

32nd AEFCA Symposium
Football Development * Today & Tomorrow

FIFA Women's World Cup Germany 2011™ Technical and tactical analysis

Vera Pauw
FIFA Technical Study Group

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.

Introduction FIFA WWC 2011 - Germany

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

Video clip



FIFA WWC '11 Awards

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.

Final Tournament Standings



Winner: Japan
Runners-Up: USA
Third: Sweden
Fourth: France

adidas Golden Ball



1: Homare SAWA (JPN)
2: Abby WAMBACH (USA)
3: Hope SOLO (USA)

FIFA Fair Play award



● Japan (JPN)

adidas Golden Glove



Hope SOLO (USA)

adidas Golden Boot



1: Homare SAWA (JPN)
2: MARTA (BRA)
3: Abby WAMBACH (USA)

Hyundai Best Young Player



Caitlin FOORD (AUS)

Most important Stats

FIFA WWC 2011 Germany



Goals scored:	86
Average/Game:	2,69 (WWC'07: 3,5)
Actual playing time:	57'27" (WC'10 South-Africa: 54'04")

Attendance:	845,711
Opening game:	73,680
Average/Game:	26,428 (#25 - #32: 31,008)

One media stat: The final match between Japan and the United States broke the record for most tweets per second on Twitter: 7,196

Technical and Tactical Analysis

General

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ The women's game has developed to a world-class event.
- ✓ The gap between the top nations - 1/4 finalists- and the rest of the starting field is closing.
- ✓ The difference between the teams is shown in the rate of teamwork: effective choices and efficiency of acting of the players within their tasks defensively & in attack.
- ✓ From the 1/4-finals onwards a base of a superiority of individual qualities appeared not to be enough any more.



Playing Styles & Team Strategies

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

Play making strategy:

✓ **Building up with patience**

(Brazil, Canada, England, USA, Germany, Korea DPR, Nigeria, Mexico, Colombia)

✓ **Both high pace and -when opposition was organized- patience with sudden high pace**

(Germany, England, Canada, France, Japan, Australia)

✓ **High pace in build up, not giving the opponents any time to control** (France, Japan, Australia)

✓ **Constructive, high pace play alternated with long, but aimed, passes to the strikers** (Sweden).

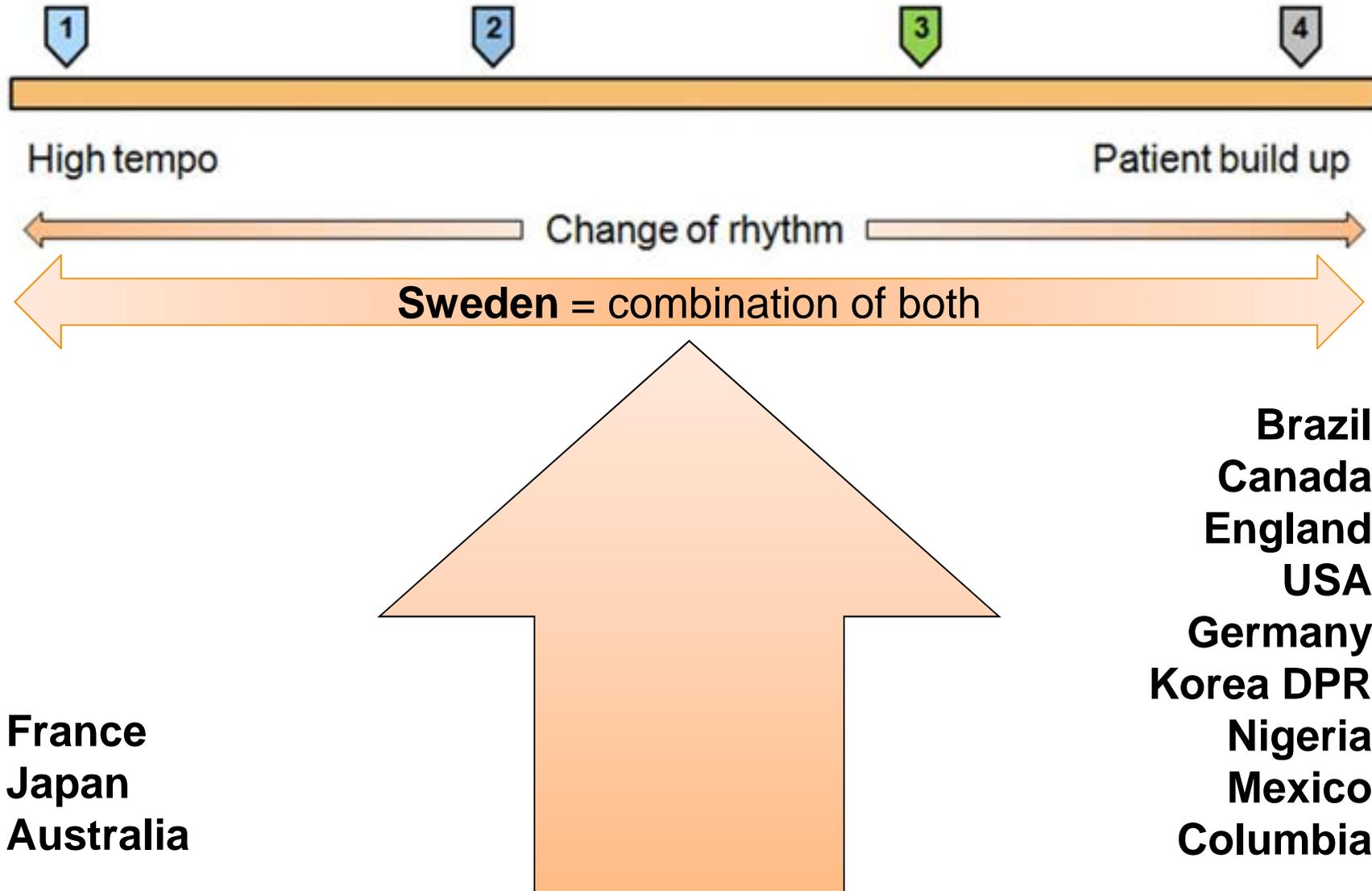
Opportunistic, direct playing strategy:

✓ **long balls to get to the goal of the opponent as quick as possible** (Norway, Equatorial Guinea, New Zealand).

Play making strategy

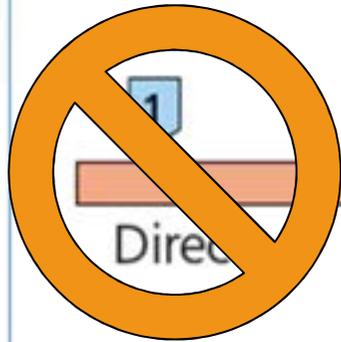
FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.



Opportunistic Playing Styles

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.



Norway
Equatorial Guinea
New Zealand



CONCLUSION

Playing Styles & Team Strategies

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ The play making strategy appears to become the most successful strategy.
Within this strategy teams find the style which suits the players & football culture of the country
- ✓ Using the opportunistic playing style, long balls with fighting for the 2nd ball, appeared to be not an effective strategy for the future any more.



Team Organisations

A variety of team organisations have been used:

- ✓ **4-2-3-1** (*one target player far away and three attacking midfielders moving*): **France, England, Norway**
- ✓ **4-2-3-1** (*attacking midfielder & striker alternate roles constantly*): **Germany**
- ✓ **4-3-3** (*3 clear strikers*): **Canada**
- ✓ **4-4-2** (*two sitters in midfield*): **Japan, USA, Columbia, Sweden, Korea DPR, Australia**
- ✓ **4-4-2** (*diamond in midfield*): **Equatorial Guinea, New Zealand**
- ✓ **4-4-1-1** (*strikers behind each other*): **Nigeria**
- ✓ **3-4-3** (*sweeper*): **Brazil**
- ✓ Different team organisations (**4-2-3-1/4-3-3/4-1-4-1**): **Mexico**
(*They showed a rate of maturity in this adaptation of different systems of play.*)

Team Organisation

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.

France
England
Norway
+
Germany



4:2:3:1

Team Organisation

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.

Canada
Nigeria
Brazil



4:3:3

4:4:1:1

3:4:3

Team Organisation

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

Equatorial Guinea
New Zealand

4:4:2

* diamond shape



Team Organisation

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

Japan

USA

Colombia

Sweden

Korea DPR

Australia

* 2 sitting
midfielders



4:4:2

Team Organisation

Finalists Japan & USA

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

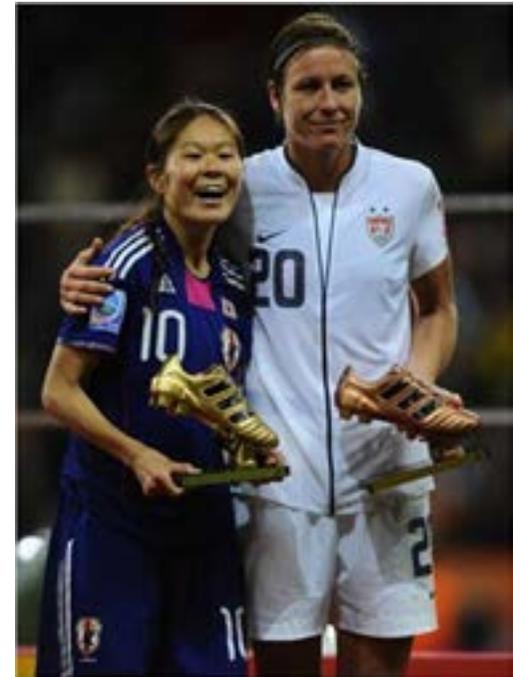
Both **Japan** & **USA** were playing 4-4-2.

Japan

- ✓ Played a **very flexible** 4-4-2 system
- ✓ Players continuously in movement to play with their opponent, pulling gaps for others to dive in.

USA

- ✓ Played a **more fixed** 4-4-2 system
- ✓ The two strikers stayed both upfront as target players, far away from the defensive block.



CONCLUSION

Team Organisations

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ A range of team organisations is used
- ✓ The **knowledge** of the players how to **solve football situations** at the top level has improved dramatically as a result of the better balanced team organisations.
- ✓ The best teams used:
 - a balanced team organisation as a **tool** to dominate
 - **high level of teamwork** both defensively as attacking
 - an **aggressive execution** of the players



Defending General

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ A well-balanced defensive team organisation with a developed sense of positioning in relation to the **opponent, each other, the part of the pitch and the moment in the game.**
- ✓ When the ball is lost every team immediately **presses the ball.**
- ✓ There was a difference in the **execution defensively** between the best teams and rest of the field (USA, Japan, France, Sweden + to be mentioned Germany)



Defending best teams

Japan, USA
Sweden, France + Germany

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

Team Tasks: Disturbing the build up / Prevent from scoring

Defensive Team Organisation

- ✓ Capable to move their defensive block of 30-30 meters up and down the pitch without losing the balance or lengthening the internal distances between the players.
- ✓ They all have a goalkeeper who plays as a libero behind the defence when the defensive block was high up the pitch. (esp. Hope Solo/USA)



Defending eliminated ¼- finalists

Germany, England,
Australia, Brazil



Team Tasks: Disturbing the build up / Prevent from scoring

Defensive Team Organisation

- ✓ Germany clear defensive block, but just occasionally put their defensive block high up the pitch
- ✓ England, Australia: struggled during ¼-final to keep the defensive block tight during the whole 90 minutes (although the final score was very close / England went out by penalty kicks).
- ✓ Brazil: defended 1v1 all over the pitch, picked up player in zone. Cover only by chance, when another player would be close

Brazil: 1v1 all over the pitch

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.



Cover by chance only. Solo decided to kick a few times as the build up became a problem because of man-marking.



Defending eliminated ¼- finalists

Germany, England,
Australia, Brazil



Team tasks: Disturbing the build up / Prevent from scoring

Defensive Team Organisation

- ✓ Germany clear defensive block, but just occasionally put their defensive block high up the pitch
- ✓ England, Australia: struggled during ¼-final to keep the defensive block tight during the whole 90 minutes (although the final score was very close / England went out by penalty kicks).
- ✓ Brazil: defended 1v1 all over the pitch, picked up player in zone. Cover only by chance, when another player would be close

Execution

- ✓ Germany could not press the opponent as they showed before
- ✓ The other teams lost their grip on the opponent at the final stages of the ¼ Finals.

Defending eliminated after Group Phase

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

Team tasks: Disturbing the build up / Prevent from scoring

Defensive Team Organisation

- ✓ Gaps in midfield, because:
 - striker ran out of the organisation to press
 - the space behind the defence became too big, so goalkeepers could not keep in touch with a defensive line
 - defenders had to drop to cover depth.



Transition to Defending

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ **All teams have a quick transition to defence and want to press the ball immediately**
- ✓ The best teams do this as a **unit**, earlier eliminated teams execute this more **individually**.
Therefore, in group phase less control:
 - **huge spaces in midfield**
 - **hardly counter attacks**



CONCLUSION

Defending

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ All teams have a **defensive strategy**
- ✓ The basic **defensive team organisation** has improved
- ✓ The most successful teams moved their tight defensive block as a **unit** over the pitch to shield/disturb the build up & prevent scoring at all times. **Internal distances** hardly changed.



Attacking General

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.



- ✓ All teams have improved their **knowledge of the demands** to build up & to create scoring chances
- ✓ **The difference between the teams:**
 - quality, pace and choice of passes in the build up
 - flexibility in changing positions while building up
 - individual class of the play makers of the teams
 - excellence in finishing

Attacking best teams

Japan, USA
Sweden, France

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

Team Tasks: Building Up & Scoring

- ✓ Most successful were the teams who:
 - could dominate by playing a high pace build up
 - combined it with great anticipation and sudden change of tempo after switched play or within the goalmouth area.
- ✓ **France, Japan:**
The most complete in their possessional play
(France could not show this high level of domination at the semi-finals & bronze medal game any more)
- ✓ **USA** controlled build up, powerful in the attacking 1/3 of the pitch
- ✓ **Sweden** was the only team who alternated direct, long passes to the striker(s) with a constructive build up from the back.

Attacking

Finalists Japan & USA

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

The two finalists **Japan** & **USA** made the difference in their attacking strategies.

Japan (World Champion):

- ✓ Principle is **“optimal teamwork”**
- ✓ Creating chances by occupying the positions without any restriction of movement.
- ✓ Players have the individual quality to recognize & react on any change of position on the pitch, so the opponent must adjust all the time.
- ✓ Every handling of the ball, positioning or the choice to stay away is related to each other
- ✓ Always balance of occupation
- ✓ They aim to create chances always (early stages final as exception)



Attacking

Finalists USA & Japan

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.

USA (the runner-up):

- ✓ in their attack they **grew from game to game**.
- ✓ Without losing patience, a **fast and direct build up** using many diagonal passes to open the game followed by aggressive, high pace attacks over the wings in order to cross the balls into the penalty box with strikers and midfielders diving into these crosses to score.

Remark:

Especially the attacking heading power of **Wambach** was extremely effective on crucial moments in the tournament
(against both Brazil -120+2'- and the opening header against France)



Crucial aerial power **Wambach** (USA)

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.



Attacking special remarks

**Brazil,
Mexico, Columbia
Nigeria**

FIFA
For the Game. For the World.



✓ **Brazil** most patience and slow build-up of all teams:

- They hardly lose the ball during the build up
- Their strikers get the time to position themselves well to create chances using their individual qualities.

Brazil were very close to qualify for the semi-finals, but exactly this aspect, the control over a high pace in the attack, made USA scoring in the last minute of the added time of extra time.

- ✓ **Mexico** and **Columbia** developed a creative attacking pattern over the recent years, which is promising for the future.
- ✓ The improvement of **Nigeria's** possessional play was caused by a much better balanced occupation of the pitch than they showed ever before.



Transition to attacking

Most teams tried to take advantage of the disorganisation of the opponent:

Group games

- ✓ not many counter attacks as in transition the play was happening in midfield (huge space caused by on a long pitch because of a lower rate of defensive team work of opposition/strikers running out individually).

Quarter finals onwards

- ✓ A complete different style was shown when the ball was won.
- ✓ High pace counter attacks, because the playing field was kept short by both teams (space only in transition).
- ✓ High pressure on the ball; the space was laying behind the defence.
- ✓ This added dimension of teamwork at the highest level increased the level of the games enormously

CONCLUSION

Attacking

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ Positional & Possessional play has improved dramatically.
- ✓ **Teamwork at the highest level increased the level of the games enormously.**
- ✓ **The control of the pace of the game** has become an important issue to have a build up that lead to scoring chances.
- ✓ The teams at the top level must find a solution to open the opponent's defence as:
 - the team organisation & knowledge of the defensive tasks have developed
 - all teams are extremely fit (overpowering does not happen any more)
- ✓ The opportunistic playing style is dying out

Goalkeeping at the WWC

General qualities

FIFA

For the Game. For the World.



Impressions of the FINALISTS' coaches

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

“Looking back at the game, there are some points of criticism. We were quite rigid at times and we didn’t always play our game. (...) There simply wasn’t enough space to play passes.”

Norio Sasaki, Japan coach



“Playing in the final you have to take your chances, we weren’t sharp enough with the two goals conceded. That is why we didn’t win the game. (...) Japan are comfortable with the ball even when they are behind and that kind of thing is good for women’s football.”

Pia Sundhage, USA coach



FINAL CONCLUSION

FIFA®

For the Game. For the World.

- ✓ This tournament **proved** the vast development of the game to a **mature world top level women's sport, both on and off the pitch.**
- ✓ The successful teams excelled in their **flexible teamwork both defensively and in attack.**
- ✓ The development of the playing styles of the different teams is related to the culture of the country (where before 2007 most teams were trying to copy other teams). **This aspect became dominant in 2011.**

FUTURE challenge

- To improve the **domestic and international competition**, so that players do not meet this level of play only once every four years, but on regular base.
- The challenge should be picked up to get **the best teams** by the expansion of the tournament to 24 countries.

(Like in Volleyball, the last 8 places are for the best teams instead of divided "fairly" over the world, because this would bring down the level of the whole tournament.)

THANK YOU !!!

