

Technical Report



UEFA European Futsal Championship
Final Round, Croatia 2012

INTRODUCTION

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Sitting in the beautiful Zagreb Arena during the European Futsal Championship final between the holders Spain and the challengers Russia, I was once again struck by the changes which have taken place in this special branch of football since we first organised a European futsal tournament in the Spanish city of Córdoba in 1996. From the playing environment (with the designer black floor, electronic scoreboards and top-of-the range branding) to the game itself (with its improvements in skill, movement and speed), futsal is almost unrecognisable from 16 years ago. Yes, the Spanish are still winning and, like their countrymen in the outdoor game, they continue to set the benchmark. Having said that, we should note that, in Croatia, Russia came perilously close to disturbing the balance of power.

But what about the future of futsal? I agree with our futsal expert Vic Hermans that if the technical quality is to be further enhanced, something needs to be done about questionable tackling (i.e. aggressive challenges from the back or going to ground at pace). In a global sense, greater efforts will be required in the training of young players and in the education of coaches if expectations are to be met and the advancement is to be about design and not chance.

As many enlightened technicians will tell you, futsal has a great deal to offer as a development activity for youngsters who have aspirations to play 11-a-side football. Just think of the benefits the 5v5 indoor game has had on many of the top Brazilian and Spanish players who have graced the UEFA Champions League. But, following the success of the Futsal EURO 2012, it is the potential of futsal, as a competitive form, to entertain and excite spectators in the hall and on TV which needs to be recognised and supported through further promotion and investment. In the Zagreb Arena, we were reminded that futsal is fun, fast and fiercely competitive – it is football richly condensed and something to be respected and nurtured.

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TOURNAMENT REVIEW



"Spain created chances but it remained an open match until the end. I don't think there was a great difference between us and Spain, as the result suggests."

"Spain are the best in Europe. They have the spirit of winners. But we gave a great performance and were very close to beating them."



The Spaladium Arena in Split was full to the brim for the host nation's crucial Group A game against the 2010 bronze medallists, the Czech Republic

These two comments, made by Roberto Menichelli and Sergey Skorovich after Italy and Russia had been narrowly beaten in the semi-final and the final respectively, highlight the fact that, even though the record books show that in Zagreb they became champions of Europe for the fourth successive time, Spain were made to sweat for their gold medals. The 2012 finals provided confirmation of rising standards and an increase in competitive edge. Only five of the games played in Croatia were won or lost by a margin of more than two goals.

The second 12-team final tournament was the first to be staged in Croatia. The two venues were Zagreb and the coastal city of Split, a drive of some 400km from the capital. Two high-capacity halls allowed records to be set in terms of attendances, with the 20 matches staged at the 10,931-capacity Spaladium Arena in Split and the 15,200-capacity Arena Zagreb in the capital. The cumulative audience for the final tournament was 95,609. The host team, unaccustomed to playing to crowds of between 7,000 and 14,300, discovered that the "home advantage" can be a double-edged sword. At times massive support generated inhibitions; at others it

boosted adrenaline. As Javier Lozano, one of UEFA's technical team at the event, remarked: "During the first half of the opening game, the Croatian players focused on avoiding errors and not losing possession. It wasn't until the second half that they managed to cast aside their fear and express themselves in uninhibited attacking play. This, in turn, encouraged the public, and the rest of the game was played in a wonderful atmosphere."

The Croatian coach, Mato Stanković, commented after the opening 2-1 win against Romania: "I feel drained. We didn't expect so many people to attend and there was a lot of pressure on us. What's more, several of my squad were playing their first game in a competition such as this." The Croatian team were one of only three newcomers in relation to the nations who had taken part in the first 12-team finals in 2010, alongside Romania and debutants Turkey, who brought to 17 the total number of national associations to have competed in a final round. This means that 26 of the 43 national teams who lined up on the starting grid have yet to sample the big-tournament atmosphere.



Despite the heavy snow outside, the magnificent Arena Zagreb provided a warm atmosphere for the Russia v Spain final – the last of the 12 games played at the venue

TOURNAMENT REVIEW (cont.)

The tournament format, based on four groups of three, once again offered opportunities for debate. It undoubtedly gave rise to oddities, such as Slovenia, on the back of two straight defeats, being on their way home a day before Russia and Serbia made their first appearances in the tournament. In three of the four groups, the two qualifiers for the quarter-finals were known prior to the final matchday. However, any talk of diminished motivation was offset by concrete sporting advantages. The Spain v Ukraine, Russia v Italy and Portugal v Serbia games which rounded off Groups B, C and D had, as incentives, the chance to take first place in the group – which allowed the winners to remain at the same venue and entertain, in the first knockout round, a team which had finished second in another group. As it happened, three of the four group winners remained in action until the final day of the tournament, with two of them disputing the final. The Italian team travelled home with bronze medals despite finishing their group in second place.

Evidence of rising standards was provided as soon as the ball started rolling in Split on 31 January. During an open first half, a young Slovenian team took the game to the defending champions with some confident, flowing, modern futsal – and went in at half-time with 1-1 on the scoreboard. The Spaniards' experience paid dividends during the second half and, after ending their opening game as 4-2 losers, the Slovenians took on Ukraine 48 hours later and were beaten 6-3, having gone 4-0 down in a first half which the Slovenian coach, Andrej Dobovičnik, described as "almost a disaster". He added: "In the second half against Spain, the difference in physical preparation became evident. I think this was understandable, bearing in mind that their players were totally professional, whereas ours have regular jobs and do their training afterwards." Much the same applied when Romania produced an impressive first half against Spain in the quarter-finals. "We played well in the first half," remarked their Spanish coach, "Sito" Rivera. "However, in the second half we were not able to keep pressing to the same extent – and that was a big problem." Although there might have been evidence to support theories of a "two-speed Europe" based on countries with or without professional leagues, the consensus in Croatia was that levels of fitness and athletic preparation had improved dramatically over the last decade.

The 12 group fixtures were played two per day over six consecutive dates. In Group A, the surprise was the elimination of the 2010 bronze medallists, the Czech Republic. Although trailing Romania by two goals in their opening fixture, the Czechs did not resort to the flying goalkeeper. "We would have been finished if the margin had been



Czech goalkeeper Libor Gerčák is grounded and Croatia's top scorer, Dario Marinović, shoots into an empty net to put his side 2-0 up early in the second half

three," their coach, Tomáš Neumann, explained. Despite the opening-day defeat by Croatia, the 3-1 win assured Sito Rivera's Romania of a quarter-final place, leaving the Czechs and the hosts to battle for the other berth. The Czechs came back from 2-0 and 3-1 down to make it 3-3 with under four minutes to play. But a late flurry produced a 5-4 victory for Croatia and sent the Czechs home.

In Group B, Slovenia's strong start against Spain took its toll and, after the 4-2 defeat, there were signs of flagging during their crucial game against Ukraine 48 hours later. Andrej Dobovičnik's side went 5-0 down in the opening minute of the second half and, to their credit, salvaged pride by fighting back to a 3-6 final score. Gennadiy Lysenchuk's young Ukrainian team then met Spain with first place at stake and were 4-0 down at half-time. Their only reply was an own goal by Spain's Kike – an experienced campaigner who travelled to Croatia in search of a fifth European title.

Group C pitted debutants Turkey against two former champions, Italy and Russia. Ömer Kaner's side surprised the Italians by taking the lead within two minutes and were holding on at 1-1 deep into the second half. Two late goals paid respect to the form book and the Turks ran out of steam against Russia 48 hours later, conceding in the opening minute and running out 5-0 losers. This allowed the Russians to go into the final game with a goal-difference advantage over Italy and, when they were two goals to the good at half-time, it appeared that this would prove irrelevant. But the Italians hit back in the opening minute of the second half and, as Russia's coach, Sergey Skorovich, remarked: "This was a morale boost for Italy and they started to play with more aggression and a psychological advantage. We tried to change things and, for a while, we were able to move the game away from our goal. But it was not enough." The Russians, however, hung on for a 2-2 draw which allowed them to top the group, whereas Italy were to face a banana-skin quarter-final against the 2010 silver medallists, Portugal.

Jorge Braz's team had vindicated the critics who saw Portugal as genuine gold-medal contenders with a convincing 4-1 against the 2010 semi-finalists, Azerbaijan, and followed this up with what Braz described as a "rational performance" against Serbia, with Portuguese players scoring all three goals in a 2-1 win. "Rational", however, was not an adjective easily applied to the Azerbaijan v Serbia match which had been played 48 hours earlier. Azerbaijan's Felipe set a new European Championship record by opening the scoring after just eight seconds and, in a roller-coaster encounter, Serbia took the lead for the first time to make it 6-5 in the second half and, after 24 seconds of parity at 7-7, a record-breaking result of 9-8 in Serbia's favour was the final outcome.

Serbia's reward was a quarter-final against Russia which, as a counterbalance, was goalless at half-time. "We created chances but didn't convert them," Sergey Skorovich said, "and it was costly because Serbia scored, even though our quick passing and movement without the ball forced them into a lot of errors. Luckily, the timing of our goals was perfect." Russia won 2-1.

Serbia's Slobodan Rajčević spreads arms and legs to the limit but Azerbaijan's Jadder Dantas keeps possession during the Group D match which set a tournament scoring record



Prior to that, Romania had given a good account of themselves against Spain, conceding second-half goals while trying to fight back with a flying goalkeeper, and losing 8-3. The hosts' 1-1 draw with Ukraine led to the only penalty shoot-out of the tournament, in which Croatia's goalkeeper Ivo Jukić earned hero status by spreading his body effectively enough to block three Ukrainian penalties and secure a 3-1 win. The last quarter-final was also goalless at half-time, only for Portugal's Arnaldo to put one through his own net and put Italy ahead 49 seconds after the restart. Although Ricardinho equalised, Italy went 2-1 up and added a third thanks to an interception while Portugal were chasing 2-2 with a flying goalkeeper.

Italy's 3-1 win earned them a semi-final against Spain which was a stunning exhibition of technique, concentration, intensity and chances for both sides. The solitary early goal by Aicardo was enough to give Spain victory in a match where, as coach José Venancio said: "The players did exactly what we had trained before the game". Spain's opponents in the final were to be the Russians who, against a flagging Croatian team, raced into a 4-0 lead only for the hosts, urged on by a record crowd of 14,300, to strike back twice – but no more. They then fell behind to Italy after only 58 seconds of the bronze-medal match and, although they came back to 2-1 down in the second half, they were beaten while playing with a flying goalkeeper – Italy's goalkeeper Stefano Mammarella stroking a long-range shot into the unguarded Croatian net to clinch a 3-1 win. It was an omen for the final which kicked off just over an hour later...

THE FINAL

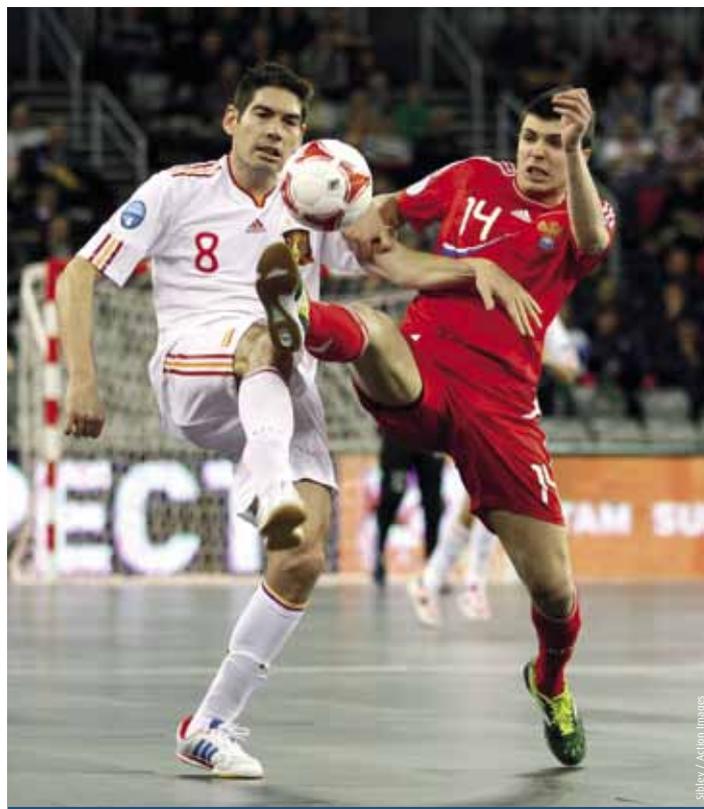
34 seconds

Of the 2,400 seconds which make up the normal time of a futsal match, 2,366 had passed when the final between Russia and Spain reached its critical moment. José Venancio's team found an equaliser when only 34 seconds from defeat.

The late drama represented a reward for the 7,500 fans who had braved the snow to heat up the Arena Zagreb with "olas" and chanting. They witnessed an absorbing tactical battle which demonstrated how history can affect the present. Four finals between the two countries had bred respect and, for the majority of the protagonists, memories were still fresh of the tense 2010 quarter-final which had ended goalless and had been settled in Spain's favour by a penalty shoot-out. In Zagreb, risk management was high on the agenda. The final was a mix of safety-first passing and moments of individual quality which produced goalscoring chances. Two teams renowned for playing their way out of tight situations opted for simple solutions designed to pre-empt their opponents' counterattacking. Under pressure, the Russians resorted to goalkeeper Gustavo or lofted the ball along the flanks; the Spaniards passed back for goalkeeper Luis Amado to make a long clearance. When compromised, neither team had qualms about knocking the ball out of play.

But the goalkeepers also had opportunities to shine: Amado dealt with a Konstantin Maevski shot after 27 seconds; Gustavo thrust out a hand to deny Rafa Usín. Spain were more adept at creating openings, but Gustavo was equal to everything they shot at him. The Russians found the Spanish defensive web difficult to pierce. The tempo was diabolical and both sides were prepared to press high up the pitch, both of them usually in a 1-2-1 structure with one eye on the possibility of a long ball. In attack, the absence through injury of pivot Fernandão obliged Spain to adopt a 4-0 formation as the default setting. Russia, with Sergey Skorovich alternating two quartets, played either 4-0 or a 3-1 with Cirilo as the attacking pivot.

The first turning point came during a spell in which Cirilo and Sergey Sergeev had tested Amado. Pula, running forcefully through the centre, struck a low drive which defeated Amado at his left post. The champions were 1-0 down with less than seven minutes to play. Caution was thrown to the winds, there were chances at both ends, and the temperature was raised even further when Cirilo was sent off with just over four minutes to play. Spain sent on Borja and then Kike as flying keeper and the white shirts flooded into the Russian defensive zone. But the tempo of their passing was insufficient to



Russia's Ivan Milovanov lifts his leg higher than Spain's Kike as the two go for the ball in the Zagreb final

exploit their numerical advantage. Surviving two minutes with four sent the Russian bench into celebration mode but, just as it seemed that the worst was over, Spain struck. Sergio Lozano hit a fierce shot which was deflected just enough to defeat Gustavo and hit the Russian net.

The psychological blow inflicted damage which the Russians carried into extra time, while the Spaniards were pumped full of adrenaline by their escape from disaster. They took control, reaped a reward when another Lozano shot beat Gustavo, and, as Russia pushed desperately forward with Sergeev as flying keeper, Borja intercepted the ball deep in his own half and hit it upfield. The buzzer sounded just as it was rolling into the unguarded Russian net. The Russians, extenuated by their efforts against the defending champions, sank to the floor. The Spaniards celebrated a 3-1 win and a fourth successive European title with the fervour of men who knew they had somehow managed to claw their way back from the brink of defeat.

THE WINNING COACH

José Venancio



It will not be one of his favourite memories of Croatia 2012, but José Venancio's departure from snowbound Zagreb airport on the day after the final provided a nice image of the way he sets about his job. When hand baggage was being scanned, the operator questioned the contents of José's bags. In particular, he was concerned about the amount of cabling. The result, much to José's chagrin, was a piece-by-piece exhibition of the technological armoury which the Spanish coach had brought to bear during the final tournament. The tools of his trade provided an illustration of his attention to detail and the exhaustive analysis of his own team and their opponents which had underpinned Spain's run to a fourth successive European title. When asked how much it meant to him to have equalled Javier Lozano's achievement of winning three European Championships, he shrugged and said it had not occurred to him. "I'm very happy, of course," he admitted. "But I had never thought about it. I just work to make the team better every day."

His achievement, however, is not to be undervalued. For many coaches, inheriting a national team who were European and world champions would have been a daunting task. But José's dedication, commitment, work rate and knowledge have allowed him to maintain Spanish futsal as a benchmark and reference point for the rest. He is unsparing with the number of hours he spends studying and analysing opponents or creating ideas for the rehearsed set plays which are an important weapon in the Spanish team's armoury. His special attention to the defensive aspects of the game was illustrated time and time again during the final tournament, ranging from the clean sheet against Italy in the semi-final to the various occasions when the Spanish team were required to deal with opponents who sought equalisers using the flying goalkeeper. "Romania had surprised us with their use of the flying goalkeeper in the past," he commented, "so we had worked hard on this aspect – and it paid off." Spain scored from two set plays against Romania. And it was a rehearsed kick-in which created the only goal of the semi-final against Italy.

In terms of attacking play, José maintains his faith in the innate abilities of the Spanish play, coupled with the team mechanisms acquired during hours of training. In Croatia, he had to rethink after an injury to his main attacking pivot, Fernandão, and the recurrence of a calf injury to the experienced Alvaro barely five minutes after his reappearance during the match against Ukraine. He took no further part in the tournament. Miguelín, brought in to replace Fernandão, was a different type of player, whose presence signified tactical changes.

José's real success, however, is that the players may have changed (five influential members of the 2010 title-winning squad were not in Croatia) but the competitive spirit and winning mentality remained unaltered. "I'm very proud of my team and happy to be their coach," he said after the final. "Russia maybe deserved to win, but luck was on our side. The players demonstrated they are the best because only the best could have maintained their faith and score in those final moments. The team is capable of anything, in every situation and in the most difficult moments. They are special. The best. All the senior players know to how pass knowledge on to the younger members of the squad." Victory in Zagreb was a reward for José's hard work and his ability to transmit a winning mentality.

A radiant José Venancio hugs Aicardo, scorer of the solitary goal against Italy that put Spain into their fourth successive final



TECHNICAL TOPICS

The goalscoring patterns mentioned later in this report illustrate that most of the teams in Croatia did not perform at a uniform level over the full 40 minutes. The notes taken by UEFA's technical observers add up to a general tendency for teams to vary the intensity of their game, with the top teams increasing the tempo after the interval. Analysis of individual matches frequently highlighted the difference between the first half and the second. The inference was that, from a coaching point of view, the philosophy was to "keep powder dry" during the first half and to put feet on accelerators after the break. In general, the tendency was for teams to press higher and take more risks during the second half – an understandable approach to a final tournament based on two "league" games played in a "cup final" environment followed by knockout matches which accounted for 40% of the schedule.

Croatia exceeded expectations by competing for the bronze medal and provided a good example of the Jekyll-and-Hyde personality displayed by many of the competing teams. During the first half of their opening 2-1 victory over Romania, the team appeared to bear a heavy burden of responsibility. Defensive work was passive, with no pressure on the opponents' ball carrier, and generally started in the midfield area. Attacking was in a 4-0 structure based on short, safety-first passing with few genuine threats to the opponents' goal. When the ball was won, counters tended to be solo efforts, with few players prepared to push forward in support, for fear of leaving themselves vulnerable to a quick break. Although 1 v 1 situations were created by clearance moves aimed at creating space on one flank, risks were avoided and dribbling was not attempted. The goalkeeper tended to look immediately for the direct attack rather than an elaborate passing move.

The team's alter ego appeared after the interval – when all the goals were scored. More aggressive defensive work started three-quarters of the way up the pitch. Mario Marinović was deployed as an attacking pivot, dropping wide to open spaces between opposition lines, attempting to beat opponents and shoot at goal, and inspiring his team-mates to also cast aside inhibitions. But nerves reappeared when the opponents sent on a flying goalkeeper, and when the ball was won it was frequently kicked out of play.

The same chiaroscuro image appeared during Croatia's 5-4 win against the Czechs. However, the team responded with greater intelligence to the flying keeper and showed mental strength when the Czechs came back from 3-1 to 3-3. In the quarter-final against Ukraine, the first-half emphasis was on concentration and well-coordinated 1-2-1 defending. After the break, Ukraine moved up a gear, with Croatia losing possession and impetus. Team-mates were at distances that invited interceptions and off-the-ball movements did little to assist the ball carrier. The goalkeeper, Ivo Jukič, coupled with Ukraine's wayward finishing, laid the foundations for a penalty shoot-out victory.



Despite a desperate sliding tackle by Romania's Gabriel Dobre, the Czech Roman Mareš gets in a shot during his side's 3-1 defeat

In the semi-final against Russia, Croatia reverted to a 4-0 system with the occasional use of a pivot. Lack of pressure on the ball carrier allowed Russia to loft long passes along the flanks to create 1 v 1 situations – and it was in this way that they scored in the opening minute. The "other Croatia" appeared in the second half when, after going 4-0 down, they scored twice. The same principles could be applied to many of the visiting teams.

Romania finished second in Group A, losing 2-1 to the hosts in an opening game in which they dominated the first half but showed a different profile after the break. Ball circulation was slow, even when playing with the flying goalkeeper. This was corrected during the 3-1 win against the Czechs, when they stuck to fierce high pressure in a 1-1-2 formation and 4-0 attacking with frequent use of clearance moves to draw three opponents towards one flank and create 1 v 1 opportunities on the other. When playing one-touch futsal, they submitted the Czech defence to tremendous physical and mental pressure. This earned a quarter-final against Spain during which "Sito" Rivera attempted to disrupt the defending champions' rhythm by fielding a flying keeper as from the ninth minute. Skilful counters brought them back to 3-4 early in the second half, but Spain scored twice after interceptions when Romania were operating with five outfielders and the 3-8 final score sent the team home.

The **Czech Republic** were eliminated in Group A. The team ticked many boxes, with flexible, aggressive, high defending, fluent passing in midfield and good goalkeeping by Libor Gerčák, effective at reducing shooting angles. However, finishing and the final pass proved problematical and, during the second game, high pressing by Croatia undermined their attack-building from deep areas. Scoring chances stemmed mainly from solo moves or advances using wall passes on the flanks. The Czechs made interesting use of the flying keeper, though ball circulation was not fast enough to trouble the Croatian defence.

In Group B, the eliminated team was **Slovenia**. Andrej Dobovičnik's side surprised spectators with modern futsal, played with speed, concentration and high levels of technique during the first half of their opening game against Spain (which ended with 1-1 on the scoreboard at half-time). The young team of part-timers effectively mixed 3-1 and 4-0 systems but could not match their opponents for experience or physical preparation. It seemed that the energy expended against Spain was lacking in their second game when, although the confidence, team-spirit and commitment were intact, a 4-0 deficit at half-time was an insurmountable barrier to progress, despite a valiant second-half comeback which included a goal scored while the team was operating with a flying goalkeeper.

Their opponents in that game were **Ukraine**, who proved that they could also dominate rather than rely on their renowned counterattacking ability. They opened against Slovenia in a 3-1 formation with Maksym Pavlenko as a powerful pivot. Gennadiy Lysenchuk's team was unable to control the second game against Spain, who provoked passing errors with high pressing. The acid test came in the quarter-final against the hosts when, after trading punches during the first half, they pushed forward after the break, defending 1-2-1 and attacking 4-0 in a curved formation with the more advanced players on the flanks. Ball circulation was at speed; the high pressure effectively pre-empted counterattacks; they were prepared to shoot from distance; and they took the initiative with waves of attacking which frequently got in behind Croatia's last

defender. However, chances were missed and the opposing goalkeeper was outstanding – especially during the penalty shoot-out which sent the Ukrainians home.

The question mark over **Spain** was whether retirements and injuries to key players would take a toll on their title defence. The injury to Fernandão obliged José Venancio to modify his attacking structure which, without a specialised pivot, was usually a 4-0. Spain's essential virtues, however, remained unchanged. They were able to exert high pressure and induce opposition errors without losing defensive balance in a side where the more experienced players, such as goalkeeper Luis Amado and Kike, transmitted tactical maturity to the newcomers in the squad. Although subjected to severe pressure and, in the final against Russia, sometimes obliged to resort to long balls, the team never lost its self-belief or the ability to find a valid response in critical moments. Set plays had been carefully rehearsed and the team had been well drilled in the art of defending against five outfielders.

Ukraine's Denys Ovsianikov protects the ball from a challenge by Rajko Uršič, one of the Slovenian team which ran out of steam in its second game and was beaten 6-3



TECHNICAL TOPICS (cont.)

Two medallists emerged from Group C, with top spot going to **Russia**. Sergey Skorovich based his strategy on two quartets, with the all-Russian starters playing in 4-0 formation and the second, featuring two players of Brazilian origin (pivot Cirilo and the provider and finisher Pula), operating a 3-1 system. The common denominators, however, were speed in decision-making, execution and ball circulation. In the serious test against Italy, a successful first half, built on individual marking as from midfield, was followed by a second half when the ball carrier was not subjected to pressure and defensive positioning made the team vulnerable to diagonal passes. The side found it difficult to maintain possession and, with three players often ahead of the ball, options for a safe pass were limited. Much the same applied to a conservative first half in the quarter-final against Serbia. The team took greater risks after the interval, when they tested the Serbian defence on the flanks, via the pivot, with long-range shooting and slick ball-winning – qualities which also secured a comfortable semi-final win against Croatia, when a goal in the opening seconds boosted confidence.

Like the Russians, **Italy** alternated the 4-0 and 3-1 attacking structures with aggressive pressing and good off-the-ball movement, often with two players breaking into space in carefully synchronised sequence – the first to attract the attention of defenders and the second to capitalise on their reactions. The effectiveness of their 1-1-2 defending (and the quality of goalkeeper Stefano Mammarella) can be measured by the six goals conceded in five matches. The emphasis was on rapid attack-to-defence transition and avoiding loss of possession in key areas.

Turkey, unfortunate to make their debut against two former champions, based their game on deep defending, good counterattacks and individual technique. Lack of big-tournament experience was translated into difficulties when it came to mounting positional attacks against well-organised opposition and choosing the right areas to attempt to dribble past opponents.

Italy's Luca Ippoliti confidently hits a pass despite the proximity of Turkey's Aziz Saglam during the 2003 champions' 3-1 victory against the 2012 debutants



In Group D, the 2010 semi-finalists **Azerbaijan** were eliminated. Despite the injury to the inspirational Biro Jade, the team retained its crowd-pleasing elements. But limited preparation time (the squad was no longer en bloc at the same club) meant that mechanisms had not been as well oiled as coach Alesio would have liked. As in 2010, he was quick to deploy the flying goalkeeper (as from ten minutes from the end of the chaotic game against Serbia) and, in both matches, strong starts were made with structures alternating between 4-0 and 3-1, using the corpulent Serjão as target-pivot. The overall structure, however, lacked stability and 13 goals were conceded in two games.

Second place went to **Serbia**, who fielded a stable group which based its game on deep 1-2-1 defending with man-to-man marking and a 3-1 structure in attack. The eight goals conceded against Azerbaijan prompted a more cautious approach to the games against Portugal and Russia, with the emphasis on ball circulation based on short-passing movements which struggled to disturb the opponents' defences. There was less enthusiasm for 1 v 1 dribbling attempts. Their best scoring chances came from central runs by the last defender, who managed to create 1 v 1 situations against the opposing keeper.

Portugal won the group with a degree of comfort, using 3-1 as the default attacking formation (with the pivot drifting wide to receive or to remove defenders from the central area) with occasional switches to 4-0. Jorge Braz built on the tactical foundations laid by his predecessor, Orlando Duarte, fielding an aggressive, tactically mature side capable of playing fluent, modern futsal, with Ricardinho acting as the catalyst. The quarter-final against Italy was one of the outstanding matches of the tournament, with both sides starting cautiously and displaying equal technical, tactical and mental strengths. At 2-1 down with five minutes to play, Ricardinho put on the keeper's jersey – only for Italy to seal a 3-1 win with an interception.

The flying goalkeeper was used by all but one of the participants – and its effectiveness was called into question by the fact that more goals were scored by teams defending against the flying keeper than those playing with one. There were examples of the flying goalkeeper being used as a tactical ploy – not least when Romania's coach "Sito" Rivera sent on a fifth outfield player after only 11 minutes of the quarter-final against Spain.

However, the eventual champions were among the teams who were well drilled in defending against five outfielders. Russia, for example, defended excellently in the closing stages of their quarter-final, enjoying two clear scoring chances while Serbia had only one. In the semi-final against Croatia, the Russians did covering work in the front line of their 2-2 defence, with the second line closing in fast when a pass was made into their area. Croatia had



Azerbaijan's 44-year-old goalkeeper, Andrey Tveryankin, makes an acrobatic save from Marinho (hidden behind him) but failed to avoid a 4-1 defeat in the opening Group D game

learned lessons against Romania, when they had nervously tended to kick the ball out when possession was won against the flying keeper, in preference to mounting a move or a counter. When they used a fifth outfielder of their own in the semi-final against Russia, they created coherent moves, although, when the ball reached the most advanced player, the ball circulation slowed down, allowing the defence to close in. On the only occasion when the attacker shot first time, he scored.

However, the tournament highlighted variations in techniques of attacking with five outfielders. In their 5-4 defeat by Croatia, the Czech Republic (sending on the flying keeper as from the 23rd minute) used two different structures, starting in a 3-2 formation with a slightly triangular shape in the line of three designed to distract the defence and increase the chances of finding the two most advanced players unmarked. The Czechs then switched to a 2-1-2 format, which created significantly more danger via its greater positional flexibility.

In the quarter-final against Serbia, Russia exhibited a variation on the 3-2 formation, with one of the two advanced players dropping closer to the three who were positioned in the elaboration area, nearer the halfway line. As a result, the ball was more protected, with risk of loss of possession minimised. On the other hand, defenders found it easier to keep attackers within their field of vision.

With defensive mechanisms constantly improving and the surprise factor minimal, the challenge for coaches is to evolve along with the game and to introduce variations and flexibility into attacking play with five outfielders – and to ensure that ball circulation is of a sufficiently high tempo to disturb well-organised defences. If not, the tendency for teams operating with five outfielders to concede goals rather than score them may extend into the future.

TALKING POINTS

Sliding backwards?

When the European Championship was played for the first time in 1999, the sliding tackle was, according to the Laws of the Game at that time, prohibited. Enforcement of the rule declined and the current laws make no specific reference to the sliding tackle at all. Referees are advised to award a direct free-kick for tackling “in a manner considered by the referees to be careless, reckless or using excessive force”. During the tournament in Croatia, this became a discussion point with an added dimension. In this context, the word “sliding” refers to a specific movement – and it was a movement not always used as a form of tackling. The sliding movement was frequently used as a blocking mechanism rather than a tackling option. Expressed in simple terms, sliding in at speed allowed defenders – we are talking about a technique used almost exclusively in defensive work – to spread their bodies as horizontally as possible as a deliberate ploy to block dribbling and passing routes, just as a goalkeeper spreads himself to cover maximal areas of his goal. During the defensive phases of the game, one of the teams in Croatia systematically “went to ground” – to the extent that Javier Lozano, a member of UEFA’s technical team at the event, commented: “Once opponents realise that this is part of a deliberate tactical ploy, it will be interesting to see if players are able to feint or cut the ball back, encouraging the defender to slide in and then leaving him on the ground.” Once a defender has sold himself in this fashion, recovery becomes an issue – and he may be unable to take any further part in the move. However, during the 2012 tournament, the sliding “tackle” was an effective defensive weapon. Vic Hermans,

Spain’s well-organised defence prevented Italy from equalising while using Luca Ippoliti as flying goalkeeper during the closing stages of the semi-final in Zagreb

the other member of the technical team, commented: “My personal opinion is that the sliding tackle is having an adverse effect on the number of goals we are offering the spectators and that something needs to be done about it.” Is it time to go back to the prohibition of the sliding tackle? Or, in order to collect evidence as preliminary research, is it worth experimenting with a prohibition in certain games?

Taking your time?

One of the debating points to emerge from the Futsal EURO 2010 in Hungary centred on the dynamics of the game in terms of the real-time entertainment offered to the spectators. The question had been raised by measurements of the elapsed time at each game, which registered an average of 76 minutes – varying between the extremes of 63:12 and 88:44 – a variation of almost 40%. In Croatia, questions about the entertainment value of the game were inspired by the increasingly frequent practice by goalkeepers and outfield players of allowing the ball to run out for a goal kick or kick-in – and then making it obvious they were in no hurry to take it. Players would wait for a ballboy to deliver the ball or, in more flagrant cases, simply allow the ball delivered by the ballboy to run past them while they were ostentatiously looking the other way. The referees unanimously waited for the ball to be correctly positioned before beginning their four-second countdown, with the result that there were frequent breaks in the flow of play. It is understandable that, bearing in mind the high tempo of the modern game, the players might want to take a breather. But to what extent should this be allowed to affect the quality of the “product” being offered to the public? Should there be a limit on the time that elapses between the ball going out of play and the restart? If so, how could this best be implemented?



Changing times?

Closely linked to the point raised above is the question of the 2 x 20 minutes' playing time. Observers at the final tournament in Croatia agreed that standards of physical fitness have risen steadily and significantly during the last decade. Intense high pressing was undertaken at some stage by almost all the participating teams (including those who, due to the lack of a professional domestic league, were expected to be "weaker" in this respect). Most teams based their games on constant off-the-ball movement by all four outfielders. And attack-to-defence transitions were generally conducted at very high speed with, normally, one player quickly exerting fierce pressure on the ball carrier, while his team-mates withdrew to their defensive positions at extremely high speed. To what extent is the decline in goalscoring attributable to the increasing levels of fitness and athletic preparation? Is it time to test fitness further by extending the playing time in futsal matches to 2 x 25 minutes in line with experiments being conducted at national association level?

Soloists – an endangered species?

In Croatia, there was nothing but admiration for the sustained high tempo of most games and the slick passing in positional attacking play. Levels of technique were generally high enough to deal with fierce pressure by opponents and for players to retain possession for long enough to spot and deliver a rational pass to an unmarked team-mate. The debating point, however, is whether solo abilities are being exploited to the full. Risk management emerged as one of the salient features of the final tournament, with the emphasis on avoiding losses of possession in key areas and playing ball to feet rather than into spaces. The question for the coaching fraternity is whether talented soloists are being discouraged from displaying their full repertoire of skills. Solo skills are an essential part of the futsal "product" – something which the spectators and viewers expect to see. Are players being discouraged from taking risks and offering the public moments of individual magic?

Goalkeepers – flying or walking?

In recent times, the use of the flying goalkeeper has become a discussion topic at major tournaments – and Croatia was no exception. Historically, sending on a fifth outfielder in the goalkeeper's jersey was a ploy used in the closing minutes by a team that was trailing on the scoreboard. However, as Javier Lozano remarked: "The flying goalkeeper is now being used for purposes that do not make such a positive contribution to the game as a spectacle." The flying keeper is now appearing earlier in games with a view to breaking up the opposition's play or, at least, disturbing their rhythm.

It is now a common sight to see the flying goalkeeper forming a triangle with two players on the wings, with a wide player passing to the keeper, the keeper passing to the other flank, and, if under pressure, the winger returning the ball to the keeper. The team with fewer outfielders tends to switch into passive, deep defence mode and this results in slow, repetitive movements with a lack of vertical progression – and boredom for the spectator. The debating point is whether the use of the flying goalkeeper should therefore be limited to the last five minutes of the game?

A young man's game?

Turkey's Kahan Ozcan (25/11/1991), Slovenia's Alen Fetic (14/10/1991) and Croatia's Franco Jelovčić (06/07/1991) were the only Under-21s at the final tournament in Croatia. The 13-man Azerbaijan squad contained eight over-30s, including all five starters. After scrutiny of the EURO 2008 squads in Austria and Switzerland, it could be argued that there is a similar lack of Under-21s in football. But in the outdoor game senior squads are underpinned by a full range of age-limit national teams. What more can be done to give young futsal players a taste of top-level international competition?



A rare image in futsal as Russia's attacking pivot Cirilo and Spain's experienced goalkeeper Luis Amado compete for a high ball during the final that gave Amado his fifth gold medal in the competition

RESULTS

Group A

(Spaladium Arena, Split)

Tuesday 31 January

Croatia – Romania 2-1 (0-0)

1-0 Marinović (22:31) 1-1 Alpar (29:50)
2-1 Grcić (34:08)

Attendance: 8,000; KO 21.00

Referee 1: Lemal (Belgium)

Referee 2: Birkett (England)

3rd official (3): Kovács

Timekeeper (T): Coelho

Yellow cards: CRO: Suton (32:54) /
ROM: Dobre (23:03)

Thursday 2 February

Romania – Czech Republic 3-1 (1-1)

0-1 Belej (07:43) 1-1 Dobre (16:55)
2-1 Ignat (33:47) 3-1 Matei (36:16)

Attendance: 1,800; KO 18.30

Referees: Onatsu (Finland), Kammerer
(Germany) / **3:** Gutiérrez Lumbreras /
T: Šivic

Yellow cards: ROM: Dobre (31:58),
Stoica (39:54) / CZE: R. Mareš (27:07)

Saturday 4 February

Czech Republic – Croatia 4-5 (0-1)

0-1 Grcić (08:16) 0-2 Marinović (22:10)
1-2 Belej (23:51) 1-3 Despotović (28:03)
2-3 Kopecký (34:45) 3-3 R. Mareš (36:22)
3-4 Novak (36:45) 3-5 Marinović (37:06)
4-5 Novak (37:47-own goal)

Attendance: 7,000; KO 20.30

Referees: Coelho (Portugal), Lemal
(Belgium) / **3:** Birkett / **T:** Kovács

Yellow card: CZE: Kopecký (28:26)

Red card: CZE: Frič (38:06)

Group B

(Arena Zagreb)

Tuesday 31 January

Spain – Slovenia 4-2 (1-1)

1-0 Miguelín (14:19) 1-1 Fetić (16:21)
2-1 Aicardo (25:30) 3-1 Torras (28:27)
4-1 Torras (29:57) 4-2 R. Mordej (37:05)

Attendance: 5,308; KO 19.00

Referees: Sorescu (Romania), Bauernfeind
(Austria) / **3:** Henych / **T:** Janošević

Yellow cards: ESP: Rafa Usín (16:10),
Alemão (39:18)

Thursday 2 February

Slovenia – Ukraine 3-6 (0-4)

0-1 Klochko (05:15) 0-2 Legchanov (07:35)
0-3 Zhurba (09:18) 0-4 Pavlenko (16:10)
0-5 Legchanov (20:46) 1-5 Legchanov
(26:30-own goal) 1-6 Legchanov (28:58)
2-6 Uršič (33:24) 3-6 Čujec (37:37)

Attendance: 2,252; KO 20.30

Referees: Bauernfeind (Austria), Sorescu
(Romania) / **3:** Janošević / **T:** Henych
Yellow cards: SVN: R. Mordej (17:02),
Osredkar (19:07), Čujec (23:26),
Melink (35:47) / UKR: Zhurba (27:02),
Kondratyuk (38:21)

Saturday 4 February

Ukraine – Spain 1-4 (0-4)

0-1 Borja (03:19) 0-2 Miguelín (15:21)
0-3 Rafa Usín (17:52) 0-4 Rafa Usín (18:35)
1-4 Kike (31:42-own goal)

Attendance: 3,546; KO 14.00

Referees: Panayides (Cyprus), Janošević
(Croatia) / **3:** Stawicki / **T:** Massini

Yellow cards: None

Group C

(Spaladium Arena, Split)

Wednesday 1 February

Italy – Turkey 3-1 (1-1)

0-1 Yasin (01:46) 1-1 Ippoliti (06:29)
2-1 Ippoliti (29:51) 3-1 Lima (36:49)

Attendance: 1,200; KO 17.15

Referees: Kammerer (Germany), Onatsu
(Finland) / **3:** Šivic / **T:** Gutiérrez Lumbreras

Yellow cards: ITA: Lima (06:56) /
TUR: Burak (08:10), Kenan (27:03),
Sami (31:14)

Friday 3 February

Turkey – Russia 0-5 (0-2)

0-1 Maevski (00:59) 0-2 Maevski (07:46)
0-3 Fukin (20:58) 0-4 Cirilo (21:16)
0-5 Maevski (23:55)

Attendance: 600; KO 18.30

Referees: Birkett (England),
Kovács (Hungary) / **3:** Coelho / **T:** Lemal

Yellow cards: TUR: Serhat (06:57),
Cihan (23:52)

Sunday 5 February

Russia – Italy 2-2 (2-0)

1-0 Fukin (04:29) 2-0 Sergeev (17:08)
2-1 Lima (20:53) 2-2 Fortino (30:17)

Attendance: 1,000; KO 20.30

Referees: Gutiérrez Lumbreras (Spain),
Šivic (Slovenia) / **3:** Onatsu / **T:** Kammerer

Yellow cards: None

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Croatia	2	2	0	0	7	5	6
Romania	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Czech Republic	2	0	0	2	5	8	0

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Spain	2	2	0	0	8	3	6
Ukraine	2	1	0	1	7	7	3
Slovenia	2	0	0	2	5	10	0

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Russia	2	1	1	0	7	2	4
Italy	2	1	1	0	5	3	4
Turkey	2	0	0	2	1	8	0

Group D

(Arena Zagreb)

Wednesday 1 February

Portugal – Azerbaijan 4-1 (2-1)

1-0 Cardinal (02:41) 2-0 Felipe (03:24-own goal) 2-1 Farajzade (06:46) 3-1 Marinho (25:24) 4-1 Ricardinho (37:12)

Attendance: 2,266; KO 21.00

Referees: Shabanov (Russia), Stawicki (Poland) / **3:** Massini / **T:** Panayides

Yellow cards: AZE: Alves (17:00), Farajzade (18:43), Serjão (33:47)

Friday 3 February

Azerbaijan – Serbia 8-9 (4-3)

1-0 Felipe (00:08) 2-0 Farzaliyev (04:08) 2-1 Bojović (05:22) 2-2 Bojović (07:44) 3-2 Felipe (08:18) 3-3 Rajčević (08:26) 4-3 Dantas (10:55) 4-4 Kocić (21:52) 5-4 Dantas (22:13) 5-5 Lazić (22:54) 5-6 Kocić (26:23) 5-7 Bojović (28:07) 6-7 Dantas (31:26) 7-7 Thiago (33:52) 7-8 Pavičević (36:16) 7-9 Bojović (38:42) 8-9 Bojović (38:56-own goal)

Attendance: 2,324; KO: 20.30

Referees: Stawicki (Poland), Massini (Italy) / **3:** Panayides / **T:** Shabanov

Yellow cards: AZE: Tveryankin (03:43, 07:44) / SRB: Živanović (12:14), Aksentijević (26:05), Pršić (29:36)

Yellow-red card: AZE: Tveryankin (07:44)

Sunday 5 February

Serbia – Portugal 1-2 (0-0)

0-1 Arnaldo (21:14) 1-1 Ricardinho (31:15-own goal) 1-2 Pedro Cary (36:08)

Attendance: 2,282; KO 14.00

Referees: Henych (Czech Republic), Shabanov (Russia) / **3:** Bauernfeind / **T:** Sorescu

Yellow card: SRB: Kocić (26:17)

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Portugal	2	2	0	0	6	2	6
Serbia	2	1	0	1	10	10	3
Azerbaijan	2	0	0	2	9	13	0

Quarter-finals

Monday 6 February

Romania – Spain 3-8 (2-4)

0-1 Torras (03:25) 1-1 Gherman (08:21) 1-2 Aicardo (13:28) 2-2 Gherman (14:07) 2-3 Rafa Usín (16:10) 2-4 Torras (19:14) 3-4 Matei (24:59) 3-5 Aicardo (26:50) 3-6 Torras (29:31) 3-7 Lin (29:48) 3-8 Ortiz (37:03)

Attendance: 1,516 at the Arena Zagreb;

KO: 18.30

Referees: Kovács (Hungary), Coelho (Portugal) / **3:** Shabanov / **T:** Birkett

Yellow cards: None

Croatia – Ukraine 1-1 (1-0), 3-1 in penalty shoot-out

1-0 Ovsianikov (17:11-own goal)

1-1 Cheporniuk (29:49)

Penalty shoot-out (Ukraine started):

0-0 Kondratyuk (saved) 1-0 Grcić

1-0 Zhurba (saved) 2-0 Jelovčić 2-1 Pavlenko

3-1 Novak 3-1 Legchanov (saved)

Attendance: 9,800 at the Spaladium Arena, Split; KO 21.00

Referees: Massini (Italy), Panayides (Cyprus) / **3:** Lemal / **T:** Stawicki

Yellow cards: CRO: Novak (30:53), Laura (42:23) / UKR: Sorokin (23:08)

Tuesday 7 February

Russia – Serbia 2-1 (0-0)

0-1 Milosavac (24:28) 1-1 Fukin (28:01)

2-1 Pula (33:35)

Attendance: 2,000 at the Spaladium Arena, Split; KO 18.30

Referees: Janošević (Croatia), Henych (Czech Republic) / **3:** Sorescu / **T:** Bauernfeind

Yellow card: RUS: Abramov (10:17)

Italy – Portugal 3-1 (0-0)

1-0 Arnaldo (20:49-own goal)

1-1 Ricardinho (24:04) 2-1 Saad Assis (29:15)

3-1 Patias (37:52)

Attendance: 2,215 at the Arena Zagreb; KO 21.00

Referees: Šivic (Slovenia), Gutiérrez Lumbreras (Spain) / **3:** Kammerer / **T:** Onatsu

Yellow cards: None

Semi-finals

Thursday 9 February

Croatia – Russia 2-4 (0-3)

0-1 Prudnikov (00:35) 0-2 Cirilo (05:07)

0-3 Abramov (15:30) 0-4 Pula (20:41)

1-4 Marinović (26:48) 2-4 Marinović (36:32)

Attendance: 14,300 at the Arena Zagreb; KO 18.30

Referees: Šivic (Slovenia), Sorescu (Romania) / **3:** Gutiérrez Lumbreras / **T:** Massini

Yellow cards: None

Spain – Italy 1-0 (1-0)

Aicardo (06:09)

Attendance: 8,300 at the Arena Zagreb; KO 21.00

Referees: Kovács (Hungary), Coelho (Portugal) / **3:** Janošević / **T:** Shabanov

Yellow cards: None

Third-place match

Saturday 11 February

Croatia – Italy 1-3 (0-1)

0-1 Saad Assis (00:58) 0-2 Honorio (25:10)

1-2 Grcić (30:08) 1-3 Mammarella (38:49)

Attendance: 12,400 at the Arena Zagreb; KO 18.30

Referees: Gutiérrez Lumbreras (Spain), Shabanov (Russia) / **3:** Sorescu / **T:** Coelho

Yellow cards: CRO: Bajrušević (14:43) / ITA: Patias (15:28)

Final

Saturday 11 February

Russia – Spain 1-3 (0-0; 1-1) after extra time

1-0 Pula (33:15) 1-1 Sergio Lozano (39:26)

1-2 Sergio Lozano (47:58) 1-3 Borja (50:00)

Attendance: 7,500 at the Arena Zagreb; KO 21.00

Referees: Janošević (Croatia), Massini (Italy) / **3:** Coelho / **T:** Sorescu

Yellow cards: RUS: Cirilo (15:15, 35:54), Abramov (45:32) / ESP: Sergio Lozano (24:19), Kike (42:39)

Yellow-red card: RUS: Cirilo (35:54)



AZERBAIJAN



HEAD COACH

José ALESIO Da Silva

Date of birth: 27/09/1968

"We conceded stupid goals and the players didn't concentrate. I didn't recognise them. They were not my players. I feel very sorry about that. There are many factors to blame and all the players were better two years earlier in Hungary than they were in Croatia. The factors might be physical; they might be psychological. I just don't know. But there are other things to be taken into account and it would be wrong to lay all the blame with the players."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	POR	SRB	G	A	Club
1	Andrey TVERYANKIN (GK)	06/03/67	✓	✓			Araz Naxçivan
3	Ilkin HAJIYEV	08/01/83	B	B			Neftchi Baku
4	Sergio Luis Maciel 'SERJÃO'	18/09/79	✓	B		1	Uragan Ivano-Frankovsk
5	FELIPE Dos Santos	05/10/78	✓	✓	2	2	Araz Naxçivan
6	ALVES De Sousa	26/06/84	B	B			Araz Naxçivan
7	Rajab FARAJZADE	19/12/80	B	B	1	1	Araz Naxçivan
8	Rizvan FARZALIYEV	01/09/79	✓	✓	1	1	Araz Naxçivan
9	THIAGO Rodrigues	26/08/81	B	B	1	2	Araz Naxçivan
11	Namig MAMMADKARIMOV	21/07/80	B	—			Araz Naxçivan
12	Marat SALYANSKI (GK)	29/05/74	B	B			Araz Naxçivan
14	Vitaliy BORISOV	05/07/82	✓	✓			Araz Naxçivan
15	Rufat BALAKISHIYEV	28/12/83	—	B			Neftchi Baku
18	JADDER Dantas	06/12/84	B	✓	3		Araz Naxçivan

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal by Serbia's Vidan Bojović

- 4-0 formation or 3-1 with Serjão a strong, physical presence as pivot
- Mix of zonal 1-2-1 or individual marking
- Exceptional technique, delivery and reception of long passes
- Attacking philosophy; unafraid to take risks
- Unpredictable, able to surprise; lapses of concentration costly
- Ready to effectively deploy flying goalkeeper at any time
- 13-man squad; starters used extensively; No 8, Farzaliyev, almost ever-present



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



CROATIA

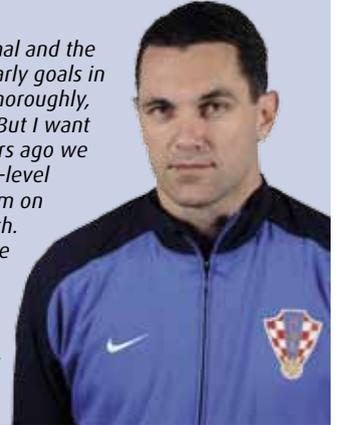


HEAD COACH

Mato STANKOVIĆ

Date of birth: 28/09/1970

"We repeated mistakes in the semi-final and the third-place match and we conceded early goals in both, even though we had prepared thoroughly, aiming to avoid that type of mistake. But I want to congratulate my players. A few years ago we couldn't take heavy pressure from top-level opponents and today we can play them on equal terms in some parts of the match. If a team attracts almost 15,000 people to an arena, it means something. It generates pressure but if this dream story continues we could see Croatia between fifth and eighth in the world. That would be fantastic."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	ROU	CZE	UKR	RUS	ITA	G	A	Club
1	Ivo JUKIĆ (GK)	13/04/86	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			MNK Split
2	Vedran MATOŠEVIĆ	27/08/90	—	—	—	—	B			MNK Uspinjača Zagreb
3	Jakov GRČIĆ	12/04/83	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3	1	MNK Uspinjača Zagreb
4	Matija DULVAT	22/02/76	B	B	B	B	—			MNK Uspinjača Zagreb
5	Frane DESPOTOVIĆ	25/04/82	B	B	B	B	B	1		Akademia FC Pniewy (POL)
6	Saša BABIĆ	04/08/89	B	B	B	B	B			MNK Kijevo Knin
7	Franco JELOVČIĆ	06/07/91	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		1	MNK Split
8	Dario MARINOVIĆ	24/05/90	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5		MNK Split
9	Duje BAJRUŠOVIĆ	27/10/84	B	B	B	B	B			MNK Mejasi Split
10	Tihomir NOVAK	24/10/86	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	3	MNK Split
11	Josip SUTON	14/11/88	B	B	B	B	B		2	MNK Split
12	Marin STOJKIĆ (GK)	30/09/84	B-	B	B	B	B			MNK Murter
13	Branko LAURA	21/10/82	B	B	B	B	—			MNK Split
14	Denis MIJATOVIĆ	01/06/83	—	—	—	—	B			HMNK Vrgorac

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal by Ukraine's Denys Ovsyannikov

- Normally 3-1 in attack with pivot dropping deep, slotting into 4-0 rotational attacks
- 1-2-1 defensive system with good cover on wings, individual marking
- Concentration and confidence affected by pressure of big crowds
- Counters undertaken on solo basis often unsupported v 2 or 3 opponents
- Goalkeeper looking to launch direct attacks with long passing
- Deep, passive defending alternated with spells of high pressure
- No 8, Marinović, acting as pivot, taking opponents wide, opening spaces between lines



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



CZECH REPUBLIC



HEAD COACH

Tomás NEUMANN

Date of birth : 22/09/1970

"I don't know what went wrong. We prepared very well but fell a long way short of our targets in terms of converting our scoring chances. We always have problems with Romania and, when we came back to 3-3 against Croatia, we had a good chance to go ahead. But we made mistakes and Croatia scored instead. We managed to score when we were playing with the flying goalkeeper but Croatia were very good defensively. It was disappointing to go home so early after going so far in Hungary. But that's life..."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	ROU	CRO	G	A	Club
1	Jakub ZDÁNSKÝ (GK)	28/05/86	B	B			FK EP Chrudim
3	Jiri NOVOTNY	12/07/88	B	B		1	FC Bohemians 1905 Praha
4	Petr OLIVA	23/10/87	—	B			SK Slavia Praha
5	Josef HAVEL	12/02/82	B	—			Tango Brno
6	Roman MAREŠ	15/03/75	✓	✓	1		FK EP Chrudim
7	Lukás REŠETÁR	28/04/84	✓	✓		2	FK EP Chrudim
8	Marek KOPECKÝ	19/02/77	B	B	1		FC Bohemians 1905 Praha
9	David FRIČ	17/02/83	—	✓		1	Slov-Matic Bratislava (SVK)
10	Michal SEIDLER	05/04/90	✓	—			Tango Brno
11	Michal MAREŠ	03/02/76	✓	✓			FK EP Chrudim
12	Libor GERČÁK (GK)	22/07/75	✓	✓			1. FC Nejbach Vysoke Myto
13	Zdenek SLAMA	28/12/82	B	B			Slov-Matic Bratislava (SVK)
14	Jan JANOVSÝ	20/06/85	B	B			Rekord Bielsko-Biela
18	Michal BELEJ	16/11/82	B	B	2		Tango Brno

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal scored by Croatia's Tihomir Novak

- High defence in 1-1-2, 1-2-1, 2-2 or 3-1 formation depending on opponents
- Generally 3-1 in attack with pivot dropping deep for short-passing options
- Attacks based on triangular movements, penetration through wide areas
- Fast, well-coordinated transition immediately after loss of ball
- Counters at speed were major weapon; final pass not always good
- Goalkeeper generally well-positioned, good at reducing shooting angles
- Emphasis on high tempo sometimes affected accuracy of passing



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

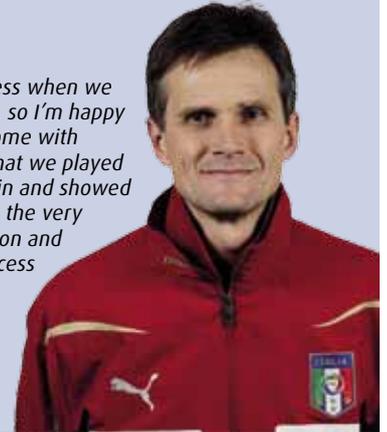


HEAD COACH

Roberto MENICHELLI

Date of birth: 14/01/1963

“Two years ago, there was sadness when we didn’t get past the quarter-finals, so I’m happy for the players that they went home with medals. The important thing is that we played against Russia, Portugal and Spain and showed that we are on the same level as the very best. We played with concentration and determination – the basis for success in any sport. I am convinced that the motivational aspect carries a weight that you have to balance with technical ability.”



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	TUR	RUS	POR	ESP	CRO	G	A	Club
1	Stefano MAMMARELLA (GK)	02/02/84	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1		ASD Città di Montesilvano
2	Marco ERCOLESSI	15/05/86	B	✓	—	—	B			Casino di Venezia
3	Marcio FORTE	23/04/77	✓	B	B	✓	✓		1	TSC Lazio
4	Sergio ROMANO	28/09/87	✓	B	B	✓	✓		1	Cogianco Genzano
6	Humberto HONORIO	21/07/83	B	✓	✓	B	B	1	1	Luparense C/5
7	Jairo dos Santos VAMPETA	18/07/84	B	✓	✓	B	B		1	Luparense C/5
8	Alessandro PATIAS	08/07/85	✓	B	B	B	✓	1		ASD Asti C/5
9	Rodolfo FORTINO	30/04/83	B	B	B	✓	B	1	1	Luparense C/5
10	Luca IPPOLITI	31/10/79	B	✓	✓	B	B	2		TSC Lazio
11	Saad ASSIS	26/10/79	✓	B	B	✓	✓	2	1	FC Barcelona (ESP)
12	Valerio BARIGELLI (GK)	19/10/82	B	B	B	B	B			Pescara C/5
13	Gabriel De Oliveira LIMA	19/08/87	B	B	✓	B	B	2	1	ASD Asti C/5
14	Marco TORCIVIA	04/05/82	—	—	B	B	—			Acireale C/5
20	Michele MIARELLI (GK)	29/04/84	—	—	—	—	—			Canottierilizio Futsal

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal by Portugal's Arnaldo

- Mix of midfield defensive line with aggressive high pressing in 1-1-2
- 4-0 or 3-1 (with fixed pivot) formations in attack; ready to shoot from long range
- Excellent transition to defence when possession lost; counters pre-empted
- No 11, Assis, the catalyst with long-range shots, vertical or diagonal passes
- Effective, simultaneous off-ball movements posing questions to opponents
- High-tempo ball circulation; direct attacks via pass to pivot, immediate finish
- Secure goalkeeper; ready to participate in construction of attacks



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



PORTUGAL



HEAD COACH

Jorge BRAZ

Date of birth: 25/05/1972

"We were a bit disorganised in the first half against Azerbaijan but after that we were organised – running into the right places defensively and offensively. We made some mistakes when we were in possession, but not too many and, against Italy, we made mistakes at important moments in the game. We could have scored again – and that would have given us control and confidence. They were a fantastic team. They prepared well and produced three good performances. But, as their leader, I have to accept the blame. The defeat against Italy was the biggest disappointment of my life."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	AZE	SRB	ITA	G	A	Club
1	JOÃO Paulo BENEDITO (GK)	07/10/78	✓	✓	✓			Sporting Clube
2	PAULINHO Camões	12/03/83	B	B	B			Sporting Clube
3	RICARDO Pinto Fernandes	20/02/86	B	B	B			AR Freixieiro
4	PEDRO CARY	10/05/84	✓	✓	✓	1	1	Sporting Clube
5	JOEL Ribeiro Queirós	21/05/82	B	B	B		1	SL Benfica
6	ARNALDO Rodrigues Pereira	16/06/79	B	B	B	1		SL Benfica
7	Fernando CARDINAL	26/06/85	✓	✓	✓	1		PFC CSKA Moskva (RUS)
8	BRUNO Dias COELHO	01/08/87	—	—	—			SL Benfica
9	GONÇALO Borges Ferreira	01/07/77	B	B	B		1	SL Benfica
10	RICARDINHO Da Silva Braga	03/09/85	✓	✓	✓	2	2	SL Benfica
11	JOÃO MATOS	21/02/87	✓	✓	✓		2	Sporting Clube
12	Euclides Gomes BEBÉ (GK)	19/05/83	—	B	B			SL Benfica
13	MARINHO Nogueira Carreiras	30/03/85	B	B	B	1		SL Benfica
14	ANDRÉ SOUSA (GK)	25/02/86	B	—	—			A. Academica de Coimbra

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal scored by Azerbaijan's Felipe

- High-energy game with flexible defending (zonal or man-to-man)
- Fluent attacking moves with good parallel and diagonal passing
- Basic 4-0 formation but with No 5, Joel, or No 7, Cardinal, occasional pivots in 3-1
- No 6, Arnaldo, No 9, Gonçalo, the dynamos; No 10, Ricardinho, able to turn the game
- Emphasis on controlled passing game within well-organised structure
- Attacking philosophy with fast counters among the team's weapons
- Strong team ethic, mental resilience; high levels of technique



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

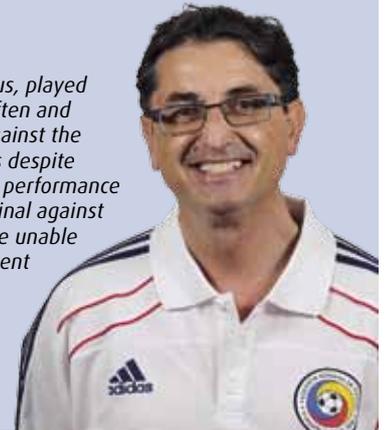


HEAD COACH

Tomás "Sito" RIVERA

Date of birth: 15/03/1956

"Against Croatia, we were nervous, played too slowly, lost possession too often and didn't apply enough pressure. Against the Czechs we played with our heads despite going a goal down. And our best performance was our first half in the quarter-final against Spain. In the second half we were unable to keep pressing to the same extent and that was a big problem. But we've only been playing futsal seriously since 2003. So it was a very good result to be among the top eight in Europe."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	CRO	CZE	ESP	G	A	Club
1	Vlad IANCU (GK)	03/01/78	✓	✓	✓			United Galati
2	Robert MATEI	08/12/83	✓	✓	✓	2	1	City'US Târgu Mureş
3	Radu RAZVAN	04/07/84	B	—	✓			City'US Târgu Mureş
4	FLORIN Ignat	26/02/82	B	B	B	1		City'US Târgu Mureş
5	Gabriel DOBRE	14/04/80	✓	✓	S	1		Györi Eto FC (HUN)
6	EMIL Raducu	19/05/84	B	B	B			HP Andorra (AND)
7	Robert LUPU	28/10/82	✓	✓	✓		1	City'US Târgu Mureş
8	Marian SOTY	12/11/80	—	B	B			HP Andorra (AND)
9	Ion Al-Ioani ALY	07/05/83	B	B	B		1	Györi Eto FC (HUN)
10	MIMI Stoica	30/09/81	B	B	B			City'US Târgu Mureş
11	Cosmin GHERMAN	25/04/84	✓	✓	✓	2	2	United Galati
12	Ionut FLOREA (GK)	07/09/80	B	B	B			CS Dava Deva
13	Iuliu SAFAR	22/04/85	—	B	B			Gáldar Gran Canaria (ESP)
14	ALPAR Csoma	22/03/84	B	—	—	1		City'US Târgu Mureş

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended

- High 1-1-2 defending with fierce pressure on ball carrier
- 4-0 attacking; passing movements (often patient) looking for 1 v 1 on wings
- Ready to shoot from distance; set plays using double block-off, long-range shot
- Good mix of vertical and diagonal passing; dangerous, fast counters
- No 2, Matei, the organiser; when absent, emphasis on high-tempo passing
- Effective one-touch passing wearing down opponents physically and mentally
- High levels of technique; sometimes over-elaborate in attack



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

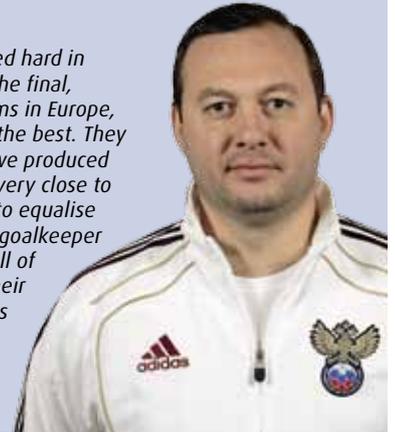


HEAD COACH

Sergey SKOROVICH

Date of birth: 05/04/1973

"I was happy because we worked hard in preparing for the tournament. The final, between the two strongest teams in Europe, was very interesting. Spain are the best. They have the spirit of winners. But we produced a great performance and came very close to beating them. We had chances to equalise when we were using the flying goalkeeper and we hit the post. I thanked all of the players. They played with their hearts and showed that Russia is equal to Spain. Time is the best healer and such defeats make a team stronger."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	TUR	ITA	SRB	CRO	ESP	G	A	Club
1	Sergey ZUEV (GK)	20/02/80	✓	B	✓	B	B			MFK Sinara Ekaterinburg
2	Anatoly BADRETDINOV	01/09/84	B	B	—	B	—			MFK Dinamo Moskva
3	Nikolay PEREVERZEV	15/12/86	B	B	B	B	B		1	MFK Tyumen
4	Dmitry PRUDNIKOV	06/01/88	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	1	MFK Sinara Ekaterinburg
5	Sergey SERGEEV	28/06/83	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	2	PFC CSKA Moskva
7	Vagner Kaetano PULA	02/12/80	B	B	B	B	B	3	2	MFK Dinamo Moskva
8	Nikolay MALTSEV	15/04/86	—	—	—	—	—			MFK Sinara Ekaterinburg
9	Sergey ABRAMOV	09/09/90	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	1	MFK Sinara Ekaterinburg
10	Konstantin MAEVSKI	05/10/79	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	3	2	PFC CSKA Moskva
11	CIRILO Cardoso Filho	20/01/80	B	B	B	B	B	2	1	MFK Dinamo Moskva
12	GUSTAVO Paradedá (GK)	05/02/79	B	✓	B	✓	✓		1	FK Sibiriyak
13	Aleksandr FUKIN	26/03/85	B	B	B	B	B	3	1	MFK Dinamo Moskva
14	Ivan MILOVANOV	08/02/89	—	—	B	B	B			MFK Tyumen
15	Ildar NUGUMANOV	05/05/88	B	B	B	✓	B			MFK Tyumen

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended

- 1-1-2, 1-2-1 or 3-1 man-to-man defending; fierce pressure to provoke errors
- Two quartets, two styles; 4-0 or 3-1 with No 11, Cirilo, as pivot, drifting wide
- High levels of technique, fitness; extremely fast attack-to-defence transitions
- Fluent, possession-based attacking moves wearing down opposition
- When pressed by opponents, emphasis on finding pivot with vertical pass
- Counters with one player breaking fast for long pass with team-mate in support
- Sometimes three ahead of ball; prepared to take risks with through passes



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



SERBIA



HEAD COACH

Аса KOVAČEVIĆ

Date of birth: 27/08/1955

"For our small country and base of players, it was a huge success to qualify for three successive EUROs and two quarter-finals. Nobody had seen anything like our game against Azerbaijan. But we had no luck in the draw and played three hard games against three of the best teams in Europe. We are satisfied with our performances and we achieved the objectives we had set ourselves. Russia put us out. They have very good players and they applied high pressure throughout the game."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	AZE	POR	RUS	G	A	Club
1	Miodrag AKSENTIJEVIĆ (GK)	22/07/83	✓	✓	✓			KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac
2	Milos MARAČIĆ	26/07/80	—	—	B			KMF Nis
3	Aleksandar ŽIVANOVIĆ	24/07/88	B	B	B		1	KMF Marbo Beograd
4	Vladimir MILOSAVAC	01/12/85	B	B	B	1	1	KMF Marbo Beograd
5	Bojan PAVIČEVIĆ	20/10/75	B	I	B	1	1	KMF Marbo Beograd
6	Boris ČIZMAR	28/08/84	—	B	—			KMF Kolubara Lazarevac
7	Slobodan JANJIĆ	17/02/87	✓	✓	✓			KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac
8	Marko PRŠIĆ	13/09/90	✓	✓	✓		1	KMF Marbo Beograd
9	Vladimir LAZIC	19/06/84	B	B	B	1	1	KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac
10	Mladen KOCIĆ	22/10/88	✓	✓	✓	2		KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac
11	Jovan DJORDJEVIĆ	22/01/85	B	B	—			KMF Marbo Beograd
12	Nicola JOSIMOVIC (GK)	16/03/86	B	B	B			KMF Kolubara Lazarevac
13	Vidan BOJOVIĆ	27/06/79	B	B	B	4	1	KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac
14	Slobodan RAJČEVIĆ	28/02/85	✓	✓	✓	1	2	KMF Ekonomac Kragujevac

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal by Portugal's Ricardinho

- Deep 1-2-1 zonal or individual defending with occasional high forechecking
- Only pushed defensive line forward for kick-ins near opponents' goal
- Good, fast cover when opponents attempted 1 v 1 in wide areas
- Positional attacking in 3-1 formation without specialised pivot
- High level of technique; emphasis on short passing game rather than 1 v 1
- Pivot often dropped wide giving 1 v 1 options, but usually passed back
- Good physical and mental strength, team ethic led by captain, No 5, Pavičević



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

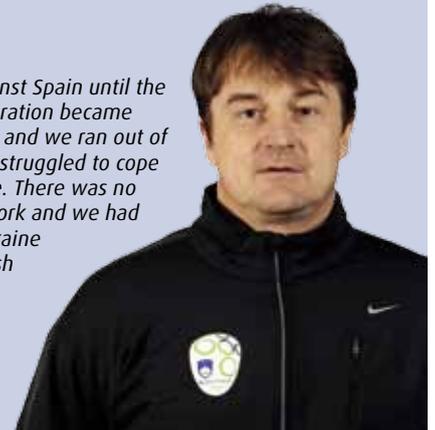


HEAD COACH

Andrej DOBOVIČNIK

Date of birth: 14/10/1967

"We had a great battle against Spain until the difference in physical preparation became apparent in the second half and we ran out of steam. Against Ukraine we struggled to cope with the pace of their game. There was no stability in our defensive work and we had lapses of concentration. Ukraine knew full well how to punish our mistakes. But it was understandable, bearing in mind that our players have regular jobs and do their training afterwards."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	ESP	UKR	G	A	Club
1	Aljosa MOHORIČ (GK)	26/11/80	✓	✓			KMN Puntar
2	Rok MORDEJ	03/03/89	✓	✓	1	1	KMN Dobovec
3	Primož ZORČ	28/12/77	✓	✓			FC Kobarid
4	Sebastijan DROBNE	19/04/87	B	B			KMN Dobovec
5	Kristjan ČUJEC	30/11/88	B	B	1	1	KMN Puntar
6	Rok GRŽELJ	17/08/82	✓	✓		1	KMN Bronx
7	Igor OSREDKAR	28/06/86	✓	✓			FC Litija
8	Benjamin MELINK	15/11/82	B	B			KMN Puntar
9	Rajko URŠIČ	20/03/81	B	B	1		FC Kobarid
10	Gaj ROSIČ	14/05/87	—	—			FC Kobarid
11	Alen FETIČ	14/10/91	B	B	1		FC Litija
12	Damir PUŠKAR (GK)	03/09/87	B	—			FC Litija
16	Alen MORDEJ (GK)	13/03/90	—	B			KMN Dobovec
18	Damir PERTIČ	10/07/81	B	B			FC Litija

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended
1 goal was an own goal by Ukraine's Valerii Legchanov

- Stable starting lineup; rational use of squad in quartets
- 1-2-1 formation with mix of zonal and man-to-man defending
- High-tempo game, demanding in terms of physical fitness
- Strong pivot No 3, Zorč, the key element in attacking play
- Varied attacking options; combinations or long-range shooting
- Inexperienced but young, dynamic squad with strong team ethic
- Ambitious, confident philosophy based on improved levels of technique



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



SPAIN

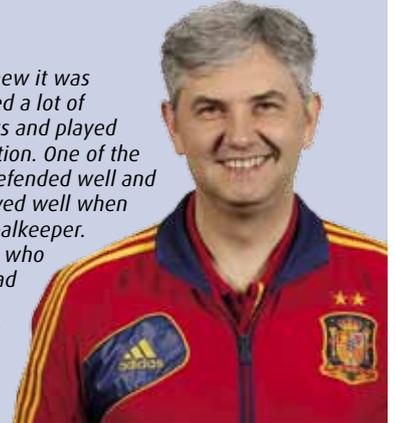


HEAD COACH

José VENANCIO

Date of birth: 27/06/1964

"It was really difficult but we knew it was going to be that way. We showed a lot of character at the critical moments and played with personality and determination. One of the keys to our success is that we defended well and were very focused. We also played well when opponents sent on the flying goalkeeper. I congratulated Italy and Russia, who gave us very hard games and had moments of superiority. But that's when my players showed their mettle and I felt proud to be their coach."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	SVN	UKR	ROU	ITA	RUS	G	A	Club
1	LUÍS AMADO Tarodo (GK)	04/05/76	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			Inter
2	Carlos ORTIZ Jiménez	03/10/83	B	B	B	B	B	1	3	Inter
3	SERGIO LOZANO	09/11/88	B	B	B	B	B	2	1	FC Barcelona
4	Jordi TORRAS Bardosa	24/09/80	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5	1	FC Barcelona
6	ALVARO Aparicio Fernández	29/09/77	I	B	I	I	I			Inter
8	Enrique Boned Guillot 'KIKE'	04/05/78	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		3	EP Murcia
9	RAFA USÍN	22/05/87	B	✓	✓	✓	✓	3		Navarra FS
10	BORJA Blanco Gil	16/11/84	✓	B	B	B	B	2	1	Caja Segovia
11	Angel Velasco LIN	16/05/86	B	—	B	B	B	1		FC Barcelona
12	JUANJO Angosto Hernández (GK)	19/08/85	B	—	B	—	B			Inter
13	CRISTIAN Domínguez Barrios (GK)	27/08/82	—	B	—	B	—			FC Barcelona
14	Julio César Simonato 'ALEMAO'	25/06/76	B	✓	✓	✓	✓		5	MFK Dina Moskva (RUS)
15	Miguel Sayago 'MIGUELIN'	09/05/85	✓	B	B	B	B	2	1	EP Murcia
16	Jesús AICARDO	04/12/88	B	B	B	B	B	4		Lobelle Santiago

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; I = injured

- Attacking philosophy based on positional play and relentless high pressure
- Basic 4-0 structure with occasional use of pivot on one flank
- Fluent passing game with effective mix of patient build-ups and direct attacks
- High level of technique throughout squad; excellent reading of game
- Workload evenly spread (short bursts) with no loss of quality
- Disciplined, well-organised defending – including against flying keeper
- Experienced, tactically mature team; mentally strong; sustained concentration



DEFENDING



ATTACKING



HEAD COACH

Ömer KANER

Date of birth: 21/05/1951

"It was our first experience and it wasn't easy for the team. We had players who could keep the ball and do things with it. But we played two great teams who both went home with medals. They both played at high tempo and didn't give us much space. We were obliged to defend and, even if you defend very well, you're always likely to make a mistake and concede a goal. I wanted them to play further forward - but then the opponents got in behind us. I went home happy and proud of my players. We learned a lot from those two games."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	ITA	RUS	G	A	Club
1	Yıldız HÜSEYİN (GK)	27/04/79	—	B			Châtelineau (BEL)
2	Özcan KAHAN	25/11/91	B	B			Futsal Beringen (BEL)
3	Cicek SERHAT	07/02/87	B	B			Belediyesi Bodrumspor
4	Erdal YASIN	30/05/84	✓	✓	1		LZV Kuypers (NED)
5	Köseoglu KENAN	17/05/85	✓	B		1	TPP Rotterdam (NED)
6	Celen ISMAIL	23/11/85	B	✓			RSKV Leonidas (NED)
7	Keskin CEM	09/09/88	B	B			Istanbul Kartal Belediyespor
8	Sağlam AZİZ	06/08/82	✓	B			Turcs Hestal (BEL)
9	Yıldırım BURAK	01/01/82	B	B			Belediyesi Bodrumspor
10	Özcan CIHAN	27/06/82	—	✓			Futsal Beringen (BEL)
11	Kilic YENER	04/01/85	B	—			CFE Ciba/VDL (NED)
12	Akbaş MAHMUT (GK)	01/01/81	✓	✓			Igdirspor
13	Çiracı ŞENOL (GK)	24/11/88	B	—			Yeni Bornovaspör
14	Büyüktopaç SAMI	22/06/88	✓	✓			Trabzonspor AS

G = goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended

- 1-2-1 or 3-1 defending deep in own half with man-to-man marking
- Direct attacking with pass from keeper to pivot or most advanced player
- Emphasis on fast counters rather than elaborate passing moves
- Good standards of individual technique; ready to try 1 v 1
- Attacks based on 3-1 with pivot as target (ball protection rather than threat)
- Good goalkeeping by No 12, Mahmut; No 4, Yasin, captain and leader of defence
- No 10, Cihan, the spearhead in attack and example of team's competitive spirit



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

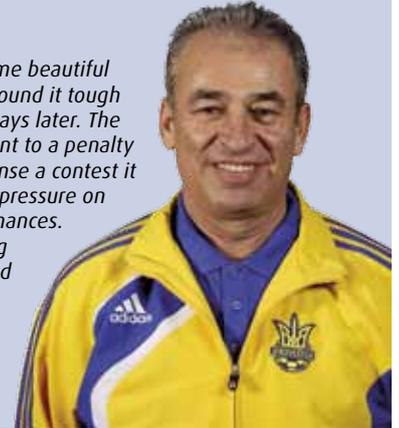


HEAD COACH

Gennadiy LYSENCHUK

Date of birth: 18/12/1947

"We played well and scored some beautiful goals against Slovenia but we found it tough to play against Spain just two days later. The quarter-final against Croatia went to a penalty shoot-out, which says how intense a contest it was. We put a huge amount of pressure on the hosts and created a lot of chances. The problem was not converting them. I didn't think we deserved to lose, so it was a very painful defeat. It was hard to accept, but there were a lot of positive things to take home from the tournament."



SQUAD

No	Player	Born	SVN	ESP	CRO	G	A	Club
1	Yevgen IVANYAK (GK)	28/09/82	✓	—	✓			Lokomotiv Kharkiv
2	Valerii ZAMIATIN	05/01/79	B	B	B			Enakievets Enakievo
3	Vitaliy KISELYOV	20/02/83		B	—			Lokomotiv Kharkiv
4	Sergii ZHURBA	14/03/87	B	B	B	1		Lokomotiv Kharkiv
5	Yevgen ROGACHOV	30/08/83	B	B	B			Energy Lviv
6	Sergii CHEPORNIUK	18/04/82	✓	—	✓	1	1	Energy Lviv
7	Maksym PAVLENKO	15/09/75	✓	✓	✓	1	2	Energy Lviv
8	Dmytro KLOCHKO	17/02/87	B	B	B	1		Lokomotiv Kharkiv
9	Oleksandar KONDRATYUK	09/04/83	B	✓	B		1	Energy Lviv
10	Valerii LEGCHANOV	13/02/80	✓	✓	✓	3		Energy Lviv
11	Denys OVSIANNIKOV	10/12/84	✓	✓	✓			Energy Lviv
12	Kyrylo TSYUN (GK)	30/07/87		B	—			Uragan Ivano-Frankovsk
13	Dmytro SOROKIN	14/07/88	B	B	B		1	Lokomotiv Kharkiv
14	Dmytro LYTVYNYENKO (GK)	16/04/87	B	✓	B			Lokomotiv Kharkiv

G = Goals; A = assists; ✓ = starting five; B = started on bench; '—' = not included on team sheet; S = suspended; 1 goal was an own goal by Spain's Kike

- Mix of 1-2-1 defending from midfield with higher pressing to pre-empt counters
- Fast attack-to-defence transitions; quick to cover advances in wider areas
- Effective individual marking; good tactical sense of defensive balance
- 4-0 attacking in curved formation favouring wide rather than central penetration
- Athletic, high-tempo ball circulation throughout; ready to take risks with passes
- Occasional use of pivot for short periods; good long-range shooting
- Well-choreographed counters with diagonal pass and fast support through middle



DEFENDING



ATTACKING

GOALS

Croatia 2012 produced an average number of goals per game which was in line with the tournament's historical parameters. Yet 18 fewer were scored in comparison with Hungary 2010, representing a 14% drop. The Group D fixture between Azerbaijan and Serbia produced a record-breaking aggregate of 17 goals – which meant 16% of the tournament total were scored in a single match. The other 19 games yielded an average of 4.84, which was substantially lower than at previous tournaments – though it can be pointed out that at the 1999 finals in Granada, 26 goals (30% of the total) were scored in just 2 of the 16 matches, leaving the other 14 to produce only 4.26 per game. Possible reasons for the downward trend are discussed elsewhere in this report.

EURO	Goals	Games	Average
1999	86	16	5.38
2001	90	16	5.62
2003	77	15	5.13
2005	87	16	5.44
2007	83	16	5.19
2010	127	20	6.35
2012	109	20	5.45

One of the salient features of the 2012 final tournament was that eight of the goals were by players who put the ball into their own net. UEFA's technical team at the event interpreted the high number as an illustration that players were covering back at high speed (giving rise to loss of control when making contact with the ball); that sliding interceptions made it more difficult to control the direction of the ball; and that cross-field passes towards the far post were driven at an increasingly high pace in order to make it more difficult for opponents to make a clean interception and launch a counterattack.

When the goals were scored

At the final tournament in Croatia, only 37.6% of the goals were scored during the first half. Even discounting the two goals scored by Spain during the 10 minutes of extra time in the final, the second half of matches yielded 61% more goals than the first period of 20 minutes. Five of the 20 games were goalless at half-time. In both halves of the game, the third five-minute segment proved to be the least productive.

Although a similar figure of 62% had been scored after the interval at the 2010 finals, the pattern of scoring varied substantially in comparison with Hungary, where a massive total of 30 goals were scored in the closing five minutes. In Croatia, the glut of goals during the second half was fairly evenly spread over the 20-minute period, making it difficult to allege that the greater number of second-half goals could be attributable to fatigue.

Minutes	2012	2010	2007	2005	2003
00:01 – 05:00	11	10	8	5	4
05:01 – 10:00	15	14	5	10	10
10:01 – 15:00	4	9	9	8	8
15:01 – 20:00	11	15	14	13	8
20:01 – 25:00	17	14	15	13	6
25:01 – 30:00	19	18	10	8	11
30:01 – 35:00	11	17	15	12	10
35:01 – 40:00	19	30	7	18	20
Extra time	2	—	—	—	—
Total	109	127	83	87	77

The format, based on two group games followed by a knockout stage, created an ambience of cup rather than league football. However, this was no encouragement for teams to adopt a devil-may-care approach to their fixtures. As remarked elsewhere in this report, risk management was a relevant factor. The tendency was for risks not to be taken until objectives became clear – for example, after falling behind on the scoreboard. Reactions to an adverse scoreline were significant and no fewer than seven games were not won by the team scoring the first goal.

Leading scorers

For the third successive tournament, the leaders in the scoring chart scored five times apiece. Spain's Jordi Torres was presented with the adidas Golden Boot award on the basis of having provided one "assist" more than Dario Marinović. They were two of the 60 players who found the net during the final tournament, while Spanish players dominated the assists chart. Alemao was the tournament's most prolific provider with five assists, while team-mates "Kike" and Carlos Ortiz registered three, as did Croatia's Tihomir Novak.

5	Jordi Torres	Spain
	Dario Marinović	Croatia
4	Jesús Aicardo	Spain
	Vidan Bojović	Serbia
3	Jadder Dantas	Azerbaijan
	Eleksandr Fukin	Russia
	Jakov Grcić	Croatia
	Valeriy Legchanov	Ukraine
	Konstantin Maevski	Russia
	Vagner Pula	Russia
	Rafa Usín	Spain

THE TECHNICAL TEAM – and their star selection



UEFA's technical director is flanked by Vic Hermans (on his right) and a serious-looking Javier Lozano, perhaps nervous as Spain were about to defend their title against Russia in Zagreb

UEFA's technical team at the 2012 final tournament represented a repeat performance by the two futsal "gurus" who had been UEFA's expert observers at EURO 2010 in Hungary. Their experience of UEFA futsal competitions dates back to the official birth of the European Futsal Championship in 1999, when Javier Lozano was the head coach of the Spanish national team which played the final against Russia, while Vic Hermans was on the Dutch bench as assistant to Nico Spreij.

In Croatia, Javier Lozano was based in Split for the opening eight days, watching games in Groups A and C, plus the two quarter-finals played in the coastal city. He then travelled to Zagreb to work for the rest of the tournament alongside Vic Hermans, who had covered Groups B and D plus the two quarter-finals played in the capital.

One of their tasks was to select a 14-man "star selection" from the 167 players on display in Croatia. Inevitably, the shortlist was compiled on the basis of teams who had reached the knockout stage of the tournament, rather than those who had played only two games. A number of criteria were applied during the selection process, taking into account elements such as attitude and "specific gravity" within the team as well as ability. The players included in the final list have good reason to feel satisfied that they were selected by two of the most illustrious names in futsal coaching.

Vic Hermans (17 March 1953) scored 23 goals in 45 international matches for the Netherlands and received the adidas Golden Ball award as player of the tournament at the inaugural FIFA Futsal World Cup in 1989, where he contributed six goals to the Dutch team's run to the final against Brazil. As a coach, he mixed the indoor and outdoor games and had been the national futsal coach for Hong Kong, Malaysia and Iran before taking the helm of the Dutch national team in 2001. In 2008, he took over futsal development in Malta, including coaching the national team. In Croatia, Vic was only days away from starting work as national team coach and director of futsal development at the national association of Thailand.

Javier Lozano (28 October 1960) chose futsal as his "first love" in the early 1980s, going into coaching at 31 and making his name at the helm of Caja Toledo and Madrid-based Interviú. In 1992, he was invited to take over from Felipe Ojeda as head coach of the Spanish national team – and led it to victory in the first European tournament staged under UEFA auspices in Córdoba in 1996. It was the first item in a gold collection, as he then led Spain to victory in the 2000 and 2004 FIFA World Cups and the 2001 and 2005 European Championships. He handed the baton to José Venancio in 2007 to take up a post in the outdoor game with Real Madrid CF, initially in the first-team dressing room and then as director of player development, before returning to futsal in his current role as president of Spain's professional futsal league.

The star selection

Player	No	Team
Luis Amado (GK)	1	Spain
Stefano Mammarella (GK)	1	Italy
Jesús Aicardo	16	Spain
Cirilo Cardoso Filho	11	Russia
Marcio Forte	3	Italy
Aleksandr Fukin	13	Russia
Enrique Boned "Kike"	8	Spain
Dario Marinović	8	Croatia
Miguel Sayago "Miguelín"	15	Spain
Carlos Ortiz	2	Spain
Dmitry Prudnikov	4	Russia
Ricardinho da Silva	10	Portugal
Saad Assis	11	Italy
Jordi Torras	4	Spain

REFEREES / FAIR PLAY

Match officials

A squad of 16, half of them from competing countries, was selected for the final tournament in Croatia. Anecdotically, the referees for the two medal-deciding games on the final day came from the four countries involved, with Russian and Spanish officials taking charge of the bronze-medal match and referees from Italy and Croatia on the lines during the final.

The tournament produced 40 yellow cards at an average of exactly two per game, plus three dismissals – two of them for second yellow-card offences. The 2010 final tournament in Hungary yielded 33 cautions and a single dismissal. Expressed in percentages, the yellow cards shown in Croatia represented an increase of 21%.

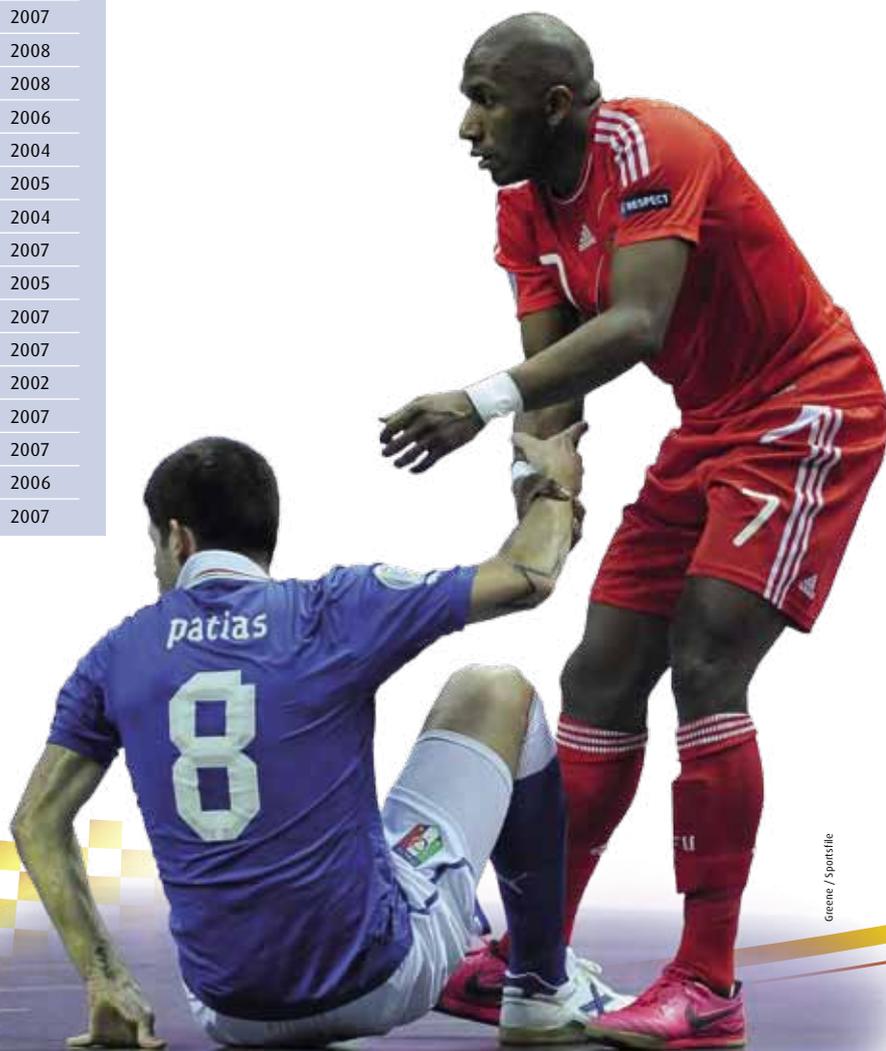
Interestingly, the eight matches played in the knockout stage of the competition produced only 11 yellow cards, with none shown in either of the semi-finals. On the other hand, five yellow cards were shown during the final – including two to the Russian pivot Cirilo, who was sent off.

Name	Country	Date of birth	FIFA
Gerald Bauernfeind	Austria	01/04/1981	2007
Marc Birkett	England	03/02/1978	2008
Eduardo José Fernandes Coelho	Portugal	10/10/1979	2008
Fernando Gutiérrez Lumbreras	Spain	26/01/1971	2006
Karel Henych	Czech Republic	11/03/1979	2004
Daniyel Janošević	Croatia	06/01/1971	2005
Stephan Kammerer	Germany	13/12/1968	2004
Gabor Kovács	Hungary	16/04/1978	2007
Pascal Lemal	Belgium	21/11/1972	2005
Francesco Massini	Italy	27/01/1969	2007
Timo Onatsu	Finland	17/01/1973	2007
Petros Panayides	Cyprus	24/08/1968	2002
Ivan Shabanov	Russia	15/08/1978	2007
Borut Šivic	Slovenia	20/04/1971	2007
Bogdan Sorescu	Romania	21/08/1974	2006
Sebastian Stawicki	Poland	22/01/1975	2007

Fair play rankings

Pos.	Team	Total points	Matches played
1	Italy	8.685	5
2	Portugal	8.642	3
3	Russia	8.578	5
4	Spain	8.564	5
5	Serbia	8.381	3
5	Ukraine	8.381	3
7	Romania	8.285	3
8	Slovenia	8.000	2
9	Croatia	7.950	5
10	Turkey	7.857	2
11	Czech Republic	7.571	2
12	Azerbaijan	6.143	2

Russia's Brazilian-born playmaker Pula offers a helping hand to Italy's Alessandro Patias during the 2-2 draw between the silver and bronze medallists in Split







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