



FIBA
BASKETBALL
WORLD CUP
PHILIPPINES · JAPAN · INDONESIA

2023 FIBA BASKETBALL WORLD CUP REPORT

MANILA, PHILIPPINES (JAPAN AND INDONESIA CO-HOSTS)
AUGUST 25 – SEPTEMBER 10

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INTRODUCTION

The 2023 FIBA Basketball World Cup took place in the Philippines, Japan & Indonesia from August 25th till September 10th. It was the 19th edition of World Cup, the first World Cup with multiple host countries. All teams stayed in their host city (Manila, Okinawa & Jakarta) for both group games & second round, thus, allowing for teams to have only one flight during the World Cup (Quarter Final games moved to Manila). The minimization of travel was part of the “players first” program which began at the 2019 World Cup to support maximizing the experience & recovery for athletes.

This was the 2nd World Cup utilizing the 24 month Qualification process prior to the World Cup, which is proving to be a success with 314 of the 384 (81.8%) World Cup athletes competing in the World Cup Qualification process.

A total of 92 games over 16 days were played over 5 venues for this tournament. Those facilities were provided a great spectators’ experience: Indonesia Arena (16,000), Okinawa Arena (8,500), Araneta Coliseum (14,360), Mall of Asia Arena (16,500), Philippine Arena (52,000). Manila hosted Group A, B, C & D; Okinawa hosted Group E & F and Jakarta hosted Group G & H during Group Play.

In general Teams started preparation at the end of July, having between 5-8 preparation games before selecting final roster for the World Cup.

A total of 44 international FIBA referees from 5 continents were selected and a number of game delegates, technical delegates and support staff, along with volunteers, provided a supreme organization of games.

A Record total of 55 NBA players took part in this competition up from the previous record number of 53 NBA players in the 2019 World Cup.

Germany are the 7th nation overall and the 4th from Europe to be crowned world champions.

An average of 169 points were scored per game in this World Cup, the highest scoring average in a tournament since 1990, when 184.9 points were made per game.

An average of 19.4 3-pointers were made per game in this World Cup, the best such average in a single edition over the last 30 years. Also, the free-throw accuracy was 75.5% across this 2023 edition, the highest such FT% in an edition over the last 30 years.

There were three teams averaging 12 or more made 3-pointers in this World Cup (Latvia 13.8, Canada 12.8 & Slovenia 12.0), more than in all the previous World Cup tournaments combined over the last 30 years (New Zealand, 12.4 in 2019 & USA, 12.9 in 1994).

This was the first FIBA World Cup over the last 30 years in which a team made more than 63% of their attempted 2-pointers: in fact, two teams did it this year – Serbia (66.4%) and France (63.9%).

GAME SCHEDULE

FIBA
BASKETBALL
WORLD CUP
PHILIPPINES-JAPAN-INDONESIA



MANILA ARANETA COLISEUM

GROUP A	GROUP B
ANGOLA DOMINICAN REP. PHILIPPINES ITALY	SOUTH SUDAN SERBIA CHINA PUERTO RICO

MANILA MALL OF ASIA ARENA

GROUP C	GROUP D
USA JORDAN GREECE NEW ZEALAND	EGYPT MEXICO MONTENEGRO LITHUANIA

OKINAWA OKINAWA ARENA

GROUP E	GROUP F
GERMANY FINLAND AUSTRALIA JAPAN	SLOVENIA CAPE VERDE GEORGIA VENEZUELA

JAKARTA INDONESIA ARENA

GROUP G	GROUP H
IRAN SPAIN COTE D'IVOIRE BRAZIL	CANADA LATVIA LEBANON FRANCE

OPENING DAY @ PHILIPPINE ARENA

ANG - ITA 67 - 81 (16:00)	DOM - PHI 87 - 81 (20:00)
SSD - PUR 96 - 101 (16:00)	SRB - CHN 105 - 63 (20:00)
ITA - DOM 82 - 87 (16:00)	PHI - ANG 70 - 80 (20:00)
CHN - SSD 69 - 89 (16:00)	PUR - SRB 77 - 94 (20:00)
ANG - DOM 67 - 75 (16:00)	PHI - ITA 83 - 90 (20:00)
SSD - SRB 83 - 115 (16:00)	CHN - PUR 89 - 107 (20:00)

GROUP PHASE - 1ST ROUND

FRI 25 AUG
SAT 26 AUG
SUN 27 AUG
MON 28 AUG
TUE 29 AUG
WED 30 AUG

FIN - AUS 72 - 98 (17:00)	GER - JPN 81 - 63 (20:00)
CPV - GEO 60 - 85 (17:00)	SLO - VEN 100 - 85 (20:30)
AUS - GER 82 - 85 (17:30)	JPN - FIN 98 - 88 (20:00)
VEN - CPV 75 - 81 (17:00)	GEO - SLO 67 - 88 (20:30)
GER - FIN 101 - 75 (16:30)	AUS - JPN 109 - 89 (20:00)
GEO - VEN 70 - 59 (17:00)	SLO - CPV 92 - 77 (20:30)

LAT - LBN 109 - 70 (16:45)	CAN - FRA 95 - 65 (20:30)
IRI - BRA 59 - 100 (16:45)	ESP - CIV 94 - 64 (20:30)
LBN - CAN 73 - 128 (16:45)	FRA - LAT 86 - 88 (20:30)
CIV - IRI 71 - 69 (16:45)	BRA - ESP 78 - 96 (20:30)
LBN - FRA 79 - 85 (16:45)	CAN - LAT 101 - 75 (20:30)
CIV - BRA 77 - 89 (16:45)	IRI - ESP 65 - 85 (20:30)

GROUP PHASE - 2ND ROUND AND CLASSIFICATION 17-32

2 ND ROUND	CLASSIFICATION 17-32
GROUP I DOMINICAN REP. ITALY SERBIA PUERTO RICO	GROUP M ANGOLA PHILIPPINES SOUTH SUDAN CHINA
ANG - CHN 76 - 83 (16:00)	SSD - PHI 87 - 68 (20:00)
SRB - ITA 76 - 78 (16:00)	DOM - PUR 97 - 102 (20:00)
ANG - SSD 78 - 101 (16:00)	PHI - CHN 96 - 75 (20:00)
ITA - PUR 73 - 57 (16:00)	DOM - SRB 79 - 112 (20:00)

2 ND ROUND	CLASSIFICATION 17-32
GROUP J USA GREECE LITHUANIA MONTENEGRO	GROUP N NEW ZEALAND JORDAN EGYPT MEXICO
NZL - MEX 100 - 108 (16:45)	EGY - JOR 85 - 69 (20:30)
USA - MNE 85 - 73 (16:40)	LTU - GRE 92 - 67 (20:40)
NZL - EGY 88 - 86 (16:45)	JOR - MEX 80 - 93 (20:30)
GRE - MNE 69 - 73 (16:40)	USA - LTU 104 - 110 (20:40)

2 ND ROUND	CLASSIFICATION 17-32
GROUP K GERMANY AUSTRALIA SLOVENIA GEORGIA	GROUP O JAPAN FINLAND CAPE VERDE VENEZUELA
CPV - FIN 77 - 100 (16:30)	JPN - VEN 86 - 77 (20:10)
GER - GEO 100 - 73 (17:30)	SLO - AUS 91 - 80 (21:10)
FIN - VEN 90 - 75 (16:30)	JPN - CPV 80 - 71 (20:10)
AUS - GEO 100 - 84 (16:30)	GER - SLO 100 - 71 (21:10)

2 ND ROUND	CLASSIFICATION 17-32
GROUP L SPAIN BRAZIL CANADA LATVIA	GROUP P COTE D'IVOIRE IRAN FRANCE LEBANON
CIV - LBN 84 - 94 (16:45)	FRA - IRI 82 - 55 (20:30)
ESP - LAT 69 - 74 (16:45)	CAN - BRA 65 - 69 (20:30)
CIV - FRA 77 - 87 (16:45)	IRI - LBN 73 - 81 (20:30)
BRA - LAT 84 - 104 (16:45)	ESP - CAN 85 - 88 (20:30)

NO GAMES

MON 4 SEP

NO GAMES

MANILA MALL OF ASIA ARENA

FINAL PHASE

QUARTER-FINAL	LTU - SRB (GAME 82) 68 - 87 (16:45)
QUARTER-FINAL	GER - LAT (GAME 83) 81 - 79 (16:45)
CLASSIFICATION 5-8	ITA - LAT (GAME 84) 82 - 87 (16:45)
SEMI-FINAL	SRB - CAN (GAME 85) 95 - 86 (16:45)
CLASSIFICATION 7-8	ITA - SLO (GAME 86) 85 - 89 (16:45)
3RD PLACE GAME	USA - CAN (GAME 87) 118 - 127 (16:30)

TUE 5 SEP
WED 6 SEP
THU 7 SEP
FRI 8 SEP
SAT 9 SEP
SUN 10 SEP

ITA - USA (GAME 81) 63 - 100 (20:40)
CAN - SLO (GAME 84) 100 - 89 (20:30)
LTU - SLO (GAME 86) 100 - 84 (20:30)
USA - GER (GAME 87) 111 - 113 (20:40 GMT)
LAT - LTU (GAME 90) 98 - 63 (20:30)
GER - SRB (GAME 83) 83 - 77 (20:40)

QUARTER-FINAL
QUARTER-FINAL
CLASSIFICATION 5-8
SEMI-FINAL
CLASSIFICATION 5-6
THE FINAL



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FINAL STANDINGS



Final Standings of the FIBA 2023 Basketball World Cup	
1- Germany (8-0)	17- South Sudan (3-2)
2- Serbia (6-2)	18- France (3-2)
3- Canada (6-2)	19- Japan (3-2)
4- USA (5-3)	20- Egypt (2-3)
5- Latvia (6-2)	21- Finland (2-3)
6- Lithuania (6-2)	22- New Zealand (2-3)
7- Slovenia (5-3)	23- Lebanon (2-3)
8- Italy (4-4)	24- Philippines (1-4)
9- Spain (3-2)	25- Mexico (2-3)
10- Australia (3-2)	26- Angola (1-4)
11- Montenegro (3-2)	27- Cote d'Ivoire (1-4)
12- Puerto Rico (3-2)	28- Cape Verde (1-4)
13- Brazil (3-2)	29- China (1-4)
14- Dominican Republic (3-2)	30- China (0-5)
15- Greece (2-3)	31- Iran (0-5)
16- Georgia (2-3)	32- Jordan (0-5)



TEAMS REPORTS



GERMANY



1ST PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.3

HEAD COACH: GORDON HERBERT (FIN)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 93.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Even if they had a lot of quality players, their game depended mostly on the creativity of Dennis Schröder (biggest +/- of the team with +15), surrounded by good spot-up shooters. Many of their points came after drive and kick situations. Franz Wagner, their second ball handler with a broad skill set, scored 10 points per game on individual scoring, off the pick and roll, on post up moves or on isolation. The team had a lot of quality players at every position, allowing it to play with high intensity thanks to a lot of rotations and using a large variety on the offensive end: 7 players averaged more than 7.5 points per game, and Schröder and Wagner were the only ones averaging more than 24 minutes per game. They played at a slower pace than the other teams, getting only 13 points per game in transition, but they were very effective when doing so.

Athletic and physical, they were very good defensively. They mostly played man-to-man defense, were aggressive on the ball (Bonga) and controlled the rebounds (Theis, Voigtmann, M. Wagner), grabbing 5.5 rebounds more than their opponents per game. When defending the pick and roll, they often didn't switch, but occasionally did so like in the crucial moments of the game vs. Australia (allowing 19 points in 23 switches). The versatility of the players (Bonga, Theis et al.) allowed them to be effective on the switches when defending the pick and roll and it was their primary defense to try to limit the impact of Luka Dončić. Against Georgia, they played several times a 1-2-2 zone press. Although their defense was solid, it only forced an average opponent turnover rate compared to Serbia (15.2 % opponent TO rate vs. 17.5 %).

KEY PLAYERS

- **Dennis Schroder** - 19.1 points, 6.1 assists, 2 rebounds, 17.6 efficiency
- **Franz Wagner** - 16.8 points, 3 assists, 6.5 rebounds, 17.3 efficiency
- **Moritz Wagner** - 11.9 points, 1.4 assists, 4.8 rebounds, 14.4 efficiency
- **Daniel Theis** - 10.9 points, 1.2 assists, 5.4 rebounds, 14.3 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

In one of the best games of the 1st Round, with a lot at stake against Australia, they were able to come back in the game after a poor 3rd quarter (only 13 points scored) thanks to a 10-0 run in the opening 2 minutes of the last quarter. They kept their defensive pressure all the way until the end, winning by managing well the pick and roll situations, switching on key possessions.

Germany survived a scary finish in the Quarter-Final game against Latvia, allowing a last second shot that hit the rim. They had then an unbelievable game against the USA in the Semi-Finals, probably one of the best games - if not the best - of the tournament.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Germany had one of the deepest and most experienced rosters of the competition, with a lot of quality at every position. Coach Herbert had many options under the basket (around 20 minutes per game per player), which turned out to be a significant advantage during the latter stages of the tournament, as the players were still fresh for the elimination games.

The Final of the FIBA World Cup 2023 was tight until the end. Dennis Schröder and Franz Wagner were the main contributors in the 1st half. Schröder's ability to penetrate on on-ball screens and in isolation was crucial during the whole game (and also during the whole World Cup). The big men controlled the paint (limiting Milutinov to only 4 points, all on free throws). The decisive moment happened in the second part of the 3rd quarter, when Germany took control of the game to build a double-digit lead. Displaying a high-quality basketball throughout the tournament, Germany took advantage of its complete and strong roster to earn a highly deserved gold medal.



SERBIA



2ND PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27

HEAD COACH: SVETISLAV PESIC (SER)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 203 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 95.1

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Their success could be seen as the result of their shooting prowess, but it was more credited to their excellent team play, their good shot selection, their precision from the free throw line and their tough mentality on the rebound. Bogdanovic was always a key option on offense, excelling when coming out of low post screens, whether curling or flaring off, sometimes using a dribble or freeing himself after having rescreened Milutinov out of a pick and roll. The team did a great job spacing up the floor, thus creating room for their vital catch and shoot players.

Serbia played with such incredible energy that at times, it gave the impression that more than 5 players were on the court. Its most outstanding weapon was their ability to put pressure on the ball with aggressive defense, which allowed them to steal many balls and to go on to score easy baskets on fast breaks. Their only weakness might have been in defensive transition, as outlined on several occasions during the competition.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Bogdan Bogdanovic** - 19.1 points, 3.3 rebounds, 4.6 assists, 21.6 efficiency
- **Nikola Milutinov** - 12.1 points, 8.4 rebounds, 19.5 efficiency
- **Aleksa Avramovic** - 11.3 points, 2.1 assists, 1.6 steals, 88% on free throws, 11.9 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Nikola Jovic (20)** - 10.1 points, 3.0 rebounds, 2.6 assists, 42.3% on three-point shots

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Serbia approached its Quarter-Final game against Lithuania with a lot of strength and focus. They took control after the 1st quarter thanks to their aggressive defense (9 steals) and versatility in offense, while controlling the tempo. Bogdanovic was his usual self coming out of screens (on and off the ball) and Milutinov was dominant on both ends of the floor. Lithuania couldn't repeat its incredible shooting performance from their win against the USA. The Serbian bench largely outscored its Lithuanian counterpart (38-11).

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Avramovic and Stefan Jovic are not the traditional playmakers, but they are both very skilled at dictating the tempo and at reading the game, able to know which offensive variants might work or are needed at specific times. Bogdanovic is an impressive player, always ready to take responsibility in clutch moments. Milutinov was the most consistent player of the team and had a remarkable tournament. Germany found ways to completely lock him up in the Final, which was one of the main reasons of Germany's triumph.

They had an outstanding tournament and were very close to become world champions. Coach Svetislav Pesic deserves a lot of credit for this accomplishment. Playing without Jokic, crowned 2023 NBA champion with Denver, it will now be interesting to see if Serbia can count on him for the Olympic Tournament in Paris 2024, for which Serbia is already qualified thanks to its 2nd place.



CANADA



3RD PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 26.9

HEAD COACH: JORDI FERNANDEZ TORRES (ESP)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 201 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 98.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Canada played an up-tempo style, averaging the 2nd most points per game (98.8) in the World Cup, as well as being the most efficient team in offense with 1.273 point per possession. Canada were also one of the better three-point shooting teams (31.6 attempts per game and 40.3 % accuracy). The high-tempo offensive style was built around their full-court man-to-man defense, with Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, Nickeil Alexander-Walker, Luguentz Dort and Dillon Brooks all being versatile defenders capable of hurrying the opposition.

Offensively, Canada had a very balanced attack, benefitting for example from Kelly Olynyk's ability to stretch the floor thanks to his precision from long range. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander was the primary option, excelling at making good use of Kelly Olynyk's and Dwight Powell's screens to penetrate or pull up for a jumper. Most of the offense ran through him. He was helped by RJ Barrett, who was very efficient in isolation (3rd in tournament).

Defensively, Team Canada was very effective against strong perimeter attacks, opting for switches in man-to-man defense, which allowed the Canadians to contest 60.7 % of the shots (5th in the tournament). However, they avoided doing so when Olynyk was on the floor, forcing the ball handler to its weak side instead. Canada's depth and physicality allowed the team to play full-court man-to-man defense for most of the tournament and it gave it an edge against less athletic teams with shorter benches. Canada often ran a 1-2-1-1 zone on made free throws. Canada struggled the most against teams with bigger frontcourts, its big men getting usually quickly in foul trouble, as they did as well against teams having multiple offensive pick and roll solutions.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Shai Gilgeous Alexander** - 24.6 points, 6.4 assists, 6.4 rebounds, 30.4 efficiency
- **Dillon Brooks** - 15.1 points, 2.6 assists, 2.9 rebounds, 16.5 efficiency
- **RJ Barret** - 16.8 points, 5.0 assists, 2.0 rebounds, 13.9 efficiency
- **Kelly Olynyk** - 10.9 points, 2.9 assists, 4.6 rebounds, 12.4 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The game vs. Spain was the key for Canada. Being down in the 4th quarter, the Canadians put an unbelievable pressure on the Spanish guards in the last 5', allowing them to come back in the game and eventually win. Canada faced successively France, Spain, Brazil, Slovenia, USA, and Serbia, so their schedule was the toughest of this World Cup, in which it was - with Latvia - the most pleasant surprise.



The loss against Serbia in the Semi-Finals showed their lack of deepness on the roster (basically a 7-player rotation), but this can be avoided in Paris this Summer if additional superstars (Murray, Wiggins, etc.) commit to the team for the Olympic Tournament.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Canada dominated pool play with their athletic full-court man-to-man defense, its guards taking fully advantage of their versatility to get through screens and switch on defense. Their defensive intensity allowed them to play at a fast offensive pace, thus putting their opponents' defense under pressure. They moved the ball very well, breaking the FIBA World Cup assists record with 44 against Lebanon. The bronze medal game vs. the USA was a classic and ended on a Canadian win in overtime. Dillon Brooks played the hero by scoring 39 points, with an almost perfect 7 out of 8 from the three-point range.



USA



4TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 25

HEAD COACH: STEVE KERR (USA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 201 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 104.5

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

USA looked to push the ball quickly up the floor at every opportunity, with explosive dribbling and passing ahead. Their offensive alignments were 4-out-1-in, 5-out and Horns. Quick ball reversal was frequently used to establish dribble penetration for lay-ups and 3-point shot opportunities. Drag screens from transition was an option.

Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) and Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's) were used sometimes flowing into pick and roll and pick and pop plays from both the middle and the side. Many isolation opportunities were created in regular play and as a late shot clock option at times from pick and roll action.

Man-to-man full-court and three-quarter were the main defensive options, while looking to influence the ball handler to one side. Full-court man-to-man was used in general and after free throws. A 1-2-2 three-quarter press was used to try to contain and/or trap the ball handler or first pass receiver, dropping then back mostly to man-to-man or occasionally, later in the tournament, to a 2-3 match-up zone.

The preferred method of defending the pick and roll was allowing the defender on the ball handler to go over the top of the on-ball screen, with the screener's defender recovering back to the screener. Switching on perimeter down screens was also used, particularly when defending players of similar size. Doubling the low post player from the help side and ball side, on the pass and on the first dribble, was also used.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Anthony Edwards** - 18.9 points, 4.6 rebounds, 2.8 assists, 16.8 efficiency
- **Austin Reaves** - 13.8 points, 2.9 rebounds, 2.4 assists, 13.8 efficiency
- **Mikal Bridges** - 13.6 points, 3.8 rebounds, 1.8 assists, 16.9 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYERS

- **Paolo Banchero** (21) - 9.3 points, 3.4 rebounds, 1.6 assists, 10.9 efficiency
- **Tyrese Haliburton** (23) - 8.6 points, 3.0 rebounds, 5.6 assists, 15.5 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The game vs. Lithuania showed the rebounding problems of Team USA, which were later on exploited by Germany in the Semi-Finals. Lithuania outrebounded USA 72 to 43, notably taking 18 offensive rebounds that day.

USA had a chance to win a bronze medal after an amazing play from Mikal Bridges: stepping to the foul line for two free throws, he made his first one before intentionally missing the second one, then grabbed his own rebound, dribbled to the corner and scored an unbelievable off-balanced three-point shot to send the game into overtime! Unfortunately for the Americans, Canada outplayed them in the extra period and won the bronze medal.

SUMMARY COMMENT

USA was undoubtedly aiming for another result than this 4th place. With a relatively young and unexperienced at the international level group of players, Team USA needed time to adjust to the international style and timing of games. In the NBA, with 12-minute quarters, there is more time to erase deficits. With close losses to Germany in the Semi-Finals and Canada in the 3rd place game, this group has definitely been able to gain valuable international basketball experience.



LATVIA



5TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.1

HEAD COACH: LUCA BANCHI (ITA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 201 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 89.3

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Latvia had the second most efficient offense behind Canada with 1.227 point per possession. Latvia's offensive style of play was led by its three-point shooting, with an average of 32.6 attempts per game and a 42.1 % accuracy, along with 24.4 assists per game. Latvia's ability to shoot the ball and its use of high pass made them very difficult to defend, even without one primary dominant scorer (only one player averaged over 14 points per game). Latvia averaged 161.3 passes per game (8th highest in the tournament). Its offense was spearheaded by Arturs Zagars, 5th in assists with 7.4 per game.

Latvia scored 1.434 points per possession when Zagars was the ball handler in ball screens (2nd highest of the tournament behind Dennis Schröder/Germany). Latvia was very hard to guard with versatile frontcourt players who were excellent three-point shooters (6.3 of the 13.8 three-point shots scored per game were made by the frontcourt players), especially Davis Bertans, able to sprint to a ball screen and pop out at speed for a three-point shot attempt.

On defense, Latvia mostly played man-to-man, however playing occasionally 2-3 zone. Latvia's defensive style was dominated by its successful strategy to aggressively defend ball screens, including hard shows and switching. The frontcourt players were very effective at switching onto perimeter players and the guards did a fine job switching to front the opposition's post players.

A common defensive strategy for Latvia was putting one of its frontcourt players (often Andrejs Grazulis or Radions Kurucs) on the opposing teams' point guard, allowing for effective switch coverage. Latvia's effective switching defense allowed them to contest 59.5 % of opposing shots and to compete with teams that had more head-to-head individual talent on their rosters.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Andrej Grazulis** - 14.4 points, 1.9 assists, 3.8 rebounds, 18.4 efficiency
- **Arturs Zagars** - 12.4 points, 7.4 assists, 2.6 rebounds, 15.3 efficiency
- **Radions Kurucs** - 7.9 points, 3.1 assists, 6.1 rebounds, 14.4 efficiency
- **Davis Bertans** - 12.0 points, 1.1 assists, 3.9 rebounds, 11.3 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Against France, Latvia showed its ability to dig itself out of holes. Down 62-74 at the end of the 3rd quarter, Latvia outscored its opponent 26-12 in the 4th quarter, while forcing France into 6 turnovers. The play of Arturs Zagars (11 points in the last period) was a huge catalyst in this win.

During the 1st Round, Latvia made 42 of 106 three-point shots (40 %). The middle on-ball screens with Arturs Zagars created lots of shooting opportunities for Latvia's floor spacers.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Latvia beat Spain (74-69) and Brazil (104-84) in the 2nd Round to qualify for the Quarter-Finals. Latvia's ability to switch on screens and front the low post made it very difficult for both Spain and Brazil to take advantage of their size in the paint.

The most memorable game was probably the one against Spain, Latvia erasing a 11-point deficit with less than 5 minutes remaining in the 4th quarter (Latvia outscored Spain 27-11 in that quarter). Latvia's team performances throughout the event were amazing and it came one shot away from winning its Quarter-Final against Germany. If Porzingis, Lomazs and Strelnieks (all three missed the World Cup due to an injury) can be present at future competitions, Latvia stands a good chance of qualifying for the Olympic Games and will be one of the top title contenders at the FIBA EuroBasket 2025, which it will host.



LITHUANIA



6TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 28

HEAD COACH: KAZYS MAKSVYTIS (LTU)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 203 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 89.1

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Lithuania's main offensive alignments included 4-out-1-in and 5-out, with Horns used as another option. From these alignments, they used Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) and Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's), as well as Floppy action, to start their offense prior to a pass being made. Quick passing around the perimeter was effective to create dribble penetration and three-point shot opportunities.

Drag screens in transition and double drag screens from set offense were used to create both inside and perimeter shot opportunities. Against 2-3 zone defense, 4-out-1-in with high-low action and an emphasis on having 3 players low along the baseline was used to create matching-up challenges for the defense.

Full-court and three-quarter man-to-man were the main defensive options. A 2-2-1 and a man-to-man full-court trapping defense were also used to complement their man-to-man occasionally after free throws. A 2-3 match-up zone was sometimes put in place. Lithuania had a variety of methods to defend on the pick and roll, including aggressive showing by the defender on the screener and then recovering to allow the defender on the ball handler to go over the screen.

The preferred method for defending down screens away from the ball was going over after a hard show by the defender on the screener, although going under was also an option when required. Occasionally, Lithuania double-teamed the receiver of a wing-entry pass.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Jonas Valanciunas** - 14.8 points, 8.8 rebounds, 18.6 efficiency
- **Rokas Jokubaitis** - 12.6 points, 5.8 assists, 15.1 efficiency
- **Ignas Brazdeikis** - 11.0 points, 2.5 assists, 12.1 efficiency
- **Mindaugas Kuzminskas** - 9.6 points, 3.8 rebounds, 12.0 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Rokas Jokubaitis (22)** - 12.6 points, 5.8 assists, 15.1 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Playing very well in the Group Phase, the game vs USA probably set their destiny for the later stage. Lithuania made its first 9 three-point shots and lead 31-12 at the end of the 1st quarter.

Despite Team USA trying to rally in the 2nd quarter, Lithuania held on to win and set up a Quarter-Finals match-up against Serbia. Lithuania clearly outrebounded Team USA (72-43, 18-9 on offensive rebounds).

Against Serbia, Lithuania was not able to repeat its outstanding performance from the USA game. The defensive pressure, the dominance in the paint and the better bench production (38-11) of Serbia proved too much for Lithuania.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

With a blend of youth and experience, an outstanding scoring ability at a highly efficient percentage and a solid performance in the paint, the future of Lithuania's national team looks bright, especially considering the absence of the injured Sabonis.



SLOVENIA



7TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.8

HEAD COACH: ALEKSANDAR SEKULIC (SLO)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 88.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Slovenia pushed the ball whenever it was possible. Doncic's presence on defensive rebounds and his great court vision provided some easy points on fast breaks. On half-court plays, Doncic's dominance was obvious (top scorer of the 1st Round with an average of 30 points per game) as he created his own shots while feeding his teammates at the same time. There were a lot of open looks for the perimeter players after pick and roll also thanks to Tobey's passing abilities after (short) rolls. Off-ball screens were set up to maximise Prepelic's shooting quality. The team excelled on pick and roll, isolation, and even low post plays thanks mostly to arguably the best player of the World Cup in Doncic. With Tobey, they form a very complimentary duo, highly efficient on pick and rolls. If the shooters can knock down their shots, this team can beat anybody on any given day.

On the defensive end, Slovenia was aggressive on the ball throughout its games. It created a lot of problems for its opponents and forced turnovers, resulting many times in points after steals. Due to their lack of size, the Slovenians switched a lot, Doncic being able to guard big guys.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Luka Doncic** - 27.0 points, 6.1 assists, 7.0 rebounds, 26.0 efficiency
- **Mike Tobey** - 11.6 points, 1.8 assists, 6.3 rebounds, 16.1 efficiency
- **Klemen Prepelic** - 14.0 points, 2.4 assists, 3.1 rebounds, 14.0 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

In a crucial game to advance to the Quarter-Finals, Slovenia beat Australia thanks to a great team effort. Carried in offense by Doncic and a terrific all-around game by Tobey, the other players played their part by bringing a lot of intensity on the defensive end and by providing good spot up shooting.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Slovenian's basketball evolves around Luka Doncic. If Cancar and Muric had not been injured, Slovenia would clearly have had a chance to battle for a medal. Doncic is the leader in points, rebounds, assists and efficiency. When he performs well, plays good pick and roll with Tobey and the rest of the team makes shots (especially Prepelic), Slovenia can beat anyone. But if the team doesn't make its shots (like against Germany), then Slovenia runs into trouble. In the Quarter-Finals game against Canada, Slovenia had to play without Jaka Blazic (injured) and his absence proved too much to overcome to hope earning a spot in the Semi-Finals.



8TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.1

HEAD COACH: GIANMARCO POZZECCO (ITA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 79.3

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Italy came to Asia with a mix of veteran players (Datome, Melli, Polonara, Ricci, Tonut) who have been playing together for many years, and some young talents like Fontecchio, Spissu, Pajola, Procida and Spagnolo. Italy usually played with a smaller line-up, with the players in a 5-out formation since all 5 could shoot well, even though at times they could be streaky. The good jump shooting skill and the will to wear out their opposition with combined defenses were the main trend of Italy.

They didn't have any dominant player in the paint but had three important characteristics needed for a team to be successful in FIBA basketball: teamwork, unity and a charismatic coach in Gianmarco Pozzecco. Their biggest weakness was the lack of interior presence, strongly felt when Melli was substituted out.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Simone Fontecchio** - 18.0 points, 1.4 assists, 5.6 rebounds, 15.0 efficiency
- **Marco Spissu** - 12.1 points, 5.1 assists, 3.5 rebounds, 15.0 efficiency
- **Nicolo Melli** - 7.5 points, 3.4 assists, 7.3 rebounds, 13.9 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The loss to the Dominican Republic (82-87) in the first game hurt the team. Italy controlled the game, but its bench and its head coach got 3 technical fouls (Pozzecco got ejected from the game after a little over 2 minutes into the 2nd half) that changed the narrative. Moreover, Italy only scored 7 three-point shots, against 16 for the Dominicans. Italy needed to beat host Philippines to advance to the Quarter-Finals, and it did, but it got unlucky with the other results.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Italy managed to erase a 16-point deficit to defeat Serbia (78-76) thanks to Luigi Datome scoring 10 points in 90 seconds to lead the comeback in the 4th quarter and Fontecchio having a great shooting performance (30 points). With that win, Italy finished at the first place of its group, but it got unlucky as Lithuania's triumph against the USA meant that Italy had to face Team USA in the Quarter-Finals. The Italians were then no match for the Americans, easy winners of that encounter (100-63).

The game between Italy and Latvia (82-87) was encompassed by a terrific shooting performance by Grazulis of Latvia, who made 12 of 13 shots for 28 points, and by veteran Italian star Datome, who played that day his 200th game for Italy.

Highly respected by all his teammates, he was a tremendous presence in the locker room.

Italy had to settle for 7th place, although it led 85-83 against Slovenia with 1 minute remaining, but the Italian defense gave up a huge three-point shot to Jakob Cebasek that sealed Slovenia's win. Italy showed too many fluctuations in its game performances, which was very evident in its last 3 games. However, the 8th place finish was positive. Italy will now try to qualify for Paris 2024 through one of the Olympic Qualifying Tournaments.



SPAIN



9TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.9

HEAD COACH: SERGIO SCARIOLO (ITA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 85.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Spain played through their frontcourt positions with Willy Hernangomez, Santiago Aldama, Juancho Hernangomez, and Usman Garuba, combining for 48.2 of its 85.8 points per game (56 %). Spain's dominant inside play led them to 12.6 offensive rebounds per game (4th in tournament). Spain's clinical offense was powered by 27.8 assists per game (1st in the tournament) as well as an average of 221.4 passes per game (1st in the tournament). The common offensive actions included multiple pick and rolls in the middle and side parts of the floor.

Spain was exceptional at screening the weak side of the defense when a side on-ball screen occurred, resulting in open three-point shots. The Spaniards were particularly good at filling space away from the ball while running the middle pick and roll, rising up and catching the ball on the move, carrying the momentum into their next action. Whenever a perimeter player was denied, Spain had effective pressure release with the post stepping out to create a passing angle into some kind of backdoor or flare action.

Spain played full-court man-to-man whenever there was a dead ball and an opportunity to do so. While playing almost entirely man-to-man, they would often play a 2-3 zone defense from baseline out of bounds.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Willy Hernangomez** - 18.2 points, 1.8 assists, 5.6 rebounds, 18.6 efficiency
- **Santiago Aldama** - 11.2 points, 0.8 assists, 4.2 rebounds, 13.0 efficiency
- **Juancho Hernangomez** - 10.6 points, 1.8 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 9.4 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYERS

- **Juan Nunez** (19) - 5 points, 5.2 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 9.8 efficiency
- **Usman Garuba** (21) - 8.2 points, 1.8 assists, 4.0 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Spain's 2nd Round included two losses against Latvia (69-74) and Canada (85-88). A turning point moment happened in the game against Latvia, with a change in the starting line-up: Alberto Diaz started at the point guard position ahead of Juan Nunez, resulting in Nunez only playing less than 10 minutes. Diaz put full-court pressure on Arturs Zagars, which limited Zagars to 7 points, but as a side effect, Nunez's effectiveness was also affected with him having minimal impact coming off the bench.

Spain ran a 2-3 zone defense on a number of baseline out of bounds which proved to be ineffective, Latvia scoring multiple times against it. It was interesting to see Spain play their veterans (Diaz, Fernandez and Claver) down the stretch in the Latvia game ahead of some of the more inexperienced players who played more minutes in earlier games.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Spain's loss against Canada included an incredible comeback from Canada, erasing a 12-point deficit at the start of the 4th quarter. Although Spain had a 10-point lead at halftime, there was a sense that the encounter was closer than the score indicated. Santiago Aldama played a great game (20 points on 4 of 7 three-point shots), which meant Juancho Hernangomez's minutes were very reduced (12.51 minutes). Ultimately, Canada's perimeter attack, with 4 guards against Spain's 3 guards and 2 frontcourt players, was the difference maker. Spain took the 3rd place of the 2nd Round group, thus not advancing to the Quarter-Finals. Despite not playing in the Quarter-Finals, Spain remains a world powerhouse and will try to win its spot for the Olympic Games through one of the Olympic Qualifying Tournaments.



AUSTRALIA



10TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.7

HEAD COACH: BRIAN GOORJIAN (AUS)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 93.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Australia tried to take advantage on transition game (15 points per game) and when it played in position, it primarily created out of pick and rolls, especially via Josh Giddey and Patty Mills. Low post game was almost inexistant, their frontcourt players mainly rolling to the basket.

Against Slovenia, they tried to trap on Doncic in the first half, then in the second, they changed their pick and roll defense to switch and double-team him on his isolation game. By doing so, they gave up a lot of open shots and cuts to other Slovenian players. With everyone else, they did hedge. They tried to play full-court press when they wanted to change the rhythm of the game. They didn't play any zone defense throughout the tournament.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Patty Mills** - 18.6 points, 5 assists, 5.2 rebounds, 19.8 efficiency
- **Josh Giddey** - 19.4 points, 6 assists, 5 rebounds, 19.0 efficiency
- **Xavier Cooks** - 9.0 points, 0.8 assists, 8.5 rebounds, 14.4 efficiency
- **Dante Exum** - 11. points, 3.0 assists, 2.6 rebounds, 11.0 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYERS

- **Josh Giddey** - 19.4 points, 6 assists, 5 rebounds, 19.0 efficiency (won Rising Star award of the World Cup)

CRUCIAL MOMENT

In the decisive game against Slovenia, they were always behind on the scoreboard. Slovenia controlled the game from the very first possession and built up a 19-point advantage in the 4th quarter, then closing the game without any problems. After that, they were out of medal contention.

SUMMARY COMMENTS

Australia can certainly not be satisfied with their results, considering it had 9 NBA players on its roster. The close loss to Germany put the team in a do-or-die situation in the game against Slovenia. It was pretty obvious from the beginning on that the Boomers lacked quality in the frontcourt and they tried to compensate by playing an up-tempo style. They used more pick and rolls (especially with Giddey) than usual, resulting in a less fluid offense, which was their trademark in past competitions.



MONTENEGRO



11TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 28

HEAD COACH: BOSKO RADOVIC (MNE)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 79.4

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Montenegro looked to move the ball up the floor quickly. Its preferred alignment was 4-out-1-in and Horns, complemented with Floppy actions and turn out cuts to initiate offense. Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) and DHO's into pick and roll and pick and pop were also used with slipping the screen from pick and roll, side. Often, side pick and roll led to down screens away by the roller to take away the help on the ball handler.

Man-to-man defense was the first option, with variations in half- and full-court pick up points. This was complemented by a 2-3 match-up zone defense. On all screens occurring towards the end of the shot clock, switching was common. The preferred method of defending the pick and roll was aggressive show by the defender on the screener, then recovering to allow the defender on the ball handler to go over the screen.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Nikola Vucevic** - 19.8 points, 8.8 rebounds, 1.2 assists, 24.0 efficiency
- **Kendrik Perry** - 13.5 points, 5.5 assists, 2.3 rebounds, 13.3 efficiency
- **Nikola Ivanovic** - 9.2 points, 1.6 assists, 2.4 rebounds, 8.4 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Against Greece, Montenegro led at half-time (36-30) thanks to some sound defense. Greece made a run in the 3rd quarter, but Montenegro remained calm and made some decisive plays in the paint (40-28 in points scored in the paint, mostly by Nicola Vucevic) and scored its free throws in the final minutes to seal the win (73-69).

SUMMARY COMMENTS

With three wins (Mexico, Egypt, and Greece) and two losses (USA, despite outrebounding them 49-31, and Lithuania), Montenegro took the 11th place, which can be considered a big success for the team. They played fast basketball, with a lot of shots and passes. Even though the game was based on the Vucevic-Perry duo, it played very well collectively. With emerging talents like Simonovic and Radonicic, Montenegro should have interesting options behind Vucevic in the near future and thus be able to continue getting good results. Andrija Grbovic and his teammates from the U20 national team (bronze medallists at the last European Championship) are the guarantors of continued good results.

PUERTO RICO

12TH PLACE
AVERAGE AGE: 27.2

HEAD COACH: NELSON COLON (PUR)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 197 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 88.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

The style of Puerto Rico can be summed up easily with their aggressive defense, their fast-paced transition play, and a huge number of three-point shots taken - and decently made - during each game. Their main issue throughout the tournament was their dependence on their offensive output, which was clearly outlined in the big loss to Italy, when they scored only 57 points. Teams which managed to slow them down had a big advantage, since their half-court execution was generally poor. They also lacked an overall size component.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Tremont Waters** - 20.0 points, 4.0 rebounds, 9.2 assists, 21.0 efficiency
- **Ismael Romero** - 11.4 points, 0.6 assists, 7.4 rebounds, 14.2 efficiency
- **Jordan Howard** - 11.4 points, 2.8 assists, 2.2 rebounds, 9.2 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **George Condit** (23) - 212cm - 10.8 points, 7.4 rebounds, 1.4 assists

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The defeat to Italy (57-73) hurt the team. Italy started strongly in this game with a 15-0 run, but Puerto Rico fought back to only trail 47-51 entering the 4th period. That day, Puerto Rico shot poorly (6 of 26 on three-point shots), was outrebounded (46-24) and Puerto Rico star Tremont Waters was held to only 13 points.

SUMMARY COMMENT

The qualification for the 2nd Round was a significant accomplishment for the Puerto Ricans and they showed a fighting spirit and team unity. A major setback occurred a few days before the start of the tournament with the forfeit of NBA player Alvarado (New Orleans Pelicans) for medical reasons. Looking ahead to the 2027 FIBA World Cup in Qatar, Puerto Rico should be able to align a similar roster with Waters, Condit, Howard, Pineiro, Steven Thompson, and Ethan Thompson. Even Romero, aged 32, looked to be able to play another 4 years. Moreover, the U19 team has some promising talents.



BRAZIL



13TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 28.6

HEAD COACH: GUSTAVO CONTI (BRA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 85.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Brazil's offense was mainly in the hands of ball handler Yago Santos (14.8 points and 7.2 assists per game) and center Bruno Caboclo (16.4 points and 9.2 rebounds per game). The other frontcourt players were very good from long range (Tim Soares and Lucas Dias), which made Brazil's offense difficult to defend and forced the opposition to decide whether to help off shooters to cover the middle on-ball or not. Brazil was very methodical with its spacing, with the ball handler being able to see the opposite side of the court well when coming off the middle pick and roll, with the screener effective at sprinting out of screens for rim runs or away screens. This spacing allowed Brazil to punish teams with its offensive rebounding on defensive rotations, with an average of 12.6 offensive rebounds per game (4th in the tournament).

Brazil played a physical full-court man-to-man defense for most of the tournament, occasionally using a 2-3 zone to take advantage of Caboclo's shot blocking ability. In the half-court, it was very traditional with ball screen coverages maximizing Caboclo's length when dropping.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Bruno Caboclo** - 16.4 points, 9.2 rebounds, 22.0 efficiency
- **Yago Santos** - 14.6 points, 7.2 assists, 4.0 rebounds, 18.8 efficiency
- **Tim Soares** - 14.6 points, 7.2 assists, 4.0 rebounds, 18.8 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENTS

A critical moment for Brazil in the 1st Round was its loss against Spain, Brazil playing on that occasion for the first time without Raul Neto Tongi, who had ruptured a patellar tendon prior to the game. In what was a close encounter, Spain blew the doors off by dominating the 4th quarter (32-19). That game also raised some concerns about Brazil against higher echelon teams, Brazil turning the ball over 16 times compared to Spain's 8 turnovers and having only 4 players scoring 8 points or more, against 8 for Spain. Spain's bench outscored Brazil's 50-28.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Brazil began the 2nd Round with a 69-65 win against Canada, followed by a loss to Latvia (84-104). The victory against Canada set up a match-up with Latvia for a spot in the Quarter-Finals. Foul trouble plagued Brazil, as it struggled to defend Latvia's middle pick and roll. Yago Santos picked up 2 fouls in the 1st quarter and Bruno Caboclo committed his 4th foul with 7:34 remaining in the 3rd quarter. Latvia then began a big run and ended Brazil's hopes to qualify for the Quarter-Finals.



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



14TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 29.0

HEAD COACH: NESTOR GARCIA (ARG)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 197 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 85.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

The styles of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico were very similar, being a tough and gritty group on defense and always looking to run on offense, putting a lot of three-point shots, including the tall NBA All-Star Karl-Anthony Towns (211 cm).

However, the Dominicans didn't show enough commitment on defense, especially on their close-outs on their opponents' three-point shot opportunities. They also lacked depth and struggled when Quiñones couldn't find his rhythm on offense.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Karl-Anthony Towns** - 24.4 points, 8.0 rebounds, shot 92.9% FT, 23.0 efficiency
- **Andres Feliz** - 16.0 points, 4.6 rebounds, 4.8 assists, 22.0 efficiency
- **Jean Montero** - 9.8 points, 4.8 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Jean Montero** - 9.8 points, 4.8 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The opening win against co-host Philippines (87-81) in front of a FIBA World Cup record-breaking crowd (38,115 spectators in the Philippine Arena) was huge. A major factor in this win was the fouling out of Philippine NBA star Jordan Clarkson (Utah Jazz) with 3:22 left in the game and the hosts down 79-76. The Dominicans held on to win with a strong offensive rebounding showing, grabbing 17 of those to only 3 for the home team. Karl-Anthony Towns led the Dominicans with 26 points (15 of 16 free throws made).

SUMMARY COMMENT

Dominican Republic beat Italy and Angola, but it spoilt up everything by losing to Puerto Rico in the 2nd Round. Feliz was dominant against Italy and the Dominicans benefitted from Angola's poor three-point shooting accuracy (2 of 21). Towns was brilliant in the match-up versus Puerto Rico, recording 39 points and 10 rebounds, but Waters was exceptional with 37 points, 7 rebounds and 11 assists to propel Puerto Rico to a victory (97-102), meaning that the Dominicans had to beat Serbia in their last game to advance in the tournament. The mountain was too high to climb (79-112). Much credit should be given to coach Nestor Garcia, who was able to lead a group of good individuals and create unity.



GREECE



15TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.4

HEAD COACH: DIMITRIS ITOUDIS (GRE)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 202 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 78.4

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

4-out-1-in and 5-out were the main offensive alignments for Greece, complemented by Horns. Screen and re-screen actions for the roller was used from the middle. Staggered double screens were used both from Horns and 5-out sets. Occasionally, a 3-out-2-in alignment was set up against man-to-man and zone defenses.

Man-to-man was the preferred defense. Full-court man-to-man press defense was employed trapping the ball handler in the backcourt and at the half-way sideline. 1-2-2 and 2-2-1 full- and three-quarter-court trapping presses were also used falling back to a 2-3 zone. The preferred method of defending the pick and roll was a hard show by the screener's defender, allowing the defender on the ball handler to go over the top of the on-ball screen, with the screener's defender recovering back to the screener.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Ioannis Papapetrou** - 14.8 points, 3.4 rebounds, 1.2 assists, 12.8 efficiency
- **Thomas Walkup** - 12.8 points, 2.8 rebounds, 7.2 assists, 15.8 efficiency
- **Giannoulis Larentzakis** - 12.6 points, 1.6 rebounds, 1.6 assists, 8.4 efficiency
- **Georgios Papagiannis** – 8.4 points, 4.4 rebounds, 1.0 assists, 11.8 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Nikos Rogkavopoulos (22)** - 8.2 points, 2.8 rebounds, 8.0 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

After being down by as many as 11 points at half-time (32-43), Greece locked up defensively in the 3rd quarter, converting New Zealand's 21 turnovers into a 29-6 advantage to win 83-74, with 50 points from the bench.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Mixing veteran and young players, Greece will need to look at refreshing the National Men's Team program in the near future in order to make a positive impact in their international standing. Considering the 50 points from the bench in its comeback victory over New Zealand, the future seems rather bright for Greece. Playing without injured Mitoglou and Antetokounmpo was too big of a challenge.



GEORGIA



16TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 29.2

HEAD COACH: ILIAS ZOUROS (GRE)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 75.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Best player of the team, Shengelia got good help from Bitadze, Mamukelashvili and even Shermadini, however, the lack of balance was obvious, as McFadden couldn't find his rhythm and the perimeter players weren't performing as well as the frontcourt players. Georgia played post-up game on more than 10 % of the offenses (4th in the tournament). The team struggled to organise and run the offense, committing the most turnovers of the tournament (16.2 per game) and shooting poorly behind the three-point line (28.9 % accuracy).

Georgia did play very aggressively on defense, showing physicality and combativeness to the limits in some moments. Man-to-man defense was the only one used, as the team never played zone defense throughout the competition. The primary defensive option on pick and roll was "contain" and the second option was switching, especially with Shengelia and Bitadze.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Goga Bitadze** - 13.6 points, 1.6 assists, 7.8 rebounds, 20.4 efficiency
- **Alexander Mamukelashvili** - 12.8 points, 2.0 assists, 6.2 rebounds, 11.8 efficiency
- **Tornike Shengelia** - 15.5 points, 2.5 assists, 4.0 rebounds, 11.8 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Versus Slovenia, Georgia's physicality and persistence caused a lot of problems, thus keeping it a close game. After a questionable call on a Prepelic three-point shot in the 2nd quarter, coach Zouros received a technical foul. Following that sequence, Slovenia scored 12 unanswered points and never looked back, as Georgia then never found its rhythm back.

SUMMARY COMMENT

The two losses against Germany and Australia in the Group Phase were not surprising. They fought hard both times, but couldn't keep up with their opponents for more than one half (similar to the game against Slovenia). Germany could match their strength in the paint and Australia's roster was too deep. Georgia played all its 5 games with a lot of energy, but the lack of depth and quality players in the backcourt stopped them from getting better results, as fatigue was an issue for those playing a lot of minutes. With only one quality guard (McFadden) playing under his usual standards, nothing more was to be expected. On the positive side, Shengelia and the promising NBA players Bitadze and Mamukelashvili are capable of carrying the team in the near future.



SOUTH SUDAN



17TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 26.5

HEAD COACH: ROYAL IVEY (USA)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 202 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 91.2

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

South Sudan used a lot of high post and side pick and roll options looking for a lob dunk for the roll player or a pop since they were an excellent 3-point shooting team. Another frequent offensive option was the use of high horns into secondary actions such as screening away, down screens opposite the post receiver, double staggered on weak side and some DHO (dribble hand off) with the ball side wing by the post with the ball.

At times they would get into their high horns structure by using a 1-4 box where the low post players would break out into the wing area, receive a pass, look for a cutter, and if nothing occurred, they would go into a side pick and roll.

However, their most important aspect of their offense was to have a great point guard in Carlik Jones who was excellent at controlling pick and roll situations, penetration to get to the rim and finish or create for a teammate, and his fine overall shooting skills.

South Sudan was a very athletic and strong physical team and predominately a man-to-man defensive team that would press full court after a made basket or made foul shot. They put a huge amount of ball pressure on the ball handler either by turning him or channelling him toward a double team or trapping situation, looking to disrupt the flow of an offense and make steals. On ball screens they normally would hedge high and recover. They did play some zone against Angola who were a poor 3-point shooting team, and it also aided their rebounding game against the strong offensive rebounding team of Angola.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Carlik Jones** - 20.4 points, 4.8 rebounds, 10.4 assists, 26.0 efficiency
- **Wenyen Gabriel** - 9.2 points, 6.8 rebounds, 14.2 efficiency
- **Marial Shayok** - 13.2 points, 3.6 rebounds, 2.2 assists, 13.2 efficiency
- **Nuni Omot** - 14.4 points, 2.6 rebounds, 2.0 assists, 14.4 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Khaman Maluach (17)** - 216cm - 10 minutes per game averaging 2.0 points and 3.8 rpg.

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The win against China (89-69) was their first one ever in a FIBA World Cup, in which they played for the very first time. The keys were the 15 converted three-point shots (out of 30 attempts) and the outstanding care of the ball, with only 4 turnovers in that game. Again, Carlik Jones led 5 South Sudan scorers in double figures with 21 points and 6 assists.

SUMMARY COMMENT

They made a good impression by showing quality and the ability to rebound from a defeat (Serbia) to overwhelm China and Angola in their last 2 games. They had quality inside the paint area with Gabriel, leadership with Jones, and good three point shooters, but their level of performance lowered substantially when their best players were on the bench.

South Sudan was founded in 2011 and has made tremendous progress under the guidance and support of former NBA player Luol Deng, who is the President of the National Federation. It received big support from the country and felt it was always the underdog, which gave the team extra motivation to prove people wrong. Puerto Rico needed an overtime to beat South Sudan, and the wins against China, host Philippines, and other African powerhouse Angola proved its quality. Ranked as the best African team in the tournament, South Sudan booked a direct spot for the Olympic Games in Paris, making an entire country proud of its success.

FRANCE

18TH PLACE
AVERAGE AGE: 29.3

HEAD COACH: VINCENT COLLET (FRA)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 81.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

France played a slower pace than the other teams in its group, scoring an average of 81 points per game (19th in the tournament). Overall, France struggled on the offensive end due to its low three-point shooting accuracy (34.1 %, 18th in the tournament) and its high turnover rate (15.4 turnovers per game, 4th highest in the tournament). France's guards had difficulties handling the pressure of the more aggressive perimeter defenders like Canada and Latvia. Offensively, France mostly played through the middle pick and roll throughout the tournament, benefitting their point guards Nando de Colo and Sylvain Francisco.

France played half-court man-to-man and ran a 2-2-1 full-court zone back to a 3-2 zone off made free throws. Defensively, France's length with Rudy Gobert in the middle allowed them to contest and pressure on the perimeter. France contested 60.1 % of its opponents' field goals (6th in the tournament).

KEY PLAYERS

- **Evan Fournier** - 13.8 points, 1.4 assists, 3.2 rebounds, 9.6 efficiency
- **Rudy Gobert** - 10.8 points, 1.3 assists, 8.3 rebounds, 17.5 efficiency
- **Guerschon Yabusele** - 10.8 points, 2 assists, 3.2 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency
- **Nando De Colo** - 8.4 points, 4.6 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 10.8 efficiency
- **Nicolas Batum** - 6.2 points, 3.4 rpg, 2 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 10.0 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

A huge turning point in the 1st Round was the loss to Latvia, essentially sending France to the Classification Round. France was leading 75-66 with 6:46 remaining in the 4th quarter when Nando de Colo was called for his 2nd unsportsmanlike foul, resulting in him being automatically ejected. Latvia then scored a 10-2 to cut the deficit to 77-76 with 4:42 to go.

SUMMARY COMMENT

France had 2 wins in the Classification Round against Iran (82-55) and the Ivory Coast (87-77). Overall, the biggest problem for France was that guards struggled against high defensive pressure (as shown against Canada and Latvia), something the team needs to take care of before the Olympic Games. If Heurtel comes back in the line-up and superstar Wembanyama joins the group, France can be a medal contender in the Olympic Tournament of Paris 2024.



JAPAN



19TH PLACE
AVERAGE AGE: 26.4

HEAD COACH: HOVASSE THOMAS WAYNE (USA)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 192 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 83.2

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

To compensate its lack of physicality, Japan always tried to play fast and quickly find open shots. In half-court game, it mostly played on-ball screen, with roll and pop variation, on the top with Kawamura and Hawkinson. All other players, especially Hiejima, Tominaga and Watanabe, didn't hesitate to take shots, even with a defender's hands on them.

They mostly played man-to-man defense, also using once in a while zone defenses. They combined a 1-2-2 press with a 3-2 zone. On the pick and roll, they defended over the screen and didn't switch often because of the lack of height of the point guards. Even without the physicality and the athleticism required for this level, they tried to be aggressive on the ball as much as possible, which was key in their crucial win against Finland. Beside the 3-2 zone used in the 1st Round, they later used a 2-3 zone.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Yuta Watanabe** - 14.8 points, 1.0 assists, 6.2 rebounds, 14.4 efficiency
- **Yuki Kawamura** - 13.6 points, 7.6 assists, 2.0 rebounds, 14.2 efficiency
- **Joshua Hawkinson** - 11.4 points, 1.4 assists, 1.2 rebounds, 8.2 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Keisei Tominaga (22)** - 11.4 points, 1.4 assists, 1.2 rebounds, 8.2 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The win against Finland was crucial, as it allowed Japan to fulfil its goal of winning at least 1 game. Hawkinson (29 points and 19 rebounds) and Kawamura (25 points and 9 assists) played a great game, and Hiejima and Tominaga gave a sparkle off the bench by scoring both 17 points in just 15 and 18 minutes respectively. Very aggressive throughout the game, Japan played relentlessly, even when trailing by 18 points at the end of the 3rd quarter. A fantastic 4th quarter (35-15) allowed Japan to create one of the biggest surprises of the 1st Round of the tournament.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Off to a slow start in its first game of the 2nd Round versus Venezuela and down by 15 points with 8:12 remaining, Japan got going thanks to offensive rebounds. Pushed by the local fans, they then took over the game by scoring a 33-9 run to seal the win, Hiejima netting 17 of these 33 points.



The team suffered against Cape Verde's inside game and started missing shots, allowing the Africans to close the gap (74-71) with 1:12 to go, but Hawkinson then scored 6 consecutive points to get the win.

Japan had a good tournament with a direct qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, something it can be very proud of. It played its trademark game, with a lot of energy and pace, never hesitating to shoot from three-point range, and its overall performances in front of its fans brought a newer, higher dimension to the team. A good choice of naturalized player and a young core give them reasons to dream bigger dreams in the future.



EGYPT



20TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.0

HEAD COACH: ROY RANA (CAN)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 82.4

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Off a defensive rebound, Egypt would look to dribble the ball up the court with speed. They used drag screens in transition with their main offensive alignments being 4-out-1-in, 3-out-2-in, and Horns. They used Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) and Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's), and turned out cuts to initiate their offense. Against Mexico's box-and-1 defense, they played 3-out-2-in with the inside players setting up low below the block. Screen-the-screener actions to create shot opportunities at the free throw line and staggered screens were also employed.

A helping man-to-man defense, at times looking like a "pack line", picking up at three-quarter- and half-court, was the favoured defense. They also used a 1-2-2 full-court trapping press and a 2-2-1 full-court press falling back to a 2-3 zone. The preferred method of defending on the pick and roll was a hard show by the screener's defender, allowing the defender on the ball handler to go over the top of the on-ball screen, with the screener's defender recovering back to the screener. On some occasions, going under the screen on the pick and roll was also used.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Ehab Amin** - 19.4 points, 4.8 rebounds, 5.6 assists, 18.6 efficiency
- **Anas Mahmoud** - 12.8 points, 5.6 rebounds, 1.4 assists, 17.6 efficiency
- **Assem Marei** - 12.3 points, 8.0 rebounds, 1.0 assists, 15.8 efficiency
- **Patrick Gardner** - 8.8 points, 4.8 rebounds, 1.2 assists, 8.4 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Amr Zahran (22)** - 7.8 points, 2.8 rebounds, 1.2 assists, 7.2 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The game against New Zealand was a game of momentum swings. Egypt led at the end of the 1st quarter (25-22). New Zealand then went on a 15-point unanswered run in the 2nd quarter to lead at halftime (47-35), holding on to its lead at the end of the 3rd quarter (68-61). In the last quarter, Egypt extended its full-court man-to-man pressure defense to good effect, taking the lead (83-82) with 2 minutes to play. However, New Zealand found its composure again and dealt better with the pressure in the closing moments to seal a 88-86 victory.

SUMMARY COMMENT

In the game versus Mexico, Egypt made 60.9 % of its field goals on its way to its first FIBA World Cup win since 1994. They scored 30 points in the 1st quarter and their bench noticeably outscored Mexico's (31-8).

Egypt can be very proud of its performance in the tournament. It was only one win away from an automatic qualification for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. For Egypt to continue to make an impact at the international level, it will need to develop the next generation of players capable of building upon these encouraging results.


FINLAND 
21ST PLACE
AVERAGE AGE: 25.9
HEAD COACH: TUOVI LASSI (FIN)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 199 CM
AVERAGE POINTS: 85.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Their first idea is to play with pace, moving a lot without the ball and creating lots of open three-point shots (more than 30 attempts per game). Their main offensive philosophy was 5-out with a lot of cutting and drive-and-kick situations to get open looks at the basket but at the end, it all fell on the shoulders of their star Markkanen to run the offense. It was one of the few teams to generate more points from off-ball than on-ball screens, mostly thanks to Salin.

They generally played man-to-man defense, with sometimes a 1-2-2 zone press followed by a 1-2-2 zone after free throws. To defend on the pick and roll, they mostly went over the screen, or they switched and caused a lot of problems, especially against Japan. In both games of the 2nd Round, their primary defense was Hedge, with less and less use of switches as games went. Against Tavares (Cape Verde) in the low post, they double-teamed from the base line. At times, they used a 2-3 half-court press and a 2-2-1 full-court press, with some options to trap on the middle line.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Lauri Markkanen** - 24.8 points, 1.2 assists, 8.0 rebounds, 24.0 efficiency
- **Mikael Jantunen** - 8.0 points, 3.2 assists, 5.2 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency
- **Oliver Nkamhwa** - 8.0 points, 2.0 assists, 3.8 rebounds, 10.2 efficiency
- **Sasu Salin** - 9.4 points, 2.6 assists, 2.0 rebounds, 8.6 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The loss versus Japan in the Group Stage outlined the lack of a dominant center, preventing them from taking advantage in the paint. They were unable to defend on the pick and rolls set up by Kawamura and Hawkinson and they got overwhelmed by Japan's defensive pressure, scoring only 1 field goal in almost 8 minutes of the 4th quarter.

SUMMARY COMMENT

At times, Finland managed to play its trademark basket with high rhythm on offense, good shooting, and mostly fast and efficient transitions, while setting up solid defense. The 1st Round result was disappointing. They stuck to their style of play, with a lot of energy on both sides of the court and always looking for a three-point shot opportunity. They kept fighting hard until the end of the tournament to get the best result possible. Markkanen, the star of this team, had a slow start in the event (19.3 points per game), but he finished by scoring 34 and 32 points in the last 2 games.



NEW ZEALAND



22ND PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.0

HEAD COACH: PERO CAMERON (NZL)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 197 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 85.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

New Zealand looked to push the ball up the floor very quickly at every opportunity. They used drag screens in transition and looked to initiate their offense through early purposeful player movements, Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's), Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's), and turn out cuts. Their preferred offensive alignments were 4-out-1-in and 5-out. Through perimeter ball movement, they looked for dribble penetration opportunities to finish inside and create three-point shot openings. Offensive rebounding was a priority, often tipping the ball back to teammates. Against zone defense, they used a 4-out-1-in alignment with screen action on the ball at the top to explore dribble penetration for inside and three-point shot opportunities.

Aggressive man-to-man defense was the cornerstone of New Zealand's defense. After free throws, they extended their man-to-man defense to full-court, trapping the ball handler at the sideline and sometimes the first pass receiver. They also used a 2-3 zone defense trapping on the sidelines and in the corners. They maintained a strong physical presence in defensive rotations, on help defense and defending screens, with constant hand pressure.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Finn Delaney** - 16.4 points, 6.6 rebounds, 2.1 assists, 16.4 efficiency
- **Shane Ili** - 14.8 points, 2.8 rebounds, 7.6 assists, 18.2 efficiency
- **Rueben Te Rangi** - 16.4 points, 3.4 rebounds, 1.4 assists, 12.6 efficiency
- **Izayah Le'Afa** - 12.8 points, 3.0 rebounds, 3.6 assists, 10.6 efficiency
- **Yannick Wetzell** - 8.4 points, 5.2 rebounds, 1.4 assists, 11.6 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

They lost their game against Greece (74-83) although they were leading by 11 points (43-32) at halftime. Greece's defense held New Zealand to 31 points in the second half, while provoking 21 turnovers.

SUMMARY COMMENT

New Zealand battled hard in every game of the tournament and was a tough opponent for every team. Even if they paid due attention to managing the workloads of their six main players, as the competition progressed, they seemed to run out of stamina. The challenge moving forward will be for New Zealand to further identify and develop a pool of players who will be capable to add contributing depth to its bench.



LEBANON



23RD PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 27.8

HEAD COACH: JAD EL HAJJ (LEB)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 194 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 79.4

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Lebanon's offense was characterized by a high number of passes early in the shot clock and by often giving the ball to Wael Arakji for a drive. Although Lebanon averaged 155.8 passes per game (9th most in the tournament), this only led to 19.4 assists per game (20th in the tournament). This was largely due to Lebanon's high turnover rate (14.4 per game, 7th highest in the tournament). Their main offensive option was Wael Arakji (18 points per game), who predominantly scored off the dribble. He was one of the most effective players of the event in isolation situations, averaging 0.880 points per isolation (4th highest in the tournament).

Defensively, Lebanon primarily played man-to-man defense. Without any true length in the frontcourt, it struggled against higher echelon teams attacking their ball screen coverage.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Wael Arakji** - 18 points, 6.0 assists, 2.8 rebounds, 19.3 efficiency
- **Omari Spellman** - 15.6 points, 1.6 assists, 5.0 rebounds, 16.8 efficiency
- **Sergio El Darwich** - 11.8 points, 2.2 assists, 3.8 rebounds, 12.8 efficiency
- **Ali Haidar** - 12 points, 1.4 assists, 4.0 rebounds, 10.2 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Ending up in the "Group of Death" with France, Latvia and Canada, Lebanon's chances of winning in its 1st Round games were close to inexistant and that draw basically chose its destiny before the competition even started. In the 2nd Round, they defeated Ivory Coast and Iran, but nevertheless fell behind Japan in the final rankings, which consequently finished best Asian team and qualified for the Olympic Games.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Lebanon had the ability to make offensive runs behind the fire power of Wael Arakji, but it struggled against teams with better athleticism and depth. Lebanon often started games well, but the bench players couldn't produce enough. Their youngest player was 24 years old so moving forward, they will need to develop rising stars who can have an impact at the world level. They can be satisfied with their overall performance at the tournament. There was a special moment after the game against Iran, as both teams gathered to thank Hamed Haddadi, who suited up for the last time for Iran, for his contributions to basketball.



PHILIPPINES



24TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 28.6

HEAD COACH: VINCENT REYES (PHI)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 196 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 79.6

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

The team was more experienced than four years ago in China (six players played in Japan, Korea, and the NBA), but needed to maintain a rapid rhythm and a high level on transition as when it was playing a 5-on-5 half-court game, it was quickly in trouble against its opponents. Although they had several systems in attack (Spanish pick and roll, triangle attack, etc.), the Philippine offense depended on Clarkson (perhaps too much), his teammates always trying to create good positions for him.

In defense, they didn't put much pressure on the ball, and they weren't aggressive enough, even though most of the guards were around 185 cm high. Clarkson had to manage his energy level, as his importance in offense was so big. They played a little zone and zone press, but mostly used man-to-man defense. On the pick and rolls, they defended in the drop, which more experienced teams punished them for.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Jordan Clarkson** - 26.0 points, 5.2 assists, 19.2 efficiency
- **Dwight Ramos** - 13.2 points, 2.4 assists, 5.6 rebounds, 14.4 efficiency
- **Ariel John Edu** - 8.2 points, 1.4 assists, 8.6 rebounds, 16.0 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The loss against the Dominican Republic (81-87) was crucial. It was a close game all the way, but things turned out badly for the hosts when Clarkson fouled out with 2:22 left to play with the Philippines only down 76-79. Key reasons for their loss were their very few offensive rebounds (3 compared to Dominicans' 17), their poor shooting accuracy from the three-point line (3 of 18), and the 19 turnovers committed. Clarkson did have a big game before fouling out with 28 points, 7 rebounds and 7 assists.

SUMMARY COMMENT

The team was athletic and had added size with Sotto (218 cm), Fajardo (211 cm), Edu (208 cm) and Aguilar (206 cm), which gave it a good rotation. One problem that affected the outcome in Manila was the lack of consistency and chemistry. Ramos had a very good tournament but was the only performant point guard, Clarkson joined the team late and Sotto was still in recovery mode after an injury. Playing at home the Philippines found themselves in do-or-die situations for every game and having chances to qualify at home for the Olympic Games added pressure on the team.



MEXICO



25TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 31.0

HEAD COACH: OMAR QUINTERO (MEX)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 196 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 82.0

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Mexico's preferred offensive alignment was 4-out-1-in. They also used Horns and occasionally went to 5-out. Side pick and roll flowing from transition was a popular transition option. To create jump shots and dribble penetration opportunities from the foul line, screen the screener action was initiated. 4-out-1-in and 3-out-2-in were used to attack zone defenses, with screening action on the ball at the top to create dribble penetration, inside and perimeter scoring opportunities.

Three-quarter- and full-court man-to-man defense were the primary defensive options. A full-court man-to-man trapping defense looking to force a turnover or pass was employed, often falling back to a 2-3 matchup zone. Against Egypt, Mexico used a box-and-1. From pick and roll action from the side, they used a hard show by the screener's defender, allowing the defender on the ball handler to go over the top of the on-ball screen, with the screener's defender recovering back to the screener.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Pako Cruz** - 18.2 points, 3.4 rebounds, 4.6 assists, 15.6 efficiency
- **Fabian Jaimes** - 11.4 points, 8.4 rebounds, 4.0, 18.4 efficiency
- **Joshua Ibarra** - 15.0 points, 5.8 rebounds, 0.6 assists, 12.8 efficiency
- **Paul Stoll** - 10.8 points, 1.4 rebounds, 7.2 assists, 15.4 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Gael Bonilla** - (20) - 5.4 points, 2.6 rebounds, 1.0 assists, efficiency 8.0

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Against New Zealand, Mexico established a 16-point lead at halftime (57-41). Withstanding a comeback by New Zealand to within 6 points with 5 minutes to play, Mexico scored a three-point shot to make it a 9-point lead in the final moments. Mexico won 108-100.

SUMMARY COMMENT

After three losses in the 1st Round, Mexico reacted with two wins in the 2nd Round, thus improving its win-loss record. With an average age of 31 years, this event showed the necessity for Mexico to rejuvenate its men's national team program by injecting emerging players from their youth team programs to improve its results in future international competitions.



ANGOLA



26TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 26.5

HEAD COACH: JOSE CLAROS CANALS (ESP)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 73.6

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Angola was well coached and ran some very interesting offensive sets but shot so poorly that no system would work under those circumstances. They made extensive use of re-penetration concepts - drive and kick into re-penetration (two really quick guards in Dundao and Gerson). Angola played a lot through the high post or Horns catch and created action off that such as the old Stockton/Malone play with the PG passing to one wing cutting into the key and reversing to set a back screen for the other post.

Another action frequently used by Angola was the high horns action into a high/low situation, screening away action, down screen action, or the dribble hand off into a flare screen action or a double staggered action. Angola would at times create early movement such as a PG cutting to the base line and coming back to the ball for a middle high post pick and roll. They normally played with 4 out and 1 in but did play with 3 big's against the Dominican Republic. Lastly, they looked for a quick transition and preferred running their posts to the rim instead of early drag screen action. Also, some isolation plays for their NBA post player Bruno Fernando occurred often when he was in the game.

Angola were predominately a man-to-man defensive team using a denial stance to contest all passes. They were able to adopt a physicality around the ball and point of the screen. They tended to flood the middle of the floor on defensive transition thereby giving up transition 3's or creating early, long close outs like against Italy in their 81-67 loss. The defended ball screen action in varying ways using a hard show, trapping against the better shooters, or switching on perimeter play.

They utilized some use of extended man to man full court pressure but not to a great degree. Their best game defensively was against the Philippines where they were able to force their star player Clarkson into a massive number of highly contested shots culmination in their only win of the WC, an 80-70 win.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Childe Dundao** - 14.0 points, 5.2 assists, 13.2 efficiency
- **Bruno Fernando** - 14.0 points, 1.5 assists, 5.3 rebounds, 14.3 efficiency
- **Silvio De Sousa** - 11.6 points, 0.4 assists, 6.8 rebounds, 13.2 efficiency
- **Jilson Bango** - 9.4 points, 1.2 assists, 7.4 rebounds, 13.4 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Even with Dominican NBA star Towns getting 3 fouls in the first 4 minutes of the game, Angola was not able to secure a win, mainly because of its poor shooting (2 of 21 from three-point range and 15 of 28 from the free throw line). Dominican Republic won the contest 75-67.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Angola played the most organized and tactical basketball of all African teams, but scoring was a major problem for them. Angola depended too much on the performances of its outside shooters, making it easy for opponents to collapse on the big men when the shots were not going in.

In Manila, a new generation appeared, and many believe the future is bright for the country. The Angolan roster had 7 players under 25 years of age, all very athletic, and it was one of the top rebounding team of the tournament. One thing that need to urgently be done is finding point guards with more size, since with Dundao (167 cm) and Domingos (178 cm) in the backcourt, although both extremely valuable for the team, it was very easy for opponents to take advantage of the edge they had in that sector. Angola must improve its outside shooting accuracy, the lack of which was devastating in two games.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

27TH PLACE
AVERAGE AGE: 27.9

HEAD COACH: DEJAN PROKIC (SLO)
AVERAGE HEIGHT: 196 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 74.6

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Ivory Coast passed the ball well, averaging 155.6 passes per game (10th in the tournament). They played without any true frontcourt size and performed well considering the fact that they were overmatched in every game.

Ivory Coast mixed up its defensive style, although the main options were full-court man-to-man pressure defense, which generated a lot of steals (best of the tournament with 10 per game), 2-3 zone and box-and-1 against the oppositions' best perimeter player. The turnovers created allowed their ball handlers (Solo Diabate, Bazoumana Kone and Nisre Zouzoua) to attack the rim.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Jean Philippe Dally** -10.8 points, 0.4 assists, 2.4 rebounds, 10.4 efficiency
- **Solo Diabete** - 9.4 points, 5.6 assists, 2.2 rebounds, 11.2 efficiency
- **Nisre Zousoua** - 8.4 points, 1.0 assists, 1.6 rebounds, 5.4 efficiency
- **Bazoumana Kone** - 8.3 points, 2.5 assists, 1.5 rebounds, 6.8 efficiency
- **Cedric Bah** - 6.6 points, 1.6 assists, 5.4 rebounds, 10.4 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The win against Iran was important. Ivory Coast attacked the basket relentlessly (20 of 21 from the free throw line), getting Hamed Haddadi and Mohammad Amini in foul trouble, both players eventually fouling out. Ivory Coast had a key run in the 4th quarter, forcing Iran into four turnovers in five possessions, while Haddadi picked up his 5th foul.

SUMMARY COMMENT

Despite the losses against Lebanon (84-94) and France (77-87) in the 2nd Round, Ivory Coast overachieved in every game considering the very limited roster available. They left a good impression and always fought hard. There is an urgent need to find a replacement for Diabate, even if at 36 years old, he is still performing well at such a high level. Ivory Coast must start building its future.



CAPE VERDE



28TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 32.2

HEAD COACH: EMANUEL TROVOADA (ANG)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 198 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 73.2

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

In the 2nd Round, they played a lot less in transition than in the 1st, with only 6 % of their offenses in comparison to the 16.3 % in the first stage. They mostly created their offenses off a pick and roll or feeding Tavares in the low post. Their three-point shot accuracy sank in the 2nd Round, making only 21 % of their attempts.

In the second stage, they had problems with defensive transition against teams which liked to play an up-tempo game. To defend on the pick and roll, they mainly used “contain” (which didn’t work well at all in the last game versus Japan, as Hawkinson was popping all the time) because of Tavares abilities to protect the rim. They tried to play a 2-3 zone, but without much success.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Edy Tavares** - 9.2 points, 3.2 assists, 12.4 rebounds, 18.0 efficiency
- **Ivan Alveida** - 11.6 points, 3.6 assists, 4.4 rebounds, 11.6 efficiency
- **Betinho Gomes** - 13.0 points, 1.0 assists, 3.4 rebounds, 9.4 efficiency
- **Will Tavares** - 10.2 points, 2.0 assists, 2.8 rebounds, 8.6 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Winning against Venezuela (81-75) was a reward for their efforts. Tavares locked the paint in the 4th quarter and Venezuela scored only 9 points in that quarter (all on three-point shots) with terrible shooting (3 of 12 from the three-point range and 0 of 6 from the two-point range).

SUMMARY COMMENT

Cape Verde was one of the biggest surprises of the African Qualifiers. Participating for the very first time in the competition, it relied on one world class player surrounded by energetic and motivated teammates. Against Japan, they trailed almost the whole game, but in the last 3 minutes they managed to cut the deficit back to 3 points and to be one possession away from tying the score. However, Hawkinson then scored 6 consecutive points to seal the win for Japan. As Cape Verde was one of the oldest teams of the tournament, its participation at the high level once Tavares retires is questionable, unless the youth program is developed.



CHINA



29TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 26.7

HEAD COACH: ALEKSANDAR DJORDJEVIC (SRB)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 201 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 75.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

In offense, their idea and focus were to create an advantage with their tall players, size being one of their strengths, but their opponents compensated for their lack of size with better athleticism. A major problem for coach Djordjevic was trying to instill a more modern basketball to players with little international experience who only play in the domestic league (except Li Kaier and Zhou Qi).

It was obvious at times that they had trouble reading the game because of their lack of focus, awareness and individual understanding of the game. Most of their problems were on defense, allowing a lot of open three-point shots and being unable to stop penetration to the key area. They played 2-3 zone for a very short time against Angola and Philippines.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Li Kaier** - 13.0 points, 3.4 assists, 5.6 rebounds, 13.8 efficiency
- **Qi Zhou** - 8.4 points, 2.4 assists, 3.6 rebounds, 12.6 efficiency
- **Jinqiu Hu** - 9.3 points, 1.3 assists, 3.0 rebounds, 11.5 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Yongxi Cui** - (20) - 196cm - 8.5min, 3.0points, 1.0 assist, 2.0 rebounds, 5.2 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

In the game lost against South Sudan (69-89), the first half was tight, but things turned out badly for China in the 3rd quarter. They made several mistakes, defended poorly on one-on-one situations, and allowed a lot of three-point shots (South Sudan scored 15 of 30 three-point shots).

SUMMARY COMMENT

This must have been one of the biggest disappointments for China in many years, since its 29th place was not enough to qualify for a OQT in 2024, meaning China will miss out on the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. Expectations were much higher but looking at the reality, this result was actually not a surprise: China took 24th place in the last FIBA World Cup played at home in 2019, it missed out on the Tokyo Olympic Tournament, and finished 8th in the 2022 FIBA Asia Cup held in Indonesia. How does the future of this team look?



VENEZUELA



30TH PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 32.3

HEAD COACH: FERNANDO DURO (ARG)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 193 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 74.2

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Venezuela had one of the shortest teams of the competition and this forced them to use a lot of on- and off-ball screens to create some open looks for their shooters. Heissler Guillent was the main creator, but he didn't have a good tournament like four years ago. They didn't run much, which is surprising for a team that can't attack from the low post.

They were the team which had the fewest possessions of the Group F. This time around, they weren't as efficient on the offensive board as they used to be. They played mainly from on-ball screens, then driving and kicking to find open shots. In the last two games, they tried to pick up the pace, but they only scored an average of 3.2 transition points.

Defensively, they played very physical with a lot of energy. On the low post, they tried to double-team on the most efficient opponents. On pick and roll, they tried to play a variety of options, with under the screen vs. Cape Verde and switch. To compensate their lack of size, they played match-up defense, using a 2-3 zone transforming into a man-to-man. They used a 1-2-2 zone press with hard double with the inbounder.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Nestor Colmenares** - 10.2 points, 3.0 assists, 6.2 rebounds, 15.0 efficiency
- **Heissler Guillent** - 9.6 points, 6.6 assists, 1.8 rebounds, 11.4 efficiency
- **Garly Sojo** - 12.4 points, 1.2 assists, 4.2 rebounds, 10.2 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Although Venezuela controlled its group stage game against Cape Verde during three quarters, it got overwhelmed by Tavares' presence in the paint in the 4th quarter, scoring only 9 points (all three-point shots), with terrible shooting (3 of 12 from three-point range and 0 of 6 from two-point range). Coach Duro tried to play most of the period with two point guards (Guillent and Cubillan), but that wasn't very helpful and didn't prevent the loss.

SUMMARY COMMENT

After three losses in the 1st Round, Venezuela started the game against Japan very aggressively.

Guillent controlled the rhythm, Sojo showed he was not only dangerous from the three-point line and its best player Colmenares, together with the rest of the team, showed presence on the offensive board (18-0 second chance points).

In defense, they prevented Hawkinson from scoring field goals (he made 6 free throws) and they led by a 15-point margin after 32 minutes (68-53). Then, they absolutely lost control of the game. Helped by the frenetic support of their fans, the hosts played much more aggressively, which resulted in bad decision making and poor shooting accuracy for the rest of the game, Japan going on a 33-9 run to finish the 4th quarter and win (86-77).

Venezuela could not compensate its lack of quality with combativeness and effort, maybe also because its opponents were more physically gifted. When a team goes 0-5 in a tournament, the impression can't be good. They had some good moments, but unfortunately very few of them, so they couldn't repeat the excellent results from the last FIBA World Cup (14th place).



IRAN



31ST PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 26.5

HEAD COACH: DEMIR HAKAN (TUR)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 200 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 64.2

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Iran ran a very traditional offensive style of play with a lot of cross screens/down screens or turnout actions. Benham Yakhchali had the 3rd most off-ball screens set for him during the tournament with a total of 83. Iran averaged 186.8 passes per game (3rd most in the tournament). Rising star Mohammad Amini can create off the drive and ball screen, which will allow Iran to play with more ball screens in the future. Iran ended up as the lowest scoring team of the tournament with an average of 64.2 points per game.

Iran mostly played half-court man-to-man defense, but occasionally switched to 2-3 zone when their perimeter defenders were struggling to stay in front of the ball.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Hamed Haddadi** - 10.0 points, 3.5 assists, 6.3 rebounds, 17.5 efficiency
- **Arsalan Kazemi** - 3.0 points, 2.2 assists, 5.8 rebounds, 11.0 efficiency
- **Mohamed Amini** - 13.2 points, 1.4 assists, 4.6 rebounds, 10.2 efficiency

EMERGING PLAYER

- **Piter Girgoorian** - (21) - 199cm Guard - 17.9min, 3.0 points, 1.2 assists, 1 rebound

CRUCIAL MOMENT

The 1st Round game against Ivory Coast had a crucial ending for Iran. Holding a 1-point lead with 7 seconds left, they fouled Nisre Zouzoua and sent him to the free throw line for 2 shots. On that play, Iran's coach Hakan Demir received a technical foul, giving in total 3 free throws to Ivory Coast, all scored to seal the win for Ivory Coast (69-71).

SUMMARY COMMENT

Iran finished the tournament with a 0-5 record. The team's primary objective appeared to be facilitating the transition of the younger generation under coach Demir. Hamed Haddadi, the Iranian star who was recovering from a serious Achilles injury, managed to participate in the competition. Having taken part in his 4th World Cup, he announced his retirement from the national team at the end of Iran's last game. The continued integration of more young players into the senior team is expected in the future.



JORDAN



32ND PLACE

AVERAGE AGE: 29.2

HEAD COACH: WESAM AL SOUS (JOR)

AVERAGE HEIGHT: 197 CM

AVERAGE POINTS: 73.8

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE STYLES

Jordan moved the ball quickly into offense as opportunities were presenting themselves. Their main offensive alignment against man-to-man defense was 4-out-1-in. Against defensive pressure on entry passes, they effectively used back door cuts, particularly after a pass to the inside player. There were many isolation plays implemented for their main offensive threat Rondae Hollis-Jefferson. Against 2-3 zones, a 1-3-1 alignment was used with screening for the ball handler at the top.

Man-to-man defense was their primary option, complemented by a 2-3 matchup zone. They varied their man-to-man pick-up point from half-court to full-court, depending upon the game circumstances. The preferred method of defending on the pick and roll was a hard show by the screener's defender, allowing the defender on the ball handler to go over the top of the on-ball screen, with the screener's defender recovering back to the screener.

KEY PLAYERS

- **Rondae Hollis-Jefferson** - 23.6 points, 7.8 rebounds, 4.4 assists, 22.6 efficiency
- **Ahmad Dwairi** - 14.8 points, 9.0 rebounds, 2.0 assists, 17.6 efficiency
- **Freddy Ibrahim** - 13.3 points, 3.0 rebounds, 6.0 assists, 10.0 efficiency

CRUCIAL MOMENT

Rondae Hollis-Jefferson's 39-point performance against New Zealand, taking Jordan into overtime, gave the team a chance to win. However, New Zealand managed to hold on and defeat Jordan (95-87).

SUMMARY COMMENT

Undoubtedly, Jordan was disappointed not to register a win at this FIBA World Cup 2023. The team was more than competitive against New Zealand, Egypt, and Mexico. If Jordan can develop a more sustainable performance from its bench players to support Hollis-Jefferson, Freddy Ibrahim, and Ahmed Dwairi, then the potential to improve on the international stage will be there. Having a viable and sustainable youth development program to prepare players to join the men's senior national team will be key for Jordan's future.

CONCLUSION

It has been an honour to work for FIBA as a scouting team at the FIBA Basketball World Cup. Our gratitude and thanks to FIBA Secretary General, Andreas Zagklis and FIBA Director of National Federations and Sport, Zoran Radovic for their support, guidance and assistance and for inviting us to undertake this important work.

Our thanks to all the FIBA staff, FIBA Competitions Department, FIBA staff and Local Organising Committee staff at each of the respective venues in Okinawa Arena Japan, Jakarta Indonesia Arena and The Araneta Coliseum, Mall of Asia Arena and Philippine Arena in Manila, Philippines. Your welcoming approach, support and assistance enabled us to smoothly undertake our work and is greatly appreciated.

Once again, our grateful thanks for the opportunity to be able to make a contribution to the outstanding success of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023.

Caleb Harrison - New Zealand, Nelson Isley - USA, Milan Opacic - Serbia and Patrick Hunt – Australia



