



AFC
U23
CHAMPIONSHIP
CHINA 2018

TECHNICAL REPORT



ONE ASIA ● ONE GOAL



FOREWORD FROM AFC PRESIDENT

Dear friends

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U23 Championship once again provided a valuable and exciting showcase for the next generation of talent that is emerging from all corners of the continent of Asia.

The stars of the future were on show at the four world-class venues in Changzhou, Jiangyin, Changshu and Kunshan and this report delivers a technical analysis of the developing trends from this competition.

Congratulations must go to our first-time winners Uzbekistan and also the rising stars of the competition - Vietnam - who reached their first AFC U23 Championship final. In the most testing of conditions both teams produced a truly thrilling final which lived up to the skill produced in the rest of the tournament.

We must also extend our thanks to the Chinese FA and the Local Organising Committee for delivering good match conditions in difficult situations - particularly with the heavy snowfall at the final.

Once again, the Chinese FA have shown their ability to stage top-class competitions and this helps the AFC deliver on its promise to provide outstanding tournaments that offer platforms for the talent of Asia.

The competition captured the imagination of fans across the Continent and record television and social media numbers were achieved in many countries, including Vietnam. A total of 81 million were engaged on social media - far outstripping the numbers of 2016.

This is concrete evidence of the AFC's commitment to the vision of maintaining football's place as the number one sport in Asia and the performances of Uzbekistan and Vietnam show the continued results of our Member Association development.

None of this would be possible without the hard work of the technical, competitions and referees' committees and departments. I thank them all and believe that this report will provide an interesting insight into the tournament.

I also thank the Technical Support Group for their hard work and their expertise in identifying trends and recognising patterns of play during this tournament. It helps all our teams improve and hopefully succeed on the world stage.



Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President



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COMPETITION OVERVIEW

GROUP STAGE

Qatar and Japan, who topped Groups A and B respectively, emerged from the group stage as the only sides to record three wins from their three games. Elsewhere, Iraq finished in Group C's pole position, while Korea Republic grabbed top spot in Group D. Uzbekistan, Palestine, Malaysia and Vietnam all qualified for the quarter-finals after finishing second in their groups.



GROUP A



Striker Almoez Ali's three goals helped Qatar secure top spot in an entertaining Group A. The Al Duhail forward hit top form when it mattered most as Felix Sanchez's side emerged from their group stage campaign with a perfect record. Uzbekistan finished second, thanks in part to a vital 1-0 win over host nation China PR who were third, while Oman failed to register a single point.

Much was expected of a talented Chinese squad ahead of the tournament, and they wasted little time in delivering on the competition's opening day, when goals from Yang Liyu, Li Xiaoming and the impressive Wei Shihao sealed a comfortable 3-0 win over Oman at the Changzhou Olympic Sports Center.

Qatar, who finished fourth at the tournament's 2016 edition, also started their title bid on a winning note thanks to Almoez Ali's strike in a narrow 1-0 defeat of Uzbekistan. Talented midfielder Akram Afif then stole the show with a goal and a virtuoso performance as the Qataris edged regional rivals Oman 1-0 on Matchday Two to record a second successive three-point haul.

Meanwhile, Uzbekistan revived their hopes of reaching the quarter-finals courtesy of a narrow and hard-fought 1-0 victory against China. Khojiakbar Alijonov's early strike proved the difference on a bitterly cold day in Jiangsu province, as the White Wolves, under the wily guidance of head coach

Ravshan Khaydarov, moved up to second in the group behind table-topping Qatar. All four teams arrived for Matchday Three's simultaneous kick-offs harbouring realistic ambitions of progressing to the knockout phase, although it was to be China who would steal an early march on their group rivals when Yao Junsheng fired home to give them a fourth minute lead against Qatar.

However, with Uzbekistan leading Oman through a scrambled Dostonbek Tursonov effort, China's hopes were dealt a blow when referee Alireza Faghani showed a second yellow card to captain He Chao.

Minus their influential skipper, China struggled to contain their rampaging opponents, and Qatar drew level shortly after through a deft Almoez Ali header.

The livewire number 19 then doubled his tally in the second period to confirm the win and top spot for his side, as they booked their ticket to the next round along with Uzbekistan who held firm to beat Oman.



GROUP B



Defending champions Japan registered a perfect record of three wins in Group B to claim top spot, while tournament debutants Palestine recovered from a losing start to register two consecutive wins to progress as group runners-up into the quarter-finals. DPR Korea and Thailand finished third and fourth respectively at the Jiangyin Sports Center Stadium.



DPR Korea kicked off their campaign in style, thanks to a second minute goal from Ri Hun against Thailand, and despite the young War Elephants fighting back, they failed to find an equaliser to lose 1-0.

Japan began their defence of their title with a similar scoreline, beating Palestine 1-0. Ko Itakura's first half goal sealed the victory.

The draw, however, was to Japan's benefit as they became the first team to secure a spot in the quarter-finals after beating Thailand 1-0 as Itakura scored in the 90th minute, eliminating Zoran Jankovic's side.

On Matchday Three, Palestine sensationally qualified for the quarter-finals after a comprehensive 5-1 win over Thailand, which coupled with DPR Korea's 3-1 loss to Japan, saw them progress to the knockout phase as Group B runners-up.



Four first half goals laid the foundation for Ayman Sandouqa's charges to secure second place on goal difference ahead of the Korean. Thailand exited the tournament with no wins to their name.

On Matchday Two, Palestine settled for a 1-1 draw with DPR Korea. Palestine enjoyed an early lead in the 16th minute through Oday Dabbagh's strike, but a second half own goal by Mohammed Rashid meant both sides shared the spoils.

Japan took a two-goal lead in the first half, DPR Korea pulled one back through Kim Yu-song in the 52nd minute but the young Samurai Blue sealed victory with a late penalty.

GROUP C



Inaugural winners Iraq sealed their place in the quarter-finals after two wins and a draw helped Abdulghani Shahad's side finish top of Group C. Tournament debutants Malaysia, despite their hefty defeat to the table-topping Iraqis on Matchday One, secured second spot and a ticket through to the last eight thanks to a creditable win over Saudi Arabia, while Jordan finished third.

Inaugural champions Iraq made a flying start to their campaign on Matchday One in Changshu, as Mohammed Jaffal, Amjed Attwan, Alaa Mhawi and Hussein Ali all found the back of the net in a convincing 4-1 win over tournament debutants Malaysia.

Elsewhere on a day of enthralling Group C action, Baha Faisal's goals either side of the break had seemed set to secure all three points for Jordan against West Asian rivals Saudi Arabia. However, Abdulelah Al Amri and Rakan Al Anaze both scored in the game's final moments to ensure a dramatic share of the spoils.

Matchday Two then saw Iraq held to a 0-0 draw by Saudi Arabia, while Safawi Rasid scored his second goal in as many games for Malaysia, his late first half penalty late earning the Southeast Asians a 1-1 draw with Jordan who had taken a 16th minute lead through Ward Al Barri.

With Iraq flying high at the top of the group, all four teams had a realistic chance of progressing to the knockout phase heading into the final round of fixtures.

Under the wily guidance of head coach Abdulghani Shahad, Iraq duly sealed their place in the quarter-finals courtesy of Bashar Resan's strike four minutes into the second half of a narrow 1-0 win over Jordan - a result which also saw the Jordanians eliminated from the competition.



In the group's other game, Danial Amier Norhisham scored to earn Malaysia a shock 1-0 victory over Saudi Arabia. Danial's 29th minute effort was enough to earn Malaysia their first win of the tournament and a place in the last eight, while Saudi Arabia, just as they did in 2016, exited at the group stage.



GROUP D



Korea Republic and Vietnam secured first and second respectively in Group D, with Kim Bong-gil's team seeing off Australia despite a desperate late fightback by the Olyroos in their final game to seal top spot while the Vietnamese drew with Syria to advance to the last eight of the competition for the first time in the country's history.

Korea Republic made a slow start to their 2018 AFC U23 Championship campaign, but by the completion of their three Group D matches Kim Bong-gil and his team had hit their stride to book their place in the quarter-finals.

Quang Hai scored the only goal of the game before a resolute rearguard performance from the Vietnamese kept Ante Milicic's team at bay, ensuring the Australians had to go for the win in their final game.

The Koreans, who finished runners-up in the 2016 championship behind Japan, went behind to a goal from Nguyen Quang Hai in their opening game against Vietnam before strikes from Cho Young-wook and Lee Keun-ho earned Kim's team a winning start.

Syria, meanwhile, kept their hopes of a place in the next phase alive with a 0-0 draw against Korea Republic, leaving all four nations harbouring hopes of a quarter-final berth going into the final round.



Australia, meanwhile, flew out of the blocks with an impressively fluid performance against Syria, with playmaker Daniel De Silva to the fore and George Blackwood scoring twice in a comprehensive 3-1 win over a clearly under-prepared Syria.

While Vietnam held on to take a point against Syria with a 0-0 draw, all the action was taking place at Kunshan Stadium, with Korea Republic racing into a three-goal lead. Lee Keun-ho claimed a brace, with a goal either side of Han Seung-gyu's strike, before Australia belatedly woke up.

Any thoughts, though, that the two berths in the knockout phase were already determined were turned on their head in the second round of matches as Vietnam pulled one of the surprise results of the competition as Park Hang-seo's side notched a 1-0 win over the Olyroos.

Two goals in four minutes from Nick Cowburn and Trent Buhagiar gave the Australians hope as they pushed forward looking for two more goals to keep their campaign alive, but in the end it was too little too late as both Korea Republic and Vietnam advanced.

QUARTER-FINALS

Uzbekistan were the first team to book their ticket through to the semi-finals following an impressive 4-0 win over defending champions Japan. Qatar duly joined the Central Asian outfit in the last four thanks to a 3-2 win over Palestine, while Korea Republic edged a resilient Malaysia 2-1, and Vietnam overcame Iraq via a penalty shootout to complete the line-up.



QUARTER-FINALS



QATAR 3-2 PALESTINE

Almoez Ali's brace and Hisham Ali's second half strike helped Qatar survive a late Palestine revival to claim a place in the semi-finals courtesy of an eventful 3-2 win.

Livewire striker Almoez Ali broke the deadlock on 32 minutes when he connected with Bassam Al Rawi's pinpoint pass to steer the ball home via an outstretched leg and claim his fourth goal of the tournament.

Almoez Ali was on hand once again to double his side's lead just three minutes later, before midfielder Hisham Ali fired home from six yards shortly after the break.

Palestine refused to buckle however, as goals from Dabbagh and Mohamed Darwish ensured a nail-biting conclusion.



QUARTER-FINALS



JAPAN 0-4 UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan showcased a dominant display of football to upset defending champions Japan, registering a comprehensive 4-0 win at the Jiangyin Sports Center Stadium.

The White Wolves applied early pressure on Japan and, while enjoying the lion's share of the possession, they took the lead courtesy of Javokhir Sidikov's superb strike from outside the box on 31 minutes.

Three minutes later, Dostonbek Khamdamov doubled their advantage when he slid the ball home, before Jasurbek Yakhshiboev found the back of the net in the 39th minute.

Yakhshiboev struck again two minutes into the second half to seal an impressive win over the 2016 champions.



QUARTER-FINALS



IRAQ 3-3 VIETNAM

After extra time. Vietnam win 5-3 on penalties

Bashar Resan's penalty miss earned Vietnam a place in the semi-finals as they defeated Iraq 5-3 in a penalty shootout after a 3-3 draw following extra-time.

Iraq went into the game in confident mood after topping Group D, but it was Vietnam who took the lead courtesy of Nguyen Cong Phuong's 12th minute finish.

Undeterred, Iraq replied in 29th minute when Aymen Hussein was fouled inside the area and Hussein converted the resulting spot kick to level the scores.

With three minutes remaining Alaa Mhawi missed from close-range to signal the need for extra-time - 30 additional minutes that saw Iraq take a 2-1 lead through Hussein, before Phan Van Duc netted in the 108th minute to draw Vietnam level.

Ha Duc Chinh then headed home Luong Xuan Truong's corner to put Vietnam 3-2 ahead, only for parity to be restored with four minutes remaining, Alaa Mhawi scoring to send the game into a shootout where Resan fluffed his lines to help Vietnam secure a famous win.



QUARTER-FINALS



KOREA REPUBLIC 2-1 MALAYSIA

Korea Republic made the perfect start to their quest for a place in the semi-finals when, with less than 12 seconds on the clock, Cho Jae-wan gave Kim Bong-gil's side the lead with a fine dipping volley as the 2016 finalists caught Malaysia napping.

Ong Kim Swee's team, however, clawed their way back into the game, with substitute N. Thanabalan levelling the scores midway through the second half with a fine diving header.

But the Koreans sealed their place in the last four when Han Seung-gyu burst into the penalty area to slot home the winner with just five minutes remaining.



SEMI-FINALS

Vietnam's remarkable journey at the competition continued apace, as the Southeast Asian nation overcame Qatar 4-3 on penalties. Midfielder Nguyen Quang Hai had scored twice to ensure an extraordinary 2-2 draw at the end of extra-time. Uzbekistan duly joined Vietnam in the final, Azizjon Ganiev's stunning 30-yard effort helping them seal a 4-1 extra-time win over 10-man Korea Republic.



SEMI-FINALS

QATAR 2-2 VIETNAM

After extra time. Vietnam win 4-3 on penalties

Goalkeeper Bui Tien Dung's two penalty saves earned Vietnam a place in the final, as the Southeast Asian side defeated Qatar 4-3 in a penalty shootout after a dramatic 2-2 draw at the end of extra-time.

The game's opening half proved to be a cautious affair, with Bassam Al Rawi's free-kick from range the closest either side came to breaking the deadlock, until defender Bui Tien Dung's 39th minute foul on Almoez Ali in the penalty area saw referee Muhammad Taqi point to the spot.

Akram Afif duly kept his nerve to convert the penalty and hand Qatar a slender advantage ahead of the break.

Vietnam drew level shortly after the break however, Nguyen Quang Hai, who had earlier rattled the bar with a free-kick, pouncing to fire home from close-range to claim an equaliser on 69 minutes.

Qatar responded by regaining the lead through Almoez Ali's scrambled 84th minute effort, only to lose it again moments later when Quang Hai curled a superb shot past Mohammed Al Bakari to signal the need for extra-time.

Chances proved to be few and far between during the additional 30 minutes, leaving Tien Dung to deny Qatari duo Ahmad Moein and Sultan Al Brake from 12 yards and emerge as the hero in the subsequent penalty shootout.



SEMI-FINALS

UZBEKISTAN 4-1 KOREA REPUBLIC

Uzbekistan continued their impressive run of form at this year's competition with an extra-time win over 10-man Korea Republic that ensured they advanced to their first-ever AFC U23 Championship final.

Zabikhillo Urinboev capped a commanding first half display by Ravshan Khaydarov's side when he scored the opener 12 minutes before the break, only for captain Hwang Hyun-soo to level the scores for the Koreans with a header in a second period dictated by Kim Bong-gil's team.

However, Jang Yun-ho's sending off 16 minutes from time for a second bookable offence swung the game in Uzbekistan's favour and, although the Koreans held on to take the match into extra-time thanks to a virtuoso performance in goal by Kang Hyeon-mu, the Uzbeks eventually prevailed.

Azizjon Ganiev's long-range strike 10 minutes into the first period of extra-time finally broke Korea's resistance, forcing them to open up and look for a way back into the game and that allowed Uzbekistan to take further advantage of their numeric advantage.

Jasurbek Yakhshiboev doubled Uzbekistan's lead with 10 minutes remaining before Akramjon Komilov struck in the dying seconds to seal the win and take the Central Asian nation into the final.



3rd / 4th PLACE PLAY-OFF

Akram Afif scored the only goal of the game as a penalty save from Yousof Hassan helped secure a 1-0 win for Qatar over Korea Republic in the play-off for third place. Afif claimed the winner in the 39th minute before Hassan expertly kept out Hwang Hyun-soo's spot-kick, earning Felix Sanchez's side the consolation of the tournament's bronze medal.





QATAR 1-0 KOREA REPUBLIC

Played in frigid conditions after heavy overnight snow, both teams cancelled each other out in a tense opening 30 minutes that yielded little in goalmouth action.



Yoon Seung-won's glancing header - which was well wide of the mark - was a rare sight of goal for the Koreans while at the other end Afif fed the ball through to Abdelrahman Moustafa, but was shepherded to safety by Hwang Hyun-soo.

However, with six minutes remaining in the half, Sanchez's side took the lead. Afif raced in behind the Korean defence as Qatar broke quickly and the attacker scored at the second attempt after Kang Hyeon-mu saved his initial shot on goal. Five minutes into the second half, the Koreans were handed the opportunity to level the scores when the assistant referee decided Tameem Al Muhaza had handled Park Jae-woo's driven cross into the area.

But Korean captain Hwang saw his penalty saved by Yousef Hassan, the Qatar goalkeeper diving to his left to push the shot to safety and keep his side's lead intact.

Afif squandered the opportunity to double his side's advantage soon after when he latched on to Ali's throughball, only for Kang to save, while Lee Keun-ho - on as a half-time substitute for the ineffective Yoon - was causing problems for the Qatar defence.

Twice the Ulsan Hyundai striker had a sight of goal, but both times Hassan was equal to the task while Cho Jae-wan was denied by the post after Hassan was beaten by his low shot. The Koreans kept probing for the equaliser but the Qatari defence held firm to claim third place.



THE FINAL

For two key reasons, the AFC U23 Championship 2018 final turned out to be a match that will linger long in the memory.

Firstly, the teams. After failing to go beyond the group stage in previous editions of the competition, Uzbekistan and Vietnam were welcome newcomers to the final, two sides of contrasting styles who - having impressed throughout - were now looking to complete their remarkable journeys by claiming the title.

Secondly, the weather. It had snowed heavily before kick-off, covering the pitch at the Changzhou Olympic Sports Center with a thick white carpet. A plastic cover had been used to remove most of the snow before the match, but continuous snowfall created a white surface nevertheless. The lines were cleared as best as possible and a coloured ball was used.

Uzbekistan entered the game as favorites thanks to the five successive wins they had racked up since defeat on Matchday One against Qatar. By way of contrast, Vietnam needed two knockout phase victories via extra-time and a penalty shootout en route to the final. It was, however, a clear signal that the team from Southeast Asia was not to be underestimated.

With referee Ahmed Abu Bakar Al Kaf from Oman overseeing matters, it was Uzbekistan who began brightly. Both full-backs in a 1-4-3-3 formation pushed up high, while dominant midfielders Odiljon Xamrobekov and Azizjon Ganiev dropped off to receive the ball from the centre-backs and connect with the two interchangeable wingers, namely Jasurbek Yakhshiboev on the right, and Dostonbek Khamdamov on the left.

In central midfield, the agile Javokhir Sidikov – operating in a free role of sorts – was always available to bring the ball forward and look for short combinations with central striker Zabikhillo Urinboev, although given that Vietnam defended in a 1-5-4-1 formation when in their own half, there was very little room for Uzbekistan to exploit through the middle of the pitch, forcing them to go wide to the wings.

Thanks to the icy conditions, shots from distance often caused problems for Vietnam goalkeeper Bui Tien Dung, while the Vietnamese defence as a whole often struggled to clear crosses into the box from Uzbekistan’s wingers or overlapping full-backs.

Whenever the ball was won by Vietnam’s defenders, their immediate aim was to play the ball forward. Uzbekistan, wary of their opponents’ pace and skill, were quick to put the player in possession under pressure. If they were able to escape the attention of their markers, Vietnam’s Luong Xuan Truong and Pham Duc Huy tried to link up with the lone striker Nguyen Cong Phuong.



Often though, Uzbekistan – either through good defending or wayward Vietnamese passes – were able to regain possession relatively quickly on a day when it was becoming increasingly clear that goals from open play were going to be hard to come by, and that set plays could well help determine the outcome of the match.

Despite that, it still came as somewhat of a surprise that only the second corner of the game produced the opening goal, Rustamjon Ashmurtov diving to head home Khamdamov’s pinpoint delivery in the eighth minute.

Roared on by several thousand of their supporters in the stand, Vietnam defended fiercely after that, with custodian Bui Tien Dung twice making fine saves to keep his side in the game. They were not, however, always on the backfoot and the 2007 AFC Asian Cup quarter-finalists were able to launch several dangerous counter-attacks throughout the rest of the first half, one of which saw them awarded a direct free-kick some five yards outside the Uzbekistan penalty area on 41 minutes.



It was to provide an excellent opportunity for Vietnam's number 19 Nguyen Quang Hai. The talented winger stepped up and duly curled the ball past Botirali Ergashev - who could well have been distracted by the traffic in front of him in the moments before the ball was struck - and into the top left corner to claim his fifth goal of the tournament. Game on.

A full hour was taken at the interval to clear the pitch of snow, and the players emerged for the second period with the Uzbekistan players wearing blue shirts instead of the white one they had on in the first half, not that the strategies of either side altered much from what had gone on before.

Uzbekistan continued to dominate possession, while Vietnam still posed a threat on the counter once they had managed to wrestle the ball from their Central Asian counterparts, although it was to be the Uzbeks who came to closest to sealing the win.

Ganiev's shot from distance and Sidikov's close-range effort were both brilliantly thwarted by Tien Dung, before, in the last meaningful action of normal time, Urinboev lashed a shot

over the bar after Tien Dung had parried Akramjon Komilov's cross into his path.

With Uzbekistan spurning chances to seal the victory, Vietnam remained in the game and their chance to win the game came deep into the second half of extra-time, substitute Ha Duc Chinh flashing a header narrowly wide of the target following Xuan Truong's excellent cross from the left.

Then, with Uzbekistan head coach Ravshan Khaydarov clearly looking to force the winner, Sidikov was replaced by Andrey Sidorov. The introduction of the tall striker was to prove a decisive moment as Uzbekistan immediately began to deliver the ball into the box with far more urgency than before. Their reward was to come just two minutes after Sidorov's arrival.

The outstanding Xamrobekov found Ganiev with a raking pass that the number six cleverly played off Pham Xuan Manh to earn his side a corner. Yet another out swinging Khamdamov delivery was met by Sidorov who volleyed the ball home with



his left foot from six yards out to ensure a first-ever AFC U23 Championship title for Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan were outstanding throughout the tournament. After losing their first match against Qatar, they grew as a team and went from strength to strength, with their adoption of a clear and successful strategy helping them win the next six games. The future for Uzbekistan looks bright with this talented squad, a number of whose players have already appeared for the country's senior side.



For their part, Vietnam were deserved runners-up. They were a side that emerged as the competition's surprise package thanks to their remarkable run to the final, one that included three matches going to extra-time and two victories by way of a penalty shootout - a clear indication both of Vietnam's ability to persevere when it mattered most and their excellent fitness levels.

Congratulations indeed to both teams and their coaches for more than playing their part during what was, without doubt, an exhilarating tournament.

WINNING COACH



RAVSHAN KHAYDAROV

Success in the final of the 2018 AFC U23 Championship for Uzbekistan provided a fitting end to an almost perfect three weeks for Ravshan Khaydarov and his team as the former Pakhtakor coach oversaw one of the finest sporting achievements in the country's history.

Since joining the Asian Football Confederation in 1994 following the break-up of the Soviet Union three years earlier, Uzbekistan have experienced limited success, winning the gold medal at the 1994 Asian Games, reaching the semi-finals of the 2011 AFC Asian Cup finals in Qatar and triumphing at the 2012 AFC U-16 Championship.

But their victory over Vietnam at a snow-covered Changzhou Olympic Sports Center could herald the beginning of a new era for the game in the Central Asian nation.

"We made history today and it's one of the greatest victories for Uzbekistan football and for our country," said Khaydarov after the final. "I haven't thought too much about the significance. But this trophy can be very good for the future.

"This team is the future of our senior team. Over the last few years we didn't see any trophies and we can't say that we have

played in a satisfactory way at the last tournaments that we have played.

"This is very important for us. But I haven't thought too much about it because I'm emotional."

While Uzbekistan's moments of triumph have been few so far, Khaydarov has played an important role overseeing the development of a generation who could take the country to unprecedented heights.

The 56-year-old has experience and knowledge to bring into play for a group of players that is continuing to learn and develop.

Khaydarov started his own career in the Uzbekistan league when the country was still part of the Soviet Union, playing in defence for FK Khiva before changing club regularly until a final, six-year stint with Traktor Tashkent.

By 1997 he was head coach of the Traktor club and he steadily made a name for himself in the dugout before taking over at Pakhtakor for the 2002 season. From there, he took over as senior national team boss the following year, leading the country at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals in China.



WINNING COACH

Khaydarov's side were denied a place in the last four of that competition by Bahrain, who won a penalty shootout after the quarter-final meeting between the teams had ended in a 2-2 draw.

The former defender returned to Pakhtakor as head coach the following year, winning the Uzbekistan League and cup double in his first season. He duly repeated the feat the following season and was named Uzbekistan's Coach of the Year.

Khaydarov's association with Pakhtakor ended in 2011 and, after stints elsewhere in the Uzbek league, he was appointed to work with the country's Under 19 team, taking them to the semi-finals of the AFC U-19 Championship in 2014 in Myanmar, with a place in the last four enough for the country to qualify for the FIFA U-20 World Cup.

A year later he coached the team as Uzbekistan advanced to the quarter-finals of the world championships, where they were eventually eliminated by Senegal.

"I've worked with this team for about two years and a lot of the players have played in the FIFA U-20 World Cup," said Khaydarov. "They have good experience but I have told them they can do more and they could win this title. Every day I told them this.

"It was a great performance and they showed the maximum of what they can do. It was the maximum because it was a difficult game. We deserved this trophy from what we have shown throughout this tournament. We deserved it. This trophy is for our families, our friends and all the Uzbek people who watched on TV."



“THIS TEAM IS THE FUTURE OF OUR SENIOR TEAM.”

TECHNICAL TOPICS



One of the salient features of the 2016 U23 tournament in Qatar had been the number of comeback victories achieved by teams who had conceded the opening goal. Although this tendency was statistically reversed in China, where Qatar and Korea Republic were alone in bouncing back to victory, the importance of mental fortitude was highlighted by Uzbekistan, who reacted to an opening defeat by gathering enough momentum to take the title for the first time. Even though the 2018 tournament offered no Olympic prizes for the most successful contestants, it proved to be even more competitive, with half of the knockout ties extending into extra-time and two of those

four games requiring a penalty shoot-out to decide the winner.

This was reflected by a 20% decline in the number of goals scored - from 103 to 82 - and the fact that 10 of the 24 group games ended in a 1-0 scoreline - among them that opening 0-1 reverse for Uzbekistan against the eventual bronze-medallists, Qatar.

It was therefore understandable that Abdullah Hassan and Islam Akhmedov, the AFC technical observers at the event, should focus the spotlight on expertise in the arts of defending. Risk-management, they observed, was high on the list of priorities

during a group stage which yielded only 51 goals at the less-than-prolific average of 2.13 per match. Avoiding defeat, they commented, seemed to be high on the list of priorities until the necessities of the knockout rounds obliged teams to adopt a less conservative approach. A measure of defensive efficiency during the tournament was that, when final whistles sounded, goalkeepers were able to

attack-to-defence transitions. An overview of the tournament revealed well-drilled mechanisms in response to losses of possession in opposition territory. As Saudi Arabia coach Daniel Teglia commented, "one of the positive trends confirmed by the matches that I saw was that there was immediate, aggressive individual pressing by players who lost possession. It revealed



“ONE OF THE POSITIVE TRENDS CONFIRMED BY THE MATCHES THAT I SAW WAS THAT THERE WAS IMMEDIATE, AGGRESSIVE INDIVIDUAL PRESSING BY PLAYERS WHO LOST POSSESSION.”

Saudi Arabia coach, Daniel Teglia

head for the dressing-room on 19 occasions with the satisfaction of having kept a clean sheet.

This may imply a tribute to goalkeepers but, as the technical observers pointed out, it also had a great deal to do with fast and efficient

that even the front men were willing to act as the first line of defence and contribute responsibly to the collective effort.”

Most teams immediately exerted aggressive pressure on ball-carriers, cutting off short-passing options and, by

provoking unsuccessful passes, sowing the seeds for rapid ball-recovery in advanced areas. Although sustained high pressing throughout the 90 minutes raises fitness questions, the tournament offered plentiful examples of successfully-executed collective manoeuvres aimed at disturbing the opponents' build-up or encouraging them to take a long-ball option that offered greater dividends in terms of regaining possession.

As the technical observers remarked, "this was the main explanation for so few goals being scored via the classic counterattack launched from the defensive third". The rapid assembly of compact defensive blocks generally forced attackers to seek goalward routes via the wide areas rather than attempt penetration by putting together combination moves through the more populated central areas. Japan, Qatar, Korea Republic and the champions Uzbekistan were the only teams who could reasonably be described a regular exponents of attempts to play through the middle and, as the technical observers diplomatically put it, "they were not always successful". The speed and positional efficiency of attack-to-defence transitions, they added, made it difficult to retain possession and find passing routes through crowded midfield areas.

SPREADING THE WINGS

The tournament confirmed the trend towards wing play based on extensive use of the full-backs in attacking functions and, in China, it was noticeable that more coaches gave both full-backs licence to break forward simultaneously with a view to creating overloads and posing problems to opponents – especially those who focused on narrow defending. Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam were prepared to attack with two wing-backs, leaving three defenders to balance play in central areas – with the wing-backs returning to base camp in attack-to-defence transitions to form a back line of five.



This observation generated discussion about job descriptions for the modern full-back / wing-back and whether, at development levels, the tendency is for coaches to look for greater attacking potential by dropping wingers or wide midfielders into back-four roles. This, in turn, raised debating points about whether selection criteria now prioritise attacking potential rather than the defensive abilities traditionally associated with members of the last line of defence. The technical observers wondered to what extent successful attacking along the flanks could be linked to shortfalls in the defensive acumen of full-backs or their difficulties in rapidly regaining their positions in attack-to-defence transitions.

The tendency to place greater reliance on the full-backs to provide width during attacking moves acted as an incentive

to field change-footed wingers or wide midfielders – in other words, left-footers on the right and vice-versa. The tournament provided striking examples, such as Qatar's Akram Afif, PR China's Wei Shihao, Vietnam's Nguyen Quang Hai or Uzbekistan's Jasurbek Yakhshiboev. The change-footed players were more effective in cutting inside and either creating shooting opportunities or opening corridors for the full-backs to exploit. The players mentioned made an impact on the tournament in terms of goals and/or assists.

The trend towards the simultaneous use of both full-backs contributed to a tournament in which, as the technical observers put it, "we hardly saw central defenders travelling into midfield to create an extra player". They added a codicil that Japan, Palestine, Qatar and Uzbekistan sometimes

supplied exceptions to the general rule, albeit with a midfielder staying deep in order to maintain defensive balance.

BACK-TO-FRONT

After the previous U23 tournament in Qatar, the technical observers noted that the Qatar and Japan goalkeepers were notable among a minority who quickly and effectively



covered the spaces behind high defensive lines. After the 2018 tournament, Abdullah Hassan commented “awareness has improved and we saw keepers who were alert to the need to deal with back-passes from team-mates. When under pressure, the majority reacted by playing long back-to-front passes”. Even though Qatar’s Mohammed Al Bakari and Uzbekistan’s Botirali Ergashev received special mention for their ability to remain composed under pressure and play the ball safely from the back, the observers’ viewpoint was that “this aspect needs further improvement”.

On the other hand, they also commented that “build-up play from the back hugely improved in relation to the previous

tournament, with many teams setting out to play from the goalkeeper through the thirds with the aim of moving forward quickly and, most frequently, to open play to the flanks”. They added that quite a few teams were prepared to use their goalkeeper as an extra component in the initiation of attacks and switches of play to the wide areas. But, in terms of coaching work on the training ground, they pinpointed this as an area that still offers scope for improvement. The negative footnote in this chapter was the untimely goal conceded by Japan while trying to play out of their penalty area during the quarter-final against Uzbekistan.

THROUGH THE MIDDLE

Although the ‘forward pass’ category was the most prolific source of goals during the tournament, only a handful of contestants set out systematically to elaborate combination moves through the middle - and by no means always successfully. Japan, Korea Republic, Qatar and Uzbekistan were particularly active in this facet of play, while other teams were daunted by the quick assembly of compact defensive blocks and preferred to attack along the flanks. A majority found it hard to overcome intense pressure in crowded midfields, while the density of defensive formations made it difficult to thread passes through a forest of legs. As an aside, the technical observers mentioned pegged the lack of successful penetration through the central areas to the shortage of free-kicks in potential goalscoring positions. As the goalscoring chart in this report indicates, only two goals were scored from direct free-kicks - a very low return considering the number of matches played.

PURPOSEFUL POSSESSION

As usual, the tournament presented statistical diversity which generated debate about the value of ball-possession. Five of the 16 contestants might genuinely be given the

‘possession team’ label: Australia (69%), Saudi Arabia (60%), Japan (57%), Uzbekistan (55%) and Iraq (54%). Discussion was further fuelled by the fact that the final brought together two extremes: Uzbekistan taking on Vietnam, who had averaged only 35% of the ball during the final tournament.

The technical observers delved deeper into statistical evidence with a view to assessing how far the dominance of possession was translated into shooting opportunities. Australia’s 69%, for example, led to an average of 12 goal attempts per game; Uzbekistan’s 55% produced 11.5; Japan’s 57% generated 10, as did Iraq’s 54%. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia’s 60% of the ball paved the way for only eight shots per match, whereas Palestine’s 42% created an average of 12 and Jordan’s 47% gave them the tournament high of 13 goal attempts per fixture.

FLEXIBLE STRUCTURES

The previous tournament in Doha had signalled a clear trend towards a 1-4-3-3 team structure or its younger brother, the 1-4-2-3-1, with the other four participants falling broadly into the 1-4-4-2 category. The event in China presented a more diffuse picture, with teams less obviously operating in a rigid structure. For the sake of argument, five contestants usually attacked in 1-4-3-3 formation; three in 1-4-2-3-1; three in 1-4-1-4-1; four in 1-3-4-3 with both wing-backs pushing forward; and only Jordan reasonably assigned to the 1-4-4-2 category as a default setting.

In transitions to defensive blocks, five teams generally set themselves up in a 1-4-1-4-1 formation; four apiece in 1-4-5-1 or 1-5-4-1 structures; two in 1-4-4-2 and one in 1-4-4-1-1. But, in terms of detecting tendencies, the technical observers commented that the numbers game was hardly worth playing. “All the teams were tactically well-organised,”



they commented, “and there were good examples of teams – Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, for example – who varied their shape from game to game depending on the structure of the opposition, while others – notably Australia, China PR, Iraq, Japan or Saudi Arabia – who were able to mutate during the 90 minutes, depending on the game situation.” At this level, where players are expected to step up to the senior team (or have already made the step) equipping them to operate in more than one team structure is an essential part of their education.

DEALING WITH PRESSURE

Still with player education on their minds, the technical observers harked back to their earlier comments on effective attack-to-defence transitions and the proliferation of aggressive collective pressure on ball-carriers. “On the one hand,” they commented, “we could highlight the importance of individual creative skills when it comes to breaking down defensive blocks and creating goalscoring opportunities. On the other hand, the tournament also underlined the importance at the top levels of the game of the ability to maintain composure in the face of aggressive pressing. This means that, at development levels, players need to be coached in the art of keeping possession when subjected to fierce pressure and equipped with sufficient awareness to be able to find effective solutions in tight situations. The high tempo of the modern game has converted these assets into basic requisites for the elite footballer.”

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS



THE PRICE OF GOALS



At the final tournament in China, goals proved to be so much more expensive than at the previous U23 event in Qatar that the goalscoring rate also warrants mention in the Technical Topics and Talking Points sections of this report. Instead of 103 goals at 3.22 per match, the 32 fixtures played during the 2018 final tournament offered the public 82 at an average of 2.56. A 20% downturn represented a disconcerting trend – and onlookers could be forgiven for being slightly confused by the tournament’s goalscoring patterns. The two finalists, Uzbekistan and Vietnam, earned second place in Groups A and D respectively by scoring two goals in their 270 minutes of football. The champions then cast aside inhibitions, scoring 10 in the knockout rounds to become the tournament’s top scorers with 12 – and to join Iraq and Malaysia in an elite trio of teams who averaged two goals per match. Uzbekistan and bronze-medallists Qatar – one-eighth of the 16 contestants – accounted for 27% of the tournament’s goals. Qatar’s Almoez Ali, with six, and Nguyen Quang Hai, who scored five of Vietnam’s eight goals, headed the scoring charts as the leaders

of a group of 14 players who scored more than once. The tournament’s goals were shared among 55 players, compared with the 67 who celebrated in Doha in 2016.

To provoke reflections and fuel discussion, it might be pertinent to ask if the shortage of goals at U23 level can be linked to parameters in elite club football where, in the AFC Champions League at least, goals regularly talk with Brazilian accents. Are young Asian players being given enough chances to hone their talents in front of goal?

SET PLAYS

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the number of goals derived from dead-ball situations was low enough to provoke questions about the amounts of training-ground investment dedicated to the creative aspects of set plays in attack. The low incidence of successes extended the trend observed in Doha two years earlier, where the dead-ball total had been inflated

by 10 penalties. This figure was sliced in China – halved if it is taken into account that one of the own goals resulted from a Japanese spot-kick which cannoned off a post and rebounded off the DPR Korea goalkeeper into the net.

The meagre success rate from corners that had emerged as a talking point from the 2016 tournament was echoed by the proceedings in China – until the two Uzbekistan goals in the final inflated the total from four to six. Over the tournament’s 3,000 minutes of football, this represented one successful corner per 500 minutes. What’s more, half of the goals from corners were scored by a single team: Uzbekistan.

Free-kicks told a similar story. The shot by Vietnam’s Hai during the final doubled the scant total from one to two. And, of the three goals to stem from indirect free-kicks, two were scored by Korea Republic.



In other words, very few teams derived any benefit from dead-ball situations, even though, a priori, lesser opportunities for scouting opponents at this level offer chances for the surprise factor to flourish.

OPEN PLAY

The generalised downturn in goalscoring was pretty much across the board. But three categories of open-play goals registered increases in relation to 2016, albeit marginal. Forward passes – the second most prolific source of goals in 2016 behind crosses, claimed pride of place in China – and by

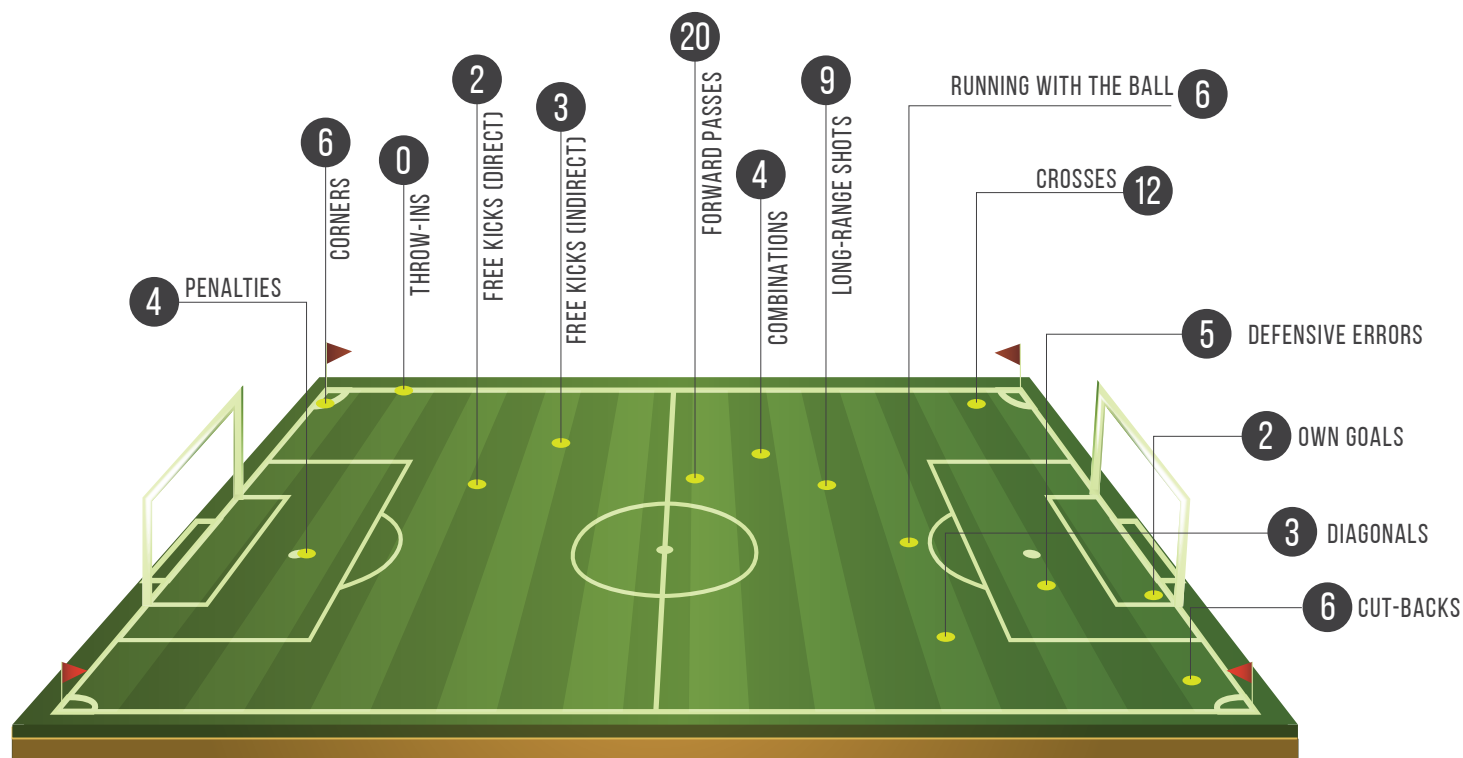
a considerable margin. Of the 20 goals resulting from through passes (compared with 18 in 2016) Qatar, Palestine and Korea Republic posted four successes apiece.

The paradox was that, although the technical observers highlighted increased reliance on wing-play among attacking options, the number of goals as a result of deliveries from the wide areas registered a sharp decline of 25% which would have been even sharper but for a slight upturn in successes following diagonal balls into the box from more withdrawn areas on the wings. The total for crosses and cut-backs fell from 27 to 18.

Although there were some spectacular strikes from outside the box, the number of goals scored from long range was practically halved. The fall from 16 to nine hints that goalkeepers deserved credit where credit was due. In this category, Vietnam were the greatest beneficiaries, netting three of their eight goals from long range.

The further decline in goals resulting from combination moves will offer further cause for concern among disciples of a passing philosophy. Combination play had led to 6.6% of the goal tally during the AFC Champions League and 5.8% of the goals at the previous U23 tournament in Qatar. In China, the figure fell to 4.88%. Japan produced a slick passing move to score the only goal of their fixture against Palestine, while two of the meagre tally of four were scored by Korea Republic, whose second goal against Australia provided a prime example of neat combinations. Kim Bong-gil's team also provided one of the tournament's anecdotal open-play goals by scoring directly from the kick-off in their game against Malaysia.

Malaysia were also on the receiving end of a prime example of counterattacking, conceding the first goal against Iraq as a result of a fast break and a cross from the left. Although classic counters from deep positions were few and far between, aggressive pressure on ball-carriers in middle-to-front areas were productive in terms of regains and fast-response attacking. In comparison with 18% in the AFC Champions League, counterattacking led to 30% of the tournament's open-play goals, confirming that, in the modern game, the ability to hit the fast-forward button after winning possession is a valuable weapon in attacking armouries.



GOALS FROM SET PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Corners	Direct from / following a corner	6
Free kicks (direct)	Direct from a free kick	2
Free kicks (indirect)	Following a free kick	3
Penalties	Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)	4
Throw-ins	Following a throw-in	0

GOALS FROM OPEN PLAY

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GOALS
Combinations	Wall pass / combination move	4
Crosses	Cross from the wing	12
Cut-backs	Pass back from the bye-line	6
Diagonals	Diagonal pass into the penalty box	3
Running with the ball	Dribble and close-range shot / dribble and pass	6
Long-range shots	Direct shot / shot and rebound	9
Forward passes	Through pass or pass over the defence	20
Defensive Errors	Bad back-pass / mistake by the goalkeeper	5
Own Goals	Goal by the opponent	2

TOTAL GOALS SCORED : 82

BEST GOALS





RANKING	PLAYER	COUNTRY	MATCH
1	No. 19 Nguyen Quang Hai	Vietnam	Final, Uzbekistan vs Vietnam
2	No. 11 Mohamed Darwish	Palestine	Qatar vs Palestine
3	No. 5 Hwang Hyunsoo	Korea Republic	Uzbekistan vs Korea Republic
4	No. 10 Aymen Hussein	Iraq	Iraq vs Vietnam
5	No. 9 Lee Keun-Ho	Korea Republic	Korea Republic vs Vietnam

RANKING	PLAYER	COUNTRY	MATCH
1	No. 19 Almoez	Qatar	Qatar vs Palestine
2	No. 17 Han Yong Thae	Korea Republic	Korea Republic vs Malaysia
3	No. 19 Nguyen Quang Hai	Vietnam	Korea Republic vs Vietnam
4	No. 19 Nguyen Quang Hai	Vietnam	Qatar vs Vietnam
5	No. 9 Baha Faisal Mohamed	Jordan	Jordan vs Saudi Arabia
6	No. 6 Ganiev Azizjon	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan vs Korea Republic
7	No. 6 Mohanad S A Fannoun	Palestine	Thailand vs Palestine
8	No. 8 Yakhshiboev	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan vs Japan
9	No. 8 Han Seunggyu	Korea Republic	Korea Republic vs Australia
10	No. 17 Alaa Ali Mhawi	Iraq	Iraq vs Malaysia

TALKING POINTS



A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Who are you? If the Under 23 Championship could stand up and reply, the question would be a pertinent one to ask. Staged every two years, the final tournament has a split personality. Sometimes it could reply that its obvious identity is to provide the AFC qualifiers for the Olympic Games. In other years – 2018 for instance – the response is not so clear.

One answer might be that the tournament allows coaching staffs opportunities to examine ‘fringe players’; to assess their potential for stepping up to the senior team; and maybe clarifying perspectives on who might reasonably merit inclusion in squads for the following year’s AFC Asian Cup.

Japan’s approach, on the other hand, was to continue to peg the U23 event to the Olympics. In China, 15 of the squad were born in 1997; five in 1998; and two in 1999. This represented an exception to the general philosophy among other teams to select players from the 1995-1997 age bracket, plus a sprinkling of players born in 1999 or even 2000.

Uzbekistan, who emerged as winners in China, lifted the trophy with the help of six players who had already represented their country at senior level. By contrast, the host nation’s coach Massimiliano Maddaloni was in favour of making the tournament an Under-21 event – an opportunity to give much-needed international exposure to players who were aspiring to senior team places.



To cloud the identity question even further, the AFC technical observers commented that, Australia and Japan apart, teams tended not to rotate their starters from game to game. In other words, is the U23 event regarded as a ‘development tournament’? What is its identity?

WHERE AND WHEN?

Another issue can readily be injected into debate. The final tournament generated different scenarios in terms of the release of players who, at the U23 stage of their careers, are engaged in first-team football at their clubs. In some

countries, December and January represent the close season in domestic competitions, meaning that some players travelled to China in ‘vacation mode’ with regard to their levels of match fitness. Some teams were given margins of four to five weeks for preparation while others, such as Japan, had been together for a week. A pertinent question was raised by AFC technical observer Islam Akhmedov: “would the release of players become much less complicated if we made it a U-21 tournament?”

And where do we go? Playing the final in a heavy snowfall might have produced some striking pictures during the

big match between Uzbekistan and Vietnam. But it has to be said that a large percentage of the players – especially those hailing from the Western sector of the Confederation, had never thrown a snowball in their lives. Admittedly, they didn't all have to play in a blizzard. But was asking them to play in such cold wintry conditions a reasonable request?

Switching from literal cold to metaphorical chill, what is the effect of playing in sparsely-populated stadiums? And what questions were raised by the public reaction when the teams returned home? Although the groundbreaking achievements by Uzbekistan and Vietnam allowed them to receive heroes' welcomes, does the general cool reception given to other teams mean that more should be done to promote the U23 tournament? To what extent is this linked to the questions about identity?

INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY?

Vietnam won one of their six games and, with an average over their six games of 35% possession, had less of the ball than any other team in the tournament. This was reflected by an average of 6.7 goal attempts per match and, considering that they played a full 90 minutes more than most (three periods of extra-time) that average could rationally be reduced to five attempts per 90 minutes of football. During the tournament they averaged one on-target goal attempt per 37 minutes of play.

During the tournament in China, only five teams managed to hit the target with more than 50% of their goal attempts. To be precise, they were Australia, Korea Republic, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and, above all, Qatar who successfully directed 58% of their attempts between the woodwork. By contrast among the 11 sides who had more wayward than on-target attempts, Oman hit the target with 26% of their



attempts – a success rate marginally superior to one in four. What more can be done on training grounds to improve the quality of finishing?



Continuing with statistics, one of the eye-catching features was that 18% of the tournament's goals were derived from set plays. In Doha, two years previously, a balance of 19.4% had been considered surprisingly low. And the tournament in China raised eyebrows with an even lower percentage that was vastly at odds with the 28% registered in the AFC Champions League season. Excluding the four spot-kicks which hit the net, the 11 set-play goals were also unevenly shared. Uzbekistan provided half of the six successful corners; Korea Republic two of three successes at indirect free-kicks. Had it not been for the three goals scored in the final (two corners for Uzbekistan; a direct free-kick for Vietnam) the drought would have been much more severe. Were set plays not given relevance or importance in preparations for the tournament? Are skills in dead-ball situations deteriorating? What more could be done on training grounds to improve the exploitation of set plays?

TEAM PROFILES



 **AUSTRALIA**



COACH

ANTE MILICIC

NATIONALITY
AUSTRALIA



STATISTICS



Possession
69%

Def 3rd - **24%**
Mid 3rd - **58%**
Att 3rd - **18%**



Total goals
5



Shots
ON TARGET - 20
OFF TARGET - 17

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	PAUL DAVID IZZO	06-01-1995
12	TOM GLOVER	24-12-1997
18	DANIJEL NIZIC	15-03-1995

DEFENDER

2	NICHOLAS CHAD COWBURN	07-03-1995
3	ALEXANDER GERSBACH	08-05-1997
4	JONATHAN ASPROPOTAMITIS	07-06-1996
5	ALEKSANDAR SUSNJAR	19-08-1995
15	KEANU BACCUS	07-06-1998
20	THOMAS DENG	27-03-1997
21	RUON TONGYIK	28-12-1996
23	BENJAMIN GARUCCIO	15-06-1995

MIDFIELDER

6	AIDEN O'NEILL	04-07-1998
8	STEFAN INGO MAUK	12-10-1995
10	AJDIN HRUSTIC	05-07-1996
14	RILEY PATRICK MCGREE	02-11-1998
17	BRANDON WILSON	28-01-1997
22	DANIEL PETER DE SILVA	06-03-1997

FORWARD

7	TRENT BUHAGIAR	27-02-1998
9	GEORGE BLACKWOOD	04-06-1997
11	BRUCE KAMAU	28-03-1995
13	MILISLAV POPOVIC	06-03-1997
16	JOSEPH CHAMPNESS	27-04-1997
19	DENI JURIC	03-09-1997

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Fullback supporting attack alternatively
- Good combination play from the back



DEFENDING

- Good compact defending
- Defense line start from midfield with good goalkeeper covering space behind defense

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1-4-3-3
- Effective Tactical flexibility and movement off the ball
- Ball possession style of play with combination play through the thirds to create scoring chances
- Good wing play delivering good crosses and square passes to central striker Blackwood
- High pressing on the ball with 2 or 3 players not allowing the opponent to play a quick counterattack
- Well organised defending shape with zonal defence in midfield
- Aggressive defending in own half.
- Transition to attack, good passing technique under pressure

CHINA



COACH

MASSIMILIANO MADDALONI

NATIONALITY
ITALY



STATISTICS



Possession
48.0%

Def 3rd - **23%**
Mid 3rd - **60%**
Att 3rd - **17%**



Total goals
4



Shots
ON TARGET - 10
OFF TARGET - 11

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	LI ZHENG	18-03-1997
12	ZHOU YUCHEN	12-01-1995
23	CHEN WEI	14-02-1998

DEFENDER

2	HUANG ZHENGYU	24-01-1997
4	LIU YANG	17-06-1995
5	GAO ZHUNYI	21-08-1995
13	LI HAILONG	02-08-1996
16	LI SHUAI	18-06-1995
21	DENG HANWEN	08-01-1995

MIDFIELDER

3	LI XIAOMING	19-01-1996
6	YAO JUNSHENG	29-10-1995
8	HE CHAO	19-04-1995
11	ZHANG YUAN	28-01-1997
14	NIE AOSHUANG	16-01-1995
20	NAN SONG	21-06-1997

FORWARD

7	WEI SHIHAO	08-04-1995
9	ZHANG YUNING	05-01-1997
10	TANG SHI	24-01-1995
15	HU JINGHANG	23-03-1997
17	YANG LIYU	13-02-1997
18	LIU RUOFAN	28-01-1999
22	BA DUN	16-09-1995

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Fluid wing play with overlapping full backs and wingers cutting inside midfield



DEFENDING

Compact aggressive defence occasionally pushing up into half of the opponent

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 with transition to 1-4-4-2
- Patient build-up combined with direct play forward
- No. 8 controlling midfielder and playmaker
- Wing play with strong attacking full backs
- Wingers cutting inside midfield, no. 7 high impact
- Compact defending with one screening midfielder
- Good aggressive teamwork in winning the ball back

DPR KOREA



COACH

JU SONG-IL

NATIONALITY
DPR KOREA



STATISTICS



Possession
50%

Def 3rd - **20%**
Mid 3rd - **56%**
Att 3rd - **24%**



Total goals
3



Shots
ON TARGET - 15
OFF TARGET - 16

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
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GOALKEEPER	
1 KIM YU IL	30-01-1997
13 CHOE HYOK	10-02-1997
18 KANG JU HYOK	31-05-1997

DEFENDER	
2 AN SONG IL	05-08-1996
3 SONG KUM SONG	23-08-1995
4 KIM KUM CHOL	07-04-1997
14 O CHOL HYOK	25-09-1995
15 KIM CHUNG IL	21-08-1997
19 JONG TONG CHOL	21-04-1997
21 KIM NAM IL	01-01-1996

MIDFIELDER	
5 RI UN CHOL	13-07-1995
7 JO KWANG MYONG	03-01-1995
10 JO SOL SONG	27-10-1995
11 CHOE JU SONG	27-01-1996
12 KANG KUK CHOL	29-09-1999
20 SO JONG HYOK	01-07-1995
22 KIM KUK BOM	19-02-1995

FORWARD	
6 CHOE SONG HYOK	08-02-1998
8 KIM SONG SUN	31-12-1995
9 KIM YU SONG	24-01-1995
16 RI HUN	31-08-1997
17 HAN YONG THAE	30-10-1996

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Strong attacking 1-4-3-3 formation with attacking fullbacks and target man Kim Yu Song up front.



DEFENDING

Well organised 1-4-4-2 defending shape with great teamwork to win the ball back.

KEY FEATURES

- Assured short combination build up through the thirds
- 1-4-3-3 with two holding midfield players no. 5 and no. 22 dropping off to receive the ball
- Both fullbacks going forward at the same time creating good wing play with wing players cutting inside
- Central striker no. 9 Kim Yu Song good combination with attacking midfielder no. 16 Ri Hun
- Aggressive well organised defending giving little time to opponents to build up
- Midfielders 5 and 22 important in regaining possession after losing the ball in half opponent
- Quick counter attacks focused on central striker + support from midfield



COACH

ABDUL GHANI SHAHAD

NATIONALITY
IRAQ



STATISTICS



Possession
54%

Def 3rd - **20%**
Mid 3rd - **63%**
Att 3rd - **17%**



Total goals
8



Shots
ON TARGET - 17
OFF TARGET - 22

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	AHMED BASIL FADHIL	19-08-1996
12	ALI ABDULHASAN RHAIF	18-09-1996
22	HAYDER MOHAMMED AL-ABEDI	23-10-1996

DEFENDER

2	AHMED ABDULRIDHA	02-04-1997
3	HAMZAH ADNAN LAFLOOF	08-02-1996
4	BURHAN JUMA AH RAZZAQ	01-07-1996
5	ALI LATEEF MOHAMMED	18-01-1996
14	KHUDHUR ALI AL-TAMEEMI	19-06-1998
17	ALAA ALI MHAWI	03-06-1996
18	RUSLAN HANOON	04-03-1996
23	ALI KADHIM MOHAMMED	26-09-1997

MIDFIELDER

6	ALI RAHEEM AL-AZZAWI	17-02-1995
7	HUSSEIN AL-SAEDI	29-11-1996
8	MOHAMMED KHALID JAFFAL AL-JUMAILI	01-06-1996
13	BASHAR RESAN BONYAN	22-12-1996
15	IBRAHIM BAYESH KAMIL	01-05-2000
16	SAFAA HADI AL-FURAJI	14-10-1998
19	AMJED ATTWAN KADHIM	12-03-1997
21	AHMED MOHSIN JABER	24-01-1995

FORWARD

9	FARHAN SHAKOR TAWFEEQ	15-10-1995
10	AYMEN HUSSEIN	22-03-1996
11	ALAA ABBAS ABDULNABI	27-07-1997
20	WALEED KAREEM ALI	10-06-1997

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Generally building up from back
- Using crossing and overlapping from fullback (no. 17 on right side)
- No. 19 Amjed play as playmaker.



DEFENDING

- Back 4 play as zonal well organized
- Midfield screen player no. 16 Safaa supported by no. 19 Amjed
- Zonal in midfield with 5 players.

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1- 4-4-2 (1- 4- 4- 1-1)
- Constructive build up play from back
- Combination on wings with overlapping fullbacks ,wide players cutting in
- Fullback support alternatively
- Immediate organized pressure on the ball after losing it. Good team work.
- Back 4 zonal defense, compact Man marking in midfield
- Aggressive defending on the ball trying to create 2v1

JAPAN



COACH

HAJIME MORIYASU

NATIONALITY
JAPAN



STATISTICS



Possession
57%

Def 3rd - **21%**
Mid 3rd - **64%**
Att 3rd - **15%**



Total goals
3



Shots
ON TARGET - 15
OFF TARGET - 24

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	RYOSUKE KOJIMA	30-01-1997
12	GO HATANO	25-05-1998
23	ABE KOTO	01-08-1997

DEFENDER

2	SO FUJITANI	28-10-1997
4	KOU ITAKURA	27-01-1997
5	YANAGI TAKAHIRO	05-08-1997
7	HARA TERUKI	30-07-1998
15	HONOYA SYOUJI	08-10-1997
20	TAIYO KOGA	28-10-1998
22	YUGO TATSUTA	21-06-1998

MIDFIELDER

3	URATA ITSUKI	29-01-1997
6	NAGANUMA YOICHI	14-04-1997
8	TSUKASA MORISHIMA	25-04-1997
10	KOJI MIYOSHI	26-03-1997
11	KEITA ENDO	22-11-1997
13	YUTO IWASAKI	11-06-1998
14	TAKAGI AKITO	04-08-1997
16	INOUE SHION	03-08-1997
17	KAMIYA YUTA	24-04-1997
21	HIROKI ITO	12-05-1999

FORWARD

9	KYOSUKE TAGAWA	11-02-1999
18	REO HATATE	21-11-1997
19	REN KOMATSU	10-09-1998

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

1-3-4-3 / 1-3-2-4-1 Strong short combination play through the centre and over the wings.



DEFENDING

Compact 1-5-4-1. Middle third aggressive defending.

KEY FEATURES

- Constructive build up play with ability to change pace of the game.
- Excellent passing game, short combinations through the centre of the field.
- Rotating midfield players good on the ball in tight areas under pressure of the opponent.
- Good wing play, wing backs pushing high delivering good crosses.
- Compact defending in own half occasionally pushing up to press high. Good teamwork.
- Quick aggressive transition to defend, often regaining possession.
- After winning the ball the team choose to keep possession

JORDAN



COACH

IAIN BRUNSKILL

NATIONALITY
ENGLAND



STATISTICS



Possession
47%

Def 3rd - **24%**
Mid 3rd - **61%**
Att 3rd - **15%**



Total goals
3



Shots
ON TARGET - 15
OFF TARGET - 24

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	RAFAT KHALDOON NASER ALRABIE	31-07-1997
12	OBAIDA MOHAMMAD ALZU'BI	16-01-1995
22	MAHMOUD RAED MAHMOUD	24-12-1997

DEFENDER

2	JABEER ZEYAD JABER KHATTAB	26-06-1995
3	MUSTAFA KAMAL MUSTAFA EID	12-02-1995
4	KHALED KHALDOON ABUA'AQOULAH	02-06-1995
5	YAZAN ALARAB	31-01-1996
15	SAED AHMAD SALAMEH A	01-02-1997
21	WARD HELAL KHALID AL	29-06-1997

MIDFIELDER

6	IBRAHIM ANWER ALKHOB	12-02-1996
8	NOOR AL DEEN MAHMOUD	24-02-1997
13	YUSEF ABDEL JALBOUSH	15-06-1998
14	MAHMOUD SHAWKAT MUSLEH	20-05-1995
16	MOHAMMAD MAHMOUD HASHEM ALRAZEM	12-06-1995
18	SULEIMAN ALI SHEHADEH ABU ZAM'A	25-12-1995
19	ANAS AHMAD MAHMOUD HAMMAD	29-05-1998
20	HASSAN FATEHI MAHMOUD ZAHRAWI	23-04-1995
23	AHMAD ERSAN HAMDOUNI	28-09-1995

FORWARD

7	AHMED FAWZI MAHMOUD	13-01-1995
9	BAHA' FAISAL MOHAMMAD	30-05-1995
10	MOUSA MOHAMMAD MOUSA	10-06-1997
11	AHMAD MOHAMMAD M AL	18-06-1997
17	KHALED WALEED FAISAL DARDOUR	23-05-1996

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Full back supporting on attack alternatively. 16 supporting attacking with 8 in holding role. 10 and 14 penetrating from the wings.



DEFENDING

13 to drop back in midfield line. Aggressive defending in own half.

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1- 4-4-2 (1- 4- 4- 1-1)
- Direct style of play
- Combination on wings with overlapping fullbacks, wide players cutting in
- Aggressive individual pressing after losing the ball
- Quick transition in attack with forwards pass to strikers
- Back four zone defense, man marking in midfield creating pressing 2 vs 1 on the ball



KOREA REPUBLIC



COACH

KIM BONG-GIL

NATIONALITY
KOREA REPUBLIC



STATISTICS



Possession
50%

Def 3rd - **21%**
Mid 3rd - **62%**
Att 3rd - **18%**



Total goals
8



Shots
ON TARGET - 30
OFF TARGET - 23

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
-------	---------------

GOALKEEPER

1 KANG HYEONMU	13-03-1995
21 LEE TAEHUI	26-04-1995
23 SONG BUMKEUN	15-10-1997

DEFENDER

2 PARK JAEWOO	11-10-1995
3 LEE GUN	08-01-1996
4 GO MYEONGSEOK	27-09-1995
5 HWANG HYUNSOO	22-07-1995
13 YU YEONGJAE	16-12-1996
19 KUK TAE-JEONG	13-09-1995
20 JO SUNG WOOK	22-03-1995
22 LEE SANG MIN	01-01-1998

MIDFIELDER

6 HWANG KI WOOK	10-06-1996
7 KIM MOONHWAN	01-08-1995
8 HAN SEUNGGYU	28-09-1996
10 YOON SEUNGWON	11-02-1995
11 CHO YOUNG WOOK	05-02-1999
12 CHO YUMIN	17-11-1996
15 CHOI JAEHUN	20-11-1995
16 JANG YUNHO	25-08-1996
17 CHO JAEWAN	29-08-1995

FORWARD

9 LEE KEUN HO	21-05-1996
14 KIM GUNHEE	22-02-1995
18 PARK INHYEOK	29-12-1995

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Tactical flexibility 1-2-1-4-3
- Short combination play through center in combination with good wing play
- Using width through diagonal balls



DEFENDING

- Covering deep with 4 defenders and a screening midfield player
- Immediately pressing when losing ball
- Regrouping the team

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1-4-3-3
- Effective tactical flexibility and movement of ball
- Both full backs in attacking role
- Short combination play trough midfield. Han Seunggyu focusing on combination play with central striker Lee Keun-ho
- Good wing play
- Quick forward movement after regaining possession
- Aggressive defending on the ball after losing possession, good teamwork

 **MALAYSIA**



COACH

ONG KIM SWEE

NATIONALITY
MALAYSIA



STATISTICS



Possession
43%

Def 3rd - **37%**
Mid 3rd - **52%**
Att 3rd - **11%**



Total goals
4



Shots
ON TARGET - 13
OFF TARGET - 14

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
-------	---------------

GOALKEEPER

1 MUHAMMAD HAZIQ NADZLI	06-01-1998
22 MOHD IFWAT AKMAL	10-08-1996
23 AHMAD SYIHAN HAZMI	22-02-1996

DEFENDER

2 MATTHEW DAVIES	07-02-1995
3 MUHAMAD SYAZWAN ZAIPOL BAHARI	24-02-1995
4 MUHAMMAD ADIB ZAINUDIN	15-02-1995
9 ADAM NOR AZLIN	05-01-1996
15 DOMINIC TAN	12-03-1997
17 MUHAMMAD IRFAN ZAKARIA	04-06-1995
20 PILLAY ASOKAN	07-12-2000

MIDFIELDER

5 MUHAMMAD SYAHMI SAFARI	05-02-1998
7 NIK AKIF SYAHIRAN	11-05-1999
8 MUHAMAD NOR AZAM	03-01-1995
13 TOMMY MAWAT BADA	26-06-1996
14 MOHAMED SYAMER KUTTY ABBA	01-10-1997
16 MUHAMMAD DANIAL AMIER	27-03-1997
18 MUHAMMAD AKHYAR ABDUL RASHID	01-05-1999
21 MUHAMMAD SYAZWAN ANDIK MOHD ISHAK	04-08-1996

FORWARD

6 MUHAMMAD SAFAWI RASID	05-03-1997
10 MUHAMMAD HADI FAYYADH	22-01-2000
11 MUHAMMAD JAFRI	11-06-1997
12 THANABALAN NADARAJAH	25-02-1995
19 KOGILESWARAN RAJ	21-09-1998

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Direct style of play in wing
- No. 6 Safawi and no. 18 Akhyar play role 2nd forward alternatively according of attacking direction and penetration to the deep



DEFENDING

- Defending in own half
- Good organization and discipline to stay as unit and compact

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1-5-4-1
- Direct forward play combined with assured play from the back
- Wing backs in attacking role
- 6 and 18 cutting inside with sharp attacking runs forward
- Aggressive individual pressing after losing ball
- Compact defensive organization with a back 5 line and 4 midfielders in front
- Quick counter attacking after regaining the ball
- Very effective in taking scoring opportunities

OMAN



COACH

HAMAD AL AZANI

NATIONALITY
OMAN



STATISTICS



Possession
47%

Def 3rd - **22%**
Mid 3rd - **62%**
Att 3rd - **16%**



Total goals
0



Shots
ON TARGET - 5
OFF TARGET - 14

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
-------	---------------

GOALKEEPER

1	IBRAHIM SALEH AL-MUKHAINI	20-06-1997
18	FARIS ALI AL-GHAITHI	09-07-1996
22	BILAL JALAL AL BALUSHI	29-05-1996

DEFENDER

3	MAJID SALEEM AL-SAADI	09-05-1996
4	JUMA MARHOON AL-HABSI	28-01-1996
5	THANI GHARIB AL RUSHAIDI	16-03-1995
14	MAADH SALIM AL-KHALDI	25-10-1995
16	AHMED ALI AL-MATROUSHI	26-05-1997
21	ABDULAZIZ AL GHEILANI	14-05-1995

MIDFIELDER

2	MATAZ SALEH RABOH	28-05-1996
6	ABDULLAH FAWAZ ABDULGHAFUR	03-10-1996
8	JAMEEL AL YAHMADI	27-07-1996
9	MARWAN TAAIB WADI	07-04-1996
10	AZAN MAHMOOD AL TAMTAMI	21-02-1995
12	MATASAM MUBARAK AL-MAHIJARI	08-05-1997
13	HASSAN AHMED AL-AJMI	04-03-1995
15	AHMED KHALIFA SAID AL-KAABI	15-09-1996
17	SAMIR SALEH AL-ALAWI	08-08-1996
23	IBRAHIM ISSA AL-SAWWAFI	22-03-1996

FORWARD

7	AL-MANDHAR AL ALAWI	31-03-1995
11	MUHCEN SALEH AL GHASSANI	27-03-1997
19	ZAHIR SULAIMAN AL AGHBARI	28-05-1999
20	YUSAIF NASSER AL MUKHAINI	20-03-1995

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Assured combination play from the back with attacking fullbacks and skilful wingers



DEFENDING

Compact aggressive defence in the middle third with no. 6 as screening player

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3
- Patient build up short combination play combined with direct play forward to central striker no. 11
- No. 6 controlling midfielder and playmaker
- Wing play with strong attacking full back no. 21 and skilful, quick wingers switching positions
- No. 11 central striker good in keeping the ball to allow midfield players to support
- Compact defending with one screening midfielder
- Improved defending after 1st group match against China

 **PALESTINE**



COACH

AYMAN SANDOUQA

NATIONALITY
PALESTINE



STATISTICS



Possession
42%

Def 3rd - **36%**
Mid 3rd - **51%**
Att 3rd - **13%**



Total goals
8



Shots
ON TARGET - 25
OFF TARGET - 24

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	RAMZI S. A. FAHKOURI	19-02-1996
16	AHMED ABUHAMAM	13-04-1997
22	NAIM R N ABUAKER	20-01-1995

DEFENDER

2	MICHELMILAD TERMANINI	08-05-1998
14	YUSEF ALASHHAB	10-02-1995
15	ABDALLAH IDREES	09-04-1995
17	MOUSA BASHEER FARAWI	22-03-1998
23	SAADOU ABDELSALAM	23-11-1997

MIDFIELDER

3	MOHAMMED B A RASHID	03-07-1995
4	ABDALLAH RAYYAN	18-04-1995
6	MOHANAD S A FANNOUN	18-09-1995
8	OMAR H R SANDOUQA	22-06-1996
9	ODAY IBRAHIM DABBAGH	03-12-1998
19	MOHAMMED ALASSA	18-04-1997
20	RAMI SALEM	07-01-1996

FORWARD

5	AHMED R A ZRAIQ	01-04-1996
7	MAHMOUD ABUWARDA	31-05-1995
10	MAHMOUD YOUSEF	30-07-1997
11	MOHAMED DARWISH	20-02-1997
12	MOHAMMED ELKAYED	14-03-1997
13	SHEHAB R I QUMBOR	10-08-1997
18	MOHAMMED OBAID	30-09-1998
21	AHMED QATMISH	10-03-1998

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

1-2-1-3-4 with attacking fullbacks and 2 strong central midfield players.



DEFENDING

Compact well organised team. Aggressive defending.

KEY FEATURES

- Build up from the back with midfielder Rashid dropping off to receive the ball alternated with long forward balls to strikers.
- Both fullbacks in attacking role with wide midfielders both cutting inside midfield.
- Good wing play with attacking support from the central midfield players
- Strikers looking to receive ball behind defenders.
- Quick transition to defend occasionally pressing the ball high but mainly dropping off in own half.
- Compact defending with two strong centre halves.
- Team dropping off in own half and occasionally pushing high to disturb build up of the opposite team.
- After winning the ball quick forward passes to the strikers.

QATAR



COACH

FELIX SANCHEZ

NATIONALITY
SPAIN



STATISTICS



Possession
51%

Def 3rd - **30%**
Mid 3rd - **59%**
Att 3rd - **12%**



Total goals
10



Shots
ON TARGET - 25
OFF TARGET - 18

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
-------	---------------

GOALKEEPER	
1	YOUSOF HASSAN ALI 24-05-1996
21	MESHAAL AISSA BARSHAM 14-02-1998
22	MOHAMMED AHMED ALBAKRI 28-03-1997

DEFENDER	
3	SALAH ALAWI ALYAHRI 25-08-1995
5	TAMEEM MOHAMMED ALMUHAZA 21-07-1996
12	AHMED SUHAIL ALHAMAWENDE 08-02-1999
13	SULTAN HUSSAIN AL-BRAKE 07-04-1996
14	YOUSSEF AYMAN FARAHAT 21-03-1999
15	BASSAM ALRAWI 16-12-1997
16	HASHIM ALI 17-08-2000
20	SALEM ALI AL HAJRI 10-04-1996

MIDFIELDER	
2	TAREK SALMAN 05-12-1997
4	OMAR AHMED AL-EMADI 05-04-1995
6	ABDULLAH ABDULSALAM 10-05-1997
7	KHALID MUNEER MAZEED 24-02-1998
8	AHMAD MOEIN DOOZANDEH 20-10-1995
10	AKRAM HASSAN AFIF 18-11-1996
11	NASSER IBRAHIM AL-NASR 11-07-1995
17	ABDELRAHMAN MOUSTAFA 05-04-1997
18	OMER MADIBO 22-10-1996
23	KHALED MOHAMMED 07-06-2000

FORWARD	
9	MESHAAL QASSIM AL-SHAMARI 19-01-1995
19	ALMOEZ ALI 19-08-1996

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Short combination play in a 1-4-3-3 with 10 and 9 in decisive role



DEFENDING

1-4-4-2/1-4-1-4-1 compact aggressive defending with high pressure occasionally dropping off in own half

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 with solid build up from the goalkeeper going through the thirds
- Good long distance passing from no. 15 Bassam to switch play and feed no. 19 Almoez up front
- No. 8 Moein attacking midfielder linking up with no. 19 Almoez
- Both attacking fullbacks putting pressure on opponent defence line
- No. 10 Afif starting wide on the left cutting inside with decisive passing and individual runs
- Striker no. 19 Almoez scoring goals from dangerous well timed forward runs behind defenders
- Quick, high and aggressive organised defending with two strong holding midfield players no. 18 Madibo and No. 20 Albakar blocking midfield

SAUDI ARABIA



COACH

DANIEL TEGLIA

NATIONALITY
ARGENTINA



STATISTICS



Possession
60%

Def 3rd - **25%**
Mid 3rd - **61%**
Att 3rd - **14%**



Total goals
2



Shots
ON TARGET - 14
OFF TARGET - 10

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 AMIN ALBUKHARI	02-05-1997
21 MOHAMMED ALYAMI	14-08-1997
22 SALEH ALOHAYMID	21-05-1998
DEFENDER	
2 ABDULLAH TARMIN	19-03-1997
3 AWN MUTLAQ ALSLALULI	02-09-1998
4 ABDULLAH AHMED KHATEEB	12-03-1995
5 ABDULELAH ALAMRI	15-01-1997
12 MOHAMMED KAREEM H ALBAQAWI	12-07-1995
13 HAMDAN ATIAH H ALSHAMRANI	14-12-1996
15 QASEM MOHAMMED LAJAMI	24-04-1996
23 ALI LAJAMI	24-04-1996
MIDFIELDER	
6 SAMI ALNAJI	07-02-1997
7 RAKAN ALANAZE	14-07-1998
8 OSAMA YOUSEF ALKHALAF	26-12-1996
10 FAHAD MOHAMMED S BIN JUMAYAH	10-05-1995
11 ABDULLAH AHMED A ALJOUI	02-03-1995
14 HASSAN ALASMARI	12-01-1997
16 A SULTAN SAAD JAMAL	25-09-1996
17 ABDULLAH MOHAMMED ALKHAIBARI	16-08-1996
19 FAHAD AYIDH ALRASHIDI	16-05-1997
FORWARD	
9 MUJAHID MUBARAK ALMANIA	15-01-1996
18 JABER NASSER ASIRI	24-09-1997
20 ABDULAZIZ HASSAN ALARYANI	13-03-1996

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Alternatively fullbacks supporting attack
- Build from central midfield no. 17 Alkhaibari to strikers
- No. 10 Jumayah and no. 11 Aljoui good in 1v1 running at defenders



DEFENDING

- Compact defense organization
- Strong pressing from midfield

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1- 4-5-2
- Tactical flexibility with changing positions , good movement off the ball
- Ball possession style of play changing pace of the game with sharp forward passes to strikers
- Quick regrouping after losing the ball putting pressure at the same time
- Back 4 zonal defense. Good discipline, well organized as a unit
- 2 classic screen players in midfield
- Flexibility in keeping possession and quick forward pass



COACH

HUSSEIN AFASH

NATIONALITY
SYRIA



STATISTICS



Possession
46%

Def 3rd - **22%**
Mid 3rd - **60%**
Att 3rd - **18%**



Total goals
1



Shots
ON TARGET - 13
OFF TARGET - 19

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	KHALED IBRAHIM	10-01-1995
22	AHMAD KANAAN	06-05-1995
23	TALAL AL HUSSEN	11-11-1995

DEFENDER

2	AHMAD ALABDULLAH	08-08-1997
3	YOUSEF AL HAMWI	01-02-1997
4	JIHAD BUSMAR	01-01-1996
5	MHD FARES ARNAOUT	01-01-1997
13	TAREK ALMOHAMMAD HNDAWI	31-01-1995
15	KHALED KURDAGHLI	01-01-1997
21	AHMAD ALGHALAB	02-01-1996

MIDFIELDER

6	AHMAD ASHKAR	01-01-1996
8	MOHAMAD ANEZ	14-05-1995
11	MOHAMMAD ALMARMOUR	04-01-1995
12	HAMZAH MUHANAETH	08-01-1998
14	ABDULLAH JUNIAT	18-01-1996
16	MOHAMAD ZEID GHRIR	10-01-1998
17	ZAKRIA HANNAN	21-08-1997
19	ABDULHADI SHALHA	19-01-1999
20	AHMAD AL AHMAD	18-10-1996

FORWARD

7	MOUMEN NAJI	01-01-1996
9	SHADI ALHAMWI	01-01-1995
10	MOHAMAD RAFAT MUHTADI	01-01-1995
18	ABD AL RAHMAN BARAKAT	01-01-1998

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- Deep passing to split defense and play behind defense line
- Good individual and collective passing



DEFENDING

- No. 6 Ashkar drop to central defense with 5 players
- Defending deep not allowing penetration actions

KEY FEATURES

- Basic formation : 1-4-1-4-1 (1-5-4-1)
- Play with 3 forwards classic 2 wingers and striker
- Fullback alternatively supporting
- Direct style of play
- Switch of play with good diagonal passes
- Back 5 defense line with combination of zonal defense and man marking
- Aggressive pressing in midfield zone
- Good compact organization

TEAM PROFILES

 **THAILAND**



COACH

ZORAN JANKOVIC

NATIONALITY
BULGARIA



STATISTICS



Possession
47%

Def 3rd - **36%**
Mid 3rd - **51%**
Att 3rd - **13%**



Total goals
1



Shots
ON TARGET - 5
OFF TARGET - 9

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
GOALKEEPER	
1 APIRAK WORAWONG	07-01-1996
18 ANUSIT TERMMEE	19-01-1995
20 NONT MUANGNGAM	20-04-1997
DEFENDER	
2 PAWEE TANTHATEMEE	22-10-1996
3 SAHARAT PONGSUWAN	11-07-1996
4 WORAWUT NAMVECH	04-07-1995
6 WANCHAI JARUNONGKRAN	18-12-1996
12 NETIPONG SANMAHUNG	04-03-1996
15 SARINGKAN PROMSUPA	29-03-1997
23 SANTIPHARP CHANNGOM	23-09-1996
MIDFIELDER	
5 RATTHANAKORN MAIKAMI	07-01-1998
8 NOPPHON PHONKAM	19-07-1996
10 CHAIYAWAT BURAN	26-10-1995
11 TANASITH SIRIPALA	09-08-1995
14 ANON AMORNLERTSAK	06-11-1997
16 SIRIMONGKHON JITBANJONG	08-08-1997
17 JAKKIT WACHPIROM	26-01-1997
21 WORACHIT KANITSRIBUMPHEN	24-08-1997
FORWARD	
7 NATTAWUT SOMBATYOTHA	01-05-1996
9 CHENROP SAMPHAODI	02-06-1995
13 PHICHA AU-TRA	07-01-1996
19 SITTICHOK KANNOO	09-08-1996
22 SUPACHOK SARACHAT	22-05-1998

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

Short combination build up focusing on wing play with individually skilful players.



DEFENDING

Compact in a 1-5-4-1 defending shape.

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-3-3 in the first match changing into 1-3-4-3
- Building up from the back with two midfielders dropping off to receive the ball
- Good wing play with quick wing players
- No. 9 as target man up front good at shielding the ball
- Defending deep changing from a 1-4-5-1 in a 1-5-4-1 formation in the second and third match
- Aggressive defending on the ball
- Quick transition to attack under pressure opponent

UZBEKISTAN



COACH

RAVSHAN KHAYDAROV

NATIONALITY
UZBEKISTAN



STATISTICS



Possession
55%

Def 3rd - **27%**
Mid 3rd - **58%**
Att 3rd - **16%**



Total goals
12



Shots
ON TARGET - 32
OFF TARGET - 37

SQUAD	DATE OF BIRTH
-------	---------------

GOALKEEPER

1	ERGASHEV BOTIRALI	23-06-1995
12	KHAMRAEV DILSHOD	11-07-1995
21	DAVRONOV RAKHIMJON	03-10-1996

DEFENDER

2	ASHURMATOV RUSTAMJON	07-07-1996
3	KHOJIAKBAR ALIJONOV	19-04-1997
4	KOMILOV AKRAMJON	14-03-1996
5	OTAKHONOV ABBOSJON	25-08-1995
13	ISLOMJON KOBILOV	01-06-1997
16	NARZULLAEV DONIYORJON	11-04-1995
18	HUSNIDDIN GOFUROV	20-03-1997
20	TURSUNOV DOSTONBEK	13-06-1995

MIDFIELDER

6	GANIEV AZIZJON	22-02-1998
7	XAMROBEKOV ODILJON	13-02-1996
8	JASURBEK YAKHSHIBOEV	24-06-1997
10	SIDIKOV JAVOKHIR	08-12-1996
14	ISROILOV ABDUJAMOL	24-12-1996
15	OYBEK RUSTAMOV	02-04-1997
17	KHAMDAMOV DOSTONBEK	24-07-1996
19	SHUKUROV OTABEK	22-06-1996
23	SUKHROB NURULLOEVI	04-01-1998

FORWARD

9	URINBOEV ZABIKHILLO	30-03-1995
11	SIDOROV ANDREY	25-06-1995
22	BOBIR ABDIXOLIKOV	23-04-1997

TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

1-4-2-3-1 / 1-3-4-3 fluid attacking play with attacking fullbacks and goal scoring midfield players



DEFENDING

Compact well organised team. Aggressive high pressure. Conceded only 2 goals prior to final.

KEY FEATURES

- Excellent passing game with good options for player in possession
- Patient build up or, when pressed, direct supply to striker no. 9 and second-ball support from midfield
- Good combinations on right, with left-footed winger Yakhshiboev cutting inside, very good in 1v1
- Strong midfield with Xamrobekov in control.
- Well-organised unit with strong work ethic, discipline, team spirit
- Tactical flexibility; three changes of structure during match
- Collective high pressing or quick transitions to 1-4-1-4-1 defending

VIETNAM



COACH

PARK HANG-SEO

NATIONALITY
KOREA REPUBLIC



STATISTICS



Possession
35%

Def 3rd - **35%**
Mid 3rd - **55%**
Att 3rd - **10%**



Total goals
8



Shots
ON TARGET - 17
OFF TARGET - 23

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1	BUI TIEN DUNG	28-02-1997
22	DANG NGOC TUAN	06-05-1995
23	NGUYEN VAN HOANG	17-02-1995

DEFENDER

2	PHAM XUAN MANH	09-02-1996
4	BUI TIEN DUNG	02-10-1995
5	DOAN VAN HAU	19-04-1999
15	LE VAN DAI	02-08-1996
16	NGUYEN THANH CHUNG	08-09-1997
17	VU VAN THANH	14-04-1996
21	TRAN DINH TRONG	25-04-1997

MIDFIELDER

3	NGUYEN TRONG DAI	07-04-1997
6	LUONG XUAN TRUONG	28-04-1995
7	NGUYEN PHONG HONG DUY	13-06-1996
8	PHAM DUC HUY	20-01-1995
9	NGUYEN VAN TOAN	12-04-1996
11	DO DUY MANH	29-09-1996
12	CHAU NGOC QUANG	01-02-1996
13	HA DUC CHINH	22-09-1997
14	PHAN VAN DUC	11-04-1996
18	TRUONG VAN THAI QUY	22-08-1997
19	NGUYEN QUANG HAI	12-04-1997
20	BUI DUNG	23-11-1998

FORWARD

10	NGUYEN CONG PHUONG	21-01-1995
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TEAM SHAPES



ATTACKING

- 1-3-4-3 formation
- Direct play / combination play
- Quick counter attack



DEFENDING

- 1-5-4-1 formation
- Compact in own half
- Aggressive on the ball

KEY FEATURES

- Build up long forward ball to striker from goal keeper alternated with short combination play.
- Wing players cutting inside midfield with Nguyen Quang Hai in decisive role scoring 5 goals in this tournament.
- Midfielder Luong Xuan Truong good link up between defenders and strikers
- Players are comfortable on the ball even in tight areas and under pressure.
- 5 man defensive line, aggressive defending deep in own half
- Goalkeeper Bui Tien Dung good on high balls; punching and catching
- Quick counter attacking style when regaining possession
- Very effective in goal scoring

TOURNAMENT RESULTS



TOURNAMENT RESULTS

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
QATAR	3	3	0	0	4	1	3	9
UZBEKISTAN	3	2	0	1	2	1	1	6
CHINA P.R.	3	1	0	2	4	3	1	3
OMAN	3	0	0	3	0	5	-5	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
09/01/18	CHINA P.R.	3-0 (2-0)	OMAN
09/01/18	QATAR	1-0 (0-0)	UZBEKISTAN
12/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	CHINA P.R.
12/01/18	OMAN	0-1 (0-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	CHINA P.R.	1-2 (1-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	OMAN

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
IRAQ	3	2	1	0	5	1	4	7
MALAYSIA	3	1	1	1	3	5	-2	4
JORDAN	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
SAUDI ARABIA	3	0	2	1	2	3	-1	2

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
09/01/18	CHINA P.R.	3-0 (2-0)	OMAN
09/01/18	QATAR	1-0 (0-0)	UZBEKISTAN
12/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	CHINA P.R.
12/01/18	OMAN	0-1 (0-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	CHINA P.R.	1-2 (1-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	OMAN

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JAPAN	3	3	0	0	5	1	4	9
PALESTINE	3	1	1	1	6	3	3	4
DPR KOREA	3	1	1	1	3	4	-1	4
THAILAND	3	0	0	3	1	7	-6	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
09/01/18	CHINA P.R.	3-0 (2-0)	OMAN
09/01/18	QATAR	1-0 (0-0)	UZBEKISTAN
12/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	CHINA P.R.
12/01/18	OMAN	0-1 (0-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	CHINA P.R.	1-2 (1-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	OMAN

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
KOREA REPUBLIC	3	2	1	0	5	3	2	7
VIETNAM	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
AUSTRALIA	3	1	0	2	5	5	0	3
SYRIA	3	0	2	1	1	3	-2	2

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
09/01/18	CHINA P.R.	3-0 (2-0)	OMAN
09/01/18	QATAR	1-0 (0-0)	UZBEKISTAN
12/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	CHINA P.R.
12/01/18	OMAN	0-1 (0-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	CHINA P.R.	1-2 (1-1)	QATAR
15/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	1-0 (1-0)	OMAN

QUARTER-FINALS

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
19/01/18	JAPAN	0-4 (0-3)	UZBEKISTAN
19/01/18	QATAR	3-2 (2-0)	PALESTINE
20/01/18	KOREA REPUBLIC	2-1 (1-0)	MALAYSIA
20/01/18	IRAQ	3-3 a.e.t. (1-1,1-1) 3-5 PSO	VIETNAM

SEMI-FINALS

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
23/01/18	QATAR	2-2 a.e.t. (2-2,1-0) 3-4 PSO	VIETNAM
23/01/18	UZBEKISTAN	4-1 a.e.t. (1-1,1-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC

3rd / 4th PLACING

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
26/01/18	QATAR	1-0 (1-0)	KOREA REPUBLIC

FINAL

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
27/01/18	VIETNAM	1-2 a.e.t. (1-1,1-1)	UZBEKISTAN



REFEREES

REFEREE LIST

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| 9 | Akane Yagi | JPN |
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| 2 | Ali Mohamad Ahmad | SYR |



ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT REFEREE (AAR) SYSTEM

The AFC Referees Committee agreed to the introduction of the Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) system in AFC competitions in Goa, in September 2016.

In operational terms, the referee, two assistant referees and the fourth official will now be joined by two AARs, who will be positioned along the goal-line in each half.

Other than enhancing the decision making process, the application of the AAR system is beneficial towards reinforcing match control through teamwork between the referee and the AARs by having two different angles of vision when looking at the same incident. This creates an improved assessment in and around the penalty area, especially when the referee clearly missed the incident.

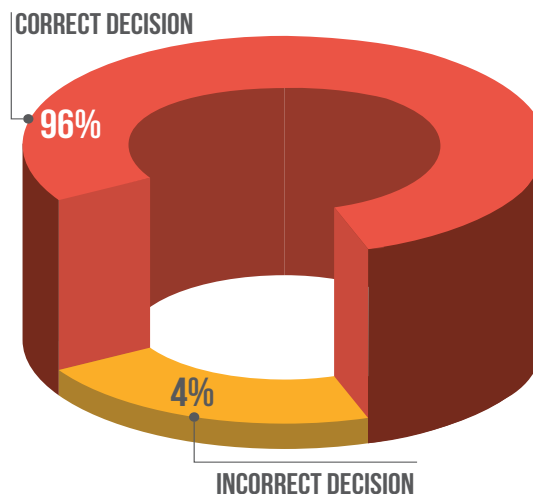
The preparation prior to the implementation comprised two stages in 2017: the AFC Additional Assistant Referees course in Doha, Qatar from 7 to 11 March and its second edition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 11 to 14 July.

Asia's top match officials underwent theoretical sessions as well as a series of practical on-the-field simulations aiming at reaching consistency and uniformity in their understanding and application of system. A specific teaching material was also designed to enhance the referees' preparation, with video and graphic demonstrations of the system's concept, protocol and technique.

PERFORMANCE AT THE AFC U23 CHAMPIONSHIP CHINA:

After proving its efficacy at 2017 edition of the AFC Champions League (15% improvement in judging penalty area incidents), the AARs made their appearance at the AFC U23 Championship in China.

A game-changing decision was made by the additional assistant referee at the semi-final match Qatar versus Vietnam.



The AAR correctly identified that the ball had completely crossed the goal-line, adding Qatar's equalising goal to the final score that allowed the team to proceed to kicks from penalty mark.

Throughout the competition, the additional assistant referees successfully cooperated with the referee in decision-making in and around the penalty area in twenty-seven incidents out of the thirty two matches. The AARs' support was accurate in a 96% of the situations with only a minimal percentage of incorrect calls made (4%).

After the AFC U23 Championship a total of 45 matches (13 in ACL, 32 in AFC U23) have been officiated by AARs.



Award present

STAR SELECTION

GOALKEEPERS



ERGASHEV BOTIRALI (UZB)



BUI TIEN DUNG (VIE)

DEFENDERS



KOMILOV AKRAMJON (UZB)



ASHURMATOV RUSTAMJON (UZB)



YUGO TATSUTA (JPN)



QATAR BASSAM ALRAWI (QAT)



HWANG HYUNSOO (KOR)



RUON TONGYIK (AUS)

MIDFIELDERS



HAN SEUNGGYU (KOR)



SIDIKOV JAVOKHIR (UZB)



RASHID (PAL)



GANIEV AZIZJOV (UZB)



XAMROBEKOV ODILJON (UZB)



DANIEL PETER DE SILVA (AUS)



LUONG XUAN TRUONG (VIE)



SAFAA HADI AL-FURAIJI (IRQ)

FORWARDS



WEI SHIHAO (CHN)



AKRAM HASSAN AFIF (QAT)



LEE KEUN HO (KOR)



URINBOEV ZABIKHILLO (UZB)



ALMOEZ ALI (QAT)



JASURBEK YAKSIBOEV (UZB)



NGUYEN QUANG HAI (VIE)

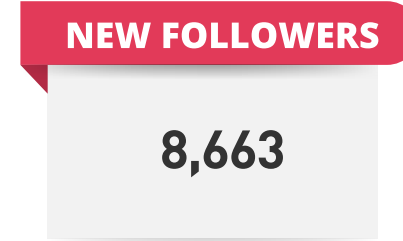
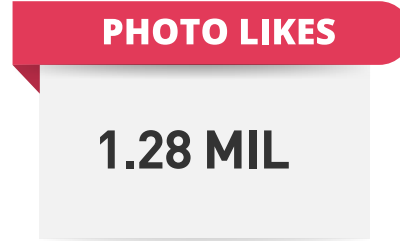
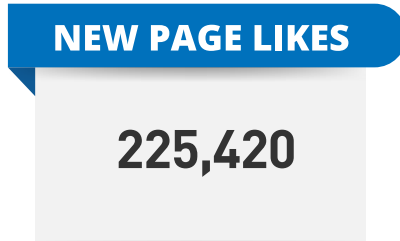
EXTRA-TIME



DIGITAL STATISTICS

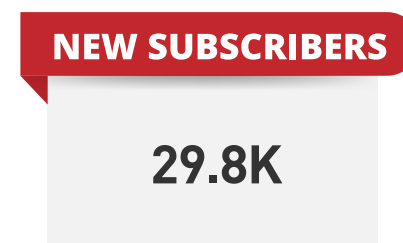
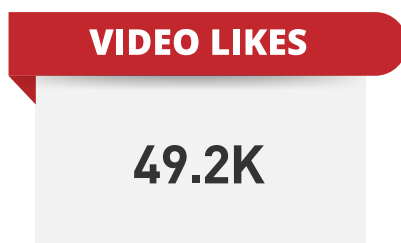
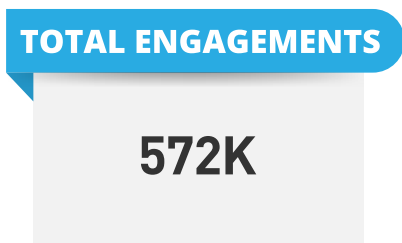
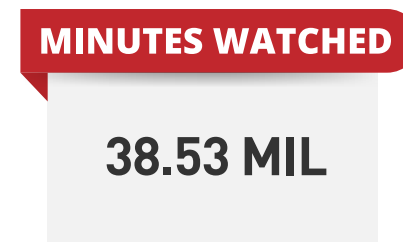
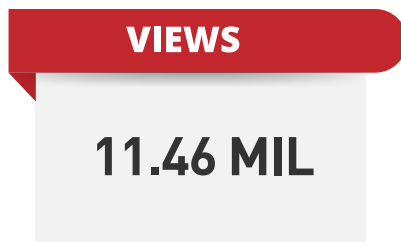
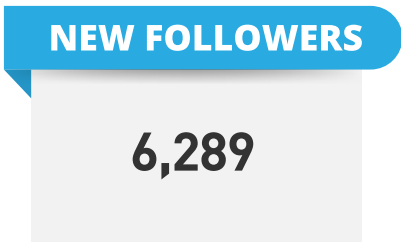
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* Data from January 6 - 30, 2018



** Data from January 6 - 30, 2018*

** Data from January 6 - 30, 2018*

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