

26.06.2018 Iceland 1 – 2 Croatia Match Analysis

Croatia were able to dominate possession (57%) by retaining control of the ball in the middle. They had 888 actions, 604 of which happened in the midfield areas. Iceland moved the ball to the front more quickly and even managed to outdo their opponents in actions close to the opposition goal (134 vs. 102).

Iceland also had more key passes (24 vs. 9) as well as shots (15 vs. 13). Their advantage in shots attempted from inside of the box was especially notable (11 vs. 3). However, Croatia were more careful with their chances, **with both of their shots on target resulting in goals.**

Iceland quickly advanced possession upfield and into the opposition half, finishing the game with just 62 non-attacking passes. When the team got the ball, the midfielders started to move forward at once. Even when a pass was unsuccessful or a challenge was lost in attack, they could get to a second ball. **Iceland had more recoveries than Croatia (72 vs. 64), and 40 of their recoveries were in the opposition half.**

Sigurðsson was the link between attack and defence. He moved between the lines, received 25 passes and was only involved in 8 challenges in attack. He was facing Badelj most frequently, winning 4 out of 6 challenges against him. **Sigurðsson played balls into spaces and made 26 passes to the final third.**

As the first wave of attack, Sigurðsson was dangerous with his passes to the right wing, as Pivarić was playing in an advanced position and was late to fall back to defence. **Over the course of the game, Croatia's left-back managed only 10 actions in defence and not once intercepted the ball.** On the wing, Finnbogason (14 actions on the right) or Guðmundsson received the ball then redirected it into the penalty area.

Sigurðsson and Bjarnason ran at the ball, with Gunnarsson supporting them from behind (19 actions in the final third). **As a result, 5 out of Iceland's 7 attacks with shots from open play came from the right flank.** Iceland had even more attacks through the left (25), but none of them led to shots.

After switching to a two-striker formation, Iceland increased pressure in the centre. **Sigurðarson won 67% of his challenges, and one of the attacks through the centre led to a penalty kick being awarded to Iceland, converted by Gylfi Sigurðsson.**

The biggest danger came from Iceland's set pieces (21 in the match, 7 with shots), which included throw-ins. The defenders were successful in challenges in offence (Magnússon – 9/6, Ingason – 5/3), and attempted 3 shots.

Before the half-time, Croatia did not bring many faces to attack. Modrić and Kovačić were positioned in front of Iceland's midfield line and focused on retaining possession in the middle. Kovačić made 81 accurate passes, but only 1 of them was directed into the box. The attacks were led by the three strikers, who concentrated in the centre. **In the first half, Croatia only had 4 shots, all from outside of the box.**

Early in the second half, the team moved their lines up the field, which created a numerical advantage for their players against Iceland's central midfielders. Badelj's runs through the centre were dangerous; **from the 45th to 60th minute, he had 24 actions, made 2 shots and scored a goal.**

After going one up, Croatia had more room for counter-attacks. **In the last 15 minutes of the game, they had 5 counter-attacks,** one of which, starting in a high area, resulted in the winning goal.