

AFC ASIAN CUP UAE 2019™



AFC
ASIAN CUP
UAE 2019™

TECHNICAL REPORT & STATISTICS



BRINGING ASIA TOGETHER



**AFC
ASIAN CUP**
UAE 2019™

5 January - 1 February 2019

TECHNICAL REPORT & STATISTICS



Contents

08

Story of the tournament

28

The Winning Coach

30

Technical Topics

44

Goalscoring Analysis

49

Best Goals

50

Talking Points

54

Team Profiles

104

Tournament results

108

Referees

120

Star Selection

130

Committees

136

Digital Statistics

142

Acknowledgements



Message from AFC President

Dear Friends, Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to this comprehensive Technical Report for the biggest-ever AFC Asian Cup. The 17th edition of the AFC Asian Cup promised to take the competition to new heights and, in many areas, we achieved our objectives as this report will catalogue.

Congratulations once again to Qatar for their historic victory and to all our teams and Member Associations for their unity and support in delivering not only this event but also a new qualifying competition.

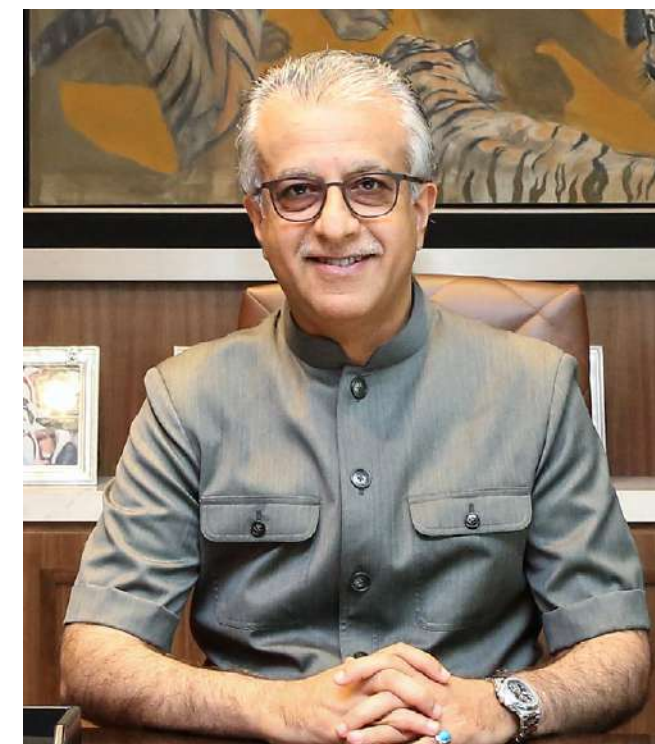
With the expansion from 16 to 24 teams for this tournament the aim was to provide top-level competition for our Member Associations, as envisaged by our Vision and Mission. The rise of emerging nations, including Kyrgyz Republic, Philippines, Vietnam, Palestine and India, was evidence of the success of our ambition.

The AFC's determination to embrace the latest technology was underlined with the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system making its debut in AFC competitions and I thank our Referees Department, FIFA and IFAB for the successful delivery of VAR. A detailed referees' report is included in this publication.

The contribution of the Organising Committee of the Asian Cup, the AFC Competitions and the AFC Referees Committee, and the Asian Cup Office is recognised as well as the support of the UAE Government, the UAE Football Association, the Local Organising Committee and all the staff and volunteers.

Finally, a word of thanks to the Technical Study Group, who under the guidance of the AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh and the AFC Technical Committee worked so hard to deliver this report which I am sure you will find interesting and informative.

Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President



Story of the Tournament





Group A



UAE



Thailand



India



Bahrain

Group B



Australia



Syria



Palestine



Jordan

Group C



Korea Republic



China PR



Kyrgyz Republic



Philippines

Group D



IR Iran



Iraq



Vietnam



Yemen

Group E



Saudi Arabia



Qatar



Lebanon



DPR Korea

Group F



Japan



Uzbekistan



Oman



Turkmenistan



Story of the Tournament

Group Stage

Group A



United Arab Emirates

United Arab Emirates started their campaign by sharing points with Bahrain following a 1-1 draw. The host nation, however, bounced back to beat India 2-0 on Matchday Two. They settled for another 1-1 draw with Thailand in their final group tie but five points were enough for UAE to top the standings.



Thailand

Thailand bounced back from their opening 4-1 defeat against India to stun Bahrain 1-0 with Chanathip Songkrasin their hero. The War Elephants then held UAE 1-1 to finish second in the group ahead of Bahrain on their head-to-head record after both sides finished with four points.



India

India could not build on the resounding win over Thailand as they fell 2-0 to UAE on Matchday Two. The Blue Tigers could not find a way past Bahrain, suffering a second defeat to finish last.



Bahrain

Bahrain, having shared points with UAE on Matchday One, were staring at elimination after falling 1-0 to Thailand. However, Al-Ahmar earned a place in the last-16 on Matchday Three after Jamal Rashed's late penalty strike sealed a precious win against India. The West Asians went through as one of the best four third-placed teams.



Group B



Australia

Unperturbed by their loss to Jordan, Australia sailed past Palestine 3-0 in their second match. The Socceroos, missing several players due to injuries, then edged Syria 3-2 in a thriller to finish second.



Jordan

Jordan were in the group stage from start to finish as they followed up their stunning 1-0 win over defending champions Australia with a 2-0 triumph over Syria to confirm their last 16 spot with a match to spare. Vital Borkelmans' side concluded their preliminary campaign with a 0-0 draw with Palestine to emerge group winners.



Palestine

Palestine turned heads when they held Syria to a goalless draw on Matchday One. Nouredine Ould Ali's men, however, were outplayed by a resurgent Australia but fought hard to hold Jordan 0-0 to finish third in the group but missed on a Round of 16 spot. They did, however, create history by claiming two points, as their maiden campaign in 2015 had ended in three defeats.



Syria

Despite having 2017 AFC Player of the Year Omar Khribin and Omar Al Soma in their ranks, Syria failed to assert themselves as they collected just a point from their draw with Palestine. They replaced Bernd Stange with Fajer Ebrahim coming in as head coach but the defeat to Australia meant the Qasioun Eagles finished bottom.





Group C



Korea Republic

Hwang Ui-jo and Kim Min-jae stepped up to shoulder the goalscoring responsibilities in the initial absence of Son Heung-min as Korea Republic breezed through the group stage with wins over the Philippines (1-0), Kyrgyz Republic (1-0) and China PR (2-0).



China PR

Marcello Lippi's China were made to sweat in their 2-1 win against Kyrgyz Republic but showed their class in the 3-0 defeat of the Philippines. Korea Republic, however, proved too strong for Team Dragon as they took second spot.



Kyrgyz Republic

Aleksandr Krestinin's debutant side were the surprise package of the competition. The White Falcons suffered losses against Korea Republic and China PR but bounced back in style to beat fellow debutants the Philippines 3-1 to finish third in the standings. The Central Asians went on to qualify for the Round of 16 as one of the best four third-placed teams.



Philippines

The Philippines fought gallantly to keep the Taeguk Warriors at bay but eventually conceded a goal in the 67th minute. Their performance, however, then took a dip as the Azkals were overwhelmed 3-0 by a Wu Lei inspired China PR. Their only goal in the competition came in their 3-1 defeat to Kyrgyz Republic on Matchday Three.



Group D



Islamic Republic of Iran

Islamic Republic of Iran flexed their muscles as they qualified for the knockout stage with easy wins against Yemen (5-0) and Vietnam (2-0) before settling for a goalless draw with Iraq, to top the standings on goal difference.



Iraq

Iraq showed their resilience when they twice came back from a goal down to beat Vietnam in a 3-2 thriller. The Lions of Mesopotamia hit three against Yemen and shared the spoils with IR Iran to finish level with Team Melli on seven points. Iraq, however, settled for second in the standings behind IR Iran on goal difference.



Vietnam

Vietnam squeezed into the last 16 as the fourth highest-ranked third-placed team. After opening their account with losses against Iraq and IR Iran, the Golden Dragons' 2-0 win over Yemen proved vital as they pipped Lebanon to the Round of 16 on the fair play rule.



Yemen

Debutants Yemen enjoyed several good opening minutes against IR Iran but found themselves trailing 3-0 at half-time before conceding two more. Jan Kocian's men never recovered from that and went on to concede 10 goals to finish bottom.





Group E



Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia started brightly, scoring four past DPR Korea in their opening match. The Green Falcons then defeated Lebanon 2-0 but found Qatar too strong as they fell to two Almoez Ali goals.



Qatar

A rampant Qatar eased into the Round of 16 by scoring 10 goals – the highest in the group stage, to claim top spot. Seven of the 10 goals came from prolific striker Almoez Ali. Felix Sanchez's men did not concede in the preliminary stage either.



Lebanon

Lebanon got their campaign off to a slow start with defeats against Qatar (2-0) and Saudi Arabia (2-0). The Cedars recovered well in their final game against DPR Korea, coming back from a goal down to win 4-1. It was not enough to qualify for the Round of 16 though as they lost out to Vietnam on the fair play rule.



DPR Korea

DPR Korea, who were making their fifth appearance in the continental competition, finished bottom of the group after scoring one goal in their final game against Lebanon and having conceded 14 overall – the highest in the group stage.



Group F



Japan

Japan qualified into the Round of 16 after winning all their group matches – Turkmenistan (3-2), Oman (1-0) and Uzbekistan (2-1).



Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan started strongly to edge Oman 2-1 and followed up with a convincing 4-0 win over Turkmenistan. Against Japan, the White Wolves struck first in the 40th minute through Eldor Shomurodov but the Samurai Blue clawed their way back with goals from Yoshinori Muto (43rd) and Tsukasa Shiotani (58th). Uzbekistan claimed second place with six points.



Oman

Oman bounced back from their losses against Japan and Uzbekistan to defeat Turkmenistan 3-1 to finish third in the standings. The Al Ahmar qualified for their first appearance in the knockout stage as one of the best four third-placed teams.



Turkmenistan

The Emeralds, who were making their second appearance in the finals, finished bottom of the group after three defeats. Their performance, however, raised eyebrows as they fought to the end in all their matches.



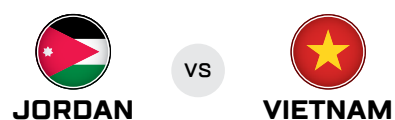


Story of the Tournament

Round of 16

With 24 teams competing in the AFC Asian Cup for the first time in history, UAE 2019 saw a Round of 16 introduced, with the top two teams from each of the six groups and the four best third-placed sides advancing.

Under the new format, Bahrain, debutants Kyrgyz Republic, Oman and Vietnam, qualified as the four best third-placed teams. It was particularly special for Oman as they advanced to the knockout round after their campaign had ended in the group stage in three previous appearances.



Vietnam, having qualified for the Round of 16 on the fair play rule ahead of Syria, continued their fairy-tale run as they edged Jordan 4-2 on penalties to be the first team to book their place in the UAE 2019 quarter-finals. The Golden Dragons, trailing 1-0 at the break, bounced back in the second half with Nguyen Công Phượng's strike in the 51st minute pushing the game into extra time and then penalties. It was Vietnam's first win in the knockout stage of the AFC Asian Cup.



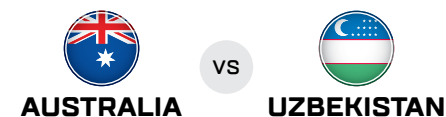
China PR displayed grit and determination to come back from a goal down to beat Thailand 2-1, courtesy of second half goals from Xiao Zhi and Gao Lin, to advance to their fifth AFC Asian Cup quarter-finals.



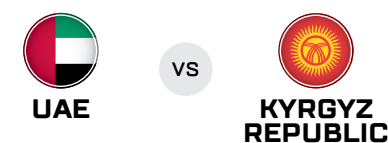
Asia's top ranked team Islamic Republic of Iran continued their unbeaten record after beating Oman 2-0 in a thrilling match that saw goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand save an early penalty before Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Ashkan Dejagah found the back of the net to keep them on track for their first title since 1976.



Japan continued their pursuit of a record-fifth Continental title with a resilient 1-0 win over Saudi Arabia, with Takehiro Tomiyasu opening his international account through a stunning header in the first half to stretch the Samurai Blue's record to four wins.



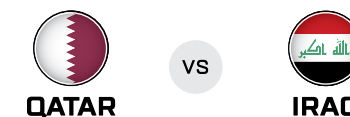
Matthew Ryan was defending champions Australia's hero after the goalkeeper saved two spot-kicks as the Socceroos emerged winners in a 4-2 penalty shoot-out after the match had ended in a goalless stalemate after extra time.



Host nation United Arab Emirates survived a late Kyrgyz Republic fightback to defeat the tournament debutants 3-2 in extra time to seal their place in the quarter-finals, with Ahmed Khalil converting a penalty in the 103rd minute.



A Son Heung-min led Korea Republic had to dig deep into extra time to beat a resilient Bahrain 2-1, with the West Asians having come back from a goal down. Defender Kim Jin-su sealed the Taeguk Warriors' win with a superb header.



Felix Sanchez's Qatar extended their perfect record with a 1-0 triumph against 2007 champions Iraq, courtesy of Bassam Al Rawi's free-kick from 25 yards out into the bottom left corner of the net as The Maroons booked a third quarter-final appearance.





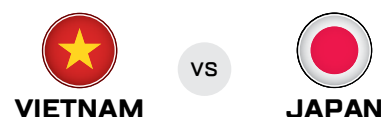
Story of the Tournament

Quarter-finals

Four former champions entered, but only two prevailed in a memorable quarter-final stage at the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019.

Four-time winners Japan defeated Vietnam and three-time champions Islamic Republic of Iran saw off China PR to book their semi-final tickets, while host nation United Arab Emirates and fellow West Asians Qatar ended the campaigns of both 2015 finalists, beating Australia and Korea Republic respectively.

The quarter-finals were historic for their use of VAR (Video Assistant Referee), with the clash between Japan and Vietnam in Dubai marking the first time the system had been implemented in the AFC Asian Cup.



A successful second-half penalty kick from youngster Ritsu Doan proved decisive, as Japan reached their fifth AFC Asian Cup semi-final in the last six editions of the tournament with a 1-0 over Vietnam at Al Maktoum Stadium.



Buoyed by their Round of 16 success against Jordan, Vietnam pushed Hajime Moriyasu's side, particularly in the opening 45 minutes. However, Doan earned a spot kick, then converted it in the 57th minute to give the Samurai Blue their fifth successive win by a single-goal margin.



Islamic Republic of Iran produced arguably their best display of the competition so far, eliminating Marcello Lippi's China PR with an emphatic 3-0 win at Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium.

Goals from Mehdi Taremi and Sardar Azmoun had Team Melli two goals clear just after the half-hour mark, and Carlos Queiroz's side never looked back, with Karim Ansarifard adding a third in the the first minute of second-half stoppage time.

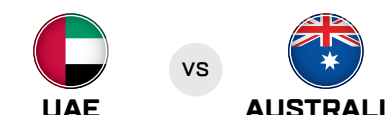


The result ended a run of three successive quarter-final exits for Iran, who confirmed their status as AFC Asian Cup semi-finalists for the first time since 2004.



A 78th-minute rocket wrote Abdelaziz Hatim's name into the history books, as the Al Gharafa midfielder became the man to seal Qatar's first ever AFC Asian Cup quarter-final victory, and secure a place in the last four.

Previously unbeaten in the UAE, Korea Republic entered the match hopeful of a fourth successive AFC Asian Cup quarter-final win, but superb organisation and Hatim's searing low drive helped Qatar continue their perfect record, and consigned the Koreans to their earliest exit in 15 years.



United Arab Emirates atoned for their 2015 semi-final loss, defeating reigning champions Australia 1-0 in a memorable quarter-final at Al Ain's Hazza bin Zayed Stadium.

In the first clash between tournament hosts and holders since 2007, Alberto Zaccheroni's side emerged victorious thanks to Ali Mabkhout, who became only the second man in history to have scored four or more goals at successive AFC Asian Cups.



The Al Jazira striker made the game's pivotal contribution in the 68th minute, intercepting a Milos Degenek pass before rounding Mathew Ryan to send the 25,000-strong Al Ain crowd into delirium, and ensure the United Arab Emirates' second successive appearance in the semi-finals for the first time since 1996.



Story of the Tournament

Semi-finals

Japan and Qatar booked their places in the final of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 with emphatic wins over Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates respectively and set up a mouth-watering clash of styles for the tournament decider at Abu Dhabi's Zayed Sports City Stadium.

Yuya Osako returned to Japan's starting line-up to score a second half brace and seal the Samurai Blue's spot in the final as Hajime Moriyasu's side defeated the Iranians 3-0 at Al Ain's Hazza bin Zayed Stadium.

Osako, who was included from the start for the first time since sustaining a hip injury in Japan's opening game, put the four-time champions in front 11 minutes after the interval when he headed home Takumi Minamino's cross following a bizarre mix-up in the Iranian defence.

Minamino was also involved in Japan's second as his pass back into the centre struck the sliding Morteza Pouraliganji on the arm and referee Christopher Beath pointed to the spot and, after his decision was confirmed via a VAR review, Osako sent Alireza Beiranvand the wrong way.



The second goal took the fight out of the Iranians and in added time Haraguchi added the third with a burst through the defence before smashing his shot past Beiranvand to confirm Japan's progress to the final.

Abu Dhabi's Mohamed bin Zayed Stadium was the scene 24 hours later of Qatar's demolition of Alberto Zaccheroni's UAE as Felix Sanchez's exciting young side defeated the hosts 4-0.

A stirring first-half performance – which saw Boualem Khoukhi break the deadlock and Almoez Ali notch a record-equalling eighth goal of the tournament – laid the foundations for the victory.

Qatar's place in the final was rubberstamped by late strikes from Hassan Al Haydos and Hamid Ismaeil as the West Asians progressed with relative ease to set up the title showdown with the Japanese.

With Abdelkarim Hassan and Assim Madibo returning from suspension, Qatar continued to look the more likely of the two sides, and they duly took the lead just eight minutes later when Khoukhi's angled drive from 18 yards somehow found its way under Khalid Eisa's despairing dive.

Clearly stunned by the opener, the UAE responded through an Ismail Al Hamadi header which was smartly saved by Saad Al Sheeb, and a similar effort from Ali Mabkhout that fizzed wide of the target shortly before the half-hour mark.

However, worse was to come for the Emiratis as Qatar doubled their lead in the 38th minute.

This time Akram Afif found Almoez Ali, who advanced into the area before firing home via a post to equal Ali Daei's record for the most goals by a player at Asia's premier event.

Despite being forced to defend deep in their own half for long periods, Qatar remained dangerous on the break and they duly added a third in the 81st minute when Al Haydos rounded off a delightful move by manoeuvring past Bandar Mohammed and clipping the ball over Eisa.

After the UAE's Ismail Ahmed was shown a straight red card late on for dangerous play, substitute Ismaeil rounded off the scoring to emphatically confirm Qatar's place in the final.





Story of the Tournament

Final



And so, to the final where Qatar were crowned champions as superb goals from Almoez Ali and Abdelaziz Hatim laid the foundation for a 3-1 win over Japan in front of 36,776 spectators at Abu Dhabi's Zayed Sports City Stadium.

The pair both found the net brilliantly in an inspirational first half for Qatar, while, despite a spirited second-half display from Japan, Akram Afif added a late penalty to secure the West Asian nation's first-ever Continental crown in spectacular fashion.



On a historic night for the Qataris, Felix Sanchez's talented charges recorded their seventh successive victory, while Almoez Ali's ninth strike of the competition saw him break Ali Daei's record for the most goals by a player in a single edition of Asia's premier event.

While there was unbridled joy for Qatar, the defeat ended Japanese hopes of claiming what would have been a record-extending fifth title.

"On behalf of the Asian football family, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and



best wishes to Qatar for their remarkable grit and passion throughout the tournament." AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa said.

"In claiming their maiden crown, Qatar have set the benchmark for all Asian teams and I am sure their success will serve as an inspiration for everyone to scale even greater heights.

"This victory is testament to the hard work and immaculate planning undertaken by the Qatar Football Association and special praise must also go to the coaching staff and everyone working tirelessly behind the scenes."

Japan, who had Tsukasa Shiotani replacing Wataru Endo, were quick to take the game to Qatar as Yuya Osako sent a fourth minute effort wide of the target.

However, it was to be their opponents who took the lead just eight minutes later through a moment of brilliance from Almoez Ali.

The young striker received the ball from Akram Afif before juggling the ball twice and sending a spectacular overhead kick beyond the reach of Japan goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda to etch himself into the record books and further underline his burgeoning reputation.

After their early setback, Japan looked for a quick response, but continually failed to find a way through a resolute Qatari defence that had not conceded a single goal en route to the title showdown.





With their frontline failing to shine, worse was to come for Japan on 27 minutes when yet another Akram Afif assist – his 10th of the competition – found the back from suspension Abdelaziz Hatim who curled a delightful effort into the bottom corner to double Qatar's advantage.

Two nearly became three for Qatar shortly after, as captain Hassan Al Haydos hit the outside of a post with an angled shot following Pedro Correia's deflected cross.

To their credit, Japan refused to buckle, and they came close to reducing the deficit on the stroke of half-time, Osako narrowly failing to apply a finishing touch to a Yuto Nagatomo cross when well-placed.

In need of a response, Japan once again started brightly, with Maya Yoshida heading over from a corner inside the first five minutes of the second period.

With the game's pace showing no sign of relenting, Almoez Ali then skied a chance from close-range, while, at the other end, substitute

Yoshinori Muto and Yoshida both flashed headers off target as the Samurai Blue continued to press.

Their persistence duly paid off on 69 minutes as Takumi Minamino reduced the deficit courtesy of a wonderful dinked finish over Qatar custodian Saad Al Sheeb after being set up by Osako.

It mattered little however, as, with eight minutes remaining, referee Ravshan Irmatov pointed to the spot following Yoshida's handball and a subsequent VAR review following the system's introduction from the quarter-final phase. Akram Afif converted the resulting penalty with aplomb to confirm Qatar's title.





The Winning Coach

Sánchez awaits further developments

Television pictures can be useful – and not just when VAR is in operation. After each of Qatar's 19 goals, spectators' eyes were inevitably drawn to celebrations on the pitch. One of the TV cameras however, would focus on Félix Sánchez Bas. The Qatar coach would maybe raise a quiet smile, maybe indulge in some perfunctory clapping. And then, suddenly, there would be pictures of an assault by jubilant coaching staff and players. His measured demeanour became one of the hallmarks of the tournament – and one that aligned with his origins at the FC Barcelona youth academy, where excesses of euphoria and despondency are not only frowned upon but, in practice, prohibited.

Even when there was every excuse for euphoria after the 3-1 victory over Japan, he opted for a low-key longer view. "We made history for our country so we need to be proud of our achievement," he commented after lifting the trophy in Abu Dhabi. "We're happy with the results and, in our analysis, these players are able to compete against any national team in Asia. That's a big step for us. Now we're looking forward to developing the players, because it's a very young squad and they performed very well. It's more proof that with hard work, commitment and working as a team you can achieve very good results."

From a coaching perspective, Sánchez's success could be seen as a recompense for continuous professional development. He was not a professional player. But Félix was steeped in the culture of FC Barcelona's La Masía academy for a decade – as was his brother Fran, who started the 2017/18 season as head coach of Barça's women's team. The Catalan club's relationship with Qatar paved the way for Félix to join the coaching team at the Aspire Academy and, from there, gravitate towards the U19 national team and, in 2014, lead Qatar to victory at the AFC Championship with a squad of Aspire students. The tournament in



Myanmar offered a first glimpse of the special attacking relationship between Almoez Ali and Akram Afif – the duo who contributed, respectively, nine goals and ten assists to the historic Asian Cup win in the UAE. Spanish connections were injected into their development programmes – the former joining Cultural Leonesa, the latter Sporting Gijón and Villarreal.

The next gradient on the learning curve was the FIFA U20 World Cup in 2015, when feet were grounded by three defeats and a group-stage exit. Recognition for Sánchez's work, however, took the shape of promotion to the U23 side and then, in July 2017, to the senior team, where he took the baton from Uruguayan technician Jorge Fossati and set about implanting a policy reminiscent of the strategy which laid foundations for Spain's international successes – that of extending the playing philosophy of the age-limit teams into the senior side, instead of vice versa.

The rest, as the saying goes, is history. But the Asian Cup served to showcase some of the Barça traits which adorn the Qatari livery: the neat triangulations, the off-ball movement to create passing options, the ability to play out of aggressive high pressure... Félix is not alone in applying the Spanish accent. His assistant, Sergio Alegre, also cut his coaching teeth at La Masía. And the Barça connection is occasionally strengthened by the presence of legendary midfielder Xavi Hernández, who takes time out from playing at Al Sadd to further his coach education with the Qatar national teams.

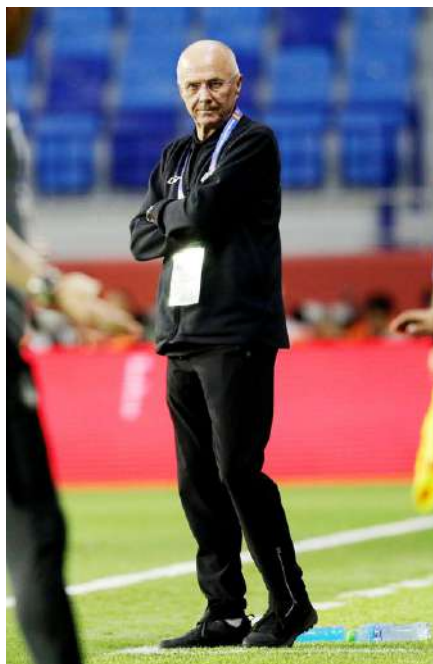
After the final against Japan, Sánchez reflected "We played against a top quality team, not in Asia but the world, so it was a huge, huge result for us. We started well, we had control, we played fantastic football and after 30 minutes we had two goals. Japan, of course, is a very attacking team and they changed their strategy. They were very offensive. But once again the team showed we are very solid. The commitment



of the players in the defensive phase of the game was very good but in the second half, for the first 25 minutes, they were pinning us down so we were defending. We conceded a goal but the players showed how strong they are. They knew how to address the game when they don't have the ball."

"I think one of the key elements during the tournament was that the players were aware of all the pressures and managed to cope with them. They showed great mental strength and ambition. I was very happy for everyone in Qatar and for this group of players, who are amazing. But it was one step more to continue developing a team to play in other tournaments." For Félix Sánchez, success at the Asian Cup was sweet. But it was another chapter in a story of continuous professional development.

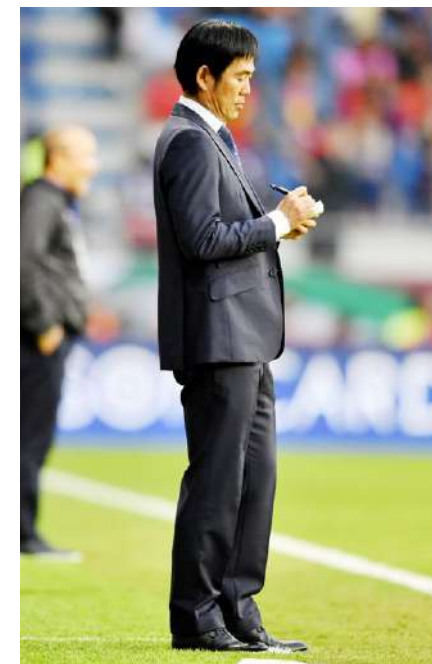




Technical Topics

Sixteen coaches from Europe; two from South America; one from Africa. Images from the technical areas at the first 24-team final tournament could easily offer a distorted picture of the 2019 edition of the AFC Asian Cup. Although, passports in hand, it could be argued that only five technicians hailed from AFC countries, in-depth perusal of curriculum vitae reveals a significant percentage of coaches who could legitimately be described as 'steeped in Asian footballing culture'.

Among them, China PR coach Marcello Lippi, alongside Philippines' Sven-Göran Eriksson, with over six years' experience in Asia. Or the host nation's helmsman Alberto Zaccheroni, whose nine-year track record included an AFC Asian Cup victory with Japan in 2011. Or Carlos Queiroz who, similarly to Zaccheroni, ended an eight-year relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran after the semi-final defeat. Or Barcelona-born Félix Sánchez, whose Qatari c/v dates back a dozen years, starting at the Aspire academy and progressing to the senior national team via the U19 and U23



sides – taking many of his young charges with him. Although a relative newcomer to the Vietnam bench, Park Hang-seo could be similarly credited for having included 11 of his U23 players in the squad that travelled to the UAE. Graham Arnold, who bowed out of the competition commenting "I've been in charge for eight games", was, nevertheless, supported by a relationship with the Australia team that dates back practically to the turn of the century. Japan's Hajime Moriyasu, also relatively new to the post, had nonetheless stepped up from his role as assistant at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and maintained the policy of promoting youngsters from successful age-limit teams, such as Doan Ritsu, Player of the Tournament at the AFC U19 finals just over two years previously. Japan, by remaining loyal to a clear philosophy, demonstrated that their successes were by design rather than chance and could be described as Asia's equivalent to Spain, in terms of making the senior team adopt the style of the youth teams, rather than vice versa.

In other words, the most successful teams in the UAE highlighted the relevance of continuity – both on the bench and within the Member Association. It also underlined, in the slightly longer term, the importance of investment, by AFC and Member Associations, in ongoing coach education.

The technical area

Longer-term strategies apart, the team of AFC technical observers in the UAE highlighted the impact made by coaches during the 51 matches played at the final tournament. Their work had varying degrees of visibility. Zaccheroni, for example, countered injuries to key players by making subtle positional permutations within his squad and gelling a team together for the host nation's creditable run to the semi-finals. Queiroz had tapped into his experience in Portugal

and at Manchester United to build a compact playing style with good balance between attacking and defending. In the UAE, IR Iran played a high-intensity game based on direct, purposeful attacking which subjected opponents to continuous pressure. Qatar's run to the final owed a great deal to their ability to switch seamlessly between four and five at the back in response to the opposition, the match situation or suspensions, with Sánchez giving his team an unmistakably Spanish touch in terms of the triangulation of passing and positional interchanging in the middle-to-front departments, allied with the ability to play a 'contain and counter' game when necessary. Moriyasu based Japan's campaign on player rotation which highlighted collective virtues, offered him strategic variations and posed problems to opposing coaches when they were designing game plans. As one of the AFC technical observers put it, Japan were "knowledgeable in their positions and produced competent performances throughout the team."

The tournament provided many illustrations of coaches' skills in reacting to game situations. For example, Srecko Katanec made two changes in midfield and switched to four at the back when Iraq were trailing Vietnam 1-2 – and was rewarded when one of his substitutes, Humam, equalised within seconds of entering the pitch. Park made a half-time substitution to change to a 1-5-3-2 structure when Vietnam were a goal down to IR Iran. Marcello Lippi was a leading exponent in terms of meaningful substitutions. A half-time change signalled a switch to 1-3-4-3 when China PR were 0-1 adrift against Kyrgyz Republic; he ordered a mutation from four to three at the back against Korea Republic; after 28 minutes of the quarter-final against IR Iran, he attempted to repair early damage by switching to a 1-4-3-3 structure which mirrored the opposition's formation; and a double substitution in the 64th minute allied with positional



changes earned two goals in seven minutes when faced with a 0-1 deficit against Thailand. “It was important for me to make changes to the formation,” he explained after the Round of 16 game. “We started the second half with three defenders. I moved Hao Junmin from midfield to the right wing, where he was very good. And the introduction of Xiao Zhi up front was also very important.” The technical observers underlined the number of teams that were “tactically efficient”. But, as coaches so often admit, the ability to change shape during the course of a game also relies on players with game appreciation.

Liquid assets

It was no surprise that the 24-team tournament showcased a variety of team shapes, with an overview of the default settings revealing a majority preference for 1-4-3-3 or the 1-4-2-3-1 variation. Having said that, around a third of the

contestants operated with a back five at some stage of the tournament with, as mentioned above, Qatar exemplifying the ability to function with two or three centre-backs according to circumstances. As AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh remarked, “it was often difficult to assess attacking shapes because of the liquid nature of middle-to-front play. To give one example, when Qatar’s No 6 Aziz Hatim was playing, he operated in a roaming role and gave his team a variety of attacking shapes, while the No 11 Akram Afif was the free spirit who gave the team an attacking spark.” IR Iran and Japan also impressed with flexibility in the middle-to-front areas without loss of team shape.

Even where teams could be given a 1-4-4-2 label, this rarely signified a genuine attacking partnership and more frequently involved an attacker operating in the slipstream of a target man. Japan illustrated this in their Round of 16 tie against Saudi Arabia when, even though the starting



formation was clearly a 1-4-4-2, No 9 Minamino operated as shadow striker behind No 13 Muto.

Many of the tactical variations became visible when teams were chasing results on Matchday 3 or in the knockout rounds. Oman head coach Pim Verbeek, for example, commented after his team had qualified for the KO phase, “we were on top, but when Turkmenistan equalised, it became difficult as they started to defend with nine players behind the ball. That forced us to use our Plan B, which was about pumping the ball into their box. Thankfully, the strategy worked.” Korea Republic implemented a similar plan when trailing Qatar 0-1 in the quarter-final but, hitting long balls from deep positions towards four advanced attackers, failed to forge an equaliser. “It failed to produce a goal,” head coach Paulo Bento reflected afterwards, “because, I felt, our front line was too flat.” Bahrain and Philippines were among the teams who switched to three at the back when facing elimination, while Qatar dropped Boualem Khoukhi from midfield into a back line of five to cope with Iraq’s late onslaught during the Round of 16. Many games in the UAE emphasised the importance of training-ground work on Plan B attacking or defending.

Defence in numbers

A total of 38 clean sheets appears to be a statement of defensive efficiency. The technical observers, however, added a number of question-marks. There were outstanding defensive records – such as IR Iran conceding in only one of their six fixtures or Qatar going one better by keeping a clean

sheet during 609 minutes of football until Japan pierced their five-man defence in the final. Qatar, the tournament’s top scorers, were prepared to attack in numbers and, in consequence, often held a high defensive line with a view to maintaining a compact block. This strategy was by no means infrequent (Korea Republic, IR Iran, China PR, sometimes Japan...) but the general trend at the final tournament was a rapid retreat into a deep or midfield defensive block in response to loss of possession in opposition territory, usually with one or two players pressing the ball-carrier with the aim of buying enough time for the block to assemble its defensive components. The technical observers often commented on compact, organised defending in numbers but with no pressure on the ball. One of them remarked “I was surprised to see low-intensity pressure, with players harassing rather than tackling”. Philippine’s coach Sven-Göran Eriksson mused “it doesn’t really matter which system you use if you can’t win the ball...”

Another member of the technical team added “we saw a lot of teams defending with five or more at the back, but it wasn’t always obvious that there was safety in numbers”.

There were also question-marks over the individual quality of defending, evidenced by a number of costly errors. There was also debate among the technical observers about whether this could be linked to the high number of goals derived from free-kicks – the question here being about the number of unnecessary fouls committed in key defensive zones. The observers highlighted this as an area where there is room for improvement.



In terms of defensive play, Japan provided one of the surprises of the tournament by opting for deep defence in numbers during the Round of 16 match against Saudi Arabia, when the silver-medallists had a 24% share of the ball and 39% of their passing was long. Hajime Moriyasu said after that game “it was obvious what our game plan was. We wanted to apply pressure but also be able to defend. People might say we could have been better offensively but we showed that we were good at defending.” IR Iran, until the semi-final defeat that Carlos Queiroz attributed to “an emotional breakdown”, had been consistently praised for experienced collective defending by players who had clear definitions of the roles they were to play. Champion coach Félix Sánchez also exalted the art of defending, commenting after surviving Japan pressure during the second half of the final, that his players “know how to address the game when they don’t have the ball.”

Counting the counters

Reporting on a game involving the Kyrgyz Republic, one of the technical observers highlighted “the consciousness of transition among all the players was very clear”. The overall impression, however, was that the general efficiency of attack-to-defence transitions was not replicated in the other direction. Technical observers’ notebooks often contained phrases such as “no effective transition to attack – only individual efforts” or “sat back in deep defensive block

with limited options for effective transitions into attack” – comments which strongly suggested that the organisation of forward transitions is another area for development and improvement.

Ball-winning in the defensive third was often, notably during the group phase, followed by a long clearance towards an isolated striker, with transition play based on winning a second ball. Even if this strategy was not overly productive, it was often difficult to deal with, as Graham Arnold remarked after one of Australia’s games. “They played very direct and very long, so it was all about the second ball and challenges. It made it difficult to play the way we wanted to play, because the ball was in the air all the time and we wanted it on the ground...”

The tournament provided a rich tapestry in terms of transitions into attack with, in stark contrast to long-ball strategies, Saudi Arabia provided a prime example of teams who, after winning the ball, focused on keeping it. They preferred patient, elaborate building through the thirds, whereas IR Iran’s transitions were high-tempo, more direct passing and running movements. Qatar were midway between the two. Their transition play was generally based on neat passing, with one of the two midfielders who operated in screening roles immediately moving into a more advanced position, thus inverting their triangle in the central midfield area.



The ability to launch fast counterattacks – as illustrated by France at the World Cup – is an important aspect of defence-to-attack play, with IR Iran, Japan and Qatar especially impressive in high-speed transitions into attacking mode. The teams who were not equipped for this strategy had a more limited attacking armoury. But the top teams were not alone in exploiting this formula. India produced effective fast counters through the wide areas via Sunil Chhetri and Kumam Udanta; Uzbekistan produced two goalscoring collective counters during the 4-0 win over Turkmenistan; Vietnam had well-organised countering options using Nguyen Cong Phuong. It has to be said that a high proportion of successful counters stemmed from a wayward pass by the opposition in midfield – Japan’s third goal in the semi-final v IR Iran a case in point.

Overall, 16% of the tournament’s open-play goals could be attributed to counter-attacking. Three of the 14 were of the classic variety (a quick break after a middle-to-deep ball-win); seven were collective counters; and four were fast responses to regains in advanced areas. The 19 goals scored by Qatar included only two successful counters, although fast breaks via Akram Afif were a constant threat. He triggered the classic counter that yielded the opening goal in the semi-final against UAE and, although the third goal in the final was the penalty he converted against Japan, he had also led the 78th-minute counter which

resulted in Hatim’s shot being diverted. The spot-kick stemmed from the ensuing corner. Qatar highlighted the differences between the champions of Asia and the world champions. Unlike France, Sánchez’s side did not rely on counters, indirect free-kicks, own goals or the exploitation of defensive errors.

The 16% registered in the UAE compares with 13% in the AFC Champions League – significantly lower than European parameters for counter-attacking. At EURO 2016 the figure was 23% and, in the UEFA Champions League, the statistic hovers around the 20% mark.

Pressing matters

One of the explanations for a global decline in counterattacking successes (46% of open play goals at EURO 2008, for example, had been from counters) is the increasing relevance of countering the counter. Even though the use of the professional foul to pre-empt fast breaks is being increasingly picked-up (and punished with a yellow card) by referees, it is still a visible element. In the UAE, however, the most frequent anti-counter play was simply to press the ball-carrier and to get bodies behind the ball as rapidly as possible. The AFC observers noted that collective high pressing was a rarity at the final tournament. Or, as one of them put it, “we didn’t see any Liverpools or Dortmunds”. In this regard, the parameters of national competitions and



climatic elements are evidently conditioning factors when it comes to the viability of high-calorie workloads.

There were sporadic examples, with the Oman v IR Iran fixture in the Round of 16 offering spectators an infrequent sighting of two teams set up to press high – as a result of their willingness to attack in numbers and thereby have players available for collective work. The power-play by Carlos Queiroz's team subjected opposition defenders to sustained pressure. Elsewhere, intense collective pressing generally started in midfield.

The possession game

Only three of the 24 contestants could genuinely be labelled 'possession teams' in that they had a majority share of the ball in each of the matches they played: Australia, Korea Republic and Saudi Arabia. Champions Qatar had more than 50% of possession in only three of their seven matches – a mere 29% against Saudi Arabia and no more than 39% in the final against Japan – though they strung together 23

passes in the build-up to the second goal. Similarly, France had won the World Cup averaging 48% of possession. The Asian Cup echoed other international tournaments in stating clearly that ball-possession offers no guarantee of success, even though one of the important assets of the two finalists was the capacity to retain possession in tight areas and under intense pressure. "It was important that we had long spells of ball possession," Korea Republic's Paulo Bento remarked, "to allow the team to make good defensive transitions and play as far as possible from our goal."

Overall, 13 of the 45 games that produced a result (i.e. drawn games excluded) were won by the team with a lesser share of the ball. The fact that, at the Asian Cup, 71% of matches were won by the side dominating possession contrasts with 31% at the European equivalent in 2016. One of the salient features in the UAE was the number of games where one team had a major slice of the ball. In 28 of the 36 group fixtures, one team had 60%+ (70%+ in eight of those games). Possession of the ball obviously leads to a higher number of passes per game, with the tables on these pages showing

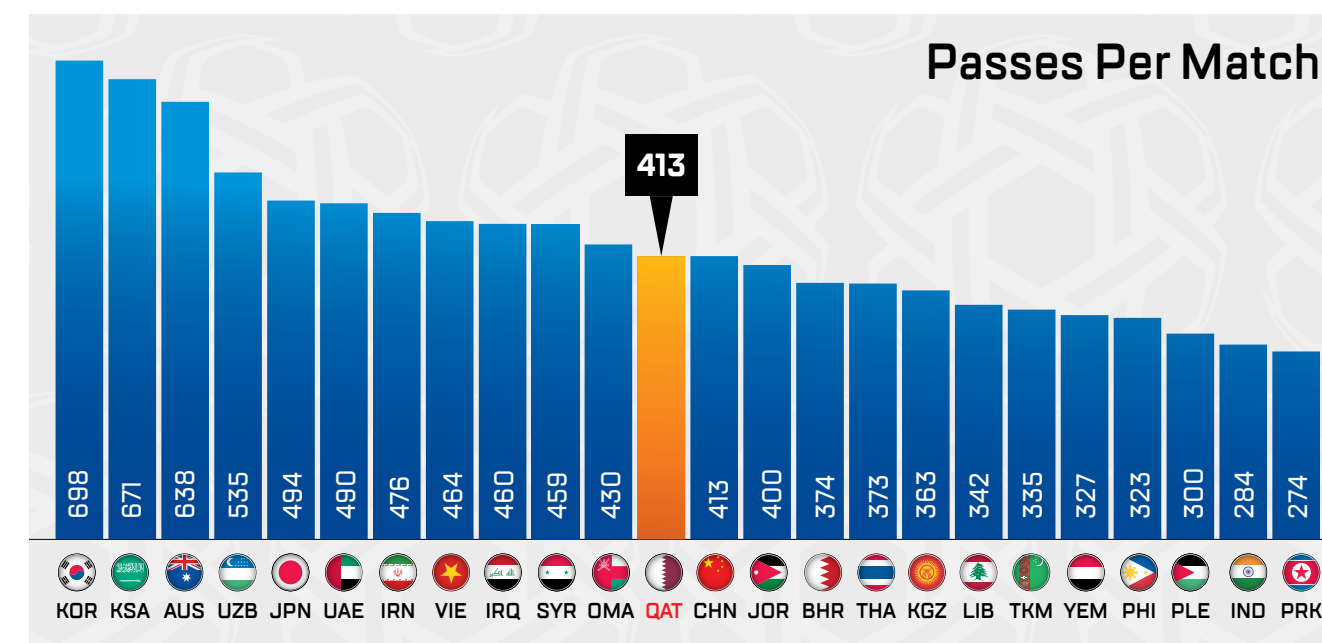
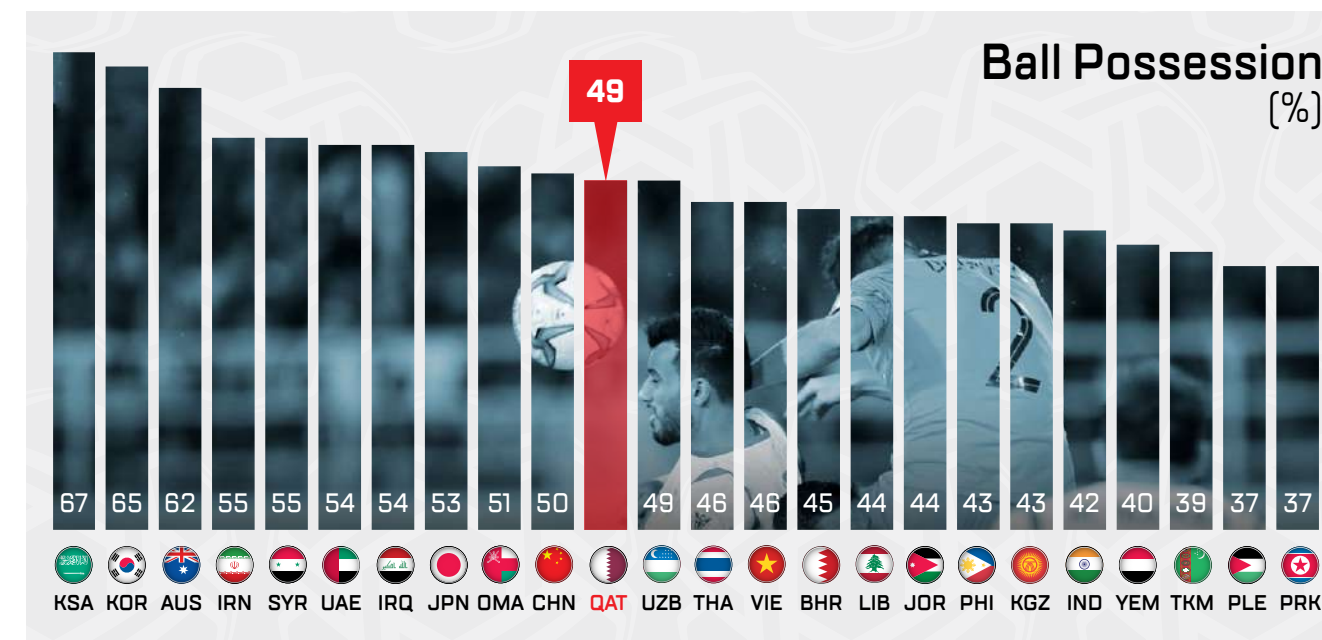


the team-by-team averages and, significantly, the number of passes in the attacking third. The arts of passing were also significant. Afif's right-footed cross from the left with the inside of the boot provided a prime example of a well-disguised pass – and provided Qatar's first goal in the final. Some IR Iran players caught the eye with their ability to move one way and dispatch the ball with a penetrating pass at a different angle with the outside of the right foot. Japan were able to see and supply penetrating passes through the eye of a needle and use their individual technique to retain

possession in tight areas. They and other top teams showed composure on the ball and moved it around quickly, whereas other contestants often miscalculated the weighting of passes or were less aware of passing options than they might have been.

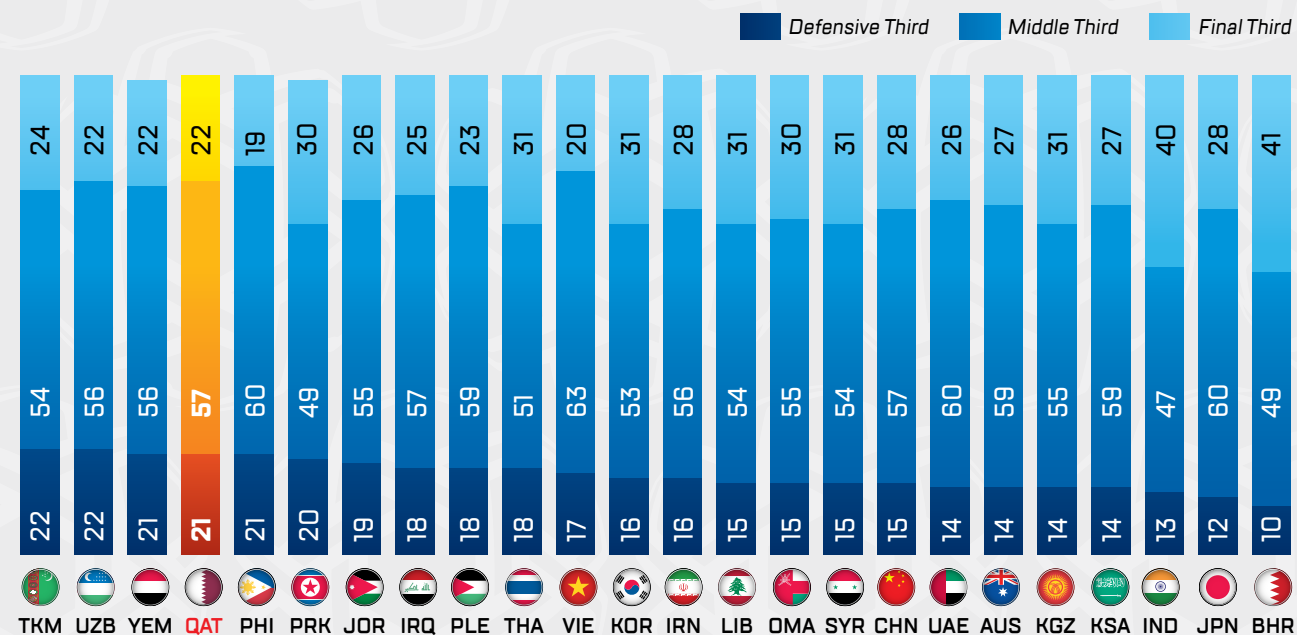
The final touch

"We tried to control the play and we had a good share of possession," commented Saudi Arabia coach Juan Antonio

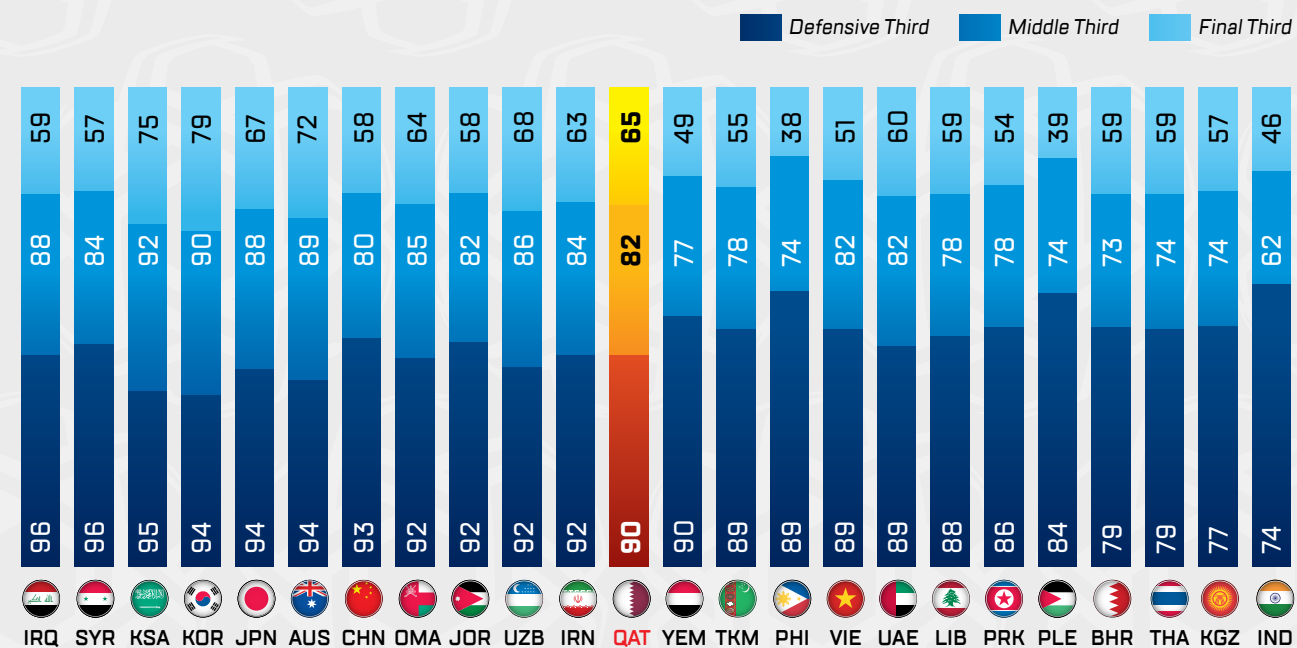




Pass Location (%)



Pass Location Success (%)



Pizzi, “but we just couldn’t execute in the final third – and that cost us.” “We were eliminated,” Paulo Bento reflected, “because we were not as efficient in converting our chances as we should have been.” “It’s probably the only sport in the world,” rued Australia’s Graham Arnold, “where you can control possession, have more chances on goal, spend more

time in the opponents’ half and still lose.” “We cannot waste chances as we did against Oman,” China PR’s Marcello Lippi lamented. “We need to play with a killer instinct and put the ball in the net.”

While many coaches were bemoaning a lack of finishing efficiency, Qatar were ramming the point home by displaying

outstanding finishing efficiency during the run to the title – not least with two goals from two attempts during the first half-hour of the final. The diagrams offer statistical evidence.

Changing gears

The technical observers remarked that many of the games – especially in the group stage – were played at low tempo. Other matches, they noted, were disputed at a uniformly hectic pace. This, they felt, led to a contrast between control and lack of control, with the successful teams, when in possession, having the ability to change the tempo. While IR Iran preferred to wear opponents down with sustained high-tempo play, teams like Japan, Korea Republic and Qatar used their technical ability to calm the game when required and to produce accelerations based on sudden changes of pace and/or direction – a facet of the game which also requires certain levels of game appreciation. Again, climatic conditions can lead to low-tempo football in domestic

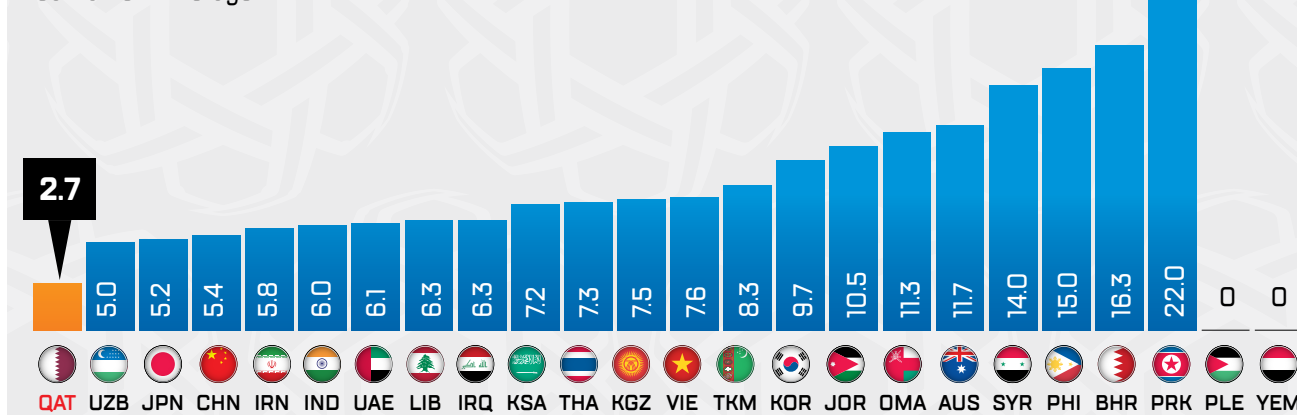
competitions. But, to compete on the world stage, the ability to raise the tempo is an essential requirement.

Combining forces

The statistic was so surprising that it prompted double-checking and a bit of eye-rubbing. After 48 games in the UAE only three goals could be attributed to combination play: Thitipan Puangchan’s equaliser for Thailand against the hosts; the Almoez Ali goal that clinched Qatar’s 2-0 win against Lebanon; and Ritsu Doan’s goal for Japan in the 3-2 victory over Turkmenistan. Then it was a long wait for Genki Haraguchi’s goal in the semi-final, when he rounded off a slick three-man move to clinch the 3-0 win over IR Iran. In the final, Qatar took the total to five in the 51-match tournament. Admittedly, other teams were prepared to attempt penetrating passing moves through the middle (Oman, Vietnam and, in particular, Japan...) but without rewards for their efforts.

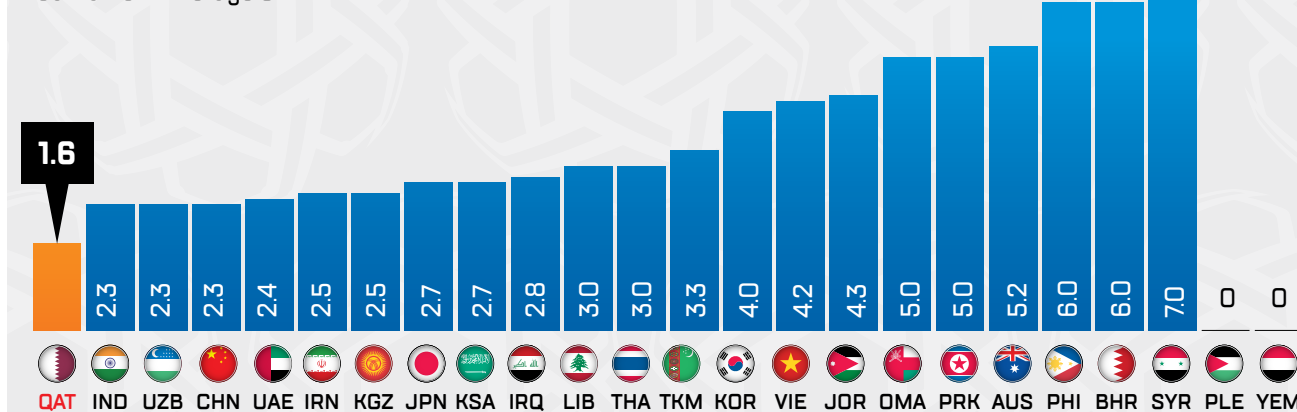
Shots Per Goal

Tournament Average 7.1



Shots On Target Per Goal

Tournament Average 3.1





The statistics supported the evidence gathered by the technical observers throughout the tournament, with one of them summarising the tendency by referring to “a glaring reluctance to attack through the middle”. The facts are that only 6% of open-play goals stemmed from combination play and that only three of the 24 teams enjoyed success in this department of the game. The facts are disturbing, not to say alarming, as they tally with observations made at other AFC competitions.

Take this extract from the technical report on the 2018 AFC Champions League, for example. “Goals derived from combination play continued along their downward path – as they have done in AFC’s age-limit competitions. Less than one in ten of open-play goals (9.4% to be precise) stemmed from elaborated attacking moves. This represents a stark contrast with Europe’s equivalent competition where, in 2017/18 three times the number of goals were down to passing moves – 24% of the open-play total.” To express it in numbers, the 125 UEFA Champions League games produced 78 combination goals.

The report goes on to highlight some of the season’s outstanding combination goals – and they involved Brazilian players. This is clearly an issue which needs to be addressed at development levels as well as in the senior game.

The wider view

The lack of successful combination play in the attacking third demonstrates that a majority of the participants in the UAE relied heavily on wing play. The goalscoring section of this report confirms that crosses were the most fertile source of open-play goals, with cut-backs and diagonals giving added weight to the wing-play baggage. There was no shortage of wrong-footed wingers – and this underlined

the tendency for wingers and wide midfielders to cut inside rather than head for the corner flag.

Channels for overlapping full-backs were opened, and the Asian Cup reflected the World Cup tendency towards pushing both full-backs up simultaneously while screening midfielders remained on amber-alert for fast counters. Underlapping runs by full-backs were less frequent, although Japan’s right-back Hiroki Sakai (combining with left-footed Ritsu Doan) or Qatar’s left-back Hassan Abdelkarim were among those ready to make runs through the inside channels. The technical observers commented, however, that the quality of the full-backs’ overlapping runs was not always matched by the quality of their crosses.

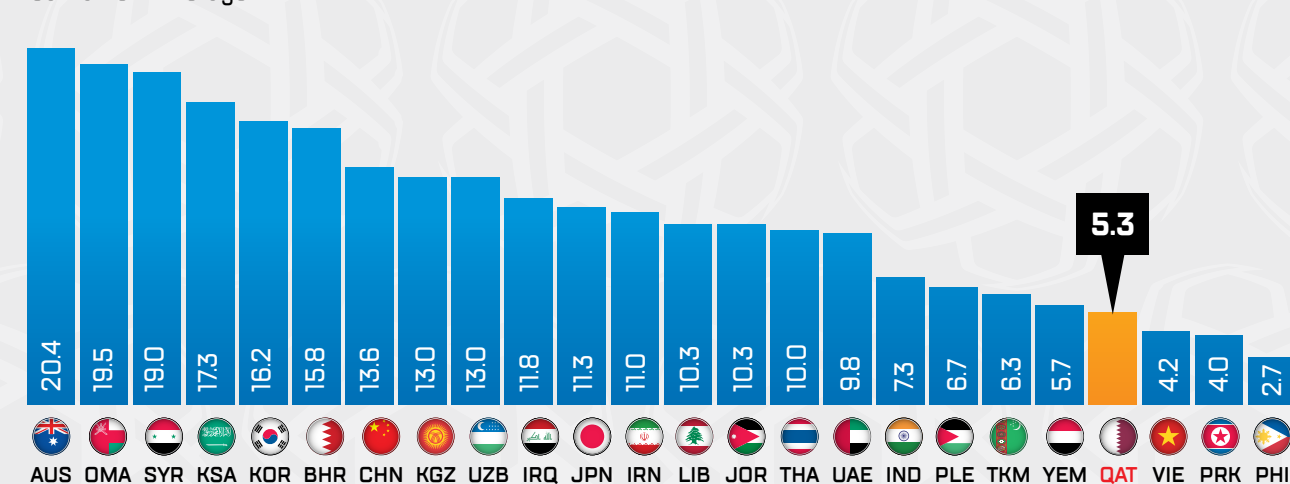
Hands and feet

Readers may have noticed that, in this report, team shapes are listed as, for example, 1-4-3-3 instead of 4-3-3. It is a small symptom of the changing role of the goalkeeper – now increasingly regarded as an integral participant in team play rather than an odd man out. The modern keeper is expected to combine traditional shot-stopping and cross-gathering qualities with competent footwork and the ability to initiate attacks or counters with accurate passing.

The tournament provided a plethora of excellent shot-stopping, although the high number of free-kick successes inevitably raised questions about positioning of defensive walls and of the keeper himself. Many of the keepers on show were competent at racing out of the box to cover areas behind high lines – with, apart from the three keepers selected for the tournament’s All-Star Squad, Korea Republic’s Kim Seung-gyu standing out as a prime example. Many of the keepers (Australia, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam...) participated actively in building from the back – although the

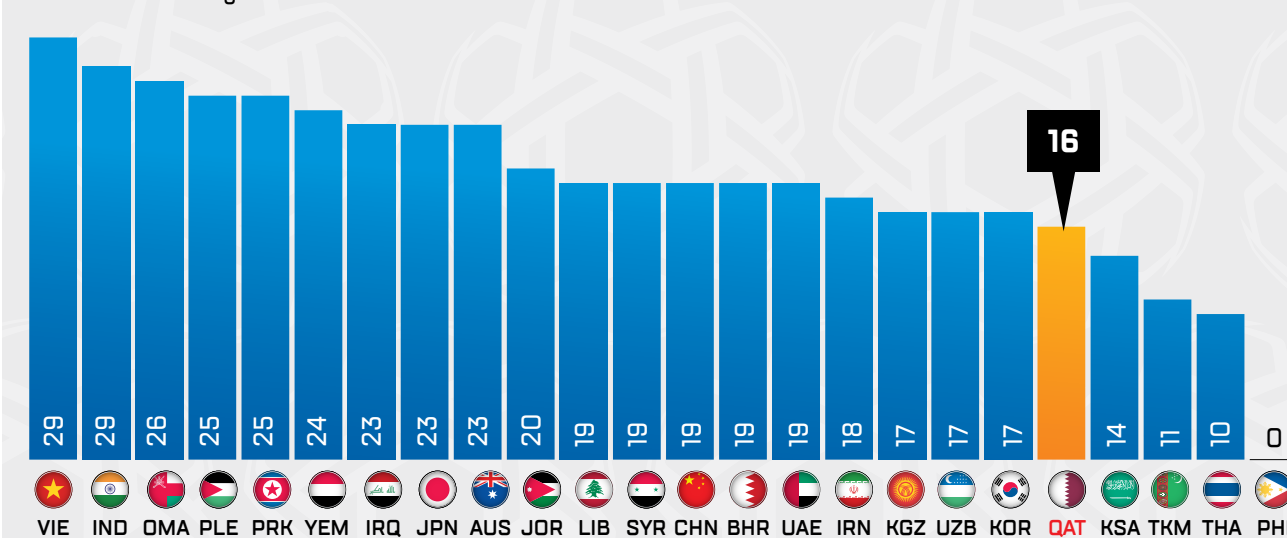
Crosses Per Match (Open Play)

Tournament Average 11.2

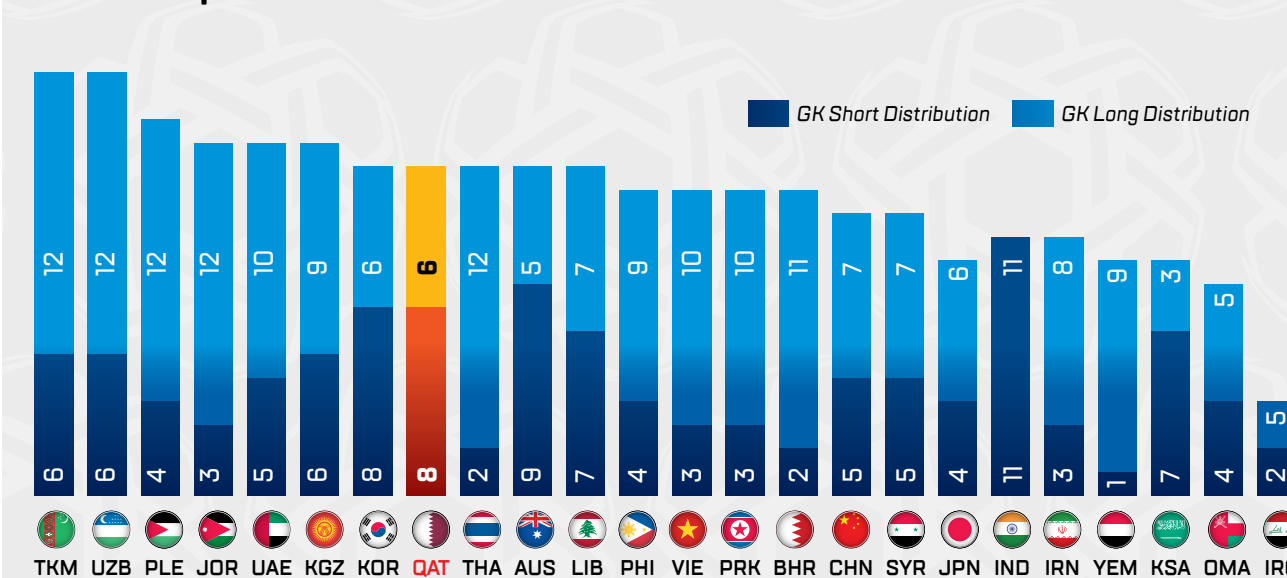


Crossing Success - Open Play (%)

Tournament Average 19%



Goalkeeper Distribution Per Match



overview of the tournament suggested that this is also an area for general improvement. By no means all the keepers in the UAE included middle- and long-distance passing in their warm-up routines and, as the diagrams demonstrate, many keepers made extensive (if not exclusive) use of the long clearance.

Looking at the other side of the coin, there were also question-marks against the readiness of defenders to bring their goalkeeper into play – doubts illustrated by situations where defenders turned into trouble when a pass to the keeper would have provided a simple solution. Another

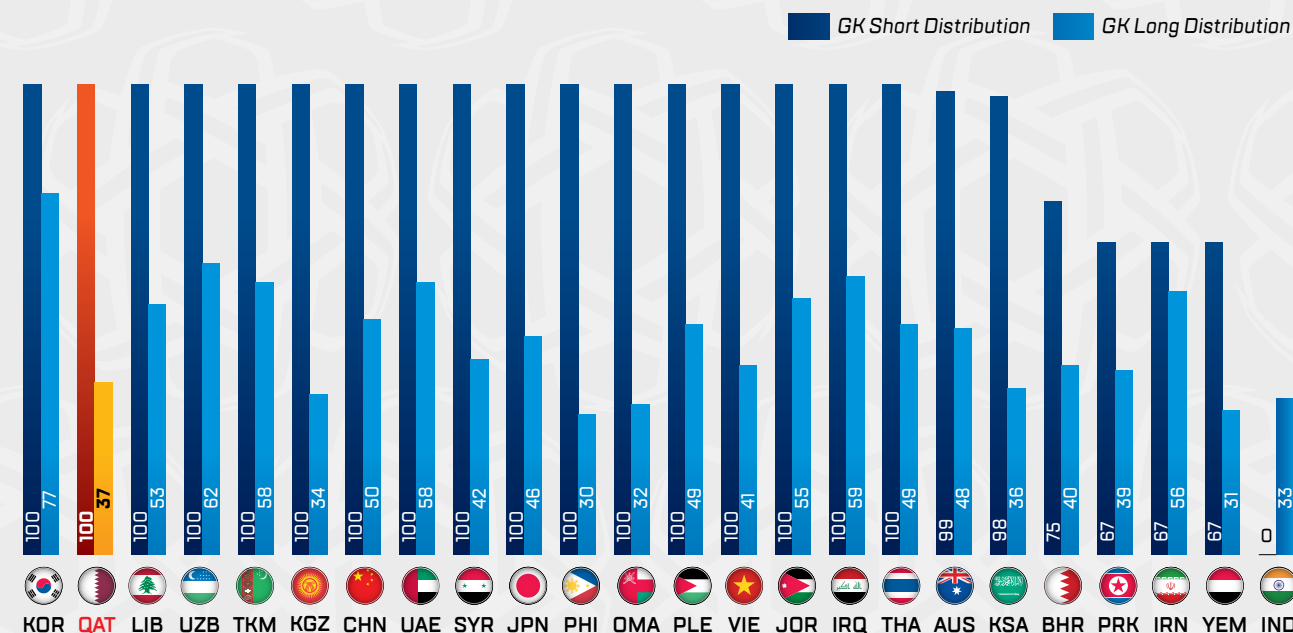
issue to be borne in mind at development levels, where goalkeepers need to be encouraged to use their feet and defenders encouraged to use their goalkeeper.

A different ball game

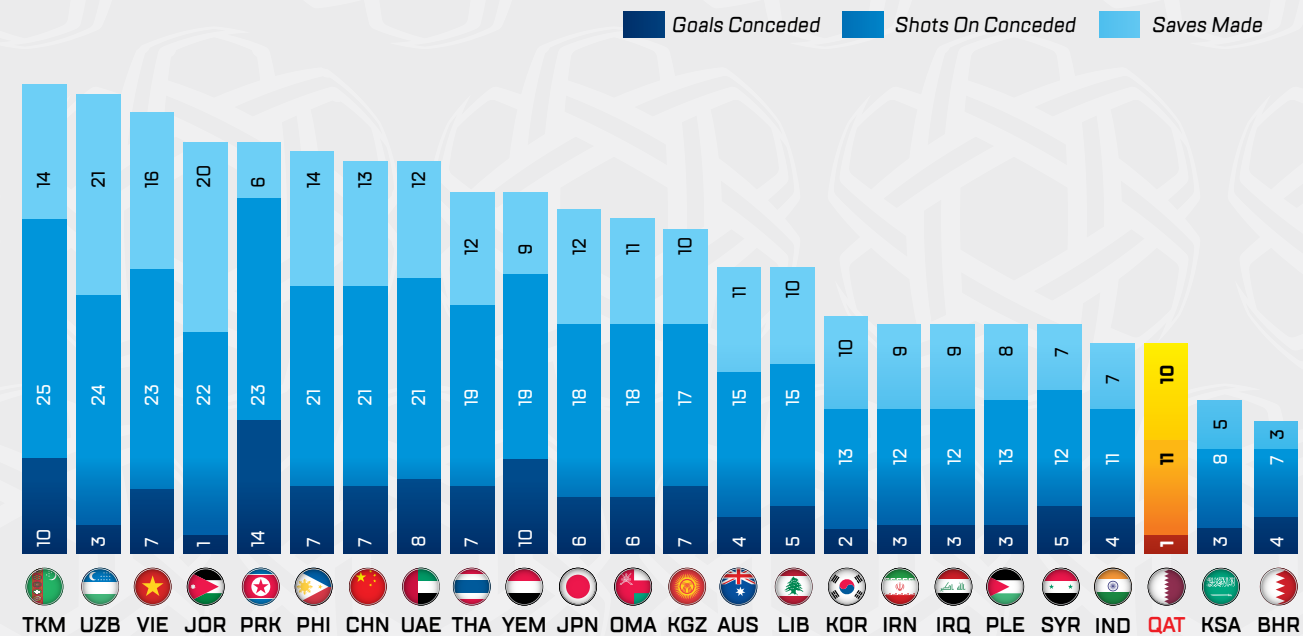
The coaches on duty in technical areas at the Asian Cup might concede that there is an art to tournament play. National team coaches who normally assemble their squads for short periods of time, suddenly need to adapt to a different off-the-ball game in which the group can be



Goalkeeper Distribution Accuracy (%)



Goalkeeper Saves



together for weeks on end. Man-management issues take on greater relevance and, as mentioned among the Talking Points to emerge from the tournament, topics such as squad rotation require thought, along with adaptability in the face of injuries and suspensions. Teams who start strongly often lose out to sides who evolve during the competition – for example, Spain lifting the World Cup in 2010 after losing their opening game against Switzerland; Portugal winning EURO 2016 after struggling through the group stage; France growing in stature and belief en route to the 2018 World Cup.

The leadership/management role at a tournament is evidently about team strategy, organisation and physical preparation. But it is also about mental preparation – and this includes emotional control and discipline by each individual

The team-building process for a coach is similar to a mechanic fine-tuning a high-powered engine.

player. Japan, as they do in their age-limit teams, showcased the value of avoiding conflict. The message that Carlos Queiroz hammered home – even when the players were in the tunnel – was “concentration!” Another important message was delivered during a press conference. When asked about the absence of Mehdi Taremi from the semi-final through suspension, he told the media “we have a better player than the one who is missing. He is called the team.”

Legendary Dutch coach Rinus Michels always maintained “the team-building process for a coach is similar to a mechanic fine-tuning a high-powered engine.” The AFC Asian Cup 2019 emphasised that, for the coach, leading a squad through an international tournament is undoubtedly a special art.



Goalscoring Analysis

Qatar set goal standards

Combination Play



Counter Attacking



Counter Pressing

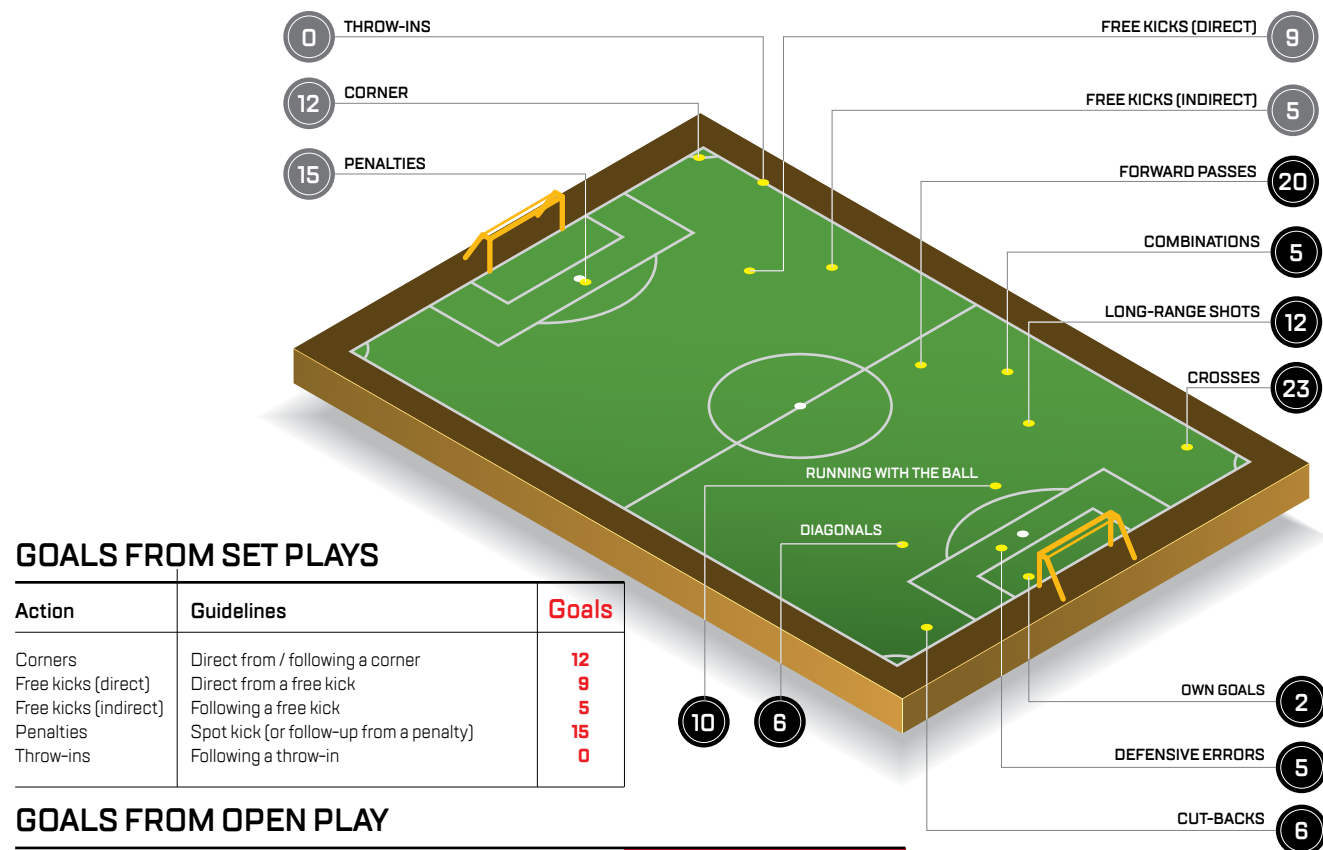


Although there were 23 other competitors, the champions accounted for 15% of the goals scored at the final tournament. Qatar, with 19 in their seven games, were by far and away the leading scorers in the UAE with a tally more than 50% higher than their nearest rivals, Japan and Iran, who scored a dozen apiece. The goalscoring exploits of Qatar were, to use an appropriate adjective, too striking to ignore. Their 22-year-old striker Almoez Ali set an all-time record with his nine goals, including the magical overhead kick which gave the champions their crucial opening goal in the final against Japan. His fellow attacker, Akram Afif (with whom he had developed a productive partnership dating back to the Qatar U19 side) accompanied him into the record books with 10 assists and ended the tournament with the other eye-catching statistic of having created 26 goalscoring chances for his team.

Qatar also set standards in a field which is broached in the Technical Topics section of this report: that of goalscoring efficiency. Even though Félix Sánchez's team was way ahead of the field with an average of 2.71 per game, they were by no means the leaders of the pack in terms of goal attempts. Their 19 goals represented a high return on 72 shots. In other words, the champions provided a reference point at a final tournament which yielded 130 goals at an average of 2.55 per game. The group stage had ended with an average of 2.67 and after it had been pushed below two goals per game during the first two KO rounds, 11 goals in the last three matches allowed the overall figure to recover.

It compared with 2.66 at the previous finals in 2015; 2.64 at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia; and 2.89 during the 2018 AFC Champions League. Debate about why club football tends to be more prolific than the national-team game could be refuelled by comparisons with Europe where, for example, the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League produced 3.21 goals per match, whereas the average at EURO 2016 had been a more miserly 2.12.





Returning to the 51-match final tournament in the UAE, the goalscoring chart logs the technical and tactical actions which led to the 130 goals. Inevitably, there is a subjective element attached to the categorisation of a few of the goals but this does not distort the overall patterns.

Set Plays

As it had done at the World Cup a few months earlier, the percentage of set-play goals raised eyebrows. In the UAE, dead-ball situations accounted for 32% of the tournament's goals, compared with 35% in Russia. At EURO 2016, the figure had been a few decimal points below 30% and, again, there were lower levels in club football: 27% in the AFC Champions League and a sharp drop to 19.5% in the European counterpart. This could prompt debate as to whether opportunities to scout future opponents or the amount of training-ground time available to national team coaches could be conditioning factors.

With the final goal of the tournament bringing the total to 15, spot-kicks accounted for 37% of the set-play goals – aligning

with the 38% registered during the 2018 AFC Champions League. However, the most salient feature among the dead-ball categories was that, unusually, successes from direct free-kicks outnumbered the goals scored from the indirect variety. Nine in the UAE contrasted sharply with a total of six in the entire AFC Champions League. So did the five indirect free-kick successes at the Asian Cup, compared with 22 in the AFC's premier club competition. There were some outstanding strikes in the UAE, including two by Qatar's Bassam Alwari – a comparatively rare example of a centre-back mastering this speciality. The champions, incidentally, were not overly reliant on set-play goals. Their only other dead-ball successes were a corner against Saudi Arabia and the penalty in the final. The Best Goals section of this report also highlights four other spectacularly converted direct free-kicks, two of them struck by IR Iran players.

On the other hand, the statistics related to corner-kicks provided no such surprises. The success rate at the Asian Cup was one goal per 40 corners, echoing the 1:41 ratio posted in the 2018 AFC Champions League. Dividends at the World Cup had been significantly greater, the balance at



the tournament in Russia yielding a ratio of 1:29. Two corners earned places among the Asian Cup's top ten goals, one of them the short corner which allowed Jordan to seal a 1-0 win against defending champions Australia in their opening fixture.

Open Play

Wing play accounted for almost 40% of the tournament's 89 goals scored in open play, with crosses, cut-backs and diagonals into the box adding up to a total of 35. The percentage provided a mirror reflection of the figures in the 2018 AFC Champions League. The table shows clearly that crosses were the most fertile source of goals, providing 26% of those scored in open play (28% in the club competition). Three 'cross and finish' goals were selected among the tournament's best, with Kim Jin-su's extra-time goal for Korea Republic against Bahrain and Nguyen Cong Phuong's equaliser for Vietnam against Jordan joining Almoez Ali's spectacular conversion of a cross from the left that gave Qatar a 1-0 advantage over Japan in the final.

They were closely followed by the total of 20 goals originating from forward passes. In the latter category, it has to be said that Qatar provided one quarter of the tournament's total, as five of the champions' goals stemmed from through passes. Incidentally, Almoez Ali's club, Al Duhail, had topped

that category in the AFC Champions League, where six of their goals had stemmed from defence-splitting passes.

However, the most significant trend to emerge from the tournament's scoring patterns was the paucity of goals derived from combination play – a feature which had also emerged from recent AFC age-limit competitions. Hence the inclusion of this subject in the Technical Topics section of this report. Over the debating table, the much higher returns from solo runs with the ball or long-range finishing (four spectacular strikes from distance are among the top ten goals, including the left-footed shot by Abdelaziz Hatem that put Qatar 2-0 up in the final) could be permed into the equation as, arguably consequences of a lack of ability to penetrate with passing moves in the final third. The low figure, it has to be added, becomes even lower if Qatar are removed from this particular equation. Sánchez's champions supplied two of the five successes, leaving the other 23 contestants to share three.

This statistic also highlights the variety of scoring options showcased by Qatar, with IR Iran and Japan alone in rivalling them. Apart from the two combination moves, their 15 open-play goals (79% of the team's total) were derived from five through passes, three crosses, two long-range shots, two solo runs and one diagonal into the box. The diversity of their attacking play won them their first-ever AFC Asian Cup.



Qatar's first goal v Japan in the final



Qatar's second goal v Japan in the final (22 passes)



Japan's goal v Qatar in the final



Qatar's third goal v Japan in the final

Best Goals

Set Plays

1	Wu Lei	China V Philippines	66'	Indirect Free-Kick
2	Al Rawi	Qatar V Iraq	62'	Direct Free-Kick
3	Quang Hai	Vietnam V Yemen	38'	Direct Free-Kick
4	Yaseen	Jordan V Australia	26'	Short Corner
5	Kim Min-jae	Korea Republic V China	51'	Short Corner
6	Ghoddoo	IR Iran V Yemen	78'	Indirect Free-Kick
7	Adnan	Iraq V Vietnam	90'	Direct Free-Kick
8	Akhmedov	Uzbekistan V Oman	33'	Direct Free-Kick
9	Dejagah	IR Iran V Yemen	23'	Direct Free-Kick
10	Abdel Rahman	Jordan V Vietnam	39'	Indirect Free-Kick



Best Set Play Goals



Best Open Play Goals

Open Play

1	Ali	Qatar V Japan	12'	Cross and Finish
2	Hatem	Qatar V Japan	27'	Long-Range Shot
3	Mabil	Australia V Syria	41'	Long-Range Shot
4	Kim Jin-su	Korea Republic V Bahrain	105'	Cross and Finish
5	Ali	Qatar V UAE	37'	Combination Play
6	Shiotani	Japan V Uzbekistan	58'	Long-Range Shot
7	Halem	Qatar V Korea Republic	78'	Long-Range Shot
8	Công Phương	Vietnam V Jordan	51'	Cross and Finish
9	Hatan	Saudi Arabia v DPR Korea	27'	Solo Play
10	Shomurodov	Uzbekistan V Japan	40'	Solo Play



Talking Points



An indirect question?

The clock shows that just over 38 minutes of the Round of 16 match have been played and the scoreboard reveals that neither Jordan nor Vietnam have scored. Midfielder Do Hung Dung back-tracks at speed to deal with a ball bouncing on the right-hand edge of the Vietnam penalty area and, as his boot makes contact with the ball at around waist height, the referee halts play to award an indirect free-kick to Jordan just inside the box. It takes a while for the match official to choreograph the situation of the defensive wall and other details of a fairly unusual scenario. By the time the scene has been satisfactorily set, Jordan No 7 Yousef Rawshdeh is standing, more or less facing his own half, with one foot on the ball.

When the referee blows his whistle, Rawshdeh removes his boot and steps aside to give the taker room to manoeuvre. The ball responds to his action with what might be described as an apologetic quiver. Then No 4 Baha Abdelrahman steps up to smash a spectacular, unstoppable shot past goalkeeper Dang Van Lam and into the far corner of the net. Jordan 1 Vietnam 0.

The delivery of the free-kick was undeniably brilliant. Yet the manner of its execution provoked a degree of head-scratching. Not because of the shot. Because of the way Rawshdeh had set it up. By simply removing his boot, had he genuinely 'played the ball'?

Putting a magnifying glass to the Laws of the Game reveals a sentence stating that the ball "is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves". Had Rawshdeh kicked it? Had the ball clearly moved?

Evidently no amount of discussion will take the opening goal of the game away from Jordan. So the talking point is more a question of principle. Does removing a boot from a stationary ball suffice to activate an indirect free-kick? Rawshdeh's action – or lack of it – certainly allowed Baha to strike a dead ball. Is it therefore legitimate to argue that an indirect free-kick had simply been converted into a direct free-kick?

And there's another side to this coin. For the defending team, the first touch on the ball in an indirect free-kick scenario is the cue to try to charge down the ensuing shot at goal. But, in this case, when there was no 'first touch' as such, did they have a sporting chance? Is it fair that an indirect free-kick should be effectively reduced to a direct shot at goal? Does this rule need clarification?



16 + 8 = a good number?

The expansion of a final tournament automatically triggers a talking point even before the ball has started rolling: does quantity detract from quality? When the ball did finally start to roll, many of the nine participants who had not taken part in the 16-team final tournament in Australia four years earlier, provided a positive response, rapidly demonstrating that they could be competitive at continental level. Thailand and Kyrgyz Republic stated the case especially strongly by reaching the knockout rounds in the UAE.

The main debate focused on two of the third-placed teams heading home after the group stage. On the one hand, Lebanon fans might feel aggrieved that their side bowed out thanks to a margin of one yellow card, having finished level with Vietnam in all other criteria. On the other hand, the cancellation of the battle for third place eliminated a meaningless fixture on the final matchday.

The unanimous feeling, however, was that the expanded tournament could only generate longer-term benefits in terms of promoting development and improvement within the AFC Member Associations. As Vietnam coach Park Hang-seo commented, "it's not easy when meeting teams like Japan, Islamic Republic of Iran or Iraq but the experience of playing against stronger teams is really helpful for players to improve." After the Philippines had bowed out, Sven-Göran Eriksson reflected "it's an extremely good experience to see what a big tournament is all about. We maybe could and should have done better but, for sure, it's good for the future of football in the country."

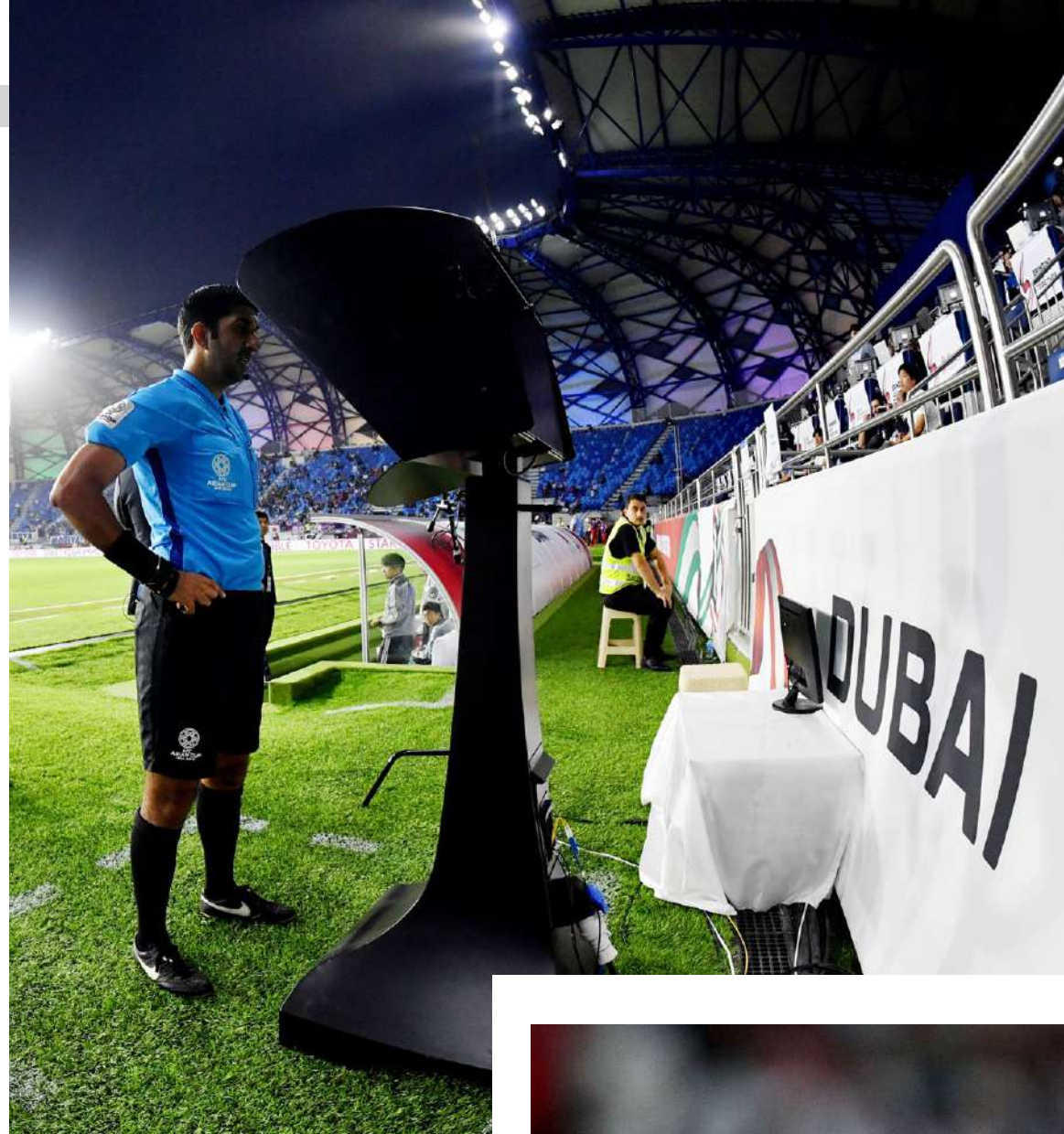
It may have been a pre-tournament talking point. But, in the UAE, all the talking pointed in one (positive) direction.

Time to pick dates?

There was no debate about the perfect conditions in the UAE. But there was debate about the positioning of the AFC Asian Cup within the international calendar. Does it follow too closely on the heels of the FIFA World Cup? Is January the ideal month? Would a move to June avoid potential conflicts about the release of players by European clubs? On the other hand, would it be an appropriate move if climatic conditions in June rule out so many potential host nations? Would it be better to dispute the finals in even-numbered years midway between World Cups? Speaking of which, does the timing of the next one at the end of 2022 signify an inevitable change of dates for the next AFC Asian Cup? Solutions may not be easy. But is it a good time to review the situation?

VAR-reaching effects?

One of the innovations at the AFC Asian Cup 2019 was the introduction of the Video Assistant Referee at the



quarter-final stage – a move which signified the withdrawal of the Additional Assistant Referees. The impact could be clearly illustrated by two VAR-motivated decisions. The first was in the closing minutes of the semi-final between the hosts and Qatar, when Big Brother's watchful eyes picked up an off-the-ball infraction which had gone undetected. The images allowed no room for interpretation: red card.

In the final, Japan were pressing hard for an equaliser when VAR picked up a handball in their penalty area. The referee, after watching the replay on the pitchside screen, awarded the penalty that clinched Qatar's 3-1 win. In this case, there was room for interpretation. While the images were provoking debate among onlookers about whether it was ball-to-hand or hand-to-ball, the referee retained the right to have the last word. It was the match official's opinion which counted.

As a talking point, it could be asked whether the two-dimensional images of the TV screen should

prevail over the three dimensions of reality on the pitch? Or whether players will increasingly approach the referee to demand a VAR review? Will players – and coaches – challenge every contentious decision? Will they use it as an excuse if the referee decides not to consult? At the World Cup in Russia, the implementation of the VAR system was linked by critics to the high level of goals from set-plays. If infractions are likely to be spotted by Big Brother, will this become a deterrent, encouraging players to stick to the rule book?

Even though there is still room for the streamlining of procedures, the VAR system seems to be widely accepted. Will it have a long-term effect on the behaviour of players and coaches?

Changing room?

You are the coach. You take a squad of 23 players to a tournament. Do you set out to give them all a game? Or, injuries and suspensions permitting, do you aim to field a settled side? As it happened, the final in the UAE showcased the two schools of thought.

Thinking might be influenced by the nature of the tournament. At development levels, is it more appropriate to offer opportunities to everyone? This has clearly been Japan's policy in recent years – and it was extended into the Asian Cup. Would you adopt this approach? Or rather, would you adopt this approach if the aim is to produce a title winner? At a final tournament, how much relevance do you give to longer-term objectives?

By contrast, Qatar rang fewer changes. And there was no doubt that the team evolved during the final tournament – as France had done during the World Cup in Russia. To what extent was continuity a key element in Qatar's success? As a coach, you need to weigh up the evidence. The Japanese policy is great for team-building, for creating harmony within the group and for experimenting with different players. The other school of thought is to respect the adage about not changing a winning team. What would you do?



Team Profiles





AUSTRALIA

**Graham Arnold***Head Coach*

A former Australia international, Graham Arnold is one of the country's most experienced coaches, taking charge of the national team at the AFC Asian Cup in 2007 and then again following the Socceroos' 2018 FIFA World Cup campaign in Russia. Domestically, Arnold – a three-time A-League Coach of the Year winner – has enjoyed title successes with Central Coast Mariners and Sydney FC.

**Key Features**

- Variations on 1-4-3-3 with fast transitions to 1-4-4-1-1 or 1-4-2-3-1 defence
- Patient possession game building from back through thirds
- Emphasis on wing play; two full-backs very high, supplying crosses, long throws
- Wingers often cutting inside to form a five-man attacking line
- 23 Rogic the free spirit in midfield; technique under pressure, incisive passing
- Quick, aggressive, early collective pressure after loss of possession
- Physical presence; aerial ability; athletically equipped for power play

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Mathew Ryan	08-04-1992	RYAN	Goalkeeper
2	Milos Degenek	28-04-1994	DEGENEK	Defender
3	Alex Gersbach	08-05-1997	GERSBACH	Defender
4	Rhyan Grant	26-02-1991	GRANT	Defender
5	Mark Milligan	04-08-1985	MILLIGAN	Defender
6	Matthew Jurman	08-12-1989	JURMAN	Defender
7	Mathew Leckie	04-02-1991	LECKIE	Forward
8	Massimo Luongo	25-09-1992	LUONGO	Midfielder
9	Jamie Maclaren	29-07-1993	MACLAREN	Forward
10	Robbie Kruse	05-10-1988	KRUSE	Forward
11	Andrew Nabbout	17-12-1992	NABBOUT	Forward
12	Mitchell Langerak	22-08-1988	LANGERAK	Goalkeeper
13	James Jeggo	12-02-1992	JEGGO	Midfielder
14	Apostolos Giannou	25-01-1990	GIANNOU	Forward
15	Chris Ikonomidis	04-05-1995	IKONOMIDIS	Forward
16	Aziz Behich	16-12-1990	BEHICH	Defender
17	Mustafa Amini	20-04-1993	AMINI	Midfielder
18	Daniel Vukovic	27-03-1985	VUKOVIC	Goalkeeper
19	Josh Risdon	27-07-1992	RISDON	Defender
20	Trent Sainsbury	05-01-1992	SAINSBURY	Defender
21	Awer Mabil	15-09-1995	MABIL	Forward
22	Jackson Irvine	07-03-1993	IRVINE	Midfielder
23	Tom Rogic	16-12-1992	ROGIC	Forward

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
5	2	1	2	6	4	2

Average Goals/Game

1.2

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.8

Clean sheets

2

TOP SCORER

Player	Awer Mabil
No. of Goals	2

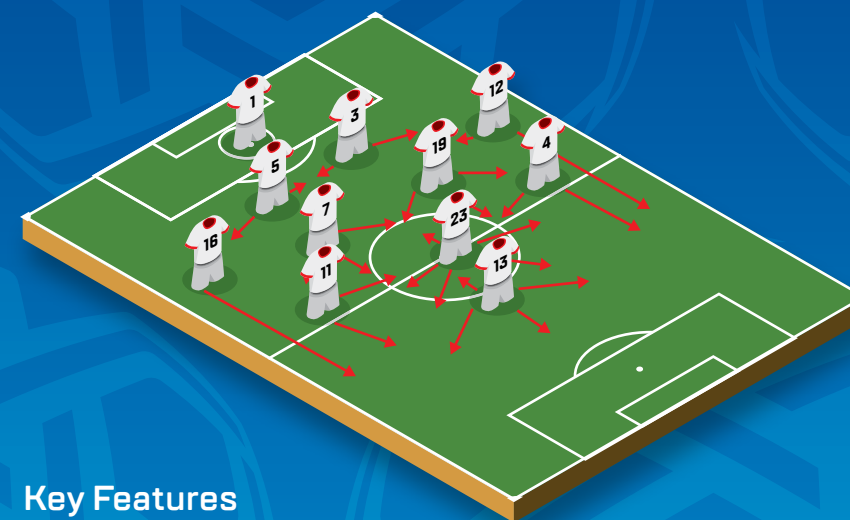




BAHRAIN

**Miroslav Soukop***Head Coach*

Miroslav Soukop was appointed head coach of Bahrain in July 2016 following a spell with the Yemen national team. A midfielder during his playing days, Soukop memorably guided his native Czech Republic to a runners-up finish at the 2007 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Canada. More recently, he oversaw Bahrain's impressive run to the 2018 Gulf Cup semi-finals.

**Key Features**

- 1-4-2-3-1; blend of long supply to striker or construction through thirds
- Balanced attacking with, mainly, six players behind the ball
- Wide midfielders cutting in; attacks usually supported by one of two full-backs
- Fast attack-to-defence transitions into 1-4-5-1 block; pressure from midfield
- 23 Rashed the middle-to-front catalyst; passing, finishing, off-ball movement
- Powerful, well-organised defending; 1v1 abilities, anticipation, discipline
- Compact unit; tactical awareness; mental strength in adverse situations

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Sayed Shubbar Alawi	11-08-1985	S.SHUBBAR	Goalkeeper
2	Sayed Mahdi Baqer	14-04-1994	S.MAHD	Defender
3	Waleed Mohamed Alhayam	03-02-1991	W.ALHAYAM	Defender
4	Sayed Dhiya Saeed	17-07-1992	S.DHIYA	Midfielder
5	Hamad Mahmood Alshamsan	29-09-1997	H.ALSHAMSAN	Defender
6	Ahmed Merza Moosa	24-02-1991	A.MERZA	Defender
7	Abdulwahab Ali Alsafi	04-06-1984	A.ALSAFI	Midfielder
8	Mohamed Jasim Marhoon	12-02-1998	M.MARHOON	Midfielder
9	Mahdi Faisal Alhumaidan	19-05-1993	M.HUMAI	Forward
10	Abdulla Yusuf Helal	12-06-1993	A.YUSUF	Forward
11	Ali Jaafar Madan	30-11-1995	A.MADAN	Midfielder
12	Ahmed Ali Juma	08-10-1992	A.JUMA	Defender
13	Mohamed Al Romaihi	09-09-1990	M.ALROMAIHI	Forward
14	Ali Abdula Haram	11-12-1988	A.HARAM	Midfielder
15	Jasim Ahmed Alshaikh	01-02-1996	J.ALSHAIKH	Midfielder
16	Sayed Redha Isa	07-08-1994	S.REDHA	Defender
17	Ahmed Mubarak Bughammar	30-12-1997	A.MUBARAK	Defender
18	Ahmed Abdulla Ali	01-04-1987	A.ABDULLA	Defender
19	Komail Hasan Alaswad	08-04-1994	K.ALASWAD	Midfielder
20	Sami Mohamed Alhusaini	29-09-1989	S.ALHUSAINI	Forward
21	Yusuf Habib Hasan	09-01-1998	Y.HABIB	Goalkeeper
22	Abdulkarim Fardan Abdulkarim	25-04-1992	A.FARDAN	Goalkeeper
23	Jamal Rashed Abdulrahman	07-11-1988	J.RASHED	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	1	1	2	3	4	-1

Average Goals/Game	0.8
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.0
Clean sheets	1

TOP SCORER

Player	Mohamed Al Romaihi
No. of Goals	2





CHINA PR



Marcello Lippi

Head Coach

Marcello Lippi, who led Italy to the 2006 FIFA World Cup title, had been in charge of China PR since 2016. Prior to his appointment, Lippi enjoyed a successful spell with Chinese giants Guangzhou Evergrande, winning three Chinese Super League titles, the Chinese FA Cup and the 2013 AFC Champions League crown. Lippi left the role following China's defeat to the Islamic Republic of Iran.



Key Features

- Tactically flexible, switching between 1-4-3-3 and 1-5-3-2 structures
- Blend of long forward balls from keeper or build-up via defenders
- Midfielder 10 Zheng Zhi dropping deep to initiate attacking moves
- Frequent use of long pass from midfield into space behind back line
- Combination play on wings with full-backs making overlapping runs
- After ball loss, pressure on ball-carrier + retreat into high defensive block
- Physical stature, good aerial ability, dangerous corners and free-kicks

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Chn Yan Junling	28-01-1991	YAN J.L.	Goalkeeper
2	Liu Yiming	28-02-1995	LIU Y.M.	Defender
3	Yu Yang	06-08-1989	YU Y.	Defender
4	Shi Ke	08-01-1993	SHI K.	Defender
5	Zhang Linpeng	09-05-1989	ZHANG L.P.	Defender
6	Feng Xiaoting	22-10-1985	FENG X.T.	Defender
7	Wu Lei	19-11-1991	WU L.	Forward
8	Zhao Xuri	03-12-1985	ZHAO X.R.	Midfielder
9	Xiao Zhi	28-05-1985	XIAO ZH.	Forward
10	Zheng Zhi	20-08-1980	ZHENG ZH.	Midfielder
11	Hao Junmin	24-03-1987	HAO J.M.	Midfielder
12	Zhang Lu	06-09-1987	ZHANG L.	Goalkeeper
13	Chi Zhongguo	26-10-1989	CHI ZH.G.	Midfielder
14	Wei Shihao	08-04-1995	WEI SHI.H.	Forward
15	Wu Xi	19-02-1989	WU X.	Midfielder
16	Jin Jingdao	18-11-1992	JIN J.D.	Midfielder
17	Zhang Chengdong	09-02-1989	ZHANG CH.D.	Defender
18	Gao Lin	14-02-1986	GAO L.	Forward
19	Liu Yang	17-06-1995	LIU Y.	Defender
20	Yu Hanchao	25-02-1987	YU H.CH.	Midfielder
21	Piao Cheng	21-08-1989	PIAO CH.	Midfielder
22	Yu Dabao	18-04-1988	YU D.B.	Forward
23	Wang Dalei	10-01-1989	WANG D.L.	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
5	3	0	2	7	7	0

Average Goals/Game	1.4
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.4
Clean sheets	1

TOP SCORERS

Player	Yu Dabao, Wu Lei
No. of Goals	2



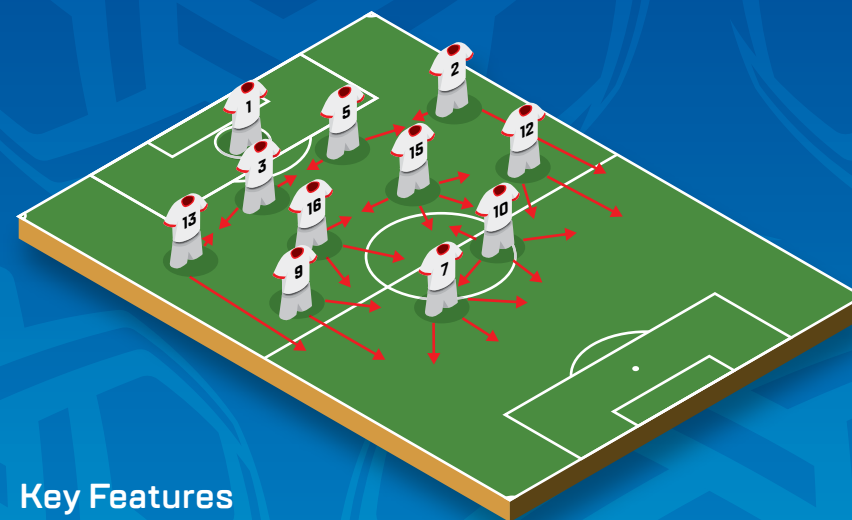


DPR KOREA



Kim Yong-jun
Head Coach

Kim Yong-jun took charge of the DPR Korea national team in December 2018 after being an assistant coach for the nation's Under-16, Under-17 and Under-23 sides. Kim played for his country at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, while at club level he spent most of his career with Pyongyang City, although he did have spells in China PR with Yanbian FC and Chengdu Blades between 2006 and 2008.



Key Features

- Emphasis on deep defending with back line of four or five
- Extensive use of long passes from keeper or defenders to main striker 10 Kwang Ryong
- Counterattacks launched in same way after ball-winning in defensive third
- Combination play often based on long diagonal passes to the wide areas
- Wing play supported by both full-backs with early crosses to front two
- Shadow striker 7 Kwang Song the creative spark: vision, skill, clever through passes
- Defensive transitions based on dropping into defensive block, pressing from midfield

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ri Myong-guk	09-09-1986	R. MYONG GUK	Goalkeeper
2	Kim Chol-bom	16-07-1994	K. CHOL BOM	Defender
3	Jang Kuk-chol	16-02-1994	J. KUK CHOL	Defender
4	Kim Song-gi	23-10-1988	K. SONG GI	Defender
5	An Song-il	30-11-1992	A. SONG IL	Defender
6	Ri Thong-il	20-11-1992	R. THONG IL	Defender
7	Han Kwang-song	11-09-1998	H. KWANG SONG	Forward
8	Ri Hyok-chol	27-01-1991	R. HYOK CHOL	Forward
9	Kim Yong-il	06-07-1994	K. YONG IL	Midfielder
10	Pak Kwang-ryong	27-09-1992	P. KWANG RYONG	Forward
11	Jong Il-gwan	30-10-1992	J. IL GWAN	Forward
12	Kim Kyong-hun	11-08-1990	K. KYONG HUN	Midfielder
13	Sim Hyon-jin	01-01-1991	S. HYON JIN	Defender
14	Kang Kuk-chol	29-09-1999	K. KUK CHOL	Midfielder
15	Ri Un-chol	13-07-1995	R. UN CHOL	Midfielder
16	Ri Yong-jik	08-02-1991	R. YONG JIK	Midfielder
17	Ri Chang-ho	04-01-1990	R. CHANG HO	Defender
18	Sin Hyok	03-07-1992	S. HYOK	Goalkeeper
19	Rim Kwang-hyok	05-08-1992	R. KWANG HYOK	Forward
20	Choe Song-hyok	08-02-1998	C. SONG HYOK	Midfielder
21	Kang Ju-hyok	31-05-1997	K. JU HYOK	Goalkeeper
22	Ri Kum-chol	09-12-1991	R. KUM CHOL	Midfielder
23	Ri Il-jin	20-08-1993	R. IL JIN	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	0	3	1	14	-13

Average Goals/Game

0.3

Average Goals Conceded/Game

4.7

Clean sheets

0

TOP SCORER

Player	Pak Kwang-ryong
No. of Goals	1





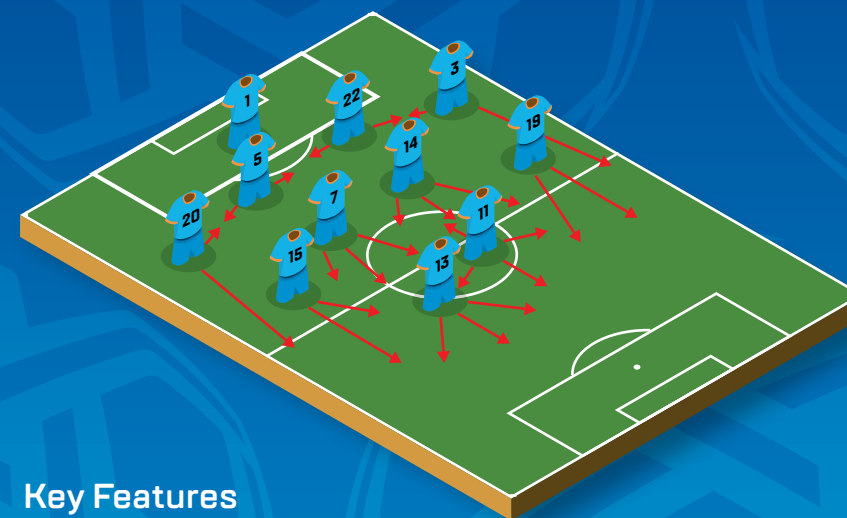
INDIA



Stephen Constantine

Head Coach

Englishman Stephen Constantine was in his second spell with India, having previously coached the South Asians from 2002 until 2005. His return came after stints at club and national team level in England, Malawi, Sudan, Cyprus, Greece and Rwanda. Under Constantine, India claimed the 2015 SAFF Championship title. The London native stepped down in the wake of India's group stage exit.



Key Features

- 1-4-4-2 with wide midfielders pushing up for 1-4-2-4 attacking
- Emphasis on high-tempo combination play and solo runs from midfield
- Also direct attacking via long deliveries from keeper or defenders to striker 13 Ashique
- Ball-winning followed by rapid counters using pace, skill of 11 Chhetri
- High pressure on ball-carrier during fast transition to compact defensive block
- Strong, well-organised defending; aerial power in back four; competent goalkeeping
- Excellent work and team ethics; sustained intensity and fighting spirit

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Gurpreet Singh Sandhu	03-02-1992	GURPREET	Goalkeeper
2	Salam Ranjan Singh	04-12-1995	RANJAN	Defender
3	Subhasish Bose	18-08-1995	SUBHASISH	Defender
4	Golui Sarthak	03-11-1997	SARTHAK	Defender
5	Sandesh	21-07-1993	JHINGAN	Defender
6	Germanpreet Singh	24-06-1996	GERMAN	Midfielder
7	Anirudh Thapa	15-01-1998	THAPA	Midfielder
8	Rai Vinit	10-11-1997	VINIT	Midfielder
9	Sumeet Passi	12-09-1994	PASSI	Forward
10	Balwant Singh	15-12-1986	BALWANT	Forward
11	Sunil Chhetri	03-08-1984	CHHETRI	Forward
12	Lalpekhlua Jeje	07-01-1991	JEJE	Forward
13	Muhammed Ashique Kuruniyan	14-06-1997	ASHIQUE	Midfielder
14	Pronay Halder	25-02-1993	PRONAY	Midfielder
15	Udanta Singh Kumam	14-06-1996	UDANTA	Midfielder
16	Vishal Kaith	22-07-1996	VISHAL	Goalkeeper
17	Rowlin	05-06-1992	BORGES	Midfielder
18	Jackichand Singh Telem	17-03-1992	JACKI	Midfielder
19	Hali Charan Narzary	10-05-1994	HALI	Midfielder
20	Pritam Kotal	08-09-1993	PRITAM	Defender
21	Narayan Das	25-09-1993	NARAYAN	Defender
22	Anas Edathodika	15-02-1987	ANAS	Defender
23	Amrinder Singh	27-05-1993	AMRINDER	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	1	0	2	4	4	0

Average Goals/Game

1.3

Average Goals Conceded/Game

1.3

Clean sheets

0

TOP SCORER

Player	Sunil Chhetri
No. of Goals	2

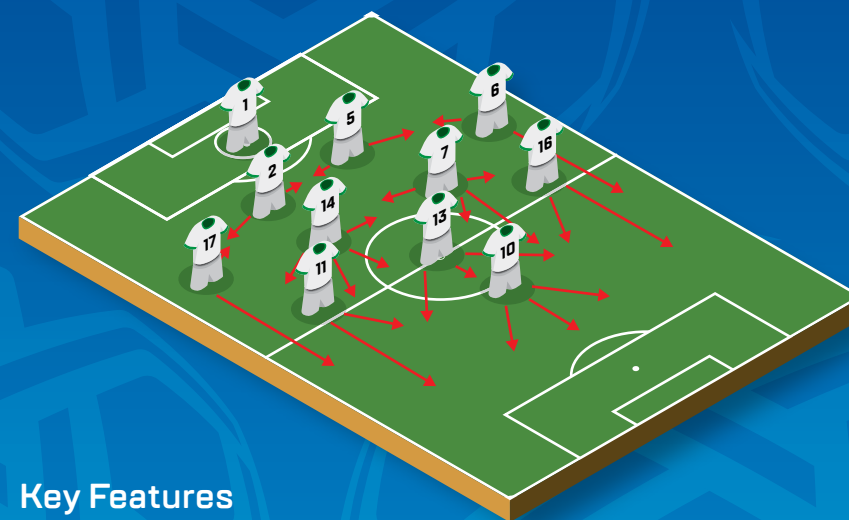




IRAQ

**Srečko Katanec***Head Coach*

Appointed in September 2018, Srečko Katanec represented Yugoslavia at two Olympic Games as well as at the 1984 UEFA European Championship and the FIFA World Cup in 1990. Regarded as one of the greatest players from Yugoslavia – and among the new nations to emerge after its break-up – he also played for Slovenia, before coaching them for more than eight years in two stints.

**Key Features**

- Mostly 1-4-4-1-1 with 10 Mohanad Ali as advanced striker
- Set out to build from back; keeper, defenders played long when pressed
- Fast skilful wingers; good relationships with overlapping full-backs
- Powerful high-tempo game; quick to win second ball when playing long
- Spells of high collective pressing; mostly fast transition to 1-4-5-1 defence
- Controlling midfielder 7 Saafa Hadi linking defence and attack with good passes
- Stout, compact back line; good 1v1 defending; strong team and work ethics

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Jalal Hassan Hachim	18-05-1991	JALAL	Goalkeeper
2	Ahmed Ibrahim	25-02-1992	A. IBRAHIM	Defender
3	Frans Dhia Haddad	14-07-1993	FRANS	Defender
4	Suad Natiq Naji	19-03-1994	SUAD NATIQ	Defender
5	Ali Faez Atiyah	09-09-1994	ALI FAEZ	Defender
6	Ali Adnan Al-Tameemi	19-12-1993	ALI ADNAN	Defender
7	Safaa Hadi Al-Furaiji	14-10-1998	SAFAA HADI	Midfielder
8	Osamah Jabbar Shafeeq	17-01-1992	OSAMAH	Midfielder
9	Ahmed Yaseen Gheni	22-04-1991	A. YASEEN	Midfielder
10	Mohanad Ali Kadhim	20-06-2000	MOHANAD ALI	Forward
11	Humam Tareq Faraj	10-02-1996	HUMAM	Midfielder
12	Mohammed Kassid	10-12-1986	M. KASSID	Goalkeeper
13	Bashar Resan Bonyan	22-12-1996	BASHAR	Midfielder
14	Amjed Attwan Kadhim	12-03-1997	AMJED	Midfielder
15	Ali Hisny Faisal	23-05-1994	ALI HISNY	Midfielder
16	Hussein Al-Saedi	29-11-1996	HUSSEIN	Midfielder
17	Alaa Ali Mhawi	03-06-1996	ALAA MHAWI	Defender
18	Aymen Hussein	22-03-1996	AYMEN	Forward
19	Mohammed Dawood	22-11-2000	M. DAWOOD	Forward
20	Mohammed Hameed	24-01-1993	MOHAMMED H.	Goalkeeper
21	Alaa Abbas Abdulnabi	27-07-1997	ALAA ABBAS	Forward
22	Rebin Ghareeb Solaka	12-04-1992	REBIN	Defender
23	Waleed Salim Al-Lami	05-01-1992	WALEED	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	2	1	1	6	3	3

Average Goals/Game

1.5

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.8

Clean sheets

2

TOP SCORER

Player	Mohanad Ali Kadhim
No. of Goals	2





IR IRAN



Carlos Queiroz

Head Coach

Carlos Queiroz was appointed head coach of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2011, subsequently guiding Team Melli to two AFC Asian Cups and the same number of FIFA World Cups. The Portuguese tactician, who has a wealth of experience at both national and club level, announced he was leaving his position following his side's loss to Japan in the semi-finals.



Key Features

- Attack-minded 1-4-3-3 based on high-intensity play in all departments
- Construction through thirds or long kicks, throws by secure goalkeeper
- Diagonal switches; high-tempo combinations on wings with attacking full-backs
- Target man 20 Sardar shielding the long ball; good lay-offs, 1v1 skills
- Strong, compact defending; intense high pressure on the ball
- Well-rehearsed set plays, including very long throw-in by 11 Amiri
- Balanced team with clear roles, collective spirit; able to dictate tempo of game

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ali Reza Safarbeiranvand	21-09-1992	BEIRANVAND	Goalkeeper
2	Vorya Ghafouri	20-09-1987	VORYA	Defender
3	Ehsan Haji Safi	25-02-1990	HAJI SAFI	Defender
4	Roozbeh Cheshmi	24-07-1993	ROOZBEH	Defender
5	Milad Mohammadikeshmarzi	29-09-1993	M.MOHAMMADI	Defender
6	Ahmad Noorollahi	01-02-1993	NOOROLLAHI	Midfielder
7	Masoud Soleimani Shojaei	09-06-1984	MASOUD. SH	Midfielder
8	Morteza Pouraliganji	19-04-1992	M.POURALIGANJI	Defender
9	Omid Ebrahimi Zarandini	16-09-1987	OMID	Midfielder
10	Karim Ansari Fard	03-04-1990	KARIM	Forward
11	Vahid Amiri	02-04-1988	VAMIRI	Midfielder
12	Amir Abed Zadeh	26-04-1993	ABEDZADEH	Goalkeeper
13	Mohammadhossein Kanan Zadeghan	23-03-1994	KANANI	Defender
14	Sayed Saman Ghoddos	06-09-1993	GHODDOS	Midfielder
15	Pejman Montazeri	06-09-1983	P.MONTAZERI	Defender
16	Mahdi Torabi	10-09-1994	M.TORABI	Midfielder
17	Mehdi Taremi	18-07-1992	MEHDI	Midfielder
18	Alireza Jahan Bakhsh Jirandeh	11-08-1993	A.JAHANBAKHSH	Midfielder
19	Sayedmajid Hosseini	20-06-1996	M.HOSSEINI	Defender
20	Sardar Azmoun	01-01-1995	SARDAR	Forward
21	Sayed Ashkan Dejagah	05-07-1986	DEJAGAH	Midfielder
22	Sayedpayam Niazmandghader	06-04-1995	P.NIAZMAND	Goalkeeper
23	Ramin Rezaeiansemeskandi	21-03-1990	RAMIN	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
6	4	1	1	12	3	9

Average Goals/Game

2.0

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.5

Clean sheets

5

TOP SCORER

Player	Sardar Azmoun
No. of Goals	4





JAPAN



Hajime Moriyasu

Head Coach

Hajime Moriyasu was named head coach of Japan in July 2018, filling the void left by Akira Nishino's departure in the wake of the Samurai Blue's 2018 FIFA World Cup campaign. As a player, Moriyasu, who is also Japan's Under-21 coach, claimed the 1992 AFC Asian Cup with Japan. His subsequent coaching career saw him win J1 League titles with Sanfrecce Hiroshima in 2012, 2013 and 2015.



Key Features

- Flexible attacking structure with fast transitions to 1-4-4-2 or 1-4-5-1 defence
- Slick one-touch combination play mixed with long balls from keeper
- Varied attacking: solo runs, forward passes, interchanging, combinations through middle
- Wing play supported by full-backs; good crosses to, usually, three men in box
- Compact zonal defending with well-organised collective pressure on the ball
- Defenders and goalkeeper alert to opportunities for swift counterattacks
- Athletic squad; strength in depth; rotations with no loss of collective quality

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Masaak Higashiguchi	12-05-1986	HIGASHIGUCHI	Goalkeeper
2	Genta Miura	01-03-1995	MIURA	Defender
3	Sei Muroya	05-04-1994	MUROYA	Defender
4	Sho Sasaki	02-10-1989	SASAKI	Defender
5	Yuto Nagatomo	12-09-1986	NAGATOMO	Defender
6	Wataru Endo	09-02-1993	ENDO	Midfielder
7	Gaku Shibasaki	28-05-1992	SHIBASAKI	Midfielder
8	Genki Haraguchi	09-05-1991	HARAGUCHI	Midfielder
9	Takumi Minamino	16-01-1995	MINAMINO	Midfielder
10	Takashi Inui	02-06-1988	INUI	Midfielder
11	Koya Kitagawa	26-07-1996	KITAGAWA	Forward
12	Shuici Gonda	03-03-1989	GONDA	Goalkeeper
13	Yoshinori Muto	15-07-1992	MUTO	Forward
14	Junya Ito	09-03-1993	ITO	Midfielder
15	Yuya Osako	18-05-1990	OSAKO	Forward
16	Takehiro Tomiyasu	05-11-1998	TOMIYASU	Defender
17	Toshihiro Aoyama	22-02-1986	AOYAMA	Midfielder
18	Tsukasa Shiotani	05-12-1988	SHIOTANI	Defender
19	Hiroki Sakai	12-04-1990	SAKAI	Defender
20	Tomoaki Makino	11-05-1987	MAKINO	Defender
21	Ritsu Doan	16-06-1998	DOAN	Midfielder
22	Maya Yoshida	24-08-1988	YOSHIDA	Defender
23	Daniel Schmidt	03-02-1992	SCHMIDT	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
7	6	0	1	12	6	6

Average Goals/Game

1.7

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.9

Clean sheets

4

TOP SCORER

Player	Yuya Osako
No. of Goals	4

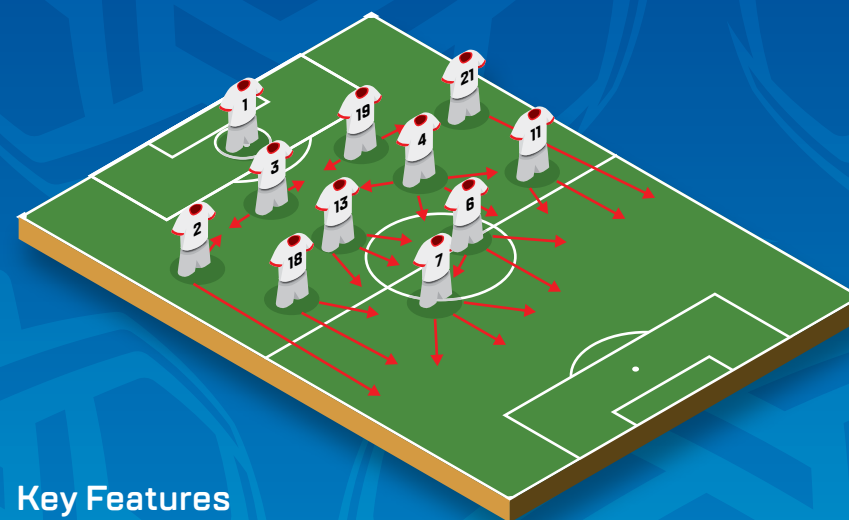




JORDAN

**Vital Borkelmans***Head Coach*

Vital Borkelmans was appointed head coach of Jordan in September 2018 following the departure of Jamal Abu Abed. The Belgian has a wealth of experience at international level, having served as an assistant to Belgium national team coach Marc Wilmots from 2012 until 2016. As a player, Borkelmans excelled for Club Brugge and was capped over 20 times by his country.

**Key Features**

- Mostly 1-4-2-3-1; mix of elaborate build-up or direct supply to front
- Varied attacking options; outstanding solo skills by wingers, attacking midfielders
- Limited counterattacking based mainly on individual running with the ball
- Committed defending; eight or nine behind ball; back line often expanded to six
- Aerial power an important weapon; dangerous corners and free-kicks
- 18 Mousa the key attacker; movement, strong shooting, unpredictable solo skills
- High-energy game; strong collective sense, working, covering for teammates

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Amer Shafi	14-02-1982	ASHAFI	Goalkeeper
2	Feras Zeyad Shilbaya	27-11-1993	FERAS	Defender
3	Tareq Khattab	06-05-1992	TAREQ	Defender
4	Baha Abdel-Rahman	05-01-1987	BAHA	Midfielder
5	Yazan Mousa Alarab	31-01-1996	YALARAB	Defender
6	Saeed Hasan Almurjan	10-02-1990	SAEED	Midfielder
7	Yousef Rawshdeh	14-03-1990	YRAWSHDEH	Midfielder
8	Obieda Ahmad Alsamrieh	17-02-1992	OBIEDA	Midfielder
9	Baha' Faisal Seif	30-05-1995	B.SEIF	Forward
10	Ahmad Sameer Saleh	27-03-1991	AHMAD	Midfielder
11	Yaseen Mahmoud Bakheet	29-01-1988	YASEEN	Forward
12	Ahmad Nawwas	06-07-1984	A. NAWWAS	Goalkeeper
13	Khalil Baniateyah	08-06-1991	KHALIL	Midfielder
14	Ahmad Ersan	28-09-1995	AERSAN	Forward
15	Bara Sami Marie	13-04-1994	BARA	Defender
16	Saleh Ibrahim Ratib	18-12-1994	SALEH	Midfielder
17	Mohammad Ghassan Al Basha	05-02-1988	M.ALBASHA	Defender
18	Mousa Suleiman	10-06-1997	MOUSA	Forward
19	Anas Bani Yaseen	29-11-1988	ANAS	Defender
20	Oudi Khader Al Qara	20-03-1991	ODI	Forward
21	Salem Alajalin	18-02-1988	SALEM	Defender
22	Mutaz Yasin	03-11-1982	MUTAZ	Goalkeeper
23	Ehsan Manel Haddad	05-02-1994	EHSAN	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	2	2	0	4	1	3

Average Goals/Game	1.0
Average Goals Conceded/Game	0.3
Clean sheets	3

TOP SCORERS

Player	Mousa Suleiman, Baha Abdel-Rahman, Anas Bani Yaseen, Tareq Khattab
No. of Goals	2





KOREA REPUBLIC



Paulo Bento

Head Coach

Former Portugal head coach Paulo Bento was appointed following Korea Republic's 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia campaign. Whilst in charge of Portugal, Bento guided his charges to the semi-finals of the 2012 UEFA European Championship and to the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil. He later had stints with Brazil's Cruzeiro and Greek side Olympiakos. He last managed Chinese outfit Chongqing Lifan.



Key Features

- Default setting 1-4-2-3-1 with rapid transitions to compact 1-4-5-1 defence
- Composed attacking with quick combinations on wings or through centre
- Wing play supported by full-backs, notably 2 Lee on right; effective crosses
- Attack well led by striker 18 Hwang; mobility, good first touch under pressure
- Fluent off-ball movement creating passing options in middle-to-front play
- Keeper 1 Kim active in build-up, fast to cover space behind compact high defence
- Strong in 1v1 defending; well-organised collective pressure after loss of ball

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Kim Seung-gyu	30-09-1990	S G KIM	Goalkeeper
2	Lee Yong	24-12-1986	Y LEE	Defender
3	Kim Jin-su	13-06-1992	J S KIM	Defender
4	Kim Min-jae	15-11-1996	M J KIM	Defender
5	Jung Woo-young	14-12-1989	W Y JUNG	Midfielder
6	Hwang In-beom	20-09-1996	B HWANG	Midfielder
7	Song Heung-min	08-07-1992	H M SON	Midfielder
8	Ju Se-jong	30-10-1990	S J JU	Midfielder
9	Ji Dong-won	28-05-1991	D W JI	Forward
10	Lee Jae-sung	10-08-1992	J S LEE	Midfielder
11	Hwang Hee-chan	26-01-1996	H C HWANG	Midfielder
12	Lee Seung-woo	06-01-1998	S W LEE	Forward
13	Koo Ja-cheol	27-02-1989	J C KOO	Midfielder
14	Hong Chul	17-09-1990	C HONG	Defender
15	Jung Seung-hyun	03-04-1994	S H JUNG	Defender
16	Ki Sung-yueng	24-01-1989	S Y KI	Midfielder
17	Lee Chung-yong	02-07-1988	C Y LEE	Midfielder
18	Hwang Ui-jo	28-08-1992	U J HWANG	Forward
19	Kim Young-gwon	27-02-1990	Y G KIM	Defender
20	Kwon Kyung-won	31-01-1992	K W KWON	Defender
21	Kim Jin-hyeon	06-07-1987	J H KIM	Goalkeeper
22	Kim Moon-hwan	01-08-1995	M H KIM	Defender
23	Jo Hyeon-woo	25-09-1991	H W JO	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
5	4	0	1	6	2	4

Average Goals/Game

1.2

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.4

Clean sheets

3

TOP SCORERS

Player	Hwang Ui-jo, Kim Min-jae
No. of Goals	2





KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

**Aleksandr Krestinin***Head Coach*

Aleksandr Krestinin has been Kyrgyz Republic head coach since 2014 and he repaid the faith shown in him by guiding the Central Asians to their first AFC Asian Cup Finals. Besides his national team duties, the highly regarded Russian is also in charge of Kyrgyz Republic club side FC Dordoi – a role he has performed since joining the Bishkek-based outfit in 2017.

**Key Features**

- Structure built on close-knit defensive block with four or five in back line
- Mix of combination play and direct supply to effective target-man 19 Lux
- Fast, dangerous counterattacking; midfielders quick to support main striker
- Good mobility, 1v1 skills, positional interchanging among midfielders
- Rapid attack-to-defence transitions; fierce high pressure on ball-carrier
- Keeper 13 Kadyrbekov alert in covering back line, good positioning, judgement
- Strong work ethic, fitness levels; well-organised, disciplined, committed unit

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Pavel Matiash	11-07-1987	MATIASH	Goalkeeper
2	Valerii Kichin	12-10-1992	KICHIN	Defender
3	Tamirlan Kozubaev	01-07-1994	KOZUBAEV	Defender
4	Mustafa Iusupov	01-07-1995	IUSUPOV	Defender
5	Aziar Akmatov	24-08-1998	AKMATOV	Defender
6	Pavel Sidorenko	26-03-1987	SIDORENKO	Midfielder
7	Tursunali Rustamov	31-01-1990	RUSTAMOV	Midfielder
8	Aziz Sydykov	23-06-1992	SYDYKOV	Midfielder
9	Edgar Bernhardt	30-03-1986	BERNHARDT	Midfielder
10	Mirlan Murzaev	29-03-1990	MURZAEV	Forward
11	Bekzhan Sagynbaev	11-09-1994	SAGYNBAEV	Midfielder
12	Odilzhon Abdurakhmanov	18-03-1996	ABDURAKHMANOV	Midfielder
13	Kutman Kadyrbekov	13-06-1997	KADYRBEKOV	Goalkeeper
14	Ernist Batyrkanov	21-02-1998	BATYRKANOV	Forward
15	Murolimzhon Akhmedov	05-01-1992	AKHMEDOV	Midfielder
16	Valerii Kashuba	14-09-1984	KASHUBA	Goalkeeper
17	Daniel Nii Armah Tagoe	03-03-1986	TAGOE	Defender
18	Kairat Zhyrgalbek Uulu	13-06-1993	UULU	Midfielder
19	Lux Vitalij	27-02-1989	LUX	Forward
20	Baktyiar Duishobekov	03-06-1995	DUISHOBEKOV	Midfielder
21	Farkhat Musabekov	03-01-1994	MUSABEKOV	Midfielder
22	Anton Zemlianukhin	11-12-1990	ZEMLIANUKHIN	Midfielder
23	Akhlidin Israilov	16-09-1994	ISRAILOV	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	1	0	3	6	7	-1

Average Goals/Game	1.5
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.8
Clean sheets	0

TOP SCORER

Player	Lux Vitalij
No. of Goals	3





LEBANON

**Miodrag Radulovic***Head Coach*

Miodrag Radulovic, who hails from Podgorica in Montenegro, has been in charge of Lebanon since 2015. Prior to his appointment, Radulovic was an assistant coach when Serbia & Montenegro were runners-up at the 2004 UEFA European Under-21 Championship. At club level, the one-time midfielder has had managerial spells in Portugal, Russia, Uzbekistan and Kuwait.

**Key Features**

- Back line of five in first two games; 1-4-3-3 in must-win match v DPR Korea
- Good blend of elaborate combination play and direct supply to the front
- Attacking trio looking to inter-pass or to challenge opponents 1v1
- Both wing-backs forward to deliver crosses; aerial power in both boxes
- After ball-loss, pressure on carrier; quick assembly of seven-man block
- Disciplined, well-organised defending backed by proficient, influential goalkeeper
- 13 Melki the leader; vision, passing, linking defence with attack

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Mehdi Kahlil	19-09-1991	KAHLIL	Goalkeeper
2	Kassem El Zein	02-12-1990	EL ZEIN	Defender
3	Mootaz Bellah El Jounaidi	20-01-1986	EL JOUNAIDI	Defender
4	Nour Mansour	22-10-1989	MANSOUR	Defender
5	Samir Ayass	24-12-1990	AYASS	Midfielder
6	Joan Oumari	19-08-1988	OUMARI	Defender
7	Hassan Maatouk	10-08-1987	MAATOUK	Forward
8	Hassan Chaito	20-03-1989	CHAITO	Forward
9	Hilal Alhelwe	24-11-1994	ALHELWE	Forward
10	Mohamad Haidar	08-11-1989	M. HAIDAR	Midfielder
11	Robert Alexander Melki	14-11-1992	R. MELKI	Midfielder
12	Adnan Haidar	03-08-1989	A. HAIDAR	Midfielder
13	George Felix Melki	23-07-1994	G. MELKI	Defender
14	Nader Matar	12-05-1992	N. MATAR	Midfielder
15	Haytham Faour	27-02-1990	FAOUR	Midfielder
16	Hassan Chaitou	16-06-1991	CHAITOU	Midfielder
17	Mohamad Zein El Abidine Tahan	02-04-1988	TAHAN	Defender
18	Walid Ismail	10-11-1984	ISMAIL	Defender
19	Ali Hamam	25-08-1986	HAMAM	Defender
20	Rabih Ataya	16-07-1989	ATAYA	Forward
21	Ahmad Taktouk	29-09-1984	TAKTOUK	Goalkeeper
22	Bassel Jradi	06-07-1993	JRADI	Forward
23	Mostafa Matar	10-09-1995	M. MATAR	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	1	0	2	4	5	-1

Average Goals/Game

1.3

Average Goals Conceded/Game

1.7

Clean sheets

0

TOP SCORER

Player	Hilal Alhelwe
No. of Goals	2





OMAN

**Pim Verbeek***Head Coach*

Pim Verbeek replaced Spaniard Lopez Caro in December 2016. The highly regarded Dutchman was an assistant to Guus Hiddink when his compatriot was in charge of Korea Republic during the 2002 FIFA World Cup. Verbeek subsequently guided Korea Republic to a third-place finish at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, and oversaw Oman's Gulf Cup title success in 2017. He has since retired from coaching.

**Key Features**

- 1-4-4-2 mixing possession play with long supply from keeper, defenders
- Adventurous full-backs delivering good diagonals and crosses
- Varied attacking options from midfield; penetrating passes, solo runs
- 6 Raed Saleh the defence-to-attack catalyst; power, speed, 1v1 skills
- Fast transitions to narrow, compact defensive block; pressure on ball-carrier
- Active role, good footwork, cover behind back line by keeper 18 Al Rusheidi
- Uninhibited attacking; ability to sustain high tempo; strong team ethic

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ammar Al-Rusheidi	14-02-1998	AMMAR	Goalkeeper
2	Mohammed Al Musallami	27-04-1990	M. AL MUSALLAMI	Defender
3	Mohammed Al Rawahi	26-04-1993	M. AL RAWAHI	Defender
4	Mohammed Al Hosni	24-03-1994	M. AL HOSNI	Forward
5	Mohammed Al Balushi	27-08-1989	M. AL BALUSHI	Defender
6	Raed Saleh	09-06-1992	RAED	Forward
7	Khalid Khalifa Al-Hajri	10-03-1994	K. AL HAJRI	Forward
8	Yaseen Al-Sheyadi	05-02-1994	YASEEN	Midfielder
9	Mohammed Al-Ghassani	01-04-1985	M. AL GHASSANI	Forward
10	Mohsin Al Khaldi	16-08-1988	M. AL KHALDI	Midfielder
11	Saad Al Mukhaini	06-09-1987	SAAD	Defender
12	Ahmed Al Mahajiri	23-02-1985	AL MAHAJRI	Midfielder
13	Khalid Nasser Al Braiki	03-07-1993	K. AL BRAIKI	Defender
14	Ali Al Jabri	29-01-1990	A. AL JABRI	Midfielder
15	Jameel Al Yahmadi	27-07-1996	JAMEEL	Forward
16	Muhsen Al Ghassani	27-03-1997	MUHSEN	Forward
17	Ali Al Busaidi	21-01-1991	A. AL BUSAIDI	Defender
18	Faiyz Al Rusheidi	19-07-1988	FAIYZ	Goalkeeper
19	Mahmood Mabrook Al Mushaifri	14-01-1993	MAHMOOD	Defender
20	Salaah Al Yahyaei	17-08-1998	SALAAH	Midfielder
21	Mataz Saleh Raboh	28-05-1996	MATAZ	Midfielder
22	Ahmed Faraj Al Rawahi	05-05-1994	A. AL RAWAHI	Goalkeeper
23	Harib Al Saadi	01-02-1990	HARIB	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	1	0	3	4	6	-2

Average Goals/Game	1.0
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.5
Clean sheets	0

TOP SCORER

Player	Muhsen Al Ghassani
No. of Goals	2





PALESTINE

**Nouredine Ould Ali***Head Coach*

Nouredine Ould Ali was named head coach of Palestine in April 2018. The Algerian had been an assistant to previous incumbents Abdel Nasser Barakat and Julio César Baldivieso prior to his appointment. Hailing from the suburbs of Algiers, Ould Ali has also previously been assistant coach to the Bahrain national side and Algerian club MC Alger.

**Key Features**

- 1-4-4-2 defensive shape the platform on which game plans were based
- Extensive use of direct supply to target striker 19 Wadi
- Midfielders pushing quickly forward to provide second-ball support
- 23 Darwish the balancing midfielder linking defence and attack
- Full-backs prepared to make overlapping runs, deliver crosses to main striker
- High press by front two, but mostly rapid transitions into defensive block
- Committed, well-organised back line with good cover from alert goalkeeper

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Tawfiq Abuhammad	08-11-1990	T.ABUHAMMAD	Goalkeeper
2	Mustafa Kabir	02-08-1984	M.KABIR	Defender
3	Mohammed B A Rashid	03-07-1995	M.RASHID	Midfielder
4	Mohammed Saleh	18-07-1993	M.SALEH	Defender
5	Tamer Salah	03-04-1986	T.SALAH	Defender
6	Shadi Shaban	04-03-1992	SH.SHABAN	Midfielder
7	Musab Battat	12-11-1993	M.BATTAT	Defender
8	Jonathan Zorrilla	26-05-1992	J.ZORRILLA	Midfielder
9	Tamer Seyam	25-11-1992	T.SEYAM	Midfielder
10	Sameh Maraaba	19-03-1992	S.MARAABA	Midfielder
11	Yaser Islame	06-02-1991	Y.ISLAME	Forward
12	Khaled Salem	17-11-1989	KH.SALEM	Forward
13	Jaka Hbaisha	29-08-1986	J.HBAISHA	Defender
14	Abdallah Jaber	17-02-1993	A.JABER	Defender
15	Abdallatif Albahdari	20-02-1984	A.ALBABHDARI	Defender
16	Amr J.m.kaddura	01-07-1994	A.KADDURA	Goalkeeper
17	Pablo Bravo	30-01-1990	P.BRAVO	Midfielder
18	Oday Ibrahim Dabbagh	03-12-1998	O.DABBAGH	Midfielder
19	Mahmoud Wadi	19-12-1994	M.WADI	Forward
20	Nathmi Albadawi	24-08-1991	N.ALBADAWI	Midfielder
21	Alexis Norambuena	31-03-1984	A.NORAMBUENA	Midfielder
22	Rami Hamada	24-03-1994	R.HAMADA	Goalkeeper
23	Mohammed Darwish	02-06-1991	M.DARWISH	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	2	1	0	3	-3

Average Goals/Game	0.0
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.0
Clean sheets	2



PHILIPPINES



Sven-Göran Eriksson

Head Coach

Sven-Göran Eriksson was hired in October 2018 and immediately guided the Southeast Asian nation to the semi-finals of that year's AFF Cup. The Swede arrived with a wealth of coaching experience, having been in charge of England at the 2006 FIFA World Cup as well as working at national and club level in Italy, Portugal, Ivory Coast, the United Arab Emirates and China PR.



Key Features

- Generally 1-5-4-1 format with wing-backs up for 1-3-4-3 attacking
- Frequent use of direct back-to-front deliveries to striker 20 Patiño
- Rapid second-ball support from wide midfielders 18 Reichelt, 14 Ingreso
- Counterattacking runs by one of two wing-backs, notably dynamic 17 Schrock on right
- Two-man press after ball-loss in attacking third; teammates rapidly into defensive block
- Disciplined defending; strong centre-backs aerially dominant, good in 1v1
- High-energy game played with commitment and strong team spirit

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Nathanael Ace Villanueva	25-10-1995	VILLANUEVA N.	Goalkeeper
2	Alvaro Silva	30-03-1984	SILVA	Defender
3	Carlos Alberto De Murga	30-11-1988	DE MURGA	Defender
4	John Patrick Strauss	28-01-1996	STRAUSS	Midfielder
5	Mike Rigoberto Ott	02-03-1995	OTT M.R.	Midfielder
6	Luke Woodland	21-07-1995	WOODLAND	Defender
7	Iain Ramsay	27-02-1988	RAMSAY	Forward
8	Manuel Ott	06-05-1992	OTT M.	Midfielder
9	Jovin Bedic	08-06-1990	BEDIC	Forward
10	Phil Younghusband	04-08-1987	YOUNGHUSBAND P.	Forward
11	Daisuke Sato	20-09-1994	SATO	Defender
12	Stephan Palla	15-05-1989	PALLA	Defender
13	Adam Tull	08-05-1991	TULL	Defender
14	Kevin Ingreso	10-02-1993	INGRESO	Midfielder
15	Michael Falkesgaard	09-04-1991	FALKESGAARD	Goalkeeper
16	Kevin Ray Hansen	29-09-1994	HANSEN	Goalkeeper
17	Stephan Schröck	21-08-1986	SCHRÖCK	Midfielder
18	Patrick Reichelt	15-06-1988	REICHELT	Forward
19	Curt Dizon	04-02-1994	DIZON	Defender
20	Javier Patino	14-02-1988	PATIÃO	Forward
21	Miguel Tanton	05-07-1989	TANTON	Midfielder
22	Amani Manuel Aguinaldo	24-04-1995	AGUINALDO	Defender
23	James Younghusband	04-09-1986	YOUNGHUSBAND J.	Forward

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	0	3	1	7	-6

Average Goals/Game

0.3

Average Goals Conceded/Game

2.3

Clean sheets

0

TOP SCORER

Player	Stephan Schröck
No. of Goals	1





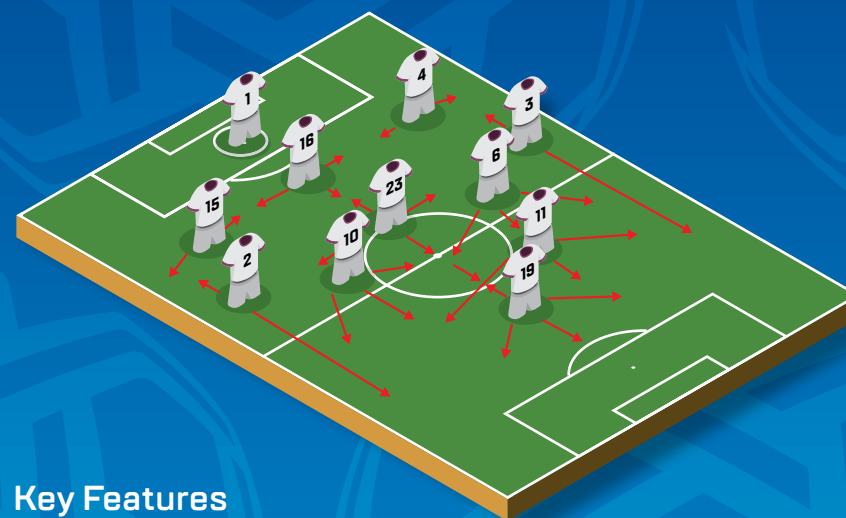
QATAR



Felix Sanchez

Head Coach

Spaniard Felix Sanchez had been part of the Qatar set-up since 2006 and was appointed head coach of the senior team following Jorge Fossati's departure in 2017. Born in Barcelona, Sanchez sensationally won the 2014 AFC U-19 Championship with Qatar, and also guided the Gulf nation to a bronze medal finish at the AFC U23 Championship in China PR four years later.



Key Features

- 1-4-3-3 with switches to 1-5-3-2; composed combination play with changes of tempo
- Keeper initiating build-up; under pressure, long delivery to striker 19 Almoez
- Overlapping and underlapping runs by full-backs, notably 3 Abdelkarim on left
- Good individual technique; 6 Aziz the free spirit linking middle-to-front play
- Electric counterattacking via Almoez and change-footed left winger 11 Afif
- After ball loss, individual pressure on ball; teammates dropping into own half
- Good defending skills, anticipation, interceptions, tracking of opponents

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Saad Al Sheeb	19-02-1990	SAAD	Goalkeeper
2	Pedro Correia	06-08-1990	PEDRO	Defender
3	Abdelkarim Hassan	28-08-1993	ABDELKARIM	Defender
4	Tarek Salman	05-12-1997	TAREK	Defender
5	Ahmed Fathy	25-01-1993	A. FATHY	Midfielder
6	Abdel Aziz Hatim	01-01-1990	A. AZIZ	Midfielder
7	Ahmed Alaaeldin Abdelmotaal	31-01-1993	A. ALAA	Forward
8	Hamid Ismaeil Khaleefa	16-06-1986	H.ISMAEIL	Defender
9	Khaled Mohammed	07-06-2000	KHALED .M	Midfielder
10	Hasan Al Haydos	11-12-1990	AL HAYDOS	Forward
11	Akram Hassan Afif	18-11-1996	AFIF	Forward
12	Karim Boudiaf	16-09-1990	KARIM	Midfielder
13	Tameem Mohammed Almuhaiza	21-07-1996	TAMEEM	Defender
14	Salem Al Hajri	10-04-1996	S AL HAJRI	Midfielder
15	Bassam Alrawi	16-12-1997	BASSAM	Defender
16	Boualem Khoukhi	09-07-1990	BOUALEM	Midfielder
17	Arahman Mohamed Moustafa	05-04-1997	AMOHAMED	Midfielder
18	Abdulkareem Salem Al-Ali	25-03-1991	AAL-ALI	Defender
19	Almoez Ali Abdulla	19-08-1996	ALMOEZ	Forward
20	Ali Hassan Afif	20-01-1988	A. AFIF	Midfielder
21	Yousof Hassan Ali	24-05-1996	YOUSOF	Goalkeeper
22	Mohammed Ahmed Albakri	28-03-1997	M.ALBAKRI	Goalkeeper
23	Assim Omer Madibo	22-10-1996	MADIBO	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
7	7	0	0	19	1	18

Average Goals/Game

2.7

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.1

Clean sheets

6

TOP SCORER

Player	Almoez Ali
No. of Goals	9





SAUDI ARABIA

**Juan Antonio Pizzi***Head Coach*

Juan Antonio Pizzi was named head coach of Saudi Arabia in 2017. The former striker spent much of his playing career in Spain – a country which, despite being born in Argentina, he represented at the 1998 FIFA World Cup. Pizzi has managed several clubs in Argentina, as well as Spain's Valencia. More recently, he was in charge of Chile when they claimed the 2016 Copa America title.

**Key Features**

- Variations on 1-4-3-3 with emphasis on elaborate short-passing moves
- Building through thirds with attacks based mainly on combinations in wide areas
- Overlapping full-backs supplying crosses; wingers cutting in to create space
- Good individual technique, 1v1 skills; ready to take risks with forward passing
- Immediate pressure on ball-carrier after loss of possession; occasional high press
- Generally, retreat into 1-4-4-1-1 or 1-4-1-4-1 defending from midfield
- Set out to hold high defensive line with goalkeeper covering space behind

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Waleed Ali	19-04-1986	WALEED	Goalkeeper
2	Mohammed Alburayk	15-09-1992	ALBURAYK	Defender
3	Abdulelah Alamri	15-01-1997	ALAMRI	Defender
4	Ali Hadi Albulayhi	21-11-1989	ALI	Defender
5	Omar Ibrahim Othman	27-09-1985	OMAR	Defender
6	Ayman Alkhulaif	22-05-1997	AYMAN	Midfielder
7	Nouh Ibrahim Almousa	23-02-1991	ALMOUSA	Midfielder
8	Yahia Alshehri	26-06-1990	YAHIA	Midfielder
9	Mohammed Alsaiani	02-05-1993	ALSAIARI	Forward
10	Salem Aldawsari	19-08-1991	SALEM	Midfielder
11	Hatan Bahbri	16-07-1992	HATAN	Midfielder
12	Hamdan Alshamrani	14-12-1996	HAMDAN	Defender
13	Yasser Alshahrani	25-05-1992	YASSER	Defender
14	Abdullah Otayf	03-08-1992	OTAYF	Midfielder
15	Ibrahim Jahshan	28-09-1990	GHALEB	Midfielder
16	Hussain Almoqahwi	24-03-1988	HUSSAIN	Midfielder
17	Sultan Abdullah Alghannam	06-05-1994	SULTAN	Defender
18	Abdulrahman Ghareeb	31-03-1997	GHAREEB	Midfielder
19	Fhad Mosaed Almuwallad	14-09-1994	FAHAD	Forward
20	Abdulaziz Ali Albishi	11-03-1994	ALBISHI	Midfielder
21	Mohammed Alowais	10-10-1991	ALOWAIS	Goalkeeper
22	Mohammed Alyami	14-08-1997	ALYAMI	Goalkeeper
23	Mohammed Al Fatil	04-01-1992	AL FATIL	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	2	0	2	6	3	3

Average Goals/Game	1.5
Average Goals Conceded/Game	0.8
Clean sheets	2

TOP SCORER

Player	Fahad Al Muwallad
No. of Goals	2





SYRIA



Fajr Ebrahim

Head Coach

Fajr Ebrahim became head coach of Syria for a third time following Bernd Stange's group stage departure. A defender of some note during his playing days, Ebrahim had previously overseen the Qasbioun Eagles in two separate spells between 2006 and 2010. The Damascus native has coached at club level in both Syria and Iraq, winning the Syrian top-flight title with Al Shorta in 2012.



Key Features

- Variations on 1-4-5-1 defending; compact, deep block pressing aggressively
- Emphasis on building through thirds; use of long pass + second ball when pressed hard
- 1-3-4-3 attacking with full-backs up, one screening midfielder protecting centre-backs
- Fast counters based on over-the-top deliveries to target striker 9 Soma
- Good diagonals to open play to wide areas; penetrating passes behind opponents' back line
- 7 Khribin cutting in from left flank with good solo skills, off-ball movement
- Fierce pressure on ball-carrier after loss of possession; team-mates quickly into defence

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ibrahim Alma	18-10-1991 I.	ALMA	Goalkeeper
2	Ahmad Alsaleh	20-05-1989	A.SALEH	Defender
3	Mouaiad Alajaan	01-01-1993	M.AJAAN	Defender
4	Jehad Albaour	27-06-1987	J.BAOUR	Defender
5	Omro Al Midani	26-01-1994	O.MIDANI	Defender
6	Amro Jeniat	15-01-1993	A.JENIAT	Defender
7	Omar Khribin	15-01-1994	O.KHRBIN	Midfielder
8	Mahmoud Almawas	01-01-1993	M.MAWAS	Midfielder
9	Omar Al Soma	23-03-1990	O.SOMA	Forward
10	Mohammed Osman	01-01-1993	M.OSMAN	Midfielder
11	Osama Omari	10-01-1992	O.OMARI	Midfielder
12	Hussein Aljwayed	01-01-1993	H.JWAYED	Defender
13	Nadim Sabag	04-08-1985	N.SABAG	Defender
14	Tamer Hag Mohamad	03-04-1988	T.HAG MOHAMAD	Midfielder
15	Abdul Malek Alanizan	25-02-1989	A.ANIZAN	Defender
16	Ahmad Ashkar	01-01-1996	A.ASHKAR	Midfielder
17	Yousef Kalfa	14-05-1993	Y.KALFA	Midfielder
18	Mhd Zaher Almedani	13-04-1987	Z.MEDANI	Midfielder
19	Mardek Mrdkian	14-03-1992	M.MRDKIAN	Forward
20	Khaled Almbayed	10-01-1993	K.MBAYED	Midfielder
21	Fahad Youssef	15-05-1987	F.YOUSSEF	Midfielder
22	Mahmoud Al Youssef	20-01-1988	M.YOUSSEF	Goalkeeper
23	Ahmad Madanieh	01-01-1990	A.MADANIEH	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	1	2	2	5	-3

Average Goals/Game	0.7
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.7
Clean sheets	1

TOP SCORERS

Player	Omar Khribin, Omar Al Soma
No. of Goals	1





THAILAND

**Sirisak Yodyardthai***Head Coach*

Sirisak Yodyardthai – previous incumbent Milovan Rajevac's assistant – was promoted to become Thailand's new head coach after the Southeast Asian nation's Matchday One defeat to India. At club level, Sirisak was in charge of Thai Honda when they gained promotion to Thailand's top-flight in 2016 – a year before he began his coaching duties with the Thailand senior team.

**Key Features**

- Mostly careful 1 or 2-touch build-up from the back; change of tempo in final third
- Wide players quick to support attacks; wing-backs up, notably 19 Tristan on right
- 18 Chanathip the attacking spark; fast, mobile, able to twist and turn under pressure
- Quick high pressure by front three; teammates into compact defensive block
- 10 Teerasil leading the attack; aerial power, shielding ball, neat combination play
- Good second-ball play when forced by opposition pressure to play long
- Strong team ethic; able to react positively to change of coach after first game

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Chatchai Bootprom	04-02-1987	B.CHATCHAI	Goalkeeper
2	Sasalak Haiprakhon	08-01-1995	H.SASALAK	Midfielder
3	Theerathon Bunmathan	06-02-1990	B.THEERATHON	Defender
4	Chalermpong Kerdkaew	07-10-1986	K.CHALERMPONG	Defender
5	Adison Promrak	21-10-1993	P.ADISON	Defender
6	Pansa Hemviboon	08-07-1990	H.PANSA	Defender
7	Sumanya Purisay	05-12-1986	P.SUMANYA	Midfielder
8	Thitipan Puangchan	01-09-1993	P.THITIPHAN	Midfielder
9	Adisak Kraisorn	01-02-1991	K.KADISAK	Forward
10	Teerasil Dangda	06-06-1988	D.TEERASIL	Forward
11	Korrakot Wiriya-Udomsiri	19-01-1988	W.KORRAKOT	Defender
12	Chananan Pombupha	17-03-1992	P.CHANANAN	Forward
13	Saranon Anuin	24-03-1994	A.SARANON	Goalkeeper
14	Sanrawat Dechmitr	03-08-1989	D.SANRAWAT	Midfielder
15	Suphan Thongsong	26-08-1994	T.SUPHAN	Defender
16	Mika Chunuonsee	26-03-1989	C.MIKA	Defender
17	Tanaboon Kesarat	21-09-1993	K.TANABOON	Midfielder
18	Chanathip Songkrasin	05-10-1993	S.CHANATHIP	Midfielder
19	Tristan Do	31-01-1993	D.TRISTAN	Defender
20	Sirod Chatthong	08-12-1992	C.SIROD	Forward
21	Pokklaw A-Nan	04-03-1991	A.POKKLAW	Midfielder
22	Supachai Jaided	01-12-1998	C.SUPACHAI	Forward
23	Siwarak Tedsungnoen	20-04-1984	T.SIWARAK	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	1	1	2	4	7	-3

Average Goals/Game

1.0

Average Goals Conceded/Game

1.8

Clean sheets

1

TOP SCORERS

Player	Chanathip Songkrasin, Thitipan Puangchan, Teerasil Dangda, Supachai Jaided
No. of Goals	1





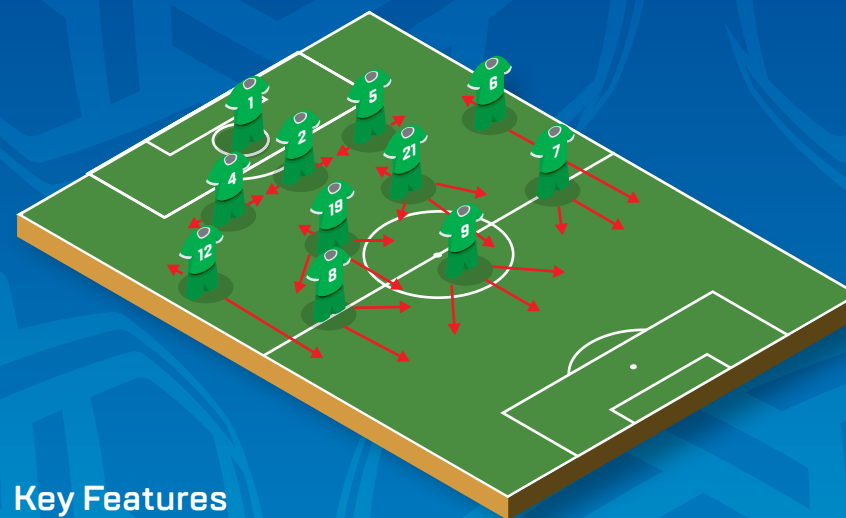
TURKMENISTAN



Yazguly Hojageldyev

Head Coach

Yazguly Hojageldyev arrived for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in the midst of his second spell as head coach of Turkmenistan. The Turkmen tactician had previously been in charge of the Central Asians from 2010 until 2013. Hojageldyev also oversees the fortunes of Turkmenistan club side Altyn Asyr who he notably guided to the final of the 2018 AFC Cup.



Key Features

- Deep 1-5-4-1 defence with lines close together; 2nd-half switch to 1-4-4-2 v Uzbeks
- 1-3-4-3 attacking; often back-to-front deliveries from keeper or defenders
- Target striker 17 Annadurdyev shielding ball; second-ball support from midfield
- Both full-backs prepared to support attacking moves, deliver crosses
- Patient construction play; immediate pressure on ball-carrier after loss of ball
- 7 Amanov the main attacking threat; off-ball movement, solo skills, neat combinations
- 21 Hojayev linking defence and attack, leading team with strong work ethic

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Mammet Orazmuhammedov	20-12-1986	ORAZMUHAMEDOV	Goalkeeper
2	Zafar Babjanov	09-02-1987	BABAJANOV	Defender
3	Guychmyrat Annagulyyev	10-06-1996	ANNAGULIYEV	Defender
4	Mekan Saparov	22-04-1994	SAPAROV	Defender
5	Vezirgeldi Ylyasov	18-01-1992	YLYASOV	Defender
6	Gurbangeldi Batyrov	28-07-1988	BATYROV	Defender
7	Aslanmurat Amanov	28-03-1990	AMANOV	Midfielder
8	Ruslan Migazov	23-11-1991	MINGAZOV	Midfielder
9	Vahyt Orazsahedov	26-01-1992	ORAZSAHEDOV	Forward
10	Suleyman Muhadov	24-12-1993	MUHADOV	Forward
11	Murat Yakshiyev	12-01-1992	YAKSHIYEV	Forward
12	Serdar Annaorazov	29-06-1990	ANNAORAZOV	Defender
13	Medan Gurbanov	30-08-1991	GURBANOV	Midfielder
14	Ilya Tamurkin	09-05-1989	TAMURKIN	Midfielder
15	Mihail Titov	18-10-1997	TITOV	Forward
16	Batyr Babayev	21-08-1991	BABAYEV	Goalkeeper
17	Altymyrat Annadurdyev	13-04-1993	ANNADURDYEV	Forward
18	Serdar Geldiyev	01-10-1987	GELDIYEV	Midfielder
19	Ahmet Atayev	19-09-1990	ATAYEV	Midfielder
20	Myrat Annayev	06-05-1993	ANNAYEV	Forward
21	Resul Hajayev	07-01-1997	HOJAYEV	Midfielder
22	Nikita Gorbunov	14-02-1984	GORBUNOV	Goalkeeper
23	Dovran Orazalyev	14-10-1993	ORAZALYEV	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	0	3	3	10	-7

Average Goals/Game	1.0
Average Goals Conceded/Game	3.3
Clean sheets	0

TOP SCORERS

Player	Aslanmurat Amanov, Ahmet Atayev, Altymyrat Annadurdyev
No. of Goals	1





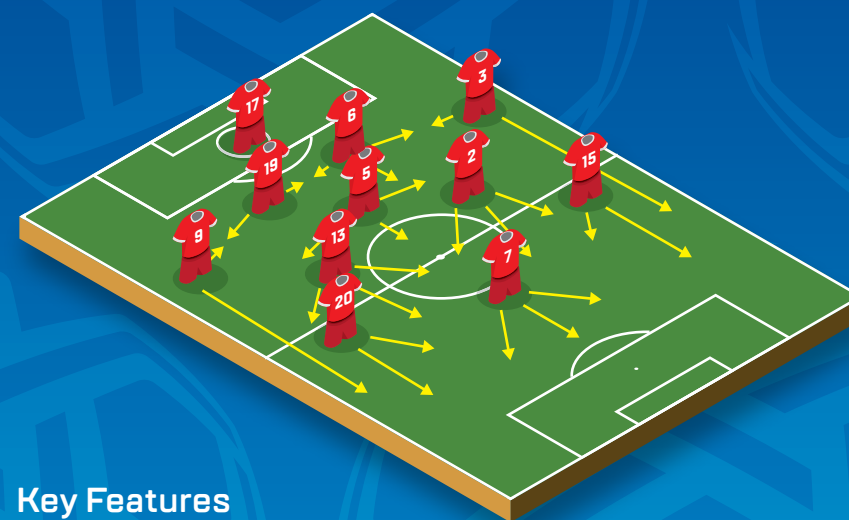
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Alberto Zaccheroni

Head Coach

Italian tactician Alberto Zaccheroni took charge of the United Arab Emirates in 2017. Renowned for winning the 2011 AFC Asian Cup with Japan, Zaccheroni has a wealth of experience at club level in Italy, having coached – among others – AC Milan, Lazio, Inter Milan and Juventus. He announced his decision to step down from the post following the host nation's semi-final loss to Qatar.



Key Features

- Variations on 1-4-3-3; strategy based on composed construction through thirds
- Holding midfielder 5 Amer the catalyst, dropping deep to perform playmaking role
- Occasional use by Amer and keeper of direct supply to target striker 7 Mabkhout
- High-speed overlapping by both full-backs; good supply of crosses
- Individual pressure on ball-carrier after ball loss; emphasis on retreat into block
- Secure back line marshalled by centre-backs; well screened by central midfielders
- Tactically flexible; positional interchanging; strong team and work ethics

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ali Khaseif Humaid	09-06-1987	A.KHASEIF	Goalkeeper
2	Ali Hassan Alblooshi	04-02-1995	A. SALMIN	Midfielder
3	Walid Abbas Murad	11-06-1985	W.ABBAS	Defender
4	Khalifa Mubarak Ghanim	30-10-1993	KHALIFA	M. Defender
5	Amer Abdulrahman	03-07-1989	AMER A.	Midfielder
6	Fares Juma Al Saadi	30-12-1988	F. JUMA	Defender
7	Ali Mabkhout	05-10-1990	AMABKHOUT	Forward
8	Majed Hassan Ahmad	01-08-1992	M. HASSAN	Midfielder
9	Bandar Mohamed Al Ahbabi	09-07-1990	BANDAR	Defender
10	Ismaeil Matar Aljneibi	07-04-1983 I.	MATAR	Forward
11	Ahmed Khalil Aljunaibi	08-06-1991	A. KHALIL	Forward
12	Khalifa Mubarak Alhammadi	07-11-1998	K. MUBARAK	Defender
13	Khamis Esmaeel Zayed	16-08-1989	K. ESMAEEL	Midfielder
14	Mohamed Khalfan Almesmari	29-12-1992	M. KHALFAN	Forward
15	Ismail Salem Alhammadi	01-07-1988 I.	ALHAMMADI	Midfielder
16	Mohamed Abdulrahman Alraqi	04-02-1989	MOHAMED A.	Midfielder
17	Khalid Eisa Bilal	15-09-1989	K. EISA	Goalkeeper
18	Alhasan Saleh Easa	25-06-1991	ALHASAN S.	Defender
19	Ismail Ahmed Mohamed	07-07-1983	I. AHMED	Defender
20	Saif Rashid Alshemeili	25-11-1994 S.	RASHID	Midfielder
21	Khalfan Mubarak Alshamsi	09-05-1995	KHALFAN M.	Midfielder
22	Mohamed Hasan Alshamsi	04-01-1997	M. ALSHAMSI	Goalkeeper
23	Mohamed Ahmad Gharib	16-04-1989	M. GHARIB	Defender

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
6	3	2	1	8	8	0

Average Goals/Game

1.3

Average Goals Conceded/Game

1.3

Clean sheets

2

TOP SCORER

Player	Ali Mabkhout
No. of Goals	4





UZBEKISTAN

**Hector Cuper***Head Coach*

Former Argentina international Hector Cuper took over as Uzbekistan head coach in August 2018 having guided Egypt to that year's FIFA World Cup in Russia. Cuper's Central Asian assignment marks his third stint as a national team coach, having also led Georgia. At club level, he has overseen the likes of Valencia and Inter Milan – as well as Al Wasl from the United Arab Emirates.

**Key Features**

- 1-4-3-3 the default setting with fast transitions to 1-4-5-1 defending
- Preference to build through thirds with good movement, neat combinations
- Effective wing play; full-backs combining with wingers to cut in or supply crosses
- Well-weighted through passes into spaces behind opponents' back line
- Excellent defensive mechanisms; covering, intercepting, reading situations
- Influential keeper 1 Nesterov; handling, concentration, reflexes, leadership
- Collective pressing, fast counters, sharp running, ability to control tempo

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Ignatiy Nesterov	20-06-1983	NESTEROV	Goalkeeper
2	Akmal Shorakhmedov	10-05-1986	SHORAKHMEDOV	Defender
3	Dostonbek Tursunov	13-06-1995	TURSUNOV D.	Defender
4	Farrukh Sayfiev	17-01-1991	SAYFIEV	Defender
5	Anzur Ismailov	21-04-1985	ISMAILOV	Defender
6	Davronbek Khashimov	24-11-1992	KHASHIMOV	Defender
7	Sardor Rashidov	14-06-1991	RASHIDOV	Forward
8	Ikromjon Alibaev	09-01-1994	ALIBAEV	Midfielder
9	Odil Akhmedov	25-11-1987	AKHMEDOV	Midfielder
10	Marat Bikmaev	01-01-1986	BIKMAEV	Forward
11	Jaloliddin Masharipov	01-09-1993	MASHARIPOV	Forward
12	Sanjar Kuvvatov	08-01-1990	KUVVATOV	Goalkeeper
13	Oleg Zoteev	05-07-1989	ZOTEEV	Defender
14	Eldor Shomurodov	29-06-1995	SHOMURODOV	Forward
15	Egor Krimets	27-01-1992	KRIMETS	Defender
16	Azizbek Turgunboev	01-10-1994	TURGUNBOEV	Midfielder
17	Dostonbek Khamdamov	24-07-1996	KHAMDAMOV	Midfielder
18	Fozil Musaev	02-01-1989	MUSAEV	Midfielder
19	Otabek Shukurov	22-06-1996	SHUKUROV	Midfielder
20	Islom Tukhtakhujaev	30-10-1989	TUKHTAKHUJAEV	Defender
21	Utkir Yusupov	04-01-1991	YUSUPOV	Goalkeeper
22	Javokhir Sidikov	08-12-1996	SIDIKOV	Midfielder
23	Odiljon Xamrobekov	13-02-1996	XAMROBEKOV	Midfielder

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
4	2	1	1	7	3	4

Average Goals/Game

1.8

Average Goals Conceded/Game

0.8

Clean sheets

2

TOP SCORER

Player	Eldor Shomurodov
No. of Goals	4



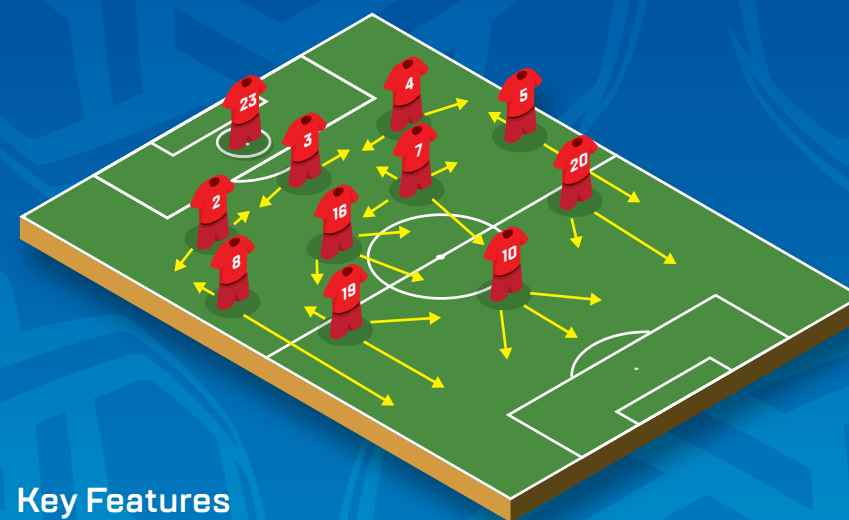


VIETNAM



Park Hang-seo
Head Coach

Since arriving in 2017, Vietnam's national sides have excelled under Park Hang-seo. The Korea Republic native guided the country to a runners-up finish at the 2018 AFC U23 Championship, as well as to the semi-finals of the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the nation's senior team were crowned 2018 AFF Cup champions under the former midfielder's guidance.



Key Features

- 1-5-3-2 structure; patient build-up in own half; high-tempo passing in opponents'
- Effective wing play with full-backs up to provide good deliveries into box
- High levels of technique; composed under pressure, able to play out of tight areas
- Good off-ball running by strikers; neat central combinations in and around box
- Diagonal switches of play; fast, dangerous counters using 10 Phuong as target man
- Immediate pressure after loss of ball + rapid retreat to compact defence in own half
- Discipline defence in numbers; midfielders quick to provide double cover on wings

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	B Tien Dung	28-02-1997	B. TIEN. DUNG	Goalkeeper
2	Do Duy Manh	29-09-1996	D. D. MANH	Defender
3	Que Ngoc Hai	15-05-1993	Q. N. HAI	Defender
4	B T Dung	02-10-1995	B. T. DUNG	Defender
5	Doan Van Hau	19-04-1999	D. V. HAU	Defender
6	Luong Xuan Truong	28-04-1995	L. X. TRUONG	Midfielder
7	Nguyen Huy Hung	02-03-1992	N. H. HUNG	Midfielder
8	Nguyen Trong Hoang	14-04-1989 N.	T. HOANG	Midfielder
9	Nguyen Van Toan	12-04-1996	N. V. TOAN	Forward
10	Nguyen Cong Phuong	21-01-1995	N. C. PHUONG	Forward
11	Ngan Van Dai	09-02-1992	N. V. DAI	Midfielder
12	Nguyen Phong Hong Duy	13-06-1996	N. P. H. DUY	Midfielder
13	Nguyen Tuan Manh	31-07-1990	N. T. MANH	Goalkeeper
14	Tran Minh Vuong	28-03-1995	T. M. VUONG	Midfielder
15	Pham Duc Huy	20-01-1995	P. D. HUY	Midfielder
16	Do Hung Dung	08-09-1993	D. H. DUNG	Midfielder
17	Ho Tan Tai	06-11-1997	H. T. TAI	Defender
18	Ha Duc Chinh	22-09-1997	H. D. CHINH	Forward
19	Nguyen Quang Hai	12-04-1997	N. Q. HAI	Midfielder
20	Phan Van Duc	11-04-1996	P. V. DUC	Midfielder
21	Nguyen Thanh Chung	08-09-1997	N. T. CHUNG	Defender
22	Nguyen Tien Linh	20-10-1997	N. T. LINH	Forward
23	Dang Van Lam	13-08-1993	D. V. LAM	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
5	1	1	3	5	7	-2

Average Goals/Game	1.0
Average Goals Conceded/Game	1.4
Clean sheets	1

TOP SCORER

Player	Nguyen Công Phuong
No. of Goals	2





YEMEN

**Ján Kocian***Head Coach*

Slovakian Ján Kocian is another head coach who was appointed shortly before the start of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. As a player, he featured nearly 30 times for Czechoslovakia, before embarking on an extensive coaching career that has seen him oversee – among others – Slovakia, China PR's Jiangsu Sainty and Hong Kong side South China.

**Key Features**

- Variations on 1-4-4-2 with switch to three centre-backs v Vietnam
- Emphasis on building through thirds with occasional use of direct back-to-front passes
- With wingers staying wide, full-backs rarely ventured beyond midfield
- Wing-backs more adventurous in 1-5-4-1 adopted for final game; overlaps and crosses
- After ball-loss, transition to defensive block with only infrequent use of pressing
- Committed 1v1 defending skills; but conceded goals at set plays
- Deep nine-man defending with limited opportunities for fast counterattacking

Jersey No.	Name of Player	Date of Birth	Jersey Name	Position
1	Mohammed Ali Ayash	06-03-1986	AYASH	Goalkeeper
2	Rami Ali Al-Wasmani	01-02-1997	RAMI. ALI	Defender
3	Mohammed Fuad Omar	13-03-1989	M. FUAD	Defender
4	Mudir Abdurabu Al-Radaei	01-01-1993	M.ABDURABU	Defender
5	Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Gumaei	08-01-1990	ALGUMAEI	Defender
6	Ahmed Saeed Abdulrab	27-04-1994	A. SAEED	Midfielder
7	Ahmed Al-Sarori	09-08-1998	AL. SARORI	Forward
8	Wahid Mohammed Al-Khyat	01-01-1986	WAHID	Midfielder
9	Ala Mohammed Al Sasi	02-07-1987	AL-SASI	Forward
10	Ahmed Nabil Dhabaan	21-04-1994	A. DHABAAN	Forward
11	Abdulwasea Al-Matari	04-07-1994	AL. MATARI	Forward
12	Ahmed Ali Al-Haifi	01-01-1994	AL-HAIFI	Midfielder
13	Alaa Al-Deen Mahdi	01-01-1996	ALA A.	Defender
14	Ali Hafeedh	21-02-1997	A. HAFEEDH	Forward
15	Ammar Hussein Hamsan	05-11-1994	A. HAMSAN	Defender
16	Salem Awadh Al-Omzae	01-01-1992	S. OMZAE	Forward
17	Hussein Ahmed Al-Ghazi	07-05-1990	H. AL-GHAZI	Midfielder
18	Ahmed Abdullah Alos	03-04-1994	A. ALOS	Forward
19	Mohammed Ali Buqshan	10-03-1994	M. BUQSHAN	Defender
20	Emad Mansoor Tawfik	15-04-1992	E. MANSOOR	Forward
21	Mohammed Ba Rowis	04-12-1988	M. BA ROWIS	Defender
22	Salem Gamal Al-Harsh	07-10-1998	S. ALHARSH	Goalkeeper
23	Saoud Abdullah Al-Sowadi	10-04-1988	S. AL-SOWADI	Goalkeeper

STATISTICS

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals	Goals Conceded	Goal Difference
3	0	0	3	0	10	-10

Average Goals/Game

0

Average Goals Conceded/Game

3.3

Clean sheets

0



Tournament Results

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
UAE	3	1	2	0	4	2	2	5
Thailand*	3	1	1	1	3	5	-2	4
Bahrain*	3	1	1	1	2	2	0	4
India	3	1	0	2	4	4	0	3

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
05 Jan 19	UAE	1-1 (0-0)	Bahrain
06 Jan 19	Thailand	1-4 (1-1)	India
10 Jan 19	Bahrain	0-1 (0-0)	Thailand
10 Jan 19	India	0-2 (0-1)	UAE
14 Jan 19	UAE	1-1 (1-1)	Thailand
14 Jan 19	India	0-1 (0-0)	Bahrain

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Jordan	3	2	1	0	3	0	3	7
Australia	3	2	0	1	6	3	3	6
Palestine	3	0	2	1	0	3	-3	2
Syria	3	0	1	2	2	5	-3	1

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
06 Jan 19	Australia	0-1 (0-1)	Jordan
06 Jan 19	Syria	0-0 (0-0)	Palestine
10 Jan 19	Jordan	2-0 (2-0)	Syria
11 Jan 19	Palestine	0-3 (0-2)	Australia
15 Jan 19	Australia	3-2 (1-1)	Syria
15 Jan 19	Palestine	0-0 (0-0)	Jordan

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Korea Rep.	3	3	0	0	4	0	4	9
China P.R.	3	2	0	1	5	3	2	6
Kyrgyz Rep.	3	1	0	2	4	4	0	3
Philippines	3	0	0	3	1	7	-6	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
07 Jan 19	China P.R.	2-1 (0-1)	Kyrgyz Rep.
07 Jan 19	Korea Rep.	1-0 (0-0)	Philippines
11 Jan 19	Philippines	0-3 (0-1)	China P.R.
11 Jan 19	Kyrgyz Rep.	0-1 (0-1)	Korea Rep.
16 Jan 19	Korea Rep.	2-0 (1-0)	China P.R.
16 Jan 19	Kyrgyz Rep.	3-1 (1-0)	Philippines

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
IR Iran	3	2	1	0	7	0	7	7
Iraq	3	2	1	0	6	2	4	7
Vietnam	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
India	3	0	0	3	0	10	-10	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
07 Jan 19	IR Iran	5-0 (3-0)	Yemen
08 Jan 19	Iraq	3-2 (1-2)	Vietnam
12 Jan 19	Vietnam	0-2 (0-1)	IR Iran
12 Jan 19	Yemen	0-3 (0-2)	Iraq
16 Jan 19	Vietnam	2-0 (1-0)	Yemen
16 Jan 19	IR Iran	0-0 (0-0)	Iraq

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Qatar	3	3	0	0	10	0	10	9
Saudi Arabia	3	2	0	1	6	2	4	6
Lebanon	3	1	0	2	4	5	-1	3
DPR Korea	3	0	0	3	1	14	-13	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
08 Jan 19	Saudi Arabia	4-0 (2-0)	DPR Korea
09 Jan 19	Qatar	2-0 (0-0)	Lebanon
12 Jan 19	Lebanon	0-2 (0-1)	Saudi Arabia
13 Jan 19	DPR Korea	0-6 (0-3)	Qatar
17 Jan 19	Saudi Arabia	0-2 (0-1)	Qatar
17 Jan 19	Lebanon	4-1 (1-1)	DPR Korea

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
Japan	3	3	0	0	6	3	3	9
Uzbekistan	3	2	0	1	7	3	4	6
Oman	3	1	0	2	4	4	0	3
Turkmenistan	3	0	0	3	3	10	-7	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
09 Jan 19	Japan	3-2 (0-1)	Turkmenistan
09 Jan 19	Uzbekistan	2-1 (1-0)	Oman
13 Jan, 19	Oman	0-1 (0-1)	Japan
13 Jan 19	Turkmenistan	0-4 (0-4)	Uzbekistan
17 Jan 19	Oman	3-1 (1-1)	Turkmenistan
17 Jan 19	Japan	2-1 (1-1)	Uzbekistan



Round of 16

No.	Date	Team A	Score	Team B
37	20 Jan 19	Jordan	1-1 a.e.t. (1-1,1-0)2-4 PSO	Vietnam
38	20 Jan 19	Thailand	1-2 (1-0)	China PR
39	20 Jan 19	IR Iran	2-0 (2-0)	Oman
40	21 Jan 19	Japan	1-0 (1-0)	Saudi Arabia
41	21 Jan 19	Australia	0-0 a.e.t. (0-0,0-0)4-2 PSO	Uzbekistan
42	21 Jan 19	UAE	3-2 a.e.t. (2-2,1-1)	Kyrgyz Rep.
43	22 Jan,19	Korea Rep.	2-1 a.e.t. (1-1,1-0)	Bahrain
44	22 Jan,19	Qatar	1-0 (0-0)	Iraq

Quarter-Finals

No.	Date	Team A	Score	Team B
45	24 Jan 19	Vietnam	0-1 (0-0)	Japan
46	24 Jan 19	China PR	0-3 (0-2)	IR Iran
47	25 Jan 19	Korea Rep.	0-1 (0-0)	Qatar
48	25 Jan 19	UAE	1-0 (0-0)	Australia

Semi-Finals

No.	Date	Team A	Score	Team B
49	28 Jan 19	IR Iran	0-3 (0-0)	Japan
50	29 Jan 19	Qatar	4-0 (2-0)	UAE

Final

No.	Date	Team A	Score	Team B
51	1 Feb 19	Japan	1-3 (0-2)	Qatar

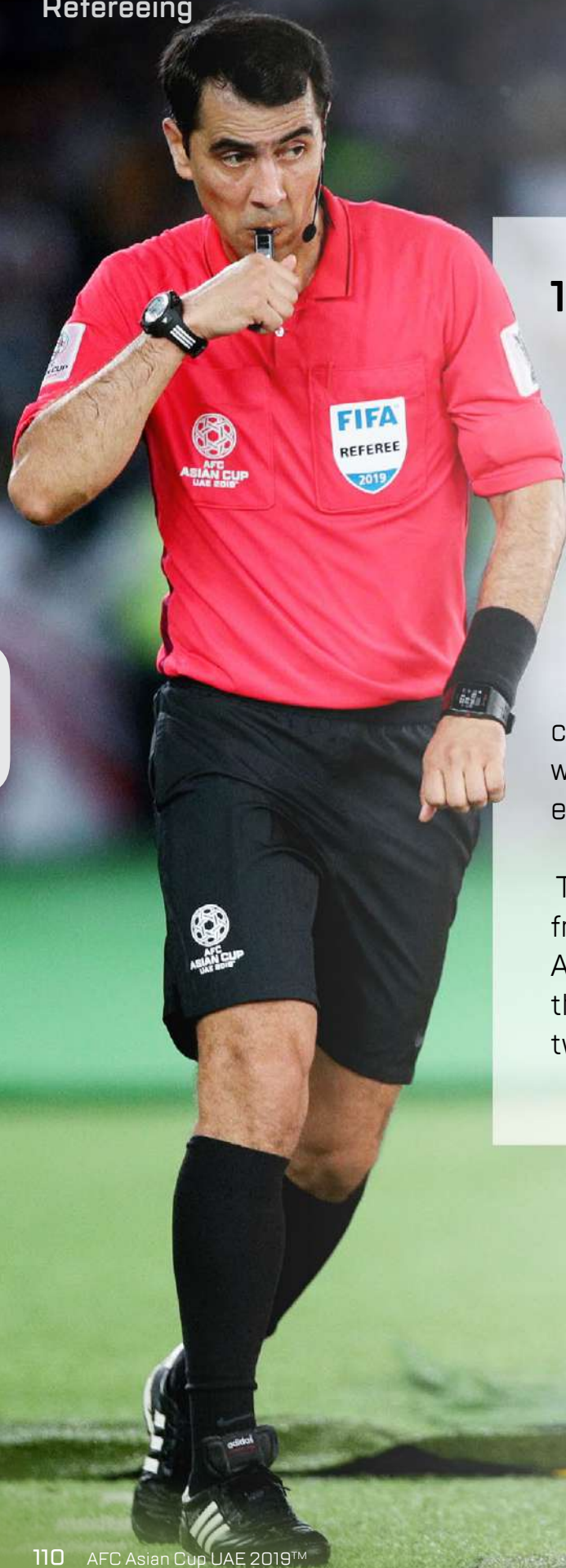


Refereeing





Refereeing



1. Summary

With the expansion of Asia's most prestigious tournament from 16 to 24 teams, a record 60 match officials, comprising 30 referees and assistant referees each, were appointed to the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019.

The largest-ever contingent, which was also supported by four reserve officials, saw a diverse range of nationalities with 19 Member Associations represented across the five AFC zones.

The AFC also appointed a guest trio from Concacaf, led by referee César Arturo Ramos from Mexico, leveraging on the existing exchange programme between the two Confederations.

1.1 AFC Match Officials

Referees

Beath Christopher James	AUS	Turki Mohammed A Alkudhayr	KSA
Green Peter Daniel	AUS	Mohd Amirul Izwan Bin Yaacob	MAS
Nawaf Abdulla Ghayyath Shukralla	BHR	Ahmed Abu Bakar Said Al Kaf	OMA
Fu Ming	CHN	Abdulrahman Ibrahim Y J Al-Jassim	QAT
Ma Ning	CHN	Khamis Mohamed K A Al-Kuwari	QAT
Liu Kwok Man	HKG	Khamis Mohammed S A Al-Marri	QAT
Faghani Alireza	IRN	Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari	SIN
Ali Sabah Adday Al-Qaysi	IRQ	Hettikankanamge Crishantha Dilan Perera	SRI
Mohanad Qasim Eesee Sarray	IRQ	Ammar Ali Abdulla Jumaa Aljneibi	UAE
Adham Mohammad Tumah Makhadmeh	JOR	Mohammed Abdulla Hassan Mohamed	UAE
Ahmed Faisal Mohammad Alali	JOR	Irmatov Ravshan	UZB
Iida Jumpei	JPN	Kovalenko Valentin	UZB
Kimura Hiroyuki	JPN	Tantashev Ilgiz	UZB
Sato Ryuji	JPN	César Ramos	MEX
Ko Hyung Jin	KOR		

Assistant Referees

Anton Shchetinin	AUS	Alabakry, Mohammed Maki A	KSA
Matthew James Cream	AUS	Mohamad Mu Azi Bin Zainal Abidin	MAS
Mohamed Jaafar Mohamed Salman	BHR	Mohd Yusri Bin Muhamad	MAS
Yaser Khalil Ebrahim Abdulla Tulefat	BHR	Al-Amri Abu Bakar Salim Mahad	OMA
Cao Yi	CHN	Rashid Hamed Ali Al Ghaithi	OMA
Huo Weiming	CHN	Saoud Ahmed S A Almaqaleh	QAT
Mohammad Reza Mansouri	IRN	Taleb Salem H A Al-Marri	QAT
Sokhandan Reza	IRN	Ronnie Koh Min Kiat (Ronnie Gu Minjie)	SIN
Ahmad Moannes Nadi Alroalle	JOR	Deniye Gedara Palitha Parakkrama Hemathunga	SRI
Mohammad Mustafa Hassan Alkalaf	JOR	Hasan Mohamed Hasan Abdulla Almahri	UAE
Mihara Jun	JPN	Mohamed Ahmed Yousef Abdulla Alhammadi	UAE
Yamauchi Hiroshi	JPN	Rasulov Abdukhamidullo	UZB
Sergei Grishchenko	KGZ	Saidov Jakhongir	UZB
Yoon Kwangyeol	KOR	Miguel Hernández	MEX
Park Sangjun	KOR	Alberto Morín	MEX

Stand-by Referees

Hanna Hattab	SYR	Gamini Nivon Robesh	SRI
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Stand-by Assistant Referees

Hayder Abdulhasan Ali Ubaydee	IRQ	Palliya Guruge Priyanga Namal	SRI
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Referee Instructors

Referee Technical Instructors & Assessors

AlTraifi Ali Ahmed I	KSA	Ali Hamad Madhad Saif Albedwawi	UAE
Subkhiddin Bin Mohd Salleh	MAS	Ishiyama Noboru	JPN
Abdullaev Farkhad	UZB	Chia Eng Wah John	SIN
Saad K M Alfadhli	KUW	Ismail Adnan Ismail Alhafi	JOR
Cheung Yim Yau	HKG	Anaz Hakan	AUS

Referee Fitness Instructors

Ganesan s/o Maniam	SIN	Ravichandran Chappanimutu	MAS
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Support Video Assistant Referees

Danny Makkellie	NED	Paolo Valeri	ITA
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1.2 Support Team

- Referees' Liaison Officers:**
 A team of Liaison Officers (LOs) supported the coordination of all logistic requirements
- Players Team:**
 Two local teams took part in the referees practical training session
- Masseurs:**
 Four physiotherapists helped in assisting match officials in their recovery and injury prevention strategies
- Medical Team:**
 Medical staff and an ambulance were stationed at the training venue daily to facilitate emergency and first aid treatment when required

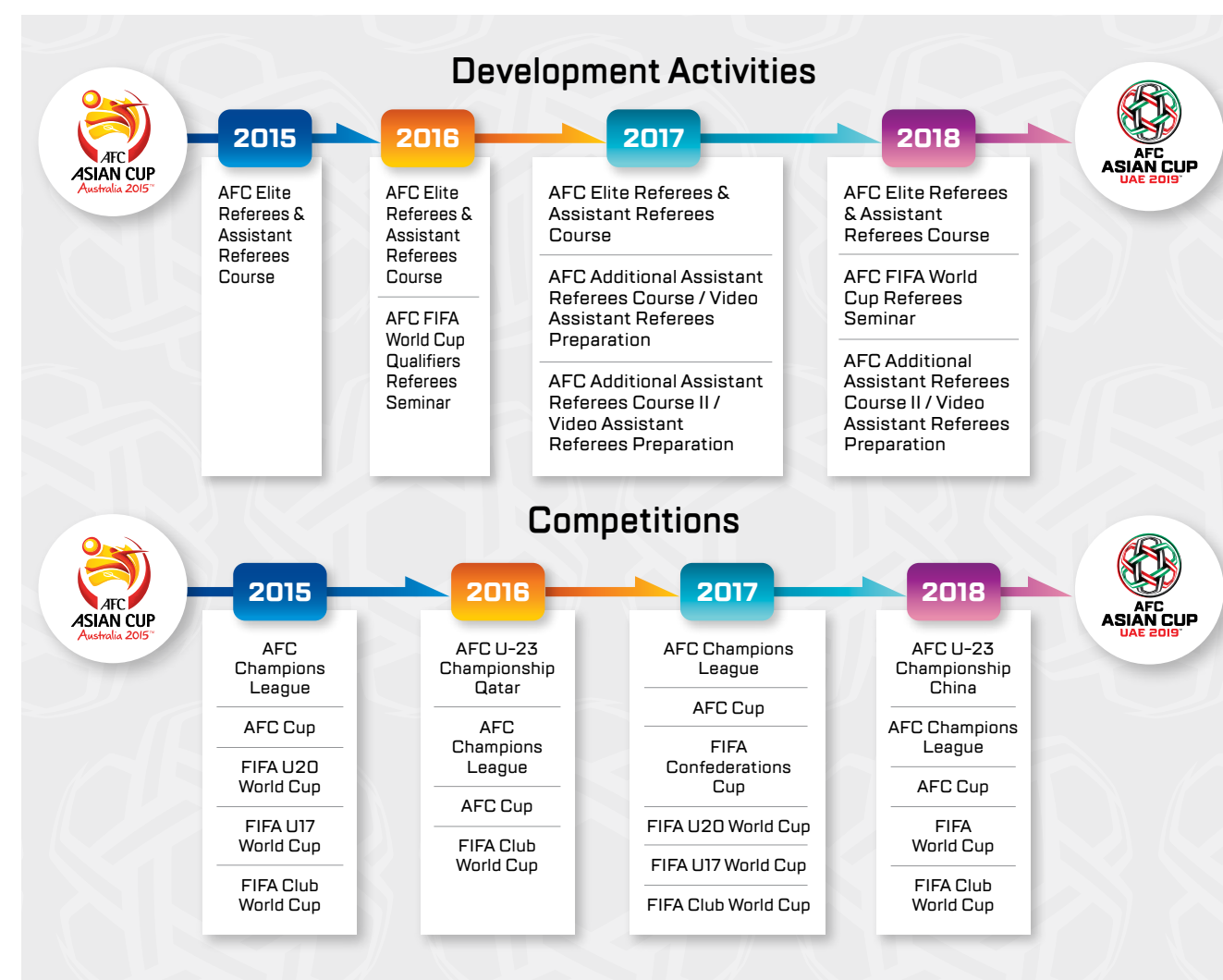
2. Pre-Competition

2.1 Match Officials' Selection Process:

The Continent's best referees and assistant referees were selected for the tournament based on their:

- Technical knowledge
- Management skills
- Physical fitness
- Experience at the top-level competitions (FIFA/AFC)
- Consistent high-level performance

2.2 Match Officials' Preparation





3. Preparatory Course

The referees and assistant referees participated in a five-day preparatory stage from December 31 to January 4, consisting



of theoretical sessions, fitness check, and acclimatisation and practical training sessions.

3.1 Fitness Check

In addition to the official fitness tests conducted in November 2018, all match officials were declared physically qualified to cope with the match demands upon the successful completion of:

- Yo-Yo Intermittent Test for referees (target: 18-2)
- Assistant Referee Intermittent Endurance Test (ARIET) for assistant referees (target: 15-5.6)

3.2 Practical Sessions

Preparatory practical sessions took place daily at the referees' headquarters. Two teams and a coach assisted to simulate match incidents based on the instructors' training plan. Among other topics, the sessions focused on:

- Positioning and movement
- Additional Assistant Referee system protocol and teamwork
- Foul recognition
- Offside recognition
- Match control
- Players management
- Fitness maintenance

An instant feedback replay facility supported the training, allowing the match officials to review the incidents immediately, therefore, enabling them to apply the advice of instructor in subsequent exercises.

3.3 Theoretical Sessions

The theoretical sessions were designed to further enhance the technical knowledge of the match officials and optimise the level of consistency in their application of the Laws of the Game.

Numerous match incident videos were reviewed and discussed in order to facilitate the match officials' participation, analysis and consensus.

Completing the preparation, relevant information on fitness and administration was also shared. Some of the main topics covered during the theoretical sessions include:

Technical Area

- Positioning, movement and reading the game
- Penalty area incidents
- Tactical fouls
- Challenges / tackles
- Handling the ball
- Match management
- Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system
- Additional Assistant Referee (AAR) system
-

Fitness Area

- Fitness check
- Weight control
- Nutrition
- Recovery strategies

- Injury prevention
- Heart monitoring system

Administration Matters

- Championship overview
- Stadium regulations and accreditation system
- Pre-match procedures
- Start list and players' equipment check
- Referee's match report
- Media contact and procedures
- Transport
- Match officials' apparel
- Communication system sets and beep flags
- Accommodation and logistics
-

Other Matters

- Integrity

4. During Competition

4.1 Team Arrival Meetings

Referee technical instructors ensured optimum level of awareness on the standard of refereeing to be applied throughout the competition to each of the 24 teams.

Prior to the quarter-finals, additional TAMs were conducted, which was focused on explaining the implementation of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system. The objective of the session was to share on the system's concept, protocol and procedures.



4.2 Practical Sessions

Following the success of the initiative during the AFC U-23 Championship in 2018, the daily practical training sessions were conducted to emphasise on fitness conditioning and maintenance.

The level of intensity was measured against the AFC Asian Cup schedule for match officials.

Similarly, the referees and assistant referees appointed for matches performed customised exercises planned for matchday minus 2 (MD -2) and minus 1 (MD -1). Gymnasium and pool recovery sessions were also delivered as part of the post-match programme.

Fatigue and heart rate levels were also assessed to provide officials with greater understanding on the customised conditioning plans to be implemented during the post-match.

The technical training after the preparatory course focused in VAR preparation from 12 to 30 January.

4.3 Match Assessment

All match footage was analysed live by a video referee assessor at the TV Compound located in the vicinity of Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi.

The video referee assessor tracked the match situations, compiling all relevant details: time and nature of incidents, decisions and sanctions, officials involved and other inputs for discussion.



Referee assessors were also assigned to observe the match officials' performance live at the match venue.

The referee assessors closely monitored the team's officiating capabilities and decisions made throughout the match, and provided first-hand feedback.

4.4 Match Debriefing Sessions

The group match debriefings gathered all the referees and assistant referees, excluding those away on match assignments.

Significant incidents from the previous day's matches were analysed to prepare the officials for upcoming challenges. Through an dialogue, the instructors highlighted areas for improvement and provided advice to ensure consistency and uniformity in foul recognition and Laws of the Game interpretation.

A general debriefing took place prior to the knockout stage matches, providing positive examples of decision-making, management, reading of the game and teamwork.

The referee assessors also conducted individual sessions with team officials involved in the specific match both prior and after it.

The referee assessors went through each match comprehensively, using a higher number of videos, as well as their own on-field experience in the individual sessions.

4.5 Technical Study Group Session

By the end of the Round of 16, AFC Deputy Technical Director Wim Koevers, representing the competition's technical study group, shared an overview of the teams' technical and tactical approach. The valuable insight into players' styles and behaviour, teams' tactics and crucial areas to focus from a refereeing perspective, enhanced the preparation for the upcoming stages.

5. Video Assistant Referee (VAR) System

The AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ marked the inauguration of the VAR system in AFC Competitions after being approved by the AFC Executive Committee in their meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in September 2018.

In November 2018, the AFC Referees Committee recommended the use of VAR from the quarter-finals onwards based on a thorough assessment of the logistical and human resources required to ensure a successful implementation and determined upon FIFA and IFAB approval processes.

5.1 Match Officials' Preparation

Licensed match officials were appointed to perform VAR duties, all of who were trained in accordance with IFAB's stringent

requirements and accumulated experience at the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ and Member Association level prior to UAE 2019.

VAR match officials underwent a comprehensive preparation from 12 to 30 January, prior and after the kick-off of the system on 24 January. The training focused in four main areas:

Offline matches

Offline matches tests took place during the Round of 16 stage, allowing the referees to enhance their preparation and ensuring the readiness of the technological aspects.

During the competition, AFC officials received on-site support by FIFA Referees Committee Chairman Pierluigi Collina and Refereeing Director Massimo Busacca, as well as IFAB Technical Director David Elleray.

5.2 Technical Setup

All camera feeds were transmitted to the Video Operation Room (VOR) located in the TV Compound at Zayed Sports City Stadium where the VAR teams assessed all the matches live.

Technology Providers

• Hawk Eye Innovations (Video)

Leading supplier for VAR and goal-line technology solutions worldwide. Major partners include FIFA (2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™, FIFA Confederations Cup 2018, FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea 2017, FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2017 &

2018), The Premier League (England), Deutsche Fußball Liga (Germany) and Ligue de Football Professionnel (France)

• Crescent Comms Ltd. (Audio)

Leading Communications services provider in operating radio communication signals in international sports competitions including the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™, the IRB Rugby World Cup and the ICC World Cup (cricket)

Video Operation Room (VOR)

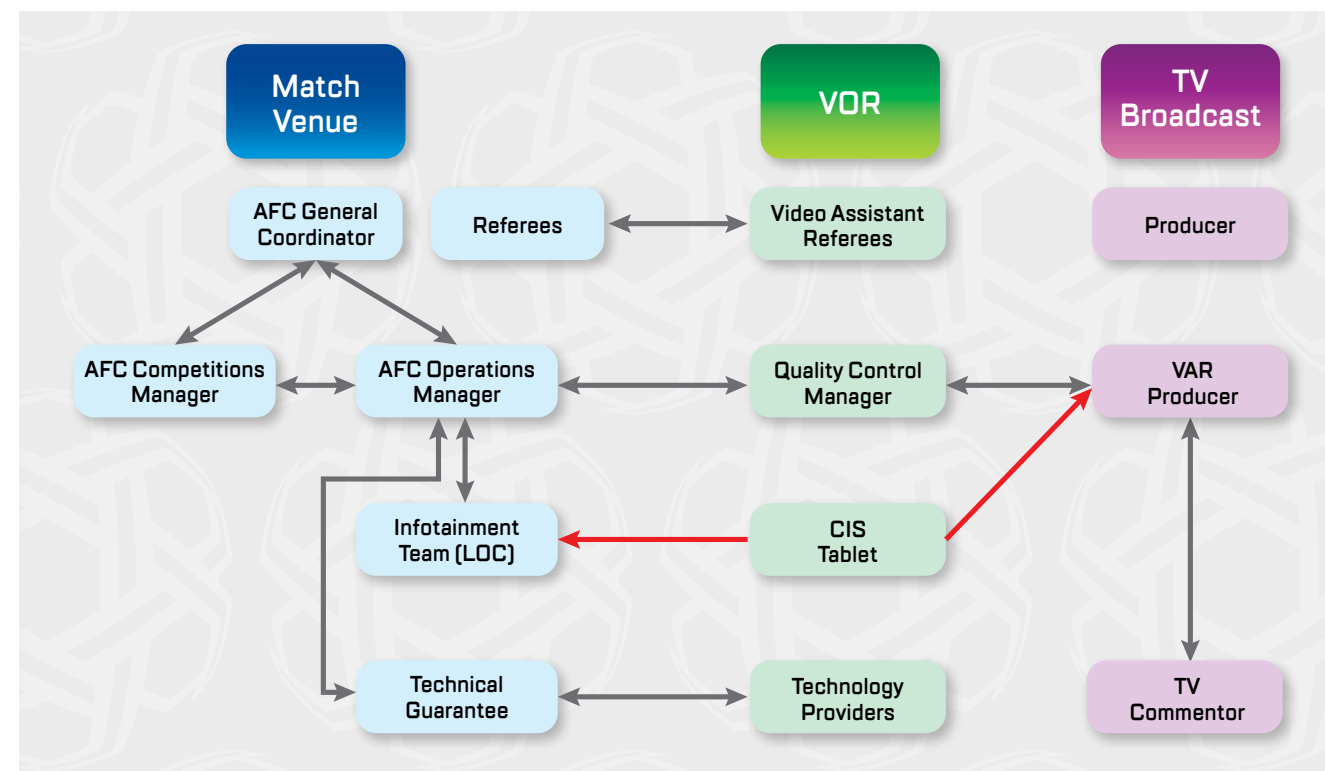
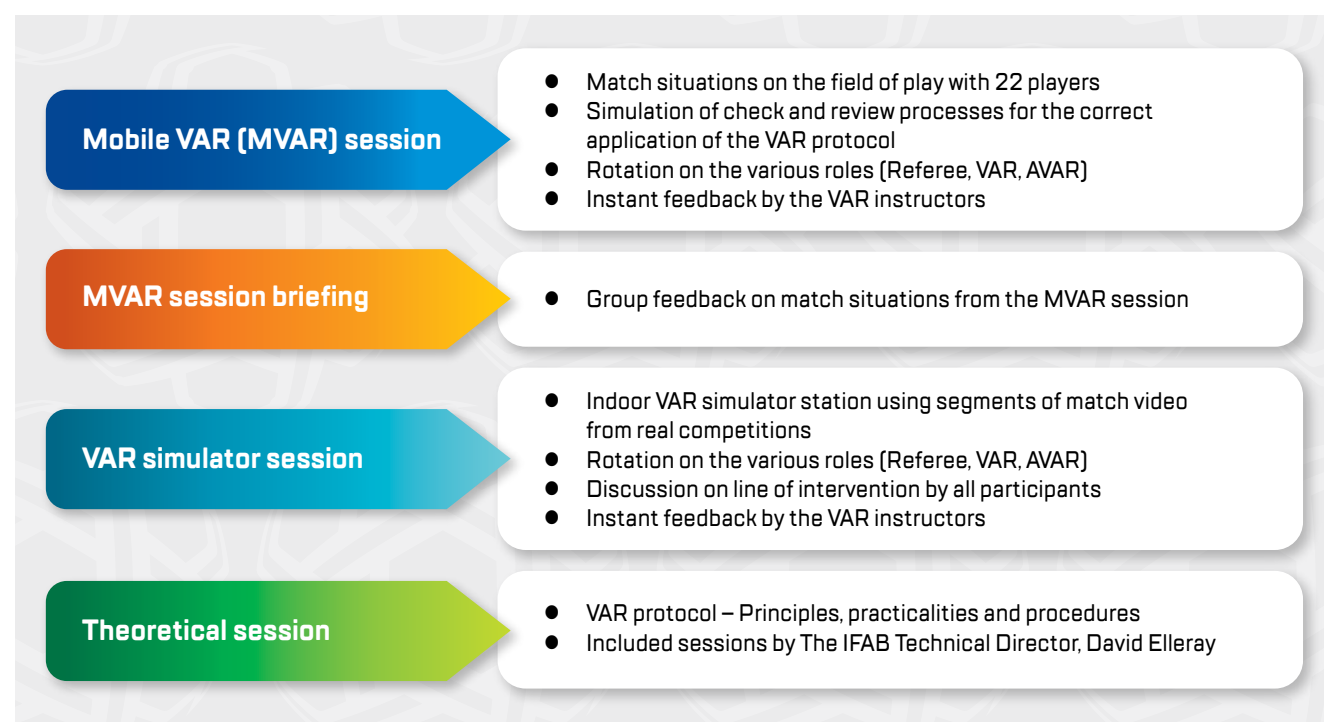
- Reception of all 23 camera feeds from the four venues
- Two units available to avoid potential overlapping of the two daily matches (quarter-finals)
- Setup:
- VAR, AVAR 1 and AVAR 2
- Two Replay Operators
- One Quality Control Manager
- Branded with official graphics
-

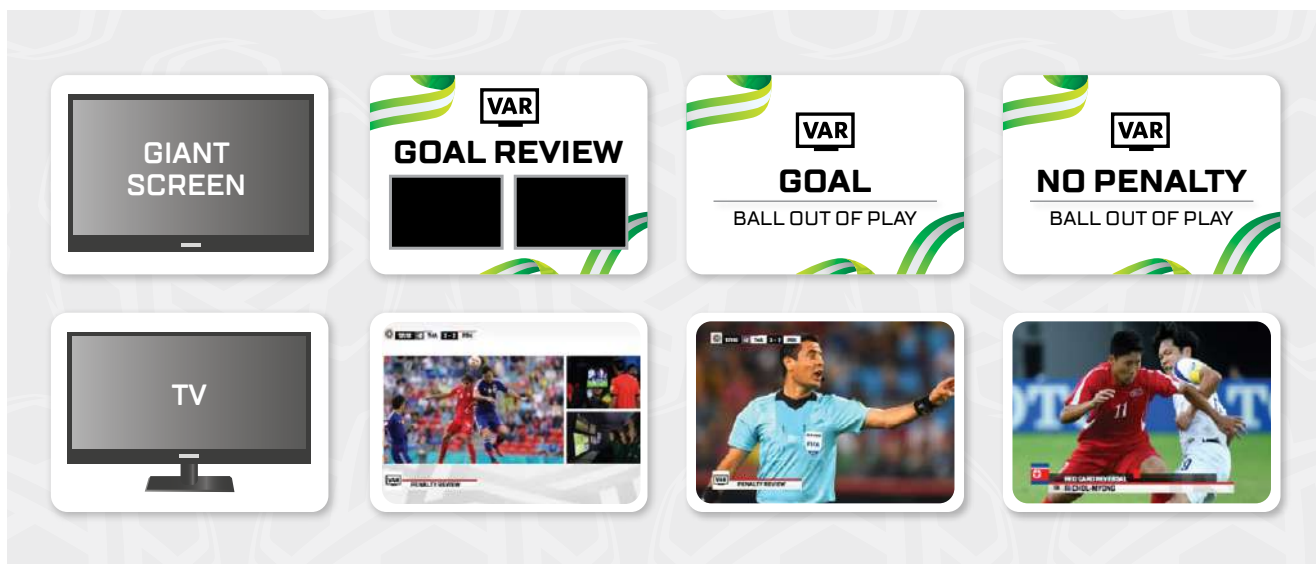
Referee Review Area (RRA)

- Pyramid-type monitor
- Located behind the fourth official bench

Redundancy plan

- Backup VOR in each venue in case of connectivity failure from the stadium to the main VOR
- Reserve VAR official in each venue to operate from the backup VOR
- Backup RRA monitors





5.3 Communication Process

Communication channels were established to facilitate the understanding of the VAR review processes in the VDR.

Through a CIS tablet system, Broadcasting & Infotainment teams received instant messages on the status of reviewed decisions, which were generated by the Quality Control Manager in the VDR.

As a result of the process, in-stadium announcements via giant screen were made each time a review was conducted with the graphics produced by the broadcast team.

5.4 Performance

The VAR system kicked off on the quarter-finals and was used in a total of seven matches:

Implementation statistics

- A total of 81 checks were completed in the seven matches, resulting in 6 reviews (average: 11.57 checks / 0.86 reviews per match). 740% of the checks led to a review.
- In 66.67% (4) of the reviews, the referees' original decision was changed, while it was maintained in 33.33% (2) cases.

45	Quarter-finals	 Vietnam	VS	 Japan
46		 China PR	VS	 IR Iran
47		 Korea Republic	VS	 Qatar
48		 UAE	VS	 Australia
49	Semi-finals	 IR Iran	VS	 Japan
50		 Qatar	VS	 UAE
51	Final	 Japan	VS	 Qatar

- In summary, the accuracy of decision making prior to the VAR intervention was of 95.06%; the VAR improved the decision-making process by 4.94%.

6 Technical Summary

6.1 General Performance

The referee assessors and instructors' team, through their match reports and close monitoring, rated the match officials' performance as good (between 8.0 and 8.4) in 89.5% of the cases. The daily training, match debriefings and other activities and resources organised to raise the refereeing standards contributed significantly to decision-making as the tournament progressed.

The main highlight was the positive outcome of the introduction of the VAR system from the quarter-final stages.

6.2 General Management

A total of 194 disciplinary sanctions were issued at the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ - of which 189 were cautions (yellow cards). Three sending-offs took place after a second caution and two direct red cards were shown.

There was a match average of 3.71 yellow cards and 0.10 red cards. There was an overall reduction of average cautions and expulsions per match, compared to both the 2015 and 2011 editions.





Star
Selection



The All-Star Squad

The team of AFC Technical Observers in the UAE were given the challenge of selecting an All-Star Squad of 23 players. Even though there were excellent individual performances during the group stage, it was decided that players from eliminated teams would, to use golf parlance, 'miss the cut'. Then the list was gradually whittled down to focus on the teams which had made the greatest impact on the final tournament. Even then, the 'short list' still totalled 35 players after the semi-finals and prompted some serious debating among the technical observers on the day of the final itself. This gives a clear indication that some players were unfortunate to have been omitted from the final selection – for example, Korea Republic's Jung Woo-young or Qatar's Assim Madibo to name but two of the midfielders who might easily have been included. Understandably, the four semi-finalists account for most of the names on the team sheet, with Australia, China PR, Korea Republic and Vietnam providing one apiece.

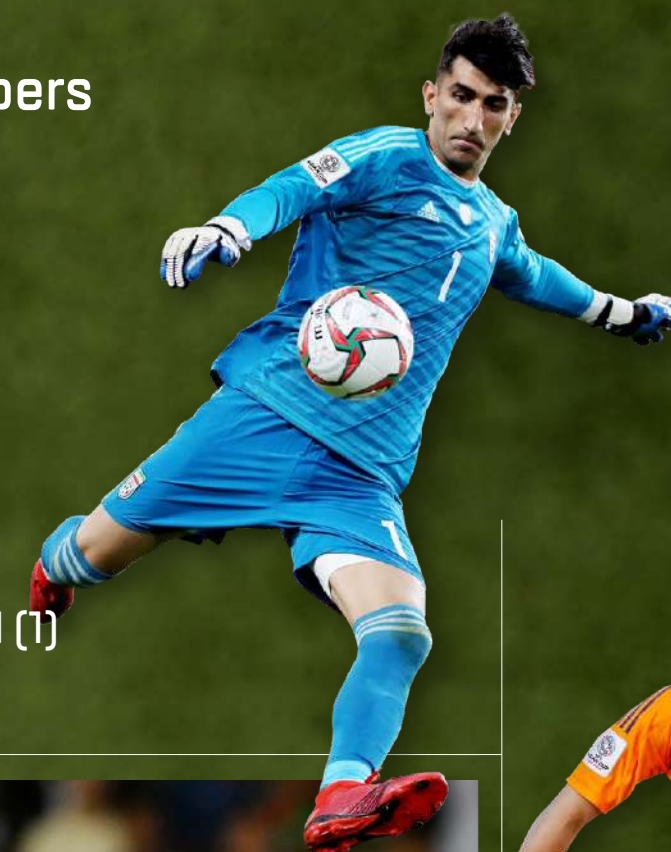


Goalkeepers

Ali Reza Beiranvand (1)



IR Iran



Shuichi Gonda



Japan



Saad Al Sheeb (1)



Qatar





Defenders

Bandar
Al Ahbabi (9)



Boualem
Khoukhi (16)



Yuto
Nagatomo (5)



Hassan
Abdelkarim (3)



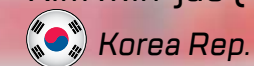
Maya
Yoshida (22)



Bassam
Alrawi (15)



Kim Min-jae (4)



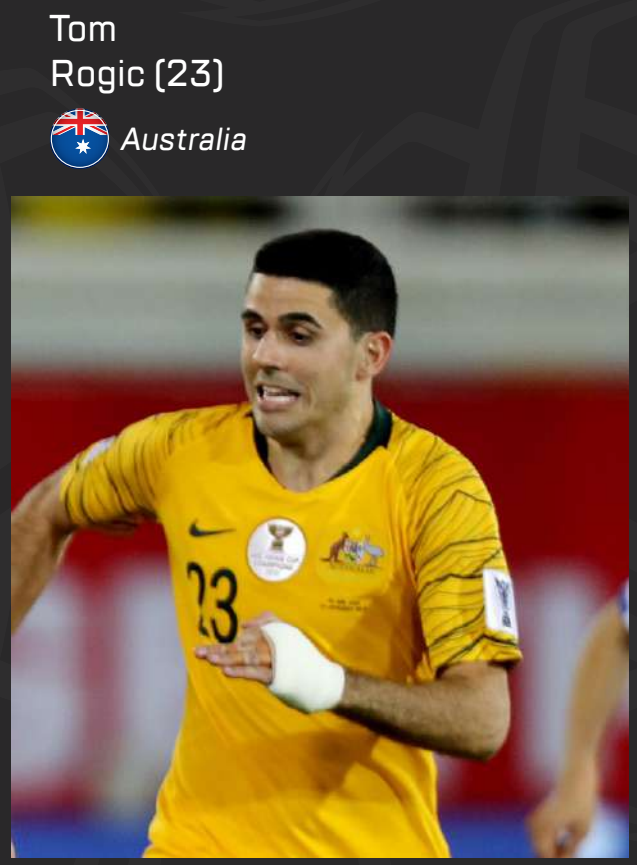
Midfielders




Omid
Ebrahimi (9)
 IR Iran



Abdel Aziz
Hatim (6)
 Qatar



Tom
Rogic (23)
 Australia



Gaku
Shibasaki (7)
 Japan



Seyed
Dejagah (21)
 IR Iran

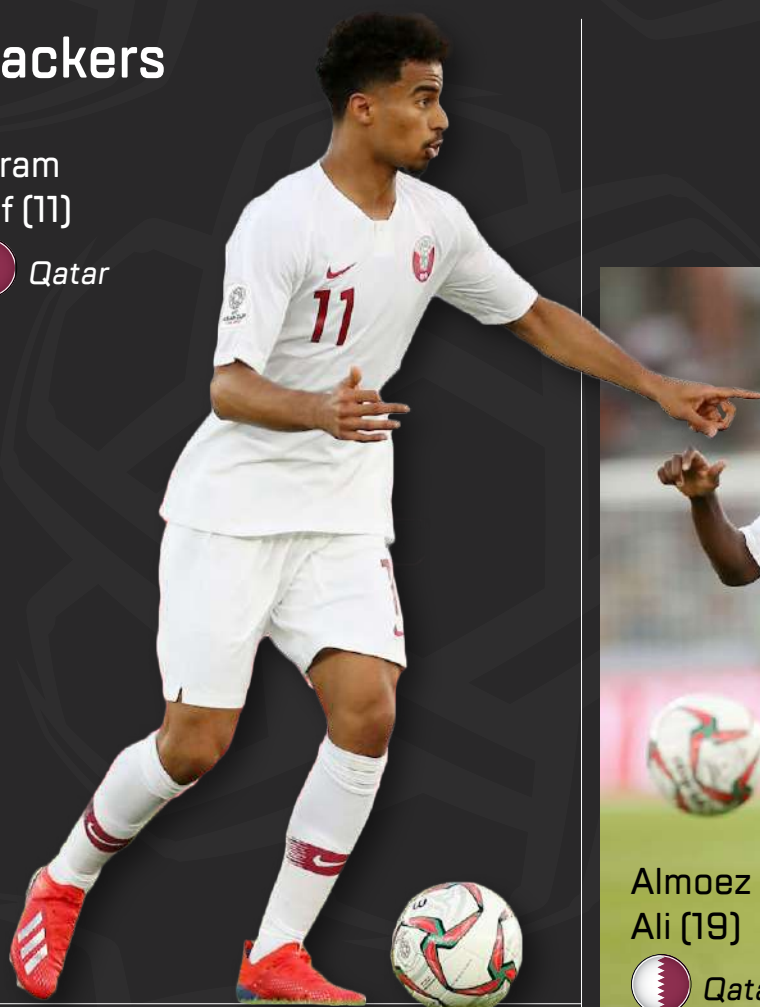


Hasan
Al Haydos (10)
 Qatar

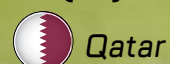


Attackers

Akram
Afif (11)



Almoez
Ali (19)



Sardar
Azmoun (20)



Nguyen
Quang Hai (19)



Wu Lei (7)



Yuya
Osako (15)



Ali Ahmed
Mabkhout (7)



Committees





AFC Competitions Committee



NAME	POSITION	COUNTRY
Mr. Saoud Al-Mohannadi	Chairperson	Qatar
Mr. Lin Xiaohua	Deputy Chairperson	China PR
Ms. Han Un Gyong	Member	DPR Korea
Mr. Mark Falvo	Member	Australia
Major Gen. Khiev Sameth	Member	Cambodia
Mr. Mehdi Taj	Member	Islamic Republic of Iran
Mr. Ali Jabbar Dabat	Member	Iraq
Mr. Tetsu Hirai	Member	Japan
Mr. Chun Hanjin	Member	Korea Republic
Mr. Sabeeh J Abal	Member	Kuwait
Datuk Wira Mohd Yusoff Mahadi	Member	Malaysia
Mr. Khalid Latif	Member	Pakistan
Mr. Luai Ibrahim Alsubaiey	Member	Saudi Arabia
Mr. Salah Eddin Ramadan	Member	Syria
Mr. Abdulla Naser Al-Junaibi	Member	UAE
Mr. Alim Arifov	Member	Uzbekistan
Dr. Tran Quoc Tuan	Member	Vietnam
Ms. Cristina D'alessio	Co-Opted Member	Lagardère Sports



AFC Technical Committee



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Mr. Winston Lee Boon Aun	Member	Singapore
Mr. Sardor Rakhmatullaev	Member	Uzbekistan
Dr. Hafez Al Medlej	Co-Opted Member	Saudi Arabia
Mr. Aref Hamad Al Awani	Co-Opted Member	UAE

Digital Statistics





AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ IN NUMBERS

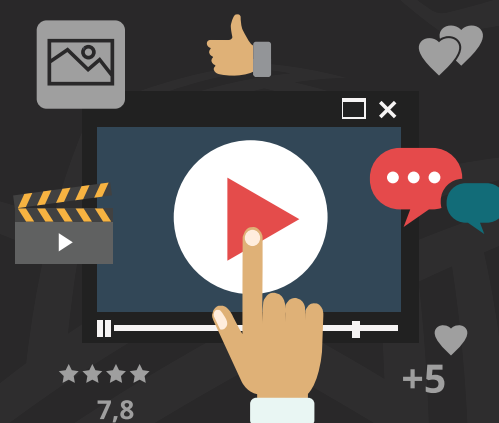
890.2
Million Interactions

Total numbers of fans interacted with AFC Asian Cup Digital platforms during the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™.



33.03
Million Pageviews

Total numbers of pageviews on the-afc.com during the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™.



81.77
Million Video Views

Total numbers of video views across AFC Asian Cup Digital platforms during the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019™ compared to just 7.1 million in the 2015 edition.





@afcasiacup



02 75.9
Million Impressions

03 44.3
Million Impressions
(Arabic Account)



01 3
Million Impressions

/afcasiacup



02 50.2
Million Impressions

01 23.8
Million Impressions



LOC: Digital & Social Media



02 148
Million Impressions

03 9.4
Million Video Views



01 2
Million Clicks
to Tickets

AFC ASIAN CUP UAE 2019™

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EDITORIAL GROUP

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Wim Koeversmans (AFC)
Jose Marcelino Carpio (AFC)
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Abdullah Hassan Abdullah (UAE)
Islam Akhmedov (UZB)
Branimir Ujevic (FIFA)
Chris Loxston (FIFA)

TECHNICAL ADMINISTRATION

Nur Syafiah Woo
Khalid Idris

EDITORIAL TEAM

Helen Summers
Ian Griffiths
Vijesh Rai
Tom Engelhardt
Vinashal Pillai
Rhys Lee
Michael Church
Tamara Garcia Lorenzo

PHOTOGRAPHY

Adam Aidil Padali
Power Sport Images

AV

Zainol Talep
Hazimi Halim
Alson Yue

DESIGN

Nadia Jamil
Yuvanesh Govindasamy



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Asian Football Confederation

AFC House, Jalan 1/155B, Bukit Jalil, 57000 Kuala Lumpur
T: +603 8994 3388 F: +603 8994 2689

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