FOREWORD FROM
AFC PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

I am pleased to present the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 Technical Report which provided the platform, not only for the stars of the future, but also the gateway to the Olympic Games which are scheduled for Tokyo in 2021 following the postponement caused by the global Covid-19 pandemic.

This tournament, as always, delivered some outstanding performances and some unexpected heroes – as well as a first-time winner in Korea Republic. They join hosts Japan, runners-up Saudi Arabia and third-placed Australia in qualifying for Tokyo.

During the tournament, there were many moments to remember, and the technical aspects have been captured in this report by our Technical Study Group. There is also a reflection on the exceptional contribution of the match officials – both on the field and in the VAR control centre.

Once again, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) embraced the advanced technology as the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system was successfully employed at this tournament – following its introduction from the Quarter-Final stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019.

It is another example of how the AFC is developing its competitions each year and that they now stand proudly among the best in world football. Our ambition was to deliver top class competitions and we do that on an annual basis.

Our thanks go to the Football Association of Thailand (FA Thailand) for providing four top-class stadiums that allowed the Continent’s best young players to demonstrate their skills. The FA Thailand has been a consistently generous host to the AFC’s tournaments.

And finally, a big thank you to all the AFC’s commercial partners, broadcasters, media and, of course, the valued spectators who support Asian football so loyally and in ever-growing numbers. This tournament once again set new levels of engagement.

I congratulate all those who have contributed to this comprehensive report and I am sure it will be useful as our teams prepare for not only Tokyo but also future U23 events.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President

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THAILAND 2020 TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW
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GROUP STAGE
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

GROUP A

Group A burst into life on Matchday One when a brace apiece from Suphanat Mueanta and substitute Jaroensak Wonggorn saw Thailand breeze to a morale-boosting 5-0 win over Bahrain.

Australia, meanwhile, began their campaign with a 1-1 draw against Iraq, before going on to beat Thailand at Bangkok’s iconic Rajamangala Stadium. After falling behind due to Anon Amornlerdsak’s 24th-minute effort, the Australians bounced back in style with two goals from Perth Glory forward Nicholas D’Agostino to secure a vital 2-1 success.

Iraq’s Matchday Two encounter with Bahrain proved no less dramatic, with the West Asian nations being forced to settle for a share of the spoils following a pulsating 2-2 draw at Thammasat Stadium.

Ahead through Hashim Sayed Isa’s effort on the stroke of half-time, Bahrain were pegged back by Amir Al Ammari’s equaliser before Mohamed Marhoon struck with four minutes remaining to seemingly hand the Bahrainis a hard-fought victory. However, Mohammed Qasim found the target two minutes into stoppage time to earn Iraq a point.

Australia’s win over Thailand ultimately helped the Olyroos finish first in Group A ahead of the host nation. The duo edged out Iraq – who recorded three successive draws – for a place in the Quarter-finals, while Bahrain finished fourth.

All four teams arrived for Matchday Three’s simultaneous kick-offs harbouring realistic ambitions of progressing to the knockout phase, although it was to be Thailand who would steal a march on their group rivals when Jaroensak fired home from the spot to give his side an early lead against Iraq.

Nearing a win to guarantee their progress, Iraq responded four minutes into the second half courtesy of Qasim’s strike from close-range, but it was to no avail as Thailand duly held on to record a 1-1 draw and secure the point they needed to qualify for the next round.

Elsewhere, Australia had gone into the final round of fixtures occupying top spot and only needing to avoid defeat to ensure their place in the last eight. Graham Arnold’s charges duly delivered, and a Ramy Najjarine goal in a 1-1 draw with Bahrain proved enough for them to go through.
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

GROUP B

When the draw for the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 was conducted, Group B - containing former champions Japan alongside Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Syria - looked certain to be among the most dramatic and keenly contested of the tournament. It didn't disappoint.

Saudi Arabia, winners of the most recent edition of the AFC U-19 Championship in Indonesia in 2018 and runners-up in the edition before, opened their campaign against a Japanese side that, while shorn of most of the country's Europe-based stars, still bristled with talent.

Ayman Al Khulaif gave Saad Al Shehri's side the lead only for Ryotaro Meshino's deflected effort to level the scores, but the Saudis took the points thanks to Abdulrahman Ghareeb's late penalty.

Qatar's 2-2 draw with Syria – secured thanks to a dramatic injury time equaliser from Syria's Alaa Aldin Dali - meant the group was already taking shape after the opening round of matches, and in the second phase the first shock of the tournament occurred as Japan were bundled out.

-needed to find a way past the already-eliminated Japanese to secure their place in the Quarter-finals, while Saudi Arabia had to avoid defeat against the Syrians.

Félix Sánchez's side could only pick up a point with a 1-1 draw against a Japanese side that played the second half with 10 men following Ao Tanaka's sending off in the first-half of injury time.

And that meant both Saudi Arabia and Syria advanced to the next phase despite Al Shehri's side securing a 1-0 win in their meeting at Thammasat Stadium thanks to Feras Al Birakan's solitary goal 10 minutes from time.
Uzbekistan ultimately joined the Koreans in the last eight on goal difference, but only after a nail-biting Matchday Three kept the identity of the group runners-up a mystery.

Featuring defending champions Uzbekistan, consistent Olympic qualifiers Korea Republic and two of Asia’s major footballing nations - IR Iran and China PR - the group was labelled one of the competition’s toughest when the draw was announced.

It lived up to its billing, producing a competitive intensity that stood in stark contrast to the laid-back location of Songkhla, which served as the group’s home for five of six matches.

Uzbekistan took a half-time lead before holding off a wasteful IR Iran as the group’s opening match finished in an entertaining 1-1 draw, before Korea Republic took pole position with a 1-0 win over China PR, thanks to substitute Lee Dong-jun’s last-gasp goal.

The events of Matchday One would set the tone for the matches to follow, with a number of early habits continuing throughout the life of the group.

For Korea Republic, that meant becoming habitual winners, prevailing 2-1 against IR Iran to seal their place in the Quarter-finals a game early.

Lightning also struck twice for Uzbekistan, with central defender and team captain Islom Kobilov putting them ahead from the penalty spot for the second consecutive match, as a Chinese side blunted by a tournament-ending injury to star striker Zhang Yuning fell out of contention with a 2-0 defeat.

Those results set the stage for a gripping final day of action, as Uzbekistan and IR Iran fought to keep their Olympic dream alive in simultaneous fixtures played on opposite sides of the country.

Uzbekistan needed only a draw against Korea Republic to confirm their place in the Knockout Stage, but a 2-1 defeat left them sweating on news from Songkhla, where IR Iran required a convincing win against China PR.

While Hamid Estili’s side produced enough chances to achieve precisely that, Omid Noorafkan’s 87th-minute penalty kick was IR Iran’s only goal from 25 shots, leaving Team Melli Omid eliminated by a single-goal margin, and extending an Olympic qualification drought dating back to 1976.

Korea Republic won all three matches to advance to the Knockout Stage in style, while Uzbekistan and Islamic Republic of Iran’s battle for second place went all the way to the wire in Group C.
GROUP D

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Jordan strolled to the Quarter-finals unbeaten, sealing first and second places in Group D respectively. Meanwhile, 2018 runners-up Vietnam finished bottom of the group after failing to register any wins, and DPR Korea had already been eliminated by the time they got their sole win to finish third.

With the runners-up tag from the previous edition and a generation of talented players led by Nguyen Quang Hai and Nguyen Tien Linh, Vietnam went into the 2020 tournament as one of the title contenders, but by the time their third group game arrived, their fate was already out of their hands.

There were glimpses of quality from Park Hang-seo’s men as they were held to a goalless draw on the opening matchday of the group, but it was Jordan who scored the first goal and win in Buriram, defeating DPR Korea 2-1 with goals from Mohammed Bani Atieh and Omar Hani. The Koreans got a late consolation from Ryang Hyon Ju.

The UAE recorded a second consecutive clean sheet and got off the mark on Matchday Two. First-half goals from Al Jazira duo Khalifa Al Hammadi and Zayed Al Ameri meant the Quarter-finals were a step closer for coach Maciej Skorza’s men and early elimination for DPR Korea.

Meanwhile, Vietnam’s attacking woes continued as they failed to score for a second time in a row, settling for a 0-0 draw against Jordan. The combination of results left UAE and Jordan in need of a score draw when they faced each other on the last matchday of the group to progress together to the next round.

After a 196-minute drought, Tien Linh finally broke Vietnam’s duck, but his early strike was rendered meaningless as goalkeeper Bui Tien Dung failed to deal with Kang Kuk Chol’s free-kick, sending the ball into his own net, and Ri Chung Gyu converted from the spot in the 90th minute to earn DPR Korea a 2-1 victory and send the pre-tournament favourites packing.

Simultaneously at Buriram Stadium, Al Ameri tapped-in from point-blank following a corner-kick for his second goal of the campaign and looked like earning the UAE the three points, but left-back Ihab Ali snuck behind the Emirati defence and slotted home a late equaliser, confirming both sides’ progression to the last eight.
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

QUARTER-FINALS
AUSTRALIA 1-0 SYRIA
(After extra time)

Substitute Al Hassan Toure’s goal in the 101st minute of a closely-fought encounter saw Australia qualify for the Semi-finals – and ensure the nation’s best-ever finish at the tournament – on a night when the Olyroos dug deep to overcome a valiant Syrian side.

After a bright and breezy start, Australia’s Ramy Najjarine curled a third-minute effort narrowly wide of the target, before Syria’s first genuine foray into opposition territory resulted in Mohamad Al Barri having his shot blocked by the right leg of onrushing Australia goalkeeper Tom Glover.

By way of contrast to the relative cut and thrust of the first period, chances were few and far between after the break, Glover’s save from a fierce Barakat strike the only noteworthy action as the game inexorably moved towards extra-time.

After Mohamad Yazan Ourabi reacted superbly to repel Trent Buhagiar’s close-range effort, Australia took the lead. Aiden O’Neill’s pinpoint pass found Toure, who expertly prodded the ball beyond Ourabi and into the net to send Graham Arnold’s charges through to the Semi-finals.
Hosts Thailand finally saw their run at the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 come to an end as Saudi Arabia squeezed past Akira Nishino’s side to advance to the Semi-finals.

Thailand went into the game at Thammasat Stadium having taken the runners-up spot in Group A to make it into the knockout rounds of the competition for the first time ever, and there was no sense that the War Elephants were out of their depth.

Suphanat Mueanta hit the post with a wicked curling shot that gave Saudi Arabia goalkeeper Mohammed Al Yami no chance as the Thais made a strong start. However, as the game wore on, the Saudis grew into the game.

Nothing separated the teams until the 70th minute, when, after Abdullah Al Hamdan was fouled just inside the area, the Al Shabab striker stepped up to stroke his penalty home and take Saad Al Shehri’s side through, simultaneously breaking Thai hearts.
Korea Republic registered a fourth successive victory at Thailand 2020 thanks to a dramatic 2-1 win over Jordan that propelled them into the Semi-finals.

Despite a late Jordan rally, Lee Dong-gyeong’s last gasp free-kick helped the Koreans move to within touching distance of what would be a first-ever Continental title at this level.

Korea Republic’s early dominance was rewarded on 16 minutes when, following a neatly worked free-kick, Cho Gue-sung headed home.

Kim Dae-won’s stinging drive nearly made it two for the East Asians moments later, as half-time approached, before Cho inexplicably fired over the bar from only six yards.

Jordan adopted a more positive approach immediately after the break, but it was Korea Republic who continued to look the most threatening with Kim Jin-gyu’s 52nd minute free-kick crashing against an upright.

Remarkably though, Jordan pulled themselves level with 15 minutes remaining when Yazan Al Naimat unleashed a terrific drive into the far corner.

However, Korea Republic substitute Lee duly stepped up to seal his side’s victory with the very last kick of the game.
The UAE made a flying start to their Quarter-final meeting with Uzbekistan at Rajamangala Stadium, but in the end, it was Ljubinko Drulovic's side who came out on top and with a place in the last four.

Zayed Alameri gave Maciej Skorza’s side the lead after 13 minutes after Uzbek goalkeeper Abduvakhid Nematov had already denied Khalfan Alhammadi, although the UAE were only able to hold on to their advantage for three minutes.

Ilkhom Alijanov’s long range strike levelled the scores before captain Islom Kobilov scored from the penalty spot to give the Central Asians the lead for the first time, with just 26 minutes on the clock.

Oybek Bozorov’s dipping, curling effort from long range doubled Uzbekistan’s lead four minutes before half time as Drulovic’s side went into the break in total control.

And while the UAE tried to summon up the energy to fight back, Jasurbek Yakhshiboev’s goal five minutes from time killed the game before Nurillo Tukhtasnov’s injury-time effort put an emphatic seal on a dominant display from the defending champions.
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

SEMI-FINALS
On a night of high drama at Bangkok’s Rajamangala Stadium, Nasser Al Omran’s deflected shot helped Saudi Arabia beat Uzbekistan 1-0 to claim a place in the Final, and, in the process, assure their participation at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

Despite their eventual capitulation, defending champions Uzbekistan were quickly into their stride as they looked the more threatening of the two sides in the opening moments. Indeed, Bobir Abdixolikov squandered a glorious chance to hand Uzbekistan the lead on 12 minutes, as the forward miscued his attempt with only Mohammed Al Yami to beat.

Moments later, Al Hamdan dragged a shot wide, before Abdixolikov somehow failed to convert from close range following a defensive lapse between Al Yami and defender Saud Abdulhamid.

Despite the high stakes, both teams continued to adopt a positive approach after the break, with midfielder Abdulrahman Ghareeb blazing over when well-placed and Al Yami saving superbly to deny Abdixolikov.

With caution replacing the initial verve, Ali Al Hassan’s drilled effort from distance proved a rare highlight as, with neither nation willing to give an inch, the match moved inextricably towards 30 additional minutes.

However, with three minutes remaining, Saudi Arabia went ahead. Substitute Al Omran unleashed a powerful effort that deflected off Al Hamdan and into the net, securing his side’s place in the Final.
Second-half goals from Kim Dae-won and Lee Dong-gyeong secured Korea Republic a place in the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 Final and a berth at the Tokyo Olympic Games as Kim Hak-bum’s side handed Australia a 2-0 defeat.

The Koreans put on a dominant display to outplay the Olyroos and ensure the country continued their remarkable run of qualification for the Olympic Games, which remains unbroken since Seoul hosted the event in 1988.

The win was no less than the Koreans deserved against an Australian side that was rarely granted a sight of goal throughout the 90 minutes.

Um Won-sang had fired wide and Kang Yoon-seong could only find the arms of Thomas Glover in the first quarter of the game before Oh Se-hun finally beat the goalkeeper, dropping off the defence to unleash a shot on the turn that crashed against the post.

Korea Republic cranked up the pressure after the interval, with Jeong Tae-wook hitting the woodwork with his header as Kim Hak-bum’s side edged closer and closer to a breakthrough.

The opening goal finally came as a neat one-two, with Lee Dong-jun allowing Lee You-hyeon to find the space to hit a drive that again came back off the woodwork but, with Glover stranded, Kim Dae-won stroked the ball home to give Korea Republic the lead.

Twenty minutes later, the Taeguk Warriors doubled their lead when Lee Dong-gyeong picked up possession on the edge of the area after a commanding header by Won Du-jae and his strike beat Glover, crossing the line via the inside of the post.
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

3rd / 4th PLACE PLAY-OFF
AUSTRALIA 1-0 UZBEKISTAN

Australia claimed third place at the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 and the final berth at the Tokyo Olympic Games as Nicholas D’Agostino’s solo effort two minutes into the second half earned the Olyroos a 1-0 win over 10-man Uzbekistan.

D’Agostino’s strike at the end of a slaloming run gave Australia the lead, and the nation’s first appearance at the Olympics since 2008 was effectively confirmed when Oybek Bozorov was sent off with little over half an hour remaining.

Australia had struggled to make an impression in the opening 45 minutes of the game and it was the Uzbeks who fashioned the more likely opportunities in the first half.

Jasurbek Yakshiboev squandered a pair of chances to put his side in front, heading at Thomas Glover from eight yards before failing to put enough bend on his shot from the edge of the area following a break that left the Australian defence chasing back. Nurillo Tukhtasnov also shot high over the bar from close range.

Uzbekistan were to rue those misses as D’Agostino showed off his ability to put Australia in front. Picking the ball up 35 yards from goal, the forward drove past two opposing defenders before giving himself room to side foot the ball into the bottom corner.

Uzbekistan’s hopes of finding a way back into the game were dealt a decisive blow just before the hour mark when, six minutes after coming off the bench, substitute Bozorov was shown a straight red card by referee Mohammed Hassan for a dangerous challenge on Zachary Duncan.
Korea Republic claimed the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 title following a dramatic 1-0 extra-time win over Saudi Arabia.

Jeong Tae-wook’s goal in the 113th minute of a closely-fought encounter helped Korea Republic seal their first-ever Continental crown at this level, one that comes four years after they dramatically lost to Japan in the Final of the competition’s 2016 edition.

For Saudi Arabia, however, the result brought late heartbreak following a campaign in which they had excelled.

Having already assured their places at the Tokyo Olympic Games, both sides adopted a positive approach at the start of the encounter. However, there was to be little in the way of goalmouth action until Jeong Woo-yeong’s 20th minute effort was superbly saved by Mohammed Al Yami.
TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

After Abdullah Al Hamdan had briefly threatened to open the scoring at the other end, the Koreans went close once again, this time Oh Se-hun exchanging passes with Kim Jin-gyu before firing narrowly past the post from the edge of the area.

As half-time approached, Jeong Woo-yeong spurned a glorious opportunity to put his side ahead, the midfielder blasting Kim Jin-ya’s cross over the bar when well-placed to leave the teams level at the break.

Following the restart, and with Saudi Arabia defending resolutely, Korea Republic continued to push for the opener, as first substitute Lee Dong-jun was denied by Al Yami’s outstretched right arm and then Kim Jin-ya dragged his shot wide of the target on 62 minutes.

In truth, genuine chances were few and far between after those near misses, with Al Yami’s excellent reflex stop from Lee Dong-jun and Abdulrahman Ghareeb’s late drive from distance the last noteworthy moments as the game moved towards 30 minutes of additional time.

After Oh had headed over from a corner and a tame Lee Dong-gyeong effort was easily gathered by Al Yami, Korea Republic went ahead, Lee Dong-gyeong’s pinpoint free-kick finding Jeong Tae-wook who headed home.

Try as they may, Saudi Arabia were unable to find an equaliser in what precious little time remained, leaving Korea Republic to celebrate at the final whistle.
TECHNICAL TOPICS
AN UNDERSCORED MESSAGE

“Sometimes in football you have to score goals.” The comment was made, tongue-in-cheek one would imagine, by Thierry Henry – a player who ran in 335 goals for his clubs and the senior team in France. The wisdom of his remark, however, was underscored by a tournament that served as an excuse to blow the dust off old clichés about ‘football being all about scoring goals’. The pattern of goalscoring in Thailand is reviewed elsewhere in this report. But, rather than how the goals were scored, it was the topic of why they were not scored that provoked debate among the AFC technical observers at the tournament.

Firstly, the facts. The 32 matches in Thailand produced 69 goals at an average of 2.16 per game. Two fixtures (Thailand 5 Bahrain 0; UAE 1 Uzbekistan 5) accounted for 11 of the total. The other 30 averaged 1.93. Overall, the tournament yielded one goal per 43 minutes of play.

This signified a 16% decline in comparison with the 2018 tournament – from 82 to 69. And, if anybody at the debating table suggests “with Olympic places at stake, there were more motives for caution”, remind them that the finals in Doha in 2016, with Rio 2016 Olympic Games’ places at stake, produced 103. The tournament in Thailand registered a significant 33% downturn on that figure.

For the sake of comparison, the AFC Asian Cup 2019 produced an average of 2.55 per game; the 2018 FIFA World Cup 2.64; the 2019 AFC Champions League 2.81; the European equivalent 2.93; and, if we turn to age-limit competitions, it might be worth mentioning the 3.71 at Europe’s U-21 finals in 2019. The exceptionally meagre harvest in Thailand encouraged the technical observers to discuss a number of inter-related topics.

THE GLASS IS HALF-FULL

Those who are determined to focus on positives would immediately see the goal drought as a symptom of good defending. “You need to have a good defence rather than a good attack,” said Saudi Arabia coach Saad Al Shehri. “It’s important to have good defensive organisation.”

His team certainly highlighted both sides of this particular coin. On the attacking side, the silver medallists scored five goals in their six matches – two of them penalties and one a somewhat bizarre deflection. But their defensive mechanisms were so finely tuned that they conceded only two goals in their 570 minutes on the field of play. Korea Republic coach Kim Hak-Bum admitted after the Final: “We anticipated that Saudi Arabia would take us all the way to penalties because they had a perfect defence.”

The Saudi defence was based on a solid, disciplined back four marshalled by Al Tambakti, who, in the words of László Szalai, capturing the team of technical observers, was “practically impossible to get past”. The line was protected by a twin screen of Al-Hassan and Ali, while the team’s fast, skilful, indefatigable wide midfielders were ready to sprint back and exert reverse pressing. The side was prepared to hold a high line and press early with a group of five or six players prepared to press the ball, tackle aggressively and sometimes use the referee’s whistle to buy time. If the advanced pressure was unsuccessful, there was rapid retreat into a deeper block.

“They and the other successful teams such as Korea Republic and Uzbekistan had been efficiently drilled in when to press the ball and when it was the right moment to drop collectively behind the ball and be adept in positioning themselves for the interception. Late transitions to the defensive block, shortage or mistiming of cover and pressure on the flanks and leaving unmarked spaces between lines were among the main reasons for teams departing early,” Morteza Mohases commented.

With high temperatures and humidity erecting a barrier to sustained collective high pressing, the common denominator in Thailand was pressure on the ball-carrier to buy time for retreat into a midfield defensive block.
“I would not over-emphasise the quality of defending,” Narayanan Sivaji added, “because we had many instances of defenders rushing in and either being beaten or giving away needless fouls. Poor decision-making comes into play when you see careless tackles on opponents who are not in a position to cause immediate danger.”

This frequently applied to situations where opponents were being strongly pressed in wide areas but were allowed to get out of jail by untimely fouls.

TRIOS AND QUARTETS

One of the salient features among defensive mechanisms was the continuing trend towards three centre-backs. At the 2016 tournament, all the contestants operated with a back line of four. In 2018, four teams opted for three. And, in Thailand, this was increased to five, with DPR Korea, Japan, Jordan, Qatar and Vietnam adopting this structure as their default setting. Four of this quintet departed after the Group Stage. Saudi Arabia mirrored Japan’s three-at-the-back structure when the teams met in Group B.

For the record, five of the other teams opted for 1-4-2-3-1, one for 1-4-1-4-1 and Korea Republic played 1-4-3-3, while the remaining four operated variations on 1-4-4-2.

“We could see that teams playing three central defenders found it easier to exploit the wide areas," Seung-bum Choi remarked. "But the athletic qualities of the wing-backs become fundamental, as any shortfall in fitness gives space to the other team.”

In theory, the observers noted, advanced wing-backs provide additional cover against counterattacks following loss of possession. But, in conditions less than conducive to high collective pressing, this numerical advantage was rarely made to tell.

“Three of the four teams in Group D adopted variations on the back three,” Mohases added, “to create numerical advantages in midfield. On the other hand, the weak point was often the unguarded space in the wide areas and coverage of the vital space between the goalkeeper and the back three. Opponents were usually intelligent enough to position attackers in the wide areas to stretch the defence. I’m sure DPR Korea, for example, addressed this issue when they analysed their games against UAE and Jordan.”

From a development perspective, the technical observers stressed the importance of coaching centre-backs in the art of 1v1 defending – and establishing how high the line of three should operate. They also led into another area for discussion with the opinion that “playing with three at the back gives more opportunities for small, tricky attackers.”

STRIKING THE RIGHT NOTE?

“We seem to be developing similar types of attackers.”

The point of view expressed during one of the technical observers’ meetings sparked debate about the attackers on view.

“On the positive side,” Szalai commented, “we’ve seen a high number of fast, mobile forwards, yet a low number of accomplished finishers. Thailand were a good example because they had clever, streetwise and skilful attackers.”

Sentences like “the need for a goal-scorer was obvious” or “the lack of a prolific scorer stood out
like a sore thumb” frequently appeared in the observers’ notebooks. The scoring chart in Thailand underpinned this thesis. At the head of it, a quintet with a modest tally of three. UAE’s Al Ameri was a central attacker, as was Iraq’s Nassif (who made only one start). Thailand’s Jaroensak played wide on the right; Australia’s D’Agostino usually operated in the wake of the target man. And Uzbekistan defender Kobilov joined those four on the basis of three converted penalties. Saudi Arabia, Korea Republic, Thailand and Uzbekistan were among the teams whose central attackers caught the eye – but struggled to hit the net.

“Scoring tended to be shared around the team,” mused Sivaji. “There was no reliance on specialist goal-scorers.”

Is this positive?

One striking statistic is that Saudi Arabia reached the final on the back of 17 on-target goal attempts in the previous five matches – and added only one to that total during the 120 minutes against Korea Republic to finish with an average of three per match. The question is to what extent poor finishing accounted for the shortage of goals. The tournament produced 782 goal attempts, of which 250 were on target. In other words, less than one in three (32% to be precise). As this was a constant percentage throughout the Group Stage and Knockout rounds, it was a general problem from which the top teams were not exempt. What can be done to improve standards of finishing?

MIND GAMES

“Another factor behind the shortage of goals is that so many teams struggled to find solutions for breaking down a deep, strong defence.”

Games are easy to play from the touchline. But the observers (and the coaches, one would imagine) were frequently frustrated by poor decision-making in the final third – mostly in terms of unmarked team-mates remaining unnoticed or unused. Or in terms of choosing the right moment to try a shot at goal.

The accuracy of passing in the attacking third is not an infallible guide, as the risky creative pass is to be applauded. In other words, the statistics can be regarded as no more than an indicator. What’s more, the averages can be misleading. The hosts, for example, registered a final-third success rate of 79% against Iraq but only 51% against Saudi Arabia. The figures, by the way, emphasise the silver-medallists’ compactness in their defensive third. They restricted Uzbekistan to 59%; Qatar to 57%, Syria to 41% and, in the final, Korea Republic to 63%. The glaring exception came in their opening game when they started with three at the back and allowed Japan a success rate of 77% (and conceded their only goal until extra-time in the Final).

The percentages in the table relate to the number of passes in the final third successfully received by a team-mate.

CROSS REFERENCES

The number of goals derived from crosses and cut-backs is reviewed elsewhere in this report. But one of the debating points for the technical observers was the quality of deliveries from the wide areas. A 100% success rate in terms of finding a team-mate is, admittedly, mission impossible.
But the observers remarked on the number of deliveries – and this also applied to corners – that failed to clear the first defender or simply ran out of play.

The pattern of wing play travelled further along the pathway towards change-footed wingers, such as Uzbekistan’s incisive left-footed right-winger Yakshiboev, with the result that crosses despatched with their preferred foot tended to curl nicely into goalkeeper’s gloves. The trend towards reliance on full-backs (or wing-backs in five-defender formations) to deliver crosses was accentuated during the tournament in Thailand.

From the defensive angle, Australia illustrated acumen in defending against crosses by restricting Bahrain and Thailand to one success apiece (from 12 and 19 attempts respectively), while only two of Syria’s 25 crosses reached a team-mate during the Quarter-final. Saudi Arabia’s defensive expertise was again illustrated by the fact that, on the run to the Final, they intercepted all but five of their opponents’ 51 crosses. Korea Republic fared better against Al-Shehri’s team: in the Final, seven of their 15 crosses reached a team-mate.

The debate point was whether a success rate of around one in four is acceptable – or whether more training-ground work is indicated with a view to increasing the productivity of wide players (especially full-backs) when it comes to supplying crosses.

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<th>Crosses per game</th>
<th>Success</th>
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<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
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<td>DPR Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>Syria</td>
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<td>Bahrain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
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<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China PR</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A SAFE PAIR OF FEET?**

Venturing off the line to deal with high crosses required sound decision-making by goalkeepers who, by and large, responded to the challenge.

“Goalkeepers generally showed good shot-stopping and cross-handling capabilities,” Sivaji commented. “They were also ready and alert to deal with balls played over defences which played with high lines in midfield and high press situations. However, in the area of involvement in build-up play, not many showed expertise.”

Korea Republic keeper Song was selected by the technical observers for the Best Goalkeeper on the basis of expertise in all areas – his ability to initiate construction illustrated by the fact...
that 27 of his 31 passes against Uzbekistan were accurately played to a team-mate. Saudi Arabia’s Al Yami exhibited some excellent shot-stopping (spreading himself well and making crucial blocks with his feet). On the other hand, his long distribution frequently signified work for the ball-boys. Thai keeper Nareechan was given credit for his 1v1 defending - refusing to commit early and transferring the pressure to the oncoming attacker. Australia’s Glover, as Szalai commented, “displayed good positioning and competent handling. In general, his distribution was also very accurate.” In other words, the tournament showcased some excellent goalkeeping qualities but raised questions about the development of commanding, confidence-inspiring personalities and about whether the keepers are, in general, being fully exploited as team members.

A WINNING COMBINATION?

Glover’s preference for playing long to bypass Uzbekistan’s high pressing during the bronze-medal match signified a departure from Australia’s habitual patient, possession game. One of the talking points to emerge from the Group Stage focused on the demise of teams playing an attractive combination game, such as UAE or, most notably, Japan, who, in their three matches, had 66% of the ball against Saudi Arabia, 70% against Syria and 55% against Qatar, whilst playing more passes than any other team in the tournament.

“Teams like Japan, IR Iran and Thailand,” Mohases remarked, “displayed skill and resilience under pressure. They were comfortable delivering short and long passes with pace and accuracy in neat triangular or square moves. But sleek passing was not enough - and they paid the price for defensive lapses.”

“This was true of Thailand,” Sivaji concurred. “The hosts showed us some excellent attacking play based on good skills under pressure and a willingness to make high-speed runs behind defences. But we did see good combination football rewarded. Korea Republic and Uzbekistan, for example, displayed exciting qualities in attack with good combinations, willingness to make skilful solo runs - and some memorable goals.”

The tournament statistics reveal that, of the 21 matches that produced a result (the other 11 were draws) nine were won by the team with a lesser share of possession. Some of the data was striking: Japan losing to Saudi Arabia and Syria despite 66% and 70% respectively. The tournament offered a rich weave of combination play and direct attacking, with the technical observers’ notebooks containing comments such as “direct forward play from goalkeeper or defenders to target striker”; “long balls to front players with limited success, as team-mates were not close enough to support”; or “long balls to strikers and emphasis on competing for the second ball”.

As an indicator of playing styles, the table (right) shows each team’s average percentage of long passes with, significantly maybe, the top teams among those who used the long pass with lesser frequency.

SMALL CHANGE?

Kim Hak-Bum maintained: “I knew decisive moments would come from substitutions”, and players who emerged from the Korea Republic bench accounted for three of the champions’ crucial goals. Curiously, he made one change during half-time in four of his team’s six matches - all in middle-to-front positions.
“But, in general,” commented Choi, “substitutions were made through injuries, fatigue or to break up play during the closing moments. We didn’t see that many tactical changes.”

“There were no hard and fast rules,” added Mohases, “but coaches used their subs to give an extra burst of energy, to protect their star players from fatigue and, possibly, surprise the opposition.”

“We saw a lot of same-for-same substitutions,” remarked Sivaji, “but it was sometimes a case of changing the qualities of the players rather than the team structure. I would cite Australia’s Quarter-final against Syria as an example. Graham Arnold sent on Duncan, a central midfielder with a more defensive perspective to retain possession. When O’Neill came on, he started to make more probing passes, taking more risks - and it was his through pass that created the goal. Then Buhagiar came on to make more penetrating runs, with and without the ball, always looking to get in behind the opponents. They were not structural changes but they changed the personality of the team and posed problems to the opposition.”

The final balance of the tournament in Thailand reveals that 25% of the goals were scored by substitutes. But it was a high percentage of a low total…
GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

AN ELUSIVE PRIZE

The balance sheet after the final tournament in 2018 revealed that the price of goals had increased radically since the previous edition in Qatar. The 32 matches played in Thailand in the 2020 edition demonstrated that goals had become even more expensive – to the extent that the shortage of goals features prominently in the Technical Topics section of this report.

An average of 2.16 goals per game at a rate of one per 43 minutes of play provides ample food for thought. So does the fact that it required 11.33 goal attempts to conjure up a goal, compared with 8.96 at senior level during the AFC Asian Cup in 2019. The difference may not look important, but, expressed as a percentage, the efficiency rate is 22% poorer. If we add in the fact that no individual scored more than three goals, there are motives to repeat the talking point that was raised in 2018: can the shortage of goals at U23 level be linked to elite club football, where goals frequently talk various languages? Are young Asian players being given enough chances to develop their goal-scoring talents?

SET PLAYS

The fact that 28% of the goals in Thailand stemmed from dead-ball situations seems, on the face of it, to signal middle ground between the 32% at the AFC Asian Cup and the 26% in the 2019 AFC Champions League. But, with the introduction of VAR making a noticeable impact, penalties accounted for 11 of the 19 set-play goals (a massive 58% compared with 37% at the AFC Asian Cup). Of the 82 goals scored at the U23 tournament in 2018, only four had been spot-kicks. In Thailand, penalties accounted for 16% of the modest goal harvest.

Although free-kick successes were few and far between, they provided some of the tournament’s decisive moments – including the indirect free-kick on their left which allowed Korea Republic defender Jeong Tae-wook to head the extra-time goal that decided the title. Or the spectacular 90+5 direct strike by Lee Dong-gyeong that decided their Quarter-final against Jordan. Equally striking was Reno Piscopo’s direct free-kick that put Australia 1-0 ahead in the opening 1-1 draw against Iraq. When defending against free-kicks, there was a clear trend towards holding the defensive line as high as possible, allowing the keeper freedom to come off his line and gather.

However, the eyebrow-raising statistic to emerge from Thailand was that only two goals were directly derived from corners: DPR Korea’s corner on the left (+ two headers) that gave them their consolation goal against Jordan, and a corner on the right (again against Jordan) that allowed UAE to take the lead in their 1-1 draw. It represented an astonishing success rate of one goal per 144 corners.

Being charitable, it might be claimed that Thailand’s early penalty against Iraq resulted from a corner. Or that IR Iran’s goal in the 2-1 defeat by Korea Republic came from a cross on the left that could be traced back to a short corner. Even such generosity, however, fails to mask a success rate far removed from 1:40 at the AFC Asian Cup or 1:34 in the AFC Champions League.
GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

There are, evidently, two sides to the coin. The technical observers noted that deliveries fell short of excellence, often failing to clear the first defender.

“In attack,” commented Morteza Mohases, “the most notable trend was to assemble a tightly-grouped line of four or five players who then aggressively attacked the ball. In defence, the clear tendency was to utilise a mix of individual and zonal marking. But there was great diversity in terms of stationing men on the posts, in blocking positions or leaving players upfield as targets for counterattacks.”

Two goals from 288 corners raises obvious questions about the amount of training-ground time profitably dedicated to this speciality.

OPEN PLAY

The low scoring in Thailand means that almost all categories of open-play goals (which accounted for 72% of the total) registered a downturn in comparison with the previous two tournaments - among them, combination moves that accounted for a minimal quota. Wing play yielded 30% of the goals scored in open play, but, as mentioned in the Technical Topics section of this report, represented an unspectacular dividend from 1,016 crosses.

At the AFC Asian Cup, wing play generated 40% of the goals; in the AFC Champions League, 44%. Through balls (forward passes) emerged as co-leader in productivity, albeit eight goals down on the figure posted in 2018. The other joint leader was the statistical surprise package. The 12 successes from long range represented the only category to register an upward turn on the 2018 figures. Many of them were spectacular - none more so than the left-footed bullet fired by Korea Republic’s Cho Gue-sung to put his team 2-0 up during the group fixture against IR Iran.

The upward surge of goals scored from long range interlocks with the rarity of combination goals, with many teams preferring to try their luck from distance rather than trying to penetrate compact defensive blocks. The other factor was that, against an established, constructed attack, defending was so deep and penalty areas so crowded that the search for space provided an inducement to play the ball back into the area outside the box - Uzbekistan’s first and third goals in the Quarter-final against UAE providing prime examples.

The density of defensive blocks also restricted successes from solo runs - though one striking run from deep by Nicholas D’Agostino provided the crucial goal that beat Uzbekistan in the bronze-medal match and earned Australia a place at the Tokyo Olympic Games.

At a defence-dominated tournament, successful counterattacks were also in short supply. Many teams immediately applied fierce pressure on the ball after losses of possession, buying time for rapid transitions into defensive shape. Saudi Arabia, well-drilled in countering counters and adept at breaking up play, provided a prime example of well-oiled mechanisms designed to minimise vulnerability when attacking moves broke down. As a result, counterattacks produced only five goals – 10% of the open-play total, compared with 30% at the previous U23 tournament. Three of the successes were collective counters; one, the swift reaction to advanced ball-winning; and the other a solo effort. Paying tribute to the efficacy of counter-the-counter mechanisms, no goals were scored via classic counterattacks from deep positions.
### GOALS FROM SET PLAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>GUIDELINES</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corners</td>
<td>Direct from / following a corner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free kicks (direct)</td>
<td>Direct from a free kick</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free kicks (indirect)</td>
<td>Following a free kick</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties</td>
<td>Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throw-ins</td>
<td>Following a throw-in</td>
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### GOALS FROM OPEN PLAY

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<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>GUIDELINES</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Combinations</td>
<td>Wall pass / combination move</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crosses</td>
<td>Cross from the wing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cut-backs</td>
<td>Pass back from the bye-line</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diagonals</td>
<td>Diagonal pass into the penalty box</td>
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<td>Running with the ball</td>
<td>Dribble and close-range shot / dribble and pass</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Long-range shots</td>
<td>Direct shot / shot and rebound</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Forward passes</td>
<td>Through pass or pass over the defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defensive Errors</td>
<td>Bad back-pass / mistake by the goalkeeper</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Goals</td>
<td>Goal by the opponent</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL GOALS SCORED: 69**
TALKING POINTS

A PICTURE THAT’S HARD TO SCAN?

Among the enchantments of talking football is that you can build from the back and, some time later, find the ball out on the left wing without being able to remember exactly how it got there. This was the case when the technical observers sat down to debate a seemingly simple question: what were the pros and cons of having the senior national team coach in charge of the U23s?

The question was inspired by the presence of Graham Arnold, Hajime Moriyasu, Félix Sánchez, Akira Nishino and Park Hang-seo on the benches of Australia, Japan, Qatar, Thailand and Vietnam. In the credit column, the observers highlighted the advantages in terms of connectivity, tactical cohesion and awareness of the coach’s demands, plus, as Morteza Mohases put it, “a huge boost of motivational factors for the younger players”.

In the debit column, there were only faintly-pencilled hints at greater reliance on the backroom staff for in-depth knowledge of opposing teams at U23 level.

But discussion veered off towards the scenarios the coaches in Thailand were required to contend with. The player lists featured Mo’Ath Al Ammouri (Jordan), Jassem Abdulsallam (Qatar) and Suphanat Mueanta (Thailand). The first was unused; the second played 190 minutes; and the latter contributed 314 minutes and two goals. All three were born in 2002 and their presence meant that the tournament embraced a six-year time-span starting with the 162 players born in 1997. For the record, there were 96 from 1998, 59 from 1999, 38 from 2000 and 10 from 2001. The tournament therefore mirrored the realities of senior team – or club – dressing-rooms where as much as a decade (or even more) can separate the squad members’ ages. From a coaching perspective, it meant that the U23 competition was far removed from ‘development tournaments’ such as the U-16s or U-19s, where the focus is on a much tighter age-bracket.

Talking of the U-19s, the observers were surprised that squad lists featured no more than a handful of names from the 2018 final tournament in Indonesia - and wondered about the current development status in international football for the players who fall into the gap between the U-19 and U23 levels. A subsidiary question was whether the youngest players at the tournament in Thailand would experience motivation challenges when ‘stepping back down’ to the U-19s.
GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

At the same time, assessing the players’ potential to make the jump into the senior team entails giving them opportunities. Although Korea Republic, for example, used 19 players on the first two matchdays and there was extensive rotation in line-ups, 40 outfield players (only Syria used more than one goalkeeper) remained unused and a further 39 played 45 minutes or less. Does the fact that 25% of outfielders were short of match action suggest that the coaches’ answer to the results v development dilemma was a vote for the former?

All of which led back to the original question: is the U23 job best done by the coach of the senior team?

SO VAR SO GOOD?
The implementation of VAR technology at the 32 matches played in Thailand represented a major innovation that added emotional value to several matches – including the Final, when the huge contingent of Korea Republic fans had to endure heart-wrenching moments while the goal that won the title was being reviewed for a possible ‘handball in attack’, as the giant screens at the Rajamangala Stadium informed them. The technical observers awarded high marks to the system, which, in their view, had generally implemented the ‘maximum benefit; minimum interference’ philosophy – though they emphasised “the duration of each intervention should be kept as short as possible”.

AFC had ensured that teams received VAR briefings prior to the tournament and the observers debated whether “generally good behaviour was influenced by the knowledge that more than four match officials were monitoring the proceedings”. Was it a coincidence that the number of goals scored from the penalty spot shot up from four in China in 2018 to 11 in Thailand? The difference would have been even more striking had Bahrain and Saudi Arabia not missed two other spot kicks during the group phase.

MORE COMPETITION?
Discussion in Thailand was fuelled by the constant search for improvement allied with concerns that failure to qualify for a final tournament sometimes signifies an abrupt end to fixture lists and a consequent lack of opportunities for players to acquire international experience. So the talking point was whether the competition should echo the AFC Asian Cup with an extension to 24 teams? Opinions were divided. One view was “if there’s a lack of quality facilities and competition in some countries, 24 teams would at least give a chance to improve undeniably talented players”.

On the other side of the debating table: “it might help development of players but more matches at the final tournament means that significant additional expenses would have to be factored in. There’s also a risk that more teams might dilute the quality of the tournament, although this didn’t prove to be the case at the AFC Asian Cup. But high-scoring lopsided games are no guarantee of player development.” What do you think?
WINNING COACH
While the Saudi Arabia coach Saad Al Shehri was out, on his haunches, at the edge of the technical area gesturing his players into position, Kim Hak-bum remained impassive on the Korea Republic bench, with arms folded across his chest, leaving his assistants to play a more visible role in the technical area. It wasn’t until the 82nd minute of the Final that, with the opposition’s defensive acumen frustrating his team, he could be seen issuing instructions on the touchline. His demeanour could be summarised by a comment that he had made after the Semi-final against Australia: “I had to stay calm and composed in order to instil confidence in my players.”

The Final illustrated the modus operandi that had served him well throughout the tournament. For example, Lee Dong-jun, the attacker short-listed by AFC’s technical observers for the Player of the Tournament award, started on the bench. When he appeared after the interval, it was to replace SC Freiburg’s Jeong Woo-jeong, whose penetrating runs from the left had created the clearest chances of the first half. It was Kim Hak-bum’s style. In Thailand, the only player to start all six games was goalkeeper Song Bum-keun. All 20 outfielders were used with constant permutations from match to match. It made his team hard to read. As IR Iran head coach Hamid Estili remarked, “We have a good team of scouts and analysts, but we just couldn’t predict …”

Kim Hak-bum commented, “Our preparations for the tournament took into consideration the weather in Thailand and the fatigue levels we could expect. We had some issues regarding drops in our levels of performance during matches, but the rotation system worked really well and I think that was the reason why we won the tournament.”
WINNING COACH

The former defender at Henan, Gangwon and Seongnam had been recruited in 2018 by a national association convinced that he was the right man for the job - not least on account of his reputation as a motivator.

“I made a list of problems to address and I started to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each individual player.” The immediate reward was a gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games, thanks to a 2-1 extra-time victory over Japan. The same principles were applied to the tournament in Thailand.

“My coaching staff and I planned to give every player opportunities to prove themselves and to become better players,” he explained. “But, apart from developing individuals, we also had to think about results. So, I wanted my players to compete for places so that I knew that anyone could go on to the pitch and deliver. And I wanted to show that I had firm faith in my players. And my belief in them was the key for me to make a successful journey as head coach.”

Shrewd substitutions certainly paid off. Three crucial goals were scored by players who came off the bench, including the 90+3 winner against China PR. “I felt that decisive moments would come from substitutions,” he acknowledged. “Those were tactical choices that we discussed and made. There was a lot of pressure on us, but I think we made the right choices. In the Final, we anticipated that we might go to penalties because Saudi Arabia had a perfect defence and were capable of taking the game right through to the end. We stressed that if we went to extra-time or penalties we had to stay as calm as possible. Even though we didn’t play as well as we could throughout the match, I told them the key was to be calm …”
**THAILAND 2020**

**AFC U23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2020 THAILAND TECHNICAL REPORT**

### ATTACKING

1-2-4-4

#### Key Features
- Compact 1-4-4-2 in attack and defence; keeper alert to ball over the top
- Well organised, disciplined, aggressive defence, mainly in mid third and own half
- Possession game with patient short passing build up + diagonals to flanks
- Wingers cut in to create space for full backs, notably No 3 Gersbach on left

### DEFENDING

1-4-4-2

#### Key Features
- Solo skills by No 11 Piscopo, No 15 D'Agostino provided attacking spark
- No 1 Glover inspired confidence; sound goalkeeping, excellent distribution
- Powerful, hard working players with winning spirit, great mental strength

### TEAM SHAPES

**CoACH**

**GRAHAM ARNOLD**

**Nationality**

**Australia**

### TEAM PROFILES

**Australia**

#### Squad

- **Goalkeeper**
  - 1 THOMAS GLOVER 24/12/1997
  - 12 JORDAN HOLMES 08/05/1997
  - 18 DANIEL MARGUSH 28/11/1997

- **Defender**
  - 2 GABRIEL CLEUR 31/01/1998
  - 3 ALEX GERSBACH 08/05/1997
  - 4 DYLAN RYAN 10/06/2000
  - 5 JOSHUA LAWS 26/02/1998
  - 6 TASS MOURDOUKOUTAS 03/03/1998
  - 14 THOMAS DENG 27/03/1997
  - 20 CONNOR O’TOOLE 04/07/1997

- **Midfielder**
  - 8 ZACH DUNCAN 31/05/2000
  - 10 DENIS GENREAU 21/05/1999
  - 13 AIDEN O’NEILL 04/07/1996
  - 17 KEANU BACCUS 07/06/1998
  - 23 CONNOR METCALFE 05/11/1999

- **Forward**
  - 7 RAMY NAJJARINE 23/04/2000
  - 9 AL HASSAN TOURE 30/05/2000
  - 11 RENO PISCOPO 27/05/1998
  - 15 NICHOLAS D’AGOSTINO 25/02/1998
  - 16 TRENT BUHAGIAR 27/02/1998
  - 19 DANIEL BOUMAN 02/07/1998
  - 21 JACOB ITALIANO 30/07/2000
  - 22 BEN FOLAMI 08/06/1999

**Coach**

**GRAHAM ARNOLD**

**Nationality**

**Australia**

### Key Features
- Well organised, disciplined, aggressive defence, mainly in mid third and own half
- Possession game with patient short passing build up + diagonals to flanks
- Wingers cut in to create space for full backs, notably No 3 Gersbach on left

### Statistics

**Best Player(s)**

- 11 PISCOPO
- 15 D’AGOSTINO
- 3 GERSBACH

**Total Goals**

- 5
  - 11 PISCOPO (1)
  - 15 D’AGOSTINO (3)
  - 9 TOURE (1)
BAHRAIN

SQUAD

GOALKEEPER
1 ANWAR AHMED 19/09/1997
21 YUSUF HABIB 09/01/1998
23 AMMAR MOHAMED 10/02/1999

DEFENDER
2 SAYED AMEEN 07/03/1999
3 AHMED BUGHAMMAR 30/12/1997
4 HUSAIN JAMEEL 03/10/1997
5 HAMAD AL SHAMSAN 29/09/1997
12 AHMED AL ZAIMOOR 26/07/1997
15 HASAN AL KARRANI 27/11/1997
20 SALEM ADEL HASAN 03/07/1997

MIDFIELDER
6 ABBAS AL ASFOOR 02/03/1999
7 AHMED AL SHEROOQI 22/05/2000
8 MOHAMED MARHOON 12/02/1998
9 AHMED SALEH 11/01/1998
10 MOHAMMED AL HARDAN 06/10/1997
11 ABDULRAHMAN AHMED 17/03/1997
13 HASIM AL JUBAN 17/04/2000
17 JASIM AL SALAMA 22/02/1998
18 ADNAN FAWAZ 30/10/1999
19 ABDULRAHMAN AL SALAMA 16/04/1998
22 ALI HASAN 29/11/1997

FORWARD
13 FAISAL AL ISA 28/03/1998
16 HASHIM SAYED ISA 03/04/1998

COACH

SAMIR CHAMMAM
NATIONALITY
TUNISIA

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
8 MARHOON
6 ABBAS

Total goals
8 MESHINO (2)
16 SAYED (1)

TEAM SHAPES

TEAM PROFILES

ATTACKING
1-2-1-4-3 or 1-4-2-3-1 with single or twin screening midfielders

DEFENDING
No 6 Al Asfoor the key linking element as holding midfielder in
1-2-1-4-3 attacking

KEY FEATURES
• 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-4-2-3-1 with single or twin screening midfielders
• No 6 Al Asfoor the key linking element as holding midfielder in
1-2-1-4-3 attacking
• Attack used combination play on wings and penetrating
passes behind lines
• Strong defending with solid, compact block with minimal gaps
between the lines
• Immediate pressure on the ball carrier after losing possession
in high areas
• Quick deliveries to striker No 9 Saleh after regains in own half
• Fast support from wide midfielders; good dribbling skills from
No 8 Marhoon on the right

ATTACK MOVEMENT
DEFENCE MOVEMENT
RUNNING WITH THE BALL
TEAM PROFILES

**CHINA PR**

### Squad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goalkeeper</td>
<td>LI GUANXI</td>
<td>25/09/1998</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CHEN WEI</td>
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<td></td>
<td>ZHANG YAN</td>
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<td>Defender</td>
<td>TONG LEI</td>
<td>16/12/1997</td>
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<td>WEI ZHEN</td>
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<td>ZHU CHENJIE</td>
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### Coach

**HAO WEI**

**Nationality:** CHINA PR

**Team Shapes**

- **Attacking:** 1-2-4-4
- **Defending:** 1-4-5-1

### Key Features

- 1-4-4-2 / 1-4-4-1-1 in first two matches; 1-4-3-3 in the final game
- Strong defending from midfield to deep; compact block with aerial power
- Fast transitions to defence; applied pressure on the ball while buying time to form a defensive block
- Attacks and counters used long passes to strikers and looked to gain possession of the second ball
- Emphasis on wing play with wingers and full backs delivering crosses
- Good shot stopping by goalkeeper; occasionally built from the back via centre backs
- Athletic, hard-working team handicapped by loss of target striker through injury

### Statistics

**Best Player(s):**

- 12 CHEN WEI
- 5 ZHU CHENJIE
- 10 HU JINGHANG

**Total Goals:**

- Conceded: 4

**Goals:**

- Attacking: 0-0
- Defending: 0-0
THAILAND 2020

AFC U23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2020 THAILAND TECHNICAL REPORT

TEAM PROFILES

DPR KOREA

COACH

RI YU-IL

NATIONALITY

DPR KOREA

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)

17 YONG-GWON
22 KUK-JIN

Total goals

15 HYON-JU (1)
7 CHUNG-GYU (1)

TEAM SHAPES

• 1-3-4-3 with fast transitions to compact, disciplined 1-5-4-1 defence
• Mix of quick, short passing through thirds and direct supply to front players
• Overlapping wing backs dribbling, delivering crosses; quick to defend wide areas
• Excellent off the ball movement in attack; mobile striker created spaces

KEY FEATURES

• Good individual technique; comfortable in possession under pressure
• Pressure on the ball and short passing options; then fast counters through middle
• Agile, athletic, focused players able to sustain high tempo game

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING

1-3-4-3

DEFENDING

1-5-4-1

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1 KANG JU-HYOK 31/05/1997
18 KIM JU-SONG 13/11/1999
21 RI CHOL-SONG 13/03/1998

DEFENDER

2 PAK CHOL-JU 01/01/1999
3 PAK KWANG-CHON 12/01/1999
5 JANG SONG-IL 21/03/1998
6 CHOE JIN-NAM 20/11/1998
8 JONG KUM-SONG 24/01/1997
19 KIM KYONG-SOK 19/02/2000

MIDFIELDER

4 SO JONG-GIL 09/03/1998
7 RI CHUNG-GYU 30/09/1998
10 KIM KUM-CHOL 07/04/1997
12 KANG KUK-CHOL 29/09/1999
15 RYANG HYON-JU 31/05/1998
16 MUN IN-JU 22/08/1999
17 RI YONG-GWON 03/03/1998

FORWARD

9 KIM KWANG-HYOK 24/03/1997
11 PAK KWANG-HUN 18/04/1997
13 SIM JU-IL 23/02/2000
22 KIM KUK-JIN 11/10/2000
23 KIM HWI-HWANG 25/01/2000
TEAM PROFILES

IR IRAN

COACH
HAMID ESTILI
NATIONALITY
IR IRAN

STATISTICS
Total goals
3
Best Player(s)
21 NOR AFKAN
10 SHEKARI

TEAM SHAPES

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

MERAJ ESMAEILI
13/01/2000
MEHDI NOROLLAHI
03/04/1997

DEFENDER

HOSSEIN SAKI
10/05/1997
MEHRAN DERAKHSHAN MEHR
10/08/1998
MOJTABA NAJARIAN
25/01/1998

MIDFIELDER

SINA ZAMEHRAN
10/03/1997
MEHDI MEHDIKHANI
28/07/1997

FORWARD

AMIR ROUSTAEI
05/08/1997
ALLAHYAR SAYYADMANESH
29/06/2001

TEAM SHAPES

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

COACH

HAMID ESTILI
NATIONALITY
IR IRAN

TEAM SHAPES

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

DEFENDER

MIDFIELDER

FORWARD

30/06/1998
09/04/1997
02/01/1997
04/09/1997
13/01/2000
03/04/1997
10/05/1997
10/08/1998
07/01/1997
01/09/1997
12/01/1997
07/09/1999
05/08/1997
05/12/1998
07/07/1997
27/01/1997

KEY FEATURES

• 1-4-4-1-1/4-2-3-1, switching to 1-4-3-3 in final game v China PR
• Excellent distribution + defending by No 21 Nor Afkan when switched to midfield
• Aggressive, industrious defending from midfield with strength and aerial power
• Immediate pressure after losing possession, allowing team to retreat to defensive shape

ATTACK MOVEMENT
1-2-4-4
DEFENCE MOVEMENT
11-4-5-1

DIRECT ATTACKS AND COUNTERS: long pass to strikers, second ball winning, or solo runs
Built from back with composed possession play when using 1-4-3-3 structure
Early crosses, dangerous long throws by left back No 19 Karimzadeh
TEAM PROFILES

IRAQ

COACH

ABDULGHANI SHAHAD

NATIONALITY
IRAQ

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
4 SHWAN
9 NASSIF
14 JABBAR

Total goals
4

9 NASSIF (3)
6 AMMARI (1)

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING
1-2-3-2-3

DEFENDING
1-5-4-1

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1 ARIAN SEVOK 01/07/1997
12 ALI KADHIM 24/10/1997
22 HUSAM MAHDI 06/01/1997

DEFENDER

2 MUSTAFA MOHAMMED JEBUR 14/01/1998
3 MUSTAFA MOHAMMED AL EZAIREJ 15/01/1997
4 NAJM SHWAN 09/07/1997
13 IHAB JARIR 11/01/1997
15 ALAA RAAD 20/02/1998
17 HASAN RAED 23/09/2000
19 MUNTADHER KHIKANI 03/12/2000
21 MUNTADHER SATTAR 04/01/1997

MIDFIELDER

5 ABDULABBAS AYAD 18/03/2000
6 AMIR AL AMMARI 27/07/1997
8 ALI QASIM 17/02/1997
10 MOHAMMED RIDHA 17/02/2000
11 OMER ASSI 03/01/1998
14 HUSSAIN JABBAR 09/03/1998
16 AL HASAN SAAD 20/02/2000
20 SADEQ ZAMIL 15/07/1999
23 MOHAMMED MEZHER 24/03/1998

FORWARD

7 MURAD SUBEH 01/04/1997
9 MOHAMMED QASIM 25/08/1997
18 MUEEN AHMED 01/01/1997

KEY FEATURES

- Generally 1-4-4-1-1 set up with fast transitions to 1-5-4-1 deep defending
- Emphasis on long passes to attackers by centre backs or goalkeeper
- Immediate pressing applied after losing possession; intense pressure from midfield
- Compact, aggressive, strong defending; aerial power used in set plays at both ends
- Good 1v1 skills in middle to front areas; finishing from solo runs or long range
- No 23 Mezher the attacking catalyst; forward runs, good individual technique
- Well organised unit; powerful, hard working players with experience, composure
TEAM PROFILES

JAPAN

COACH

HAJIME MORIYASU

NATIONALITY

JAPAN

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)

10 MESHINO
16 SOMA
8 TANAKA

Total goals

3

16 SOMA (1)
10 MESHINO (1)
8 TANAKA (1)

TEAM SHAPES

TEAM SHAPES

1-3-4-3 with fast transitions between 1-5-2-3 defence, 1-3-2-5 attack
• Passing game; neat high tempo combinations on the flanks, with wing backs pushing forward
• Dynamic movement with good 1v1 skills in all departments
• Fast transitions to solid, compact defending with emphasis on high pressing

KEY FEATURES

• Central midfielders No 7 Shunta and No 8 Ao Tanaka the creative playmakers
• Extensive squad rotation with player development priorities
• Fast, athletic, disciplined team with tactical understanding, strong work ethic

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1 RYOSUKE KOJIMA 30/01/1997
12 KEISUKE OSAKO 28/07/1999
23 KOSEI TANI 22/11/2000

DEFENDER

2 YUGO TATSUTA 21/06/1998
3 TSUYOSHI WATANABE 05/02/1997
5 DAIKI SUGIOKA 08/09/1998
15 MAKOTO OKAZAKI 10/10/1998
17 KOKI MACHIDA 25/08/1997
20 TAIYO KOGA 28/10/1998

MIDFIELDER

4 DAIKI SUGA 10/09/1998
6 MITSUKI SAITO 10/01/1999
7 SHUNTA TANAKA 26/05/1997
8 AO TANAKA 10/09/1998
10 RYOTARO MESHINO 18/06/1998
11 KEITA ENDO 22/11/1997
14 TSUKASA MORISHIMA 25/05/1997
16 YUKI SOMA 25/02/1997
21 TAISHI MATSUMOTO 22/08/1998
22 DAIKI HASHIOKA 17/05/1999

FORWARD

9 KOKI OGAWA 08/08/1997
13 AYASE UEDA 28/08/1998
18 KYOSUKE TAGAWA 11/02/1999
19 REO HATATE 21/11/1997

COACH

HAJIME MORIYASU

NATIONALITY

JAPAN

KEY FEATURES

• 1-3-4-3 with fast transitions between 1-5-2-3 defence, 1-3-2-5 attack
• Passing game; neat high tempo combinations on the flanks, with wing backs pushing forward
• Dynamic movement with good 1v1 skills in all departments
• Fast transitions to solid, compact defending with emphasis on high pressing
TEAM PROFILES

JORDAN

COACH

AHMED ABU ISMAIL

NATIONALITY
JORDAN

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1 ABDALLAH RA’ED ALFAKHORI 22/01/2000
12 AHMAD MOHANNAD JUAIDI 09/04/2001
22 RAFAT KHALDOON ALRABIE 31/07/1997

DEFENDER

2 IHAB MOHAMMAD ALI AL 11/3/1997
3 YAZAN MAHMOUD ABDELAAL 07/01/1999
5 HADI OMAR AHMED 14/04/2000
6 DANIAL AHMED AFANEH 24/03/2001
13 SHOOI GHASSAN AL QUZ’A 14/01/1999
15 SAED AHMAD ALROSAN 01/02/1997

MIDFIELDER

4 AHMAD THA’ER HAIKAL 02/04/1997
7 OMAR HANI ALZEBDIEH 27/06/1999
8 NOOR AL-DEEN AL RAWABDEH 24/02/1997
9 MOHAMMAD ZIAD ATIEH 13/02/1999
10 MOUSA MOHAMMAD SULEIMAN 10/06/1997
11 MOHAMMAD ISAM MASHEH 30/01/1997
16 NIZAR MAHMOUD AL RASHDAN 23/03/1999
18 IBRAHIM MOHAMMAD SAMI 27/04/2000
21 WARD HELAL ALBARRI 29/06/1997

FORWARD

14 ALI IYAD OLWAN 26/03/2000
17 MOHAMMAD ABDEL-MOTALIB ABURIZIQ 01/02/1999
19 YAZAN ABDALLAH ALNAIMAT 04/06/1999
20 MOHAMMAD WA’EL ALZUBI 15/04/1999
23 MOHANNAD JEHAD SEMREEN 08/01/2002

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING
1-3-4-3

DEFENDING
1-5-4-1

KEY FEATURES

• 1-3-4-3; quick to drop into midfield, held high line in 1-5-4-1 defending
• Good individual technique; ability to retain possession under pressure
• Effective combination play; varied attacking options on both flanks or through the middle
• Aggressive pressing from midfield; fast counters after regaining possession

• Skilful, mobile striker No 19 Yazan the focal point of attacking play
• Screening midfielders No 8 Al-Deen, No 4 Ahmad talented playmakers
• Good switches of play, changes of tempo; excellent team spirit, work ethic

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
8 AL-DEEN
4 AHMAD
2 IHAB
19 YAZAN

Total goals
4

19 YAZAN (1)
9 ZIAD (1)
7 OMAR (1)
2 IHAB (1)
KOREA REPUBLIC

COACH
KIM HAK-BUM
NATIONALITY
KOREA REPUBLIC

TEAM SHAPES

TEAM PROFILES

KOREA REPUBLIC

COACH
KIM HAK-BUM
NATIONALITY
KOREA REPUBLIC

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
11 DONG-JUN
4 SANG-MIN
1 BUM-KEUN
18 SE-HUN

Total goals
9

11 DONG-JUN (2)
9 GUE-SONG (2)
18 SE-HUN (2)
10 DONG-GYEON (2)
14 DAE-WON (1)

TEAM SHAPES

KEY FEATURES
• Constant player rotation within 1-4-3-3 structure; 1-4-5-1 defence
• Emphasis on building from the back with goalkeeper an active participant
• Positional interchanges by midfielders, wingers; full backs attacking at every opportunity
• Effective quick passing combinations on flanks, through the middle with close support
• Frequent use of deep one touch passes, runs from deep, in attacking third
• High pressure, high line, keeper alert to balls over defence; strong centre backs
• No 20 Won Du-Jae the influential distributor in screening midfield role
**QATAR**

**TEAM PROFILES**

**COACH**

**FELIX SANCHEZ**

**NATIONALITY**

**SPAIN**

**STATISTICS**

- **Best Player(s)**
  - 7 Y. ABDURISAG
  - 10 AL AHRAK

- **Total goals**
  - 2

- **Own Goal**
  - (SYRIA)

**TEAM SHAPES**

- **ATTACKING**
  - 1-3-2-5

- **DEFENDING**
  - 1-5-3-2

**SQUAD**

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<td>16. HASHIM ALI</td>
<td>17/08/2000</td>
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<td>20. KHALID MAZEED</td>
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<td>23. HOMAM AHMED</td>
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**TEAM SHAPES**

- **Attack Movement**
  - Running with the ball

- **Defence Movement**
  - 1-5-3-2

**KEY FEATURES**

- 1-3-5-2 set up with five up front in attacking moves; 1-5-3-2 defending
- Frequent use of long ball for striker No 7 Y. Abdurisag to lay off to supporting midfielders
- Otherwise, emphasis on patient, low tempo construction through thirds
- Attacks opened to wing backs with long diagonal switches of play
- Immediate high pressure after ball loss; compact defence with high line
- Players with good solo skills; comfortable in possession when under pressure
- Good use of positional interchanging in middle to front areas
ATTACKING
1-2-4-4

DEFENDING
1-4-2-3-1

TEAM SHAPES

COACH
SAAD ALI ALSHEHRI
NATIONALITY
SAUDI ARABIA

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
7 GHAREEB
9 ALHAMDDAN
4 TAMBAKTI

Total goals
5
10 KHULAIF (1)
7 GHAREEB (1)
19 ALBRIKAN (1)
9 ALHAMDDAN (1)
8 OMRAN (1)

TEAM PROFILES

SAUDI ARABIA

GOALKEEPER
1 AMIN BUKHARI 02/05/1997
21 SALEH AL OHAYMID 21/05/1998
22 MOHAMMED AL YAMI

DEFENDER
2 ABDULLAH TARMIN 19/03/1997
3 ABDULBASIT HINDI 02/02/1997
4 HASSAN ALTAMBAKTI 09/02/1999
5 ABOULELAH AMRI 15/01/1997
13 KHALID DUBAYSH 27/11/1998
23 SAUD ABDULHAMID 18/07/1999

MIDFIELDER
6 SAMI AL NAJEI 07/02/1997
7 ABDULRAHMAN GHAREEB 31/03/1997
8 NASSER AL OMRAN 13/07/1997
10 AYMAN AL KHULAIF 22/05/1997
12 AYMAN YAHYA 14/05/2001
14 ALI AL HASSAN 04/03/1997
15 HUSSAIN ALESSA 29/12/2000
16 YOUSEF AL HARBI 16/03/1997
17 SAAD ALSALULI 25/05/1998
18 KHALID AL GHANNAM 08/11/2000
20 MUKHTAR ALI 30/10/1997

FORWARD
9 ABDULLAH ALHAMDDAN 13/09/1999
11 ABDULRAHMAN AL YAMI 19/06/1997
19 FERAS ALBRIKAN 14/05/2000

KEY FEATURES
• 1-4-2-3-1; narrow, compact, disciplined 1-4-5-1 defence
holding high line
• Power play with fast forward passing and incessant pressure
on opponents
• No 7 Ghareeb the free spirit in middle to front play; solo skills,
creative passing
• No 4 Tambakti the pillar of strong back line; fine shot stopping
by No 22 Yami
• Central midfielders No 14 Hassan, No 20 Ali the focal points
in build up play
• Extremely fast, mobile, skilful players in wide areas; good
switches of play
• Very well organised unit with great physicality, concentration,
work ethic
TEAM PROFILES

SYRIA

COACH

AYMAN ALHAKEEM

NATIONALITY

SYRIA

TEAM SHAPES

ATTACKING
1-2-4-3-1 or 1-4-2-3-1 with fast transitions to deep 1-4-5-1 defensive block

DEFENDING
1-4-5-1

KEY FEATURES

- 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-4-2 with fast transitions to deep 1-4-5-1 defensive block
- Strong, compact back line coordinated by leadership qualities of No 5 Arnaout
- Deep ball winning the cue for fast counters on wings; 3 or 4 players bursting forward
- Technically equipped to build through thirds with quick ball circulation
- Also direct attacking with supply from keeper to striker No 9 Rahman
- Good diagonal switches of play; high crosses to exploit aerial power
- Well organised unit with strong team spirit and work ethic

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)

5 FARES ARNAOUT

Total goals

9 RAHMAN (2)
21 DALI (2)

GOALKEEPER

DATE OF BIRTH

1 WILLIAM GHANNAM 01/01/1998
22 MHD YAZAN OURABI 30/01/1997
23 NABIL KORO 10/01/2000

DEFENDER

DATE OF BIRTH

2 MUSTAFA SAFRANI 01/01/2001
3 YOUSSEF ALHAMWI 01/02/1997
4 YOSIEF MOHAMMAD 01/01/1999
5 MHD FARES ARNAOUT 01/01/1997
7 KHALED KURDAGHLI 01/01/1997

MIDFIELDER

DATE OF BIRTH

6 KAMEL HMEISHEH 01/01/1998
8 ABDUL KADER ADI 08/01/1998
13 MOHAMAD AL BARRI
14 MOHAMAD ZEID GHRIR 10/01/1998
15 SIMON AMIN
16 KHALIL IBRAHIM 21/01/1997
17 MOHAMMAD RIHANIEH
20 ZAKRIA HANNAN 21/08/1997

FORWARD

DATE OF BIRTH

9 ABDUL RAHMAN BARAKAT 01/01/1998
10 MOHAMMED KAMEL KOAEH 01/01/1998
11 ANAS ALAJJI 07/01/1998
12 MILAD HAMAD 01/01/1997
18 MOHAMMAD ALHALLAK 01/01/1999
19 ABDULHADI SHALHA 19/01/1999
21 ALAA ALDIN DALI 01/01/1997
THAILAND

TEAM PROFILES

THAILAND

COACH

AKIRA NISHINO

NATIONALITY
JAPAN

ATTACKING
1-2-4-4

DEFENDING
1-4-5-1

Attack Movement
Defence Movement
Running with the ball

TEAM SHAPES

SQUAD

DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER

1 KORRAPHAT NAREECHAN
10/07/1997

20 KIADTISAK CHAODON
19/07/1999

23 SUPAWAT YOKAKUL
10/02/2000

DEFENDER

2 THITAWEE AKSORNRSI
08/11/1997

3 THITATHORN AKSORNRSI
08/11/1997

4 CHATCHAI SAENGDAO
01/11/1997

5 SHINNAPHAT LEEAOH
02/02/1997

12 MEECHOK MARHASARANU
12/12/1997

14 PEERAWAT AKKRATUM
03/12/1998

15 SARINGKAN PROMSUPA
29/03/1997

MIDFIELDER

6 AIRFAN DOLOH
26/01/2001

7 WISARUT IMURA
18/10/1997

8 WORACHIT KANITSRIBUMPHEN
24/08/1997

10 SUPACHOK SARACHAT
22/05/1998

11 ANON AMORNERTSAK
06/11/1997

13 JAROENSAK WONGGORN
18/05/1997

16 SORAWIT PANTHONG
20/02/1997

18 KRITSADA KAMAN
18/03/1999

21 KANNARIN THAOWORNSAK
27/05/1997

22 BEN DAVIES
24/11/2000

FORWARD

9 SUPACHAI CHAIDED
01/12/1998

17 SUPHANAT MUEANTA
02/08/2002

19 NANTHAWAT SUANKAEO
12/08/1998

COACH STATISTICS

KEY FEATURES

• 1-4-2-3-1 or 1-4-4-2; 1-4-5-1 defence; sometimes 1-5-3-2 with midfielder back
• Fast attacking with forward runs, penetrating passes, combinations in final third
• Wingers cut backs in to attack goal or delivering low crosses/ cut backs from wide
• Fast transitions to defence; pressure on ball + retreat into compact block

Well organised back line; centre backs opening play with long diagonals
No 1 Korrhat influential keeper; crucial saves, active in build up
Team with high levels of pace, dribbling skills, winning mentality

Best Player(s)

11 ANON
17 SUPHANAT

1 KORRAPHAT

10 SUPACHOK

Total goals

7

13 JAROENSAK (3)
17 SUPHANAT (2)
11 ANON (1)
10 SUPACHOK (1)
TEAM PROFILES

UAE

COACH
MACIEJ SKORZA
NATIONALITY
POLAND

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)
7 ZAYED
10 JASSIM
13 ABDALLA

Total goals
4
5 KHALIFA (1)
7 ZAYED (3)

TEAM SHAPES

SQUAD DATE OF BIRTH

GOALKEEPER
1 MOHAMED HASAN ALSHAMSI 4/1/1997
17 KHALID ABDULLAHMAN 18/04/1997
22 ABDULLAHMAN ALAMERI 30/04/1998

DEFENDER
2 HAMDAN NASIR ALBAROUGH 24/04/1997
5 KHALIFA MUBARAK ALHAMMADI 7/11/1998
3 MOHAMMED ALI ALMAHRI 27/04/1997
12 KHALED EBRHEIM ALDHANHANI 17/01/1997
14 ABDULLAHMAN SALEH KHAMIS 3/6/1999
23 SAEED ALI SUWAIDAN 19/05/1997

MIDFIELDER
4 MOHAMAD OMAR ALATTAS 5/8/1997
6 MAJID IBRAHIM SALIM 14/10/1997
8 TAHNOON HAMDAN ALZAABI 10/4/1999
9 ALI SALEH 22/01/2000
10 JASSIM YAAOQOB ALBALOOSHI 16/03/1997
13 ABDALLAH RAMADAN BEKHEET 7/3/1998
15 KHALIFAN HASSAN ALHAMADI 7/1/1999
18 MAJID RASHID ALMEHRZI 16/05/2000
20 YAHYA ALI ALGHASSANI 18/04/1998
21 EID KHAMIS ALNUAIMI 20/05/1999

FORWARD
7 ZAYED ABDULLAH ALAMERI 14/01/1997
11 MOHAMED RASHID ALHAMMADI 11/5/1997
19 ALI EID 1/3/1998

KEY FEATURES

• 1-4-2-3-1; pressure on ball during retreat into 1-4-5-1 defensive block
• Good individual technique, composed of short passing combination game
• Ability to change tempo suddenly, switch play with long diagonals
• Rapid defence to attack transitions; good off the ball movements, passing options

• Compact defending, closing down spaces; two dominant centre backs
• Attacking full backs; No 7 Alameri a skilful, mobile central attacker
• Composure, good positioning, leadership by goalkeeper No 1 Alshamsi

ATTACKING
1-3-4-3
DEFENDING
1-5-4-1
TEAM PROFILES

UZBEKISTAN

COACH

LJUBINKO DRULOVIC

NATIONALITY

SERBIA

STATISTICS

Best Player(s)

23 BOZOROV
6 GANIEV
3 KHOJIAKBAR
19 ILKHOMJON

Total goals

9

2 KOBILOV (3)
8 TUKHTASINOV (2)
10 ABDIXOLIKOV (1)
19 ALIJANOV (1)
23 BOZOROV (1)
9 YAKHSHIBOEV (1)

TEAM SHAPES

• 1-4-2-3-1 with genuine wingers; fast transition to solid 1-4-4-1-1 defending
• Possession game with composed passing, with excellent link up play between lines
• No 4 Abdullaev, No 6 Ganiev controlled tempo, switching play from flank to flank
• No 23 Bozorov the attacking catalyst with pace and solo skills as shadow striker
• Full backs No 3 Alijonov, No 19 Alijanov over/underlapped with power and guile
• Dangerous solo runs, cut backs by wingers No 9 Yakhshiboev, No 22 Kodirkulov
• Immediate press on the ball carrier after losing possession; quick counters often with solo runs

KEY FEATURES

ATTACKING

1-2-4-4

DEFENDING

1-4-5-1

GOALKEEPER

1 ABDUVAKHID NEMATOV 20/03/2001
12 MASHKURJON MUHAMMADJONOV 21/02/1999
21 NIZOMIDDIN ZIYAVUTDINOV 25/04/1998

DEFENDER

2 ISLOMUJON KOBILOV 01/06/1997
3 KHOJIAKBAR ALIJONOV 19/04/1997
5 DILSHOD SAITOV 02/02/1999
7 SHAROF MUHAMMADJONOV 14/07/1997
9 JASURBEK YAKHSHIBOEV 24/06/1999
13 SHERZOD NASRULLAEV 23/07/1998
15 OYBEK RUSTAMOV 02/04/1997
19 ILKHOMJON ALIJANOV 03/05/1998
20 KHUSNIDDIN ALIKULOV 04/04/1999

MIDFIELDER

4 ABDULLA ABDULLAEV 01/09/1997
6 AZIZ GANIEV 22/02/1998
8 NURILLO TUKHTASINOV 19/02/1997
14 ABRORBEK ISMOILOV 08/01/1998
17 ISLOM KENJABAEV 01/09/1999
18 DOSTON IBRAGIMOV 23/01/1997
22 SANJAR KODIRKULOV 27/05/1997
23 OYBEK BOZOROV 07/08/1997

FORWARD

10 BOBIR ABDIXOLIKOV 23/04/1997
11 MIRJAKHON MIRAKHMADOV 15/07/1997
16 AMONOVAZIZBEK 30/10/1997

DATE OF BIRTHSQUAD

RUNNING WITH THE BALL

BACK TO CONTENTS

the-AFC.com | AFC U23 CHAMPIONSHIP 2020 THAILAND TECHNICAL REPORT
**VIETNAM**

**COACH**

PARK HANG-SEO

NATIONALITY: KOREA REPUBLIC

**SQUAD**

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**TEAM SHAPES**

- **ATTACKING**
  - 1-3-4-3
- **DEFENDING**
  - 1-5-4-1

**TEAM PROFILES**

**COACH**

PARK HANG-SEO

**STATISTICS**

- Best Player(s):
  - 22 TIEN LINH
  - 19 QUANG HAI
- Total goals: 1

**KEY FEATURES**

- 1-3-4-3 with fast transitions to 1-5-4-1 defence; fierce pressure on ball carrier
- Fluent construction through thirds with assured combination play
- Also fast collective counters with as many as six players pushing forward
- Strong defending with front three the first line of compact, disciplined unit
- High level of individual skill; good passing, switches of play, long range shooting
- Wing backs active in supporting attacks, delivering crosses
- Excellent fitness; fluid movement, intensity, determination, mental strength

**ATTACK MOVEMENT**

- Running with the ball

**DEFENCE MOVEMENT**

- 1-3-4-3
- 1-5-4-1
STAR SELECTION
STAR SELECTION

GOALKEEPER

SONG BEOM-KEUN (KOR)

DEFENDER

HASSAN AL-TAMBAKI (KSA)
STAR SELECTION

MIDFIELDER

AZIZJON GANIEV (UZB)

WON DU-JAE (KOR)
STAR SELECTION

FORWARD

SUPHANAT MUENTA (THA)  
RENO PISCOPO (AUS)  
LEE DONG-JAE (KOR)
# Tournament Results

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## Quarter-Finals

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## 3rd / 4th Placing

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REFEREES
A total of 62 Match Officials from the AFC Elite Panel were appointed for the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020, including two stand-by Assistant Referees.

The pool included 34 VAR-licensed Referees from 19 Member Associations who were selected to support the system’s full implementation for the first time in an AFC competition.

Additionally, nine Referee Instructors and Assessors were appointed alongside three Fitness Instructors to provide the Match Officials with the best training and preparation.
## Support Team

- **Local Organisers’ team:** A team from the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) supported the coordination of all logistical requirements.
- **Players’ Team:** Local teams took part in short matches for the Referees’ practical training sessions.
- **Masseurs:** Massage therapists were on hand to provide massages to assist the Match Officials with their recovery and injury prevention strategies.
- **Medical Team:** Medical staff and an ambulance were stationed at the training venue daily to facilitate emergency and first aid treatment when required.

## Referee Instructors and Assessors

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<td>1 Ganesan s/o Maniam</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Banjar Mohammed B J Al-Dosari</td>
<td>QAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ravichandran Chappanimutu</td>
<td>MAS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Pre-Competition

### Match Officials’ Selection Process

AFC ensured the highest level of officials by selecting the Continent’s best Referees and Assistant Referees. Each Match Official was selected based on their:

- Technical knowledge
- Management skills
- Physical fitness
- Experience at top-level competitions (FIFA/AFC)
- Consistent high-level performances
- VAR training and experience.

### Pre-Preparation Overview

The Referees and Assistant Referees participated in a five-day preparatory course from 3 to 7 January, consisting of theoretical sessions, fitness and practical training.

## Pre-Competition Preparation Overview

- **VAR Licensing + Training:**
  - VAR Course July 2019 & Mini Tournament
  - VAR Course April 2019
- **Pre-Competition Preparation:**
  - Five-day Preparatory Course
  - Theoretical Sessions
  - MVAR Practical Training
  - Simulator Training
- **During Competition:**
  - Daily Sessions
  - MVAR Practical Training
  - Instant Feedback Sessions
  - Match Debriefings
FITNESS CHECK
In addition to the official fitness tests conducted in November 2019, all Match Officials were declared physically qualified to cope with the match demands upon the successful completion of:

- Yo-Yo Intermittent Test for Referees (target: 18-8)
- Assistant Referee Intermittent Endurance Test (ARIET) for Assistant Referees (target: 15-5.6).

PRACTICAL SESSIONS
Preparatory practical sessions took place daily at the Referees’ training pitch. Two teams assisted to simulate match incidents based on the instructors’ training plan. Among other topics, the sessions focused on:

- VAR protocol
- Positioning and movement
- Foul recognition
- Offside recognition
- Delaying the flag.

Offside and delay flag training were further supported by a multi-angle instant feedback replay system. This four-camera system, in addition to the VAR equipment, allowed the Match Officials to review the incidents and their actions immediately, enabling them to apply the advice of the instructors in subsequent exercises.

THEORETICAL SESSIONS
Theoretical sessions were designed to further enhance the technical knowledge of the Match Officials and optimise the level of consistency in their application of the Laws of the Game.

Videos of different match situations were shown. Referees were encouraged to participate in discussion and analysis of each incident with the technical instructors to identify any ambiguity and reach a consensus.

Technical subjects were supplemented with presentations on competition administration and fitness matters ensuring that Referees were prepared for every eventuality. Topics covered throughout the course included:

TECHNICAL

- Penalty Area Incidents
- Challenges
- Handball
- Tactical Fouls
- Offside
- Offside – Delay Flag Technique (VAR)

ADMINISTRATION

- Accommodation and logistics
- Championship overview
- Match procedures
- Communication system and flags

FITNESS

- Fitness check
- Weight control
- Nutrition
- Recovery strategies
- Injury prevention

OTHER

- Integrity
- Technical Study Group
**DURING COMPETITION**

**TEAM ARRIVAL MEETINGS**

Refereeing matters were brought to the attention of teams by the Referee Technical Instructors who attended the Team Arrival Meetings (TAM) on behalf of the Referees Delegation.

The objective of the TAMs was to inform teams and team officials on all refereeing matters including players’ equipment, technical area and implementation of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system.

**PRACTICAL SESSIONS**

Throughout the competition, Referees took part in daily sessions. Each day consisted of fitness training, with the level of intensity varying depending on each Referee’s match schedule allowing each Referee to undergo customised pre and post-match training to complement their fitness conditioning and maintenance.

Gymnasium and pool recovery sessions were also conducted to ensure the Referees stayed in top physical condition.

**MATCH ASSESSMENT**

A Referee assessor was appointed to each match to observe the officials’ performance live at each venue. The Referee team’s decisions and abilities were monitored throughout the match, allowing the assessor to provide first-hand feedback.

Additionally, a Video Referee Assessor was also assigned to analyse each match at the Referees’ Match Analysis room at the official hotel. Key match incidents and potential teaching materials were identified, allowing clips to be produced post-match for the group and individual debriefing sessions the following day.

**DEBRIEFING**

Debriefing sessions were held after each Matchday, allowing feedback to be provided to all Referees and Assistant Referees. Any important incidents from the previous day’s matches were discussed and analysed and any areas for improvement were highlighted by the Referee instructors to ensure consistency and uniformity in foul recognition and Laws of the Game interpretation.

Referees who were on assignment at different venues were able to join the session via Skype to ensure all Match Officials were provided with the necessary advice and preparation throughout the competition.

Prior to the Knockout Stage, a general debriefing took place allowing Referees to look back and discuss their performance during the Group Stage and to emphasise any areas to be focused on in the coming matches.

Furthermore, individual sessions with the assigned Referee Assessor were conducted prior to and after each match. The Assessor was able to go more in-depth with each Referee team and offer more personal advice and expertise to the officials.

**TECHNICAL STUDY GROUP SESSION**

On completion of the Quarter-final stage, AFC Deputy Technical Director László Szalai, representing the competition’s Technical Study Group, shared technical information and tactical observations of the remaining teams.

Referees were provided with a valuable insight into what to expect in the upcoming matches such as teams’ tactical approach and individual players’ style and behaviour, which aided the Match Officials’ preparation.
Having made its successful debut from the Quarter-final stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 in January, the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020 was the first AFC competition to implement the VAR system in all 32 matches.

**MATCH OFFICIALS’ PREPARATION**

All Match Officials appointed to support the implementation of the VAR were trained to the stringent standards and requirements put in place by the International Football Association Board (IFAB). VAR-licensed Referees also have a wealth of experience, ranging from the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ to the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019, as well as at the Member Association level.

Throughout 2019, AFC Match Officials gained extensive VAR training and experience at two specialised courses in Kuala Lumpur. Held in April and July 2019, the two sessions were organised following the successful introduction of VAR from the Quarter-final stage of the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019. The aim of the courses was to:

- Expand the pool of licensed VAR Match Officials
- Train Match Officials on the protocol and practicalities of VAR
- Test Match Officials’ knowledge and understanding of the VAR system.

This was achieved through the use of:

- Back-to-back practical sessions where Referees and Assistant Referees assessed live match incidents on a mobile VAR station
- Simulator sessions conducted off the pitch involving analysis of match video clips from worldwide competitions
- Video tests to prove the Match Officials’ understanding of the VAR system and lessons learned from the course.

The quality of AFC VARs was also recognised globally in 2019 with fully-licensed Referees hand-picked to officiate at the following FIFA competitions:

- FIFA Women’s World Cup France 2019
- FIFA U-20 World Cup Poland 2019
- FIFA U-17 World Cup Brazil 2019

This provided an opportunity for a number of Referees to gain invaluable VAR experience on the world stage.

Appointed VAR Match Officials took part in VAR-specific training during the preparatory course from 3 to 7 January in anticipation of the opening match of the competition.

**VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREE (VAR) SYSTEM**

The training involved three main areas:

| MOBILE VAR (MVAR) TRAINING | • Match scenarios staged with 22 players and a full team of Match Officials  
|                           | • Simulation of check and review process for the correct application of VAR protocol  
|                           | • Application and refinement of communication between Referee and VOR  
|                           | • Rotation of the various roles (Referee, VAR, AVAR)  
|                           | • Instant feedback by the VAR instructors |
| VAR SIMULATOR SESSIONS    | • Indoor VAR system involving staging real-life match scenarios as-live  
|                           | • Allowed the procedures and principles learned in theoretical sessions to be instantly put into practice  
|                           | • Discussion after each simulation by all participants and observers  
|                           | • Rotation of the various roles (Referee, VAR, AVAR)  
|                           | • Instant feedback by the VAR instructors |
| THEORETICAL SESSIONS      | • VAR protocol - Principles, practicalities and procedures  
|                           | • Discussion and dialogue between Referees and Instructors |
TECHNICAL SETUP
A decentralised system was implemented for the duration of the competition meaning that a Video Operations Room (VOR) was located at each venue. The VOR was positioned next to the broadcast compound at the stadium allowing for all camera feeds to be connected locally to the VAR system.

Video Operation Room
- Located at each stadium
- Reception of all camera feeds from the stadium broadcast
- Branded with official competition graphics
- Personnel setup:
  1. VAR, AVAR 1, AVAR 2
  2. Two Replay Operators
  3. One VAR Quality Control Manager

Referee Review Area
- Pyramid monitor
- Located next to the fourth official bench
- Displays VAR output screen for Referees to review incidents

Technology Provider
- Hawk-Eye Innovations (Video & Audio)
  Hawk-Eye Innovations were chosen to supply the VAR and Referee Communication systems for the AFC U23 Championship 2020. They are the leading supplier for VAR and goal-line technology solutions worldwide. Major partners include FIFA (FIFA World Cup Russia 2018, FIFA Women’s World Cup 2019, FIFA U-20 World Cup Poland 2019, FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019) as well as domestic leagues in Australia, China PR, England, France, and Germany.

COMMUNICATION PROCESS
Various communication channels were put in place to facilitate the smooth operation of the VAR system between stakeholders.

Situated in each VOR, a CIS tablet was operated by the AFC Quality Control Manager. The tablet allowed information on the status of any VAR reviews to be instantly shared with broadcast and infotainment teams. The relevant graphics were then displayed on the stadium giant screen and on the tv broadcast to relay the information to spectators.
VAR IMPLEMENTATION STATISTICS

There was a total of 179 checks in 32 matches, an average of 5.6 checks per match:

- 41% consisted of goal/offences leading up to a goal
- 30% consisted of penalty area incidents
- 29% consisted of challenges/tackles

There was a total of 10 reviews in 32 matches, an average 0.3 reviews per match/1 review every 3.2 matches:

- 7 on-field reviews (OFR): 6 decisions changed, 1 confirmed
- 3 only VAR reviews (OVAR): 3 decisions changed

A total of 12 penalty kicks were awarded (11 scored, 1 missed):

- 54 penalty area incidents were checked, 7 were reviewed. 6 decisions were changed, 1 confirmed
- 5 penalty kicks were awarded after a VAR review, while 7 were originally awarded by the Referee
- 1 penalty kick was cancelled after a VAR review (the incident occurred outside the penalty area)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PENALTY AREA INCIDENTS SUMMARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Penalty Kicks Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECISIONS CHANGED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECISIONS CONFIRMED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty area incidents reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties awarded after VAR review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed after OFR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No VAR review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties awarded by the Referee (with and without confirmation after OFR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confirmed after OFR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No VAR review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalties cancelled after VAR review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No penalty decision confirmed after VAR review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty missed but not given due to attacking offence in APP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REFEREES
A total of 69 goals were scored and 4 goals were disallowed:
- 69 goals were checked and confirmed by the VAR
- 1 goal was disallowed after a VAR review (offside), while 3 were originally disallowed by the Referee

A total of 4 red cards were issued (2 direct red cards, 2 after 2nd yellow):
- 52 challenges/tackles were checked
- 1 red card was issued after a VAR review

---

## GOALS SCORED

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>69</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals checked</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals checked and confirmed</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals reviewed and confirmed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals awarded but disallowed by VAR</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals originally disallowed but awarded by VAR</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals disallowed without VAR</td>
<td>3</td>
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## 10 VAR INTERVENTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7 on-field reviews</th>
<th>3 only VAR reviews (factual)</th>
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</table>

---

## 9 MAJOR DECISIONS CHANGED DUE TO VAR INTERVENTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>4 OFR, 1 OVAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penalty kicks awarded</td>
<td>4 OFR, 1 OVAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty kicks cancelled</td>
<td>1 OVAR (outside penalty area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals disallowed</td>
<td>1 OVAR (offside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red cards shown</td>
<td>1 OFR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## DECISION-MAKING ACCURACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>With VAR intervention</th>
<th>98.84%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Without VAR intervention</td>
<td>94.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

## TIME LOST DUE TO VAR INTERVENTION (*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>63 seconds</th>
</tr>
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(*) Time for VAR review is calculated from the moment the Referee delays the restart of play until the moment the Referee shows the final decision
### VAR Interventions by Match/Referee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Match Officials</th>
<th>Review</th>
<th>Incident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M4 - JPN vs KSA</td>
<td>REF: Christopher Beath (AUS) VAR: Shaun Evans (AUS)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7 - VIE vs UAE</td>
<td>REF: Muhammad Taqi (SIN) VAR: Fu Ming (CHN)</td>
<td>OVAR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11 - SYR vs JPN</td>
<td>REF: Ali Sabah Al-Qaysi (IRQ) VAR: Christopher Beath (AUS)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M14 - CHN vs UZB</td>
<td>REF: Abdulrahman Al-Jassim (QAT) VAR: Abdulla Ali A A Al-Marri (QAT)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M17 - THA vs IRQ</td>
<td>REF: Adham Makhadmeh (JOR) VAR: Muhammad Taqi (SIN)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M20 - KSA vs SYR</td>
<td>REF: Crishantha Dilan Perera (SRI) VAR: Fu Ming (CHN)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Yellow Card Issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M19 - QAT vs JPN</td>
<td>REF: Muhammad Taqi (SIN) VAR: Ma Ning (CHN)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Red Card Issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M26 - KSA vs THA</td>
<td>REF: Ahmed Al Kaf (OMA) VAR: Christopher Beath (AUS)</td>
<td>OVAR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M28 - UAE vs UZB</td>
<td>REF: Fu Ming (CHN) VAR: Shaun Evans (AUS)</td>
<td>OFR</td>
<td>Penalty Kick Awarded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M30 - KSA vs UZB</td>
<td>REF: Sato Ryuji (JPN) VAR: Kimura Hiroyuki (JPN)</td>
<td>OVAR</td>
<td>Goal Disallowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GENERAL PERFORMANCE

The Referee Assessors and Instructors’ team, through their match reports and close monitoring, rated the Match Officials’ performance as good (between 8.0 and 8.4) or above in 89.6% of the cases. With VAR intervention, this number increased to 96.9%.

The continuous training, match debriefings and other resources provided for the Referees contributed significantly to the high standard of refereeing throughout the tournament.

The main highlight was the successful implementation of the VAR system in every match of the competition.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT

A total of 102 disciplinary sanctions were issued at the AFC U23 Championship Thailand 2020, of which 98 were yellow cards. Two direct red cards were shown while a further two red cards were given after a second caution.

There was a match average of 3.06 yellow cards and 0.125 red cards. There was an overall reduction of average cautions and expulsions per match, compared to both the 2018 and 2016 editions.

YELLOW CARDS ISSUED

- DOGSO - CHALLENGE: 54%
- SPA - CHALLENGE: 10%
- RECKLESS - IUA: 10%
- SPA - HOLDING: 16%
- UB - CHALLENGE: 3%
- DELAYING THE RESTART: 1%
DIGITAL STATISTICS

- **IMPRESSIONS**
  - 2020: 17.9 MIL
  - 2018: 10.4 MIL

- **NEW FOLLOWERS**
  - 2020: 4,187
  - 2018: 6,289

- **VIEWS**
  - 2020: 12.5 MIL
  - 2018: 11.46 MIL

- **MINUTES WATCHED**
  - 2020: 19.89 MIL
  - 2018: 38.53 MIL

- **TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS**
  - 2020: 875K
  - 2018: 572K

- **NEW SUBSCRIBERS**
  - 2020: 24.1K
  - 2018: 29.8K
## COMPETITIONS COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DR TRAN QUOC TUAN</td>
<td>CHAIRPERSON</td>
<td>VIETNAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABED-ALKHALIQ MASOUD AHMED</td>
<td>DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON</td>
<td>IRAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARK FALVO</td>
<td>MEMBER</td>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAZI MD. SALAHUDDIN</td>
<td>MEMBER</td>
<td>BANGLADESH</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAJ. GEN. KHIEV SAMETH</td>
<td>MEMBER</td>
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<td>LOUIS LIU YI</td>
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<td>CHINA PR</td>
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<td>SUNANDO DHAR</td>
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<td>RATU TISHA DESTRIA</td>
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<td>AHMED KHELLIL ABBASSI</td>
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<td>IBRAHIM S. ALKASSIM</td>
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<td>BADR M. A. AL-BARAM</td>
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## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

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## REFEREES COMMITTEE

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<td>GEN. FAROUK BOUZO</td>
<td>MEMBER</td>
<td>SYRIA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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EDITORIAL GROUP
Andy Roxburgh
Graham Turner
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TECHNICAL CONSULTANT
Wim Koevermans

TECHNICAL ADMINISTRATION
Jose Marcelino Carpio (Technical Division)

PRODUCTION TEAM
Bridget Rive
Vijesh Rai
Ian Griffiths
Michael Church
Tom Engelhardt
Wael Jabir
Rhys Lee
Graeme Anderson
Esther Grace Low
Hafiz Idris

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Adam Aidil Padali
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