Qualitative Analysis
Part 1. Basic Statements

A, B) Basic Data, Table of Results

Men's U18 EHF championship took place in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi.

In the beginning hosts intended to arrange the tournament in the city of Telavi which is situated 90 kilometers to the east of Tbilisi and is the center of one of the main tourist regions, Kakheti. In spring 2018 new, modern Sports Palace was almost ready but the customer and the performer could not agree about installation of a wooden floor and the organizers were forced to move the competition to the usual place - Olympic Palace of Tbilisi. The venue was built in 2015 especially for handball and fourth year in row it is the arena for youth World and European Championships. The Olympic Palace meets all modern standards while the stuff of Georgian National Handball Federation has a lot of international experience and for this reason the tournament was held at a high organizational level.

There was a playing hall with 3000 spectators and two halls for practice – one in the same building and second nearby, in Sportcomplex Arena which is under the management of Georgian National Handball Federation. The only flaw of the tournament was lack of audience (there would be more spectators in Telavi), because the venue is not located in a tightly populated area of the city. At the final and on the matches of the host team of the tournament there were some 700 spectators.

Replacement of the city was the reason of forced search for new hotels and Georgian Federation has suffered financial losses, but the problem was solved and due number of quality hotel rooms were found. These hotels were located no more than 35 minutes drive from the main venue. As for EHF officials, they lived in the historic centre of the city, in hotel Mercure. The organizers offered participant teams special excursions, and all of them took advantage of this opportunity.

Despite lack of audience, the tournament has big number of viewers as all 35 matches were streamed at several platformes and at the end of the day Championship had 150 000 viewers. The official website of the tournament had an amazing number of visits: over 1 000 000 from 25 000 visitors, and that was beyond expectations.
## Men’s 18 EHF Championship 2018
### FINAL ROUND

### OFFICIAL RESULT BULLETIN

#### PRELIMINARY ROUND

#### GROUP A

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#### STANDINGS GROUP A

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4. FAR 146:135 11.4
5. EST 112:142 -30.2
6. LTU 121:162 -41.0

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## Semifinals and Cross matches

### Cross Matches 9-11

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## Finals and Placement matches

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## Ranking

1. ITA Italy
2. BLR Belarus
3. SUI Switzerland
4. MKD FYR Macedonia
5. FAR Faroe Islands
6. LUX Luxembourg
7. GEO Georgia
8. FIN Finland
9. EST Estonia
10. GRE Greece
11. LTU Lithuania
Part 2. General Trends

C) Attack General Systems 6:6, 6:5, 5:6, Fast Break

Almost all teams used the method of Team Fast Breaks and Fast Throw Offs. Most of them did not have enough experience and on this they made tactical mistakes during a quick game. Players could not make a quick decision and this was the reason of Technical Faults: Steps, Double Dribbles, Attacking Fouls and etc. One could notice all these problems when watching games of Estonia, Lithuania, Greece, Faroe Islands and Georgia. In this issue Italy, Belarus, Switzerland and FYR Macedonia were better. There were 10-15 mistakes per game committed because of wrong fast decisions.

Attack 6:6

There were a few teams who used special combinations for far throwing during positional attacks. The only outstanding team was Belarus. The rest followed long attacks trying to create numerical advantage on wings or breaking trough between first and second defenders. In the same time almost every team had one or two players standing out high class. They took the initiative and achieved the goal due to individual skills. Backcourt players were weakly connected with Pivots. The only exception was the team of Georgia which was highly dependent on a pivot and often their first choice was exactly a pivot.

Attack 6:5

During attack when using an "extra player" most of teams used to play with two Pivots. It was either second nominal pivot or Backcourt player who acted as second pivot. In most cases, the attack was started by a Central Back, who passed to the Left Back and took the position at the 6m line among the third and fourth defenders himself. The main Pivot stood between first and second defenders. Then the left back began to operate, trying to create a attacking situation for the right back, which had two options: breacking through between the fourth and fifth defenders or passing right to the Winger who was standing uncovered.

There was one more option in situations called 6:5 – to play ball with pivots who were standing between defenders 1-2 and 3-4.
**Attack 5:6**

In such situations, almost all teams replaced Goalkeepers and brought to the court the sixth attacking player. In these case the pivot of the attacking team changed position to the side of substitution area, playing cross-passing with a Backcourt player and held a position on side of substitution zone. The attack to the centre was started by a Back or Wing standing at the side of substitution zone who then left the court for the replacement with Goalkeeper. Thus the attacking team created situations 3-3 or 4-4 on opposite side of court. This scheme was well practiced by Belarus, FYR Macedonia and Switzerland but Estonia, Luxembourg and Faroe Islands conceded many goals from long distances after losing the ball.

**Fast Breaks**

It was not difficult to notice, that the players got tired at the end of matches. The reason was their age. Especially it was obvious in the final days of the competition. Every team tried to have Fast Break attacks, but couldn't do it during whole match because of tiredness. In this aspect we can pick out the team of FYR Macedonia with fast and hardy wingers.

**D) Defence Basic Systems and Alternatives: 6:6, 6:5, 5:6**

The main system used by participants was 6-0. Going into defence most teams used to substitute at least one player putting on the field more skilled defender.

Teams used active versions of 6-0. For example Centre Defenders of Macedonia and Switzerland went up to the 9-meter line. Italian version of 6-0 was more like playing for blocking long shots and doing it with the cooperation with Goalkeeper - distribution of shot directions.

Teams rarely used tacticks of personal defence against best players of the opponent. However, there have been such cases.

The only team that used the system 3-3, acting 10-12 meters from the goal, was Belarus. Using active defence they often had an advantage of organizing fast counterattacks.

Some teams occasionally used system 5-1 (FYR Macedonia). We have to mention the system 4-2 which was used by Greece in the game against Georgia. Thanks to this tactics Greeks created serious problems for Georgian side.

**Defence 6:6**

In this matter we should line out Italy and Switzerland who played best defensive game at the championship. They blocked good percentage of opponent's long shots. These teams closed the
central zone very well with a good cooperation with Goalkeepers and as a result, opponents often have been losing the ball or made attacking fouls.

**Defence 6:5**

This was a very rare situation because all the teams used the tactics of goalkeeper’s substitution and adding the sixth attacking player. Thus, moments when a team attacked with five players against six, was a rarity. But when such a situation occurred, the defensive team immediately began to cover the leader of the opponent personally. At the same time, they tried to block the wings.

**Defence 5:6**

In these case we have to outline four best teams of the tournament: Italy, Belarus, Switzerland and FYR Macedonia. They tried to close the central zone as well as possible and using a pressing of Wingers against rival Backs forced them to make a long pass towards his Winger of shot from long and hard position.

**Return to Defence**

Here the age of the participants turned out to be important, mainly at the end of the tournament. Teams became more and more tired, the number of mistakes in attack increased and players couldn't to return in defence in time. In this aspect the best team was Italy, who conceded the least number of goals from Fast Breaks.

**E) Goalkeepers Performance**

The speed and power of throwing increased even in this age, thus goalkeepers are in trouble to keep the goal in safe when opponent is throwing from 9 meters, unexpectedly and often from the first movement. For the most part, this concerns throws from positions of the Left and Right Back when there is only one defender in front of the thrower.

We think that the number of saves from far distance throws deeply depends on good defence and collaboration between goalkeeper and defenders. As for Near Shots (from a wing, 6 meters, or one on one situations) goalkeepers sometimes looked better.

We want to mention a work of some stuffs (Switzerland, Italy, FYR Macedonia) during the match time – they conducted statistics and supplied their Goalkeepers with datas during the game.

Young goalkeepers were inexperienced and lacked stability. In our opinion, best goalkeepers were Andrea Colleluori (Italy) and Uladzislau Sukala (Belarus). In several matches the goalkeeper of Switzerland Nicola Damann stood out. Throughout the tournament there were other good goalkeeping performances as well.
F) Finding, Evaluation of the First 4 Teams

Italy

The Team of Italy was the most motivated at the championship. It was easy to notice good teamwork and good mutual understanding between the players.

We have a complete statistics of only three last Matchdays at our disposal but it is quite enough to demonstrate why Italians became the champions.

Firstly, they won thanks to the best defence. The team conceded 129 goals in 6 games – 21.5 per match and that is a very good result. Italians had been closing central zone very effectively (21 blockshots in the last 3 games) and cut 11 attacks of rival teams. On both indicators Italy was much better in comparison with three other opponents. We can also judge about their defence by number of suspensions: only 5 2-minutes suspension during last 3, the most important games.

As for attack, the team of Italy was the most diverse. In last 3 matches they scored 87 goals and 23 of them was from long shots; 14 from Breakthroughs, 10 from 7m penalties, 11 were Line shots, 13 – Wing shots, 12 from Fastbreaks and 4 in empty goal. No other team had such a balance.

The team had two leaders, Mengons Brothers who were leading in attack as well as in defence and took initiative in most difficult and complicated moments of the games.

In General the team played defensively very well, not very active but collectively, having good collaboration with a goalkeeper. The Italians had physically strong wings, especially the right winger Max Prantner, who was not tall, but was also used as the right back.

Summing up, we can say that the team was competitive, motivated and disciplined, who had a big stuff with high quality.
ITALY: Cumulative Statistics of Last 3 Matches

vs BLR 27-22 (Group B, 16 Aug), vs SUI 29-23 (SF, 18 Aug), vs BLR 31-26 (Final, 19 Aug)

MP: Matches Played, TOT: Total shots, 9m: 9m shots, 7m: 7m shots, 6m: Line shots, W: Wing shots, BT: Breakthroughs, FB: Fast Breaks, E: Empty net shots; - Positive Actions - A: Assists, +: Earned 7m penalties and 2 min Suspentions; BS: Blocked shots, St: Steals – Negative Actions - TF: Technical faults, 7: Commited 7m penalties; Y: Yellow cards, 2m: 2 min suspensions, RC: Direct red cards

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<tr>
<td>25</td>
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TOTAL 87/144 | 23/51 | 10/14 | 11/13 | 13/19 | 14/25 | 12/16 | 4/6 | 15 | 18 | 21 | 11 | 32 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 1

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Received to empty goal (goals/shots): 1/2
Belarus

At the Men's U18 EHF championship Belarus played the most distinguished game in attack as well as in defence. In Defence they played aggressively, often with 3-3 formation, standing up to 10-12 meters from their goal. Belarusian players were also good individually at one on one situations.

In the attack Belarus played a combination game to free their tall Backcourt players for throw-ready positions. Shortly before the tournament in Tbilisi this team successfully participated in FYR Macedonia at U20 EHF Championship and lost only the final match.

Summing up we may say that Belarus was the most mature and well-established team of the championship but Belarusians had one serious drawback - in attack the team was strongly depended on Backcourt players and Long shots: 44 9m goals from overall 80 in last 3 matches.

**BEIRUS**: Cumulative Statistics of Last 3 Matches

<p>| vs ITA 22-27 (Group B, 16 Aug), vs MKD 32-30 (SF, 18 Aug), vs ITA 26-21 (Final, 19 Aug) |</p>
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**Goalkeepers**

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<td>13/39</td>
<td>6/17</td>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>5/15</td>
<td>8/22</td>
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Received to empty goal (goals/shots): 2/2
Switzerland

One of the most disciplined and accomplished teams was Switzerland. Swiss didn’t have a obvious leader and they worked as a unit. Statistics proved that – goals scored by this team were almost equally distributed on all 14 court players.

Switzerland played a good 6:0 defense, being aggressive and collected into the 9-meter area. They often used a method of blocking that was well coordinated with the Goalkeeper.

The team was physically strong, using 7:6 scheme in attack well. During the positional attack, the team worked well both collectively and individually.

**SWITZERLAND: Cumulative Statistics of Last 3 Matches**

vs FAR 29-26 (Group A, 16 Aug), vs ITA 23-29 (SF, 18 Aug), vs MKD 35-31 (3-4 places, 19 Aug)

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<td>Bouilloux</td>
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<td>Voskamp</td>
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<td>Hofer</td>
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<td>Markovic</td>
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**Bench**

TOTAL | 87/134 | 14/30 | 7/8 | 20/26 | 20/32 | 13/18 | 11/16 | 2/3 | 14 | 9 | 12 | 9 | 31 | 1 | 6 | 13 | 1

**Goalkeepers**

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<td>0/1</td>
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</table>

**Bench**

TOTAL | 32/110 | 19/42 | 2/12 | 3/17 | 5/23 | 1/11 | 1/5

Received to empty goal (goals/shots): 8/12
FYR Macedonia

FYR Macedonia had a very good, competitive team. Defensively it played using 6-0 tactics tightly closing central zone. Second defenders played aggressively one on one, even out of 9 meters area. They rarely used blocking system in defence, mostly tried to cut a passing game of an opponent. Then they tried to arrange a fast counter-attack.

The most notable player was FYR Macedonia’s Right Wing Nenad Kosteski. In attack the team tried to score mostly based on individual and physical skills than collectively. We would like to point out also the Right Back Martin Serafimov, who was a high class player.

The team often tried to finish an attack from the right wing an used this combination very well.

**FYR Macedonia:** Cumulative Statistics of Last 3 Matches

vs EST 26-22 (Group A, 16 Aug), vs BLR 30-32 (SF, 18 Aug), vs SUI 31-35 (3-4 places, 19 Aug)

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**Goalkeepers:**

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<td>5/20</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>4/8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Received to empty goal (goals/shots): 4/4
G) New elements in Defence and attack

We didn't notice some new elements in defensive play. One can only say that the sistem 3-3 used by Belarus was forgotten for a while and thus we can call it something new.

In attack we noticed high level of individual technique of players especially among the members of first four teams. We can also say that teams of Luxembourg and Finland in some games also showed a good handball mostly thanks to individual skills of some players.

We ought to mention tendention of Swiss to create numerical advantage and play 7-6 tactics in attack which means that this tactical novelty of last years is also established among YAC teams.

H) Special Players

Samuel Zehnder, LW, Switzerland – He was notable for physical strength, high percentage of scored goals from his wing, sometimes was helpfull for the teammates from the position of backcourt player, was one of the bests during Fast Breaks and was good defensively where he sometimes held a position of the first and mostly of second defender.

Nenad Kosteski, RW, FYR Macedonia – Players of FYR Macedonia team tried to transfer the attack to the right wing because Kosteski has good individual techniques and was distinguished with high percentage of scored goals. He was one of the best when his team has been breaking through and he was one of the best in the interception of passes.

Mengon Twins, LB/CB, Italy – These two players of Montpellier HB played a big part in their team's success. They were the best among Italian players both in attack and in defence. Both were capable to settle the game of their team and lead it when necessary. They were good throwers both in high jump and in run. They also have been arranging effective, powerful breakthroughs. For Backcourt players Marco and Simone Mengons are not tall (about 190 cm), but it did not prevent them to be one of the best players of the tournament.

Mikita Chyzhyk, CB, Belarus, MVP – We may say that the team of Belarus depended on this gifted player especially in attack. He distributed the attacks of his team very cleverly, rationally and diversely and throwing himself well. We want to stress that Chyzhyk used both hands almost equally and he can use that quality well in future.
Giorgi Tskhovrebadze, RB, Georgia – He is a very talented player and European handball circles are long time interested in him. Since 2017 he is under contract with Montpellier HB. Tskhovrebadze is physically strong, jumps high and throws variously.

I) Players for the future

In this part, we will allow ourselves to name two players of the Georgian team because we know the players of the Georgian side better.

George Lapiashvili, Pv, Georgia – He is a physically strong competitive pivot, well disciplined and with good basic skills. He also plays well in defence.

Nikoloz Kalandaze, CB, Georgia – He is 16 years old, and he was the youngest player not only of the Georgian team, but of the entire tournament. In some matches he played really well. Usually he is a central back but for the interest of the team played as Left Back. Kalandaze is tall enough – 196 cm, very smart, good thrower. After two years, when he will play among his peers he can became one of the distinguished players of the EHF U20 championship.

J) Summary

In general, the tournament left a good impression. Teams were quite equal. Of course the first four stood out, but at the group stage they had tough games against teams who ranked 5-8 in the end. These teams were Luxembourg, the Faroe Islands and Georgia who beat even Belarus with an impressive score of 32:24. There were many tough games. One match of play-off stage was decided by penalty shootouts.

The tournament had a worthy winner - the Italian team. In two years, the Italians can play successfully in U20 EHF Championship. We believe that the remaining three teams of the Final Four - Belarus, Switzerland and FYR Macedonia could play well in 2018 M18 Euro.

The tournament in Tbilisi showed that handball in Europe is developing rapidly. The game becomes fast, and young players have a growing basic technique and game intelligence.

K) Trend of the Future

As a result of our observation recently in Europe, many young players of age 19-20-21 are ready to play for Senior teams both at a Club and National level.

We think that the main trend of the future is rejuvenation. Players are improving more and more at a young age and their level is growing every year. We think that several distinguished players of the tournament in Tbilisi will soon play at a professional level.