Referee Analysis of the Women’s 19 European Championship

The matches of the Women’s 19 European Championship, that took place in Izmir (TUR) from the 10th – 19th August 2007, were officiated by the following referee pairs:

AUT – BRKIC / JUSUFHODZIC (born 1978 / 1979)
HUN – ANDORKA / HUCKER (born 1977 / 1979)
LAT – JASKINS / ZABKO (born 1979 / 1979)
SRB – NIKOLIC / STOJKOVIC (born 1976 / 1979)

The time- and scorekeeping were undertaken by young Turkish referees and by following instruction, they performed their task correctly.

The referees and the delegates travelled on the 7th August, to be on site two days prior to the start of the tournament in order to finalise their preparations together for the matches.

During the Officials’ Conference, the 10 nominated referee pairs presented various subjects chosen by the EHF such as progressivity, situations at the goal area, criteria of 7m and the correct execution of throws.

The delegates, Magnusdottir, Stasova, Cuderman and Vizitiu, in addition to the observers, Mulleners, Sivrikaya, Tevzadze and Domenge, either assisted the referees in their discussions or introduced other topics with the assistance of EHF representatives, Brihault and Ambrus and Bestilleiro the staff member from the EHF Office.

The topics included the mental and physical preparation of a referee, the profile of a good referee, the control of a match in delicate situations, performance evaluation and how delegates can assist referees as well as more general topics which included EHF arbitration policy, behaviour of referees during a competition, expected behaviour of referees, officials’ task distribution etc.

During the competition the referees were brought together each morning in the presence of the observers and of the supervisors to analyse and exchange on their views on their performances using situations extracted from footage of matches chosen by the observers from the previous day. The chosen footage is able to reveal bad decisions / omissions, but also delicate and unusual situations handled well by the referee pair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Robert Kleiner who spent hours extracting the aforementioned footage chosen by the observers.

The discussions took place to help the referees understand the play situations better and to help them find solutions or take corrective measures for the remainder of the competition included the following subject matter:

- Arbitration coherence
- Attitude of key players
- Special situations and
- Player technique
The participants were motivated and actively took part in these discussions, then the referees went on to apply knowledge gained in the appropriate situations with relative success. In addition to this the referee and the observer also held discussions after each match.

**Written Tests**

The following two written tests were proposed:

- 10 questions pertaining to knowledge on the Rules of the Game starting with a text extract of a rule (where in the Rules it is written...?)
- The second test would contain 30 multiple choice questions (QCM) based on text extracts (IHF Rules Book).

The results of these tests have shown that the referees performed strongly.

**Physical Tests (Cooper and Shuttle Run)**

The overall conclusion to the physical tests is that the preparations of the referees remain insufficient. The majority of the referees were minimally successful taking into account the particular age range of the participants. They need to improve especially the pair from POL and TUR.

**Training**

Under the tutelage of Alenka Cuderman, the referees were invited to a teambuilding exercise, where they were able to show their aptitude to space on the court, the ability to function as a pair and ball handling skills by playing games of football and handball. This was a very positive experience for all involved.

**Performance Evaluation**

It is necessary for future competitions that the referees should prepare for the competition on the same basis as the players; this is to ensure that the referees to carry out their arbitration in the best possible way.

It should be noted that during the competition the team officials did play a part in the achievement of this objective in light of their exemplary behaviour on the benches during the matches.

The referee pairs from MNE and SRB performed consistently and showed their best performances at the beginning and at the end of the tournament. HUN, NED and UKR improved during the course of the tournament. The officiating of the AUT, LAT, POL and TUR pairs was insufficient at the start of the tournament, and only improved to an acceptable level thereafter, whereas DEN started well then showed some inconsistencies.

On the whole, the officiating centred too much on the application of the rules almost mechanically. There was a distinct lack of personality and an obvious lack of instinct/initiative.

Nevertheless, almost all the referees knew how to adapt during the competition and were firm in their decision-making, in particular when it came to disciplinary actions and disqualifications.
This attentive and receptive group of referees evolved and moved in interesting ways throughout this competition, not only on the court but off as well. There was a sympathetic harmony between the referees despite the very broad age bracket (25-41 years).

To conclude, the nominations of the referees were satisfactory. There were no major incidents and only one protest without direct consequence was registered.

Nevertheless, it is essential that the nominated referees are much better prepared to officiate at this level of competition, so that the level of the matches does not catch them unawares – it was observed that some pairs had not officiated at a female match during the season!

A good knowledge of English language, which allows for fluidity and a certain speed in conversations, in regards to the referees and observers is necessary for the exchange with all participants as well as benefiting from individual and common meetings.

Finally, total neutrality must be assured. During this tournament, more than 50% of the referee pairs having their national teams engaged in this competition could prove problematic.

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