# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The experts, in conversation: 3
- Technical stats: 6
- Technical and tactical analysis and trends in the game: 11
- Official FIFA awards: 14
While there has been plenty of talent on the field during the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017, watching on from the stands there has been some high proponents of the game, too.

To get a taste of the tournament through the eyes of those who know the game best, FIFA.com sat in on a chat ahead of the final led by FIFA Chief Officer for Technical Development Marco van Basten with FIFA Legend Pablo Aimar.

Joining them were former Switzerland and Netherlands internationals Jean-Paul Brigger and Wim Koevermans. Both part of FIFA’s Technical Study Group, the TSG have been analysing the finer points of the game since 1966 FIFA World Cup England™ and the pair have been part of the team turning their expert eye to the action in Korea Republic.

Marco van Basten: Pablo, you have seen the tournament, how do you assess what you have seen and what do you think about the level here?

Pablo Aimar: I think the standard has been good. The best teams reached the semi-finals in my opinion and any of four of them could have played the final. The final we’ve got, though, is a really good one.

Van Basten: You won the U-20 World Cup at Malaysia 1997. What did you see from the Argentina team this edition?
Aimar: I don’t think they played badly. They couldn’t take the chances they created but they didn’t play badly.

Van Basten: Did you see a new Aimar, Lionel Messi, or Diego Maradona?
Aimar: Or a new Van Basten? [Laughs]

Van Basten: [Laughs] That’s impossible!


Van Basten: In terms of the tournament, did you see any players among other teams who are looking promising for the future?

Aimar: Yes, there’s a lot of them. [Dominic] Solanke, [Riccardo] Orsolini, [Federico] Valverde, [Fashion] Sakala, [Adalberto] Penaranda, Diogo Goncalvez, Xadas. There are a lot of players, even the Argentinians. What I don’t know is how good they’re going to end up being, but there are a lot of them for sure. Valverde might make it to Russia 2018.

Van Basten: What is the big difference between the U-20s and the senior FIFA World Cup?

Aimar: The interest among the fans and the pace of the game. The pace is faster at senior level. There’s more intensity.

Van Basten: And technically?

Aimar: It’s inferior but the technical gap is not as large as the difference in intensity.

Van Basten: Which team did you like the most in Korea Republic?
Aimar: Zambia, because they were always smiling and wanted to play. They were young lads enjoying the game. I really liked the way they ran onto the pitch singing and then played well. I’m not [saying this as] a Zambia fan, though. I’m neutral.

Van Basten: Football now is different from 20 years ago, it’s changing. Did you see anything new or special during the tournament as opposed to those over the last five years?
Aimar: At senior international level it’s very tactical, and at U-20 level it’s become more tactical than it was 20 years ago. That’s why I prefer U-17 football to U-20’s because they play more. They’re younger and you see that in their play. It’s closer to what it was like when we were youngsters, when it was all about playing football and doing it with a smile. That’s what football is – a game.

Van Basten: That’s important to see. So, it’s becoming more tactical but did you see any new ideas in the way the game was played?

Aimar: New ideas, no. I think there are countries who have a tradition to uphold, such as Italy and Uruguay, who defend and try to hit you on the break. Venezuela try to play a bit more, but of the four semi-finalists, I think England were the side that tried to play the most.

Van Basten: Do you still see a difference between footballing styles from different continents, or are approaches becoming more common?

Aimar: The European sides have come on a lot in terms of technique. In the past, they always looked to import technically gifted players, but now they have more of their own. Players with good control, passing and precision when playing at speed.

Wim Koevermans: I really liked a lot of Argentina’s players but they conceded goals too easily and didn’t score. But they had very good players.

Aimar: The 4-4-3 formation has not left room for the traditional No10. We don’t have them anymore. Historically, Argentina always had a No10 but now it’s more difficult. They don’t exist.

Koevermans: There’s no space for them.

Van Basten: Do you see the No10 as someone who plays closer to the defenders or closer to the centre-forward, so he is free to go where he wants?

Aimar: He’s the fourth forward.

Koevermans: But the space has gone, I think Messi is the only one who can do it.

Aimar: I think under [Jorge] Sampaoli, Messi will play as a No10.

Van Basten: In that case, maybe Messi will have to work a little bit more. Now, in his forward role, when he loses the ball, there are still eight or nine players behind him. If he’s a midfielder and he loses the ball, there are only four or five players behind him, so he’ll need to be a bit careful about that.

Aimar: But he doesn’t lose the ball!

[Laughs].

Jean-Paul Brigger: We have talked about the video assistant referee system a lot, and it’s always good to hear from the best former players on what they think.

Aimar: I’m in favour of the VAR but sometimes I watch an incident once, twice or three or four times over and I still don’t know how to call it.

Van Basten: I can understand that, but the rules are that you only use the VAR if you have a clear mistake and, if there is any doubt, then the decision is the referee’s. It needs to be clear for everyone before they can intervene. If there’s a discussion, that means it’s not a clear mistake.

Van Basten: Just to finish, as an ambassador of Korea Republic 2017, how do you reflect on the tournament?

Aimar: I’m just really grateful to everyone who went to the games. Tournaments like this one are very important.
**FINAL STANDINGS**

1. England  
2. Venezuela  
3. Italy  
4. Uruguay  
5. Zambia  
6. USA  
7. Portugal  
8. Mexico  
9. France  
10. Korea Republic  
11. Senegal  
12. Costa Rica  
13. Germany  
14. Japan  
15. Saudi Arabia  
16. New Zealand  
17. Argentina  
18. Iran  
19. Honduras  
20. Ecuador  
21. South Africa  
22. Vietnam  
23. Guinea  
24. Vanuatu

**STATS**

- **Total attendance**: 410,795
- **Average attendance**: 7,900
- **Goals**: 140
- **Goal average**: 2.69
- **Penalties**: 20
- **Converted, 8 missed**: 12
- **Yellow cards**: 176
- **Red cards**: 8
- **(avg/game 3.38)**
- **(avg/game 0.15)**
- **2nd yellow card**: 6
- **Direct red card**: 2
- **Total goals**: 140
- **(19.29%)**
- **(13.57%)**
- **Ball possession %**: 55
- **Pass accuracy**: 76%
- **Venezuela**: 82%

**WHEN THE GOALS WERE SCORED**

- **0-60 min**: 65 goals
- **61-120 min**: 75 goals
- **06th to 60th minute**: 15 goals
- **61st to 75th minute**: 16 goals
- **1st to 15th minute**: 10 goals
- **16th to 30th minute**: 9 goals
- **31st to 45th minute**: 8 goals
- **61st to 75th minute**: 7 goals
- **46th to 60th minute**: 6 goals
- **76th to 90th minute**: 5 goals
- **3rd to 45th minute**: 4 goals
- **1st to 15th minute**: 3 goals
- **46th to 60th minute**: 2 goals
- **16th to 30th minute**: 1 goal
- **30th to 60th minute**: 1 goal
- **61st to 75th minute**: 1 goal
- **6th to 25th minute**: 1 goal

**WHO SCORED THE GOALS**

- **Defenders**: 11
- **Midfielders**: 18
- **Strikers**: 77
- **Goalkeepers**: 1

**TOP 3 GOALSCORERS**

1. Riccardo ORSOLINI  (ITA, 7)  
   - **Goals**: 5  
   - **Assists**: 0  
   - **Minutes played**: 568  
   - **Matches played**: 7

2. Joshua SARGENT  (USA, 19)  
   - **Goals**: 4  
   - **Assists**: 1  
   - **Minutes played**: 422  
   - **Matches played**: 5

3. Jean-Kévin AUGUSTIN  (FRA, 7)  
   - **Goals**: 4  
   - **Assists**: 0  
   - **Minutes played**: 218  
   - **Matches played**: 3

**THE FINAL**

- **Goals**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 1

- **Shots**
  - **Venezuela**: 19  
  - **England**: 20

- **Shots on goal**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 8

- **Shots blocked**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 4

- **Penalties awarded**
  - **Venezuela**: 1  
  - **England**: 0

- **Penalties missed**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 0

- **Ball possession %**
  - **Venezuela**: 45  
  - **England**: 55

- **Passes completed**
  - **Venezuela**: 226  
  - **England**: 295

- **Goals**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 1

- **Shots**
  - **Venezuela**: 19  
  - **England**: 20

- **Shots on goal**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 8

- **Shots blocked**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 4

- **Penalties awarded**
  - **Venezuela**: 1  
  - **England**: 0

- **Penalties missed**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 0

- **Ball possession %**
  - **Venezuela**: 45  
  - **England**: 55

- **Passes completed**
  - **Venezuela**: 226  
  - **England**: 295

- **Goals**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 1

- **Shots**
  - **Venezuela**: 19  
  - **England**: 20

- **Shots on goal**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 8

- **Shots blocked**
  - **Venezuela**: 4  
  - **England**: 4

- **Penalties awarded**
  - **Venezuela**: 1  
  - **England**: 0

- **Penalties missed**
  - **Venezuela**: 0  
  - **England**: 0

- **Ball possession %**
  - **Venezuela**: 45  
  - **England**: 55

- **Passes completed**
  - **Venezuela**: 226  
  - **England**: 295

**THE FINAL**

- **Match**: 0-1 (0-1)
- **Venue**: Suwon World Cup Stadium in Suwon
- **Referee**: Björn KUIPERS (NED)

**GOALS FROM**

- **Inside goal area**: 22 goals
- **Inside penalty area**: 84 goals
- **Outside penalty area**: 22 goals

**Technical stats**

- **Total goals**: 140
- **Goals awarded**: 20
- **Goals converted**: 140
- **Goals blocked**: 4
- **Goals by substitute**: 14
- **Goals missed**: 8
- **Ball possession %**: 55
- **Passes completed**: 295
- **Pass accuracy**: 76%
- **Venezuela**: 82%

**Additional stats**

- **Total attendance**: 410,795
- **Average attendance**: 7,900
- **Goals**: 140
- **Goal average**: 2.69
- **Penalties**: 20
- **Converted, 8 missed**: 12
- **Yellow cards**: 176
- **Red cards**: 8
- **(avg/game 3.38)**
- **(avg/game 0.15)**
- **2nd yellow card**: 6
- **Direct red card**: 2
THE FINAL

LINE-UPS

VEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GK</td>
<td>Walker FARÍÑEZ</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Williams VELÁSQUEZ</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Nahuel FERRARESI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>José HERNÁNDEZ</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Adalberto PEÑARANDA</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Yangel HERRERA (C)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Ronald PEÑA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Ronaldo CHACÓN</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Ronald LUCENA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Ronaldo HERNÁNDEZ</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GK</td>
<td>Freddie WOODMAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Jonjoe KENNY</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Lewis COOK (C)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Fikayo TOMORI</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Jake CLARKE-SALTER</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Josh ONOMAH</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Ademola LOOKMAN</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>Dominic CALVERT-LEWIN</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF</td>
<td>Kieran DOWELL</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUBSTITUTES

VEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Eduin QUERO</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MF)</td>
<td>Christian MAKOUN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GK)</td>
<td>Yeferson SOTELDO</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Joel GRATEROL</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Héber GARCÍA</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FW)</td>
<td>Samuel SOSA</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Josua MEJÍAS</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MF)</td>
<td>Luis RUIZ</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GK)</td>
<td>Rafael SÁNCHEZ</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Callum CONNOLLY</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MF)</td>
<td>Ainsley MAITLAND-NILES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FW)</td>
<td>Adam ARMSTRONG</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Ezri KONSA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Dean HENDERSON</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DF)</td>
<td>Dael FRY</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FW)</td>
<td>Harry CHAPMAN</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FW)</td>
<td>Sheyi OJO</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MF)</td>
<td>Ovie EJARIA</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(GK)</td>
<td>Luke SOUTHWOOD</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEAM PASSES COMPLETED (STARTING 11)

VEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FARÍÑEZ (GK)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERNÁNDEZ (DF)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VELÁSQUEZ (DF)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHACÓN (FW)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEÑARANDA (FW)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUCENA (MF)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERRARESI (DF)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. HERNÁNDEZ (DF)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEÑA (FW)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CÓRDOVA (FW)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOK (MF)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Jersey Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WOODMAN (GK)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLARKE-SALTER (DF)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOLANKE (FW)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONOMAH (MF)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOWELL (MF)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COOK (MF)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENNY (DF)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOMORI (DF)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALKER-PETERS (DF)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EVENTS

VEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46'</td>
<td>Yellow card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74'</td>
<td>Penalty missed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:50</td>
<td>Start of 2nd half</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35'</td>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62'</td>
<td>Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48'</td>
<td>Yellow card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76'</td>
<td>Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58'</td>
<td>Yellow card</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEERING YOUR WAY THROUGH THE DOCUMENT

This document presents the line-ups of Venezuela and England, with substitutions made during the match. The technical stats include team passes completed and events occurring during the game. The events section details specific moments like yellow cards, goals, substitutions, and penalty missed.
PLAYER STATISTICS FROM THE FINAL

FREDDIE WOODMAN, 1

Goalkeeper (GK)
England
4 March 1997
Newcastle United FC, ENG
adidas Golden Glove winner

Goals and Saves

Saves

Goalkeeper (GK) England 4 March 1997 Newcastle United FC, ENG adidas Golden Glove winner

Dominic Solanke, 10

Forward (FW)
England
14 September 1997
Chelsea FC, ENG
adidas Golden Ball winner

Shots from Midfielders and Forwards (Starting 11)

Goals/ Shots

Goals/Shots Blocked

Passes

Technical stats
NAHUEL FERRARESI, 4

Defender (DF)
Venezuela
19 November 1998
Deportivo Tachira FC, VEN

- DUELS
  - TACKLES: 4
  - Possession lost: 2
  - Possession regained: 5
  - Yellow: 0
  - Second yellow: 0
  - Direct red: 0

- PASSES BY ZONE

- SHOTS
  - GOALS: 0
  - On goal: 2
  - Off target: 0
  - Blocked: 1
  - Total shots: 3

TEAM PASSES COMPLETED (STARTING 11)

- SHOTS FROM MIDFIELDERS AND FORWARDS (STARTING 11)

YANGEL HERRERA, 8

Midfielder (MF)
Venezuela
7 January 1998
New York City FC, USA

- DUELS
  - TACKLES: 7
  - Possession lost: 8
  - Possession regained: 6
  - Yellow: 0
  - Second yellow: 0
  - Direct red: 0

- SHOTS
  - GOALS: 0
  - On goal: 2
  - Off target: 0
  - Blocked: 1
  - Total shots: 3

- CHANGE OF POSSESSION

- PASSES BY ZONE
**Technical stats**

**Comparison between New Zealand 2015 and Korea Republic 2017**

### Number of Goals Scored:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KOR 2017</th>
<th>NZL 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average goals per match</strong></td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KOR 2017**

140

**NZL 2015**

154

### Number of Wins:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KOR 2017</th>
<th>NZL 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHO SCORED THE GOALS:**

**KOR 2017**

- Strikers: 77
- Midfielders: 72
- Defenders: 48
- Goalkeepers: 61
- Own goals: 11

**NZL 2015**

- Strikers: 7
- Midfielders: 6
- Defenders: 4
- Goalkeepers: 1
- Own goals: 0

### From What Distance the Goals Were Scored:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>KOR 2015</th>
<th>NZL 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inside goal area</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside penalty area</td>
<td>84 (+12)</td>
<td>86 (+9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside penalty area</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Highest-Scoring Match:

**KOR 2017**

7-0 VEN v. VAN

**NZL 2015**

8-1 GER v. FIJ

### Technical stats:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>KOR 2017</th>
<th>NZL 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of draws</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wins in extra time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of penalty shoot-outs (PSO)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of penalties awarded/converted</td>
<td>20/12</td>
<td>18/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of goals scored by substitutes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of matches won by numerically inferior teams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wins after conceding 1st goal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual playing time (excluding extra time)</td>
<td>2757:55</td>
<td>2814:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average actual playing time (excluding extra time)</td>
<td>53:02</td>
<td>54:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total attendance</td>
<td>410,795</td>
<td>448,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average attendance</td>
<td>7,900</td>
<td>8,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow cards</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red cards (indirect)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red cards (direct)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Golden Boot Winner:

- **Dominic Solanke (ENG, 10)**
- **Adama Traoré (MLI, 19)**

### Golden Glove Winner:

- **Riccardo Orsolini (ITA, 7)**
- **Wiktor Kowalenko (Ukr, 17)**
- **Predrag Rajković (SRB, 1)**
Technical and tactical analysis and trends in the game

General

Most of the teams chose to take the initiative by playing possession football focused on assured combination play, building up from the back starting with the goalkeeper, trying to get the ball into midfield before feeding the ball to the strikers. Some teams, however, still preferred a more direct game with long balls. There were a variety of formations on show, including 4-3-3, 4-4-2 and 5-3-2 (all with variations thereof).

A lot of the games saw teams playing at high intensity, with both teams pressurising with and without the ball. At the highest level of the modern game, teams retain possession in tight areas with high intensity. This FIFA U-20 World Cup showed that some teams are developing towards these high demands, not only while in possession but also while defending, and also while in transition between attack and defence (and vice-versa). The physical condition of the players should not be forgotten either as it allowed them to keep going for 90+ minutes at the highest tempo. Six matches went into extra time, with two of them decided by kicks from the penalty mark (not including the match for third place, which was decided by penalties immediately after a goalless 90 minutes). Venezuela played three consecutive extra-time matches.

Attacking

When building up from the back, most of the teams pushed their full-backs higher up the pitch with the two central defenders then splitting up. The positioning of the central defenders was varied as well. In the match between Mexico and England, for example, the teams’ central defenders took up positions on the left and right side of the penalty area, opening up the centre of the defensive third for midfield players to drop back for the ball. Other matches saw midfielders call for the ball after dropping off into the areas vacated by the pushed-up full-backs or into the area between the two central defenders. Some teams had one holding midfielder moving behind their opponents’ striker(s) to find space in which to receive the ball. Some teams rotated in midfield to make it difficult for the opposition to press. In general, teams used constructive build-up play. Some teams were more patient than others, but more often than not the aim was to get the ball into midfield rather quickly.

Central defenders rarely carried the ball into the midfield area, especially if their full-backs were already in an advanced position. In their match against England, however, Mexico’s right-sided central defender dribbled the ball into midfield a couple of times, with the holding midfielder dropping back to cover him.

There is always one major influential factor in build-up play: the opponents. Many teams (Venezuela, Argentina, Korea Republic, England, France, Uruguay, Mexico and Germany) chose to press high up the pitch to immediately start disturbing the build-up. Even teams that were under pressure started their build-up play by using the goalkeeper as an extra player who was capable of finding a “free” player in defence or midfield. The role of the goalkeeper is obviously very important too.

Building up under pressure did not always result in a good transition into midfield but sometimes resulted in a long ball forward by a goalkeeper or defender.

Some teams (Zambia, Iran, Costa Rica and Guinea) chose to go direct and played a long-ball game, a ploy that did not always result in them keeping possession but at least avoided them losing the ball in their own half. In midfield, there were generally three or four players, either in
a 4-3-3 or a 4-4-2 formation. In a 4-4-2, one of the strikers would often drop back into midfield to create space for himself and try to get possession. In a 4-3-3, teams could deploy either one or two attacking midfielders. At this level, midfielders need high levels of technical, tactical and physical skills as they have to play in tight areas with many players around them. At the very highest level, there is constant pressure from opponents so it is important to prepare players for the future. It was also clear that not all of the teams in Korea boasted such well-developed midfielders yet.

The role of wide midfield players or wingers is also interesting. At the top level of international football, quite a lot of teams play with a left footer on the right and a right footer on the left, allowing them to cut inside to create attacks through the middle, overloading the attacking third and creating space for attacking full-backs. At the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017, we saw teams playing in the same style. This movement of the wingers creates congestion in the middle/attacking third (six to seven players of the attacking team) and puts pressure on the defenders/ midfielders of the opposition. Centre forwards have to move a lot and be available for short combination play or to run on to a ball played in behind the defence (throughballs). We witnessed some wonderful short combination play by a number of teams (Korea Republic, Venezuela, Portugal, Italy, Japan, Mexico and Uruguay). Composure close to and inside the box is an area that still needs improvement, however. Many players found themselves in a good scoring position but were too hasty in their determination to put the ball in the back of the net or deliver a quality final pass.

Space, often on the wings, was exploited well by wingers/wide midfield players and full-backs. Some teams had the quality to play the ball from left to right or vice-versa with long diagonal balls to open up the game and speed up the attack. FIFA U-20 world champions England also pushed both full-backs forward, with both wingers then cutting inside. They created many problems for their opponents in this way, especially down the left through full-back Kyle Walker-Peters (14) and winger Ademola Lookman (11), who linked up well with adidas Golden Ball winner Dominic Solanke (10) and striker Dominic Calvert-Lewin (16), who scored the winning goal in the final.

Modern-day strikers also have to deal with having less and less space in which to play as there tend to be so many players in the final third. Strikers therefore drift outside or drop back into midfield to get the ball and to try and draw the central defenders out of position and create space for other players to drive into the box.

**Transition between attack and defence**

Many teams immediately put pressure on the ball after losing it. In the attacking third, teams pressed the goalkeeper to force a long ball and make it more difficult for the team now in possession to launch a quick counter-attack.

Other teams that did not press immediately (Iran, Costa Rica, Italy mainly in the match against England, Saudi Arabia) tended to drop off into their own half and start applying pressure from there.

Teams did not always choose to launch counter-attacks but instead decided to move the ball around, and some teams ran into trouble because of this and conceded chances or goals (e.g. Argentina versus England). If players were not able to win the ball back immediately, they sprinted back into their own half to get back into position, fully aware of the danger of a counter-attack (Zambia, Senegal). It was very rare for only one or two attackers to slowly drop off into their own half to focus on the next ball coming forward, and as such transitions between attack and defence tend to be a team effort these days.

Defending a quick counter-attack is not easy with so much space in your own half. Both central defenders and holding midfielders have to be quick and strong in duels (ground and air) and good readers of the game in order to be able to win the ball/control the situation (England, Portugal, France, Italy, Venezuela and Uruguay). Some teams (England,
Argentina, Korea Republic, Venezuela, Italy) had excellent holding midfielders blessed with pace, physical strength, and a good reading of the game to prevent a counter-attack developing by winning the first forward pass in midfield or closing down the player in possession of the ball, allowing team-mates to get back into position as quickly as possible.

At the top level, many goals are still scored from counter-attacks. In this tournament, teams showed the importance of switching into defence immediately after losing the ball and/or getting back into position.

**Defending**

The majority of teams played with a back four. In midfield, teams used one or two holding midfielders (sometimes rotating with three midfielders).

The teams mainly used zonal defence with two lines of four (sometimes with a holding midfield player between the two lines) covering space and pressurising the player with the ball. The South American teams, assured in quick and short combination play, were able to find space between the two lines to receive the ball and were even allowed to turn, creating difficulties for the defenders. Some teams played with a zonal defence and with man-to-man in midfield.

Many teams seemed to struggle with their defending and transitions between attack and defence, lacking organisation (communication) in a unit or between the defensive line and the midfield, with no pressure on the ball resulting in conceding goals. The more developed teams had their defensive organisation already in place when they were attacking so that they were able to neutralise any quick counter-attacks.

When defending, teams need an aggressive but fair way of putting the player in possession under pressure and a high work rate as a team in order to prevent the other team from scoring. England were a very good example of this. Although they were not always able to stop the short combination play of their opponents (Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, who made England drop deep into their own half), they put so much work into defending together that they always managed to get someone to block the ball or to divert it in another direction. This, combined with an outstanding goalkeeper (Freddie Woodman, 1), made it very difficult for teams to score against them. England, Uruguay and Venezuela only conceded three goals in seven matches, and as such they were all the most solid teams in the tournament.

The teams that progressed the furthest in the tournament showed good balance in the main moments of transition, whether it was from attack to defence or vice-versa, and they made fewer errors.

Most of the teams had quality when in possession. The two debutants – Vanuatu and Vietnam – also played some impressive attacking football, with Vanuatu scoring four goals. Unfortunately, Vietnam were the only team that failed to score a goal.
OFFICIAL FIFA AWARDS

ADIDAS GOLDEN BALL

This award goes to the best player in the final competition on the basis of a ranking compiled by the FIFA Technical Study Group. A Silver Ball and a Bronze Ball are awarded to the second and third best players.

Dominic Solanke (ENG, 10)
ADIDAS SILVER BALL: Federico Valverde (URU, 16)
ADIDAS BRONZE BALL: Yangel Herrera (VEN, 8)

This award goes to the top goalscorer of the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017. Assists were included if two or more players were equal on goals scored. The FIFA Technical Study Group decided whether an assist was to be counted. If two or more players remained equal, the player who had played fewer matches in the final competition was ranked first.

Riccardo Orsolini (ITA, 7)
ADIDAS SILVER BOOT: Joshua Sargent (USA, 19)
ADIDAS BRONZE BOOT: Jean-Kevin Augustin (FRA, 7)
The FIFA Fair Play Trophy is awarded to the team with the best fair play record, according to a points system and criteria specified in the competition regulations.

Mexico