9th EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP FOR MEN

AUSTRIA 2010

QUALITATIVE TREND ANALYSIS

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EHF MC Member / AUT
Introduction

The event took place in Austria from 19th – 31st January 2010. The preliminaries were played in the cities of Graz (A), Linz (B), Innsbruck (C) and Wiener Neustadt (D). The main round was played in Vienna (1) and Innsbruck (2), the finals took place in Vienna.

The organisation by the LOCs and the attendance of the audience was excellent due to two main factors:

First there had been test tournaments in all the venues for the training of the logistics during the last year before the Championship. Additionally direct test matches were scheduled in all the venues shortly before the event to test the final set-up of the equipment, electronic gear, etc.

Second a regional setting of the host team (as usual) and of three more qualified teams (for the very first time) was done putting a crowd catcher to every location according to the regional position of the preliminary venues. CRO therefore played in Graz close to their home country, as well as GER in Innsbruck and HUN in Wiener Neustadt thus guaranteeing packed halls in the preliminaries.

These preparation moves proved to be bull’s eye for the event. The final outcome was that the general feedback of most of the people watching or working or participating in one or the other way was that it had been the best Championships so far.

Of course there were some small deficiencies but most of them were covered by the LOCs and their volunteers pretty fast.

Some deficiencies are just inevitable due to the construction of the event as a whole.

To give an example it is very difficult to achieve an absolute common line of the refereeing when you have five venues to cover and the accommodation of the officials is spread all over these venues and therefore you cannot have one common meeting for refs and officials altogether.

At the end of the day we can state that this event marked a cornerstone in terms of organisation and the echo by the media as well as the spectators was massive.

For sure it was a step forward to maintain the good position of handball in the indoor sports programme.

It was my pleasure to be part of such a successful event in my home country and I want to express my gratitude and congratulations to all the people who have been involved.
Picked statistical data of interest

Table 1
Table of results of the European Championships with 16 teams in the final round

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank.</th>
<th>SWEDEN 2002</th>
<th>SLOVENIA 2004</th>
<th>Switzerland 2006</th>
<th>NORWAY 2008</th>
<th>AUSTRIA 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SWE</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>FRA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>CRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>ISL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>POL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>GER</td>
<td>SWE</td>
<td>DEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>NOR</td>
<td>ESP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>ESP</td>
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<td>ISL</td>
<td>POL</td>
<td>NOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>CZE</td>
<td>SCG</td>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>HUN</td>
<td>CZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>POR</td>
<td>HUN</td>
<td>SCG</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>AUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>YUG</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>POL</td>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>GER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>UKR</td>
<td>CZE</td>
<td>NOR</td>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>SLO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>SUI</td>
<td>UKR</td>
<td>MNE</td>
<td>RUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SUI</td>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>HUN</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>SRB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>ISR</td>
<td>POR</td>
<td>SUI</td>
<td>CZE</td>
<td>HUN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>POL</td>
<td>UKR</td>
<td>POR</td>
<td>BLR</td>
<td>SWE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>POL</td>
<td>SVK</td>
<td>SVK</td>
<td>UKR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows three nations of high stability in the top rankings: FRA, CRO, DEN.

Behind them POL is on a constant way up as GER lost their position in the tops which applies to SLO even more. Both seem to be in a downswing they have to reconsider their position. SRB is still struggling in lower areas than they are used to which is even worse with RUS.

NOR seem to stabilize their position in the upper half as CZE is back after a negative period and ESP returns to the upper half of the table continuing the parallel run with CZE.

This does not apply for SWE who failed to confirm their return.

ISL continue their oscillation (4-13-7-11-3) up and down the table whereas HUN and UKR zigzag in the lower half only.

Host team AUT was the only newcomer and they fully took the impetus of the hosting teams as usual finishing a totally unexpected 9th and by this adding a smashing sporting succes to the triumph in terms of organisation.
Table 2 (Teams 1-12 only)

Game dynamics of the teams by scores (6 matches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total average</th>
<th>Preliminaries</th>
<th>Main round</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>27.5-24.5 (14.5-12.5)</td>
<td>25-24 (14-12)</td>
<td>30-25 (15-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>27-24.5 (12.5-12.5)</td>
<td>28-25 (13-13)</td>
<td>26-24 (12-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>32-29.5 (17-13.5)</td>
<td>31-29 (17-14)</td>
<td>33-30 (17-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>29-28 (13.5-13)</td>
<td>28-26 (13-12)</td>
<td>30-29 (14-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>27.5-26 (14-13.5)</td>
<td>28-26 (15-13)</td>
<td>27-26 (13-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>31-26.5 (14.4-11)</td>
<td>32-25 (15-10)</td>
<td>30-28 (14-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOR</td>
<td>28-27.5 (14-13.5)</td>
<td>27-26 (13-13)</td>
<td>29-29 (15-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZE</td>
<td>29-30 (14.5-15)</td>
<td>26-28 (11-15)</td>
<td>32-32 (18-15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>31-31.5 (14.5-16)</td>
<td>35-34 (16-18)</td>
<td>27-29 (13-14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>26.5-27.5 (12.5-14)</td>
<td>30-30 (13-15)</td>
<td>23-25 (12-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>31-34 (13.5-15.5)</td>
<td>30.30 (12-12)</td>
<td>32-38 (15-19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>29.5-32 (15-17)</td>
<td>30-30 (17-16)</td>
<td>29-34 (13-18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most interesting fact is the finding that success is based upon the first halftime performance.
The first seven teams manged to end up with a positive goal balance; out of them CRO was the only team with a better performance in the second than in the first.
FRA, ISL, ESP grounded their success on their first half performance as POL, DEN and NOR showed consistency over 60 minutes, as well as CZE did by the way.
AUT had a far better second than first and the teams at the bottom of the table suffered from their performance in the first 30 minutes of their matches.

To underline this statement: ESP missed the semis due to their bad first half performance vs. POL; it was their only match trailing at intermission and their only loss.

Some more details:
Defence still wins the Championships
- FRA and CRO do show identical defence performance with fantastic consistency
- DEN can almost catch up with them in this respect.
- GER good defence performance was ruined by a desastrous offence in the MR
- ESP surprised with the new style 5-1 in the first half

The score of the matches increased in the MR; AUT and GER fell back due to decline in offence efficacy.

The fast throw-off was played constantly by three teams only – ISL was very successful with this tactical mean (although struggling by the end of all games), for AUT it was one of the main factors for their successful appearance; in contrary it seemed to have a boomerang-effect on SLO.
All the other teams used it every now and then, sometimes for surprise, sometimes to overcome short-handed situations or with reference to the actual score and the playing time remaining.
Table 3

**Team rankings in goals shot, makes, shots allowed on target (avg.), Gk saves (avg.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Goals shot</th>
<th>Makes</th>
<th>Shots allowed</th>
<th>Saves</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEN</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOR</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZE</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The range of goals shot was from 192 (ISL) to 157 (GER), the makes ranged from 147 (FRA) to 203 (SLO).
The average per match of goal shots allowed on target ranged from 37 (CRO) to 50 (SLO).
The saves per match ranged from 16 (POL/SLO) to 10 (ESP).

**Defence wins Championships.**
- With only 39 shots allowing and a saving of 14.5 FRA won the tournament
- 37 shots allowing in combination with 13 saves gave silver to CRO
- Great performance of the goalies (16 saves) brought POL to the semis
- FRA, CRO and DEN were 9-11 in the goals shot but their defence performance had them ending in the ranks 1,2 and 5.

**Bad defence will kill you**
- With second most goals shot (186) and the top saving performance (16) SLO only ended 11th due to a disastrous performance of the defence formation
- Very much the same applied to RUS – 3rd in saves (15), 5th in goals shot (177) but 47 shots allowed
- ESP failed to go to the semis due to a low performance of the GK (10 saves only)

The final conclusion is that good saving alone can decide single matches but will not win you the tournament. Bad performance of the goalkeepers on the other hand may cost you a medal.

ISL was a different story in this tournament. With outstanding fastbreak play and constant fast throw-off they were the one and only team to gain their ranking by offence power.

GER was the other side of the coin. They played quite good in defence with good saving as well but their offence was absolutely desastrous in the MR.
Table 4

Balance of the matches (42 matches)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Draw</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>6-9</th>
<th>&gt; 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>6 (2)</td>
<td>7 (8)</td>
<td>7 (9)</td>
<td>3 (5)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MR</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 (7)</td>
<td>5 (9)</td>
<td>5 (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8 (2)</td>
<td>13 (15)</td>
<td>12 (18)</td>
<td>8 (7)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That means that 50% of the matches were as close as 2 or fewer goals difference in the final score.

The respective figures of the Women EURO 2008 MKD were

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Draw</th>
<th>1-2</th>
<th>3-5</th>
<th>6-9</th>
<th>&gt; 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6 (4)</td>
<td>8 (17)</td>
<td>13 (14)</td>
<td>7 (7)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures do show a clear difference in the match dynamics.

In the men tournament the scores became closer in the second halftime, in the women tournament the gap widened.

There is more fighting and obviously the level of the participating teams is more equal in the men tournament especially in terms of the physical shape of the players.

Some more findings:

- The teams allowed 2-7 shots from fastbreak. The best turnover teams were DEN (2), AUT (2.5) and CRO (3). The weakest SLO (7) followed by RUS, POL, NOR and FRA (6 each).

- SLO and FRA could equalize this weakness by good saving and good own fastbreak play, POL, NOR and RUS ended with a negative balance due to their weak performance in the fastbreak (less than 3 scores).

- The average score of the teams from fastbreak per match was 3-4.

- The best balance had ISL (+3) and AUT (+2); two of the three teams that played fast throw-off constantly.

- As there was an average of 9 suspensions per game every team played 6-5 for 4-5 times per match and scored 2-4 times. This means that the play 6-5 and fastbreak play are of identical importance in terms of the scores.

- Many teams made use of an additional court player in the shorthanded play but according to the observation only CRO took advantage from this tactical move.

- There was a total of 10 red cards in this tournament. Having seen more than half of the matches direct and some videos I have to say that the referees still lack of courage in terms of direct disqualifications. This has to be discussed in the future.

- The same applies in the cases of the so called “aliby-free-throws”. In certain situations the continuation of the game after a call simply cannot be free throw. It might be offence fault or penalty shot and it is the task of the refs to find a clear decision.
General trends

First we have to state that there is a clear difference to the findings at the 2008 ECh of the women in MKD. There we could see a difference in style of offence play that we called “Northern” and “Southern”.

This is not the case in terms of offence set-play of the men teams. Most of the teams do use identical moves in offence, maybe because of the general “Diaspora” of the national team players being active in different leagues of more than half a dozen countries all over Europe. And the coaches of those respective teams seem to use a quite narrow band of group tactical means thus forcing the national coaches to pick their offence patterns from this limited offer. The only teams showing a clear difference in this respect were RUS and UKR - I will come back to this later.

1. Defence set-play

The picture is different when looking at the defence set play. The domination of the 6-0 system has vanished, many teams play different interpretations of the 5-1, some play 3-2-1 even.

Basic systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>6-0</th>
<th>5-1</th>
<th>3-2-1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>CZE</td>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>SLO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>ESP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISL</td>
<td>FRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOR</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td></td>
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<td>POL</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Variation:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>SLO</td>
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<tr>
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<td>GER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUT</td>
<td>RUS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list represents the basic set-up only.

In transitions most of the teams playing 5-1 do stay in this system, only GER will go back to 6-0.

FRA is a very specific case because they react differently according to the player who takes the position of the point. If this position is played by NARCISSE (#8), they will stay in the 5-1 set-up. KARABATIC (# 13) will move back giving a 6-0 set up.

SLO will shift the 3-2-1 into a 4-2, if they stand in 5-1 they will stay in this set-up.

CRO will shift the 3-2-1 into a 5-1, logically their 5-1 will remain unchanged.

In case of man advantage most of the teams will play 5+1 some even 4+2, sometimes there will be a change to a 5-1 “Red Indian”-style. There is no real clear line in this respect the crucial factors for the set-up are score and remaining playing time. Sometimes there was even the feeling that a certain set-up was used for practising reasons.

In the basic set-up of the respective systems there was quite a variety of interpretations as you will see in the following:
1.1. Styles of 5-1:

ESP

The Spanish team came up with a very new and interesting interpretation of the 5-1. The left wing plays man-to-man against the PM, but according to the situation he is free to move to either side and thus covers an enormous range of space. This sideways move will occur irregularly whenever the ball is with the wing player of the offence team. In this case one of the defence specialists (#7,#24,#6) will go extremely deep, if the ball is with the LW even both of them might go deep. They played it the other way around as well with TOMAS (#8) as point.

FRA

The famous 5-1 of FRA is much more compact, they will only go to 9m. There is DINART (#3) as specialist covering all the central area and directing the others. All semicircular moves to the centre with the ball will be tackled by the point, the BL and BR on non-ball-side will go deep in order to prevent fast diagonal passes. The wings will support the BC in covering the line.

AUT

AUT showed a revival of the old eccentric 5-1 that was played by the URS in the late 80s. The point will cover the LB (or RB) of the offence team, the others will just shut down the space in the free throw area. The second player on the opposite side will go deep. AUT played it on both sides according to the team line-up of the opponents team.
1.2. Styles of 6-0:

ISL

ISL moved away from Swedish 6-0. They had two specialists strictly closing all the central area (#17 and #5). The RW (#15) played BR and went deep. So did the BL as well. The ball carrier was covered strictly as long as he was with the ball. In this case no switch was allowed. This gave a very compact close defence together with the good anticipation of #7 and #15 this system was very effective.

GER, POL and CZE played pretty similar to this.

DEN

DEN played the well-known Swedish 6-0 with the two specialists (#26 and #6) going deep in the central area. Due to their excellent cooperation this worked quite well. The other players covered the infighter zone in the first place.

NOR extended this concept by going deep on non-ball-side with the BL/BR respectively in order to fight fast diagonal passes.

1.3. Styles of 3-2-1:

SLO

Here we see a revival of the 3-2-1 with “Libero”, a system that had been very common in the 80s. SLO played this vs. POL very physical and man-oriented. The LW was in the point place, the outside defenders supported the “Libero” who had to move with the ball flight in covering the line. The physical load on the players is extreme, therefore this system cannot be used for the full 60 minutes.
2. Offence set-play
The dominating concept is the outnumbering of the defence in close quarters. In achieving this, almost all teams use group tactical means and 2-2 or 3-2 solutions. The core characteristic of the offence play is that it is focused upon decision making and continuation play. The sequence is:

Initiating move – decision making – termination/continuation – decision making – termination

For the initiating move all the teams take some kind of a crossing with or without ball. This gives the offence player a clear advantage in terms of speed and direction of the move. Therefore in many cases he will be able to pass by the direct defender and force the approach of a second one thus giving a man advantage situation in the continuation.

2.1. Play versus a 6-0 defence set-up.

DEN

PM passes the ball to RB and goes for crossing without the ball with LB who will receive the ball in full running.

1\textsuperscript{st} solution – fast shot through the gap
2\textsuperscript{nd} - pass to the PM.

Continuation of PM:

1\textsuperscript{st} - fast shot over LP
2\textsuperscript{nd} – counter move and shot
3\textsuperscript{rd} - counter move and pass to LP
4\textsuperscript{th} – counter move and pass to LW.

The Danish team will play this on either side concentrating the decision making on the PM in the first place.
They played it to both sides. Of course they took the easy solutions in case of a mistake of the defence as there are direct pass PM – LP or pass LB – RB in case BL moves inside for the tackle with continuation to the RW if necessary.

FRA

This move consists of two phases:

The start is like in the move of the team DEN but the position of the LP is different.

LB
1\textsuperscript{st} – jump shot through the centre
2\textsuperscript{nd} – if tackled by IR pass to PM

The first phase is restricted to this and only in case of a clear mistake of the defence LB will pass to the LP straight or continue to RB.

After receiving the ball back the PM starts a full 1-1 penetration action.

PM
1\textsuperscript{st} - termination
2\textsuperscript{nd} - continuation to LB

LB
1\textsuperscript{st} - full 1-1 with shot
2\textsuperscript{nd} - if IL comes tackling - pass to LP
3\textsuperscript{rd} – pass to RB

RB
1\textsuperscript{st} - straight move – shot over LP
2\textsuperscript{nd} – outside move – shot or pass to LP
3\textsuperscript{rd} - continuation to RW

PM thrusts straight. With the IR tackling he moves against throwing arm side, passes back to the crossing LB and continues moving outside.

LB
1\textsuperscript{st} - From the fast run the LB aims for the shot.
2\textsuperscript{nd} – IL tackling and IR too slow – pass to LP
3\textsuperscript{rd} - IL and IR perfect – counter pass to PM.

PM
1\textsuperscript{st} – Shot or breakthrough
2\textsuperscript{nd} - Pass to moving LP
3\textsuperscript{rd} – if OR comes running pass to LW
This move shows a lot of decision making by several players. If they are in good shape it's almost impossible to defend against this concept. But on the other hand there are a lot of chances for mistakes and taking wrong decisions as well thus explaining why the team always seems to need some time to find the good rhythm in a tournament.

**ESP**

Once again the identical opening moves. The LP is positioned in the very centre and there is an additional give and go action RB-RW. This reserves more time for the LB for the inside sweep.

- LB
  - 1st – Shot over the LP
  - 2nd – pass to PM

The PM is a terrific 1-1 specialist in a perfect set-up now.

- 1st – 1-1 with shot
- 2nd – pass to the moving LP.

**POL**

A very specific move of the Polish team.

The PM goes for a crossing without the ball with the LB but the RB will sweep inside with the ball thus effecting a double-crossing.

- RB
  - 1st – shot over the LP
  - 2nd – pass to LB after long run

- RB
  - 1st – shot or breakthrough
  - 2nd – pass to LP
  - 3rd – pass to RW

This is a good move with clear outnumbering of the defence but with high risk since there is a concentration of 4 players in close quarters.

If the move is not successful there is little chance to fight the fastbreak of the opponent since there are only two players left for this purpose.

The second problem in the tournament turned out to be the bad finishing of the Polish RW players. This gave the defending teams the chance to leave them open for the shot and fight all the others thus avoiding the more dangerous shots by the LP and the RB in the first place.

In sharp contrast to all these concepts based upon so called “frame moves” and decision making I do like to present an old fashioned concept without decision making, a so called fixed scheme.
The weak point of this system is the lack of decision making for the defence and there will never be outnumbering. Since you cannot prevent the backs from shooting you have to find a good cooperation GK – defenders. If the defence succeeds in that the system will collapse due to the high pressure that lasts on the strikers in both physical and psychological respect. They have to run long ways and they do not find alternatives for the shot – score or fail you have to shoot anyway.

2.2. Transition concepts versus 6-0

This basic concept was played by several teams with and against the ballflight. The crucial point is the position of the LP. Only in this particular position the outnumbering of the defence will be inevitable because the OR will be in the back of the LP and thus eliminated. So the BR cannot tackle properly because of the danger of the pass to the LP and this will force the IR to approach for support. It is a very effective concept for teams with fast ground shooters (jump shots will take too long).
This move of course is very specific and it is tailor-made for the special skills of BALIC and his cooperation with VORI. This move they played extremely successful with METLICIC on the position RB during the last three years or so.

POL

A very effective move of the Polish team which they played versus 5-1 in the identical way. Once the diagonal pass is fired, this move is very hard to defend. The only weak point of this pattern is the dependency upon the performance of the RB. If this player is in good shape – super; if not – trouble ahead.
Very similar to the move of POL, the double switch makes it even more confusing for the defence. Applied versus 5-1 as well with an additional option for the RB to pass on to the RW immediately (sometimes behind the back even).

The basic move of the team ISL. Played vs. 6-0 and 5-1.
In the 5+1 situation the PM will do the crossing with the RW with the RB moving back to 12-14m.
This concept proved to be extremely effective in the play 6-5 as well.

Most of the basic concepts of the teams were applied against 6-0 as well as against 5-1.
DEN played a transition of the LW very much alike that one that we showed done by ESP vs. a 6-0 set-up.
CRO and RUS had specific standards vs. 5-1 defences, CRO again based upon the individual skills of BALIC, DUVNJAK and VORI. RUS had to find ways to move away the point and preserving open the long running lanes of their tall strikers.
2.3. Specific concepts versus a 5-1 defence set-up.

CRO

Against a 5-1 formation with a very man-oriented point BALIC (#4) will go to LB and ask for the ball. In this position he will start a 1-1 into the back of the point. If he manages to force the approach of the BC he will shoot a fast diagonal pass to the pushing RB.

RB
1\textsuperscript{st} shot
2\textsuperscript{nd} pass on to RW.

This turned out to be the standard move in the preliminaries with RUS. The crucial point is to force the support of any second defender. If the point will come back for tackle, BALIC will pass on to DUVNJAK (#5) and the effect will be almost the same with DUVNJAK moving towards throwing arm and outnumbering the defence in the very same way.

DEN used an almost identical concept against 5-1 formations.

CRO

Concept versus a ball-oriented 5-1 defence. PM goes for a crossing with the ball with LB. This move is supported by a pick&roll action of the LP. The crucial part is that the LB has to run very fast and the pass has to be perfect. In this case the LB will have three options:

LB
1\textsuperscript{st} breakthrough and shot
2\textsuperscript{nd} pass to the RW
3\textsuperscript{rd} pass to the rolling LP.

Even the French defence struggled sometimes in the final when confronted with this explosive move. The move is very effective due to the high speed but on the other hand this high speed execution might give some problems to the LB in terms of perfect decision making and technical faults. Offensive faults will occur every now and then because of the complexity of the tasks to be carried out with top speed.
This move was the most effective of the team RUS. And it was the only modern one with variations and decision making. FILIPPOV (#2) forced the point to give way because if not, then he would shoot by himself or pass to the LP, a move that they continued to the RW in some cases.

At the end of the day we can sum up all the observations to these core factors:

1. Greater variety in defence set-play than in the past. Some old hats have been brushed up and do look pretty attractive again.
2. Fast throw-off is an option for many teams but only for special use. ISL and SLO were the teams playing it as a basic conception; all the teams were able to do it every now and then.
3. The standard moves in offence set-play are very much alike across all the teams. The basic principle is to gain speed advantage by a first move and to use this advantage to outnumber the defence in a limited area.
4. In order to do this, team tactics have passed away, group tactical means 2-2 or 3-2 do play the crucial role. Teams clinging to team tactics still faced a severe setback.
5. Decision making is the decisive element for success within a predefined frame. The team playing faster on the same level of decision making or the team managing a higher level of decision making on the same level of speed will win the match.
6. The turnover play has improved so extremely that fast-break goals will result from steals or wrong passes as well as from saves with direct passes by the goalkeepers in the first place.
7. The offence-defence-switch of one or two specialists is still dominating; every team has one specialist at least.
8. There is no need for a 16 player line-up obviously. Controlling the time played of the players in the respective matches you will see that the coaches made use of not more than 14 players in general. Many coaches were pretty reluctant in terms of substitutions and continued playing with the starting 9 (7 + 2 specialists) most of the playing time.
Defence set-up

This set-up is very common for some years now.
A 5-1 with the LW playing point and the PM OL; the specialist does a single switch with the LP.
Sometimes there will be an additional switch with #15 (D) and #47 (O).

Very clear weak point in this defence on the position BR
Offence set-up

Standard 3-3 with two fixed positions (LP, RW) and two PM.
Frequent switch on the positions RB and LB.
LW was switched due to the defence work as a point.

Basic move vs 6-0
IVANOV (#77) passes to RB and moves on to 6m. RB feeds running LB for a fast shot over the LP from the very centre.
The shot can hardly be prevented since the move of the LB will be on 12-14 m. This move is played to either side.

Double-crossing vs 6-0
PM starts first crossing with RB who will pass the ball to the running LB immediately and continue with a long crossing move behind the LB.
Receiving the ball back he will head on for a shot over the LP from the “wrong side”. Played from either side.

Those moves worked well because the running lanes of the shooters are so far away from the goal (12-16m).
The problem was the total lack of any variation; the ultimate finishing is the shot of the striker, there is no alternative continuation.
In the end most of the defence teams did not even try to prevent the shot, they just worked on closing the target for the shot in cooperation with the goalkeeper. Therefore after 15 minutes approximately in every match the shooters started to crack under the pressure and their self confidence vanished thus leading to weak shooting and quite a number of fastbreak chances for the opponent teams.
The offence moves against 5-1 and in 6-5 were pretty effective. The difference is clearly that there are variations foreseen in the continuation. Besides, Filippov seemed to give more power and punch to his teammates than did Ivanov who played too schematic.

All in all team RUS was quite successful in offence play (ranked 5th in goals) but their defence as well as their turnover play could not match the requirements. Therefore they finished last in the MR in spite of a very good presentation of their goalkeepers (ranked 3rd in saves).

Besides all there was the impression that the coaching and the team did not fit together.
Defence set-up

The basic set-up was a traditional 6-0 with the PM in the position of OL and the LW in the position LH.

This was played defensively or with the HL and HR moving out to 10m, according to the situation and the play of the opponents team.

No switch in this set-up.
Although the systems seemed to be well trained, still the defence was the weak point of the play of SLO. As already mentioned before they allowed 50 shots on target per match and although the performance of their goalkeepers was the very best of all the teams this could not equalize this deficiency.

**Offence set-up**

Very aggressive 3-2-1 set-up that was played as the basic system vs. POL. In this case after 15 mins the complete block was switched and came back after 10 more mins.

In the other matches this set up was used for shorter periods only. Very well trained and played without switch as well, PM will be in the position LO as usual.

**Offence moves**

Basic move vs 6-0
After initial give & go move switch of direction against throwing arm and fst pass to LB pushing between #2 and #3.

Continuation
- Shot of LB
- Pass to LP
- Direct pass to LW

Standard 3-3 formation.
Very few substitutions on LW (due to an injury of the second LW) and LP.

Frequent variations on the other positions, partly because of the exhausting defence work, partly because of ineffective offensive set-play.
The offence of SLO was very effective. They played very fast and with good individual skills of the key players. On the other hand those kinds of fast play lead to a high number of early shots or technical faults.

So they did not succeed in the extra close games thus missing a ranking in the upper half of the table.
Defence set-up

Traditional 6-0 with single switch between the specialist and the LP. The PM will stand as OL and the LW will play BL.

If the switch should not be possible the LP will press away the PM of the offence in a 5+1.
The defence was the strong part of the play of team GER including the goalkeepers. They worked very physical and determined. ROGGISCH (#4) was beyond the tolerance sometimes and lucky not to see more red cards than he did. But with his fighting spirit and personal presentation he pulled the team up in any situation.

**Offence set-up**

Regular 3-3 set-up.

No substitution on the line, in the position LB only if both playmakers were on court.

It was obvious that options in terms of alternatives were absolutely limited.

**Offence moves**

Turntable vs 6-0

PM goes for crossing with the ball with LB but gives the ball to the LP coming up in a counter move.

LP passes to the pushing LB and moves on to the line between the two central defenders.

LB will fire the shot over the LP or pass on to the RB in his inside sweep.

Fast shot of the RB through the gap.

5+1 set-up vs CZE.

The LP plays pressing against JICHA (#9), the specialist will stand as BC of course.

Single switch with one of the main strikers according to the offence set-up.
The problem with those kinds of move was that most of them had just one finishing and the defence of the opponent would know the ultimate termination pretty soon. Therefore the efficiency of the offence of the team GER declined heavily in the MR due to observation and analysis by the other teams.

Parallel move LP + PM vs 6-0

PM gives the ball to the LP coming up in a counter move and continues with a crossing without the ball with the LB. LP passes to the pushing LB and moves on to the line between the defenders BR and IR. LB will pass on to the PM in his outside sweep.

Solutions:
- Fast shot of the PM through the gap
- Pass to LP
- Pass to LW if OR tackles

Transition of the LW vs 6-0

LW sweeps in with the ball flight. Parallel-thrusting of LB and PM. PM aims to fire the shot over the LW or through the gap.

Support move by the RB.

Transition of the PM vs 5-1

HAAß (#24) passes to RB and moves straight to 6m. The RB will sweep in with the ball thus forcing the point to tackle. With the BC covering the LP and BR taking care of the PM the lane is free for the LB for breakthrough after the diagonal pass.
The play 6-5 was the best part of the offence of the team GER. As mentioned already they suffered from problems of predictable play in the offence. Some of their key players were not in top shape and the team in total did not seem to be at top level for such a tough tournament. The defence was very good but the offence looked a lot like a “work in progress”.

**Crossing in 6-5**

Crossing with the ball PM – LB. Due to the position of the LP a number of continuations is possible.

**Solutions:**
- Shot by the LB
- Direct pass to either wing
- Pass to RB (and on to RW)
Defence set-up

Asymmetric 5-1

This was the starting set-up (5-10 mins.)

As soon as the single switch was deployed between #22 (specialist) and #14 (PM), the LP FÖLSER (#3) played BR and SCHLINGER (#21) moved to BL.

In case FRIEDE (#20) played LW, he and Schlinger would switch in defence.

This basic set-up was also played in a flip-flop version in the match with ISL when ZIURA (#5) pointed at the RB Stefansson.
The defence was the weaker part of the performance of team AUT in this tournament. They ranked on 10th in the makes only and on 11th in the GK percentage; that seems to indicate that the cooperation between GK and defence did not work well at all.

**Offence set-up**

The formation had a clear first seed. Due to the fact that the number of key players was limited a lot of substitutions were necessary in order not to overload them. Injuries and fitness of elder players had to be taken into account as well.

**Offence moves**

Breakthrough of the PM vs 6-0

With the starting pass of the LB the PM will push straight in order to fire a shot over the LP.

With the tackle or IR he will continue with a fast breakthrough against throwing arm. According to the reaction of the defenders he will go for the shot or play a short pass to the LP.
The host team was the biggest positive surprise of this event. They showed extreme fighting spirit and played fast throw-off whenever there was a chance to do so. Szilagy and Friede had outstanding appearances and they pulled up their teammates. By this the team was able to overcome the unexpected shaky performance of the goalkeeper and even the injury of top winger Wilczynski.

The final ranking means a smashing success to the host team and the young coach who did a fantastic job before and during the tournament.
Defence set-up

Traditional 6-0 with double switch.

PM and RB will switch with two specialists.

Very tall defence, playing rather close to 6m. Very few substitutions only.
Except for the catastrophic starter vs ESP the team played strict physical defence with high figures in terms of blocks and steals. Their goalkeepers were beyond average thus equalizing the high number of allowed shots on target (which is the result of the kind of close defence they play).

**Offence set-up**

A clear first seed structure with few substitutions only. The second PM will only play for a few minutes as well will the second LP. The same applies to the wing positions.

**Offence moves**

PM pick & roll vs 5-1 of FRA. The PM will fire a fast shot from this p&r move. Pretty successful in this match.
Free throw solutions

Based upon the individual skills of Jicha, CZE was extremely successful from free-throw situations in the main round.
The two most frequent moves do show that the set-up was picked according to the position of the free-throw. In any case Jicha will do a lay-away jump shot move.
The pass to the LP is an additional option only.

CZE due to their tactical discipline gained a maximum from their options.
Defence set-up

Basically a Swedish 6-0 with the central defenders going deep only and all the others covering the line.

Extension of the basic concept by going deep on non-ball side of BR / BL respectively in order to fight fast diagonal passes.

No switch.
Their set-defence was the even stronger part of a good presentation of this team. The weakest part was the turnover play (ranked 11th only).

**Offence set-up**

A strict basic set-up without any variations except in the RB position.

Very few substitutions, LOKE (5) plays LP only, in this case single switch with VATNE (3).

**Offence moves**

**Crossing with the ball vs 6-0**

PM starts crossing with the ball with LB who will continue with give & go with the RB.

Solutions:
- Shot from the centre over the LP
- Pass to the LP
- Continuation to PM and LP

**“Empty” crossing with the ball vs 6-0**

PM moves with the ball to RB position and plays a short g&g with the RW.

After receiving the ball back he will continue with direct pass to the LP or pass to the RB who has moved into the centre without ball.
NOR played a good tournament, Their performance was very solid and determined. They had some bad luck in their close matches with DEN, ISL and CRO. Those results proved that they are absolutely competitive at top level.
Defence set-up

Spanish 5-1

New designed 5-1 defence system with double switch. They play it with either the RW or the LW as point.

For more details please go to the section “General trends”
Fore checking by the team ESP with both wings.

The new defence strategy of the team ESP was the most interesting fact of the Championships from technical point of view. The strategy in the set defence is discussed in the “General trends” in detail; the forecheck play was the other thrilling new thing with this team. Both wings will do it in the areas shown above according to goalkeeper-throw or fast throw-off situation. After slowing down the offence significantly the wings will retire to their set play positions. One of them will play point the other one outside defender respectively.

Offence set-up

In the 3-3 system there was a lot of variations in the second row. 6 backcourt players shared the playing time, the set up was picked according to the play of the opponent and was very flexible.

In contrary there was little variation in the first row. RW and LP played almost 100%. The two LW played in a balance 5:2.

Offence moves

Crossing + diagonal pass vs 6-0

Crossing with the ball PM / RB, pass to LB on the inside sweep.

Shot by LB or pass to LP.
Crossing without the ball vs 6-0

PM passes the ball to LB and goes crossing without the ball PM / RB, LB will pass to RB on the inside sweep.

Shot by RB.

Crossing without the ball vs 6-0 + 1-1 by PM

PM passes the ball to RB and goes crossing without the ball PM / LB, RB will pass to LB on the inside sweep.

Shot by LB or pass on to the PM who will start a 1-1 action for breakthrough or pass to the moving LP.

Long double crossing vs 6-0

“Empty” crossing of PM / LB. The LB continues to cross with RB in a long run, RB sweeps inside with the ball.

Solutions:
- Pass to LP by RB
- Pass to pushing PM – shot
- Continuation by PM to moving LP.
The Spanish team was very positive in this event. They had just one bad match that kept them away from the semis. Due to the very creative defence strategy and the number of variations that they have available in the offence play they might go to a bright future. Given the shooting abilities of their strikers and the chance to improve remarkably in the GK position they seem to be on the way up to the very top.

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Transition of LW vs 6-0

With the pass PM – LB the LW rushes in against ball flight.

LP and LB do a pick & roll with shot by LB or LP according to the situation.

If the additional defender IR comes supporting, LB passes on to the PM who will fire a fast shot through the gap in the centre.

Play 6-5.

Wide crossing with the ball by PM and LB. Support move by RB.

Long diagonal pass to either one of the wings.

This move was extra well rehearsed and was the most effective of all the 6-5 moves of the tournament.
Defence set-up

- Swedish 6-0 with double switch of two specialists.
- One switch is fixed, the other specialist switches according to the offence set-up.
- Very experienced and clever defence with extraordinary anticipation abilities.
- 3rd lowest number of makes after FRA and CRO.

Additionally to the good performance in the set defence they had the best turnover play of all the teams (2 shots from fastbreak only per match).
Offence set-up

Regular 3-3 with frequent substitutions as usual with Danish teams.

Although the RB had to run back diagonally for his defence position (BL) no negative effect of this could be noticed.

The position RB was covered by righthanded players in the first place.

Offence moves

Basic move vs 6-0 – Crossing without the ball.

The PM will play the ball to the RB and go for a cross move without the ball with the LB who comes pushing hard to the centre aiming to fire a fast shot after the pass by the RB. If this is prevented by the defence – pass on to the PM.

- direct shot over the LP
- inside move and shot through the gap
- pass to the LP or direct to the LW

Transition of the LW + give & go LB / PM vs 5-1

With the transition of the LW the LB will pass the ball to the PM.

The PM pushes hard towards throwing arm side to pull away the point. With this the LB moves straight to the gap and receives the ball for a fast shot. If the BR tackles – continuation with a pass to the LP.
As you can see there is no shirt numbers represented in the graphics. The reason is that the Danish team will play the identical moves regardless of the different players in the respective positions. This might be seen as an advantage for the flow of the game but on the other hand it makes the offence play pretty much predictable. This lack of surprising creative actions most probably kept the team from going to the semis like they did four times straight in the past.

Diagonal pass vs 5-1

With both backcourt players starting from the sideline almost the LB fires a fast diagonal pass to the RB. The PM catches the attention of the point.

The righthanded RB goes for breakthrough; if tackled he will continue with the pass to LP or RW according to the situation.
The defence performance of the Polish team was just average in all the figures, in the turnover play lousy even. This was all equalized by the stunning performance of their goalkeeper SMAL (#1) holding them on track in all their close matches.

Defence set-up

Traditional 6-0 with single switch for the LP.

Average performance of this very physical defence, bad turnover play.
No substitution in the position of the LP, all the other positions were covered by two players at least.

Few shots from the wings, good play at the line.

From the backcourt Jurecki and K. Lijewski were clearly more effective than their partners.

Transition of the PM vs 6-0.

Short crossing with the ball PM / LB with shot of the LB.

Continuation: The PM moves on to the line diagonally following the pass LB – RB.

Solutions:
- Shot of the RB from inside or outside move
- Pass to either one of the two players at the line.

Transition of the PM vs 5-1

After the pass to the LB the PM zigzags for the line, crossing with the LP without the ball.

Since the LP pulls the attention of the defence the PM is free for the pass by the pushing LB.
The Polish team made it to the semis due to their high tactical discipline, their fighting spirit and the outstanding performance of their coach and their goalkeeper in the first place.

The young backcourt players showed enormous potential which might be a promise for the future.

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**Transition of the PM vs 3-2-1**

After the pass to the RB the PM just moves straight for the line. The LP moves away from the BC thus offering two options for the pass to the line. Support move of LB necessary.

**Long double crossing vs 6-0**

The PM gives the ball to the RB and moves left for a crossing with the LB without the ball. The LB moves on in a long move crossing behind the RB who sweeps inside with the ball. This outnumbers the defence 3-2 and offers three different solutions for the final shot.
Defence set-up

ISL moved away from Swedish 6-0. They had two specialists strictly closing all the central area (#17 and #5). The RW (#15) played BR and went deep. So did the BL as well.

This gave a very compact close defence together with the good anticipation of #7 and #15 this system was very effective.

Double switch for PM and LP.

The defence worked quite well as long as all the players were at their physical level necessary for it. In the last 5-10 minutes of almost every game problem occurred because of the exhausting offensive style of play.
Offence set-up

Very few substitutions.
PM and LP do play offence only, but for the others the style of play means quite a high load in terms of athletics.
A very good line-up putting high pressure on the defence from every position.

Offence moves

Turntable system vs 6-0
The PM gives the ball to the LP coming up in a counter move and fakes screening for the LB.
The LP passes on to the RB and moves to the line.
As soon as the RB starts pushing, the LP moves back to his starting position behind the defenders which is supported by the counter move of the PM.
The LB sweeps inside without the ball.
At the end of the move we have more or less a 4-2 situation in the centre.

Basic move vs 6-0 – Crossing + transition
Simple crossing with the ball PM / RB and transition of the PM to the line.
With the inside sweep of the two remaining backcourt players threat emerges from every position.
ISL played a brilliant tournament with just one loss vs FRA in the semifinal. They were the most offensively oriented team, going for the fast throw-off constantly. They scored the highest number of goals and they had the highest speed of all the teams over 60 minutes.

They came up with a new style of the 6-0 defence and their offence moves are absolutely state of the art.

Time will show how they will manage to substitute some of their key players because they will have to do so in quite near future.
Defence set-up

**Standard 5-1**
Main defence system with the point closing the central area between 7 and 11 m and the specialist covering all the spaces at the line at least 3 m left and right from the middle.

Single switch with the PM.

Extremely effective and compact in the centre. Sometimes extension to 3-2-1.
Dr. W. Pollany – April 2010

Surprise – the defence was the jewel of the Croatian team. They allowed the fewest shots on target, they had the second lowest figure in makes and they were the third best team in the turnover play.

**Offence set-up**

Like all the other successful teams very few substitutions.

BALIC (#4) and DUVNJAK (#5) switched between PM and LB, BUNTIC (#21) was the standard RB, no switch on the position LP of course.

**Offence moves**

4-2 vs 6-0 – PM running

The PM goes for the line. With the LB with the ball he starts running in a semicircular move on 9-10m. Receiving the ball from the LB he continues the move with the ball and plays kind of a crossing move with the RB. RB shoots over the LP.
Special situations

This will present the standard move in 6-5 and moves in 7-6 as well as in 5+1-6. The Croatian team was the one and only team to manage the 7-6 and the 5+1-6 situation with remarkable results.

Diagonal pass vs 5+1 (AUT) or 5-1 (RUS)

Balic takes the position LB and starts a 1-1 move against the BR. By this he forces the BC to support and the BL to take care of the LP. Therefore there is huge space for the breakthrough of the RB with the diagonal pass.

Long fast run of the LB vs 5-1

The PM moves against throwing arm side with the ball. The LP comes up for a fake pick & roll move. The pass to the running LB is delayed and with the ball the LB pushes hard between OL and BL. Termination according to the situation.

Play 6-5 – crossing PM / LB

Parallel move of PM and LP. The crossing LB receives the ball and pushes towards the goal. Solutions:
- breakthrough of LB
- pass on to the RB
- continuation to RW
The offence play of CRO was strong as usual but it must be stated that their silver medal was based upon great defence work. On the other hand they were the only team that really seemed to have a concept for the situation with an additional court player. And more than ever they keep the offence play simple stupid and thus effective.

It was funny to watch how Lino Cerva was able to maintain a reasonable level of tactical discipline and teamwork in that bunch of individualists. It will be very interesting to monitor the future development without Lino.

Play 7-6 or 5+1 - 6

In a set-up with two LPs Balic will take the position RB with the ball and start a 1-1 action against throwing arm side.

With this the IL is forced to tackle and the lane is free for the PM in the centre.

In the 6-6 situation Balic will do exactly the same, forcing two defenders to take care of him.
Defence set-up

The well known 5-1 system is the one and only defence set-up. This system has been developed further and improved in terms of variability (see “General trends”).

As usual DINART (#3) goes for a single switch.

B. GILLE (#6) was injured and only played shortly. When he is fit, he will be first pick in the point position.

The French 5-1 is still top state of the art. They had the 3rd fewest allowed shots and in combination with a goalkeeper’s performance beyond average it made them best team in terms of makes.
Offence set-up

The variations in this 3-3 set-up do not come from substitution but from the switch of the positions between the three key backcourt players.

The second player in all the first row positions is a “back up” in the first place.

Few substitutions like in the teams of CRO, ISL, NOR, ESP, CZE and AUT.

Offence moves

Basic move vs 6-0 in two phases (see „General trends“)

The first phase is a simple crossing without the ball PM / LB and a fast shot through the gap. If this does not work – restart with phase 2.

Phase 2 consists of 1-1 actions with continuation (parallel thrust) on to the RW if necessary.

Short sweep in of the LW vs 6-0

Parallel thrust LW / LB with screen on the defender IR.

Shot by LB through the gap or pass to the LP

Short pass LW – LP is possible also.

Sometimes applied vs a 5-1 defence as well.
The French team played, as already mentioned, with a mix out of most simple 1-1, 2-2 or 3-3 actions all based upon the capacity of their players to execute perfect decision making.

This kind of strategy of course does take some time to come into full effect but as soon as the machine starts really going it is almost impossible to stop it.

Therefore the preliminaries are always difficult for the team of France because the system takes some time to run smoothly. Usually they manage to overcome this starting problem by their defence work and the performance of OMEYER (#16) and after that they will never look back.

Looking at the coaching style you will notice that there are only few substitutions in order to give the players a chance to stabilize themselves and the system as a whole.

The longer the tournament ran the more stable the overall performance became and the final triumph was just the logic climax of the development.

At the end of the day this EHF EURO 2010 showed a lot of motion in the area of men handball. ISL succeeded due to offence power and a new defence system, ESP created a complete new strategy in defence overall, the big three FRA, CRO and DEN are still going strong but the big disappointers RUS, GER and SWE will fight back for sure.

All is set for a very thrilling development in the near future.