



POLAND
W 17 EHF EURO
GDAŃSK GDYNIA
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Basic data – the events, the atmosphere, the fans, associated events

Junior European Championships (under-17) took place between 15th and 25th of August 2013 in Poland. The Championships hosts were two seaside cities: Gdańsk and Gdynia. The total of 56 games were played, 28 matches in each city. 16 teams competed in the Championships. 15 of them were selected as a result of eliminations in March, during which 32 national representations of juniors competed in eight groups for the right to play in the Championships. The group of 15 teams from the eliminations was complemented by Poland, which was the host of the final tournament.

The selection of two neighbouring cities which form one urban agglomeration to be the host of the competition seems to be a good idea. The possibility of movement between sport halls was a great convenience for the fans, the referees and the representatives of all participating teams. Also the hotel infrastructure offered by Gdańsk and Gdynia complied with required quality standards. The Tri-City is also a very important venue for Polish handball, since it is where numerous champions of Poland, such as Wybrzeże Gdańsk, Spójnia Gdańsk and Vistal Gdynia, developed; moreover, Gdańsk is the place where in 2002 the representation of Poland won the Junior European Championships.

The location of competition in the cities which offered many summer attractions, such as the beaches, seaside bathing sites or cultural and musical events was also very advantageous from the fans' perspective. During the days which were free from sports competition all participants had the occasion to enjoy a cruise on the Gdańsk Bay, visit the Old Gdańsk, the Sopot beach, or the Gdańsk Oceanarium. The whole Tri-City is also quite well communicated, which ensured efficient transfers on the routes between the halls and the hotels in app. 15 minutes. Also the distance from the airport (app. 15 km) was a huge convenience.

The atmosphere at the audience was really great. Numerous groups of fans came to see the matches of their teams. These were mainly the parents, the families and the friends of the participating players. All matches were seen by nearly 18 thousand fans. The average audience at the matches in Gdynia where the representation of Poland played totalled 330 persons, and the highest participation figure during the finals totalled 1500 spectators. The third place playoff was seen by 500 persons, and the opening game between Poland and Portugal was seen by 1000 spectators. The most numerous and most active groups of fans came from Germany, Sweden, Norway, and the Czech Republic.

A similar average number of spectators at the game in Gdańsk (app. 300 persons) is related to the events which took place at that time in the area of the Academy of Physical Education and Sport in Gdańsk. During the Championships a training conference for nearly 70 coaches was organized by EHF, which was represented by Helmut Horisch and Jerzy Elias. The appropriate level of the conference was ensured by the lecturers, i.e. the coaches recommended by EHF, such as Monique Tijstermann from Holland, Martin Tuma from the Czech Republic, and Wojciech Nowiński from Poland. The conference offered to all its participants the possibility to enhance their coaching expertise and to see championship games.

Simultaneously the summer sports camp for Polish handball players took place. Also there EHF lecturers, such as Wolfgang Pollaný and the aforementioned Wojciech Nowiński assisted in the co-ordination of training activities for 120 participants.

Table of results

group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	Venue	spect.	group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	venue	spect.
C	13	RUS	HUN	35	22	GDA	200	A	1	POR	POL	21	25	GDY	1000
C	14	SWE	SVK	34	20	GDA	200	A	2	ROU	ESP	31	25	GDY	100
C	15	SVK	RUS	20	29	GDA	200	A	3	ESP	POR	22	22	GDY	200
C	16	HUN	SWE	21	24	GDA	350	A	4	POL	ROU	21	31	GDY	700
C	17	RUS	SWE	27	17	GDA	200	A	5	POR	ROU	25	21	GDY	100
C	18	HUN	SVK	24	27	GDA	250	A	6	POL	ESP	25	30	GDY	800
standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	Difference	points	standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	difference	points
1	RUS	3	0	0	91	59	6	1	ROU	2	0	1	83	71	4
2	SWE	2	0	1	80	75	4	2	POR	1	1	1	68	68	3
3	SVK	1	0	2	67	87	2	3	ESP	1	1	1	77	78	3
4	HUN	0	0	3	67	86	0	4	POL	1	0	2	71	82	2
group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	Venue	spect.	group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	venue	spect.
D	7	NOR	CRO	26	26	GDA	250	B	35	DEN	NED	32	21	GDY	100
D	8	GER	CZE	32	22	GDA	450	B	36	FRA	MNE	26	27	GDY	400
D	9	CZE	NOR	28	26	GDA	400	B	37	MNE	DEN	17	23	GDY	100
D	10	CRO	GER	31	25	GDA	400	B	38	NER	FRA	20	23	GDY	400
D	11	NOR	GER	28	22	GDA	300	B	39	DEN	FRA	35	26	GDY	200
D	12	CRO	CZE	29	24	GDA	400	B	40	NED	MNE	17	19	GDY	100
standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	Difference	points	standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	difference	points
1	CRO	2	1	0	86	75	5	1	DEN	3	0	0	90	64	6
2	NOR	1	1	1	80	76	3	2	MNE	2	0	1	63	66	4
3	GER	1	0	2	79	81	2	3	FRA	1	0	2	75	82	2
4	CZE	1	0	2	74	87	2	4	NED	0	0	3	58	74	0
group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	Venue	spect.	group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	venue	spect.
I2	13	HUN	CZE	30	18	GDA	250	I1	41	POL	NED	22	25	GDY	150
I2	14	SVK	GER	23	31	GDA	300	I1	42	ESP	FRA	19	23	GDY	300
I2	15	CZE	SVK	35	22	GDA	200	I1	43	NED	ESP	26	16	GDY	100
I2	16	GER	HUN	27	26	GDA	300	I1	44	FRA	POL	23	25	GDY	500
standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	Difference	points	standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	difference	points
1	GER	3	0	0	90	71	6	1	FRA	2	0	1	69	64	4
2	HUN	1	0	2	80	72	2	2	NED	2	0	1	71	61	4
3	CZE	1	0	2	75	84	2	3	ESP	1	0	2	65	74	2
4	SVK	1	0	2	72	90	2	4	POL	1	0	2	72	78	2
group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	Venue	spect.	group	nr	team A	team B	team A	team B	venue	spect.
M2	17	SWE	NOR	31	25	GDA	400	M1	45	POR	MNE	21	20	GDY	150
M2	18	RUS	CRO	34	24	GDA	200	M1	46	ROU	DEN	24	36	GDY	200
M2	19	NOR	RUS	27	35	GDA	400	M1	47	MNE	ROU	22	27	GDY	200
M2	20	CRO	SWE	23	32	GDA	100	M1	48	DEN	POR	38	21	GDY	300
standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	Difference	points	standings	team	won	draw	lost	goal	difference	points
1	RUS	3	0	0	96	68	6	1	DEN	3	0	0	97	62	6
2	SWE	2	0	1	80	75	4	2	POR	2	0	1	67	79	4
3	NOR	0	1	2	78	92	1	3	ROU	1	0	2	72	83	2
4	CRO	0	1	2	73	92	1	4	MNE	0	0	3	59	71	0
CROSS 13-16	21	ESP	SVK	29	22	GDA	200	CROSS 5-8	49	ROU	CRO	34	31	GDY	50
CROSS 13-16	22	CZE	POL	31	30	GDA	500	CROSS 5-8	50	NOR	MNE	24	30	GDY	100
CROSS 9-12	23	FRA	HUN	29	33	GDA	300	CROSS 1-4	51	DEN	SWE	28	30	GDY	500
CROSS 9-12	24	SVK	POL	24	26	GDA	500	CROSS 1-4	52	RUS	POR	35	23	GDY	150
FINAL 15-16	25	ESP	CZE	23	21	GDA	250	FINAL 7-8	53	CRO	NOR	27	28	GDY	200
FINAL 13-14	26	FRA	NED	26	24	GDA	200	FINAL 5-6	54	ROU	MNE	24	26	GDY	150
FINAL 11-12	27	HUN	GER	26	19	GDA	200	FINAL 3-4	55	DEN	POR	42	28	GDY	700
FINAL 9-10	28	GER	NED	31	27	GDA	300	FINAL 1-2	56	SWE	RUS	26	24	GDY	1500

General 6x6, 6x5, 5x6 attack systems, fast break

	team	Goals	Shots	%shots	AS	R7	BS	TO
1	SWE	194	330	59	57	16	7	77
2	RUS	219	338	65	64	18	11	76
3	DEN	234	351	67	107	37	7	68
4	POR	161	334	48	40	25	14	107
5	MNE	161	303	53	47	24	6	68
6	ROU	192	317	61	43	36	14	89
7	NOR	184	336	55	49	28	23	84
8	CRO	191	333	57	73	39	13	86
9	HUN	182	357	51	60	33	17	73
10	GER	187	351	53	61	37	12	91
11	FRA	176	325	54	48	35	26	100
12	NED	160	311	51	76	17	12	105
13	ESP	164	298	55	48	40	12	71
14	CZE	179	339	53	63	24	34	86
15	POL	174	313	56	62	26	8	111
16	SVK	158	306	52	63	28	29	90

The teams participating in the EC represented different solutions aimed at combatting the opponent's defence. The majority of team actions were based on the co-operation between 2 or 3 players. The opening of attack strategies resembled the solutions used by senior teams. A popular manner of initiating the action was a crossing without the ball in the middle and in the side section of the court, the exit of the pivot player and the entry of the wingers. Tactical measures of specific teams were not too complicated, but quite high quality of execution of technical elements could be observed (the quality referred both to the speed and to the precision of executed actions). This thesis can be confirmed by the above table, which shows that the average number of turnovers suffered by main teams during the game was situated at the level of 10-12 (TO). Given the age of the players and the dynamics of games, the number of errors seems to be quite satisfactory.

6x6 attack

The manner of initiating the action in the court zones dominated in the position attack. The actions were quite short. The majority of teams used the possibility of the replacement of attack player, who in the majority of times was one of the midfielders. The players tried to gain advantage in the specific court sector by attempting a 1x1 play. Practically in each team there were players that were capable of conducting a positional attack in such manner. Each team had also a player who could throw from the 2nd line. Key teams were distinguished by the possession of players who were capable of strong throws from the second lines. A noticeable tendency was the continuation of solution based on best players in the teams: a Portuguese – S. Santiago, a Romanian – C. Laszlo, a Norwegian – M. Hoegdahl, and the Russians – E. Malashenko and Y. Frolova. The basis for achieving success in the positional attack seems to be the right level of players in all positions, which offers the possibility of conducting diversified game and making many choices. Efficient wingers enabled their teams to initiate action in external sectors. The technical level of 1st line players and their fitness was also used for the activities usually attributed to midfielders. The wingers were active, since they did not limit themselves to waiting for the ball in the court corners. The European Champions- the Swedes- had two best

wingers of the Championships in their team, which shows how important this position may be for the final result of the team.

6x5 attack

When playing at an advantage two different manners of solving a situation could be observed: the lack of any planned special actions and conducting the attack according to the usual rhythm. In other words, one planned action was initiated, such as the entry of the midfielder to the position of the second pivot, which was the most popular solution used recently by many teams, and quite successfully used by the Montenegro team. It should be noted that this team had a player D. Malovic, who could throw far from the 2nd line and who was good at selecting the right manner of passing the ball.

5x6 attack

The majority of teams had the system of solving the game while playing at a disadvantage. In the first play the team action was conducted as long as possible, which was aimed at the prolongation of ball possession time. The tactical means serving this end was the active play of the wingers, who left their positions, and crossed with themselves or with the midfielders. One of them remained in the pivot position and the other one returned to her position and the team tried to create an advantageous situation to throw a goal on this side.

Fast break

Three key teams attached great importance to the effectiveness of action in the fast attack. The first three teams scored on average 6 – 7 goals using the fast attack in each game, which constituted over 20% of goals scored by all teams. This is a highly important information, since the use of this manner of scoring goals is the condition of obtaining good sports result. Motoric preparation and the adherence to the established movement tactics of these teams allowed them to conduct the game in a very effective manner in the fast attack. The attack was taken up after the lost goal, but the effectiveness of return to defence did not allow scoring too many goals using this manner of action. Sweden, Denmark, Germany and the Czech Republic scored on average one goal per game.

Efficiency and structure of throws

		7mg	7mt	7%	6mg	6mt	6m%	9mg	9mt	9m%	Wg	Wt	W%	BTg	BTt	BT%	FB	FBt	FB%
1	SWE	11	16	69	42	68	62%	59	122	48%	21	41	51%	5	18	28%	45	64	70%
2	RUS	16	18	89	41	59	69%	82	142	58%	15	28	54%	16	18	89%	49	73	67%
3	DEN	31	39	49	70	85	82%	49	100	49%	23	44	52%	12	19	63%	49	64	77%
4	POR	20	26	77	43	81	53%	56	146	38%	18	49	37%	8	10	80%	16	22	73%
5	MNE	22	27	81	34	54	63%	53	146	36%	17	31	55%	19	25	76%	16	20	80%
6	ROU	26	36	72	44	59	75%	53	117	45%	15	39	38%	25	29	86%	29	37	78%
7	NOR	19	27	70	27	44	61%	76	161	47%	18	42	43%	16	19	84%	28	43	65%
8	CRO	38	42	90	59	87	68%	26	97	27%	28	49	57%	15	22	68%	24	35	69%
9	HUN	22	33	67	43	73	59%	49	136	36%	26	53	49%	13	17	76%	29	45	64%
10	GER	31	38	82	48	80	60%	39	118	33%	20	52	38%	7	9	78%	42	54	78%
11	FRA	24	36	67	39	55	71%	50	131	38%	30	61	49%	11	12	92%	22	31	71%
12	NED	14	18	78	44	74	59%	27	92	29%	33	69	48%	13	15	87%	28	42	67%
13	ESP	30	41	73	36	58	62%	32	94	34%	27	49	55%	25	32	78%	14	24	58%
14	CZE	17	24	71	37	60	62%	52	142	37%	27	50	54%	13	14	93%	36	52	69%
15	POL	17	26	65	36	63	57%	52	122	43%	24	43	56%	10	12	83%	36	46	78%
16	SVK	18	28	64	36	59	61%	50	136	37%	6	25	24%	20	22	91%	27	35	77%

General defence systems 6x6, 5x6, 6x5, return to defence

TEAM	DEFENCE BASIC	DEFENCE ALTERNATIVES
DENMARK	6 0	5 1
MONTENEGRO	6 0	5 1
FRANCE	6 0	5 1
NEDERLANDS	6 0	5 1
POLAND	6 0	5 1
SPAIN	6 0	5 1
ROMANIA	5 1	6 0
PORTUGAL	3 2 1	1 AG 1
NORWAY	6 0	5 1
CZECH REP.	6 0	3 2 1
CROATIA	6 0	5 1
GERMANY	6 0	5 1
RUSSIA	5 1	6 0
SWEDEN	6 0	5 1
HUNGARY	6 0	5 1
SLOVAKIA	6 0	5 1

The main defence system which dominated during the European Championships U 17 was the 6:0 system. The teams behaved in a different manner using this system, which was most characteristic in the case of Scandinavian teams, where the central defenders were most active. Their activities were supported by the excellent co-operation with the goalkeeper, which opened the possibilities of a counterattack. The specialization in the area of defence in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd position could also be observed. The majority of teams introduced one or two players into the defence, mainly in the central sector. These players either participated or did not participate in the counterattack. Technical and tactical individual training of the players enabled the implementation of the team system. Characteristic defence activities were displayed especially by Sweden, Denmark (6:0), Russia (5:1) and Portugal (3:2:1). Each of these systems was successful. The key was the quality of performance and the use of physical skills of the players. A quite important role for the defence of the players defending in the 1st position could also be observed, since the success of the defence action often depended on their invention and anticipation.

6x6 defence

The classical action which was used by the majority of the teams under their systems. The reduction of clinch attempts is characteristic for such teams as Denmark, Sweden, Hungary or Spain. Defence activities are aimed at regaining the possession of the ball by stealing or by facilitating the throw from a difficult position. The countries such as Russia, France, the Czech Republic and Poland blocked the ball twice as much than the countries mentioned above. The number of blocks using the performed by the countries using forward defence is small (Portugal, Romania, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia). The teams leading in the number of steals are Sweden, France and Spain, which performed app. 8 steals per game. The fact that the

Portuguese team used 'everyone defends one's own' defence type in the key moments of the games with Romania and Montenegro that which brought the positive result is also worth mentioning.

6x5 defence

When playing at an advantage in the defence configuration certain systemic actions were observed, which were quite diverse, depending on the decision of the playing team to include the pivot in the attack or not. Often individual marking of the best player was used or the concentration of defence in the middle and individual marking of the wingers.

5x6 defence

During defence action conducted at a disadvantage the teams concentrated in the middle of the court with the view to preventing a goal throw in this sector. They courageously attempted to take possession of the ball on the basis of the previous analysis of the opponent's game conducted at an advantage.

Return to defence

Very good physical preparation of the players enabled very fast organization of the return to defence, either after the lost ball or after the scored goal. High level of tactical discipline of the teams enabled them to appropriately protect the goal from the opponent's counterattacks. The Swedish team only 10 goals as a result of fast attack during the whole Championships, and the runner up- Denmark lost only 21 goals, while the weakest Slovakia lost 54 goals. This parameter analysed in the case of these teams exactly reflects their order in the tournament.

A good defence supported by an effective return to defence can allow a team to think of winning the European Championship medal.

		YC	RC	2m	2+2	EX	ST	DB	AI
1	SWE	18	0	15	0	0	57	17	97
2	RUS	21	0	29	0	0	47	21	167
3	DEN	18	0	10	0	0	44	15	86
4	POR	19	0	26	0	0	50	4	129
5	MNE	19	0	31	0	0	35	13	139
6	ROU	19	0	27	0	0	58	3	108
7	NOR	18	1	16	0	0	43	12	113
8	CRO	14	0	32	0	0	53	16	107
9	HUN	18	0	22	0	0	52	20	99
10	GER	21	0	24	0	0	58	23	143
11	FRA	18	1	22	0	0	60	16	181
12	NED	20	0	31	0	0	56	18	136
13	ESP	17	0	14	0	0	60	12	74
14	CZE	20	0	30	0	0	53	3	183
15	POL	20	1	27	0	0	32	31	164
16	SVK	19	0	28	0	0	47	1	131

The description of the goalkeeper play

		saves	shots	s%	7ms	7mt	7m%	9ms	9mt	9m%	6ms	6mt	6m%	Ws	Wt	W%	BTs	BTt	BT%	NS%	FBs	FBt	FB%
1	SWE	91	259	35	1	15	7	52	118	44	13	54	24%	17	42	40%	2	14	14%	29	6	16	38%
2	RUS	95	254	37	7	24	29	45	91	49	19	59	32%	12	27	44%	1	10	10%	33	11	43	26%
3	DEN	142	309	46	6	23	26	81	124	65	25	69	36%	18	45	40%	3	18	17%	35	9	30	30%
4	POR	85	288	30	6	29	21	38	70	54	11	73	15%	12	30	40%	6	27	22%	22	12	59	20%
5	MNE	95	257	37	11	31	35	49	101	49	90	40	225%	15	33	45%	4	22	18%	29	7	30	23%
6	ROU	84	270	31	3	31	10	49	97	51	10	61	16%	7	27	26%	5	15	33%	21	10	39	26%
7	NOR	115	314	37	2	30	7	69	140	49	23	61	38%	15	40	38%	1	15	7%	34	5	27	19%
8	CRO	88	291	30	2	32	6	44	103	43	18	58	31%	15	35	43%	2	20	10%	31	7	43	16%
9	HUN	122	301	41	6	21	29	64	117	55	23	66	35%	19	34	56%	0	5	0%	40	10	57	18%
10	GER	105	288	36	7	31	23	52	115	45	19	49	39%	19	36	53%	1	23	4%	36	7	34	21%
11	FRA	95	278	34	4	37	11	39	82	48	12	47	26%	30	67	45%	2	15	13%	34	8	30	27%
12	NED	120	289	42	11	42	26	63	111	57	19	53	36%	22	42	52%	2	10	20%	41	3	31	10%
13	ESP	110	280	39	4	22	18	46	86	53	32	86	37%	19	39	49%	1	16	6%	36	9	33	27%
14	CZE	94	286	33	3	30	10	29	62	47	22	75	29%	27	50	54%	4	25	16%	35	9	44	20%
15	POL	116	301	39	5	22	23	61	126	48	19	50	38%	20	43	47%	5	22	23%	38	6	39	15%
16	SVK	90	298	30	3	17	18	29	72	40	28	80	35%	9	33	27%	4	24	17%	30	16	70	23%

During the whole event the goalkeepers constituted a very important element of the team play quality. Their attitude on many occasions had direct impact on the results of the game. Tall and fit players continue to be the preferred choice in the case of this position. The goalkeeper play was compatible with the manner of defence play and the fast attack, which can be exemplified by the Swedish goalkeeper, whose precise passes enabled to use the effectiveness of very good wingers. The initiation of fast attacks of the team was the noticeable element of goalkeeper play. An example could be a goalkeeper Karolina Sarnecka, who performed 12 passes opening the way to scoring a goal. Another important element was the effectiveness of the goalkeepers in co-operation with tactical interventions of defenders in the middle and in the side sectors of the court. Two best goalkeepers of the Championships were A. Reinhardt from Denmark and R. Duijndam from Holland, who achieved efficiency exceeding 40% during 7 games. The tactical preparation of the goalkeepers on the basis of the analysis of throws performed by the players from opposing teams was also noticeable. The best example for that is the behaviour of the Swedish goalkeeper, whose best games were the two last ones, namely the semi-finals and the finals. She also achieved as much as 38% efficiency of throw defence after the fast attack. The lowest efficiency was achieved by the goalkeepers of the teams who used tall defence systems, such as Romania, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. They had to defend the majority of throws from a short distance, which undoubtedly had impact on the effectiveness of their interventions. The result of 65% throw defence from 9m by the goalkeeper from Denmark is quite impressive. However, this result is the example of the right co-operation with the defence players, especially given the fact that the number of defence blocks performed by the Danish team is quite low (15) for the 6:0 defence system. Therefore this result seems to be the effect of conscious co-operation, aimed at regaining the possession of the ball.

The Championships undoubtedly underlined the important role of the goalkeepers and the impact of their play on the final result of the game. The specialists coaching the players of this position were spotted in the coaching staff of many teams.

Four best teams

Sweden

Following the Swedish male and female teams that had won the World Champion title in 1992, yet another Swedish team was able to win a huge international competition. Surely the coaching experience of the previous generation will be a good coaching example for next age groups. Very good physical conditions supported by the excellent motoric preparation enable Sweden to conduct a very strong defence play. The players gave an excellent example of the play in the Scandinavian 6:0 system. Flawless usage technique also offers the possibility of diverse attack solutions, Although these players have received universal training, they play according to the principle „one player – one position”. The majority of midfielders are characterised by a very strong throw from the 2nd line. The wingers O. Mellegard and E. Ekenman were selected as the best players in their positions in the whole Championships. The tactical preparation of the team is also at a very high level, since it could draw the conclusions from the 10-goal defeat with the Russian team in the group and thus it appropriately prepared for the final game. Also capacity preparation is exemplary, since the Swedish team was at its very best during the last two games. The semi-finals between Denmark and Sweden were called by many experts the best game of the Championships. Its technical and tactical level satisfied numerous spectators who gathered in the Gdańsk hall. The key Swedish players include H. Blomstrand, A. Johansson and the goalkeeper J. Chaddad.

Russia

After the initial phase of the Championships the Russian team was considered to be the favourite, which could play the key role in the tournament. Aggressive 5:1 defence caused huge problems to all opponents. The Russian team had a wide range of good players, fit and tall, with very good individual training. Each girl was capable of effective 1x1 play. It was characteristic for the Russian team to score a huge amount of goals after throws from the floor. Such players as E. Malashenko, Y. Frolova, J. Golikova, J. Komarova, A. Suslova, V. Vemigorova and E. Nefedova are the future of Russian female handball. The Russians scored as many as 82 goals with the throws from the 2nd line, while the Swedes who were the Champions scored only 59 goals. It seems that the weakest element of this team are the 1st line players. Russian wingers only managed to beat the opponent's goalkeepers 15 times using 28 attempts at 7 games by means of throws from the corner of the court, which is the second lowest result of all participating teams. Maybe this element was the missing factor which could enable Russia to win the tournament. During the whole Championships the Russian team performed 70 counterattacks, which gives an average of 10 counterattacks per game, out of which 50 ended up in a goal. Group C, i.e. Russia, Sweden, Hungary and Slovakia proved to be very strong, since also the Hungarians won the competition for the 9-16 place. Russia lost the final game with Sweden, but this generation of players has the chance to dominate in the coming years in the junior female handball.

Denmark

The Danes were the participants of the best Championships game- the semi-finals with Sweden. It could be that an easy way to the semi-finals did not enable the Danes to be appropriately prepared for the most important games. They demonstrated ideal technical training, especially in handling the ball. Together with Montenegro they committed the lowest number of technical errors (68), which gives less than 10 errors per game. Year '96, who is coached by F. Larsen, the assistant coach of H. Erikssen who coached players born in '92 and in '94 continues on his own the effective path of Danish training. Strength training, running, technical and didactic training of players have typically been at a high level in the case of Scandinavian teams. The key figure in the team seems to be the goalkeeper R. Reinhardt. The Scandinavian 6:0 system supported by the goalkeeper of this class results in 50 goals from the counterattack 64 attempts. The Danish team, just like other Scandinavian teams, resolves an organized fast attack in an organized manner. The number of all scored goals can be considered the manifestation of the force of attack of the Danish team: it scored 234 goals, which is the highest result of all teams, with the greatest percentage efficiency (67%). Distinguished players include right midfielders C. Kristiansen and L. Hristensen as well as S. Flader, L. Pedersen, S. Hald, O. Hristensen and P. Boegelund. The representative of Denmark, M. Lykkegaard was considered to be the best defender of the whole Championship. It seems that these three teams, i.e. Sweden, Russia and Denmark represent a very high, uniform level. These three teams at present significantly surpass the remaining teams of the Old Continent.

Portugal

The behaviour of the Portuguese team during the European Championships is a huge surprise. However, the results of elimination tournament in Hungary, where Denmark beat the host with a huge difference were quite thought provoking. The good condition of the Portuguese team was confirmed in the trial games before the championships, during which Portugal beat the French team. After completing the work with the 1992 generation the coach S. Fernandez from Madera created an interesting team with players born in 1996. The team leaders are two side midfielders, S. Santiago and P. Rodrigues. Sandra Sandiago was chosen to be the best left midfielder of the Championships. The Portuguese won only two Championship games, they ended one game in a draw and they lost four games. The 3:2:1 defence used by Portugal proved effective in two key games of the tournament: with Romania and with Montenegro. The defence concentrating in the middle of the court forced the rivals to implement risky solutions. Forcing the attack to the side sectors proved sufficient in the most important games. Despite the weak start in the Championships and the defeat in the first game with the host, brave Portuguese managed to end a game with Spain in a draw during the Iberian Peninsula Derby, thanks to which they qualified to the first fourth. However, during the three last matches (2 with Denmark and once with Russia) they were without a chance. Still, the behaviour of Portugal indicates that it is possible to play effectively without good physical conditions. We will follow further development of this team with great interest.

Final summary

New elements in the attack and in the defence

- ✓ The activity of wingers– the players in wing positions do not play in a passive manner in the corners of the court, but they actively participate in the team actions under positional attack.
- ✓ Low amount of clinches in defence – the defence players try not to interrupt the action (the interruption of the action results in the free throw for the opponent), but they try to gain possession of the ball through stealing or by a throw from a difficult position.
- ✓ A huge numbers of ball overtakes– the defenders are more concentrated in gaining possession of the ball than on stopping the opponent.
- ✓ Low number of technical errors- the training of players and uncomplicated team play in the attack lead to the decrease of ball turnovers.

Distinguished players

- ✓ Goalkeeper: Althea Rebecca Reinhardt (Denmark) 
- ✓ Left wing: Olivia Mellegard (Sweden) 
- ✓ Left back: Sandra Santiago (Portugal) 
- ✓ Middle back: Yaroslava Frolova (Russia) 
- ✓ Right back: Djurdjina Malovic (Montenegro) 
- ✓ Right wing: Emma Ekenman-Fernis (Sweden) 
- ✓ Pivot: Sophia Fehri (France) 
- ✓ The best player of the Championships (MVP): Elizaveta MALASHENKO (Russia) 
- ✓ The highest number of goals: Cristina LASZLO (Romania) – 56 goals
- ✓ The best defender : Maria LYKKEGAARD (Denmark)

The players of the future

Mellegard	SWE	Fehri	FRA	Enkenman	SWE
		Komarova	RUS		
		Senic	MNE		
Serenbrandt	SWE	Posavec	CRO	Kristiansen	DEN
Golikova	RUS	Plazanet	FRA	Malovic	MNE
Bolk	GER	Flader	DEN	Nieuwenweg	NED
Santiago	POR	Frolova	RUS	Nevedova	RUS
Malashenko	RUS	Hoegdahl	NOR	Laszlo	ROM
		Reinhardt	DEN		
		Duijndam	NED		

Trends

- ✓ Every teams has a good run – high level of motoric and capacity training of all team players could be observed. The first four teams played the fastest handball among all participants.
- ✓ Good speed in the games – the maintenance of very fast speed during 60 minutes of the game in relation to all game elements.
- ✓ Good technical level – it enables to implement individual and team tactical assumptions at fast playing speed.
- ✓ Aggressive defence – high activity of the defenders increases the possibility of gaining possession of the ball and it makes it more difficult for the opponents to conduct planned team actions, it disrupts their rhythm and it increases the risk of an error on the part of the attack players.
- ✓ Less blocks in defence – throw blocking has been replaced by the attempts to gain possession of the ball by stealing or by provoking the opponent to throw from a difficult position.
- ✓ More short actions – the increase in the number of actions consisting of a few passes (2-4) can be observed; these actions are characterised by very fast speed and they terminate with a goal throw.
- ✓ A lot of goals after 1:1 – more and more frequently the teams use tactical solutions which enable the team to score a goal during 1 to 1 play (in isolation), using high technical preparation of team players.