



THE DEVELOPING TENDENCIES AND DIRECTION OF WOMEN'S HANDBALL

Based on observations
made at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens



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Introduction

A world event is always a milestone in the history of the development of a sport – in this case handball. At World Championships or at the Olympic Games, the best national teams of the world measure themselves against each other and this brings out the best performance from both the individual player and the team. These events provide indicators physical fitness, technical skill and tactical range that ensure success at any given age of the sport. Across these performance indicators a certain playing style can be deduced and should be taken into account when preparing our teams to their potential. Furthermore, when comparing a world event with the preceding event/championship an opportunity arises to see in which direction world handball is heading.

The Course of a Comparative Analysis

The analysis of a particular world event is a reflection of the game at a given point in time. The result can be an indicator of the direction of the sport only if it is compared to and measured against a previous world event, using the same points of analysis to compare them. From the data gathered in this way certain minor **changes** can be noticed and when grouped together they strengthen into **tendencies**. With further analysis these tendencies become **trends** that then formulate the **principles** that mark the way for the practical preparation.

Thus, in order to indicate the direction of sport we need 2 major events: one starting point (in this case the Women's World's Handball Championship in Croatia 2003 – WB) and one point of comparison (here the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens – OG). Although I participated in both events as the Assistant Coach of the Hungarian Women's Team, I still would not rely just on my personal opinion of these tournaments. Rather, for sake of a strictly objective, comprehensive, factual and thorough analysis, I took as my starting point the overall statistics of the 2 events. I did a comparative analysis because I wanted to know how the measurable performance of the world's best teams changes in the 4 basic phases of handball:

- Counterattack
- Attack against Organised Defence
- Quick Retreat
- Defence against Organised Attack

From a mathematical perspective it was not fair to compare the overall results of the 10 matches most of the teams played at the WC to those of the 7 matches played at the OG. Therefore, for a realistic analysis I worked with the average number of goals scored/conceded per match from the different zones of the score dangerous area. Thus in attack, I tabled the numbers of goals scored per match during:



- The counterattack (fast break)
- The phases of attack against organised defence:
 - from the zone of the side shots (wings),
 - from the zone of the close-range shots (pivot) and
 - from the zone of the long-range shots (through-shots)
 - after breakthrough

Similarly, in defence, I tabled the number of goals conceded per match during:

- The quick retreat (fast break)
- The phase of defence against organised attack:
 - from the zone of the side shots (wings),
 - from the zone of the close-range shots (pivot) and
 - from the zone of the long-range shots (through-shots)
 - after breakthrough

For a clearer perspective I tallied and arranged the statistical data into a table. By putting the numbers next to each other it becomes possible to either summarise one team's performance in both events (vertical comparison) or to summarise one particular phase of handball in both championships (horizontal comparison).

Due to their final rankings at both the World Championship and the Olympic Games, I chose the following teams for my analysis –

- **Hungary** (WC –2 → OG –5)
- **Denmark** (WC –13 → OG –1)
- **France** (WC –1 → OG –4)
- **Korea** (WC –3 → OG –2)
- **Ukraine** (WC –4 → OG –3)



1. Vertical Comparison

With the vertical comparison it is possible to analyse how one team's overall performance changes over the 2 events.

Hungary

After losing the 2003 WC final in extra time, Hungary was considered one of the favourites for the 2004 OG. The WC squad was changed in 2 places. Since neither Sugar nor Szrnka (who were eliminated) played a significant role in the WC squad and Palffy (a newcomer) was only a safety precaution, we can establish that Hungary basically played with the same team as at the WC, including all the key players.

Country		HUN	
Event		2003 WC	2004 OG
COUNTER ATTACK		5,1	4,8
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	6,5	4,8
	Long range shots	8,4	4,7
	Close range shots	6	8
	Breakthrough	2,6	4,2
	Total	28,6	26,5
QUICK RETREAT		5,4	3,8
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	6,4	3,4
	Long range shots	6,9	5,1
	Close range shots	3,8	6,4
	Breakthrough	1,6	3,2
	Total	24,1	21,9

Attack

The number of goals scored from fast break reduced by a lesser degree while those scored from the wing positions lessened by almost 2 goals. By comparing the 2 wing positions, we can establish a weakness on the right. Lovasz who was injured, was unable to repeat her success of the WC neither in fast break (WC – 10 goals, OG – 2 goals) nor from the wing positions (WC – 27 goals, OG – 14 goals) at the OG.

When comparing the goals scored from the middle section of the score dangerous area it is obvious that the number of goals scored from pivot and after breakthrough increased by 2 goals.

The backcourt players' (Ferling 8/9, Siti 6/7, Radulovics 6/6, Görbicz 5/5) shooting percentage was outstanding in this category while Kulcasar from the pivot not only scored many goals (30/37) moreover she attained a very good percentage (81%). However, from the zone of long-range shots, the backcourt players scored on average 4 goals less at the OG than at the WC and this set a significant seal on the

effectiveness of the attack.

Since in the LB position both at the WC and at the OG players often changed, it is worth examining the RB position where in attack Radulovics played almost the entire time in both championships. (WC – 34/85 → 40%; OG – 14/41 → 34%). She scored more than half as many goals at the OG and this had a decisive impact on the success of the Hungarian attack.



Summarizing we can say that by comparing the goal average of 28,6% at the WC and 26,5% at the OG, there is a –2 goals deficit per match in attack.

Defence

In defence a certain duality is evident. On the one hand, it is obvious that at the OG the team conceded approximately 2 goals less from both fast breaks and from through-shots, while from the wings it was 3 goals less. It needs to be highlighted that the goalkeeper Palinger, a key player in both championships and who saved an average of 40% of shots, produced an outstanding (93%) saving percentage of 53% from the wings and 61% from long-range shots at the OG.

On the other hand, at the OG, the team conceded 3 goals more from the pivot position and after breakthrough, that is, the number of goals conceded almost doubled. These facts evidently indicate the weakness of the defence in the vicinity of the goal line area. Knowing that the Hungarian team mostly used 3:2:1 defence proven to be effective against long-range shots but less effective against pivot play, shot after breakthrough and wingers running in, this duality is further confirmed.

To summarize the defence, we can say that in comparison to the 24,1 average per match conceded at the WC, the team produced a better average of 21,9% at the OG. This 2-goals improvement per match can be mainly attributed to good goalkeeping and quick retreat. If we examine the team's performance from the point of view of the effectiveness of the attack and of the defence, it can be established that although the comparative number of goals given and taken was reduced by 2, the final outcome and comparative relationship remained the same at the OG.

Denmark

Perhaps it's not a surprise that after the disappointing thirteenth placing at the WC the squad changed in 7 places. There were fewer wingers and more backcourt players like the experienced Andersen and Kiarerskou at the OG in the Danish squad. This was reflected in the attack where this time most of the activity was initiated and often completed by the backcourt players.



Country		DEN	
Event		2003 WC	2004 OG
COUNTER ATTACK		2,8	6,2
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	6,4	3,5
	Long range shots	4,6	6,8
	Close range shots	4,2	6,7
	Breakthrough	1,8	4
	Total	21,6	27,2
QUICK RETREAT		1	2
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	4,8	3,2
	Long range shots	7,8	7,4
	Close range shots	5,4	5,7
	Breakthrough	1,4	4,7
	Total	20,4	23

Attack

In attack, it is characteristic of the Danish team to score many goals from fast break and this tournament was no exception as they scored the highest number of goals (44) among the teams. The average of 6 goals per match from fast break at the OG was 3 goals more than they scored at the WC. Nevertheless, it is a surprise that the number of goals scored from the wing reduced by half compared to the WC average. In fact, they scored the lowest number of goals (25) among the top teams. Since the WC they improved with an average of 2 goals from each of the zones of long and close-range shots and also after breakthrough. The Danish team scored the highest number of goals with through-shots and these were almost evenly distributed among the four players (Vestergaard, Kiaerskou, Andersen and Fruelund) who most often played in the backcourt positions. Furthermore, Fruelund was very effective in 1 versus 1 in front of the defence wall and out of the team's 28 goals after breakthrough she scored the half of

them. Pivot play was also an outstanding feature of the Danish attack as the pivot Thomsen, Broedsgaard, and the winger Daugaard scored 2/3 of the team's goals from the zone of close-range shots. Hence, in the most successful areas of the Danish attack no one, but often the collective performance of three or four players in one position was a key factor. Among the many, good individual performances in attack, Fruelund's role needs to be highlighted. She scored 50 goals out of 73 attempts with a very high scoring percentage of 68% and apart from fast breaks she was very effective in every area of the attack. She was often the playmaker of her team (18 assists) not to mention her outstanding performance in the OG final where she was the true leader. To summarize, it is obvious to see the improvement in the Danish attack at the OG. By comparing the goal average of 21,6% at the WC and 27,2% at the OG there is a huge 6 goals improvement.

Defence

In defence, the Danish team was the only team that consistently applied 6:0 zone defence. In the phase of quick retreat they conceded 1 goal more per match than at the WC while at the wings they improved by letting in an average of 1 goal less since the WC. Goals conceded from the zone of long-range shots (mostly through-shots) and from the zone of close-range shots (from pivot position) were almost the same in both tournaments. These results can be attributed to the goalkeepers, particularly Smidt who saved with a high saving percentage of 62% and 31% respectively from these areas. Nevertheless, it is surprising that their defence conceded an average of 3 goals more after breakthrough at the OG than at the WC particularly after knowing that 6:0 defence is meant to be effective against this type of attack completion.



Based on the statistical facts we can summarise by saying that after comparing the 20,4% average conceded per match at the WC, and the conceded 23% average at the OG, it can be established that the effectiveness of Danish defence was diminished by 3 goals.

To summarize, it can be said that, the winning factor for the Danish team at the OG was their attack. Even though their defence seemingly weakened at the OG, they improved so much in the attack that they were able to compensate for this. After finishing thirteenth at the WC the Danish team showed the greatest improvement among the leading handball nations by becoming the Olympic Champions!

France

As the reigning world champions, it is understandable that the French made only 1 change to the team from the WC to the OG. So basically, similar to the Hungarian team, this team played the Olympic tournament with the world champion squad. This very experienced team finally won a world event after having played together for many years. As the favourites they also had to overcome the pressure of this burden.

Country		FRA	
Event		2003 WC	2004 OG
COUNTER ATTACK		6,8	5,2
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	4,2	3,5
	Long range shots	9	5,5
	Close range shots	3,2	7,2
	Breakthrough	2,1	1,4
	Total	25,3	22,8
QUICK RETREAT		2,2	3,1
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	4,1	4,7
	Long range shots	6,4	4,4
	Close range shots	3,5	7,2
	Breakthrough	2,9	3
	Total	19,1	22,4

Attack

In attack, the number of goals scored from fast breaks and from the wing lessened by an average of 1 goal per match respectively. While at the WC the fast wingers mostly scored the fast break goals, at the OG it was the pivot, Pecqueux-Rolland who was the most successful with her 13 goals besides the two wingers (Cano 8/19, Tervel 8/19). At the wing Tervel, who was the first choice left wing, scored more goals by herself (14) than Cano (5) and Vogein (4) together from the right wing.

The backcourt activity was somewhat characterised by the fact that from the long-range shots the backs scored almost 5 goals less at the OG than they did at the WC. The problem was not the number of attempts (124), rather the backcourt players who played regularly (Lejune, Jacques, Herbrecht, Korfanty) shot at the goal with a low scoring percentage of 31% and it resulted in only 39 goals from through-shots. Furthermore, at the OG the number of goals attained after a breakthrough also marginally

lessened in comparison to the WC performance.

Conversely, pivot play, which was already strong, became a real weapon at the OG. Pecqueux-Rolland and Wendling complemented each other very well and they Managed to score 38 goals collectively from the zone of the close-range shots.

To summarize, when comparing the goal average of 25,3 at the WC and the 22,8 at the OG the conclusion can be drawn that the French attack was weakened by almost 3 goals.



Defence

The effectiveness of the quick retreat is demonstrated by the fact that the French team conceded 1 goal more in this phase of the defence. The number of goals conceded from the wing and after breakthrough remained basically the same in both tournaments. The French defence proved to be effective against through-shots and received an average of 2 goals less per match at the OG.

Perhaps also the contribution of the goalkeepers (Nicolas, Dudziak) who produced a 57% saving average from long-range was a deciding factor. At the OG the weak point of the defence was the protection of the goal line area because in comparison to the WC, they conceded almost 4 goals more from the zone of the close-range shots. With a mediocre saving average of 27% from close-range not even the goalkeepers could compensate for the individual defence errors.

To summarize, the statistical facts and comparing the 19,1 goal average conceded per match at the WC, and the conceded 22,4 goal average at the OG, it can be established that the French defence worsened by 3 goals.

When adding up the statistics, the 3 goals less in attack and the 3 goals more conceded in defence adds up to an average of a 6 goals deficit per match. Perhaps this indicates why the number 1 ranked French team dropped back to the fourth position at the Olympic games.

Korea

After long absence from the world elite, Korea returned amongst the world's best teams at the 2003 WC. The Korean squad made up of both older, more experienced players and younger, talented players stormed through to the semifinals and won the bronze medal.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the squad was only slightly changed and with the exception of one player, they arrived at the OG with the same team as the WC.



Country		KOR	
Event		2003 WC	2004 OG
COUNTER ATTACK		7,4	5,2
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	5,2	6,7
	Long range shots	7,9	5,4
	Close range shots	4,7	7,2
	Breakthrough	2,2	3,5
	Total	26,8	28
QUICK RETREAT		4,4	4,7
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	2,7	2,4
	Long range shots	6,9	6,4
	Close range shots	5	6,8
	Breakthrough	5,1	3,7
	Total	24,4	24

Attack

The stability of the Korean's attack is characterised by the fact that while they scored an average of almost 2 goals less from fast break, they compensated by scoring from the wing and after breakthrough collectively an extra 3 goals more than at the WC. Of the wingers, right wing Woo was outstanding; while the goals scored after breakthrough were evenly distributed among the backcourt players. Although the Korean backs scored the third highest number of through-shots at the OG, it was still 3 goals less in comparison to their performance at the WC. Similar to the French players, the Koreans were most successful in the zone of close-range shots and the 2 pivots Huh and Kim took their share of this success. It is interesting to note that goals scored from the pivot position and after breakthrough, thus from the zone of close-range shots, were altogether 1/3 of all the goals scored from the field. To further highlight the effectiveness of their attack they were the second most efficient team in concluding the attack (58%)

while they scored the most goals (229) at the OG. In general, it says a lot about their attack that they were able to improve by 1 goal the already high 26,8 goal average of the WC and with the average of 28 goals per match the Koreans became the most successful attacking team at the OG.

Defence

For a long time, defence was the Koreans' prime and most feared weapon. Although in comparison to the WC the number of goals received during quick retreat didn't change, in relation to the other teams at the OG the Koreans received the most goals (4,7) from fast breaks. The number of goals conceded from the wings does not show significant deviation between the 2 championships. Apart from a tighter defence, the reduction of goals conceded from long range was further aided by the goalkeepers who saved more than half (55%) of the through-shots. The defence was less effective at the OG against the pivot of the opposition and this is indicated by the fact that they conceded an average of 2 goals more per game from the zone of the close-range shots. The significant reduction of the number of goals received after breakthrough can also be attributed to the fact that the Korean defence was tighter around the goal line area.

To summarize, it can be said that the Korean defence conceded the highest number of field goals average per match among the leading teams. However, when comparing the statistical analysis of the WC (24,4) and the OG (24), it is clear that the overall outcome did not change significantly.



By analysing the performance of the Korean team in both events the common factor that arises is its consistency; and the slight improvement in both attack and defence resulted in a WC bronze to OG silver.

Ukraine

One third of the Ukrainian team, which finished 4th at the WC was changed and as a result 4 new players were added to the Olympic squad of which 3 were naturalised from Russia. As the only team sport to qualify for the OG from the Ukraine, this team had total government support and was able to start its Olympic preparation a week ahead of the others in the hope of winning a medal.

Country		UKR	
Event		2003 WC	2004 OG
COUNTER ATTACK		7,4	4,7
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	4,6	3,4
	Long range shots	5,1	3,7
	Close range shots	3	2,8
	Breakthrough	4	5
	Total	24,1	19,6
QUICK RETREAT		3,7	2,4
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	4,3	3,7
	Long range shots	7,7	5,8
	Close range shots	5	4,2
	Breakthrough	1,5	1,4
	Total	22,4	17,5

Attack

The fact that they scored by far the lowest number of goals in total (165) among the leading nations at the OG says a lot about the attack of the Ukrainian team. Compared to the WC, at the OG they scored 3 goals less from fast break and 1 goal less from the wings. Although this was a setback for them at the OG they were equal to the other teams in these categories. Even more striking was the fact that they scored only 4 goals per match on average from long-range and this is also the lowest among the other competitors – the efficiency though remained under 30% (26/93). The performance of the 2 regular backcourt players, Tsygitsa and Verhejuk (4/28 and 5/13 respectively) in particular, declined from one tournament to the other. They achieved approximately the same result from pivot position and the only area in which they showed considerable improvement was in scoring after breakthrough. In this, Szjukalo and Verhejuk compensated a little for the poor performance from long-range and they

scored collectively more than half (20) of the Ukrainian goals. With a total of 35 goals scored after breakthrough, Ukraine was one of the best in this category. To summarize their attack it can be seen that they did not reach their potential and in comparison to the average 24,1 goals scored per match at WC, they only managed to score an average of 19,6 goals per match at the OG and this resulted in a significant reduction of 4 goals in their attack.



Defence

In defence however, the Ukrainian team did very well. During quick retreat, from wing positions and from the zone of the close-range shots they conceded 1 less goal in each. Moreover, at the OG, from the zone of the long-range shots the results were better and they conceded 2 goals less than at the WC. There was even a slight improvement in conceding goals after breakthrough so in general we can say that in every section of the score dangerous area, they conceded fewer goals.

After these results 2 points automatically come to mind: defence and goalkeeping.

With a very aggressive, sometimes rough 5 + 1 defence, the team from the Ukraine managed to concede 3 goals below the average of the other leading teams. Even at the expense of 2 minutes suspensions, they consistently maintained this physical form of defence and they were the most effective team defending in numerical inferiority. In the various categories of the defence statistics: for example, stealing the ball – Verhejuk, 16 times, blocking shots – Sevcsenko, 18 times; the Ukrainian players can be found among the top ranked players.

The goalkeepers achieved a good 40% saving efficiency collectively. The burden and the court time were well distributed among the 3 goalkeepers as even the third goalkeepers spent almost a total of an entire game on the field. However, the first choice goalkeeper Borisenko stood out with her saving efficiencies of 61% from the zone of the long-range shots and 50% from the zone of the close-range shots.

To summarize, the statistics indicate that in comparison to the already good 22,4 goals on average conceded per match at the WC the 17,5 goals conceded at the OG was a vast 5 goals improvement.

To encapsulate, statistically comparing the attack and defence we can say that although the Ukrainian team scored an average of 4 goals less in attack, the 5 goals improvement in defence not only compensated for this loss but also improved their performance overall. For the Ukrainian team the strong defence was the decisive factor, and this allowed them to move from fourth place at the WC up to the bronze medal at the OG.



2. Horizontal Comparison

Horizontal Comparison allows for the analysis of the summarised indicators of the teams in four categories. By analysing the results of the teams' overall performances, we can see how they have changed within the different categories over the 2 events.

Counterattack

Country	HUN		DEN		FRA		KOR		UKR		Total	
	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG
COUNTER ATTACK	5,1	4,8	2,8	6,2	6,8	5,2	7,4	5,2	7,4	4,7	5,7	5,2

Looking at the data it can be established that there is a marginally yet not significantly fewer number of goals scored from fast break at the OG (5,2) than at the WC (5,1). This way of scoring is still indispensable and a successful weapon proven by the fact that 1/5 of the goals scored come as a consequence of fast break. The slight decline in the results of the goals scored come as a consequence of fast break. The slight decline in the results predominantly on the individual fast break because the frequency of completing the counterattack in the second or third wave tends to increase. The Danish team provided a good example because aside from the classic completion of fast break by the winger, they also finished counterattack more frequently with the player starting off from the middle of the defence. Apart from the outstanding improvement of the Danish team, all the other teams deteriorated in this phase of the game. Perhaps it is surprising that the Danish team, who had the least amount of substitution between attack and defence, achieved well. However, it seems that the other teams who tried to operate with attack and defence specialist players were disadvantaged in the counterattack.

Attack Against Organised Defence

Country	HUN		DEN		FRA		KOR		UKR		Total		
	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	
ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	6,5	4,8	6,4	3,5	4,2	3,5	5,2	6,7	4,6	3,4	5,4	4,4
	Long-range shots	8,4	4,7	4,6	6,8	9	5,5	7,9	5,4	5,1	3,7	7	5,2
	Close-range shots	6	8	4,2	6,7	3,2	7,2	4,7	7,2	3	2,8	4,2	6,4
	Break through	2,6	4,2	1,8	4	2,1	1,4	2,2	3,5	4	5	2,5	3,6
	Total	28,6	26,5	21,6	27,2	25,3	22,8	26,8	28	24,1	19,6	25,3	24,8



Looking at the table the first thing that catches the eye in this phase of the attack is the slight decline of the number of goals scored from the wing and from through-shots and the substantial increase of goals scored from pivot position and after breakthrough. Most of the teams used an open defence and this reduced the chances and opportunity for through-shots from the backcourt. It is a fact that the big shooters of the teams (eg, the French Jacques WC 18/41 – OG 5/16; the Hungarian Radulovics WC 34/85 – OG 14/41; the Korean Oh Seng WC 23/49 – OG 6/29 or the Ukrainian Tsygitsa WC 24/69 – OG 4/28) had weaker performances at the Olympic Games. Therefore, the importance of playing close to the defenders and keeping them under constant pressure increased. This type of play is not as risky as shooting from the backcourt and offers more opportunities for breakthroughs, for unexpected through-shots, for passing to the pivot or to the wingers running in. As an indirect consequence of playing 1 on 1, penalties can be gained and quick waving can be initiated. All these actions lead to focussing the completion of the attack in the zone of the close-range shots where there is a better chance of succeeding.

To summarize this phase of the attack it can be said that although the distribution of the goals shifted, the overall number from the WC (25,3) to the OG (24,8) did not change significantly.

Quick Retreat

Country Event	HUN		DEN		FRA		KOR		UKR		Total	
	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG
QUICK RETREAT	5,4	3,8	1	2	2,2	3,2	4,7	3,7	2,4	3,4	3,4	3,2

Looking at the data it can be established that there is no significant difference between the WC (3,4) and the OG (3,2) in this phase. The teams consciously strove to obstruct the oppositions' fast break attempts by running back quickly and defending their goal. Nevertheless, if we make a cross comparison of the quick retreat data we can see that 2 teams (Hungary and Ukraine) improved, Korea instead remained the same while the other 2 (France and Denmark) declined. Player substitution as opposed to counterattack did not influence the teams' success. The performance of the goalkeepers, apart from the Ukrainian, did not improve and their effectiveness in saving clear scoring chances worsened by an average of 3-4%. This fact further reinforces the theory that the slight improvement in this phase of the attack can be attributed to the faster retreat of the players.



Defence Against Organised Attack

Country		HUN		DEN		FRA		KOR		UKR		Total	
Event		WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG	WC	OG
DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	6,4	3,4	4,8	3,2	4,1	4,7	2,7	2,4	4,3	3,4	4,5	3,5
	Long-range shots	6,9	5,1	7,8	7,4	6,5	4,4	6,9	6,4	7,7	5,8	7,1	5,8
	Close-range shots	3,8	6,4	5,4	5,7	3,5	7,2	5	6,8	5	4,2	4,5	6,1
	Break through	1,6	3,2	1,4	4,7	2,9	3	5,1	3,7	1,5	1,4	2,5	3,2
	Total	24,1	21,9	20,4	23	19,1	22,4	24,4	24	22,4	17,5	22,8	21,8

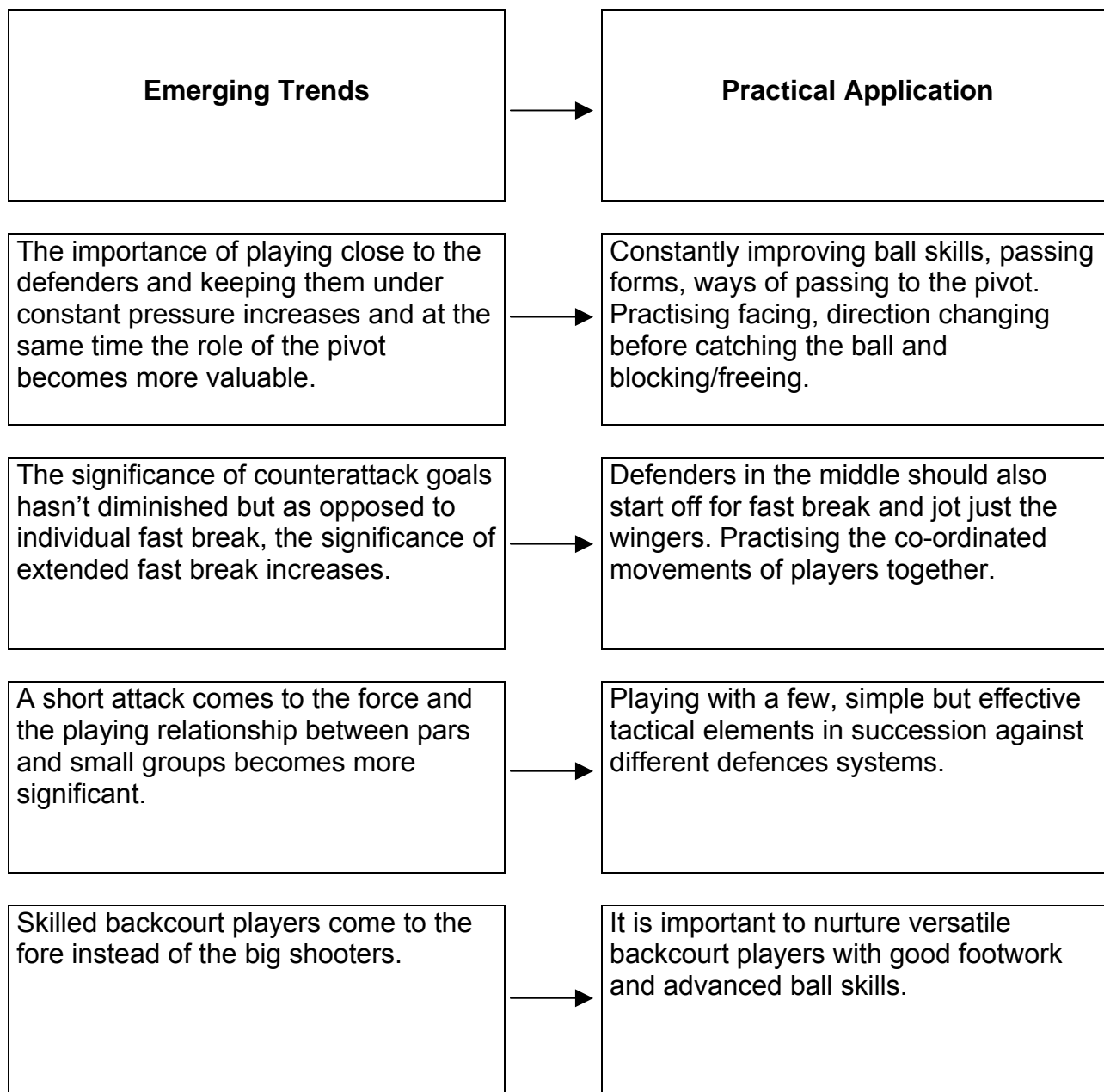
This phase of attack shows the reverse result to the attack against organised defence: there is an average of a 1-goal improvement in the number of goals conceded from the wing and from through-shots and a decrease of 1 goal conceded from pivot position and after breakthrough. It's contradictory that fewer goals were scored from the wings even though all the teams, apart from Denmark, used 3:2:1 or 5:1 open defence. One reason could be the improvement of goalkeepers' saving efficiency from the wing. Due to their physical size, Palinger 53%, Smidt 43% and OhYong 41% were better able to cover the surface of the goals as compared to their physically smaller counterparts. The other possible reason could be the individual improvement of the outside defenders as at the OG there were fewer attempts at concluding the attack from the wings. At the OG as a result of the open defence where the players were divided in depth, dual blocking proved to be an effective weapon against through-shots. This was further enhanced by the goalkeepers (Palinger 61%, Nicolas 59%, Borisenko 63%, Smidt 62%) who helped the defence with excellent saving percentages from the zone of the long-range shots. From the zone of the close-range shots and after breakthrough, the teams weakened by an average of 3 goals. This can also be attributed to the fact that the teams favoured open defence where the protection of the goal line area is more difficult. This was the weakness of defence for most of the teams.

To summarize this phase of the defence it can be said that although there is a significant step back in the zone of the close-range shots, in comparison to the WC (22,8), there was a 1-goal improvement at the OG (21,8) and this confirms the important role of defence.



The emerging trends

Following the horizontal analysis a few reoccurring tendencies seem to be emerging into new trends. These trends then can be the starting point for the practical application when planning for training.





Final note

After a thorough analysis emerging tendencies have been established. However, this theory is useless if it is not adopted and put into practice. Now it becomes the work of the coach to adapt these principles to the abilities of his/her team and follow in the path of the leading teams of the world.



COMPARISON BETWEEN OF THE LEADING NATIONS OF WOMEN'S HANDBALL BASED ON THEIR STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE AT THE 2003 WC AND THE 2004 OG

	Country	HUN		DEN		FRA		KOR		UKR		Total		
	Event	2003 WC	2004 OG	2003 WC	2004 OG	2003 WC	2004 OG	2003 WC	2004 OG	2003 WC	2004 OG	2003 WC	2004 OG	
ATTACK goals scored/match	COUNTER ATTACK	5,1	4,8	2,8	6,2	6,8	5,2	7,4	5,2	7,4	4,7	5,7	5,2	
	ATTACK AGAINST ORGANISED DEFENCE	Side shots	6,5	4,8	6,4	3,5	4,2	3,5	5,2	6,7	4,6	3,4	5,4	4,4
		Long-range shots	8,4	4,7	4,6	6,8	9	5,5	7,9	5,4	5,1	3,7	7	5,2
		Close-range shots	6	8	4,2	6,7	3,2	7,2	4,7	7,2	3	2,8	4,2	6,4
		Break-through	2,6	4,2	1,	4	2,1	1,4	2,2	3,5	4	5	2,5	3,6
		Total	28,6	26,5	21,6	27,2	25,3	22,8	26,8	28	24,1	19,6	25,3	24,8
DEFENCE goals conceded/match	QUICK RETREAT	5,4	3,8	1	2	2,2	3,1	4,7	4,7	3,7	2,4	3,4	3,2	
	DEFENCE AGAINST ORGANISED ATTACK	Side shots	6,4	3,4	4,8	3,2	4,1	4,7	2,7	2,4	4,3	3,7	4,5	3,5
		Long-range shots	6,9	5,1	7,8	7,4	6,4	4,4	6,9	6,4	7,7	5,8	7,1	5,8
		Close-range shots	3,8	6,4	5,4	5,7	3,5	7,2	5	6,8	5	4,2	4,5	6,1
		Break-through	1,3	3,2	1,4	4,7	2,9	3	5,1	3,7	1,5	1,4	2,5	3,2
		Total	24,1	21,9	20,4	23	19,1	22,4	24,4	24	22,4	17,5	22,8	21,8