Men's 20 EHF Championship in Montenegro

1. General

The European Handball Federation (EHF) organized in the last few years the participate countries (38 all together) in 3 groups. In the end of July three tournaments were played: in Slovenia Euro championship with 16 and two EURO tournaments (MNE and MKD) with 11 teams. The aim is to give possibility to developed players via international competition to bigger amount of countries. The purpose is to strengthen handball on all levels (possibilities also “small” handball countries in competitions and tournaments; at the same time is also possibility to developed knowledge and experience of handball officials).

All three tournaments were played at the same time, between 20 and 29 July 2018.

The teams in MNE (and in MKD) played 35 games during the tournament. In MKD and MNE the last European competitions for this age group were held, who did not qualify for the Junior World Championship in 2019.

Five couple EHF referees and 6 EHF delegates participated in Podgorica. They did their job very well, as well as all other officials and EHF representatives. The tournament in Montenegro was organized at a high level, with excellent accommodations for teams and officials. Also professional organization and warm hospitality of MNE handball federation is necessary to mentioned.
Photo 1: VERDE complex: Relatively new and modern, the complex has a big hall with the seating capacity of 2100+, surface area of 5000m2 and a multifunctional court of 1680m2. Besides that „Verde“ offers luxury accommodations, an indoor pool, wellness&SPA, a gym, restaurant etc. so the participants will have all the best possible conditions during their stay.

The Czech Republic dominated in the tournament, especially with excellent defence play.

1. Final Results and Official Data

**Final Ranking**
1 Czech Republic
2 Austria
3 Montenegro
4 Latvia
5 Netherlands
6 Turkey
7 Kosovo
8 Slovakia
9 Bulgaria
10 Moldova
11 Georgia

**Top scorer:**
1. Moldova’s Roman Dodica, ( RW , RB , left h.) won the best goal scorer award in Podgorica with 64 goals, ahead of left back Doruk Pehlivan (TUR) on 60, and Kristian Vasilev (BUL) on 58.

There were many talented players and outstanding individuals in some teams. With common methodology – teams (officials / ?coaches?) voted for the “All star team”: **All Star Team**
Best Goalkeeper: Yannik PELZ (AUT)
Best Left Wing: Ondrej SKALICKY (CZE)
Best Left Back: Doruk BEHLIVAN (TUR)
Best Playmaker: Vasilije KALUDJEROVIC (MNE)
Best Pivot: Tim CLAESSENS (NED)
Best Right Back: Drenit TAHIRUKAJ (KOS)
Best Right Wing: Roman DODICA (MDA)
Top-Scorer: Roman DODICA (MDA)
Best Defensive Player: Jiri DOKOUPIIL (CZE)

**MVP:** Ivar STAVAST (NED)

**RESULTS – FINAL DAY**

Sunday 29 July
Final: Czech Republic vs Austria 27:17 (14:7)
3/4 Placement Match/Bronze: Montenegro vs Latvia 29:23 (12:11)
5/6 Placement Match: Turkey vs Netherlands 31:36 (15:15)
7/8 Placement Match: Kosovo vs Slovakia 27:26 (15:12)
9/10 Placement Match: Bulgaria vs Moldova 35:34 (16:16)

The overview of the all three tournaments ranking is very interesting – to have overview of all teams in Europe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U SLO</th>
<th>EURO U 20 Montenegro</th>
<th>EURO U 20 Macedonia</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Slovenia</td>
<td>1. Czech Republic</td>
<td>1. Fyр Macedonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. France</td>
<td>2. Austria</td>
<td>2. Belarus</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Spain</td>
<td>5. Netherlands</td>
<td>5. Ukraine</td>
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<td>8. Serbia</td>
<td>8. Slovakia</td>
<td>8. Italy</td>
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<td>10. Sweden</td>
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<td>10. Finland</td>
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<td>12. Denmark</td>
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<td>13. Israel</td>
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<td>14. Romania</td>
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<td>15. Russia</td>
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<td>16. Poland</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1 Some other results – after preliminary round:
Table 1: Results of preliminary round (Eurohandball.com) are really interesting, because it is so obvious that group A was h
stronger. (1 and 2. Place and 5. th for NDL – all from group A)

1.1.2 Placement matches

In this chapter we used and combined some reports from official the site (http://www.ehfu20montenegro.me/rukomet/site_cg/public/index.php/statistika/news ) with some personal remarks.

1st PLACE _ FINAL MATCH

29.07. 19:00 35 CZE:AUT 27:17 (14 : 7 )

The CZE team dominated through the whole tournament, especially in the defence phase (and with excellent goalkeepers), their win in the final match was expected (they received only 7 goals in the first, and 10 in the second half). Nejdl and Kristek were the most efficient Czech players with 4 goals each, and Skalicky, Klima, Patzel and Piroch finished the match with 3 goals each.

The AUT team defence was also good -: they combined 6: 0 and 3.2.1. defence; but in the final match they weren’t effective enough in ofence / against the excellent defence play from CZE.

3th PLACE: BRONZE MEDAL

29.07. 17:00 34 MNE:LAT 29:23 (12 : 11)
The game was undecided for 40 minutes when Latvia was just three goals behind. Montenegrins then made a 6:2 run which enabled the safe finish.

5th PLACE:

29.07. 15:00 33 TUR:NED 31:36 (15 : 15)

At the 5th place came the NDL team (that maybe have the biggest potential for the future); but the team from TURKEY played excellent as well.

Both teams preformed really good handball; it worth mentioning that either team could also probably play for the 1. position. Especially the NDL team proved to be one of the best teams at the championship with many players for the future.”

As for the match, it was open the whole time and could’ve gone either way, until the 55th minute, when the Dutch made a 6:1 run which decided the match.

NDL: Really nice team, with very promising players. They have a good structure, different types of backs, a very tall pivot player, and many excellent wings on both sides; good shooter (Florent and Niels have lead the Dutch with 9 goals scored each in the last match.) . NDL demonstrated excellent variations of defence with a high player (left handed no 5 – Verstejinen Niels) on the position 1.

![Photo 2: Team spirit (NDL)](image)

The TUR Team, with a good playing system, especially in the defence (5: 1 or 6:0). In general, one outstanding player holds special value for TUR, the left back, Doruk Pehlivan, who was a candidate for the MVP during the whole tournament. He is an extremely efficient scorer, and also possesses many other competences; he is also excellent in whole phases of the match, really good in assisting other players (wings, pivot players).

7th PLACE KOSOVO WINS THE DRAMA FOR THE 7th PLACE

29.07. 13:00 32 KOS: SVK 27:26 (15 : 12)
The match for the 7th place was also played on a high level and was one of the most dramatic matches of the championship. The match ended with one goal difference: Kosovo won, thus securing the seventh place. Tahirukaj (8 goals) and Muqolli (6 goals) were the best scorers for Kosovo and Recicar and Bystricky were the most efficient in the SVK team with 6 goals scored each.

Photo 3: team Slovakia

9th PLACE for BULGARIA; LAST TEN MINUTES FATAL FOR MOLDOVA

29.07. 11:00 31 BUL:MDA 35:34 (16 : 16)

The BUL team won the battle for the 9th place against Moldova although they had a negative result for almost fifty minutes.

It was typical that each team has one outstanding player. Bulgaria’s Kristian Vasilev (middle back) scoring 10 (10/14) and Roman Dodica at the MDA side, stopped at 12 goals out of 19 shots in total.

1. 2. Best team

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czechs dominated through the whole tournament especially in the defence phase (and with excellent goalkeepers); they achieved four victories (they lost only against AUT). In the final game they presented their strength in the defence phase (6:0 mostly with very good cooperation of all defenders). Also an important team quality is their variety of players at similarly high level.
AUSTRIA

The AUT team: they combined 6: 0 and 3.2.1. defence. The defence was played in a modern way and concluded with good goalkeepers’ performances through the tournament (f.e. no12). The middle back Glatzl Fabian is truly a very good playmaker, through him the AUT attack was organized and prepared very well. A good defence player worth mentioning is the no 10 – as center- half in 3: 2: 1 defence.

MONTENEGRO

MNE: A team with many good players, first of all the left handed Brank Vujović (who was not at his highest level here – from my point of view /- it might be maybe more optimal, in this time, to have a different type of playmaker. I have found that Kaludjerović, who is without doubt an excellent player, would maybe be more suited for the left back position ( from my point of view he is too oriented on scoring (and not on organizing the team in attack) for the playmaker position). Excellent performance of the goalkeepers (especially Matovic), and all wings is to be mentioned as well. Aleksandar Bakić (no 4) presented a good defence in 5:1 or 3.2.1 position, with excellent foot work and anticipation at the same time.

LATVIA

LTV: Latvia played some interesting handball; in a little bit different way from the others. It is worth mentioning the excellent attack tactics, which were based on the many crossings and movement rhythms changes ( tempo”-speed changes), mostly lead by a very interesting player- the left hander on the play maker position (Nikita Pančenko), but also other interesting players (PP . no 77; left back no 19 , right back (no 5), and the wings as well). The LTV team didn’t use many different players in attack (mostly
the first 7 players (and one defence specialist), the on other hand, they had many different defence systems (6:0; 5: 1 also 4: 2).

Figure 1: CZE: AUT : Data of the two finalists in goals and shots. CZE was better at all elements in the final match.

2 General trends

1. Best “DEFENCE WON”
   o Czechs dominated through the whole tournament, especially in defence phase;

2. Teams with a variety of players on a similar (high) level WON

3. Teams ranked under the 8. place have only a few (or only one extraordinary) players, able to play handball at the highest level.

4. It was possible to follow were good goalkeeper performance in many teams (CZE, MNE, TUR, AUT;…..)


3 General CONCLUSION

- There is a big gap in quality between the first six placed teams and the teams ranking from seven to the eleventh place. The teams (or players) in the first group were tactically well prepared – especially the first 4 teams (CZE, AUT, MNE; LTV, NED, TUR).
- Relatively accurately performed special sets in certain parts of the matches with numerical inferiority in offense for the best 6 teams; and a lot of improvement for the rest.
- Many sets include combinations with pivot players, who had an active role in defence and offence in nearly all the best teams.
- Many good wing players (especially NED, CZE, NED) are included in the team tactic; but they also performed individually in active play in offense; in certain parts of the matches with numerical inferiority.
- Individual qualities of players are becoming more and more important – (but they should also be able to cooperate in team tactic), which is actually a trend in men’s top-level handball. For teams with one (or two) outstanding players – they were maybe even too loaded with playing minutes) – it is demanding to play such tournament.
- Nearly all the teams (not always teams from 8-11) were using the possibility of changing the goalkeeper with an additional player (mostly in the period of numerical inferiority).

Figure 2 Shooting Effectiveness of the best scorer of the tournament
3.1.1 Attack, general systems:

Different tactics variations and sets in attacks have also become “unified”: nearly everybody from the teams placed from 1 to 6, used the same or similar sets, with some variations. However, there were a few new or unexpected solutions, mostly based at the individual skills of some extremely talented players. In such cases the teams put a lot of effort in finding tactics suitable for the individual extraordinary characteristics of one (or two players (LVA; MDL; TUR)).

Again, the excellent attack tactics preparation from team LVA are worth mentioning. Based on many crossing and movements rhythms changes (tempo”-speed changes) and mostly lead by very interesting players - the left hander on the play maker position. (Nikita Pančenko).

6: 6 PLAY (6 attackers against 6 defenders): the teams were using a lot of changing positions and different types of crossing between all three backs and between back and wing players. In attack against different zone systems, nearly all the teams were using the pivot players in crossing and changing positions as well. They used different shooting variations on goal (overarm shot, side shot, under arm shot, falling jump shot, jumping shot,…). There were no big differences in the main ideas of players’ movements; the biggest difference was the way the players performed these activities. The differences occurred in precision, speed, timing…. a big gap between 1- 6 position and all others,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>All Goals / Shots</th>
<th>Punishments</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Defence</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Goals</td>
<td>Shots</td>
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<td>10/15</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>vs Austria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8/12</td>
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<td>39</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>v Netherlands</td>
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<td>65/108</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3.1.2 Basic defence systems and alternatives, 6:6, 6:5, 5:6

In general, most of the teams were using 6:0 as a basic defence system and alternatives, 5:1 (TUR) and even 3:2:1 (AUT). In some special situations, the teams were also using the "man to man" defence. There was quite a variety of different interpretations of the 6:0 system concepts. In many cases, coaches adapted the used defence system on the basis of morphological characteristics and motoric abilities of the players. Maybe the best example of a typical 6:0 defence were CZE, NDL and AUT, who all have really tall and strong players in the middle of the defence formation. All the teams had their defence specialists, and nearly all the teams were switching one player (or even two players) all the time. Some teams were using the 5:1 (TUR, MNE). The position of the front centre (FC) in 5:1 was quite interesting (NDL, MNE, LAT). Mostly these teams tried to find players with high-level agility and anticipation at the same time.

5:6 situation: In shorthanded defence, all the teams stood at 5:0 with a tactical decision to first try to defend the middle of the court as a priority and leave the space (if necessary) – for the opponents’ wing positions.

6:5 situation: In the main advantage situation, all the teams kept their regular defence set-up (6:0), some of them went for a little more offensive defence system – from 7 to 9 meters.
3.1.3 Goal keepers’ performance

Table 3: Goalkeepers saves – in %. In total, all goalkeepers saved 31% of all shots. Some special (outstanding) results are marked with red.

As usual, also at this tournament, the goalkeepers played an important role concerning the results – especially the goalkeepers in the CZE, AUT, MNE, TUR teams. Obvious are the statistics from the final match (Table 4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Goalkeeper Comparison</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>All Goals / Shots</th>
<th>Punishments</th>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>Defence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Shots %</td>
<td>% 7m</td>
<td>% 6mC</td>
<td>Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20/48</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>5/6</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17/59</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Data about goalkeeper performance in match AUT : CZE

Of the same importance were also the other GK activates/tasks (passing the first ball, throw in, fast break,…) and cooperation with the team, especially in the defence phase.

3.1.4 Findings, evaluation of the first FOUR (or five) teams

In the first part, general remarks are presented for the best four (or five) teams.
Table 5: Overall overview for first 5 teams

There aren’t big differences in the attack characteristic. Best teams scored from 26 to 31 goals per match. MNE scored 171 goals, and NDL 222, which is the max amount, with 31,7 per match and with really high 61.8 % effectiveness 9 Table 4 )

Table 6: Statistical/efficiency data from 6m, wings, jm

AUT had the highest amount of shots from the wings position, and from 6m, MNE seems to have a different tactic with many shots from the 9 m position ( 105 attempt al together).

Table 7: Data about punishment
General impression was that players are playing on the fair-play manner. There were also several red cards (NDL – 2 times), but more or less no fouls were made with the intention of injury or foul play in mind.

**In general, the best 8 teams were using similar sets**

- The teams, not effective from the distance shots, could not expect one good ranking.
- Generally, the teams committed a lot of technical faults and turn overs.

**The reasons:**

- lack of technical skills and tactical knowledge
- fatigue of the players and the teams
- making bad decisions
- over motivation
- the choice to not optimize speed and pace

The individual performances of the key players determined the results and ranking.

**Typical sets:**

- Transition with and without ball
- Forcing fast break, 1. 2. and 3. wave
- Organised fast throw off – but not really often
- Temporary playing 7:6
- Numerical inferiority (5:6): changing player for goal keeper
- Numerical superiority (6:5): „negative” piston movement, LP on the opposite side
- Transition of CB for second pivot position
- Free shot: wing transition from the same side
- CB crosses LP; CB crosses LW or RW

**Defence**

Besides 6: 0 which was the most often used defence system, some of them used also very offensive defence system (AUT; TUR; LTV). Just 2 teams started and played with 5:1 system during the games: TUR; LTV.

Almost every team changed 1 player for the defence (they are developing some defence specialist).

3.1.5  Players for the future
I decided to mentioned some players who are really talented for handball in absolute category. For sure, there are also some others who have possibility and chances to rich the national teams and championships level (– and are not mentioned here).

**GOALKEEPER**

12 AUT Pelzl (excellent against NDL) and also in general
1 MNE – Matovič
1 CZE Štefanič
99 TUR Ardic

**WING LEFT**

27 NDL - Smith
4 CZE Zelenka
7 TUR Can
3 CZE Skalicky
2 NDL Wielage
7 Lukas Gangel (7),

**PLAYMAKER**

23 CZE Kfsteck
2 AUT - Glatzl Fabian
20 NDL- Bourget
6. BUL Vasilev
2 LVA Pančeko (left h.)
10 AUT Schrattenecker
24 NDL- Stavast
9 SVK Potisk

17 MNE Kaludjerovic V.e (it may be wise for coaches to change him to a LB position – not because of technical and tactical abilities – more because of his personal orientation for scoring)

**LEFT BACK**

24 NDL Stavast (A) - complete- defence/attack. MVP

11 TUR Doruk Pehlivan (also good defender)
13 CZE Klima
13 AUT Hutecek
19 AUT Haunhold
17 / KOS Jon Muqolli (c)

RIGHT BACK
2 LVA Pančenko (also playmaker and excellent defence player)
5 NDL – Verstajner
11 MNE Vujovic (has been playing for Celje IN ChL)
10 MDA Dodica
17 CZE – Piroch
7 KOS Tahirukaj
9 AUT Stavanović

RIGHT WING
27 NDL Smith
21 NDL Visser
7 AUT Gangel
10 MDA Dodica / shooting, assisting, anticipation from defence position
11 AUT - Fuchs (and defence playing 2. position in 3: 2: 1 )

DEFENCE: 8 AUT; 9 CZE, 19 CZE, 17 NDL, 4 NDL

4 Summary and some additional remarks

➤ All teams are trying to present their best at the moment. In some teams, it seems
that general strategical tactic is more focused on the long term individual development of
the players (especially NDL).
➤ Best teams managed to include nearly all players in each game (NDL, CYE, TUR,
AUT, SVK,...)
Teams from 1-6 have many players at similar (high quality) level; for others, it’s typical that they have rare outstanding players. (f.e. Moldavia - Dodica; Bulgaria - Vasilev…)

It is obvious that in some teams (e.g., MNE – Vujivić, Kaludjerovic) there are players who have experience from senior levels and are physically and mentally closer to the top level; also many players in CZE, AUT, NED and also TUR, SVK, LTV, MDA, are nearly completely prepared for top-level handball in the senior category.

In general, the teams’ behaviour was nice (except one: spitting over the bench in 2 minutes)

5 Conclusion

We can see many talented players, but also many that have already experienced the highest level. It is to expect a lot of them to play at the highest level; probably also because of the experience at this tournament.

For the conclusion it’s necessary to underline the excellent organization from MNE handball federation; special thanks to them; and also all volunteers who truly did a great job during whole tournament.

Some further photos:
Photo 4: It was also nice to see good cooperation between team officials – for example Nederland

Photo 5: Team Turkey
Photo 6: Team MNE