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TREND ANALYSIS OF HANDBALL GAME AT MAN'S ECh'S – GENERAL TENDENCIES AND PARTICULAR TEAMS SPECIFIC

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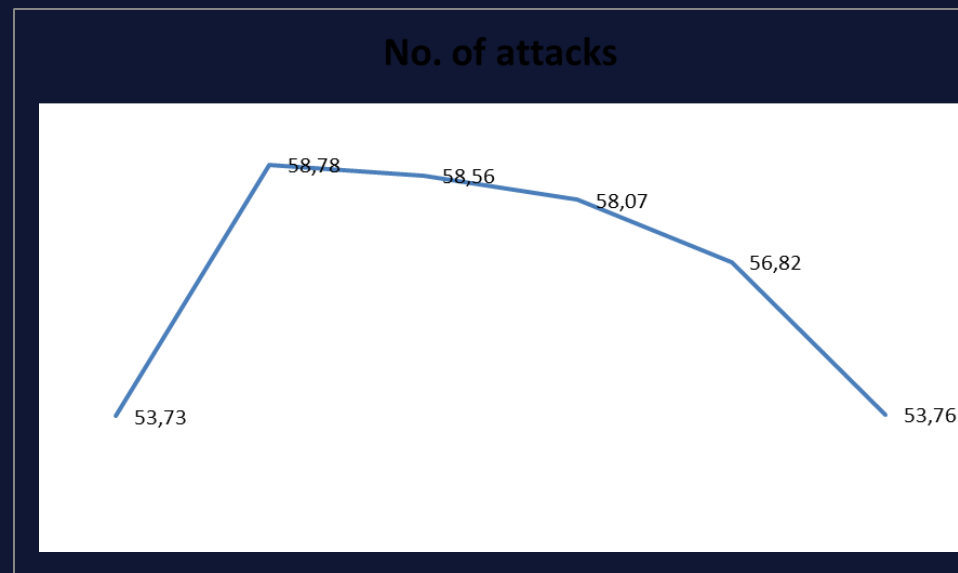
INTRODUCTION

- If we take into consideration basic statistic data about the game parameters, handball began to stagnate or even regress a bit (after a certain period of progress).
- Good example - statistical data of trend development on the ECh's from 2002 to 2012.



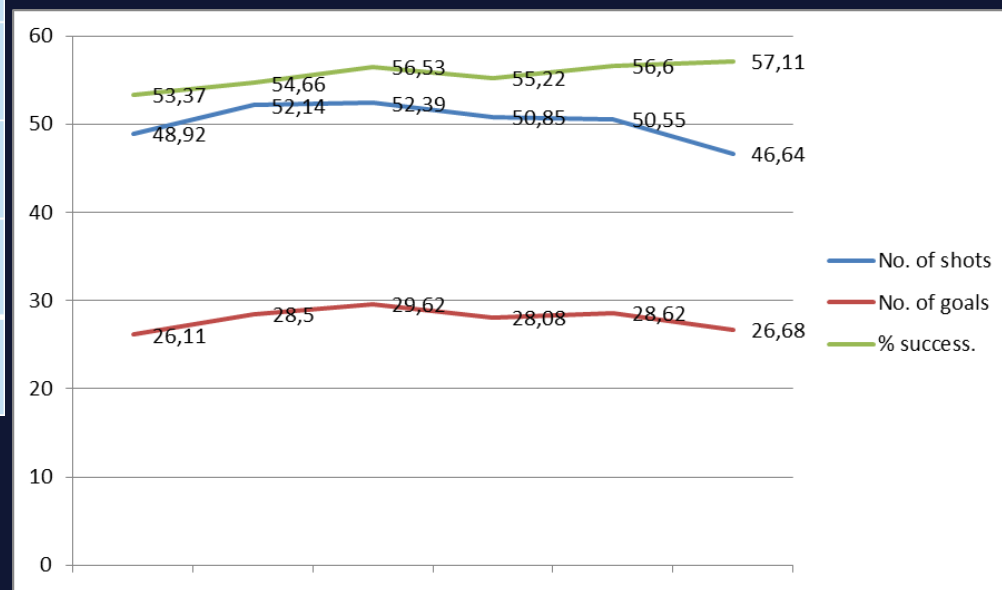
The average number of attacks per "team/game" at the ECh's from 2002 to 2012

	No. Of attacks	% successful att.
ECh 2002	53,73	48,92
ECh 2004	58,78	48,48
ECh 2006	58,56	50,58
ECh 2008	58,07	48,35
ECh 2010	56,82	50,36
ECh 2012	53,76	49,62



The average number of shots and goals per "team/game" at the ECh's from 2002 to 2012

	No. of shots	No. of goals	% successful shots
ECh 2002	48,92	26,11	53,37
ECh 2004	52,14	28,50	54,66
ECh 2006	52,39	29,62	56,53
ECh 2008	50,85	28,08	55,22
ECh 2010	50,55	28,62	56,60
ECh 2012	46,64	26,68	57,11



Comparison of data obtained on half-final and final matches – ECh 2012 and WCh 2013

ECh 2012			WCh 2013		
No. attacks	No. goals	%	No. attacks	No. goals	%
412	195	47,33	488	213	43,65
Average per match/team					
51,5	24,38		61	26,62	



No. of positional attacks and no. of goals scored in positional attacks

	No. of positional attacks	No. of goals – positional attacks	%
ECh 2002	46,92	21,87	46,61
ECh 2004	52,11	24,31	46,65
ECh 2006	52,20	25,11	47,82
ECh 2008	50,24	23,26	46,30
ECh 2010	51,61	24,79	48
ECh 2012	47,34	22,49	48



No. of counterattacks and no. of goals scored in counterattack

	No. FB	No. of goals FB	% successful FB
ECh 2002	6,85	4,24	61,90
ECh 2004	6,74	4,22	62,61
ECh 2006	6,36	4,51	70,91
ECh 2008	7,84	4,82	61,48
ECh 2010	5,20	3,64	69,90
ECh 2012	6,42	4,19	74



- Decreasing of playing performance statistical values is the result of:
 - No important changes in the Rules of the game - from the changes related to the implementation of „Throw-off“ rule, there was no high-impact change in the Rules;
 - Large number of different club and national team competitions, which are forcing the players to be more rational;
 - The finding that a slower and tactically prudently game in attack may be more favourable for achieving a good result - reduce the risks arising from the high-speed game.



Defence set-play

- The predominant types of zonal or combined defense formations:
 - 6:0
 - 5:1
- Less frequently or only in exceptional cases:
 - 3:2:1
 - 4:2
 - 5+1
 - 3:3



The predominant types of zonal or combined defense formations in the ECh 2012

Basic defence:	6:0	5:1	3:2:1	5+1
	DEN	CRO		
	ESP	ESP		
	GER	FRA		
	HUN	MKD		
	ISL			
	POL			
	SLO			
	SRB			
	SWE			
Alternative defence:	CRO	ISL, DEN	CRO, MKD, SLO	POL, SWE, FRA



Set-zone defence 6:0

- It has grown to almost the whole of Europe (or the world), and is not limited to the more traditional countries (especially Scandinavian countries and Germany).
- In recent years it has developed substantially:
 - Deep aggressive approach to the good shooters – even very tool defenders (very little was left from "blocking" way of playing this zone).
 - Anticipate the development of game situations and the demolition of the concept of co-operation among the attackers - even against attackers who do not have the ball - defenders at position outside- and mid-defender (anticipation, the different "cut" of back and also wing players).
 - Classical performance is upgraded with improvisation.



- Successful are various types of players at different positions - even slightly lower players with lower body weight.
- Almost all teams change at least one player at positions Center left and Center right.



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Set-zone defence 5:1

- Long tradition and high prevalence all over Europe, particularly in Spain, France, and Russia.
- In recent years without the appropriate development and attention (as opposed to 6:0).
- Remains at the standard solutions from the past:
 - different variants of transformation when opponent's play with second pivot (transition to 5+1 or 4:1 +1 or 4:2);
 - center can acts with a deep, aggressive approach to a dangerous shooter, or acts according to the principles of zone 3:2:1;
 - forward can play very creative;
 - outside players on the opposite side of the ball permanently try to be in a position which prevents long passes from one to another back player (anticipation);
 - successful different types of players at different positions.



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Set-zone defence 3:2:1

- In recent years it's popularity is decreasing – especially in top-level handball,
- It's main qualities - aggressiveness, depth, creativity, offering the attacker (especially back players) shots from difficult situations – are now also in the concept of a zone 6:0 and 5:1;
- In spite of that it will remain important zone defence for the teams which traditionally master this type of defence – it may represent a certain advantage;
- That's why more and more countries involve it as an important part of tactical in technical knowledge in different periods of the young players development - knowledge of playing in the defence of 3:2:1 can help later in other zones.



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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- Generally play in defence is based on the following principles:
 - Equality by providing the depth, width and density of defence regardless of baseline selected defensive formation;
 - Great aggressiveness and sharpness in the play 1:1, where the offenses are at the limit of the "game against an opponent." The all permitted and impermissible means (pulling and pushing the players with or without the ball, ...);
 - With constant and quick fouls break up organization of attacks and so bring the attackers in time pressure;
 - Anticipation of attackers performance (especially those based on the most typical activities undertaken by individual attackers and the team used), and empathy in their play. This enables the reactions in a due time.



- Great emphasis on the play against the attackers without the ball, which could be dangerous in the following actions - (e.g. preventing or hindering run-in of wing or back players who want to reach the position of second pivot);
- Almost all the best teams have defence specialists (French - Dinar, Danes - Nielsen, Germany - Roggisch, Spain - Moros, Croats - Gojun, Island – Svavarson, Belarus – Niazhura, Russia – Evdokimov,...) who has almost no playing time in attack. They usually cover the most important positions and are pillars who underpinning the operation of their defences.



Return into set-zone defence (transitional phase)

- Basic objective of most teams is to form set-zone defence as soon as possible (quick run into defence to occupy their basic playing positions in the zone defence);
- In the cases when it's situational reasonable players attempt to break the opponent's counterattack already on their half of the court;
- Some teams use a combination - 3 or 4 players try to return as quickly as possible to the starting playing positions in the zone, 2 or 3 players have the task to prevent the development of the counterattack across the playing court;
- Goalkeeper also provide a significant support to the returning players. He leaves his area and tries to intercept a long pass near to goalkeeper's area - despite the change in the rules.



Goalkeeper

- The role of the goalkeeper is becoming increasingly important;
- Individual preparation becomes more and more important for goalkeepers. Their training often differs significantly from the preparation of the other players;
- In the recent period almost all top teams rely on one excellent keeper even if they have also very good second or third keeper – less changes as in the past;
- Some goalkeepers make better performance when their team play a certain zone defence - e. g. – 6:0;
- Typological differences are getting smaller, the same is valid for the technique and tactics of defending - the different schools merge with each other, collected the best for build-up a universal, global "school" of defending;...



- Empathy in the shooter and "reading" his intentions is based on a different analysis of the shooters abilities, and awareness of shooter opportunities regardless to his position;
- Extremely important is collaboration between keeper and defenders by blocking the shoots



Average no. of shoots toward goal and average no. of shoots saved by goalkeepers

	Goalkeepers – all shoots	Goalkeepers – all saves	%
ECh 2002	39,69	13,58	34,22
ECh 2004	42,26	13,77	32,58
ECh 2006	43,62	14,00	32,10
ECh 2008	41,41	13,77	33,25
ECh 2010	42,31	13,69	32
ECh 2012	39,15	12,47	32



Goalkeepers efficiency by shots from different positions on ECh 2012

	Backs	Wings	Pivots	FB	7 m	All
DEN	53%	33.3%	25.53%	29.03%	27%	35%
SRB	47.1%	43.75%	38.89%	21.88%	27%	39%
CRO	41%	34.0%	34.780 %	20.69%	26%	31%
ESP	41%	41.07%	21.67%	27.66%	12%	29%
All	45%	33%	27%	20%	23%	32%



Attack against set-zone defence

- Average time per attack play is decreased, but in the last period again we can detect a slight tendency to increase the time of attack - for prudence and tactic;
- Players have made impressive progress in the game without the ball, particularly in the context of rapid change of movement in any direction (agility). This allows them to choose between many different technical tactical elements in a more favorable position when they get the ball;
- We can observe a variety of new techniques of shooting (or development of some already established) from all playing positions. Interesting and attractive are some shots from the wing and back, which effectively exploit the elastic potential of muscles and tendons (shots with "whip" swing, overarm shot on the same side foot, jump shot with a one-step or no-step approach).



- Group and team tactic activities (crossing, changing positions without the ball, successive passing from a piston movement, ...) are carried out in the highest possible speed and despite the high risk very sovereign;
- Constant creation of new variants of classic combinations - making defenders more difficult to anticipate the evolution of offensive situations;
- Once again is enforced organized execution of free throw from 9m, especially at the time when the attackers are under pressure of "passive play";
- Attack by switching to two pivots is often used against all zone and combined defences, even against 6:0, thus trying to exploit weaknesses of defences that arise from their deep and aggressive accession, and from different types of "anticipatory" defence actions.



- In the future we can expect a development of two types of attacks:
 - attack in which the team will try to score a goal very quickly, after only a few passes and not allowing the offense to get in position to break the attack activities (e. g. „fast execution of „throw off“);
 - attack, where the team will attempt to create an opportunity for a shot with a slightly longer "tactical" attack, where players will be implemented by constant pressure on the defence but they will not decide to hit until they made a very good position for a shot or they will be finish the attack because of the dangers of passive play.
 - successful will be the teams that will be able to combine tactically correct both type of attacks.



Attack against set-defence on ECh 2012

<i>Team</i>	<i>No of goals.</i>	<i>Wing</i>	<i>Pivot</i>	<i>Backs</i>	<i>BT</i>	<i>FB</i>	<i>7 m</i>
<i>DEN</i>	216 (8)	18.05%	20.37%	25.00%	9.72%	17.59%	9.26%
<i>SRB</i>	176 (8)	19.88%	24.43%	24.43%	12.50%	9.09%	9.66%
<i>CRO</i>	216 (8)	18.52%	12.03%	22.22%	17.59%	17.59%	12.03%
<i>ESP</i>	224 (8)	23.66%	17.41%	20.54%	8.04%	15.18%	15.18%
<i>All teams</i>	2508	18.46%	18.77%	26.12%	10.65%	15.71%	10.29%



Counterattack (transitional phase)

- The importance of all types of counterattack is growing;
- All top teams have created a counterattack system in terms of the sequence of starting from defence positions and the operation according to the width and depth of the court – mostly the organizer is fixed;
- Players are becoming more creative in the counterattacks, although they respect also the systemic mode of actions;
- Players in CA are excellent in actions where they must „become playeball“. By doing this their speed and agility is fundamental;
- Group collaboration is excellent. Situations 2:1, 3:2 or 4:3 in a favour of attackers almost always ends with a success for the attackers;



- In extended counterattacks players use many activities specific to the game against the set-zone defence – run into a free space, blockades, crossing, pass from the piston movement - the speed of implementation is very high;
- New rule concerning the execution of „Throw-off“ CA can be executed also with fast execution of „Throw-off“.
- Some teams made the CA without carrying out a substitution of players (which is made later). Others carried out a substitution already during the CA. For this purpose players adjust leaving playing positions in the defence and movement around the pitch during the CA. For such a way alternation there are several reasons:



- The overall time of the attack is reduced, because after unsuccessfully an performed counterattacks or even extended counterattack takes too much time to change the defender with an attacker (danger of passive play);
- By doing this attackers can gain an advantage because defensive players have more difficulties to change;
- Defence specialist is usually less successful in the counterattacks or extended counterattacks - so his replacement makes sense from this perspective.



Classification of teams on ECh from 2002 to 2012

	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012
1	SWE	GER	FRA	DEN	FRA	DEN
2	GER	SLO	ESP	CRO	CRO	SRB
3	DEN	DEN	DEN	FRA	ISL	CRO
4	ISL	CRO	CRO	GER	POL	ESP
5	RUS	RUS	GER	SWE	DEN	MKD
6	FRA	FRA	RUS	NOR	ESP	SLO
7	ESP	SWE	ISL	POL	NOR	GER
8	CZE	SCG	SLO	HUN	CZE	HUN
9	POR	HUN	SCG	ESP	AUT	POL
10	YUG	ESP	POL	SLO	GER	ISL
11	UKR	CZE	NOR	ISL	SLO	FRA
12	SLO	SUI	UKR	MNE	RUS	SWE
13	SUI	ISL	HUN	RUS	SRB	NOR
14	ISR	POR	SUI	CZE	HUN	CZE
15	POL	UKR	POR	BLR	SWE	RUS
16	CRO	POL	SVK	SVK	UKR	SVK

(Pollany, 2012)

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAYERS

- Average number of player's appearances is decreasing (several cancellations for various reasons) - Croatia 67, Denmark - 73, Spain - 83, Serbia 41, Germany 69, Slovenia 46, France 108, Poland 89.
- Body height and weight are extremely important. Croatia: 193 cm and 96 kg, Denmark - 192 cm and 95 kg, Spain 191.6 cm and 94 kg, Germany 193 cm and 93 kg, Poland 193.5 cm and 93 kg.
- There is a tendency for the development of such type of player, who will be able to perform a wide range of different actions and play on different positions.



- In spite of that we can still find a players that are higher specialized and very good at certain tasks (e. g. shooters from a distance, defender) and not so good in universality.
- Fitness of top players is a comprehensive and very high. Most teams and clubs involved in the preparation of their players also scientific information.
- Similar is valid for psychological readiness and ability to integrate into the collective.
- No more amateurs or semi-professionals at the top level!



Thank you very much for
your attention and good luck!



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