaid M	KSA
Yasir Abdullah S Al Sultan	KSA
Abbas H A M A Gholoum	KUW
Abdulahdi M O A B Alanezi	KUW
Al-Amri Abu Bakar Salim Mahad	OMA
Rashid Hamed Ali Al Ghaithi	OMA
Yousuf Aref M A Al-Shamari	QAT
Zahy Snaid S A Alshammari	QAT
Deniye Gedara Palitha Parakkrama Hemathunga	SRI
Ali Ahmad	SYR
Rawut Nakarit	THA
Tanate Chuchuen	THA
Ali Rashid Mohamed Aljorn Alnuaimi	UAE
Sabet Obaid Suroor Sabet Al-Ali	UAE
Timur Gaynullin	UZB
Andrey Tsapenko	UZB

STANDBY REFEREE	MA
Abdullah M M H M H Jamali	KUW

STANDBY ASSISTANT REFEREES	MA
Ruslan Serazitdinov	UZB
Sergei Grishchenko	KGZ

REFEREE INSTRUCTORS & ASSESSORS	MA
Craig Zetter	AUS
Ismail Adnan Ismail Alhafi	JOR
Kamikawa Toru	JPN
Altraifi Ali Ahmed I	KSA
Saad K M Alfadhli	KUW
Widiya Habibah Binti Shamsuri (Ms.)	MAS
Subkhiddin Bin Mohd Salleh	MAS
Abdulrahman Mohammed A M Hussain	QAT
Vladislav Tseytlin	UZB



REFEREE FITNESS INSTRUCTORS	MA
Ahmad Khalidi Bin Supian	MAS
Ganesan S/O Maniam	SGP
Rustam Abdulloev	TJK

1.2 Support Team

- Local Organisers' team – the Uzbekistan Football Association (UFA) Referees Department supported the coordination of all logistical requirements and refereeing activities throughout the competition.
- Players' team – local youth teams participated in the Referees' practical training to simulate incidents for match preparation as well as to facilitate VAR licensing requirements for selected Match Officials.
- Masseurs – four masseurs were on hand for the duration of the competition to assist Match Officials with their recovery and injury prevention strategies.



- Medical team – medical staff and an ambulance were made available during practical training to assist in case of an emergency or to supply first aid treatment when required.

2. PRE-COMPETITION

2.1 Match Officials' Selection Process

A group of promising VAR-licensed Match Officials were selected for the competition alongside experienced Referees to give them the exposure and preparation for future competitions at AFC and International levels. The Referees were selected based on the following criteria:

- Past consistent high-level performances in AFC Competitions
- Performance during the VAR course conducted for potential AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022 Match Officials in March 2022
- Technical knowledge
- Management skills

2.2 Match Officials' Preparation Overview

VAR TRAINING	PRE-COMPETITION PREPARATION	DURING COMPETITION
VAR Course (March 2022)	Five-day Preparatory Course	Daily Sessions
	Theoretical Sessions	MVAR Practical Training
	MVAR Practical Training	Instant Feedback Sessions
	Simulator Training	Match Debriefings

3. PREPARATORY COURSE

Prior to the competition, Match Officials participated in a five-day preparatory course between May 27 and 31, 2022 to certify their readiness for the matches. The course consisted of theoretical sessions in the classroom, a fitness check, and practical sessions on the training field. VAR Simulator and Mobile VAR (MVAR) training was also conducted to suitably prepare all Referees for the technology's implementation.



3.1 Fitness Check

All appointed Match Officials completed a fitness check to ensure they were in the best physical condition to cope with the demands of the matches. The fitness check consisted of the following tests:

- Referees: Yo-yo Intermittent Test for Referees - target: 18.8
- Assistant Referees: Assistant Referee Intermittent Test (ARIET) - target: 15.03

3.2 Practical Sessions

Daily practical sessions were held each morning at the Referees training pitch. Fitness training was conducted alongside MVAR sessions to enable Match Officials to suitably prepare for their upcoming appointments.

A team of players was utilised during the competition to support training and to simulate match incidents based on the instructor's training plan. Topics covered during the practical sessions were as follows:

- VAR protocol
- Positioning and movement
- Foul recognition
- Delay the flag technique
- Fitness maintenance

3.3 Theoretical Sessions

Theoretical sessions were conducted in the Referees Meeting Room to further enhance and refresh the technical knowledge of the Match Officials.



**AFC U23
ASIAN CUP™
UZBEKISTAN 2022**

A variety of match incident clips were shown with discussion and analysis of each clip led by the Referee Instructors. The topics were focused on VAR implementation with additional presentations on competition administration, fitness, and integrity. Topics covered throughout the course included:

Technical

- VAR Protocol
- Line of intervention
 - o Goals – Attacking Possession Phase
 - o Goals – Offside
 - o Challenges
 - o Penalty Area Incidents
 - o Tactical Fouls
 - o Management
- Positioning and Reading
- Game Management



Fitness

- Fitness Check
- Weight Control
- Match Preparation
- Recovery

Administration

- Competition Information
- Accommodation and Logistics
- Pre-match Procedures
- Match Operations
- Medical Protocol

Others

- Integrity
- Technical Study Group

4. DURING COMPETITION

4.1 Team Arrival Meetings

Referee Assessors were appointed to each Team Arrival Meeting to ensure that players and coaches were suitably briefed on refereeing matters. The main objective was to impart the values of fair play and respect, and to ensure that decisions made by the Referee were understood and accepted.

The Referee Assessors discussed a variety of incident clips with the players to make certain there was a mutual understanding of each decision as well as ensuring the VAR protocol was correctly interpreted by the teams.

4.2 Practical Sessions

Daily practical sessions continued throughout the competition, ensuring that the Referees maintained



a high level of fitness. Additionally, MVAR sessions were held to provide the appointed Video Match Officials (VMOs) with sufficient practice of VAR procedures and protocols. These sessions also gave additional time for Match Officials, who were yet to be fully licensed in certain roles, the opportunity to gain the appropriate match experience practice.

For Referees who were appointed for a match the next day, specialised match preparation training with a dedicated fitness instructor was conducted while Referees who had a match the previous day had scheduled recovery sessions in the swimming pool.

4.3 VAR Simulator Sessions

Due to the implementation of VAR for the full duration of the competition, VAR Simulator Sessions were held throughout the competition in the Referees Meeting Room. This provided Referees that were not appointed for a match the chance to gain extra practice and experience using real-life examples. Clips from different competitions around the world with varied degrees of difficulty were chosen, allowing the Referees to react live to each situation. For each clip, a VAR, AVAR and Referee were appointed to simulate the match-environment.

4.4 Match Assessment

A Referee Assessor was assigned to each match to observe the Match Officials' performance live at the match venue. The referee team's performance was



closely monitored throughout the match, including decision-making, positioning and communication. This allowed the assessor to provide each Match Official with personal, first-hand feedback after the match.

Additionally, a Video Referee Assessor was appointed to analyse the match at the Remote Monitoring station at the Referees' Hotel. The video assessor had access to the VAR camera feeds as well as the Referees' communication to allow more in-depth analysis to be conducted. Specific incidents were noted so that teaching material clips could be created for the subsequent general debriefing after the match.

4.5 Match Debriefing Sessions

General debriefing sessions were held after each round of matches to allow feedback to be provided to all Match Officials. Any incidents or points of note from the previous matches were shown and a discussion was held between the Referee Instructors and the Match Officials. Areas of improvement were highlighted to ensure consistency and uniformity in foul recognition, Laws of the Game interpretation, and VAR protocol application.

Referees who were appointed in Qarshi were able to join the debriefing session via Zoom, ensuring all Match Officials were provided with the appropriate advice and feedback.

Furthermore, individual debriefing sessions were held with each refereeing team and the appointed Referee Assessor. The assessor was able to provide more personal, in-depth feedback to each Match Official, ensuring that the Referees received the best support and advice to take into the next match.

4.6 Technical Study Group Session

On completion of the Group Stage, AFC Deputy Technical Director Laszlo Szalai led a session by the AFC's Technical Study Group in which technical information about the qualified teams was shared.

The Match Officials were provided with valuable insights into each team's tactical approach, individual player's style and behaviour and areas to be aware of for the subsequent Knockout Stage matches.

5. VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE (VAR) SYSTEM

Having been implemented fully at the competition's previous edition in Thailand in 2020, the VAR system was again utilised for all 32 matches.

5.1 Match Officials' Preparation

In order to support the implementation of VAR at the competition, the pool of Match Officials included 30 fully-licensed Referees and four partially-licensed Referees. VMOs also had a wealth of experience, ranging from the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games to domestic league matches at the Member Association (MA) level.

A VAR course was held for shortlisted Match Officials in March 2022 to improve and refresh their knowledge and understanding of the VAR system as well as evaluate their ability. The course was held online and involved VAR Simulator Sessions that allowed the participants to analyse match clips in real-time.

The appointed Match Officials also took part in VAR-specific training during the preparatory course from

May 27 to 31, 2022. This training was continued throughout the duration of the competition to ensure that all Match Officials were suitably prepared and ready to perform to the highest standard. The training consisted of the following areas:

MVAR practical training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replication of match incidents on the training field with teams of players Simulation of check and review process for the correct application of the VAR protocol Communication procedure between on-field Referees and the Video Operation Room (VOR) Rotation of the appointed roles (Referee, VAR, AVAR) Real-time feedback and instruction from Referee Instructors
VAR Simulator Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match incident clips from worldwide competitions recreated live Practice of procedures for checking and reviewing incidents Rotation of the appointed roles (Referee, VAR, AVAR) Observation by the rest of the Referees to allow group discussion after each clip led by the Referee Instructors
Theoretical sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recap of VAR protocols and practicalities Match incident example clips shown from previous competitions worldwide Discussion and dialogue between Referees and Referee Instructors

5.2 Technical Setup

A decentralised system was implemented for the competition where a Video Operations Room (VOR) was situated at each venue from where the VMOs operated. Each VOR was situated in either a cabin or room next to the broadcast compound to allow camera feeds to be easily provided to the VAR system.

- Technology Provider
 - Hawk-Eye Innovations Ltd (Video & Audio)
 Hawk-Eye were chosen as the technology providers for the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022, having previously been used in the last edition of the competition as well as the recent Final Round of the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to Qatar™.
- Video Operation Room (VOR)
 - Located at each stadium
 - Reception of all camera feeds from the Host Broadcaster
 - Personnel setup:
 - VAR, AVAR (AVAR 2 used from Semi-finals onwards)

- One Replay Operator (RO)
- One Quality Control Manager (QCM)
- One VAR Information Officer (VIO)

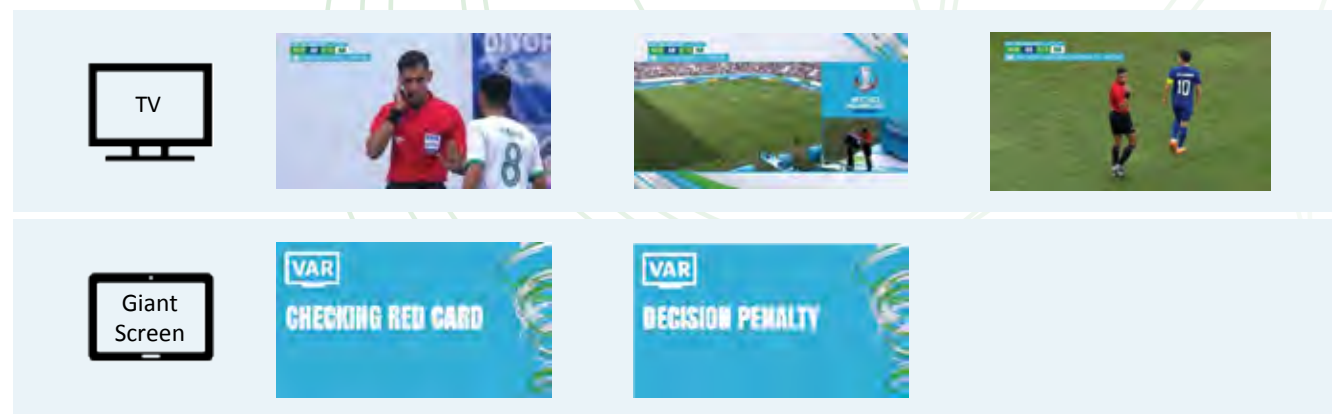
Referee Review Area (RRA)

- Pyramid monitor
- Located next to or behind the fourth official's bench at each venue
- Displayed VAR output screen for the Referee to review incidents in the case of an On-field Review (OFR)

5.3 Communication Process

Communication channels were put in place to facilitate the smooth operation of the VAR system.

In each VOR, a Quality Control Manager (QCM) operated a tablet to send relevant VAR information to both the broadcast and infotainment teams. The graphics were then displayed on the giant screen and TV broadcast during any VAR checks or reviews to relay the information to the spectators.



5.4 VAR Implementation Statistics

- There was a total of 30 reviews in 32 matches, an average of 0.94 reviews per match / one review every 1.07 matches:
 - o 24 On-Field Reviews (OFR): 20 decisions changed, 4 confirmed
 - o 6 Only-VAR reviews (OVAR): 6 decisions changed

VAR REVIEWS	TOTAL	DECISIONS CHANGED	DECISIONS CONFIRMED
TOTAL REVIEWS	30	26	4
On-field Reviews	24	20	4
Only-VAR Reviews	6	6	0
Penalty Area Incidents reviewed	13	12	1
Goals reviewed	5	5	0
Encroachment by GK in PK reviewed	1	1	0
Potential red card incidents reviewed	10	7	3
Mistaken identity situations reviewed	1	1	0
Average reviews per match	0.94		
1 review every # matches	1.07		



- A total of **13 penalty area** incidents were reviewed by the VAR:
 - o Six penalty kicks were awarded after a VAR review
 - o Four penalty kicks were awarded by the on-field referee but were cancelled after a VAR review
 - o Two penalty kicks missed by the on-field

referee were not awarded after a VAR review due to offences in the Attacking Possession Phase (APP)

- o One no-penalty decision was confirmed after a VAR review

- A total of **six goals** were reviewed including goalkeeper encroachment during penalty kicks:

- o Four goals were originally awarded by the on-field referee but were disallowed by the VAR
- o One penalty kick was ordered to be retaken after encroachment by the goalkeeper
- o One goal was originally disallowed but was awarded after a VAR review

- A total of **10 potential red card incidents** were reviewed by the VAR:
 - o Five red cards were given after a VAR review
 - o Three decisions were maintained after a VAR review
 - o One possible red card incident was reviewed in which no red card was given but the yellow card was rescinded and given to the opposing player
 - o One red card was rescinded after a VAR review

6. TECHNICAL SUMMARY

6.1 General Performance

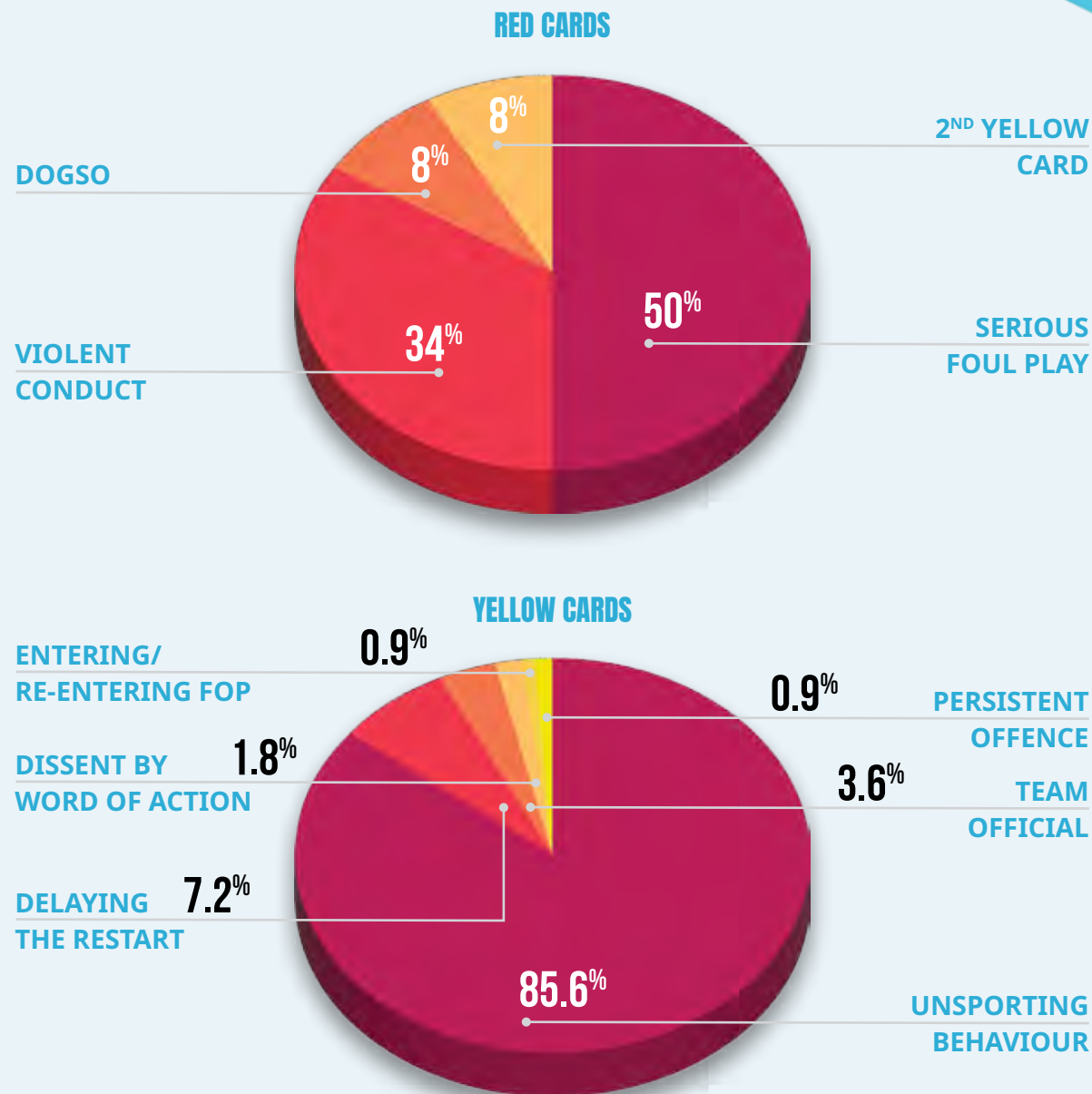
The Referee Assessor and Instructors' team, through their match reports and close monitoring, rated the Match Officials' performance as good due to the overall performance being consistent and meeting the expected levels of a top-level competition.

The continuous training, match debriefings and other resources provided for the Referees contributed significantly to the high standard of refereeing throughout the competition.

6.2 General Management

A total of 123 disciplinary sanctions were issued at the AFC U23 Asian Cup™ Uzbekistan 2022, of which 111 were yellow cards and 12 were red cards.

There was a match average of 3.47 yellow cards and 0.38 red cards which was an overall increase of average cautions and expulsions per match compared to the previous edition of the competition in Thailand.





AWARDS

AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS



BEST GOALKEEPER: NAWAF ALAQIDI (KSA)

MVP: AYMAN YAHYA (KSA)

TOP GOAL SCORER: CHO YOUNGWOOK (KOR)

AFC FAIR PLAY AWARD





PLAYERS TO WATCH

GOALKEEPERS



AL AQIDI NAWAF (KSA)



ZION SUZUKI (JPN)



JOE GAUCI (AUS)

DEFENDERS



ABDULHAMID SAUD (KSA)



KIM JUSUNG (KOR)



WEPA JUMAYEV (TKM)



NGUYEN THANH BINH (VIE)



MEHDI HASHEMNEZHAD (IRN)



SEIYA BABA (JPN)

MIDFIELDERS



TYRESE FRANCOIS (AUS)



DAIKI MATSUOKA (JPN)



ABBOSBEK FAYZULLAEV (UZB)



JOEL FUJITA (JPN)



PARK JEONGIN (KOR)



JASURBEK JALOLIDDINOV (UZB)



LEE KANGIN (KOR)



MUEANTA SUPHANAT (THA)



YAHYA AYMAN (KSA)

FORWARDS



YUITO SUZUKI (JPN)



AL BRIKAN FIRAS (KSA)



RAMADHAN WAKAA (IRQ)



HUSAIN NORCHAEV (UZB)



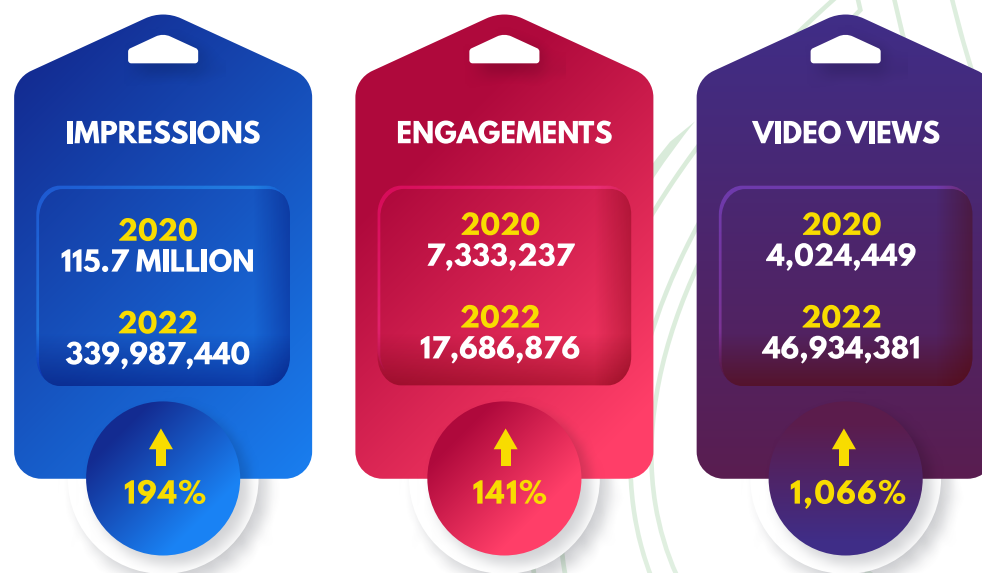
HOJIMAT ERKINOV (UZB)



EXTRA-TIME

DIGITAL STATISTICS

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



DIGITAL STATISTICS

the-AFC.com

PAGE VIEWS

2020
4,822,231

2022
1,938,038



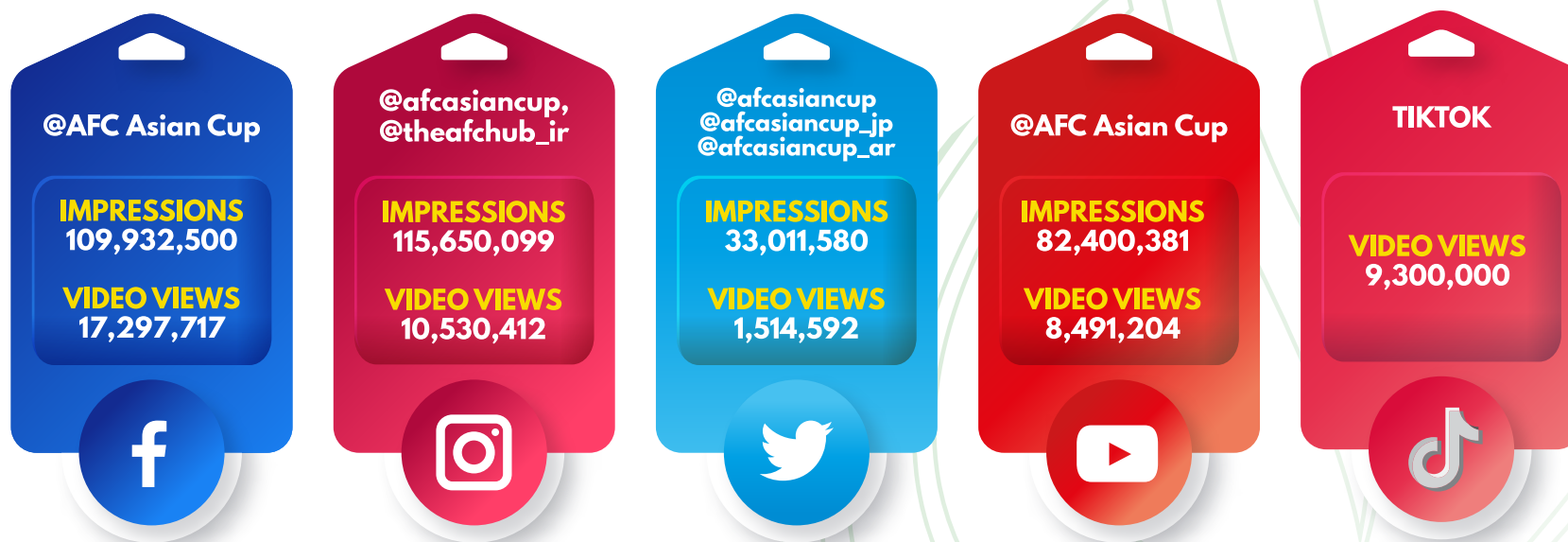
USERS

2020
1,769,945

2022
463,761



DIGITAL STATISTICS





COMMITTEES

AFC COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE

NAME	POSITION	MEMBER ASSOCIATION
DR. TRAN QUOC TUAN	CHAIRPERSON	VFF
MR. ABED-ALKHALIQ MASOUD AHMED	DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON	IFA
MR. MARK FALVO	Member	Football Australia
MR. KAZI MD. SALAHUDDIN	Member	BFF
MR. LOUIS LIU YI	Member	CFA
MR. SUNANDO DHAR	Member	AIFF
MR. ENDRI ERAWAN	Member	PSSI
MR. TSUNEYASU MIYAMOTO	Member	JFA
MR. SIZAR SOUBAR	Member	JFA
MR. CHUNG MONG GYU	Member	KFA
MR. STUART RAMALINGAM	Member	FAM
MR. BIGYAN RAJ SHARMA	Member	ANFA
MR. AHMED KHELLIL ABBASSI	Member	QFA
MR. IBRAHIM S. ALKASSIM	Member	SAFF
MR. DAVLATMAND ISLOMOV	Member	TFF
MR. ABDULLAH NASER AL-JUNAIBI	Member	UAE FA
MR. ALEKSANDR DAVIDENKO	Member	UFA

AFC TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

NAME	POSITION	MEMBER ASSOCIATION
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MR. MOHAMMAD YOSUF KARGAR	Member	AFF
MR. TREVOR MORGAN	Member	Football Australia
MR. ZHANG CHAO	Member	CFA
MR. ABHISHEK YADAV	Member	AIFF
MR. INDRA SYAFRI	Member	PSSI
MR. MORTEZA MOHASES	Member	FFIRI
MR. KIM PAN GON	Member	KFA
MR. HAROON AL BARTAMANI	Member	OFA
MR. FAHAD ABDULLA AL ZARRAA	Member	QFA
MR. OMAR ABDULLA BAKHASHWEIN	Member	SAFF
MR. MUHANNAD AL FAKEER	Member	SFA
MR. WITHAYA LAOHAKUL	Member	FA Thailand
MR. ABDULLA HASAN ABDULLA	Member	UAE FA

AFC REFEREES COMMITTEE

NAME	POSITION	MEMBER ASSOCIATION
H.E DU ZHAOCAI	CHAIRPERSON	CFA
MR. HANY TALEB B S AL-RAEESI	DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON	QFA
MR. CHARLES CHEUNG YIM YAU	Member	HKFA
MR. RAVISHANKAR JAYARAMAN	Member	AIFF
MR. HEDAYAT MOMBINI	Member	FFIRI
MR. YOSHIMI OGAWA	Member	JFA
MS. EUN AH HONG	Member	KFA
MR. SAAD AL FADHLI	Member	KFA
MR. MAHMOUD EL RABAAH	Member	LFA
MR. MARAI ALAWAJI	Member	SAFF
MR. JOHN CHIA	Member	FAS
MR. ALI HAMAD AL BEDWAWI	Member	UAE FA
MR. RAVSHAN IRMATOV	Member	UFA
GENERAL FAROUK BOUZO	ADVISOR	Syria



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A large blue banner is laid out on a green football pitch. The banner features the AFC U23 Asian Cup logo, which is a stylized trophy with colorful swooshes. Below the logo, the text "AFC U23 ASIAN CUP" is written in large white capital letters, and "UZBEKISTAN 2022" is written in large blue capital letters. In the background, players in various kits are walking on the pitch, and a large stadium filled with spectators is visible under a clear sky.

Raja Amy
Esther Low

