



FIBA
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
WORLD CUP
AUSTRALIA 2022

FIBA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL WORLD CUP 2022

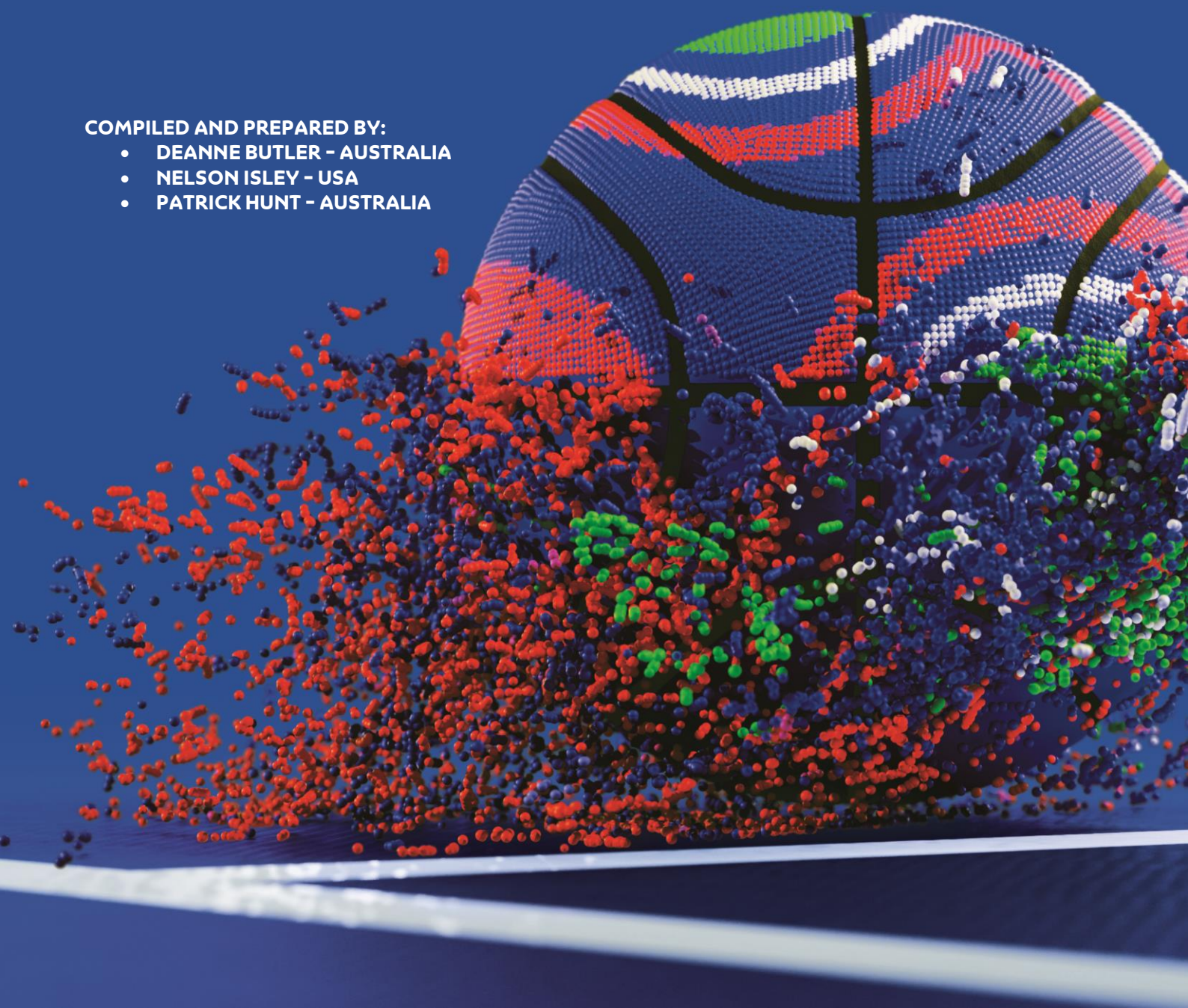
SCOUTING REPORT

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

22 SEPTEMBER - 01 OCTOBER 2022

COMPILED AND PREPARED BY:

- DEANNE BUTLER - AUSTRALIA
- NELSON ISLEY - USA
- PATRICK HUNT - AUSTRALIA



Introduction	3
Venues	4
Final Draw	5
Competition format.....	5
Final Standings.....	6
Trends – Overall Summary.....	6
Defence.....	6
Offense	8
Analysis of teams	2
USA	3
China	6
Australia	10
Canada.....	13
Belgium	16
Serbia	200
France.....	244
Puerto Rico	288
Japan	322
Korea.....	355
Mali	388
Bosnia and Herzegovina	411
ALL STAR 5	444
General Coaching Trends and Observations	466
Acknowledgements and thanks	499

INTRODUCTION

The FIBA Central Board awarded the hosting rights for the FIBA 2022 Women's Basketball World Cup to Basketball Australia on the 26th of March 2020. This 19th Women's World Cup was held in Sydney, Australia from the 22nd of September to the 1st of October 2022 at Sydney Olympic Park, Homebush, the precinct for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. Twelve teams competed and these were drawn into two groups of six teams. For the group games two venues were used, the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre and the Sydney Superdome. The quarter finals, semi-finals, bronze medal, and gold medal games were all played at the Sydney Superdome. Quarterfinals were played on Thursday the 29th of September, Semi-finals played on Friday the 30th of September and the bronze and gold medal games played on Saturday the 1st of October.

Because of international circumstances beyond FIBA's control, three teams were replaced to attend the World Cup. The team from Russia, who qualified through their qualifying tournament was replaced by Puerto Rico. The team from Nigeria, who qualified through their qualifying tournament was replaced by Mali while the team from Bosnia and Herzegovina replaced Belarus who withdrew from their qualifying tournament.

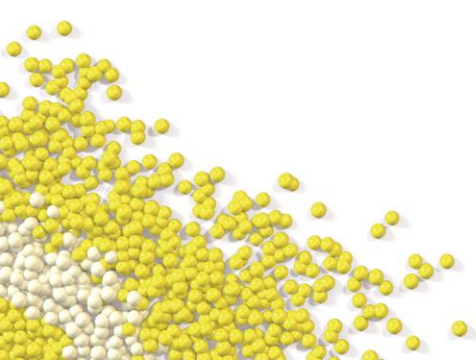
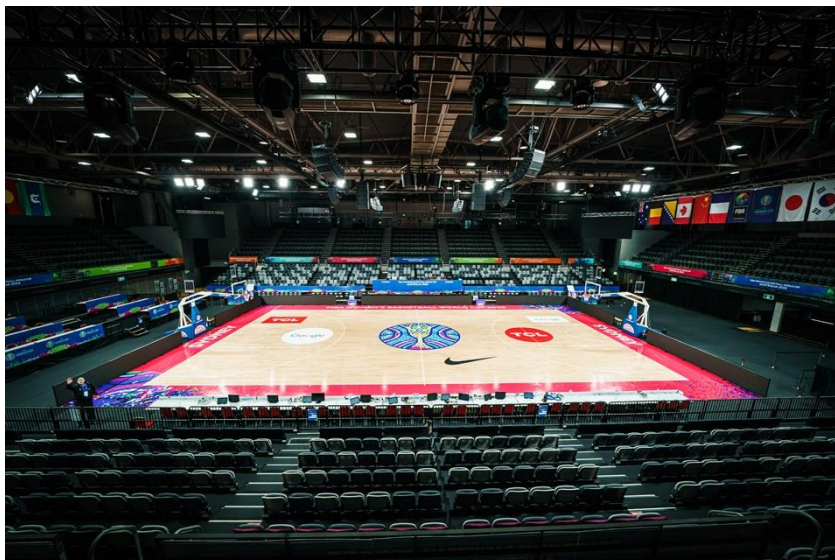
This report will outline the tournament groups, competition format, final standings, verall summary of offensive and defensive trends, analysis of each team's preparation, style, key players and impressions then general Coaching trends and observations, acknowledgement, and thanks.

VENUES

Sydney Superdome



Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre

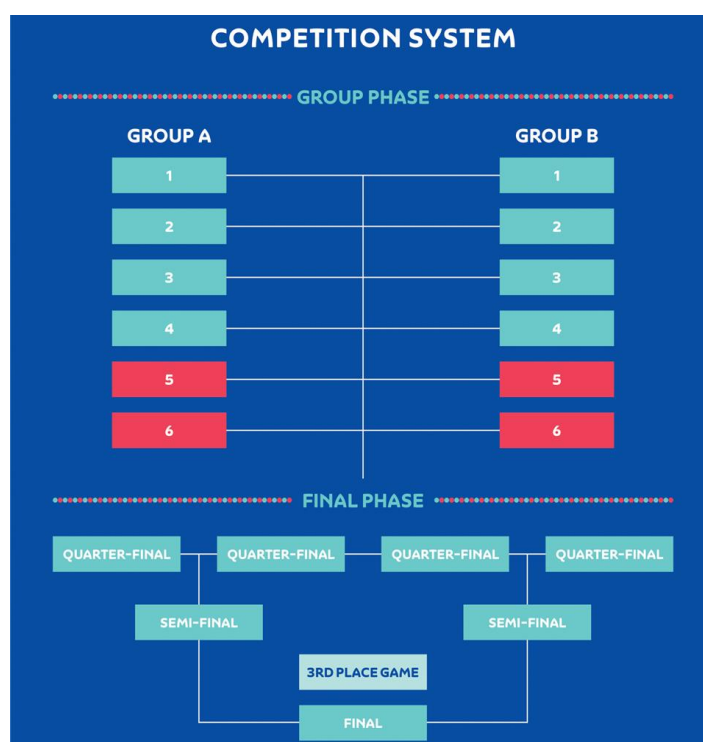


FINAL DRAW

GROUP A		GROUP B	
BELGIUM (BEL)	CHINA (CHN)	FRANCE (FRA)	SERBIA (SRB)
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (BIH)	PUERTO RICO (PUR)	JAPAN (JPN)	MALI (MLI)
KOREA (KOR)	USA (USA)	CANADA (CAN)	AUSTRALIA (AUS)

As outlined in the introduction, the team from Russia, who qualified through their qualifying tournament was replaced by Puerto Rico. The team from Nigeria, who qualified through their qualifying tournament was replaced by Mali while the team from Bosnia and Herzegovina replaced Belarus who withdrew from their qualifying tournament.

COMPETITION FORMAT



At the end of the Group Phase, a draw determined the pairings of the Quarterfinals. The two best-ranked teams of each group (Group A and Group B) were drawn against the two teams ranked third and fourth of the other groups.

FINAL STANDINGS

1. USA (8-0)	7. France (3-3)
2. China (6-2)	8. Puerto Rico (2-4)
3. Australia (6-2)	9. Japan (1-4)
4. Canada (5-3)	10. Korea (1-4)
5. Belgium (3-3)	11. Mali (0-5)
6. Serbia (3-3)	12. Bosnia and Herzegovina (0-5)

TRENDS – OVERALL SUMMARY

DEFENCE

All teams employed man to man defence as their principal defence and this was the dominant defence. Most teams had a variety of pick-up points ranging from half court to full court depending upon the game circumstances. Teams used full court man to man defensive pressure as required. Trapping opportunities in the back court, at the half-way side-line intersection and side-line wing were also used as part of teams' man to man defensive strategies.

Some full court zone press was used with the main alignment being 2-2-1 seeking trapping opportunities in the back court and at the half-way side-line intersection. From full court zone presses teams recovered mostly into man-to-man defence. Half and three-quarter court 1-2-2 zone presses were also employed to change tempo with teams mostly recovering to a 2-3 matchup zone defence. Serbia used a 1-2-1-1 full court zone press using total denial, their backs to the ball technique, to deny the intended first pass receivers inbounds pass and in the event of an inbounds pass looked to trap the first and/or second pass receiver.

Matchup Zone defence was used as secondary defence with the most common alignments being a 2-3 and 3-2. Puerto Rico also used a 1-3-1 trapping matchup zone as a strategic option.

The preferred method of defending Pick and Roll (PNR) was a hard show by the screener's defender into the path of the cutter allowing the defender on the ballhandler to go over the screen and stay with their player. For defending PNR on the side ("icing"), forcing the ballhandler away from the screen denying the PNR opportunity, was a common strategy. Some double teaming of the ballhandler in late clock and middle PNR was another strategy. Also, for middle PNR some teams had the screeners defender drop off the screener towards the basket ("drops") providing help and allowing the ballhandlers defender to go through or over the screen - the screeners defender then recovered back to their player.

For defending screens away from the ball, staggered screens and turn-out cuts the preferred method was a hard "show" by the screener's defender into the path of the cutter, often forcing them into a wider cutting angle, allowing the defender on the cutter space and time to go over the screen and stay with their player. As necessary, some switching also occurred.

Compared to the Tokyo Olympics, to disrupt screening action away from the ball there was far more emphasis on using physical contact to move both the screener and cutter away from the most effective point of the screen. There was also more physical contact employed to defend ballhandlers.

There was a noticeable strategy for defending Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) action and Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's) action by attempting to disrupt the action by physically moving the dribbler or receiver away from the point of the action, in the case of DHO's, or in the case of SHO's physically moving the passer and receiver away from the point of the action. There was also some trapping occurring in DHO action.

Defending the low post was mainly from behind, and from the wing three quarter coverage on the high side. There was some double teaming of the

low post from the low help side and ball side top on both the pass to the post and on the first dribble by the post.

Sustained effective closing out and containment defensive footwork to manage 3-point shooting opportunities and dribble penetration remains a challenge.

In early half-court offence, there was a significant emphasis on denial of both the wings and posts to prevent/disrupt initiating offensive action. This often led to an increase in late shot-clock plays.

At the Tokyo Olympics Women's tournament, there was more "pack-line" help man to man defence employed while at this FIBA Women's World Cup there was more emphasis on having responsibility for individuals containing their assigned players. This included maintaining defensive pressure on the ballhandler and one pass away receivers, being more aware of defensive positioning to contest perimeter shot opportunities and relying less on providing early defensive help notably from the low help side.

OFFENSE

An emphasis for most teams was to move the ball quickly into offensive transition through passing as a priority.

A feature was establishing precise wide spacing early in offensive transition seeking to create penetrating driving opportunities and early opportunities inside for trailing players. Teams also sought to create closing out and containment challenges for the defence through quick ball movement and making the extra pass not only in offensive transition but also in their half-court offense to again create penetrating driving opportunities.

Against man-to-man defence the most predominate offensive alignments were "horns" – 3 out 2 in with inside players setting up at the elbows and 4 out 1 in with the inside player setting up either low or starting at the elbow. There was also more prominence of 5 out alignments with wide spacing to start offences. Against zone defences the offensive alignments of 3 out 2 in,

with both inside players either low or high or one high and one low, and 4 out 1 in with the inside player either high or low were used most. Screening on the ball and off the ball were also used against zone defences as was high low action.

Early in the tournament there was less purposeful player and ball movement leading to more late shot clock plays. However, as the tournament progressed there were more effective starts to initiate offense particularly passing to players positioned at the elbows and more purposeful player movement prior to a pass including, down screening away from the ball, up screening away from the ball, “flare screens”, and some “Floppy” action and turn out cuts with curling options for the cutter off screeners positioned inside the key below the block. Passing from the high post position to the low post was effectively used against both man to man and zone defence.

It was noticeable that players cutting off screens made adjustments to the timing of their cutting action, as early in the tournament cutters were going early prior to the screen being set causing blocking fouls. This also occurred early in the tournament with Pick and Roll (PNR) action with the ballhandler going early prior to the screen being set. However, appropriate adjustments were also made in PNR action.

Recognition of using back cuts against wing denial pressure was at a high level as was using low to high post flash cuts to release denial pressure on wing players and to get into Stationary Hand Off's (SHO's) action. Passing and catching skills of players in these pressure release situations was of a very high level.

Dribble Hand Off's (DHO's) and SHO's side and middle were evident in all teams' offensive schemes as was PNR side and middle. To counter switching in PNR play the more efficient teams “slipped” the screener (the screener cut to the basket early) to take advantage of a mismatch inside or create 1 on 1 opportunities for the ballhandler.

Other elements in teams' offensive systems were screen the screener action, staggered screens away from the ball, “drag” screens (screens for

the ballhandler) from offensive transition and double “drag” action in both transition and halfcourt offense.

There was less reliance on PNR action than at the Tokyo Olympics with teams using a variety of off ball movement action as outlined earlier, including down screening away from the ball, up screening away from the ball, “flare screens”, and some “Floppy” action and turn out cuts with curling options for the cutter off screeners positioned inside the key below the block to create 1 on 1 opportunities for the cutter and screener. Dribble penetration opportunities were constantly explored to create perimeter shot opportunities.

It was noticeable that the step back 3-point jump shot is now an integral part of players individual offensive skill set with many more players now being able to execute this skill.

01

ANALYSIS OF TEAMS



USA

1st PLACE (8-0)

Average age: 27

Head Coach: Reeve Cheryl (USA)

Average height: 185cm/6'1"

PREPARATION

The USA arrived at Sydney looking to capture their 4th consecutive World Cup title. Due to WNBA commitments of every member of the American team the preparation was limited. They held a short camp in Las Vegas from 6 – 12 September where they had a televised intrasquad game on September 10 called the Red-White game. The Americans arrived in Sydney with only 9 players due to 3 players still involved in the WNBA finals. They only had one practice game against France behind closed doors with no score reported. The 3 that competed in the WNBA finals arrived on the 22 September and missed the first two games of the competition.

STYLE

Offensively USA once again utilised their size and perimeter pace to push the ball effectively and consistently in transition looking for 3 point opportunities. This enabled them to play at a tempo/early offense to avoid different defensive schemes. Although the USA did use some back to the basket post play with players like Wilson, they played frequently through high post catches (gets) to create secondary actions such as dribble hand off, flare screen opposite, and back door cuts by the wings. Out of this 1-4 Horns setting middle ball screens, double drag screens, and opposite post pin downs was observed. The guards of the USA were able to get deep in the paint area which created a better and more open “kick out” for a shot.

This USA team was quicker, more versatile, more athletic, younger, and more defensive minded than any American team seen since 2010. They played an aggressive and suffocating man to man defence that was able to get

through screens quickly (fight over), take away space, high hedge, and trap on most ball screens out front, and would switch at times on ball screens. Defence was the identity of this USA team with ball pressure an essential part of this identity. They showed some inconsistent movement on close outs as most teams did but improved as the tournament progressed.

KEY PLAYERS

A'JA WILSON	17.2 PPG	7.5 RPG	
KELSEY PLUM	15.8 PPG	1.8 RPG	4.2 APG
BREANNA STEWART	12.8 PPG	6.6 RPG	3.0 APG
CHELSEA GRAY	9.2 PPG	2.3 RPG	5.3 APG
ALYSSA THOMAS	9.9 PPG	7.0 RPG	4.3 APG

IMPRESSIONS

The USA won its 11th overall World Cup title, 4th straight gold medal, and 30th consecutive WC win with a solid 83-61 win over China in the championship game which qualified them for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. They had one of their closet games in their opener defeating Belgium 87-72 as Belgium committed 25 turnovers that the USA turned into 27 points. Breanna Stewart led the USA with 22 points, and it should be noted that the Americans played this game with only 9 players since 3 players (Gray, Plum, and Wilson) were still involved in the WNBA playoffs. Their 2nd game was an easy win against Puerto Rico 106-42 as they dominated the rebounds 54-31 and points in the paint 54-8. China came next in a group phase game (first game with a full squad) with the USA winning by 14 points. China had been averaging 102 points per game in the tournament but were held to 63 by the strong American defence. A'Ja Wilson led the USA with 20 points and 9 rebounds. In their 4th game the USA set a FIBA record for most points in a WC game by defeating Korea 145-69 as 8 players finished in double figures. This was followed by another blowout as the Americans defeated Bosnia and Herzegovina 121-59 with 7 USA players in double figures led by Plum with 20 points and 7 assists.

A very physical Serbian team gave the USA a tough game, but a 25-10 2nd period put the USA too far ahead for the Europeans to make any possible comeback. Alyssa Thomas was spectacular with 13 points, 14 rebounds, 7 assists, and 3 steals. This win put the USA in the semi-finals where they met Canada, and with a 15-0 1st period start where Canada did not score for the first 4:51 of the game so the Americans went on to establish a 40 point win. The 43 total points by Canada was the fewest points ever scored in a WC semi-final game. A sell-out crowd of 16,000 watched the USA defeat China 83-61 in the gold medal game on October 1 at the Sydney Superdome. The USA led from the beginning and with a 68-47 lead after 3 periods of play the American coaching staff went to their bench who maintained the 20 plus point margin until the end. The MVP of the tournament, A'Ja Wilson scored 19 points, followed by Plum (17 pts) and Lloyd (10 pts). As a final thought the average winning margin of this 2022 USA team was 40.3 points per game compared to the 20.3 winning margin of the 2018 Tenerife team and defensively this 2022 team allowed only 58 points per game compared to the 67.3 points allowed by the 2018 team in Tenerife. This world cup team demonstrated a remarkable ability to transition and adjust to FIBA basketball from the WNBA and play cohesively and to such a high standard on both offense and defence with limited time together.

CHINA

2nd PLACE (6-2)

Average age: 26

Head Coach: Zheng Wei (CHN)

Average height: 186cm/6'1"

PREPARATION

China were undefeated in their qualification campaign in Belgrade, beating Nigeria, Mali, and France. China named a squad of 15 to attend Qingyuan, Guangdong for a long term closed training camp commencing on the 21st of May. They solidified their preparation with practice games in August travelling to Europe and playing France in Paris (L) and then two games against Belgium near Brussels (L, W.) They remained in Europe until early September where they played Serbia in Belgrade before travelling to Sydney, Australia. They finalised their preparation with two further practice games against Australia (W) and Canada (L).

STYLE

China were consistently committed to transition basketball and utilised their advantage of mobile post players and guard speed to aggressively run in numbers. Their fast breaks were initiated predominantly with guards cutting high over their posts through the middle corridor, opening the court for early opportunities and deep corner catches. They were effective in dictating tempo and were able to run over teams early with their pace and aggressive physical defence.

Offensively, their floor spacing was disciplined and they regularly started their structure with 4 out 1 in, or their main post player outside the 3pt line. They worked a lot through the pinch-post area (elbow), with effective ball movement and pitch-passes with guard's slash cutting. They had specific offences designed to back screen posts or mis-matched wings to isolate

them in the key. They regularly worked off dribble hand-offs, double-stagger screens, flare cuts, and pin-down screens, and were one of the best teams consistently creating high percentage scoring opportunities through on-ball screen separation and feeding the rolling post.

Defensively, China were physical, disruptive, and athletic, and built a lot of pressure through intensity and change ups. They often extended up the floor with full court man to man defence, and mixed in 2-3 and 3-2 zones post timeouts, dead ball situations or to start a quarter. There were glimpses at times of a 1-2-2 press, but this was utilised sparingly back into a zone. China were relentless with hand pressure and found ways to disrupt shots and take time away from their opposition. They had a repertoire of ways to defend the on-ball screen; fighting over, hedging, switching, and icing (forcing ball handler away from the screen.) Their defensive schemes appeared to be clear and well understood by the players and varied depending on the scout and opposition. Overall, their size and length caused disruptions for any pass penetration, and their post players were exceptional at providing rim protection.

KEY PLAYERS

MENG LI	16PPG	1.7 RPG	2.5 APG
XU HAN	12.4 PPG	8.4 RPG	
YUERI LI	10.1 PPG	7.6 RPG	
SIYU WANG	9.3 PPG	3.3 RPG	4.4 APG

IMPRESSIONS

The last time China medalled at a World Cup was in 1994 with a silver medal. Coincidentally, that tournament was also in Sydney Australia, so no doubt this podium finish held some nostalgia for them. It was evident from their first pool game that each player had a clear understanding of their role, were well prepared, and arguably the most balanced roster brought to Sydney. Even though there were only two players different to their team in Tokyo last year, their composure, physicality and cohesion is remarkably different. The formidable combination of Yueri Li and Xu Han was entertaining to watch,

but they provided significant support to their team through offensive pace and rim running; along with their ability to consistently defend on-ball actions and contain smaller players successfully. The team were disciplined, methodical and consistently able to get the ball to the right player through well executed offensive schemes and play making.

China began their campaign against an under-sized Korea, the first time the countries have met in a Cup in 32 years. China was ruthless for 4 quarters, shooting over 60% from the field with limited turnovers, and holding Korea to 44 points (their lowest for the tournament). They took that momentum into game two against Bosnia and Herzegovina, forcing them to numerous late shot clocks with suffocating defence and elite offensive transition. Game 3 turned out to be the gold-medal game preview and was the closest any team got to the USA for the whole tournament (14 points.) China were led by the experience of their guards in Siyu Wang and Meng Li, who seemed to surprise the USA early with their intense ball pressure and floor running. The game attracted a huge and loud Chinese crowd, which seemed to manufacture confidence and a real belief within the team moving forward. They made light work of Puerto Rico, putting on a ball movement clinic and experimenting with different combinations on the floor which included playing Xu Han and Yeuri Li together. Their last pool game was against Belgium, solidifying second place in the pool with a comfortable and efficient 26 point win over Belgium.

China drew France for the quarter-final, bringing a disruptive defensive scout that set the tone for the game. Meng Li was sensational, scoring 13 points in 8 minutes and finishing with 23 points for the game. France pushed with a few runs, but China had too many weapons including Sijing Huang who finished with 18 points. The semi-final proved one of the games of the tournament where China was able to pip the host country Australia in front of 12,000 fans, even with Meng Li missing due to illness. The game was decided in the final seconds when Siyu Wang sunk two free-throws to seal the game. Captain Liwei Yang was incredible posting her best World Cup scoring performance with 18 points. Xu Ha produced another double-double whilst equalling the FIBA Women's World Cup blocks record with 5. The next day they backed up against a somewhat rested and humming USA team in

front of a sold-out crowd of 16,000 fans. Even though they couldn't stay with the USA in this game much past the first quarter, China were highly deserving of their silver medal and brought an exciting and evolving brand of basketball to the tournament.

The result from this event is a clear indicator that China's commitment and investment into the development of their youth is working. To be able to produce this level of turn-around in such a short amount of time is commendable and should serve as a warning to other Federations that further success will no doubt follow China into the very near future.

AUSTRALIA

3rd PLACE (6-2)
Average age: 30

Head Coach: Brondello Sandra (AUS)
Average height: 188cm/6'2"

PREPARATION

Australia finished 2nd in Group A of the qualifying tournament in Belgrade, Serbia, however gained automatic qualification due to being the host nation for the World Cup. They commenced preparation with a training camp and 3 game series against Japan (W, L, L) in late May in Sydney and Newcastle. They held a further camp late-June in Canberra before travelling to New York mid-July for training and two practice games against Canada (W, W.) After the final 12 were selected, Australia travelled to the Gold Coast early September for final preparations before heading to Sydney early to play further practice games. Leading into the tournament, they played Puerto Rico (W), China (L), France (W) and Belgium (W).

STYLE

Australia reintroduced their well-known brand of basketball, by playing hard-nosed defence and executing an efficient inside/outside game with success. With an experienced group that included 5 x WNBA players, Australia had multiple options that varied from game to game. The changeover of guards to previous years certainly impacted their ability to consistently push the ball, so they often utilised their wings and mobile posts to initiate transition.

Offensively, most of their actions were high on the floor, starting with 4 or 5 out. They consistently used different Horns variations, double stagger screens and double-drag screens to develop post roll or slipping opportunities. Their shooters were made available through pin-downs or

flare screens, and they successfully isolated their larger guards on designed post-ups at the front of the rim. Australia often played in momentum swings and rapid shooting bursts, developing a great ability to execute plays to get the ball to the 'hot' hand. They were most dangerous when they had a focus and intent on getting the ball inside. This caused difficulty for opposition teams if they collapsed, as it produced uncontested 3's on the kick out or post re-sealing options.

Defensively, Australia significantly improved with intensity, physicality, and cohesiveness each game. They predominantly played man-to-man, extending full court and mixing in a 2-2-1 press after a foul shot. They defended on-ball screens by hedging or switching likes and played a 'drops' defence on any middle on-ball screen. They varied their defending scout of DHO's; gapping (one man removed), switching and locking over to heavily disrupt any separation and limit driving lanes. They led the tournament with blocked shots, using their length, hand pressure and rotations to force teams into late shot clock and contested shooting situations.

KEY PLAYERS

STEPH TALBOT	8.5 PPG	6.9 RPG	5.3 APG
SAMI WHITCOMB	11 PPG	2.3 RPG	3.6 APG
MARIANNA TOLO	10.3 PPG	4.6 RPG	
EZI MAGBEGOR	9.6 PPG	4.5 RPG	1.4 BPG

IMPRESSIONS

The host nation entered this tournament with high expectations and a feeling of redemption due to their disappointing performance at the Olympic Games in Tokyo. They brought the tallest and oldest playing group of the tournament, with the much-anticipated return of 41 year old Lauren Jackson after 9 years retired from international basketball.

Australia started the tournament with a shock 13pt loss to France, displaying a surprisingly lack lustre and disjointed performance in front of a huge home crowd. This loss however appeared to be the kick start they needed as they

bounced back with a sharp 50pt win over Mali. With 7 players in double-figures and shooting 54.5% from the 3pt line, Australia made significant adjustments including a high-low post offensive focus and defensive extension up the floor.

Game 3 against Serbia was a tighter contest, struggling against the full court pressure and producing 19 turnovers. Marianna Tolo working her way into the starting five was a high light, delivering a stellar performance alongside teammate Steph Talbot. Australia solidified a 69-54 win, shooting a remarkable 18/18 from free throw line. Australia survived a tight match up against Canada, with the game see-sawing with momentum and undisciplined play phases. The team were without Bec Allen due to a significant injury sustained against Serbia; however, Sami Whitcomb repeatedly inspired her team to get the 3 point win, whilst Steph Talbot again was superb and validating her selection in the All Star 5 by finishing with 11 points, 9 rebounds and 8 assists. Australia were too big and too strong against Japan and were impressive with their disciplined hand pressure and gapping against the smaller and faster opponents. They made light work of Belgium in the quarter finals, only fading in the last quarter with a poor start. Cayla George played a veteran role with one rebound shy of a double-double, cementing the win and ensuring for only the 3rd time in World Cup history that no European team made the final four. The much-anticipated Semi-Final against China in front of 12,000 fans certainly didn't disappoint. Australia found difficulty developing clean options off wing DHO's due to China's pressure and physicality. The game became a defensive grind and even though Australia only lost one quarter (the 2nd) for the game, they couldn't claw back the small deficit, losing by 2 points; 59-61.

The bronze medal game was all about the Lauren Jackson show. To finish with 30 points in 21 mins and to equal the highest number of games played at her 5th World Cup appearance, Jackson showed her teammates and the rest of the world how much it really meant to her to represent her country for one last time. Her professionalism, efficiency, and obvious impact on the culture of the Australian team was certainly timely, and a much-needed inspiration for this program moving forward.

CANADA

4th PLACE (5-3)
Average age: 25

Head Coach: Lapena Victor (ESP)
Average height: 184cm/6'0"

PREPARATION

This was Canada's 5th consecutive and 12th overall appearance at a World Cup. Canada held their first training camp in Toronto from 7th -10th July with 12 players as part of the Global Jam International U23 Basketball Showcase. They travelled to New York on the 28th of July for a further camp that included 2 games against Australia. They lost both, 62-70 and 50-59. After that, they held their most important camp in Edmonton, Canada with 15 players from the 24th of August to the 8th of September. They travelled to Sydney shortly after that for final preparations which included test wins against Mali, Puerto Rico, and China.

STYLE

Canada, under their new Spanish coach looked to run on every opportunity and play an aggressive defence with strong ball pressure and worth noting is they used the same starting 5 for each of the 8 games they played. They had 2 outstanding guards in Shay Colley and Nirra Fields who played well together and were tough defenders to score on. Kia Nurse also played well considering she had not played in 11 months due to rehabilitation from an ACL injury. Bridget Carleton was the most consistent player for Canada and had perhaps her best tournament which finalized with her being selected to the All Star 5. They had good post presence with Kayla Alexander, Laeticia Amihere, and Natalie Achonwa that helped them to be the 3rd best rebounding team in the tournament. They did not finish well at the rim and

were a poor 2 point shooting team (37.2%). They used a lot of 4 out-1 in setting but also some horns action especially by hitting one of the posts with the other setting a down screen for a wing (Carleton on many occasions) that would curl for a shooting opportunity. The high post pick and roll was a common action for Fields and Colley whereas the side pick and roll were used mostly by Fields and Carleton. With the 4-1 setting a lot of DHO was used with Fields, Carleton, Nurse, and Colley making it very difficult to defend. Some staggered screens were used to lead into other actions such as flare screens and dribble hand offs.

Defensively they played predominantly man to man defence, but some 2-3 zone was implemented also in certain games. They used a lot of pressure and disruptive defensive schemes such as lane denial, aggressive hard shows with trapping tendencies on ball screens, switching on many dribble hand offs, and physicality on cutters. It was observed that on many occasions they would ice the pick and roll (force the dribbler away from the screen). Their defence was very effective against the lesser teams but showed some weak areas against the USA and Australia in the late stages of the tournament.

KEY PLAYERS

KIA NURSE	13 PPG	4 RPG	2 APG
BRIDGET CARLETON	11.3 PPG	6 RPG	3.3 APG
NATALIE ACHONWA	8.3 PPG	6 RPG	4 APG
NIRRA FIELDS	11.3 PPG	2.7 RPG	APG

IMPRESSIONS

Canada's performance was their best finish since they finished 3rd in 1986 but the last 2 defeats against the USA and Australia put a dampener on the overall performance. They won their first 3 games beating a good Serbian team 67-60, a surprise easy win over France 59-45, and completing the 3rd win over the disappointing Japanese team 70-56. Against Serbia a 23-12 2nd

period got Canada ahead to stay with the Europeans being held to their lowest score ever in a WC contest (60 points). Kayla Alexander led the North Americans with 13 points and 7 rebounds. The French win was big for Canada and a surprise being that France had beaten host Australia in their opening game. Their defence held France to only 45 points by forcing them into a 33% shooting night which included a 3 of 19 on shots from the 3 point line.

They had another fine defensive game against Japan holding them to a 31.9% overall shooting percentage and even worse a 6-35 from behind the arc! Carleton led Canada with 19 points and 6 rebounds while Colley scored 13. They came very close to winning a 4th straight game against Australia, but the Aussie rebounded from a 14-23 Canadian 1st period advantage to storm back in the 2nd period (24-10) and finish the Canadians off with a 24-15 4th period run for a final score of 75-72. Most disappointing for Canada was the fact that their 3 big inside players (Alexander, Amihere, and Achonwa) were held to a combined 15 points on 6 of 19 shots. Fields (17 points), Carleton (16 points), and Nurse (11 points) were positive elements for the Canadians. Their last group game against Mali came quite easily winning 88-65 as Alexander was impressive with 19 points and 14 rebounds and Carleton showed her shooting talent by making 7 triples for 27 points in total. Canada erased previous ¼ final defeats in 2014 and 2018 by beating Puerto Rico 79-60 in this Sydney event. They jumped ahead of the Islanders 33-16 in the 1st period and had 5 players in double figures led by Nurse with 17 points and Carleton with 15 points. After such a good showing up to this point things fell apart in the semi-finals as the USA scored the first 15 points of the game on the way to a 27-7 lead after the first 10 minutes and continued to pile it on for a final score of 83-43. The 43 points for Canada was the lowest points ever scored by them in a WC semi-final game. This was all compounded by the fact that they only shot 21.9% and went 4 for 26 from the 3 point line with not a single Canadian player in double figures. The pain continued in the bronze medal match as Australia played terrific in winning 95-65. Nurse did have a nice game with 19 points, but these last 2 setbacks showed that Canada have a lot of work to do if they are to qualify for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

BELGIUM

5th PLACE (3-3)
Average age: 25

Head Coach: Demory Valéry (FRA)
Average height: 181cm/5'11"

PREPARATION

Belgium finished 4th in the World Cup in Tenerife so a lot was expected of them in Sydney. They began practice in August 2022 with 14 players at Leuven and Winketkaai. They played two practice games against Serbia on the 20th and 21st of August, winning both. The team rested before playing China on the 26th of August, winning by 5 without Meeseman and Allemand, their 2 big stars. Belgium played China the next day (L) before travelling to Pau, France, to play France in a 3 game series starting on September 1. (L,L,L.) They travelled to Sydney on September 9, playing Japan on the 16th (L) and Australia two days later (L).. They only won three out of their 8 preparation games, and it seemed for the most part they had difficulties in scoring enough points. Belgium was missing one of their main experienced leaders, Kim MESTDAGH who retired from their national team this year.

STYLE

Belgium did not push the ball in transition as they did in the 2018 WC held in Tenerife or the 2021 Tokyo OG's where they averaged almost 80 points per game as opposed to 72.2 in Sydney. This loss of long time star Kim Mestdagh and the injury during the tournament to Emma Meesseman certainly played a part in this lower production of points. It can also be noted that a change in coaching played a part since it seemed this new coach preferred a more controlled style of play.

They seemed to rush shots at times but refused shots when they were seemingly open. They offered multiple looks in their half-court offence – high

screen pick and pops, side screen pick and rolls, and some back screen action by the guards for Linskens/Meesseman followed by a down screen for the screening guard. Allemand was heavily involved in screen the screener actions, some drag screens, dribble hand off actions using a shovel pass, some elevator screens for shooting guards such as Vanloo and Hind Ben Abdelkader who were their 3 point specialists, and double staggered looks which led to a lot of cutting action from these allowing for better gaps. In Tokyo Meesseman was dominant as she led the Tokyo Games in scoring with 26.8 points per game and was 2nd in rebounds at 10.5 per game. She was just not the same player in Sydney as she only averaged 5.8 points per game and was out of the competition after 4 games with a calf injury. Belgium also ran some 4 out-1 in with Meesseman high and Linskens low early in the tournament but went more with a 3 out-2 in look as the tournament moved forward. Allemand played the point guard extremely well (was 2nd in assist and 4th overall in steals) but really had an up and down tournament in Sydney as opposed to both Tenerife 2018 and Tokyo 2021.

Defensively, Belgium is known to play a very aggressive and mobile man to man defence, but this also was lacking in Sydney. They resorted quite often to a 2-3 matchup zone. At other times, their man to man defence would be extended but was mostly for containment to slow the advance of the ball with no real pressure applied. They mostly switched on-ball screens especially against the dribble hand off action, and screens away from the ball. They did not defend the pick and roll well which led to some bad rotation moments by the Europeans.

KEY PLAYERS

KYARA LINSKENS	12.8 PPG	7.7 RPG	1.2 APG
JULIE ALLEMAND	10.2 PPG	2.7 RPG	6.3 APG
JULIE VANLOO	12.2 PPG	1.3 RPG	2.2 APG

IMPRESSIONS

Belgium was considered a team to look for as they arrived in Sydney after a 4th place finish in the 2018 Tenerife World Cup and a good performance in Tokyo losing to Japan 86-85 in the ¼ finals. They had a strong starting five with good size and skill at every position. They were a well-balanced team with a terrific guard in Julie Allemand, good shooters in Vanloo and Abdelkader, and good size with Linskens and Meesseman. However, upon arrival to Sydney there was no Mestdagh who had retired (averaged 14.8 points in Tokyo), Meesseman seemed tired and not her old self which ended with an injury against Bosnia Herzegovina in the 4th game and could not play anymore, and Allemand was forced to do too much. The swagger and utmost confidence showed by them in Tenerife and in Tokyo never arrived unfortunately.

They drew the USA in their opener and went down 87-72 but played them tough even winning the 2nd period 17-16 and the 4th period 16-15. They shot well (11-27 on three's) but what killed them in this game was the 25 turnovers that the USA turned into 27 easy points. Julie Vanloo with 13 points and Allemand with 10 led Belgium. Belgium raced to a 50-30 half-time lead against Korea and never looked back in their second game win over Korea 84-61. Meesseman was very effective with 9 points, 10 rebounds, and 7 assists while Allemand added 13 points and handed out 8 assists. The third game against Puerto Rico was an up and down struggle that Belgium was able to pull out at the end 68-65 despite 27 points by Guirantes of Puerto Rico and Belgium only shooting 4-19 from behind the arc. Linskens came up huge for Belgium with 24 points and 13 rebounds as she had her best tournament ever for her country.

Belgium got revenge on Bosnia and Herzegovina in their 4th game 85-55 to accomplish a third consecutive win for the first time in their short WC history. This also propelled them to their 2nd ¼ final appearance. Hind Ben Abdelkader, a 3 point specialist scored 18 points to lead Belgium. The revenge factor was derived from the fact that they had lost twice to the opponent in 2021 at the FIBA EuroBasket and the FIBA Europe 2023 qualifiers. The bad news was that Meesseman sustained a calf injury and was

declared out for the rest of the championship. In their last group game, they only trailed China by 9 points entering the 4th period but a 27-10 run by the Asians in the 4th period resulted in the 81-55 loss. Belgium shot poorly (33%, 4-19 on three's) and only Linskens with 14 points and 7 rebounds and Vanloo with 13 points showed up. Belgium ended their participation in the 2022 WC with a ¼ final loss to host Australia 86-69 as the Aussies built a 52-37 half-time lead and coasted home. Without Meesseman they were killed on the boards 48-23 and just game up too many inside points to the hosts. Allemand did end well with 15 points and 7 assists, Linskens with 13, and Vanloo with 12. If this team can be healthy for Paris 2024, they will be a team to be taken seriously because they have good talent and normally great chemistry.

SERBIA

6th PLACE (3-3)
Average age: 28

Head Coach: Maljkovic Marina (SRB)
Average height: 183cm/6'0"

PREPARATION

Serbia qualified for the World Cup after winning the European Championships and then finishing top of their pool in the Qualifiers in Belgrade, Serbia (3-0). They commenced their preparation on June 3rd with a 20 player camp in Vizura Sports Hall, Belgrade. They played two games against Turkey (W,W) before travelling to Greece with only 15 players and playing further games against Poland (L, W) and Croatia (W).

Serbia travelled to Belgium late August where they played two games on 20th and 21st, losing both. They returned to Zlatibor, Belgrade, playing three games against Puerto Rico (W,W) and China (U/K result.) On the 12th of September, they travelled to Istanbul where they completed their final preparations before flying out to Australia.

STYLE

Even with a significant player turnover from Tokyo last year, Serbia competed with their staple physical and relentless defence and aggressive off-ball movement. Their constant change up of starting 5 players from game to game was either by design to build and set expectations for this new playing group, or as a strategic element for the opposition.

Offensively, Serbia worked with a lot of counter movements to suit their personnel. They often started with a 4 out 1 in or 5 out offensive structure, with posts sprinting into on-balls with hard separation. They prioritised

weaksides turn out cuts for their shooters, (Cado), and pin down screens to lift guards into middle on-ball actions. Their pace was heavily dictated by their guards; in particular Anderson and Nogic. Due to this, combining their PnR action with their forwards was more successful at times as they were mobile enough to stay with them. Structurally they used shuffle cuts, double staggers, elevator screens and 'diamond' action within their half court. Isolation plays for Krajisnik and Stankovic involved low cross screens or elbow back screens to assist them getting a low post catch. They were consistently aggressive crashing the boards, with their posts doing a great job tapping the ball out of a contest to give them another offensive possession.

Serbia demonstrated many different variations to their defensive pressure and were consistently physical on the ball and disruptive to screeners and cutters. Their attention to interrupt DHO's and the ball handler had positive results at times, however it also caused them to fall just shy of averaging the most team fouls in the tournament. Their scout changes included switching, trapping, and hard hedging on-ball screens and hand offs with high energy and active hands. They often trapped dominant posts, even face guarding on box outs to try to exclude them from rebounding contests. Serbia consistently extended full court, jump switching and trapping ball handlers. After foul shots, they utilised a 1-2-2 face-guarding press which deterred the ball away from dominant ball handlers. They were the only team to show this pressing style which was effective and often earned them the desired result of a steal or stoppage.

KEY PLAYERS

YVONNE ANDERSON	15.0 PPG	4.2 RPG	6.5 APG
TINA KRAJISNIK	10.7 PPG	7.7 RPG	
JOVANA NOGIC	10.2 PPG	4.3 RPG	1.8 APG
IVANA RACA	7 PPG	5 RPG	

IMPRESSIONS

After losing in the bronze medal game in Tokyo, Serbia commenced a 'rebuilding phase' which included a changeover of 6 new players. There were some big names missing from Sydney – Sonja Vasic, Jelena Brooks and Ana Dabovic, but the roster put together was on average 3yrs younger and certainly buying into the Serbian brand of basketball.

They started their campaign with a 7pt loss against Canada, their lowest score ever at a World Cup. Having 19 turnovers and shooting 17.6% from the 3pt line was the telling difference in what was a super physical and defensive focussed game. Their performance against Japan the next night was of stark contrast, coming away with a 5pt win against Olympic Games silver medallists, Japan. 4 out of the 5 starters were changed from the night before, resulting in a sharp, efficient, disciplined game with 5 players in double figures. Their aggressive smothering of the ball and rotations defending on-ball screens caused problems and several shot clock violations for Japan.

Their extended pressure against Australia was once again disruptive in their next contest, however they struggled to score and look after the ball against the size of their opposition. They had a comfortable win against Mali, with Cado having a night out with 20 points shooting 6/10 from the 3pt line. Their defensive adjustment to pack in the driving lanes worked in their favour, forcing high turnovers, and allowing them to run. They moved into their last pool game with a feeling of redemption for their disappointing loss in the bronze medal game in Tokyo. Serbia trapped, switched, face guarded and arguably outcoached the French team, winning by 6 in a tight contest. The 24 year old Jovana Nagic had her game of the tournament finishing with 17 points, and Anderson was once again instrumental with 18 points, 5 rebounds and 6 assists.

Serbia certainly faired the unluckiest in the Quarter-Final pairings, finding themselves up against the USA. Their 1st quarter was promising, however they only scored 17 points over the 2nd and 3rd quarter, struggling to execute against the USA's pressure. Regardless of the result of this last game, Serbia

demonstrated a mature ability of recognising and using momentum changes to their advantage. This roster appeared to be more focussed on playing an aggressive and high tempo style of basketball. Once they learn to counter this (at times) frantic pace and develop a more consistent possession game, they will certainly have the potential to upset teams late in any competition.

FRANCE

7th PLACE (3-3)
Average age: 26

Head Coach: Toupane Jean-Aimé (FRA)
Average height: 185cm/6'1"

PREPARATION

France began practice on August 9th in Marseille and had their first practice game on August 17th with a game against China at their high performance training facility (INSEP, National Institute of Sport, Expertise, and Performance) winning 58-52. This was followed by a game against Bosnia-Herzegovina on August 21st in Marseille where the French prevailed 87-52. A 5 day rest ensued before commencing their second stage of preparation on 26 August. During this stage they won three straight games comfortably against Belgium on the 1st (83-62), 2nd (74-55) and 4th of September (76-69.)

France travelled to Australia on September 9 to continue preparation which included 3 further practice games. They lost on the 16th to Australia 88-92 and on the 18th, they lost to Japan 59-69. In their final warm up game they scrimmaged the USA on the 19th of September behind closed doors, lost, but the score was unknown. The French were somewhat unlucky during their preparation as 2 of their key players, Sandrine Gruda and Marine Johannes were injured and could not participate in the WC. Gruda sustained a calf injury and Johannes a thigh injury.

STYLE

France was just a shell of the team that won the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympic games in 2021 since not having Gruda and Johannes affected them greatly. They were up and down with wins over Australia and Japan and very lacklustre in losses to Canada and Serbia. They were very poor on the offensive rebounding end (ranked 10th in rebounding at 34.5 per game), got little or no production from the bench, and lacked a physical presence inside. They had a very good player in Gabby Williams and lots of the offense revolved around her with high post pick and rolls, drag and step up screens, some screen and rescreen actions, along with curling action off low post screens looking for rim penetration. They were the worst 3 point shooting team in the tournament (25.6%), and this was never so evident as in the game against Canada when they went 0-12 in the 1st half and 3 of 19 for the game. In the half court, they often worked with a 1-4 set with multiple options including stationary hand-offs, "Iverson" cuts, back screening the pinch post and middle on-ball screens. They identified who was shooting well early and used double staggered screens for shooters, mostly Williams.

Defensively, France predominantly played individual defence but lacked the intensity that French teams have showed in the past. They tried to bump cutters off their line of entry but failed miserably on this in losses to Canada and Serbia. They would mostly switch on the wide pin down and flare screens. It appeared that France and many other teams also switched often to stay out of defensive rotations which very few teams did well. They would lock and trail frequently on staggered screens to force the curl to the help defence. They normally hedged high on outside ball screens with some trapping tendencies.

KEY PLAYERS

GABBY WILLIAMS	15.8 PPG	5 RPG	3.2 APG
MARINE FAUTHOUX	10.8 PPG	2.3 RPG	3.5 APG
ALEXIA CHARTEREAU	10.2 PPG	3.8 RPG	

IMPRESSIONS

France made the quarter finals for the 6th consecutive time since 2002 with their highest finish being 5th in both the 2006 and 2018 World Cup's. France began their WC participation with a terrific win over host Australia 70-57 in front of 9,000 fans. This was the first time France had ever beaten Australia in World Cup competition having lost the previous 5 contests. The French shot 48.3% from the field and their defence made Australia uncomfortable all night (one of the few games the French were able to do that). The big star for France was Gabby Williams who has dual citizenship as a French/American and currently plays in the WNBA and the French League in the off season. She had a terrific game scoring 23 points (10-15 overall and 3-5 from 3 point line) and most likely this was her best game ever in a French uniform. From one high (win over Australia) to a dismal low as France was handed an embarrassing 59-45 defeat by Canada in their 2nd game. The Canadians completely dominated the boards 56-38 and the French were held to a very poor shooting night by Canada's defence (30% overall and 3-19 from behind the arc). Williams was the only French player in double figures with 13 but was harassed into a 6-15 shooting night.

France had their hands full with Sika Kone and Mali in their 3rd game, but a 25-11 2nd period run and they held off the Africans in the 3rd and 4th period to win 74-59. France was weak again on the boards losing that overall battle 41-35 and shot a dismal 4-19 from the 3-point line but Williams came to the rescue again scoring 14 points, grabbing 7 rebounds, and dishing out 6 assists. In their 4th group phase game both France and Japan played poorly with France posting a 5-23 on three-point shooting whereas Japan only managed a 5-21 from the same distance. Thanks to a big 19-9 4th period run France was able to salt away the victory 67-53. Williams led again with 16 points and Iliana Rupert (21 years old, 1.94cm) finally lived up to her potential by scoring 15 points and capturing 12 rebounds. She has a nice future but must get more consistent. The 5th game was a disaster for France as Serbia out-rebounded them 44-20 on the way to a 68-62 loss which forced them to face China in the quarter finals.

The quarter finals were a huge disappointment for Europe since when Serbia, Belgium, and France lost their respective games it became only the 3rd time in WC history that no European team would be in the final 4. France fought hard against China, but the Asians had a much better rotation of players, a huge physical advantage inside, and a big 25-14 run in the 2nd period from which the French never recovered in the 85-71 defeat. Williams led France with 17points, 4 rebounds, and 6 assists aided by a fine game from Marine Fauthoux who scored 19 points. This loss meant France has never reached the final 4 of a World Cup. Will this kind of performance be repeated in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games?

PUERTO RICO

8th PLACE (2-5)
Average age: 25

Head Coach: Batista Gerardo (PUR)
Average height: 179cm/5'10"

PREPARATION

A mix of 13 young and veteran players commenced practice on August 15 in San Juan. They left on August 30 for Serbia where they played two games, losing both by around 20 points on 6th (73-91) and 7th September (NA). They travelled to Australia on September 8 and played Australia on the 12th (lost but no score known) and played Mali the next day winning 79-67. On the 18th they played Canada, losing by a sizable margin. They came with 4 world cup debutantes (San Antonio, Gonzales, Vargas, and the newly naturalized Hollingshed), and the rest were veterans who have been with their program for several years such as the eternal veterans Rosado and O'Neill. Puerto Rico lost all games in their qualification series that was played between Washington, D.C. and Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. However, they were chosen to replace Russia when the Europeans were suspended by FIBA.

STYLE

This was a much better Puerto Rican team than the one that participated in the 2018 Tenerife WC (lost all 3 games and finished last), and the Tokyo Olympic Games (lost all 3 games and finished last). It was evident from their 1st game against Bosnia Herzegovina that the addition of 2 new players (Arella Guirantes, a 2021 WNBA 2nd round pick by the Los Angeles Sparks and Mya Hollingshed, the 8th overall pick in the 2022 WNBA draft by Minnesota) were going to make Puerto Rico a better team. Where they had depended

on veteran Jennifer O'Neill in the past for their scoring although she was always very inconsistent due to poor shot selection, they now possessed a true "go to player" in Guirantes and a good second option in Hollingshed.

The one on one and quick perimeter shooting was now a thing of the past as they were much more structured with mostly a 4 out and 1 in using many options such as the side pick and roll, high post screening action into either a roll or pop, dribble hand off action off a horns set, "gets' into a down screen on the weak side, and some screen the screener action. They had the luxury in late shot clock moments of having Guirantes who could get a decent shot with her penetration ability or going inside to Hollingshed for post action. They still tried to play fast but now under more control. In conclusion a fine performance on offense by Puerto Rico.

Defensively, Puerto Rico played an aggressive and compact defence, cut off passing lanes well, and bumped off cutters constantly. They occasionally implemented a 2-3 half court zone as a change-up in addition to a 2-2-1 full court press and even some 1-3-1 zone was observed. They mostly switched on down screens in their man to man defence and would try and fight over on perimeter screens with drop tendencies. In conclusion and with discussions with the coaches Puerto Rico after the 2018 WC failure put in a plan that revolved around a technical and athletic talent structure, established some staggered goals within the region (Central America), continent (FIBA America), and world-wide (FIBA OG and WC), and testing new players. Result – it worked!

KEY PLAYERS

ARELLA GUIRANTES	18.2 PPG	6.5 RPG	3.5 APG
MYA HOLLINGSBED	13.0 PPG	6.2 RPG	1.8 APG
ISALYS QUINONES	8.5 PPG	4.8 RPG	1 APG

IMPRESSIONS

Puerto Rico finished last (16th) in the 2018 WC held in Tenerife and were like Mali in that they were afforded a spot in Sydney under special circumstances when after losing all their games in the February qualification tournament (USA, Belgium, and Russia) FIBA suspended the Russian Federation which opened the door for Puerto Rico. Besides the poor performance in Tenerife, they also played terrible in the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games but surprised everyone by winning 2 of their 5 games in the group phase and advanced to the ¼ finals. Their first game in Sydney against Bosnia and Herzegovina was the key to their eventual success as they pounded the Europeans 82-58. They exploded into a 31-16 1st period lead and never looked back in winning their first game ever in a WC competition. Two players stood out in this huge win with 1.80 cm, 24-year-old Arella Guirantes having one of best games ever by anybody in scoring 26 points, grabbing 9 rebounds, and handing out 8 assists. She was aided by 23-year-old, 1.90 cm Mya Hollingshed who scored 21 points and grabbed 15 rebounds. She is an American citizen but was recently naturalized by the Puerto Rico NF upon approval by FIBA. After their surprising win over Bosnia and Herzegovina they came back to earth as the USA handed them a 106-42 beatdown in their second game. The Americans jumped to a 54-21 half time lead as the Islanders shot 21% from the field and went 4-24 on 3 point attempts. Both stars in Guirantes and Hollingshed were held in check by the Americans defence as Hollingshed only managed 10 points with Guirantes even lower with just 7 points.

Puerto Rico came very close to another huge upset by taking Belgium to the last minute of the game before losing 68-65. They employed a very smart game plan by playing a very aggressive and compact defence plus cutting off passing lanes that Belgium always uses so effectively. In this loss

Guirantes was terrific for Puerto Rico in scoring 27 points, securing 10 rebounds, and adding 4 assists. In their 4th game China was just too big as the Asians cruised home with a 35 point win. Puerto Rico shot very poorly from the 3-point line (4-15), and China controlled Guirantes (12 points) and Hollingshed (11 points) with only the 18-year-old Trinity San Antonia able to penetrate the Chinese defence for 19 points. An important WC record was set by China in this game by having 41 assists for 41 field goals. In a do or die game with the winner moving on to the ¼ finals and the loser going home Puerto Rico played a fine game in defeating the South Korea 92-73. They were able to comfortably win this game due to 2 outstanding performances by Hollingshed who shredded the Asians with 29 points and 12 rebounds backed up by Guirantes who scored 18 points, 5 rebounds, and 5 assists. O'Neill and Quinones also assisted in this historic win by scoring 15 points apiece as the Islanders made the quarter finals for the first time ever. The chance for Puerto Rico to pull an upset against Canada in the quarter finals went awry in the 1st period as they finished the first 10 minutes behind 26-11. The rest of the game they played Canada almost equal even winning the 3rd period 19-16 and only losing the 4th period 18-19. They shot again poorly going 35.8% overall, 4-19 on threes, and 8-13 from the free throw line. Guirantes led the way with 19 points and 7 rebounds with the 18-year-old San Antonio adding 16 points on a 7-10 shooting night. Sadly, Hollingshed was way below par in this game as she only could manage 3 points on a 1-9 shooting night even though she did grab 12 rebounds. In conclusion Puerto had a historic finish in Sydney but will they make the 2024 Paris Olympic Games?

JAPAN

9th PLACE (1-4)

Head Coach: Onzuka Toru (JPN)

Average age: 25

Average height: 177cm/5'10"

PREPARATION

Japan finished 2nd at the World Cup Qualifying Tournament in Osaka, Japan. Their preparation began on the 18th of May with 15 players in Tokyo. They went on tour to Australia for two weeks from the 21st of May where they held their first training camp. On the 24th of May, they scrimmaged a young Australian National Team, before playing a televised 3 x game series (W, W, L). They returned to Japan for their second training camp and the Mitsu Fudosan Cup 2022 in Chiba, which included two games against Turkey (W, W). Japan's third camp began in August where they played Latvia on the 11th and 12th (W, W). Japan then flew to Australia, playing Belgium on the 16th of September (W). and France two days later (W) to finalise their preparation.

STYLE

Off the back of their silver medal performance in Tokyo last year, Japan were able to convincingly prove their pace, ball movement, spacing and perimeter game was enough to compete against bigger and more traditional opposition. Coming into this tournament however, they were under a new coach and were without two key players, Rui Machida and Saki Hayashi, which seemed to significantly impact their ability to execute this same style of play.

With the return of Ramu Tokashiki, Japan introduced more ball screens which included double drag screens, early punch (step-up) and middle on-ball screens. This was effective on the pick and pop, however they found

issue if teams switched or hedged to be able to deliver the ball through taller defenders to the rolling post. They utilised their 5 out positioning to back door cut or flare screen, and executed Iverson cuts, stagger screens and elevator actions within the half court. Japan continued to prioritise their transition game, looking for early 3's where possible.

Defensively, they predominantly played man to man defence and extended full court where possible. They had a multitude of defensive schemes; full denial, trapping the low post, jamming on high on-ball screens, and switching hand offs. Their swarming full court defence had them looking for early trapping opportunities on the ball carrier. They mixed in 2-2-1 and 1-2-2 presses after foul shots and timeouts, falling back into man to man or an active 2-3 zone.

KEY PLAYERS

MAKI TAKADA	9.4 PPG	4.2 RPG	
HIMAWARI AKAHO	7.6 PPG	5.0 RPG	
SAORI MIYAZAKI	7.0 PPG	2.0 RPG	5.2

IMPRESSIONS

The surprise omission of WNBA player Rui Machida and injury to sharp-shooter Saki Hayashi (along with their other personnel changes) seemed to impact Japan's performance significantly. Their relentless and tenacious defence and offensive aggression and shooting from Tokyo was absent for the most part in Sydney.

Their first game was solid and a convincing against Mali, shooting 43% from the 3pt line which ended up being their only game shooting above 24% for the tournament from this position. It was a different story against Serbia, scoring only 9 points in the opening quarter. After pegging it back through disruptive defensive changes and transition baskets, they were still unable to execute successfully enough against a smothering Serbia. They were

unconvincing in their 3rd pool game, with only captain Maki Takada finishing in double figures with 11 points. They found themselves down 16 points after the first half but didn't have enough scoring punch to make a dint. Japan put up the same number of shots as Canada, however half of Japan's were 3 pointers at 17.1% which ended up being the difference. They unfortunately continued with their shooting slump into their next game against France, managing only 5 points in the first quarter. Saori Miyazaki was solid finishing with 13 points, 5 rebounds and 4 assists, causing problems for France facilitating off middle on-ball screens. However, she didn't receive much support from her teammates, and they lost by 14 points to a side they beat twice last year in Tokyo. This loss determined their fate and removed any chance of them advancing further into the tournament. Their final game was against the host nation which was a tough ask considering their form. There were 13 lead changes by half time, with Japan showing some promising signs with the return of their tenacious defence and forcing Australia into numerous shot clock violations. However, the Aussies dominated the boards and adjusted their gap and hand pressure, forcing Japan to concede a 16 point loss.

The telling tale for this Japanese team was they were a 20 point less team per game than Tokyo last year. It's difficult to predict if the play making abilities of Machida and shooting prowess of Hayashi would have elevated the group to a different level. Whatever the case may be, Japan no doubt will be disappointed with the result and will work efficiently to try to restore their success in a hurry.

KOREA

10th PLACE (0-6)
Average age: 26

Head Coach: Jung Sunmin (KOR)
Average height: 178cm/5'10"

PREPARATION

Korea have been in 16 consecutive Women's World Cup since 1964. They qualified by finishing 3rd in their group in Belgrade Serbia, pipping Brazil by 2pts. 15 players attended their first training camp on 1st August at Jincheon National Training Centre in North Chungcheong, with a late omission of Jisu Park for medical reasons. They selected their final 12 players after two practice games against Latvia (W, W) on the 18th and 19th of August, before travelling to Australia on the 18th of September.

STYLE

With their main centre Jisu Park missing from the tournament, Korea had to significantly adjust their focus and reduce their use of on-ball screens whilst increasing their commitment to rebounding. They relied heavily on their perimeter shooting, even to the point of equally the highest 3-point attempts for the tournament and preferred a transition style offence rather than settling into half court execution.

Offensively, Korea favoured 5 out spacing, with constant exchange cuts and turn-outs for shooters on the weakside of the floor. They utilised DHO's on the perimeter, working to create driving opportunities to kick out to shooters like Leeseul Kang and Hyejin Park. There were glimpses of Horns action and 4 out 1 in, however this was only run when the opposition was of similar size. Their transition offence was loosely influenced to clear out the ball side

runner to a weakside corner cut. This was advantageous at times to get an early 3pt shot in the corner or to cause a close out for dribble penetration. Jihyun Park heavily dictated their pace by consistently pushing the ball, often instigating transition by busting out after getting a defensive rebound.

Defensively, Korea primarily played half court man to man defence. If they weren't switching guards, they locked and trailed shooters, using their speed to stay attached. However, for 5 out of their 6 games they were significantly undersized, so they combatted this by trapping and zoning to disrupt the low post. Their endeavour was admirable however their help and rotations were impacted by their lack of size, often resulting in fouls or giving up uncontested baskets in the key.

KEY PLAYERS

LEESEUL KANG	17.2 PPG	2.8 RPG	1.6 APG
JIHYUN PARK	12.8 PPG	3.4 RPG	2.8 APG
HYEJIN PARK	12.4 PPG	2.8 RPG	3.5

IMPRESSIONS

Korea arrived in Sydney without their leading scorer and rebounder in Jisu Park. Her omission as their only tall post player, proved to have an obvious impact on the team's ability to compete against size, with the team finishing with the lowest rebounds for the tournament. Leesuel Kang, Jihyn Park and Hyejin Park were consistent and notable contributors, but Korea weren't equipped with enough depth past these three to make up for the absence of Jisu. They played China in their first game, this being the first time the two countries have met each other at a World Cup in 32 years. Korea struggled to get away any uncontested shots, only scoring 44 points for the game. Jihyun Park was impressive on their first outing, and the only player reaching double figures with 14 points. China were too big, doubling Korea's rebound count (58-29) and coming away with a 63-point win. They improved on their

next performance, however, didn't have enough scoring contributors against a sharp-shooting Belgium team.

Game 3 against Bosnia and Herzegovina proved to be the game of the tournament for Korea. Both teams started strong, but Korea were able to pile on 54 points in the 2nd half to come away with a convincing 33-point win. Leeseul Kang was an absolute stand out, finishing with 37 points, 7 made 3 pointers, 8 rebounds and 5 assists. Kang's performance surpassed Liz Cambage's efficiency record with an incredible 44+ and caused Korea to snap an 11-game losing streak at a World Cup event stretching back 12 years. The high of that game didn't last for long, as they faced the reigning World Champions in the USA. Korea had limited options to counter the size and scoring power of the American's, giving up a monumental 94 points in the paint and a record breaking highest final score of 145. They entered their last pool game against Puerto Rico, with the result determining who advanced to the quarter finals. With a dismal start and only scoring 10 points in the first quarter, Korea struggled to demonstrate the intensity or urgency that usually accompanies such a critical game. Somewhat surprisingly also, was Korea made limited adjustments to try to slow the blistering momentum of Puerto Rico, who were able to hold their 20-point lead throughout the second half.

Jisu Park and the team's reliance on her clearly left a dint in this national team, but there should be some excitement around the rising of 22-year-old Jihyun Park who finished the tournament with an impressive 12.8 points, 3.4 rebounds and 2.8 assists per game.

MALI

11 th PLACE (0-5)	Head Coach: Brizuela Carrion Joaquin (ESP)
Average age: 24	Average height: 183cm/6'0"

PREPARATION

This is Mali's first World Cup appearance since 2010 in the Czech Republic. They lost all their qualification games in Belgrade but were awarded a position in the tournament when Nigeria withdrew in June 2022 due to a political decision by the Nigerian government.

It was a very complicated training period for them when not every player was available for their summer training camp in Bamako commencing 22 July. They flew to Sydney on September 12 and played Puerto Rico the next day and lost. They played Canada on September 15 losing again and ended their 3 game preparation series by losing to Bosnia and Herzegovina 91-66.

STYLE

Mali had a very difficult time scoring as was shown by them being the tournaments poorest shooting team overall at only 31.9%, last also in free throw shooting at 68.5%, next to last on 3-point shooting at 26%, and 11th in scoring at 61.2%. They showed lots of competitiveness and played hard for 40 minutes, which led others to know they were not an easy out. They were very unlucky in the draw by being placed in the so called "group of death" with Japan, Australia, France, Serbia, and Canada. They mostly used a 4 out and I in with a strong focus on trying to get their star, Sika Kone (led Mali to a 4th place finish in the 2021 FIBA U19 WC) as many touches as possible. They would constantly try and reverse the ball as fast as possible to hit Kone in a nice low post position. Some of the offensive actions that were observed

included a UCLA cut that would end with a side pick and roll with Kone rolling into the post area, some base line screens for corner shooters coming from the weak side, screen the screener action, and lots of curling action off pin down screens. They did not have much structure on offense which contributed to the 3rd worst team in committing turnovers per game (15.0). They mostly played an aggressive man to man defence but gambled way too much which gave their opponents too many easy baskets and led to lots of foolish fouls. On ball screens they used a variety of techniques with “under” used quite often. They also would use the “ice” technique at times.

KEY PLAYERS

SIKA KONE	12.0 PPG	11.8 RPG	2.4 APG
DJENEBA N'DIAYE	11.6 PPG	5.8 RPG	1.6 APG
MAIMOUNA HAIDARA	5 PPG	5.4 RPG	2.4 APG

IMPRESSIONS

They began their participation with an 89-56 loss to Olympic silver medallist Japan. They shot a terrible 25.6% from the field, went a poor 6-31 from the 3-point line, and with Japan making 16 triples Mali had no chance after a half time score of 47-29. Djeneba N'Diaye, the 1.63m PG scored 13 points with Sika Cone, their highly regarded star scoring 10 points with 14 big rebounds. They were completely outclassed by Australia in their second game losing 118-59 as shooting woes continued (28.2% overall, 10-37 on 3's, and 8-17 from the free throw line). N'Diaye again played well with 15 points with Kone being harassed by the Aussies into a 9 point and 6 rebound night. Mali started off well against France by winning the 1st period 21-17 but fell apart after that in losing the last 3 periods on the way to a 74-59 loss. The only good news from this game was the fine play of Kone who had 18 points and 18 rebounds.

Mali was competitive against Serbia and was losing only 43-39 after the first 20 minutes. However, Serbia went on a 19-11 3rd period to defeat the Africans 81-68. Kone had another outstanding game with 13 points and 11 rebounds but a poor 6-23 three-point shooting night by her team did not help. Mali

ended their participation in the WC with a 5th consecutive loss to Canada 88-65. The Canadians started strong with a 33-16 lead after 10 minutes, but Mali did play them equal for the rest of the game even winning the 2nd half 36-35. Shooting again was a major problem along with 17 turnovers. Kone ended her respectable play in the WC with a double-double of 10 points and 10 rebounds. Mali was a team of some very promising young players with Kone only 20 years of age, Kamite Dabou at only 17 years of age, Maimouna Haidara at only 18 years of age, and Alima Dembele at 22 years of age. They have a chance to be back at the 2026 World Cup if serious work is done.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

12th PLACE (0-5)
Average age: 26

Head Coach: Lojo Goran (BIH)
Average height: 182cm/6'0"

PREPARATION

Bosnia and Herzegovina qualified for the World Cup after Belarus withdrew from the Qualifying tournament. They commenced their preparation by travelling to the Apenine Peninsula in Italy in early August with a squad of 16. They trained for two days before playing friendly games against two NCAA and 3 international club teams from Germany and Italy. They won 3 and lost 2 before returning to Sarajevo to play two practice games against Portugal on the 17th and 18th of August. (U/K results.) They travelled to Marseille, France the next day, before playing two games against France. (U/K, L). They returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina for their final training camp in Vlasice on the 28th of August. After arriving in Sydney on the 11th of September, they played their final practice game against Mali on the 16th of September (W). Their final roster was complete upon the arrival of Jonquel JONES from the WNBA the day before competition commenced.

STYLE

Bosnia and Herzegovina designed most of their offensive structure towards WNBA star Jonquel Jones. Her addition into this team not only brought star power and points but provided a clear focal point for opposition teams to

target. Their style of play varied from game to game, however they were more inclined to play within the half court than push out in transition.

Offensively they frequently started with an 'Iverson cut' across the elbow, Horns set, or early drag or punch (step up) screens. Jones would often start or very quickly get to the low block, however teams understandably adjusted by congesting this area. This in turn caused difficulty getting her the ball, resulting in a deflection or turnover, or players remaining stagnant waiting for the pass. Their inside-outside game was good at times, however shooting 26.4% from the 3pt line wasn't enough to force teams to respect the kick out. They couldn't deliver consistent or enough scoreboard pressure, which certainly put pressure on their defence at the other end.

Defensively, Bosnia and Herzegovina predominantly played man to man, extending full court after foul shots and moving into a 2-3 zone when momentum was with the opposition. Changes to their scout included switching, gapping hand-offs (one man removed), hard showing against on-ball screens, and going under screens. They consistently had break downs however on close outs which effected their rotations off the ball. Matea Tavic and Nikolina Elez worked hard to create pressure, however the team as a collective were unable to generate enough steals or deflections to impact the scoring ability of their opposition.

KEY PLAYERS

JONQUEL JONES	13.6 PPG	8.8 RPG	2.0 APG
NIKOLINA ELEZ	9.6 PPG	4.8 RPG	1.8 APG
MATEA TAVIC	8.8 PPG	2.2 RPG	2.6 APG

IMPRESSIONS

Bosnia and Herzegovina appear to have some work to do in terms of chemistry and cohesiveness. With Jonquel Jones arriving from the WNBA only the day before competition started, it was anticipated it may take a bit of time to gel. However, unlike most other teams, their performance

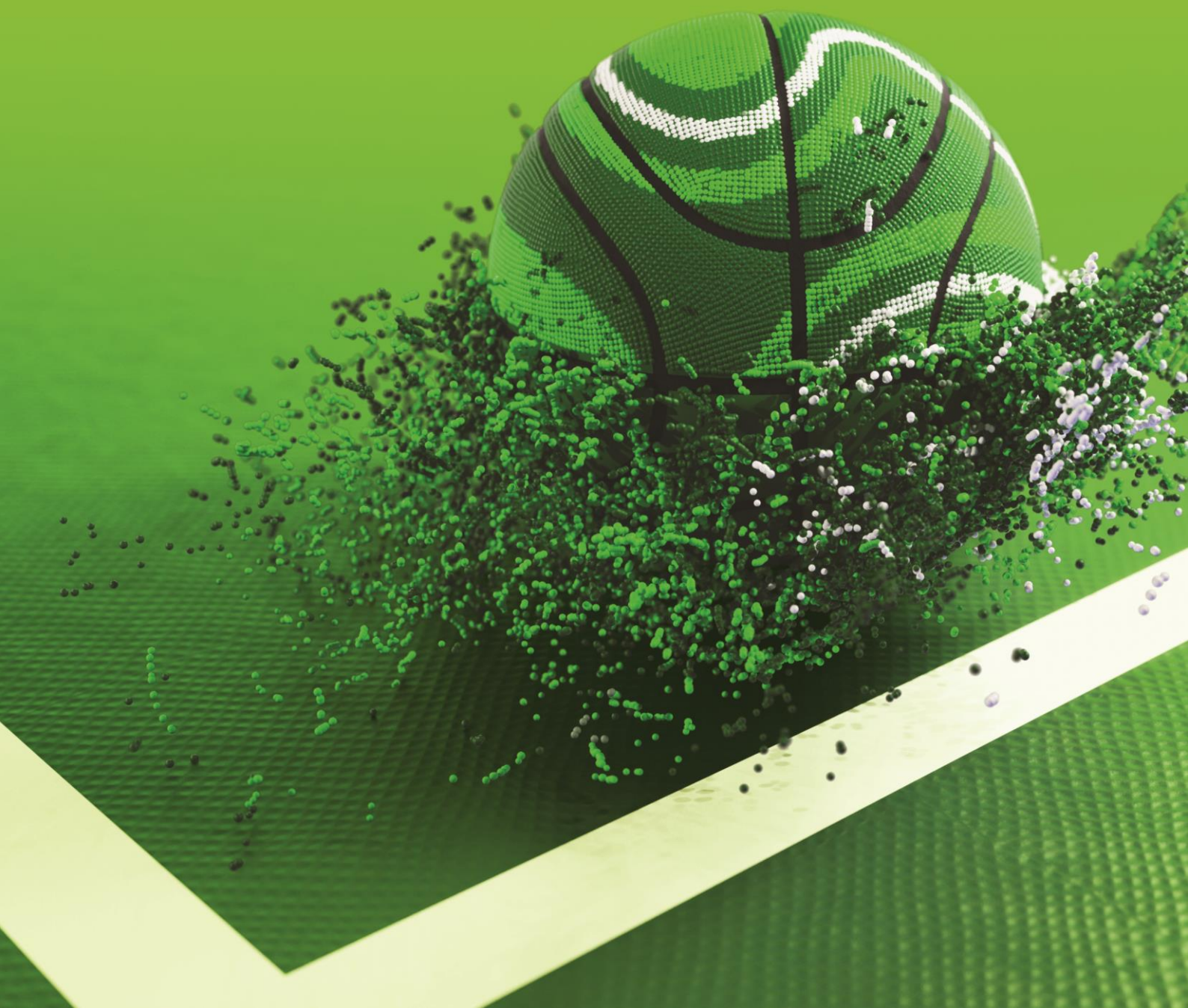
throughout the tournament did not seem to improve or evolve after each game.

They opened their tournament against a rejuvenated Puerto Rican team, who set the tone early with a huge scoring first quarter. Jones (15 points) was supported well by Miljana Dzombeta (11 points), but they had no answer for Puerto Rico's transition and repeated efforts on the boards. They backed up the next day to a disciplined and relentless Chinese team, which was the first time the nations have ever met at a World Cup. Bosnia and Herzegovina found it difficult to initiate their offensive structure against the pressure, often getting pushed into a late shot clock possession or violation. They weren't able to score enough points to be competitive, losing by 47 points; with only 20 of them coming in the second half. They were able to move a bit more freely against Korea, however, were unable to influence the ball movement and penetration of their opposition, losing 66-99. They added another 21 turnovers to their tally, which eventually landed them as the highest team in this stat line for the tournament. Tavic was an inspiration with her mid-range game against Belgium, finishing with 13 points, 4 rebounds and 3 steals. She was well supported by Elez and Nikolina Knezevic, however a team shooting effort of 17.6% from the 3pt line was not enough against a deep and experienced Belgium team. Bosnia and Herzegovina found themselves moving into their last game of the tournament, lacking consistency and coming up against a USA outfit who had a clear scout for Jones. Nikolina Elez didn't take a step back and had a stellar game with 19 points and 4 rebounds and was the highlight for their group in what was another huge loss, 59-121.

This team scored the least number of points for the tournament and returned home with plenty of elements to improve on. To continue building around the foundations of Jones, Elez, Tavic and Knezevic would see an increase in their depth and a point of difference to other teams, as this was absent for the most part. More opportunities to play together and focus of developing a clear identity would certainly benefit this group moving forward.

02

ALL STAR 5



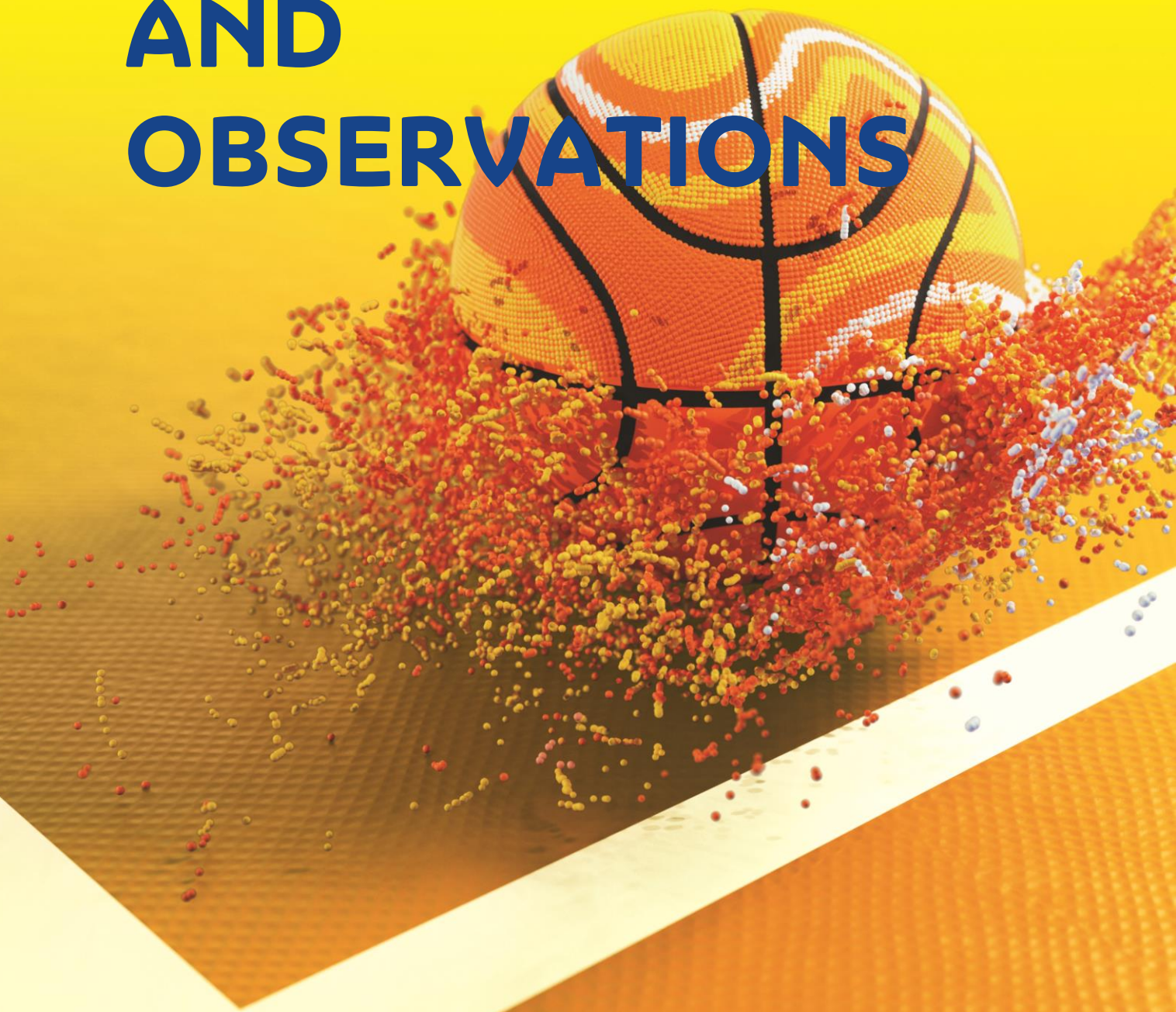
ALL-STAR 5 OF THE FIBA 2022 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

A'JA WILSON - MVP	USA
BREANNA STEWART	USA
HAN XU	CHN
STEPHANIE TALBOT	AUS
BRIGGET CARLETON	CAN



03

**GENERAL
COACHING TRENDS
AND
OBSERVATIONS**



This FIBA 2022 Women's World cup was conducted around 12 months after the Tokyo 2020 Olympics which, due to the Covid pandemic, was held in July/August 2021. Of the 12 Nations which competed at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics 10 of these also competed at the FIBA 2022 Women's World Cup tournament, USA, China, Australia, Canada, France, Serbia, Belgium, Puerto Rico, Japan, and Korea.

Of these 10 competing teams, with the exception of China, 9 teams had a substantial turnover of players from the Tokyo Olympics. These included USA (7), Australia (5), Canada (5), France (6), Serbia (6), Belgium (6), Puerto Rico (7), Japan (5) and Korea (5). China had a turnover of 2 players. In addition to player turnover from the Tokyo Olympics France, Canada, Belgium, USA, Japan, and China all had new Head Coaches.

Considering the significant turnover of players and Coaches from the Tokyo Olympics and the shorter than usual preparation time available between the Tokyo Olympics and this World Cup of around 12 months instead of 2 years Coaches did a commendable job preparing Teams.

Throughout the tournament it was noticeable that Coaches were prepared to allow larger scoring "runs" than for previous international tournaments before intervening with a time-out or substitution.

Managing late shot clock, end of quarter and end of game situations was a challenge for most teams. In these situations, consistent recognition of the "go to" player seemed unclear as was clarity around strategies to counter defensive adjustments.

Overall, Coaches organised offensive systems and defensive systems/schemes well suited to team personnel and implementation of these depending upon game circumstances was sound. Throughout the tournament Coaches made appropriate adjustments to these and adjusted tactics and strategies as required.

Coaches effectively combined appropriate playing combinations according to different teams and game requirements and were prepared

to be flexible and explore a variety of different combinations to find suitable solutions for offensive and defensive challenges.

The depth of players playing standards, general understanding of game strategies, tactics and principles of play was sound with most teams using at least 9 players in games with Coaches being prepared to continue this trend throughout all games in the tournament.

Early in the tournament organisation against full court pressure, both man to man and zone trapping defences, was not sound particularly having a secondary option to counter the defensive pressure taking away the first option. This progressed somewhat throughout the tournament.

Managing roles and expectations of players in "All-Star" National teams is an ongoing challenge for Coaches. Considering the substantial turnover of players and Coaches it appeared that, for the most part, players roles and expectations were managed well and as would be expected, teams which had playing personnel who had been together for previous campaigns and who had relatively longer programs of preparation had strategies in place to effectively manage these.

Overall, Coaches proudly represented their Nations with honour and dignity, respected the opposition Players and Coaches, brought credit to our wonderful game and made a significant positive contribution to the success of the FIBA 2022 Women's World Cup in Sydney Australia.

04

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS



As mentioned previously, for the group games two venues were used and having a team of three scouts enabled a detailed coverage of all games for not only the group stage games but also the quarter finals, semi-finals, and medal play-off games. At our daily meetings throughout the tournament our gained information, insights and observations were shared and collectively analysed and compared. These daily meetings and having three scouts also allowed for a systematic and comprehensive level of observations and in-depth level of comparative insights and analysis.

Many thanks to the FIBA and Local Organizing Committee staff for their greatly appreciated support, assistance and most welcoming approach which significantly enabled us to complete our work.

Our sincere thanks to FIBA Secretary General Andreas Zagklis and FIBA Director of Sport and National Federations Zoran Radovic for their much-appreciated support and guidance and for providing this valued opportunity to make a contribution for FIBA.

It has been an honour, privilege, and joy for us to have been able to work together as a scouting team and we all gratefully appreciate the opportunity to have been able to contribute to the FIBA 2022 Women's Basketball World Cup.

