



UEFA U16 DEVELOPMENT TOURNAMENT 2026

Technical Performance Report

identity - tactical behaviours - data insights - development focus



Scotland - Romania - Cyprus - Wales | February 2026

Prepared for UEFA Technical Observer

2026 U16 Development Tournament — Tournament Overview

TOTAL GOALS	AVG GOALS/MATCH	TOTAL XG	AVG PASS ACC	TOTAL SHOTS	AVG POSSESSION	PPDA RANGE
13	2.6	14.29	78.0%	109	49.7%	6.4–7.4
across 5 matches	per game	combined	all teams	all matches	mean balance	press intensity

The 2026 UEFA U16 Development Tournament brought together Scotland, Romania, Cyprus and Wales across five matches of event-level tracked football. 13 goals were scored in total (2.6 per match) with a combined xG of 14.29 — indicating broadly accurate conversion across the tournament. Scotland's controlled, possession-dominant style (59.2% average) stood in sharp contrast to Romania's direct, high-volume approach (43.5% possession, 15.0 shots/M). Average pass accuracy across all teams was 78.0%, with Scotland setting the benchmark at 82.4%. PPDA ranged from 6.37 (Romania — most aggressive pressing) to 7.35 (Cyprus — most passive).

1. Executive Summary

The 2026 U16 Development Tournament provided five matches of high-quality event-level data across Romania vs Cyprus, Wales vs Romania, Cyprus vs Scotland, Wales vs Scotland, and Romania vs Scotland. One fixture (Cyprus vs Wales) was absent from the extract. Scotland emerged as tournament winners with the highest goal tally (7), the most stable performance model ($CV=0.097$), and the best take-on success rate (75.6%). Romania generated the highest shot volume but the greatest xG underperformance (-1.77). Cyprus and Wales both struggled to convert possession into goals.

Scotland U16

Executive Summary



- ♦ 7 goals from 5.44 xG (+1.56 overperformance) — tournament winners
- ♦ Highest possession (59.2%) and pass accuracy (82.4%) — possession-dominant identity
- ♦ PPDA 6.64 — second-most aggressive pressing
- ♦ Balanced left/right chance creation; right side most exposed defensively (30.8%)

Romania U16

Executive Summary



- ♦ 5.77 xG but only 4 goals (-1.77 underperformance) — highest xG, lowest conversion
- ♦ Clear left-flank attacking identity driven by key passes (50% left)
- ♦ Most aggressive pressing (PPDA 6.37); lowest possession (43.5%)
- ♦ Left-side mirror vulnerability (61.1%) — same flank both attacking and exposed

Cyprus U16

Executive Summary



- ♦ 2 goals from 1.32 xG (+0.68 overperformance) despite lowest chance volume
- ♦ PPDA 7.35 — least aggressive pressing, deepest block
- ♦ 2.31 xG conceded per match — highest exposure rate despite balanced vulnerability

Wales U16

Executive Summary



- ♦ 0 goals from 1.76 xG (-1.76 underperformance) — tournament's most acute finishing problem
- ♦ Highest defensive workload: 36.0 clearances/M, 7.0 blocks/M
- ♦ Lowest box receptions (6.5/M) and hot zone passes (21.0/M) — struggled to create in final third
- ♦ Left side most exposed defensively (40.9%)

2. Tournament Summary Dashboard

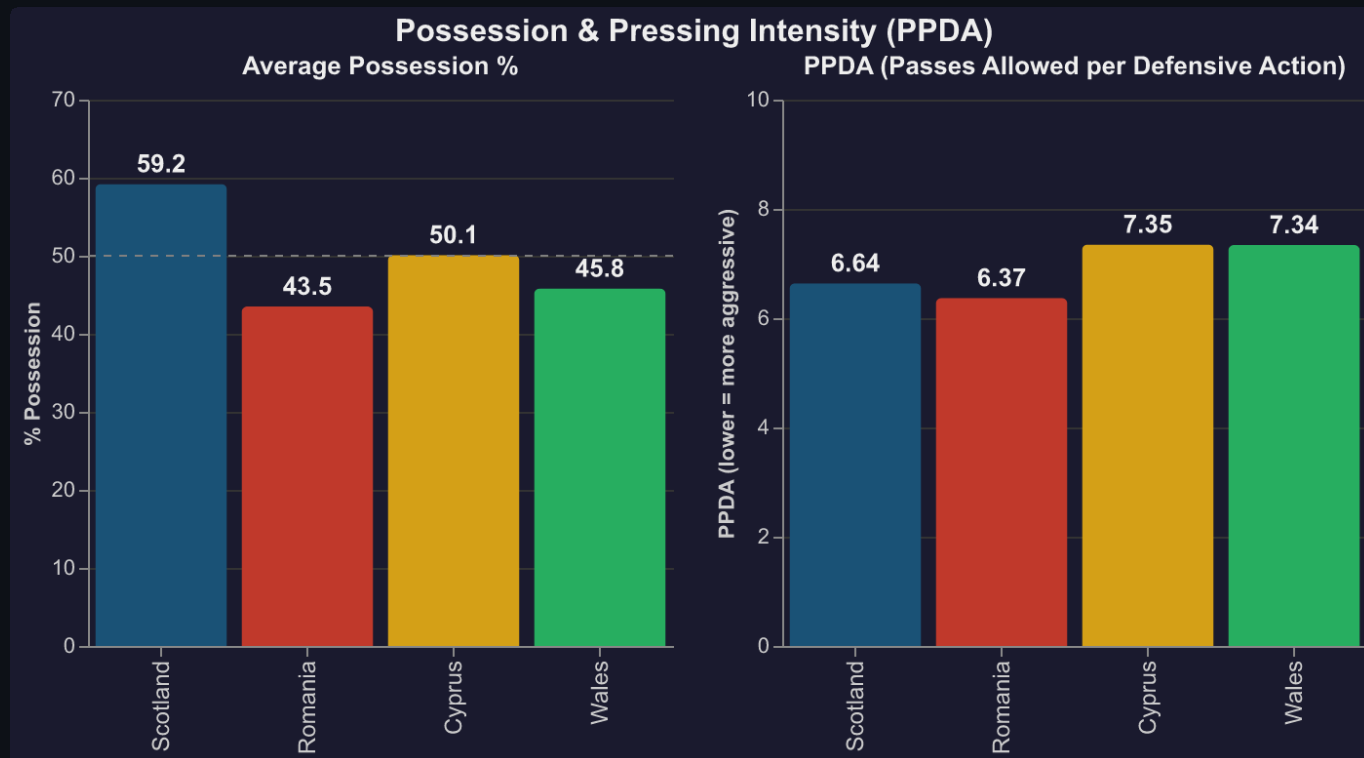
Per-match averages unless stated. Performance CV (Coefficient of Variation) measures match-to-match consistency — lower values indicate more stable performances across the tournament.

METRIC	SCOTLAND	ROMANIA	CYPRUS	WALES
Matches Played	3	3	2	2
Goals Scored	7	4	2	0
Total xG	5.44	5.77	1.32	1.76
xG Over/Under	+1.56	-1.77	+0.68	-1.76
Possession %	59.2%	43.5%	50.1%	45.8%
PPDA	6.64	6.37	7.35	7.34
Shots per Match	11.7	15.0	7.0	7.5
Shots on Target %	48.6%	31.1%	42.9%	26.7%
Pass Accuracy %	82.4%	73.8%	79.2%	74.6%
Short Pass %	22.8%	35.6%	26.0%	26.8%
Middle Pass %	66.6%	52.0%	62.0%	60.1%
Long Pass %	10.6%	12.4%	12.0%	13.1%
Key Passes per Match	13.7	17.7	8.0	6.0
Hot Zone Passes/M	22.3	24.3	17.5	21.0
Final-3rd Passes/M	52.3	46.0	40.5	41.0
Deep Completions/M	7.3	12.0	5.5	7.0
Box Receptions/M	12.0	13.3	6.0	6.5
Crosses per Match	13.7	8.0	3.5	6.5
GK Long Kick %	28.6%	54.2%	18.2%	13.3%
Tackles per Match	14.3	14.7	13.0	15.5
Interceptions per Match	11.3	18.3	16.5	15.0
Clearances per Match	17.7	26.0	29.5	36.0
Take-on Success %	75.6%	81.8%	46.3%	91.3%
Aerial Duel Success %	56.6%	50.0%	52.9%	42.9%
Fouls per Match	12.7	18.7	9.5	13.5
Yellow Cards (total)	6	2	1	0

3. Possession & Pressing Intensity (PPDA)

Possession % tells us how much of the game each team had the ball. PPDA (Passes Allowed per Defensive Action) tells us how aggressively a team defends without the ball — a low number means they press hard and win it back quickly, a high number means they sit deep and let opponents pass.

PPDA Formula: opponent passes in their own and middle third, divided by the defending team's tackles, interceptions and fouls.



TEAM	POSSESSION %	PPDA
Romania	43.5%	6.37
Scotland	59.2%	6.64
Wales	45.8%	7.34
Cyprus	50.1%	7.35

Possession & PPDA — Coaching Observations

Scotland U16



Scotland U16 — Scotland had the ball the most (59.2%) and pressed aggressively when they didn't have it (PPDA 6.64). They dominate games in both phases. Their high pass accuracy (82.4%) makes their press even more effective — opponents get limited time to build.

- ♦ 59.2% possession — most in tournament
- ♦ PPDA 6.64 — aggressive pressing
- ♦ Best of both worlds: keep the ball, win it back fast when they lose it

Romania U16



Romania U16 — Romania gave away possession (43.5%) but pressed the hardest of any team (PPDA 6.37 — lowest in tournament). Their 18.3 interceptions per match — the most in the tournament — shows they disrupted opponents in passing lanes rather than just sitting back and waiting. Winning the ball quickly fuels their counter-attacking style.

- ♦ 43.5% possession — least in tournament
- ♦ PPDA 6.37 — most aggressive pressing in tournament
- ♦ 18.3 interceptions/M — best in tournament; actively disrupt opponent build-up

Cyprus U16



Cyprus U16 — Cyprus had roughly equal possession (50.1%) but barely pressed when they lost the ball — PPDA 7.35 is the highest (most passive) in the tournament. They sit deep in a compact block and let opponents pass in front of them. This keeps their shape but means opponents have time and space to find openings — which explains the 2.31 xG conceded per match.

- ♦ 50.1% possession — roughly equal split
- ♦ PPDA 7.35 — sat deepest, least pressing
- ♦ Conceded 2.31 xG per match — opponents had time to build up and find gaps

Wales U16

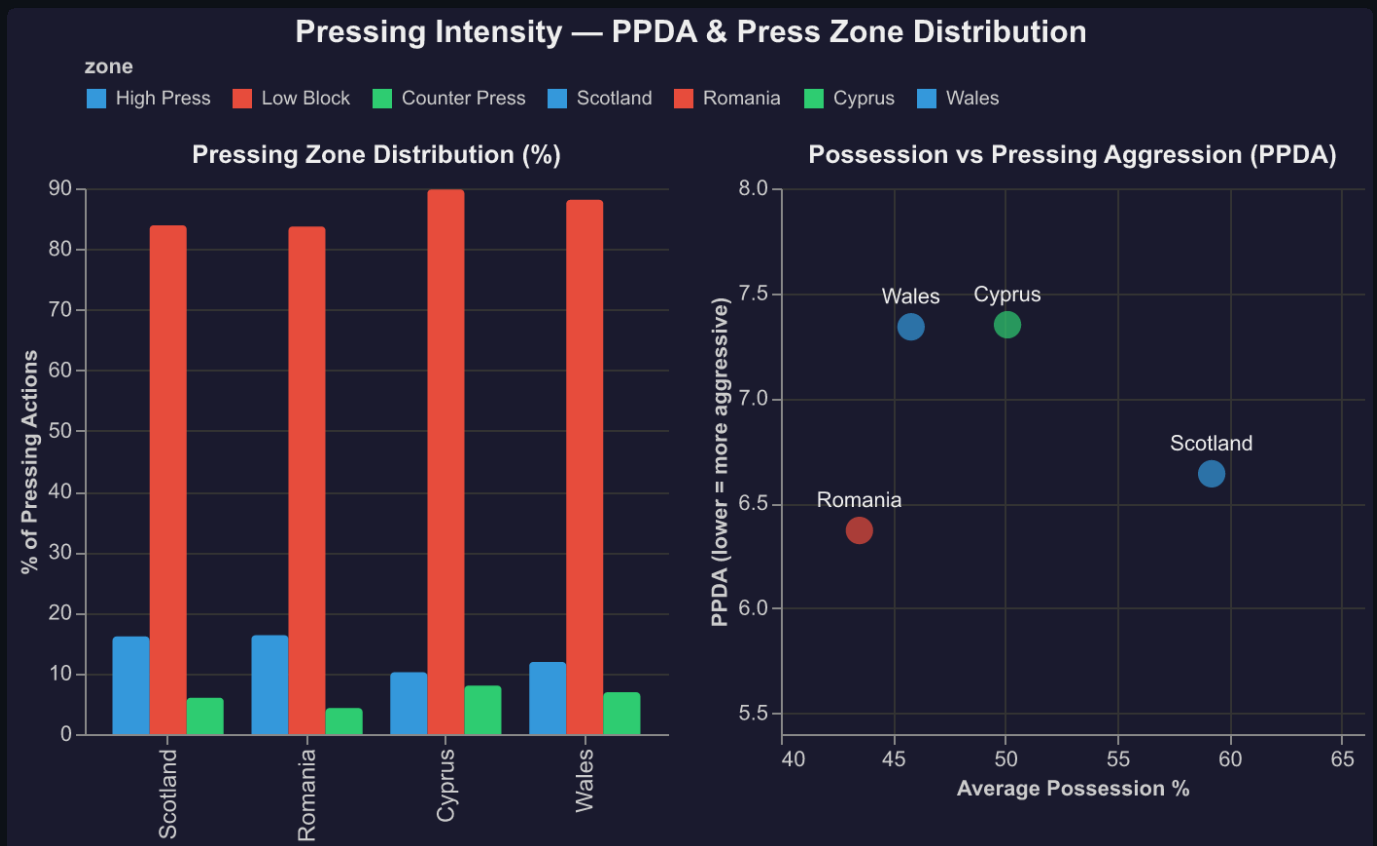


Wales U16 — Wales had below-average possession (45.8%) and a PPDA of 7.34, sitting back rather than pressing. They absorbed pressure in a deep block, which is why they needed so many clearances (36.0/M) and blocks (7.0/M). The problem is they couldn't win individual battles — with the lowest aerial duel success rates (42.9%), the defensive block came under constant pressure.

- ♦ 45.8% possession — below average
- ♦ PPDA 7.34 — deep-sitting, reactive defending
- ♦ 36.0 clearances/M and 7.0 blocks/M — under pressure for large parts of every game

Pressing Zone Distribution

TEAM	HIGH PRESS %	LOW BLOCK %	COUNTER PRESS %
Scotland	16.1%	83.9%	6.0%
Romania	16.3%	83.7%	4.3%
Cyprus	10.2%	89.8%	8.0%
Wales	11.9%	88.1%	6.9%

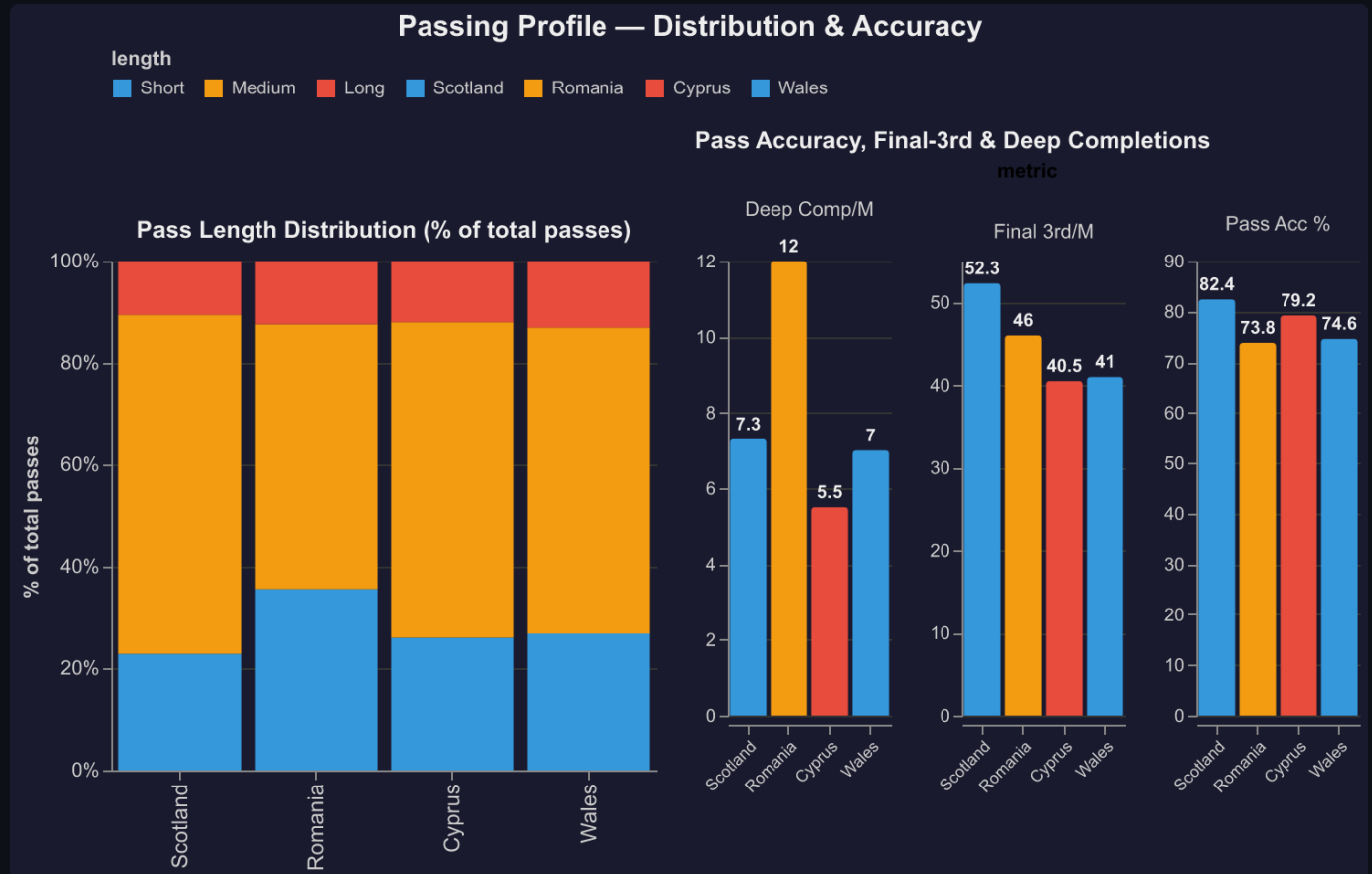


Romania and Scotland have nearly identical high-press rates (~16%), while Cyprus is the most low-block oriented (89.8%). Romania stand out as the most aggressive pressers overall (lowest PPDA) despite having the least possession — they press with purpose to trigger counter-attacks. Cyprus are the outlier — they sit back and don't press, which is why opponents have the most time and space against them.

4. Passing Analysis

This section looks at how each team passes the ball — how long their passes are, how accurately they pass, and how well they get the ball into the dangerous areas in front of goal.

1. Pass Length Distribution & Accuracy



TEAM	SHORT %	MIDDLE %	LONG %	PASS ACCURACY %	FINAL-3RD/M	DEEP COMP/M
Scotland	22.8%	66.6%	10.6%	82.4%	52.3	7.3
Romania	35.6%	52.0%	12.4%	73.8%	46.0	12.0
Cyprus	26.0%	62.0%	12.0%	79.2%	40.5	5.5
Wales	26.8%	60.1%	13.1%	74.6%	41.0	7.0

Pass Distribution — What It Tells Coaches: Scotland play mostly medium-length passes (66.6%) — progressive passes that move the ball forward through the thirds without giving it away. Romania mix short combinations (35.6%) with long direct balls — their medium-pass % is the lowest (52.0%), which matches their direct style. Wales play the most long balls (13.1%) and have the lowest pass accuracy (74.6%). Cyprus are similar to Scotland in distribution but don't get the ball into danger areas as often.

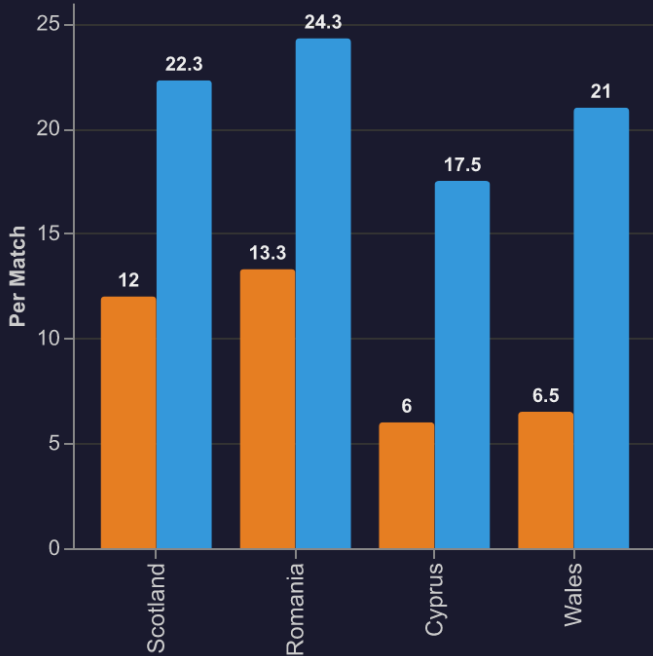
4.2 Hot Zone Passes & Final-Third Penetration

Passes into Hot Zone (Final Third Central Zone)

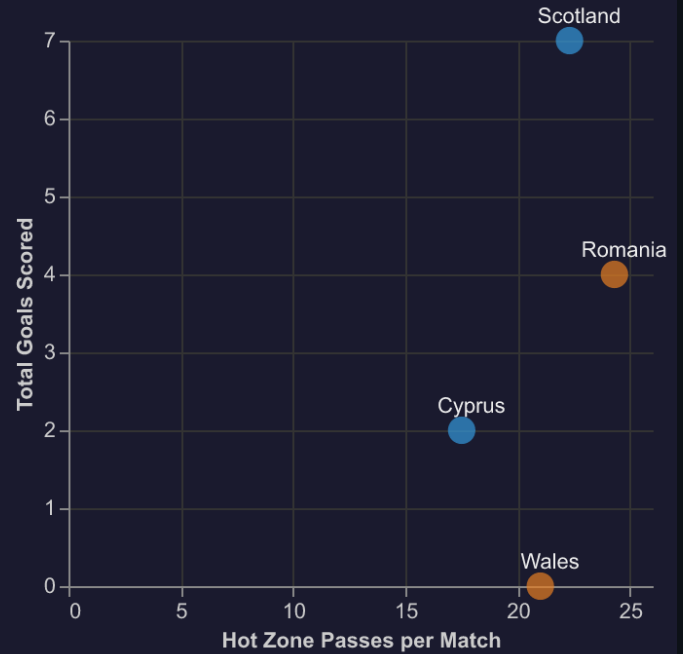
metric

Hot zone passes/M Box receptions/M Scotland Romania Cyprus Wales

Hot Zone Passes & Box Receptions (per match)



Hot Zone Entry vs Goals Scored



TEAM	HOT ZONE PASSES/M	BOX RECEPTIONS/M
Scotland	22.3	12.0
Romania	24.3	13.3
Cyprus	17.5	6.0
Wales	21.0	6.5

Hot Zone Arrival Corridors

TEAM	LEFT %	CENTRE %	RIGHT %	TOTAL ARRIVALS	PER MATCH
Scotland	31.6%	38.5%	29.9%	117	39.0
Romania	26.7%	42.0%	31.3%	131	43.7
Cyprus	26.2%	41.0%	32.8%	61	30.5
Wales	30.8%	36.9%	32.3%	65	32.5

Scotland spread arrivals evenly across all three corridors — opponents can't predict which side the danger will come from. Romania's 131 arrivals per tournament is the highest, driven by their direct style, with a central emphasis (42.0%). Cyprus show a slight right-side bias. Wales distribute fairly evenly but with less central penetration.

Per-Team Passing & Penetration

Scotland U16



Scotland U16 — Scotland got the ball into the final third more than anyone else (52.3 passes/M) and had the most players receiving the ball inside the box (12.0/M). Their high possession means they consistently work the ball into the right areas — and they finish well when they get there.

- ♦ 52.3 final-third passes/M — most in tournament
- ♦ 12.0 box receptions/M — most in tournament; possession leads to real danger
- ♦ 22.3 hot zone passes/M — consistently threaten the central danger area

Romania U16



Romania U16 — Romania get the ball into dangerous areas through direct passes (24.3 hot zone/M — most in tournament) and their deep completion rate (12.0/M) is nearly double any other team. They reach advanced positions quickly but the final action — the last pass or shot — lets them down.

- ♦ 24.3 hot zone passes/M — highest; direct route into danger areas
- ♦ 12.0 deep completions/M — almost twice any other team
- ♦ High penetration, low conversion — the final decision is the coaching priority

Cyprus U16



Cyprus U16 — Cyprus get the ball into dangerous areas least of all four teams (17.5 hot zone passes/M, 6.0 box receptions/M). Despite their 79.2% pass accuracy they don't create enough in the final third.

- ♦ 17.5 hot zone passes/M — lowest in tournament; creation is the main limitation
- ♦ 6.0 box receptions/M — fewest alongside Wales
- ♦ High pass accuracy but low penetration — playing well but not in the right areas

Wales U16

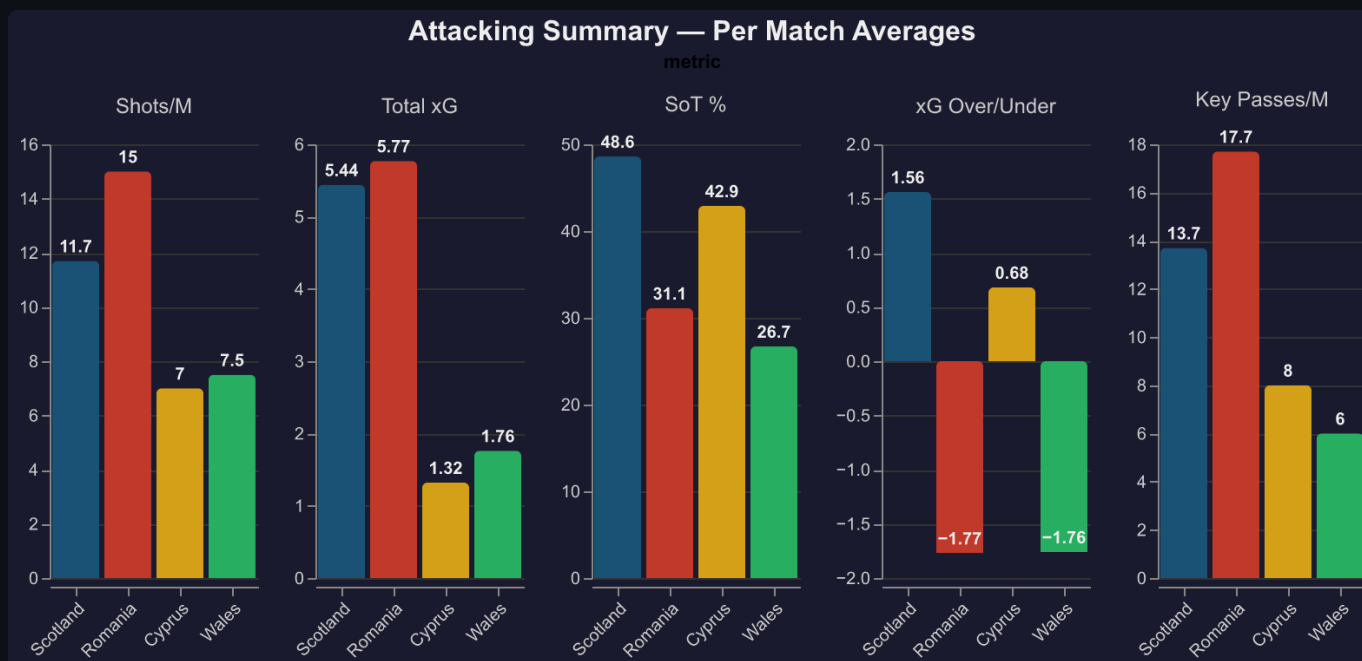


Wales U16 — Wales get the ball into the hot zone (21.0/M) but it does not turn into goals. They had 0 goals despite reaching dangerous areas — the ball arrives but players can't finish or create a clear chance.

- ♦ 21.0 hot zone passes/M — above Cyprus, but 0 goals
- ♦ 6.5 box receptions/M — players reaching the box but not converting
- ♦ The ball gets there — coaching focus must be on what players do when it arrives

5. Attacking Summary

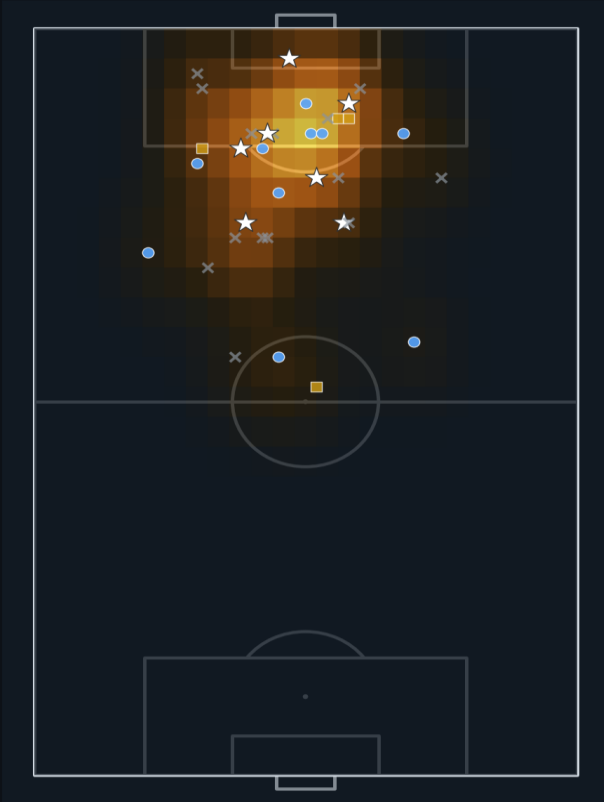
1. Shot Creation & Chance Quality



TEAM	SHOTS/M	TOTAL XG	SOT %	XG OVER/UNDER	KEY PASSES/M
Scotland	11.7	5.44	48.6%	+1.56	13.7
Romania	15.0	5.77	31.1%	-1.77	17.7
Cyprus	7.0	1.32	42.9%	+0.68	8.0
Wales	7.5	1.76	26.7%	-1.76	6.0

Shot Zone Heatmap — Tournament Totals

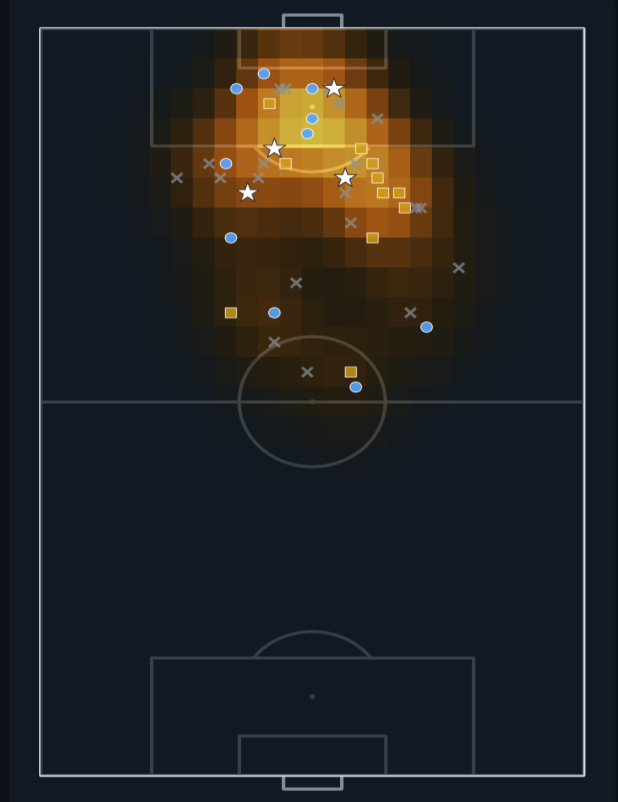
Scotland | 7G | 5.40 xG



In Box: 30 shots (xG 5.18) • Outside: 5 shots (xG 0.22)

Total: 35 shots | Goals: 7 | On Target: 17 | Blocked: 4 | Off Target: 14

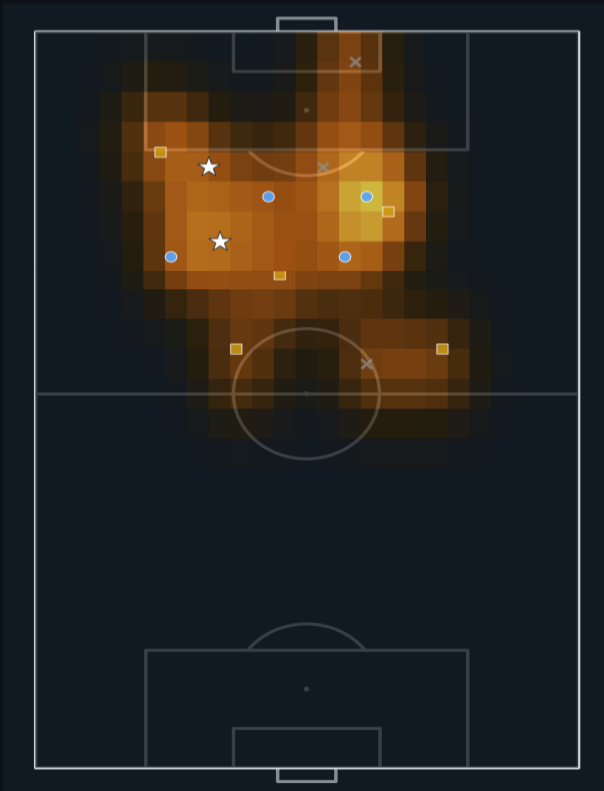
Romania | 4G | 5.77 xG



In Box: 35 shots (xG 5.39) • Outside: 10 shots (xG 0.38)

Total: 45 shots | Goals: 4 | On Target: 14 | Blocked: 11 | Off Target: 20

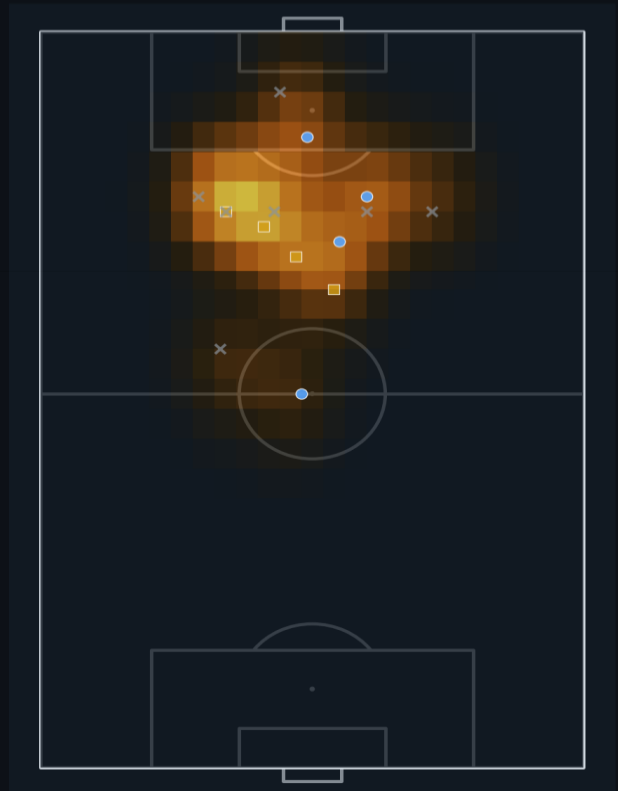
Cyprus | 2G | 1.24 xG



In Box: 10 shots (xG 1.07) • Outside: 4 shots (xG 0.17)

Total: 14 shots | Goals: 2 | On Target: 6 | Blocked: 5 | Off Target: 3

Wales | 0G | 1.75 xG



In Box: 12 shots (xG 1.65) • Outside: 3 shots (xG 0.11)

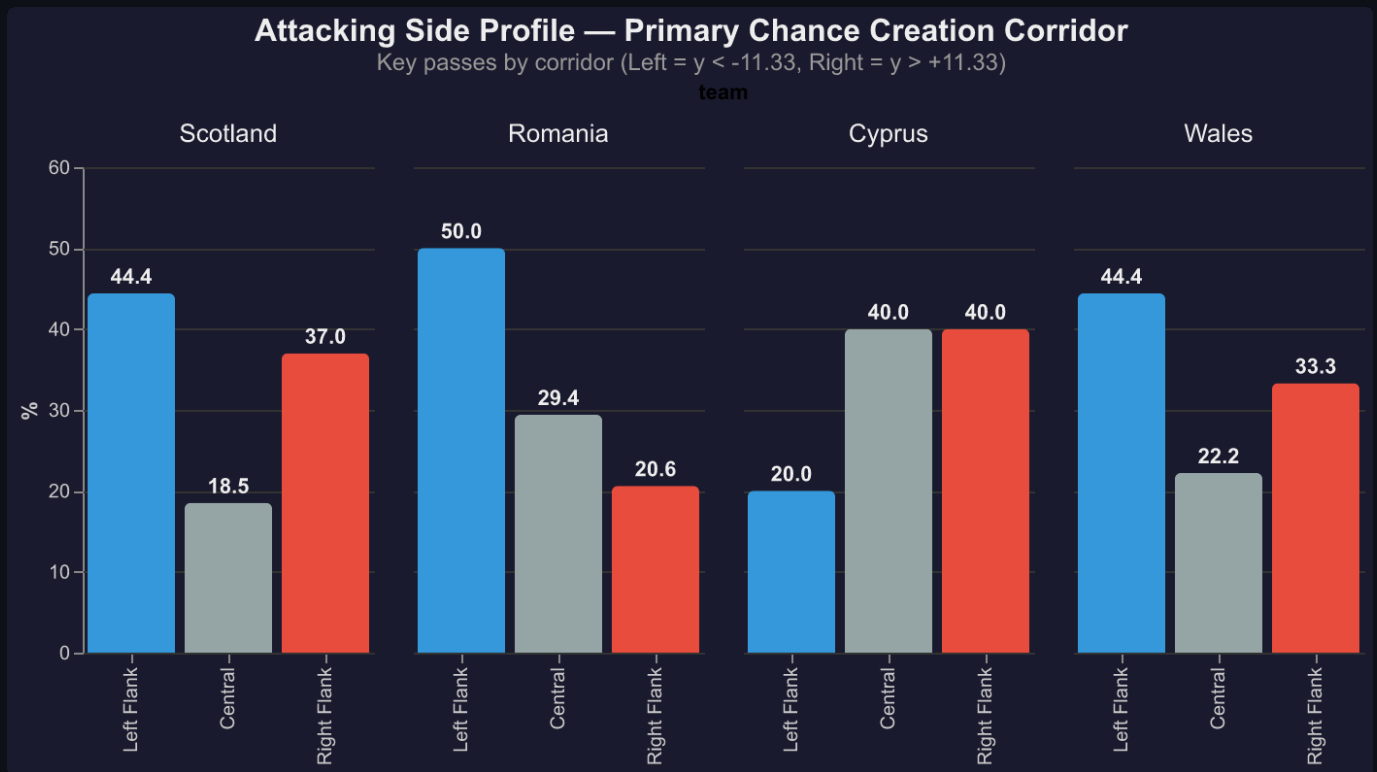
Total: 15 shots | Goals: 0 | On Target: 4 | Blocked: 4 | Off Target: 7

★ Goal ● On Target ■ Blocked × Off Target

TEAM	CLOSE SHOTS	LONG SHOTS	TOTAL SHOTS
Scotland	30	5	35
Romania	35	10	45
Cyprus	10	4	14
Wales	12	3	15

Scotland take the highest proportion of close-range shots (85.7%) — they work the ball into good positions before shooting. Romania take 10 long shots from their 45 total (22.2%), consistent with their direct style but contributing to their low conversion.

5.3 Attacking Side Profile



Key passes by corridor (y-axis: Left = $y < -11.33$, Right = $y > +11.33$).

TEAM	LEFT %	CENTRE %	RIGHT %
Scotland	44.4% (12)	18.5% (5)	37.0% (10)
Romania	50.0% (17)	29.4% (10)	20.6% (7)
Cyprus	20.0% (2)	40.0% (4)	40.0% (4)
Wales	44.4% (4)	22.2% (2)	33.3% (3)

Scotland U16



Scotland U16 — Balanced flank use (Left 44.4%, Right 37.0%). The team rotates creation well across both sides.

Romania U16



Romania U16 — Pronounced left-flank attacking identity driven by key passes (50% left). Romania's right side is relatively quiet (20.6%).

Cyprus U16



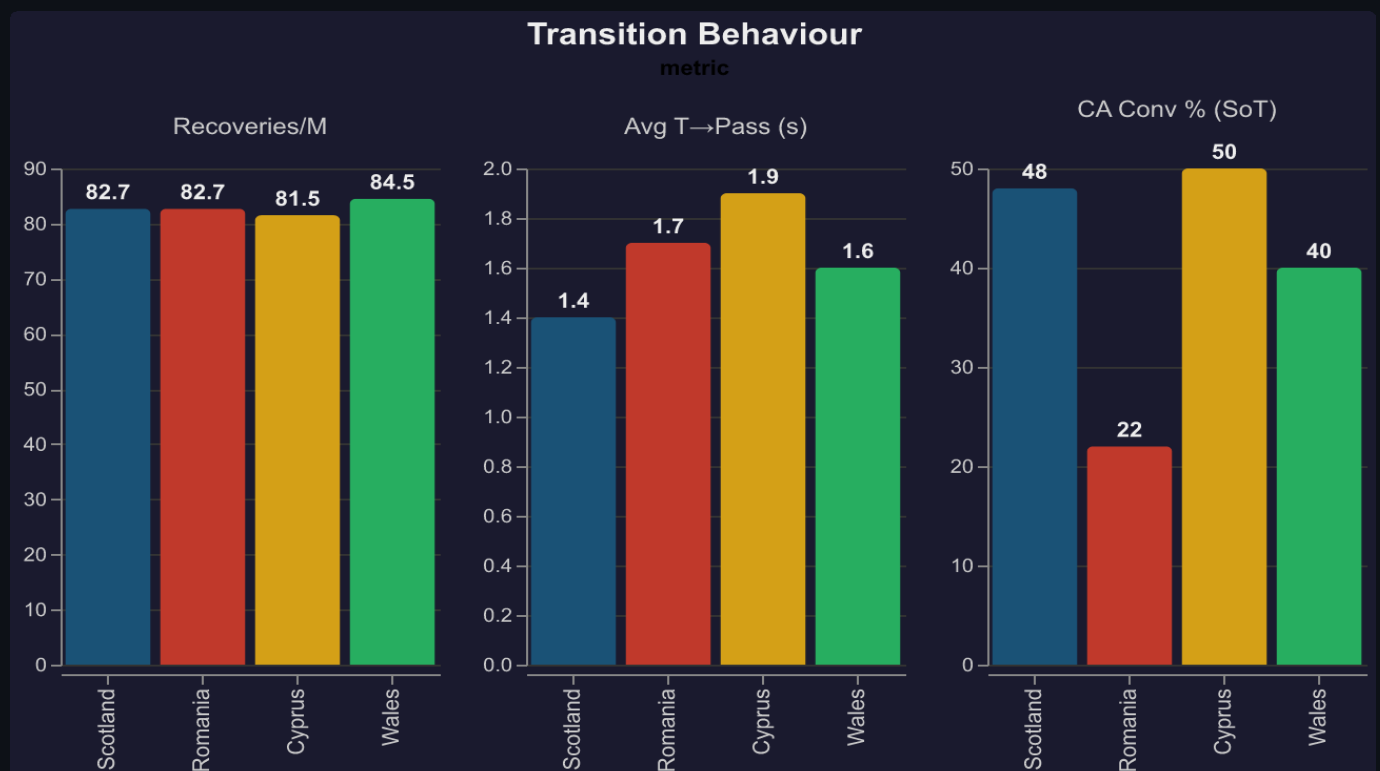
Cyprus U16 — Balanced between centre and right (40% each), with limited left-side involvement. Sample size is small (10 total key passes).

Wales U16



Wales U16 — Left-side tendency (44.4%). However, with only 9 total key passes, the sample is limited.

6. Transition Behaviour



TEAM	RECOVERIES/M	AVG T->PASS (S)
Scotland	82.7	1.4s
Romania	82.7	1.7s
Cyprus	81.5	1.9s
Wales	84.5	1.6s

Note: Transition speed measures the average time from winning the ball back (recovery, interception, or tackle) to the first pass — capped at 30 seconds to exclude dead-ball situations.

Transition — Per-Team Analysis

Scotland U16



Scotland U16 — Scotland take their time after winning the ball back — they slow down and build rather than rushing forward. This gives them better control and the fastest average transition to first pass (1.4s).

- ♦ Avg T->Pass 1.4s — fastest transition to first pass
- ♦ Next step: Teach players to recognise when to play forward quickly. If space opens up behind the opposition, Scotland need to attack it faster.

Romania U16



Romania U16 — Romania transition at moderate speed (1.7s) with the most interceptions in the tournament (18.3/M) providing frequent transition opportunities.

- ♦ Avg T->Pass 1.7s — moderate transition speed
- ♦ Next step: Focus on the final decision. Romania get into good positions quickly but need to improve what they do when they get there.

Cyprus U16



Cyprus U16 — Cyprus are patient after winning the ball — they reset and rebuild rather than counter-attacking (slowest transition at 1.9s).

- ♦ Avg T->Pass 1.9s — slowest transition, prefer to reset
- ♦ Next step: Teach players to spot the moments when a quick counter-attack is on. Cyprus have the quality to finish — they just need to be braver about when to use it.

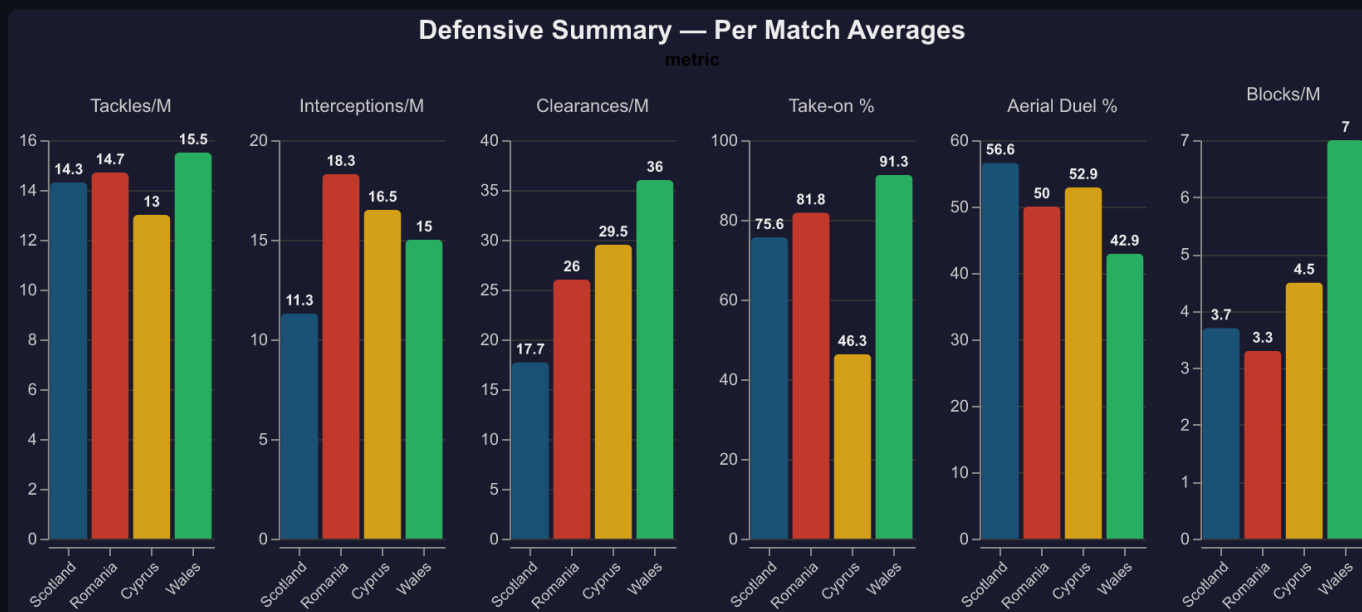


Wales U16 — Wales go forward quickly after winning the ball (1.6s). Most of their ball recoveries come from clearances, which leaves players in poor positions to start attacks.

- ♦ Avg T->Pass 1.6s — quick transition
- ♦ Next step: Improve the quality of how they win the ball — less clearing, more controlled recovery.

7. Defensive Summary

1. Defensive Workload & Duel Profile



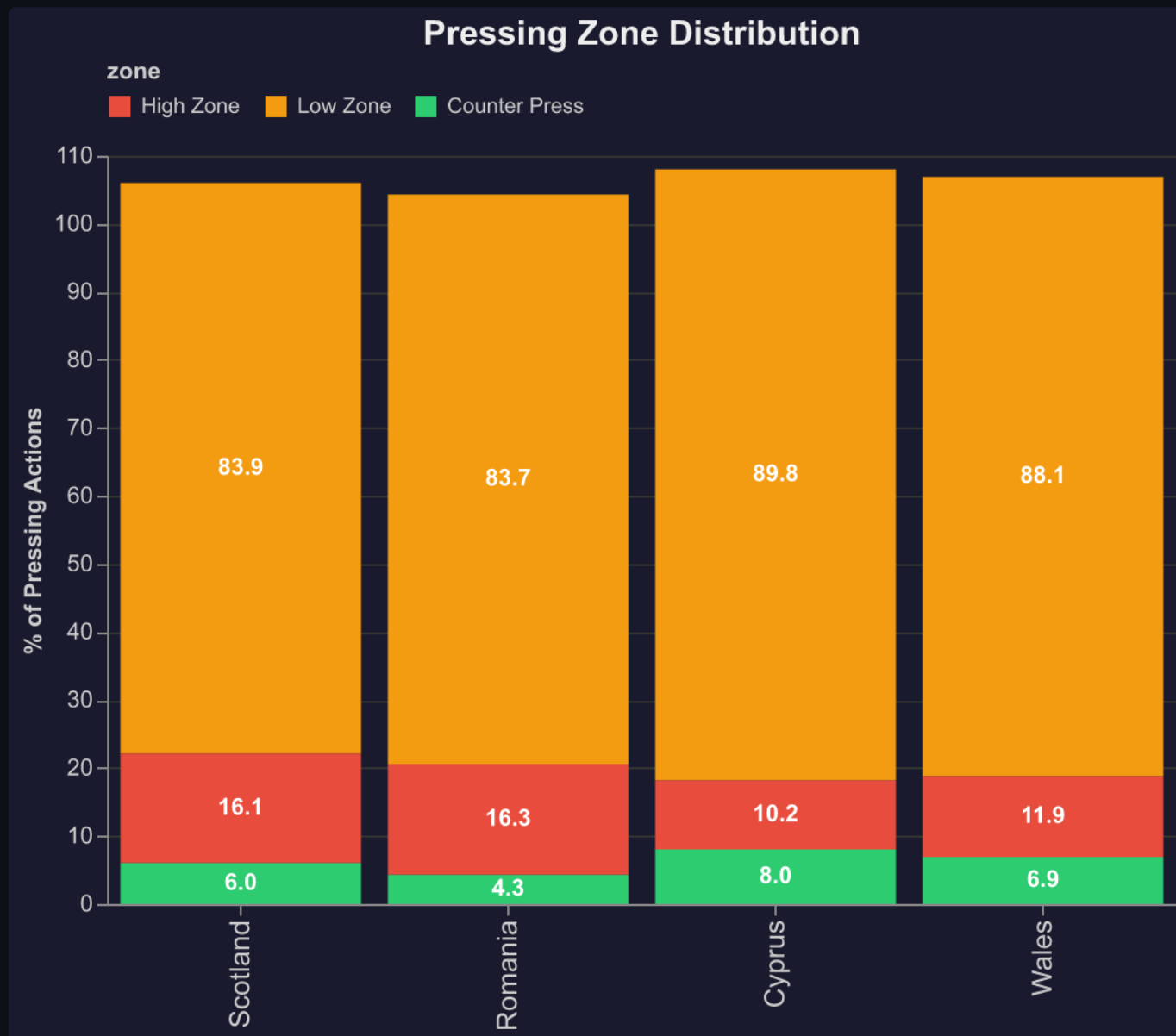
TEAM	TACKLES/M	INTERCEPTIONS/M	CLEARANCES/M	BLOCKS/M	TAKE-ON %	AERIAL %
Scotland	14.3	11.3	17.7	3.7	75.6%	56.6%
Romania	14.7	18.3	26.0	3.3	81.8%	50.0%
Cyprus	13.0	16.5	29.5	4.5	46.3%	52.9%
Wales	15.5	15.0	36.0	7.0	91.3%	42.9%

Wales faced the heaviest defensive workload (36.0 clearances/M, 7.0 blocks/M) yet recorded the lowest aerial duel success rate (42.9%). Scotland's defensive unit was the most effective — best

aerial success (56.6%) reflecting their high-press, proactive style.

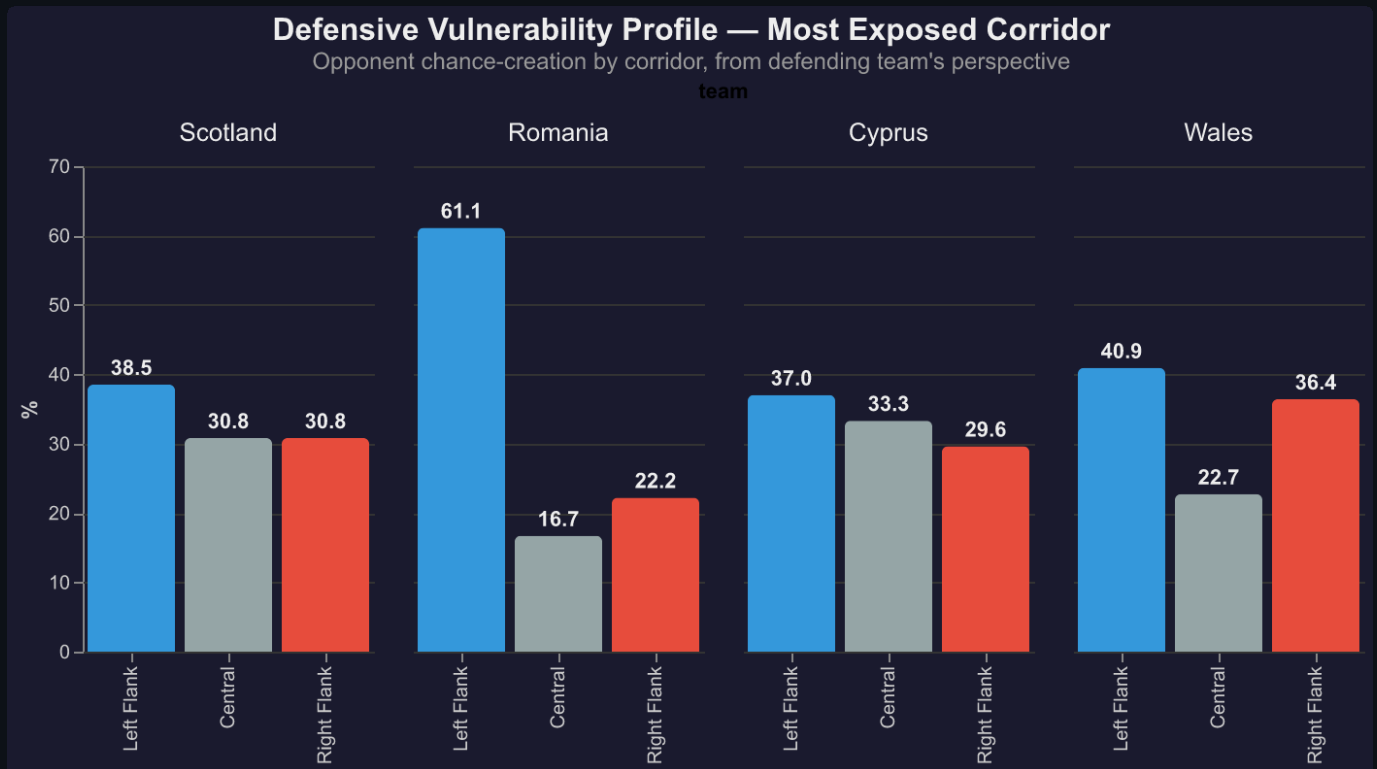
Note: Take-on Success % measures 1v1 dribbling duels from the attacker's perspective. Wales' 91.3% is from 23 attempts (21 successful). Romania: 22 attempts (18 successful).

7.2 Pressing Organisation



TEAM	HIGH PRESS %	LOW BLOCK %	COUNTER PRESS %
Scotland	16.1%	83.9%	6.0%
Romania	16.3%	83.7%	4.3%
Cyprus	10.2%	89.8%	8.0%
Wales	11.9%	88.1%	6.9%

7.3 Defensive Vulnerability Profile



Opponent key passes by corridor (from defending team's perspective).

DEFENDING TEAM	LEFT %	CENTRE %	RIGHT %
Scotland	38.5% (5)	30.8% (4)	30.8% (4)
Romania	61.1% (11)	16.7% (3)	22.2% (4)
Cyprus	37.0% (10)	33.3% (9)	29.6% (8)
Wales	40.9% (9)	22.7% (5)	36.4% (8)

Scotland U16



Scotland U16 — Most balanced defensive exposure (38.5/30.8/30.8%). Scotland allowed only 2.34 xG total — the lowest in the tournament.

Romania U16



Romania U16 — Left side massively exposed (61.1%) — a mirror of their own left-flank attacking identity. Same left-sided players appear to be both creative outlet and defensive liability.

Cyprus U16



Cyprus U16 — Most balanced vulnerability (37.0/33.3/29.6%) but 2.31 xG conceded per match — highest per-match exposure. Structural defensive issues rather than a specific flank weakness.

Wales U16



Wales U16 — Left side most exposed (40.9%). Crosses from the right landing on the left side of the box as the primary delivery mechanism against Wales.

8. Goalkeeping Summary

TEAM	GK LONG KICK %	SAVE %	CLAIMS/M	SWEEPING/M
Scotland	28.6%	71.4%	1.0	10.3
Romania	54.2%	72.7%	1.7	13.3
Cyprus	18.2%	54.5%	1.0	7.0
Wales	13.3%	70.0%	0.0	9.0

Romania's GK is the most direct (54.2% long kicks) and the most active sweeper (13.3/M). Cyprus' GK prefers short build-up (only 18.2% long). Wales' GK rarely goes long (13.3%). Save percentages are similar (70-73%) except Cyprus (54.5%, small sample: 11 saves, 6 successful).

