

Water polo - Evolution of Men's game towards Paris 2024 – provisional analysis

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FOREWORD

Following the conclusion of the Men's European Water Polo Championship, held in Dubrovnik and Zagreb, Croatia, from 4 to 16 January 2024, a comparative analysis has been elaborated between the statistical data of previous international competitions during the Olympic quadrennium (Tokyo 2021 in Paris 2024) such as the European Championships in Split 2022, Zagreb/Dubrovnik 2024 and the World Championships in Budapest 2022 and Fukuoka 2023.

The analysis was based on official statistical data, produced by OMEGA (World Aquatics) and MICROPLUS (LEN) corresponding to the 12 matches between the top 8 ranked teams during the quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals.

This is a provisional analysis ahead of the World Aquatics Championships Doha 2024 and the Paris 2024 Olympic Games to better understand any trend on the various aspects of the game and its continuous evolution.

CONTENTS

In this analysis, we will consider four parameters, as follows:

- I. Goals & Shots - *per game*
- II. Score/Goal Profile - *per game*
- III. Ejection Profile - *per game*
- IV. Action Goals Vs 6x5 Goals & Penalty Goals – *per game*

I. GOAL & SHOTS - PER MATCH

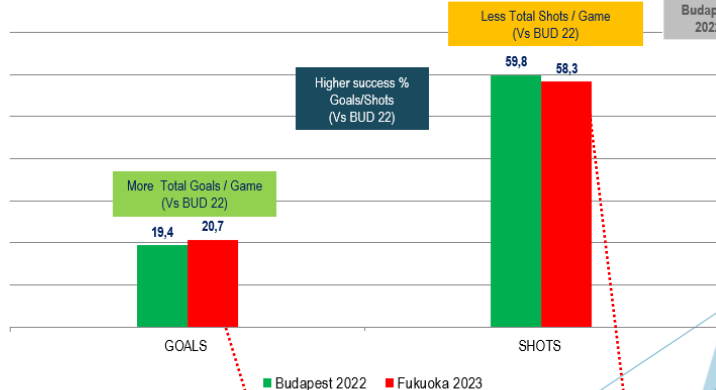


Fukuoka 2023 Vs Budapest 2022 (MEN competition)

Goals and Shots per Game

Sample 2: TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	Goals	Shots	%
Fukuoka 2023	248	700	35%
Budapest 2022	233	718	32%



Split 2022 Vs Zagreb - Dubrovnik 2024 (MEN competition)

Goals and Shots per Game

Sample 2: TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	Goals	Shots	%
Zagreb-Dubrovnik 2024	266	687	38.7%
Split 2022	229	695	32.9%



MORE GOALS PER GAME
ZAGREB 2024 (22.2)
FUKUOKA 2023 (20.7)

LESS SHOTS PER GAME
ZAGREB 2024 (57.3)
FUKUOKA 2023 (58.3)

INCREASED SHOOTING EFFICIENCY
ZAGREB 2024 (38.7%)
FUKUOKA 2023 (35%)

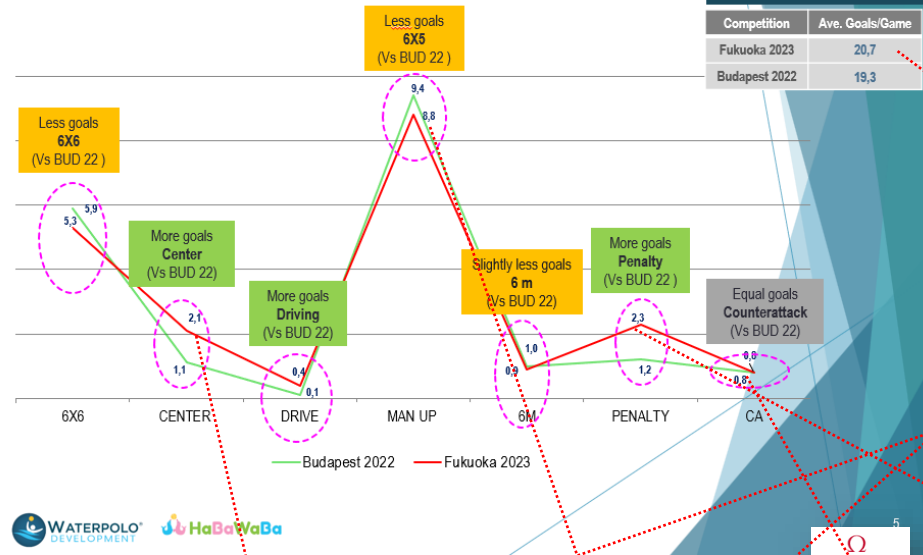


II. SCORING PROFILE - PER MATCH



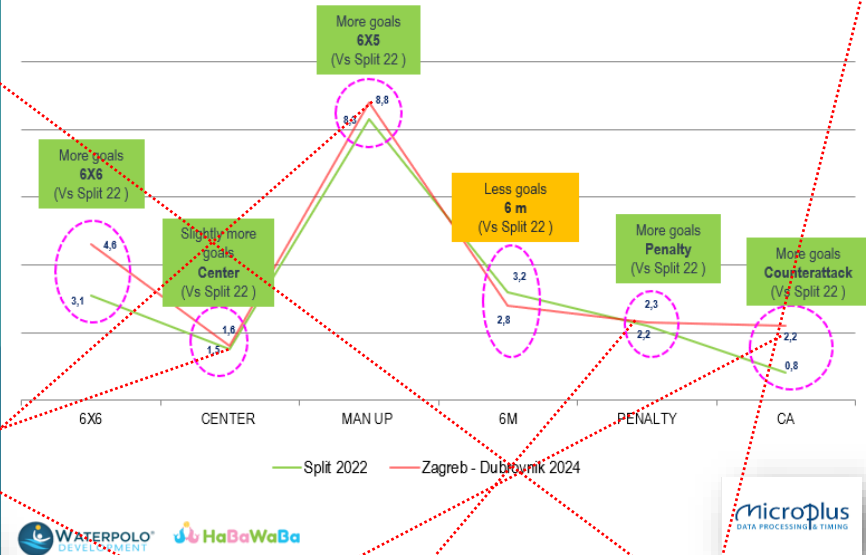
Fukuoka 2023 Vs Budapest 2022 (MEN competition)

Scoring profile – Goals per Game



Split 2022 Vs Zagreb - Dubrovnik 2024 (MEN competition)

Scoring profile – Goals per Game



Sample 2: TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	Ave. Goals/Game
Zagreb 2024	22,2
Split 2022	19,5



MORE GOALS PER MATCH
 ZAGREB 2024 (22.2)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (20.7)

FEWER GOALS AT THE CENTER
 ZAGREB 2024 (1.6)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (2.1)

EQUAL 6x5 GOALS
 ZAGREB 2024 (8.8)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (8.8)

MORE GOALS AT THE COUNTERATTACK
 ZAGREB 2024 (2.2)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (0.8)

EQUAL GOALS PENALTY
 ZAGREB 2024 (2.3)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (2.3)



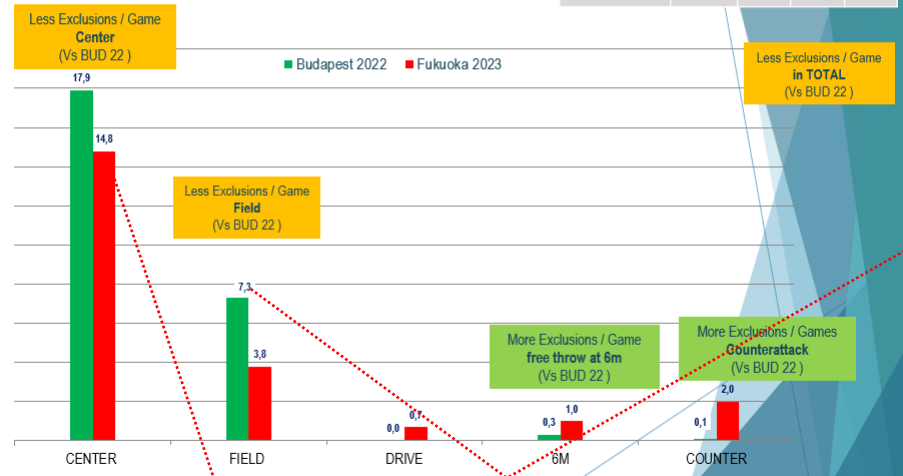
III. EXCLUSIONS PROFILE - PER MATCH

FUKUOKA 2023 | WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS
 Fukuoka 2023 Vs Budapest 2022 (MEN competition)

Exclusions profile

Sample 2:
 TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	Center	Field	Total	Game
Fukuoka 2023	178	89	267	22,3
Budapest 2022	215	92	307	25,6

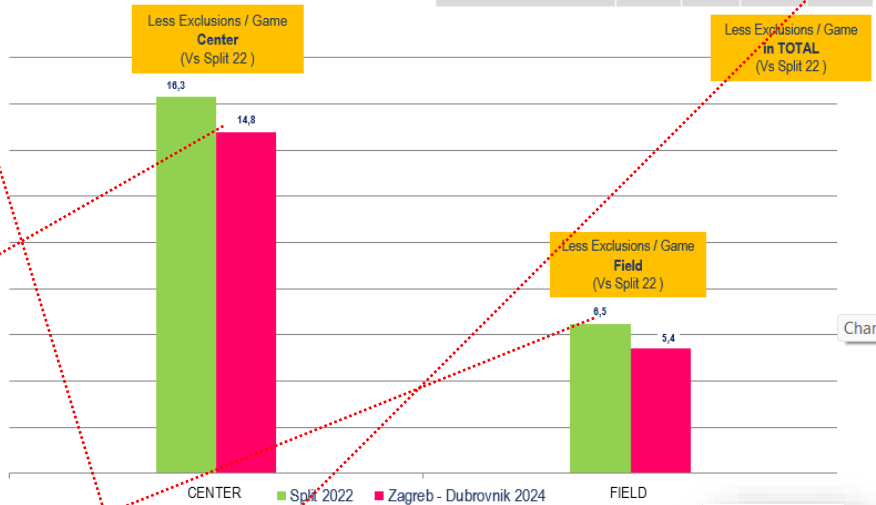


Split 2022 Vs Zagreb - Dubrovnik 2024 (MEN competition)

Exclusions profile

Sample 2:
 TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games)
 (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	Center	Field	Total	Game
Zagreb - Dubrovnik 2024	177	65	242	20,2
Split 2022	195	78	273	22,8



EQUAL EXCLUSIONS AT CENTER
 ZAGREB 2024 (14.8)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (14.8)

Less FIELD EXCLUSIONS
 ZAGREB 2024 (6.5)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (7.3)

LESS EXCLUSIONS IN TOTAL
 ZAGREB 2024 (20.2)
 FUKUOKA 2023 (22.3)

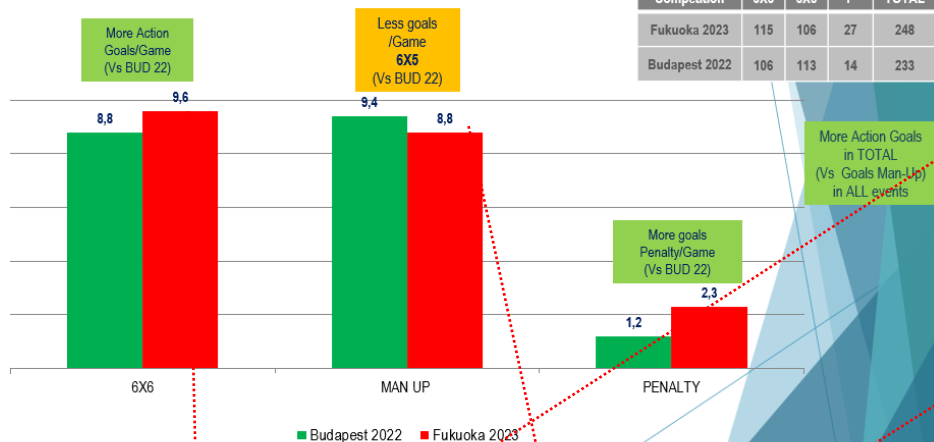


IV. ACTION GOALS (1) VS 6X5 & PENALTY GOALS - PER MATCH



Fukuoka 2023 Vs Budapest 2022 (MEN competition)

Action Goals⁽¹⁾ Vs Goals 6X5 and Penalty (per Game)



⁽¹⁾ Action Goals= All Goals 6X6 (Center, 6M, Driving, Counter Attack)



⁽¹⁾ Action Goals = All Goals 6X6 (Centre, 6M, Entry, Fast Break)

Sample 2:
TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	6X6	6X5	P	TOTAL
Fukuoka 2023	115	106	27	248
Budapest 2022	106	113	14	233

More Action Goals in TOTAL (Vs Goals Man-Up) in ALL events



Split 2022 Vs Zagreb - Dubrovnik 2024 (MEN competition)

Action Goals⁽¹⁾ Vs Goals 6X5 and Penalty (per Game)



⁽¹⁾ Action Goals= All Goals 6X6 (Center, 6M, Driving, Counterattack)



Sample 2:
TOP 8 TEAMS (12 games) (Quarter finals to Finals)

Competition	6X6	6X5	P	TOTAL
Zagreb-Dubrovnik 2024	134	105	27	266
Split 2022	103	100	26	229

More Action Goals in TOTAL (Vs Goals Man-Up) in ALL events



MORE GOALS IN 6x6 ACTION
ZAGREB 2024 (11.2)
FUKUOKA 2023 (9.6)

EQUAL GOALS ON 6X5
ZAGREB 2024 (8.8)
FUKUOKA 2023 (8.8)

INCREASED EFFICIENCY 6X5
ZAGREB 2024 (50%)
FUKUOKA 2023 (45.7%)



RESULTS

The following notes summarize the results of the (provisional) comparison of the 2024 Men's European Water Polo Championship statistical data with the previous editions of the European Championships in Split 2022 and the World Championships in Budapest 2022 and Fukuoka 2023:

1. Centers in Zagreb 2024 score less than in Fukuoka 2023, while they get the same number of exclusions per game.
2. Field exclusions in Zagreb 2024 are decreasing. Considering that the volume of centerforward ejections remains the same, the total number of ejections decreases. This could be due to the tactical adaptations of the defenses (more zone M applied to Zagreb 2024) as well as the style of refereeing that allows a more physical game by whistling less.
3. Improved technical skills of players leads to greater shooting efficiency and a higher number of goals per game.
4. Scoring efficiency in 6X5 situations seems to improve. This could be due to the improvement of the players' technical skills, mentioned earlier, or the innovative 2-meter play (new offside rule).
5. Considering that goals from the center and penalties remain unchanged, action goals (including positional attack, driving and counter-attack goals) have increased, meaning that the impact of goals in numerical superiority has slightly decreased.