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# **ANALYSIS OF THE 2016 EHF EURO TEAMS - CONSEQUENCES FOR REFEREEING**

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# Participants on 2016 Men's ECh

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
France	Croatia	Spain	Denmark
Poland	Iceland	Sweden	Hungary
Fyr Macedonia	Belarus	Germany	Russia
Serbia	Norway	Slovenia	Montenegro

Out: Austria, Czech Republic

In: Germany, Slovenia



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## Final Standing ECh 2014

1. FRA - France

9. RUS - Russia

2. DEN - Denmark

10. MKD - Macedonia

3. ESP - Spain

11. AUT - Austria

4. CRO – Croatia

12. BLR - Belarus

5. ISL – Island

13. SRB – Serbia

6. POL - Poland

14. NOR – Norway

7. SWE - Sweden

15. CZE - Czech

8. HUN – Hungary

16. MKD - Macedonia



# Characteristics of 2014 Men's ECh (??? Author)

- The goal-difference in the results of the matches (47):

Draw	1-2 goals	3-5 goals	6-8 goals	9-10 goals	> 10 goals
3	17	9	10	6	2

Defence set-play:

- 15 teams started with closed 6:0 defensive system;
- Only one team (BLR) used the 5:1 defensive system as default system;
- 9 teams combined their defence during the matches.



- Most of the times the 6:0 defence was switched with combined defence 5+1 or zone 5:1.
- Substitutions between offense and defence: All teams had one to two substitutions but less defence specialist).
- On most teams the four middle defenders are very tall – around 2m (CRO, POL, ESP, FRA, CZE) – which justifies the 6:0 defence tactics;



- The teams spent an average of 8 minutes a man down, which matches the 2012 EURO.
- Occasionally - mostly during numerical superiority – the teams switched to 5+1 and rarely 4+2, man-marking two key players.
- On the other hand in inferiority defenders focused on the middle attackers, leaving a relatively bigger space for the wings.



- On the average the two teams of a match stole 6 times the ball from each other, and blocked 6 shots.
- The best ranked teams had, as one might expect, many steals and blocked shots.
- On the other hand, lower ranked teams had fewer steals and blocks.

	Matches' Nr.	ST	BS	AGG	AV		Matches' Nr.	ST	BS	AGG	AV
POSITIVE						NEGATIVE					
FRA	8	37	23	60	7,5	SRB	3	8	7	15	5
DEN	8	23	40	63	7,9	NOR	3	3	2	5	1,6
ESP	8	31	38	69	8,6	CZE	3	6	11	17	5,4
CRO	8	23	25	48	6	MNE	3	7	2	9	3



# Goalkeepers Performance

- The average efficiency of the goalkeepers was 31%. In other words, they saved almost every third shot.
- The performances of the goalkeepers show rather similar values as an average. Among 10 teams the average was between 30% and 32%.

	EFF. (%)	CONCEDED GOALS/MATCH			EFF. (%)	CONCEDED GOALS/MATCH
POSITIVE				NEGATIVE		
NOR	40	28		BLR	23	32
DEN	35	28		MNE	29	28
CZE	35	29		RUS	29	30
POL	34	26				





## Suspensions:

- In 2012 the referees gave 353 times 2 minutes suspension, and this number increased to 374 in 2014.
- During the entire tournament 6 red cards were given to the participants (2012 ECh – 10).
- The largest number of suspensions were given against CRO – 35 (4,4), DEN – 30 (3,8) and HUN – 30 (5). Beside this HUN has received also 2 red cards.
- Also SWE received 2 red cards in the tournament.
- SRB had extremely large number of suspensions: 17 times in 3 games, which means 5,7 suspensions per game in average.



- Top teams FRA (21 – 2,6 per match) and ESP (23 – 2,9) received the least 2-minutes suspensions on average.



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## Offensive play:

The average number of attacks per "team/game" at and Men ECh 2012 and 2014

	No. of attacks	% successful att.
Men ECh 2012	53,76	50
Men ECh 2014	53,5	52

The average number of shots and goals per "team/game" at the Men ECh 2012 and 2014

	No. of shots	No. of goals	%
Men ECh 2012	46,64	26,68	57
Men ECh 2014	47,37	27,79	59



- Simple tactical solutions: piston movements; crosses; position changes, wing and back transition with and without the ball; and the combinations of these movements.
- Players are individually very strong and “selfish”.
- On the other hand strict tactical were followed.



- The number of successful fast breaks show a slight decrease – 4 FB per match (4,3 ECh 2012 – not a big difference).
- Fast breaks were directly related to final tournament ranking. The four top teams in the competition were also among the best in fast-break goals and fast-break efficiency.
- The lower-ranked teams scored fewer goals from fast break – about half as many as the first ranked.

	Goals	Av	Efficiency		Goals	AV	Efficiency
	Positive				Negative		
ESP	47	6	85		MKD	14	2,3
CRO	46	6	72		MNE	8	2,6
DEN	36	4,5	77		SRB	7	2,3
FRA	36	4,5	77		NOR	9	3



Quick throw-offs were used by all teams, with varying success.

- There were an average of 22 turnovers per match -- 11 per team.
- The most turnovers were committed by DEN, an average of 12 per match.
- The fewest turnovers were committed by CRO, 9 balls per match.

	Turnovers
Men ECh 2012	11,5
Men ECh 2014	10,9



## General conclusions:

- Similar tendencies could be seen in the defensive and offensive tactics of the teams (unification);
- Play became more predictable. There were few new or unexpected solutions;
- Attack tactic with two pivots (transition mainly from wing position) become very popular and cause problems when defenders play deep and aggressive set-zone defence;
- Values of statistical parameters concerning playing performance have remained more or less unchanged for years;



# Particular team characteristics:

## France

- 6:0 zone defence (5:1 or 5+1 in numerical superiority);
- Strong and rough in a body contacts;
- Excellent shooters from a distance and very good pivot and wings;
- Tactically very strong – good team attack concept with individual solutions (“selfish individualist”);
- Excellent in CA with 2 pivots.

## Poland

- 6:0 zone defence;
- They use a defence specialists (Grabarczyk, Chrapkowsky) ;
- Strong and rough in a body contacts;
- Sometimes low shoot efficiency – particularly wings;
- Good shooters from a distance;
- Excellent body shape of the players (body height and body mass)





## Serbia

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Sometimes too rough fouls „without sense“;
- Very good shooters from a distance;
- Excellent individual CA;
- Sometimes too individual attack play – too few tactics.
- Unpredictable!

## FYR Macedonia

- 6:0 zone defence (occasionally 5:1 or 5+1);
- Well motivated for the play in defence – defence specialists;
- Good individual CA;
- Not so good shooters from a distance with exception of RB;
- Try to find a breakthrough chance, pivot and wings;
- Combination of very slow and rapid actions.



## Croatia

- Classic 6:0 zone defence – not too deep approach to the attackers;
- Elements of modern way of defence – anticipation and demolition of opponents tactical combinations;
- A lot of attack tactic with two pivots;
- Excellent wing players;
- Good shooters from a distance – pronounced RB;
- Dominant player - Duvnjak;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA and Fast throw-of.

## Iceland

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Rugh defenders – weel motivated for the play in defence (specialists);
- On the body and ball oriented defence play;
- On average “old team”;
- Classical play in offence with many crossing actions;
- Pivots and wings are very important;
- Dominant player and a lieder - Palmarsson;
- Forcing a rapid game — very important part of their attacking play.



## Belarus

- Classic 5:1 zone defence (occasionally 6:0 in numerical superiority);
- Players change - attack – defence;
- Young excellent pivot player – a lot of collaboration with backs;
- Good team attack tactic with two pivots;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA and fast throw-off.

- Dominant attacker - Rutenka;
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## Norway

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Players change - attack – defence;
- Young and motivated team;
- Classical tactic in attack vs. set zone defence – good piston movements combined with crosses – good shooters from a distance;
- Almost no attack tactic with two pivots;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA and fast throw-off.



## Spain

- Classic 6:0 zone defence, combined with an anticipation actions;
- Occasionally 5:1 or 5+1 – with a player more;
- Players change - attack – defence (pure defence specialist – Moros);
- Pivot player with a great body mass;
- Back players with good 1:1 play and break-through abilities;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA and fast throw-off.

## Sweden

- 5:1 defence and classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Players change - attack – defence (pure defence specialist – Tobias Karlsson);
- Classical tactic in attack vs. set zone defence – good piston movements combined with crosses;
- Good shooters from a distance;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA (particularly individual) and fast throw-off.
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## Germany

- Classic 6:0 zone defence (in qualification vs. Spain – 4:2 defence);
- Elements of modern way of defence – anticipation and demolition of opponents tactical combinations; ;
- Very good body shape of the players;
- Very skilful and tactical well prepared players;
- A lot of tactic with 2 pivots in attack;
- Good collaboration with excellent pivot;
- Forcing a rapid game — especially different kind of CA.

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## Slovenia

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Able to play 5:1 or even 3:2:1;
- Defence – attack change one or even two players;
- A lack of good shooters from a distance – trying to find breakthrough chances;
- Classical play in offence with many crossing actions, good piston movements and changing position;
- Forcing a rapid game — a lot of technical errors.
- Unpredictable.



## Denmark

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Elements of modern way of defence – anticipation and demolition of opponents tactical combinations;
- Players substitution defence – attack (pivot);
- Classical tactic in attack vs. set zone defence – good piston movements combined with crosses and changing of position;
- Good shooters from a distance;
- Forcing a rapid game — CA and fast throw-off.
- Well balanced team – all positions good covered (Hansen dominant);

## Hungary

- Classic 6:0 zone defence;
- Players substitution defence – attack (specialist);
- Players with a lot of experience;
- Classical tactic in attack vs. set zone defence – good piston movements combined with crosses and changing of position;
- Tactic with two pivots;
- Good shooters from a distance;
- Well balanced team – all positions good covered (Nagy dominant);



## Russia

- 6:0 zone defence;
- On the body and ball oriented defence play;
- Classical play in offence with many crossing actions (especially good collaboration with pivot);
- Good shooters from a distance;
- Forcing a rapid game — a lot of technical errors;
- Well balanced team with a good individual abilities;
- New generation – only Chipurin, Dibirov and Rastvorcev remain from old team.
- A lot of up and down during the matches.

## Montenegro

- Classic 5:1 zone defence (5+1 in numeric superiority);
- A lot of changes attack - defence
- Classical tactic in attack vs. set zone defence – good piston movements combined with crosses;;
- Sometimes too much individual play in attack:
- Very good shooters from a distance;
- Forcing a rapid game;
- Well balanced team with a good individual abilities – but too many misunderstandings during a match.



# 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 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.
- Due to the lack of time for the common preparation of the National teams trainers are forced to develop a model of defence play in accordance with the habits of players from their clubs (Example – Sweden played 5:1 with excellent forward Källman who had great experience in this set-defence from his club).



## 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



## 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 favourable 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.



## 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.



Thank you very much for  
your attention!



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