

## Using Performance Indicators from the World Cup to predict the Asia Cup winner.

The most obvious indicators of future success are the ability to score goals and not concede them. Figure 1 shows the results of the Asian teams at the 2018 World Cup for goals scored and attempts at goal in Open Play.

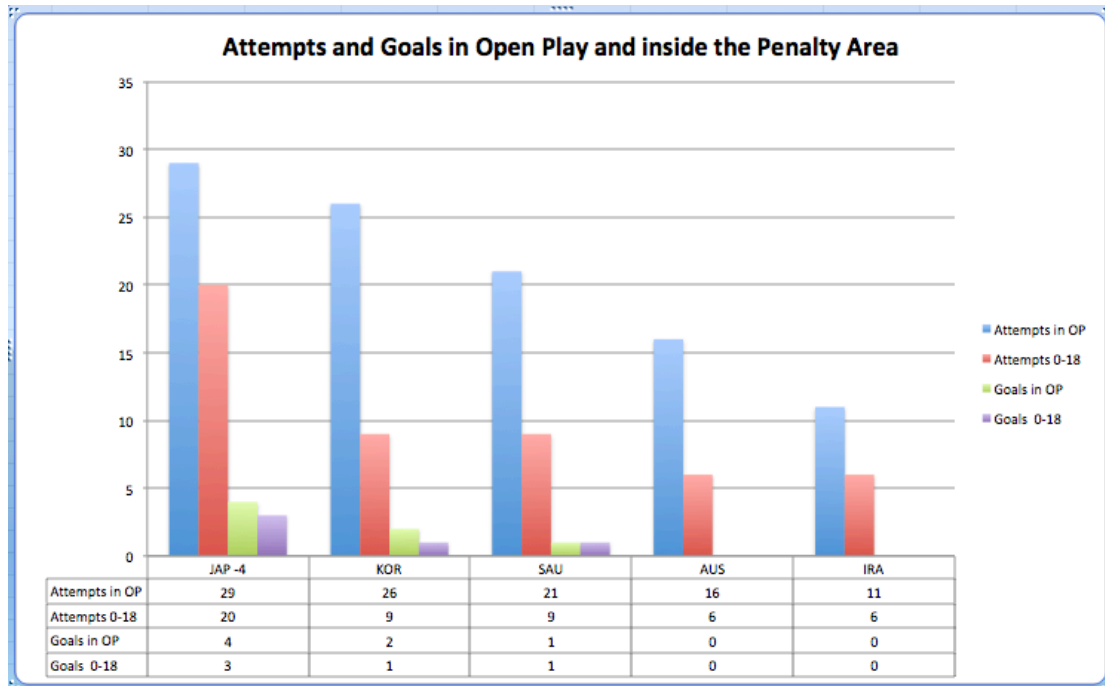


Figure 1. Goals and attempts at goal in Open Play by Asian teams at the 2018 World Cup.

The total of attempts at goal in Open Play is one indicator and Japan were the best of the Asian teams at the World Cup with 29 but they did play one more game than the other teams who failed to progress to the Round of 16. Japan were also the best at scoring goals (4), the best at scoring goals inside the penalty area (3) and the best at creating attempts at goal inside the penalty area (20). Figures 2 and 3 show the exact figures after three rounds and Japan and Korea were the best of the five teams, scoring two goals in Open Play, with Japan scoring two from Set Plays to Korea's one.

The reason I place so much emphasis on what happens inside the penalty area is that in all competitions the vast majority of goals in Open Play (80%+) are scored inside the penalty area.

By comparison and on a sliding scale, Korea were the next best followed by Saudi Arabia, who both scored at least one goal in Open Play. Australia and Iran were the worst Asian teams at the World Cup failing to score in Open Play and only created 6 attempts inside the penalty area in three matches.

It is more appropriate to compare the teams at the World Cup after three rounds and see where the Asian teams were at that stage compared with the more

successful teams. Figure 2 shows the number of attempts and goals after three rounds at the 2018 World Cup.

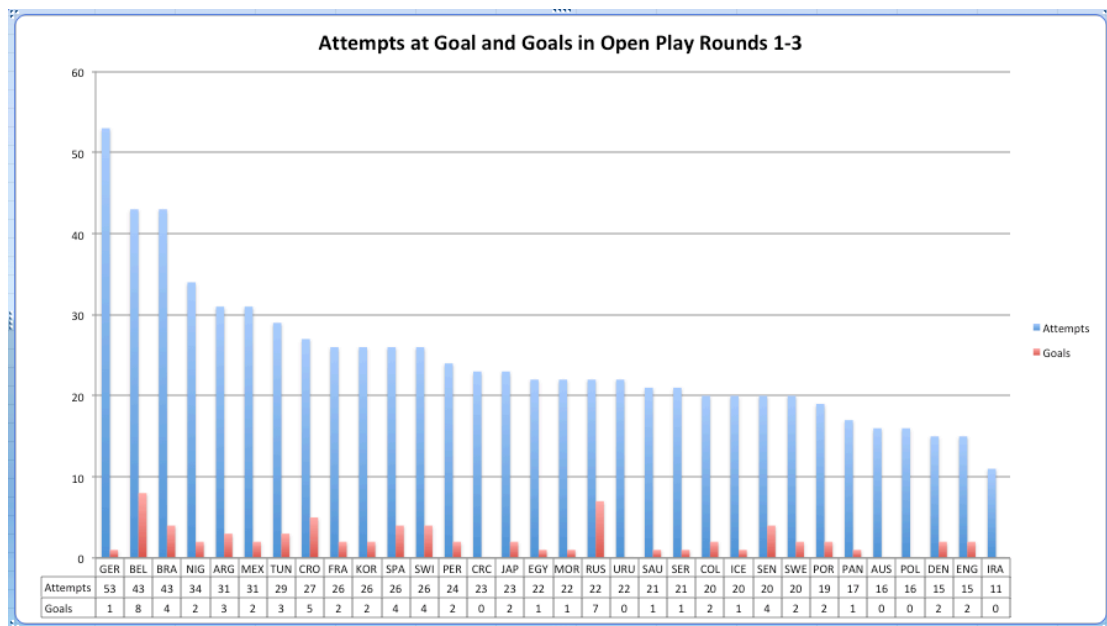


Figure 2. Attempts and goals after three rounds – World Cup 2018

It is worth noting that England who made the semi finals of the World Cup were the second worst team for attempts at goal in Open Play but they did score two goals along with six from Set Plays.

Figure 3 shows the attempts and goals at the World Cup after three rounds, from Set Plays where England was the best.

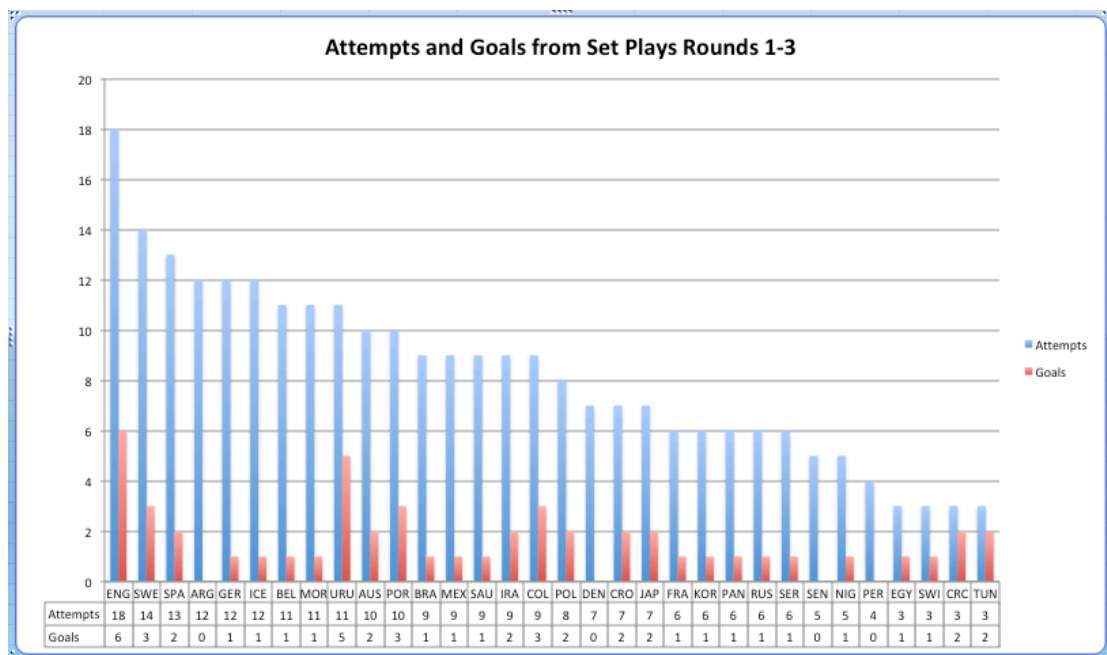


Figure 3. Attempts and goals from Set Plays after three rounds at the 2018 World Cup

### World Cup Set Plays

Australia, Iran and Japan were the best of the Asian teams with 10, 9 and 7 attempts respectively from Set Plays and 2 goals each, closely followed by Saudi and Korea with one goal from 9 and 6 attempts respectively.

### Favourites from the World Cup

Based on the World Cup data I would say Japan are the favourites, followed by Korea, then Saudi. The data would not support Australia or Iran as favourites to win the Asia Cup. However there will be changes in all squads and Australia has a new Head Coach (Graham Arnold) with an attacking mindset so Australia will be a different proposition.

After three rounds of the Asia Cup the attempts at goal and goals scored might provide an indication of who is on track to progress beyond the Round of 16 and which team may have the best chance of winning. Figure 4 shows the data for the opening three rounds.

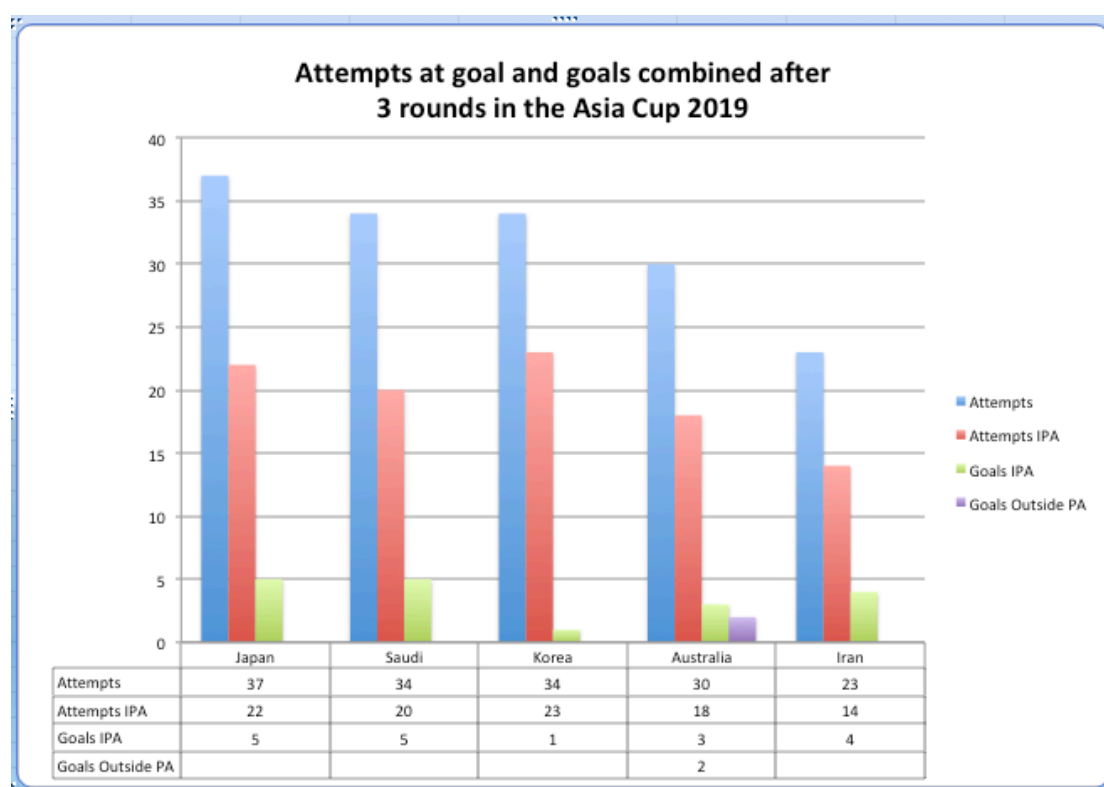


Figure 4. Attempts at goal and goals after three rounds of the Asia Cup

### Asia Cup Set Plays

Iran and Korea have scored three goals from Set Plays, while Australia and Saudi have scored one, Japan have not scored from a Set Play.

## **Predictions**

Based on the data from the World Cup and the performance of the teams after three rounds of the Asia Cup Japan are the favourites with 37 attempts in total, 22 from inside the penalty area and five goals in Open Play. Japan also played their third group match with a different set of outfield players.

Saudi and Korea are a close second with 34 attempts each, 20+ attempts from inside the penalty area but Saudi has scored 5 goals to Korea's 1 in Open Play. Korea also has their star striker Son from Tottenham for the remaining games.

Australia is just behind Korea and Saudi with a total of 30 attempts, 18 from inside the penalty area and 5 goals in Open Play. Australia played the opening three rounds without several injured players who may be available for selection in the latter stages

Iran has 23 attempts at goal with 14 from inside the penalty area and has scored 4 goals in Open Play. Based on the data Iran has less chance of winning the Asia Cup.

It will be interesting to see how the rest of the tournament unfolds and if the indicators I have used are any good for predicting the outcome of a tournament.

At the World Cup in 2018 three of the top four teams scored very high on the performance indicators I have used but France who won the World Cup were average on all of them.