

# 2023 K LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT



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Welcoming the 40th anniversary of K League, this season will be remembered as the one that has seen growth in every aspect compared to last. In particular, we made history by surpassing three million in paid fans and opened the door to a new era in K League 1 with a milestone average attendance of 10,000.

The battles for positions in the table were intense. Ulsan Hyundai showed their courage and clinched back-to-back titles in K League 1, while Gimcheon Sangmu earned promotion back to K League 1 in the most dramatic way imaginable just one season after relegation.

It was amazing that Gwangju FC earned an AFC Champions League spot for the first time in their history right after they won promotion with the K League 2 title just last season. Gimpo FC's campaign was incredible too as they made it to the Promotion-Relegation playoff after finishing third in K League 2.

As much as we have more football fans coming to watch the games, analysis and explanations about the games are becoming more scientific. In order to underpin this change, we have published the K League 2023 Technical Report which has compiled all match performance data, tactics, and strategies from the 2023 season.

We put together our analyses to look back on what have been the key features in various areas. We have also put video clips in at appropriate places to help you understand them better.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all people in K League from players, coaching staff to team officials for their efforts and commitment to be able to finish the season in style. I also would like to extend my thanks to fans for their continued support and love for K League. I hope this report will help K League become a more scientific and a more interesting league.

Best Regards,



President Kwon Oh-gap  
Korea Professional Football League

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- **xG(Expected Goals)** | the possibility that a specific shot made can lead to a goal. This is determined by several variables like a location of shot from and an angle of shot made at, and where the connected pass was from.
- **xGOT (Expected Goals on Target)** | Value refers to the probability that a shot on target leads to a goal. It is determined by the xG value and the goalmouth location of the shot, and only shots on target are included during the calculation process.
- **xT (Expected Threat)** | refers to the ability to deliver the ball to an area with a high probability of a goal being scored. The ball can be delivered in three ways: pass, dribble, and carry, and the field is divided into zones (21x18), giving each zone a scoring chance, and the area where the ball is delivered is subtracted from the area where the ball is delivered.
- **Shot on Target** | any shot attempt that; 1) scores a goal. 2) would have been a goal had it not been saved by the goalkeeper.
- **Control Under Pressure** | An action from a player to keep possession of the ball and get out of pressure from an opponent player.
- **Sequence** | A series of actions from taking the ball to losing the ball. It initiates from the possession of the ball and ends with losing the ball to a defending team, shooting, or the ball out of play.
- **Shoot Sequence** | A sequence that ends with a shoot.
- **Goal Sequence** | A sequence that ends with a goal.
- **Key pass** | Any final pass or cross that leads to a shot (excluding goals). If that final pass or cross leads to a goal, it is not only a key pass but also an assist.
- **Final Third Pass** | A pass started in the final third area of the pitch when divided into three equal spaces.
- **Middle Third Pass** | A pass started in the middle third area of the three equal spaces.
- **Defensive Third Pass** | A pass started in the defensive third area of the pitch. This is usually within your own half.
- **Long Pass** | a pass equals to or is longer than 30 metre.
- **Medium Pass** | A pass is longer than 15 metre and shorter than 30 metre.
- **Short Pass** | A pass equals to or is shorter than 15 metre.
- **Forward Pass** | A pass that travels forward within 60°.
- **Sideway Pass** | A pass that travels towards both sides within 120°.
- **Back Pass** | A pass that travels back toward their own goal within 60°.
- **PPDA (Passes allowed Per Defensive Action)** | An indicator to measure the intensity of high pressure. This is calculated by a number of passes made by an attacking team divided by defensive actions within 60 % of the opponent's half from the goal line.
- **Aerial duel** | Two players challenge each other in the air to win the ball.
- **Ground Duels** | Two players challenge each other on the ground to win the neutral ball
- **Tackles** | A defensive action to dispossess an opponent by tackle and make them lose possession of the ball.
- **Interceptions** | When the opposing team tries to play the ball between their teammates but is intervened by one of your players and your team regains possession.
- **Blocks** | A defensive action to block passes, crosses, and shots and make the opponent lose possession of the ball.
- **Clearances** | A defensive action in which the player kicks or heads the ball away or out of play with no intention of finding a teammate.

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# 01

## 2023 K LEAGUE OVERVIEW

In the 40th anniversary year of the K League in 2023, K League 1 was filled with lots of stories. Promoted team Gwangju FC managed to earn a place in continental competition after finishing third while Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors had to settle for a fourth-place finish and were trophyless for the first time in the last ten years. Jeonbuk had managed to win at least one trophy every season since 2013 but were unable to pick up any silverware this year. Meanwhile, one of the most successful teams in Korea, Suwon Samsung Bluewings were unable to avoid automatic relegation to K League 2 after finishing bottom of the table. They took a huge gamble by putting Yeom Ki-hun in charge as interim manager, but in the end were unable to survive. In K League 2, Gimcheon Sangmu were crowned champions following a dramatic end to the season while Gangwon FC and Suwon FC managed to retain their places in K League 1 for next season after they saw off Gimpo FC and Busan IPark in the Promotion-Relegation Playoffs respectively.

2023 K League 1 Final Standings

Position	Club	Points	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals Scored
01	Ulsan	38	23	7	8	63
02	Pohang	38	16	16	6	53
03	Gwangju	38	16	11	11	47
04	Jeonbuk	38	16	9	13	45
05	Incheon	38	14	14	10	46
06	Daegu	38	13	14	11	42
07	Seoul	38	14	13	11	63
08	Daejeon	38	12	15	11	56
09	Jeju	38	10	11	17	43
10	Gangwon	38	6	16	16	30
11	Suwon FC	38	8	9	21	44
12	Suwon	38	8	9	21	35

2023 K League 2 Final Standings

Position	Club	Points	Won	Drawn	Lost	Goals Scored
01	Gimcheon	36	22	5	9	71
02	Busan	36	20	10	6	50
03	Gimpo	37	17	12	8	42
04	Gyeongnam	38	15	13	10	55
05	Bucheon	37	16	10	11	45
06	Anyang	36	15	9	12	58
07	Jeonnam	36	16	5	15	55
08	Chungbuk Cheongju	36	13	13	10	37
09	Seongnam	36	11	11	14	43
10	Chungnam Asan	36	12	6	18	39
11	Seoul E	36	10	5	21	36
12	Ansan	36	6	7	23	40
13	Cheonan City	36	5	10	21	33

FEB-MAR

## Ulsan Running Riot, FC Seoul Playing Effectively

Ulsan Hyundai were strong from the very start of the season. Their record was unblemished in the first four games with four wins and rose to the top of the table. The driving force behind this strong start was 'defence' with the Horangi conceding just two goals. The back four, consisting of Seol Young-woo, Kim Young-gwon, Jung Seung-hyun, and Kim Tae-hwan, provided solid protection.

Ulsan were well-organised attacking-wise too. The players had a clear understanding of their roles on the pitch when it came to pressing and exploiting the space. All players except for Um Won-sang switched roles from one to another in order to confuse opposition defenders. The likes of Joo Min-kyu, Gustav Ludwigson, Valeri Qazaishvili, and Ataru Esaka played their part in that regard.

FC Seoul were just behind the leaders Ulsan. The capital side won three of their first four games and found themselves second in the table. The key to this was efficiency. While Seoul were more focused on ball retention last season with 61.9% possession, this season, however, they tried to do more with the ball and had 44.7% possession.

One of their strengths was having a simple but effective way of playing and there were some significant improvements in some indicators: the number of passes and time per sequence and direct speed. Their main pattern was to move forward via the flanks at a fast pace from defensive positions in a 4-4-2 formation. Once the player in the number 9 position held the ball up, the players on the flanks ran into the space behind. In the early stages of the 2023 season, FC Seoul were more dangerous and impressive than they had been in recent years.



Ulsan's attacking play in the early stages of the season. Forward players did what was asked of them.



### Notable Ulsan Stats R1-6

Goals **8** 1st

Final Third Passes **371** 1st

Crosses **19** 2nd



### Notable FC Seoul Stats R1-6

Passes in Defensive Third **500** 1st

Clearances **212** 2nd

Blocks **113** 1st





APR

## Pohang Steelers and Suwon Bluewings: Moving In Opposite Directions During Packed Schedule

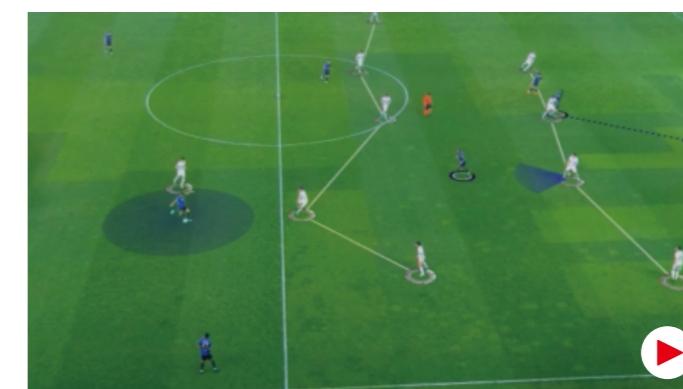
The month of April was busy in K League with six rounds played, which was a tough schedule for all. Looking back on the season, April turned out to be the month with the most games played.

Pohang Steelers were a team that seemed to enjoy April more than most. After Ulsan, they earned the second-highest number of points with three wins, two draws, and a loss. The Steelers suffered their first defeat of the season to Incheon United in Round 10 after being unbeaten in their first nine games. By the end of April, having picked up 19 points, they drew level with FC Seoul in second.

Credit must be given to Pohang manager Kim Gi-dong's tactical ability. At the beginning of the Round 5 match against Jeonbuk, he deployed defensive midfielder Lee Seung-mo up front to press high, with the likes of Jeong Jae-hee, Cho Jae-hun, and Kim Seung-dae running in behind. In Round 6 against Gwangju, he opted for a man-marking system to stifle the opposition. Moreover, he moved target man Zeca to the side to take advantage of Gwangju's lack of height in the full back positions.

Meanwhile, Suwon Samsung Bluewings suffered their worst-ever start to a season. They earned just two points from their first 10 games with two draws and eight losses and remained at the bottom of the table. Suwon became the only team that had still not won come the end of April, and more shockingly, were eight points adrift of 11th-placed Gangwon FC.

One of their problems was that they allowed too much space between the midfielders and defence, an area where their opponents often put the ball into. Midfielders like Kim Bo-kyung, Yu Je-ho, and Rodrigo Bassani did not provide enough protection, and Lee Jong-sung suffered a dip in form. This had a profound impact on their back four as teams were free to move forward without difficulty. The left side where Lee Ki-je and Dave Bulthuis played was particularly vulnerable.



Suwon Samsung allowed the ball to be put into the area between the defence and midfield, exposing too much space.



### Notable Pohang Steelers Stats R5-10

Interceptions  
**132**<sup>1st</sup>

Ground Duels  
**43**<sup>2nd</sup>

Passes in Middle Third  
**1,001**<sup>3rd</sup>



### Notable Suwon Bluewings Stats R5-10

Goals  
**5**<sup>11th</sup>

Blocked shots  
**18**<sup>1st</sup>

Clearances  
**191**<sup>12th</sup>

MAY

### A Late Spring Transformation

The month of May saw a rise in form of Jeju United. Jeju were unable to pick up a single victory in the first five games of the season but then went on to win eight, draw one, and lose just once in their next 10. By early April, they began to see a turnaround and following this upturn in form, Jeju leapfrogged other teams to reach third place, up from tenth.

With Nam Ki-il in charge, the back three worked well and the key to its success was wingback Ahn Hyeon-beom. Jeju tended to use a 3-4-3 or a 3-5-2 formation to maximise Ahn's attacking ability. In most cases, the team's right winger moved centrally into midfield, which dragged the defender out of position. This allowed Ahn Hyeon-beom to overlap in that space. Jeju were able to get back on track thanks to a solid back three and Ahn Hyeon-beom's attacking ability. Meanwhile, at the bottom end of the table, the artillery-less battle between Suwon Bluewings and Gangwon FC continued. In May, Suwon's worst-ever start to a season prompted the club to bring in manager Kim Byung-soo. This was the first managerial change of 2023 in K League 1. Kim took the reins after Suwon bagged their first win of the season against Incheon in Round 11.

Gangwon had the most miserable time in May, managing just a draw and four defeats in five games and the gap with Suwon was getting narrower as time went by. Gangwon's biggest problem was their attacking play. They were unable to register a single goal in May, and the form of their forward players seemed to dip further. Kim Dae-won and Yang Hyun-jun, following dazzling displays in 2022, seemed to have lost their shine, and striker Dino Islamovic was unable to function as a target man. With drops in form of Gangwon's attacking players, the frustrating situation continued for Choi Yong-soo who was trying to make use of a counterattacking-oriented tactic.



Jeju found opportunities to overlap by switching freely between a 3-4-3 and a 3-5-2.



**Notable Jeju United Stats R11-15**

Goals **12**<sup>2nd</sup>

Goals conceded **3**<sup>11th</sup>

Interceptions **170**<sup>2nd</sup>



**Notable Gangwon Stats R11-15**

Goals **0**<sup>12th</sup>

Shots **42**<sup>11th</sup>

Shots on Target **7**<sup>12th</sup>





JUN-JUL

### Dan Petrescu Era Begins for Jeonbuk, and Flying Incheon

Jeonbuk went through a hectic schedule. Manager Kim Sang-sik left the club in May and Kim Do-heon was placed in charge as interim manager. Kim Do-heon's Jeonbuk first emerged in Round 11 against FC Seoul. Jeonbuk were set up in a back four having switched from a 3-4-3 formation under Kim Sang-sik.

There were more tactical variations under Kim Do-heon. Five days later when they faced Suwon Bluewings, Maeng Seong-ung was given a special role. Maeng was deployed at left full back but then moved into midfield when Jeonbuk were in possession. The tactic was designed to give Jeonbuk a bit of extra emphasis in the middle of the park. Ten days later against Suwon FC, Jeonbuk made the best use of Kim Jin-su and Kim Moon-hwan by playing them on the flanks for their attacking ability. Jeonbuk's new era began at the end of June. Dan Petrescu became the club's seventh full time manager and was in charge in time for the Round 19 fixture with Gwangju FC. The Romanian preferred to use a 4-4-2 formation with long balls being played to the strikers. He placed a target man like Cho Gue-sung or Gustavo upfront with pacey players around them. The key was to send the ball forward as fast as possible rather than keeping possession.

Meanwhile, Incheon United, who struggled during the early phase of the season, managed to bounce back from July and the team's drive came from a change in the way they played. Earlier in the season, Incheon tried to keep possession as much as possible through Lee Myung-joo and Shin Jin-ho. However, Incheon's attack was ineffective and was unable to break down compact defences. The glove didn't seem to fit. Incheon decided to make a change. In July, their attacking style became much simpler with the introduction of Kim Do-hyeok as central midfielder. Kim moved into space diligently, which worked well with the performances of Gerseo Fernandes and Hernandes upfront. On some occasions, Incheon used Cheon Seong-hoon and Stefan Mugoša to keep hold of the ball. Thanks to these changes including a formation switch from a 3-4-3 to a 3-5-2, Incheon finally began to take off.



Jeonbuk interim manager Kim Do-heon had an interesting way of using Maeng Seong-ung against Suwon Bluewings



**Notable Jeonbuk Stats R16-24**

Shots Inside the Box  
**74** 2nd

Aerial Duels  
**234** 2nd

Blocks  
**178** 1st



**Notable Incheon Stats R16-24**

Goals Conceded  
**6** 1st

Interceptions  
**287** 2nd

Dribbles  
**27** 2nd



AUG-  
SEPT

## Gigantic Gwangju, Daegu Marching into Final A

In the midst of the sizzling summer in August, Gwangju's form began to rise along with the temperatures and, points-wise, the team gained what their performances had deserved. With one win in five in July, Gwangju's biggest problem was finding the back of the net. Despite dominating possession they could not find a breakthrough and this situation gave Gwangju manager Lee Jung-hyo a bit of a difficult time. However, entering August, centre forwards Lee Kun-hee and Heo Yool began to find goal-scoring form.

Gwangju reaped the rewards and got the kind of results they would have wanted in September. Prime examples would be the Round 29 match against Ulsan and the Round 30 match against FC Seoul. In both games, Gwangju set themselves up in a defensive 4-4-2 formation, which was designed to press from the front. They pressed high to interfere with their opponent's build-up rather than sitting back.

Daegu FC had three wins and a draw in September, and this served as a springboard for them to advance to Final A. One thing to note is that this was done without the services of talisman Cesinha through injury. Brazilian forward Barcelos had been a big help throughout as he provided a Cesinha-less Daegu with an option out wide, relishing one-on-one situations on the flanks.

Barcelos' impressive displays reignited the chemistry between Edgar and Go Jae-hyeon. Edgar and Go occupied and exploited the space left by a defender who had gone to close down Barcelos out wide. Daegu did well tactically as a group, too. They often created situations where their central midfielders could run forward. Daegu were able to make it to Final A thanks to their results in September.



Gwangju gained points through effective game management in September



**Notable Gwangju Stats R25-31**

Possession  
**59.7%**

Goals Scored  
**13**<sup>1st</sup>

Goals Conceded  
**4**<sup>12th</sup>



**Notable Daegu Stats R25-31**

Goals Conceded  
**5**<sup>11th</sup>

Ground Duels)  
**59**<sup>1st</sup>

Blocks  
**151**<sup>1st</sup>





OCT-DEC

### The End of Long Journey, Back-to-Back Titles for Ulsan and Relegation for Suwon Bluewings

The 2023 K League 1 season entered the Final Round in mid-October. Sixth-placed Jeonbuk and seventh-placed FC Seoul met at a fork in the road in the final game of the regular season, and ended up heading in different directions. Jeonbuk beat Seoul 2-0 and snatched the last place in the Final A Group.

The league leaders Ulsan confirmed their championship in Round 35 with a win over Daegu FC. Despite their dominance earlier in the campaign, they found things a bit less straightforward in the second half of the season due to various reasons including the summer departure of Park Yong-woo. Because of that, Ulsan had a disappointing time from August to October, picking up just three wins out of 11 games. However, Ulsan got the job done and successfully defended their title. They were champions who managed to find a way through when points were needed.

Extremely poor performances in the second half of the season saw Suwon FC drop to 11th place. The last nine games of the season were particularly disappointing with four draws and five defeats. Suwon's problem was their defence. Despite efforts to improve things, such as changing formation and personnel, they could not find a solution. Furthermore, throughout the season, their goalkeepers struggled to find form and neither Park Bae-jong nor No Dong-geon were able to secure a permanent place in goal when a chance was given to them. Suwon FC conceded 76 goals this season, the most in K League history having shipped two more than Sangju Sangmu (currently Gimcheon) in 2012. Sangju actually forfeited matches in what was a 44-round league format that season.

Suwon Samsung Bluewings suffered automatic relegation after finishing bottom of the table. At the end of September, the appointment of Yeom Ki-hun brought Suwon a glimmer of hope but was not enough to avoid falling through the trap door. The most decisive game was the very last one of the season, in Round 38 against Gangwon FC. Suwon were unable to combat Gangwon's wide play, with a lack of stability in midfield that was affected by the suspension of Lee Jong-sung. As a result, Suwon had to settle for a goalless draw at home and faced their first-ever relegation. Thus, Suwon FC's record really stands out. Nevertheless, Suwon FC, who laughed last, laughed loudest after a rollercoaster Promotion-Relegation Playoff with Busan IPark thanks to explosive attacking play.



Notable Suwon FC Stats R33-38

Goals Conceded

**13**<sup>1st</sup>

Tackles

**40**<sup>11th</sup>

Interceptions

**108**<sup>10th</sup>

# Beginning to Establish the 'Tiger Kingdom'

## Looking Back at the 2023 Season with Ulsan manager Hong Myung-bo

Ulsan Hyundai clinched back-to-back K League 1 titles in 2022 and 2023 and it seems like we're now heading into the era of the 'Tiger Kingdom'. We hear from the mastermind behind this great achievement, manager Hong Myung-bo. What did the Ulsan boss think of the 2023 season? What concerns does he have in terms of preparation for 2024? The Technical Report is full of tactical stories.



### Compared to the 2022 Ulsan, what has changed in the team this year?

"We used a back three in some games this season. There was no significant change in the foundation of our tactical stance between the two seasons, but establishing a new tactic was the difference. Our defensive shape changed occasionally this season. It was a modified back three against Jeonbuk and a conventional back three when we took on Pohang.

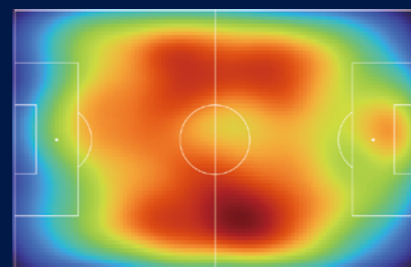
### When out of possession, you preferred to use a 4-4-2. Do you think this is the best fit for Ulsan's attacking philosophy?

"Yes, I think so. If you play a back three you will end up having longer distances to run, not to mention that people get the impression that your football is defensive. I found a back four the most comfortable system for us and it has been the best fitting system for us."

### I've brought a heatmap that shows the area of the pitch where each team won the ball back this season. This is how it looks for Ulsan.

"We took the ball back high up the pitch. I guess teams like Daegu would have a red area [higher intensity] further back. Two years ago we began to win the ball

back further up and we've tried to maintain our pressing shape no matter where we play, whether that be at home or away. Other teams tend to sit back away from home, but we kept it consistent and pressed no matter where we were."



### What's interesting about Ulsan's squad is that it is the oldest in K League 1 with an average age of 29.1.

"That is because we have a lot of experienced players who play their part. Of course, we feel the need to improve in that regard moving forward."

### Ulsan ranked first in a lot of different indexes; first in possession rate, first in possession in the attacking third and midfield area, and second in the defensive third. This shows that Ulsan kept possession regardless of where the players were on the field this season.

"Possession, that's what we have been in pursuit of since I came to Ulsan. That

is how we were able to control games. Of course, there have been setbacks as well. Sometimes we seemed to want to create the perfect chance when we just needed to power through and have a shot, and became too obsessed with creating the chance. But that gradually improved at the end of the Final A Round."

### Ulsan scored more goals (39) in the second half of games than in the first half (24). Do you think this has any meaning? How do you see this?

"Yes, it has meaning. There were a couple of games where we were trailing after going a goal behind. So, we had to push even harder in the second half and find a way to score no matter what. We put ourselves in a situation where we desperately needed to keep attacking to win. So those kinds of situations are perhaps behind these statistical figures."

### Ulsan scored eight goals from outside of the box this season. Do you think this is a fair reflection or not?

"Well, I think it's a bit low. But compared to other teams, I don't think our figure was particularly an underachievement either. (Interviewer: Is it less common to see shots from distance in modern football?) I think so because modern football emphasises using the half-spaces."

### How worried you were when holding midfielder Park Yong-woo departed from Ulsan this summer. Afterwards, you experimented with other players tasked with taking over Park's role.

"We have a few players who can play in Park Yong-woo's position, for example, Kim Min-hyeok, Lee Chung-yong, Lee Dong-gyeong, Lee Gyu-sung, and Kim Sung-joon. But they are different in how they play because Park is the kind of a player who does all the dirty work. So, when I asked them to play in a similar way, they had difficulty adapting. As time went on, it became better and better, but never to a level I was satisfied with. In the way I like my teams to play football, the role of defensive midfielder is crucial. We can play more aggressive football with a player like Park Yong-woo so we need that kind of midfielder."

### During pre-season, I heard that Ulsan were working on an attacking shape with a back three, but I don't think it was implemented that much during the season.

"Well, our players are still used to playing in a back four. When we switched to a back three, I got the feeling that the players didn't really want to be set up that way. In a back three, defenders need to move differently, which is difficult and requires practice. I can't get the players to stand in that shape without practice. It took a month of practice just planning for one game."

### When taking on Pohang this season, Ulsan's shape was a classic back three. What made you change the formation for a clash with Pohang?

"Back then, we were suffering from a dip in form while Pohang had been in fine form. I remember that Pohang had been unbeaten for ten games with five wins and five draws, but we'd won three, drawn three, and lost four. So, I thought we would have a smaller chance of winning if we stuck with our regular formation. As a result, I decided to change a bit. The game ended level in the end, but that one point we picked up was very precious. It probably was the most important game as we were heading towards the end of the season at a time when the result only mattered."

### A combination of Martin Ádám and Joo Min-kyu was brought into use in the second half of matches when looking to turn things around. How do you assess the combination as Ulsan's Plan B?

"We used them together in the second half as starting them together wouldn't have been as effective with the opposition not tired yet. However, my honest thought is that this combination would not be "the best" option for the second half either. I don't mind so much if the other team is able to predict our tactical changes because do that as well. Most will have a bit of an idea of which players will be introduced and when. Nevertheless, I think our substitutes did a great job when they were brought on."

### Ulsan had a Plan A and a Plan B. Will there be a Plan C or even Plan D next season? Or will there be a new and updated Plan A?

"Sure, our Plan A could change. We are getting things ready step by step in terms of defensive shape or the formation in midfield. It's not complete though."

### It must be difficult trying to prepare for the 2024 season as there'll be players away on international duty for the 2023 AFC Qatar Asian Cup. Also, there's the knockout stages of the 2023/2024 AFC Champions League in February.

"There's an awful lot to think about. I don't know how many will be away, but they won't be able to have a proper rest. What we do in pre-season and how we spend pre-season depends on how well-rested the players are and how much time we have. But this time won't be able to have a normal pre-season. I will have to discuss how we get ready for the new season with our fitness coach."

### Tactics are very important in modern football perhaps more so when compared to when you were a player. What do tactics mean in football in the modern day?

"You can feel how much tactics have evolved. But on the other hand, when I played there was a lot of use of a conventional back three with a libero-type player but you don't see a lot of that these days. I believe we could improve by util-

ising that kind of system (Interviewer: can a libero system fit modern football?) Well, I believe there's a chance if we can find a player who can play that role. So we have to find a player like that first."

### What are the differences in tactics between the past and present?

"Tactics have become more intricate compared to the past. Also, the player's understanding of football has improved. In the past, I felt like there was more emphasis on physicality over tactics, but this has changed and games have improved. (Interviewer: Was there a concept of using the half-spaces?) I don't think there was much. Well, I am not saying that that tactical idea never existed back then, but that term wasn't commonly used or spoken. I remember we were asked to move into that area [half-space], but the tactical idea itself wasn't as sophisticated as it is now."

### Then, as the use of the term 'half spaces' is very common, what does this area mean in modern football?

"It is a very important area when attacking as well as defending. For example, we will have more chances of dragging defenders out of position by attempting to attack in that space. Once defenders are out of position, there is space left. That's it and everything begins from there."

### Last question. Tactical battles between the 12 managers made the 2023 K League 1 season an interesting one. At what sort of level would you rank their ability compared to managers in other countries?

"Each team has unique and distinctive tactical features, and credit for that must go to their managers. I think what we have seen this season is different types of tactics going up against each other, and each team using a tactic that suited them best with what they had at their disposal. I don't think there is a drop in quality when compared to managers overseas. Although there was a time when the quality of games went down due to scorching temperatures in summer, our games have reached a high enough level of quality."

# Chung Jung-yong's 'Tailored Management'

## to Establish a Formula for Dominant Gimcheon Sangmu

The 2023 season looked as though it was going to be difficult for Gimcheon. The military side struggled in the early stage of the season, and other teams were going strong. However, things started to change once Chung Jung-yong took the reins. He made an impact, starting from the players' point of view, rather than himself. His efforts paid dividends by clinching a surprising championship title on the last day of the season. We caught up with Chung Jung-yong, the manager of the 2023 K League 2 champions Gimcheon Sangmu.



**Let's begin with an easy question. What did it feel like to win the K League 2 title this season?**

"To be honest, title-wise, I didn't think it was going to be our year. Also, I never even imagined what happened with Busan would happen. It was a shame that we couldn't celebrate our title much together as the players had to do some military training the day after. They had to wake up early."

**It was an incredible title win with such a big twist right at the end. How did you assess the chances of winning the title when you were appointed?**

"Well, most people predicted that Gimcheon would be the strongest side in K League 2, but that's not what I thought. My honest thought when I first came to the club was that the chances would be slim. So, I set a more realistic goal, which was to secure a place in the playoffs because there was such an imbalance in the squad, and I was trying to focus on what I could do."

**According to the TSG report, Gimcheon's positioning was different depending on where Kang Hyun-muk was played. Can you talk us through it?**

"As a league, K League 2 is more straightforward. But even so I thought we could win games through build-up play. So what I did first was move Kang Hyun-muk around to different positions in response to the number of midfielders the opposition had. It wasn't easy at the start, but it gradually got better and better, and it eventually led to some good chemistry between Kang Hyun-muk and Cho Young-wook. When Cho went on that goal-scoring run, Kang's contributions had been immense."

**Some pundits said that Gimcheon had a lot of different attacking options. What did you think of the team's attacking quality?**

"Lee Young-jun was our main target man but he's still young. Cho Young-wook can play in that position, but it's not his natural position. So I concluded that we need to utilise the abundance of wingers that

we have in our squad. We tried to find a way by playing them in inverted winger roles. We focused on getting the best out of them rather than forcing them to play my football philosophy."

**Stats-wise Gimcheon's season appeared less spectacular.**

"I think we had one or two weaknesses as well this season. Moreover, players had a bit of difficulty in terms of mental strength. But all players who come to Gimcheon have quality. So I thought what I needed to do was help them develop and be strong mentally. Gimcheon players were less motivated compared to other teams. What I learnt from ten years of working with the Korean Football Association, a manager should motivate players in order for them to grow. Then we can see what comes next."

**Even with this image you have as being a tactician, it sounds like you put emphasis on looking after the players' mental strength this season.**

"I didn't want to hear that Gimcheon

players don't give 100% or they avoid physical battles or they are not energetic on the pitch. So I said to the boys that professional footballers should always give 100% no matter what and then you'll develop further and become a national team player one day. On and off the pitch every day, what I stressed most was how important it is to be ready mentally. Once players are mentally ready, then you can instil in them the other aspects of their game they need."

**It must have been a concern for you when Cho Young-wook was discharged from military service after winning a gold medal with the South Korea U24 Team at the Hangzhou Asian Games.**

"It wasn't easy, but we coped without him as a team. We spent time trying to maximise what we're good at. For example, playing Kim Hyeon-ug on the other side, or capitalising on Lee Joon-suk's speed, or improving defensive cohesion. We talked and helped each other, and that boosted our confidence."

**This question comes from the TSG analysis. It said that Gimcheon maintained a good level of defensive cohesion, even though the squad was rotated.**

"No matter where I was, my time with Seoul ELand, or with the Korea U20 Team at the FIFA U20 World Cup, I am quite confident with how we defend as a team. I usually prepare the team's defensive shape together with the players through talking and meetings. Gimcheon had conceded more goals than they should have. Also, I found that the players were not motivated or hungry enough because of the nature of the military team. But I think our defensive ability improved in the second half of the season. I kept telling the players that you need to put in 100% even in training."

**Now Gimcheon is back in K League 1 next season. Do you see Gimcheon can shake off being a yo-yo club?**

"Gimcheon Sangmu are a team with a unique system that I had never experienced before. It isn't going to be easy. All our players are going through their basic military training, and our new recruits will be going through it soon. So I think we will be able to gather all together as a

team by February, which goes against us a bit. In this situation, realistically it's difficult to form team cohesion. But on the other hand, I can't wait [to see how we do in the top flight]. The attitude and the reaction that I saw from the players in the second half of the season left a strong mark in my mind. Once we established our style of play, we could maintain it even with a new batch of players because all the players coming to this team played in the K League before. I believe in them. So how we do from March to May could be vital because at that time our team cohesion is expected to still be low and we'll have to find a way through."

**What will Gimcheon's tactical approach be in K League 1?**

"Well, I can't say until the players have returned [laugh]. Because that's when you can figure out the details about players like strengths and fitness. But one thing I can be sure of is we cannot spend time just defending. I don't want my team to defend all the time. We'll look to see as much of the ball as we can in the other team's half. [Interviewer: Isn't it going to be difficult against Ulsan or Gwangju?] Of course, it is. Nevertheless, we have to challenge ourselves and I believe we have the potential to do so. We will focus on getting the players on track to regain their form and increase our team cohesion as early as possible."

**How good is the Korean manager's ability compared to the overseas manager?**

"I think it has improved significantly. Look at their salaries [laugh]. I would like to applaud them. But we still need to study more and develop the best tactics that work best in Korea. These days we can keep up with the latest trends. I think this is what led to K League's boom in popularity in 2023. K League 1 is the best league in Asia, and there are many Korean players in Europe. In this sort of environment, players as well as managers can help and teach each other, and there's still the potential to grow even further. Korean football will be better and better."

**Do you have any thoughts or concerns about coming up with tactics?**

"Well, it's a great tactic when things

happen the way a manager predicts, but it's not always the case. What I think is important is to find the best system that suits your players. Then it can be said that you are a 'good manager'. Throughout my managerial career, I've spent time in different roles with various teams such as Korea youth national teams working with young players, second division teams and now I'm working with Gimcheon in what's a unique sort of situation. One thing I've felt that's been in common with all of them is that it is more important to figure out what we can do best rather than following the trends. So I spend my time these days thinking what combinations we should use to improve our chances and what we need to do to increase our team cohesion."

**Is there anything that's more important than tactics?**

"Tactics are very important in football, but what is more important is an individual's mental strength. Players with a strong desire to prove themselves on the pitch can produce better results. This is fundamental for a team's success in a combination of tactics and other things."

**At a unique club like Gimcheon, is there anything specific that you want to achieve?**

"Former manager Kim Tae-wan told me the other day that Gimcheon is a team that comes with a lot of risk in terms of team management and results. I want that risk to be as small as possible. I can't say that the pool of players is bad, they are all proven K League players. So it's my priority to find the optimal system that suits them best within our environment. Then, a tactic and other things will naturally come together. It's interesting and I'm excited. I can't wait to see how things are going to unfold for us."

MVP

# Kim Young-gwon

"I'm not going to stop here. The last page in the story of my life as a footballer has just begun." Ulsan centre back Kim Young-gwon has been awarded the Most Valuable Player for the 2023 season in K League 1. He won an even number of votes from the three voting groups: managers, captains, and media. The South Korean international was linked with a transfer away from Ulsan in the middle of the season but decided to stay to complete the mission. As a result, he was able to receive the honour at the end-of-season award ceremony. More than just a centre back, he is among the top players in K League 1.



## K LEAGUE 1 BEST 11

**GK**  
HYUNDAI



**Jo Hyeon-woo**  
13 clean sheets

Even we have lost count of how many times Jo Hyeon-woo has won the Best Goalkeeper Award. It feels like the award is exclusively reserved for him. But even if you're bored of Jo winning it, there's not a lot that can be done. No other goalkeeper outperformed him this season, keeping the most clean sheets with 13.

**DF**  
Ssangnam



**Wanderson**  
7.09 average rating

An attack-minded defender who made Pohang more dangerous. He obtained the second-highest average rating among all K League 1 full backs. He showed off his attacking instincts through speed and crossing. His contributions in terms of attacking statistics were a bit low, but there was no better player than Wanderson in this position this season.

**DF**  
HYUNDAI



**Kim Young-gwon**  
940 Forward Passes in the Middle Third

He recorded the most forward passes in the middle third of the pitch among all K League 1 players with 940. This shows how important he was for Ulsan this season, serving as the starting point for Ulsan's build-up play.

**DF**  
Ssangnam



**Alex Grant**  
169 interceptions

He was excellent at interceptions and recorded the second-most among all K League 1 centre backs. Grant was brilliant in a number of aspects of his games and shone the brightest when it came to the fundamentals of being a defender.

**DF**  
HYUNDAI



**Seol Young-woo**  
24 shots attempted

A fast-developing full back who can play on both sides. In particular, this year saw him develop his attacking ability by scoring three goals from the most shots on target by a full back with nine.

**MF**  
HYUNDAI



**Um Won-sang**  
Highest speed of 36.25km/h

Currently one of the fastest players in K League 1 with a top speed of 36.25km/h. One particular highlight was, with unstoppable speed, Um Won-sang breezing past Jeonbuk's defence before finding the back of the net. He is one of manager Hong Myung-bo's most valued resources.

**MF**  
Ssangnam



**Lee Soon-min**  
134 forward passes in the defensive third

He was categorised here as a midfielder, but he played as a defender as well as a defender this season. He has grown into a player who can influence all areas across the pitch under the guidance of manager Lee Jung-hyo. His passing ability is excellent, too. He delivered the most forward passes in the defensive third of the pitch among all K League 1 midfielders.

**MF**  
Ssangnam



**Oberdan**  
15 interceptions in the attacking third

The Steelers struck gold this season with Oberdan. The Brazilian shone the most, even when doing the basics. He kept on running and running and made himself a nuisance to opponents. He proved his quality in the K League with the most interceptions in the attacking third (15) among all K League players.

**MF**  
HYUNDAI



**Gerso Fernandes**  
32 successful dribbles

A tip of the spear for Incheon and the best dribbler in K League 1. Gerso Fernandes dribbled past defenders 32 times, which is the most in K League 1 this season. There was a big gap between himself and the second ranked for successful dribbles, Lee Hye-gyun (23).

**FW**  
HYUNDAI



**Joo Min-kyu**  
14.88 xG

What more can you say? He has been the top goal scorer in K League 1 for three consecutive seasons. That is, he is the best K League striker of the 2020s so far. His finishing ability blossomed even more after he moved to Ulsan. No one could stop him in front of the goal.

**FW**  
Ssangnam



**Zeca**  
39 key passes

Zeca was outstanding when it came to link-up play. He made 39 key passes, which is the most among all K League 1 forwards. The textbook example of being a selfless striker, he put pressure on the opposition from the frontline.

MVP

# Valdía

The 2023 K League 2 MVP was very easy to predict because of the existence of Valdía. The new signing was Jeonnam's main man in 2023, bagging 14 goals and 14 assists from 36 appearances in what was his first season in Korea. It was no wonder he got the most votes for the award. The Brazilian went further and earned more honours as he was named as the player with the most assists. He also recorded the most goal contributions with 28. It could be said that he was the most dangerous player in K League 2 this season.



## K LEAGUE 2 BEST 11

**GK**  
  
**Koo Sang-min**  
 3,240 minutes played

Busan IPark's guardian. Above all else, he was consistent. He was the only player in K League 2 to play the full 90 in every game of the 2023 season to clock up 3,240 minutes. Thanks to his performances, Busan IPark were able to dream of winning promotion right up until the end.

**DF**  
  
**Kim Dong-jin**  
 24 shots

One of K League 2's leading attack-minded fullbacks with 27 shots attempted. This figure was the most among all fullbacks in the division, as too were the five goals that he scored. He proved his value by significantly increasing his contributions defensively as well as from an attacking perspective.

**DF**  
  
**Lee Sang-min**  
 93.5% passing success rate

The last commander for Gimcheon left an astounding record of a 93.5% passing success rate. This figure was the highest among all K League 2 centre backs and serves as strong evidence that his ability brought composure to Gimcheon's back line.

**DF**  
  
**Lee Han-do**  
 158 aerial duels won

The 'ruler of the skies'. Busan IPark defender Lee Han-do won 158 aerial duels this season. This record was unrivalled within his own team with Cho Wi-je in second recording 139. He appears irreplaceable at Busan and became one of the best centre backs in K League 2.

**DF**  
  
**Choi Jun**  
 7.33 average rating

Choi Jun made Busan's defence more diverse. He obtained the highest average rating among all K League 2 full backs with the second-highest number of goal contributions with two goals and five assists. Still developing as a defender, Choi has high levels of speed and stamina.

**MF**  
  
**Kim Jin-gyu**  
 196 forward passes in the attacking third


The conductor of Gimcheon Sangmu. He delivered 196 forward passes in the attacking third of the pitch, and was first in that regard among all K League 2 players, despite playing just 2,248 minutes in total. He played a huge part for Gimcheon this season.

**MF**  
  
**Valdía**  
 28 goal contributions

Is any explanation needed for Valdía's place? His number of goal contributions tells its own story as he made the most (28) among all players in K League 1 and 2. He was his teammates' favourite option to pass to and was expected to do something magical - which he usually did. He probably is one of the most memorable players in the history of K League 2.

**MF**  
  
**Won Du-jae**  
 2,401 passes

Won Du-jae played just behind another Best XI player, his Gimcheon teammate Kim Jin-gyu where he brought composure to the team. He made a total of 2,401 passes which was the highest among all K League 2 players, and 400 more than Bucheon FC 1995's Kazuki Takahashi.

**MF**  
  
**Mo Jae-hyeon**  
 50% conversion rate for shots on target

A key player in Gyeongnam's attacking style of football. He boasted the highest shots-on-target conversion rates among all K League 2 wingers. Despite not being a centre forward, he managed to lad 12 shots on target, 6 of which went in. This meant that when Mo Jae-hyeon got a shot on target there was a 50% chance of it being a goal.

**FW**  
  
**Jorge Teixeira**  
 63 shots inside the box

A reason why Chungbuk Cheongju was able to enjoy a solid first season in K League was the presence of Jorge. He was key to the team's counterattack and showed great tactical understanding. He also contributed to the team defensively when Chungbuk Cheongju had to park the bus.

**FW**  
  
**Luis Mina**  
 16 goals

The man who led Gimpo's miraculous run to the playoffs. Luis Mina won the K League 2 golden boot this season with 16 goals scored. His team usually played quite defensive football in a back three, and so had to be clinical when chances fell to them. This was a difficult task but Luis stepped up and finished them.

## RESULTS K League 1

Award	Club	Name	Votes			Weighted Score			Final Score	
			Managers	Captains	Journalists	Managers	Captains	Journalists		
<b>Manager of the Season</b>	Pohang	K.Gidong	1	5	17	2.50	12.50	5.91	20.91	
	Gwangju	L.Junghyo	1	1	59	2.50	2.50	20.52	25.52	
	Incheon	J.Sunghwan	1	2	3	2.50	5.00	1.04	8.54	
	Ulsan	H.Myeongbo	9	4	36	22.50	10.00	12.52	45.02	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>MVP of the Season</b>	Ulsan	K.Younggwon	6	4	55	15.00	10.00	19.13	44.13	
	Gwangju	A.Youngkyu	0	0	8	0.00	0.00	2.78	2.78	
	Pohang	Zeca	4	7	41	10.00	17.50	14.26	41.76	
	Daejeon	Tiago	2	1	11	5.00	2.50	3.83	11.33	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Young Player of the Season</b>	Suwon	K.Joochan	3	1	15	7.50	2.50	5.22	15.22	
	Pohang	L.Hojae	2	2	22	5.00	5.00	7.65	17.65	
	Gwangju	J.Hoyeon	2	6	43	5.00	15.00	14.96	34.96	
	Daegu	H.Jaewon	5	3	35	12.50	7.50	12.17	32.17	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best GK</b>	Gwangju	K.Kyeongmin	0	2	16	0.00	5.00	5.57	10.57	
	Daejeon	L.Changgeun	1	2	31	2.50	5.00	10.78	18.28	
	Ulsan	J.Hyunwoo	9	8	62	22.50	20.00	21.57	64.07	
	Pohang	H.Injae	2	0	6	5.00	0.00	2.09	7.09	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best DF (Left back)</b>	Jeonbuk	K.Jinsu	6	1	32	15.00	2.50	11.13	28.63	
	Pohang	Wanderson	6	7	47	15.00	17.50	16.35	48.85	
	Gwangju	L.Mingi	0	2	21	0.00	5.00	7.30	12.30	
	Daegu	H.Chul	0	2	15	0.00	5.00	5.22	10.22	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best DF (Centre back)</b>	Pohang	Grant	3	6	41	3.75	7.50	7.13	18.38	
	Ulsan	K.Keehee	0	3	15	0.00	3.75	2.61	6.36	
	Ulsan	K.Younggwon	10	7	76	12.50	8.75	13.22	34.47	
	Gangwon	K.Youngbin	0	1	2	0.00	1.25	0.35	1.60	
	Daegu	K.Jinhyuk	0	1	1	0.00	1.25	0.17	1.42	
	Jeonbuk	P.Jinseop	4	1	41	5.00	1.25	7.13	13.38	
	Gwangju	A.Youngkyu	2	1	33	2.50	1.25	5.74	9.49	
	Gwangju	Timo	5	4	21	6.25	5.00	3.65	14.90	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	<b>Best DF (Right back)</b>	Gwangju	D.Hyeonseok	2	6	31	5.00	15.00	10.78	30.78
Pohang		P.Seungwook	2	1	3	5.00	2.50	1.04	8.54	
Ulsan		S.Youngwoo	8	5	77	20.00	12.50	26.78	59.28	
Jeonbuk		A.Hyeonbeom	0	0	4	0.00	0.00	1.39	1.39	
<b>Total</b>				<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best MF (Left midfielder)</b>	Seoul	N.Sangho	4	4	48	10.00	10.00	16.70	36.70	
	Ulsan	Ludwigson	2	0	16	5.00	0.00	5.57	10.57	
	Pohang	B.Sungdong	0	4	12	0.00	10.00	4.17	14.17	
	Incheon	Gerso	6	4	39	15.00	10.00	13.57	38.57	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best MF (Centre midfielder)</b>	Pohang	G.Youngjun	3	2	43	3.75	2.50	7.48	13.73	
	Incheon	K.Dohyeok	1	0	14	1.25	0.00	2.43	3.68	
	Ulsan	K.Minhyeok	0	1	6	0.00	1.25	1.04	2.29	
	Jeonbuk	P.Seungho	4	3	22	5.00	3.75	3.83	12.58	
	Pohang	Oberdan	8	8	49	10.00	10.00	8.52	28.52	
	SuwonFC	Y.Bitgaram	2	0	7	2.50	0.00	1.22	3.72	
	Gwangju	L.Soonmin	5	5	73	6.25	6.25	12.70	25.20	
	Ulsan	L.Chungyong	1	5	16	1.25	6.25	2.78	10.28	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	<b>Best MF (Right midfielder)</b>	Pohang	K.Seungdae	3	6	27	7.50	15.00	9.39	31.89
Daejeon		K.Ingyun	2	2	10	5.00	5.00	3.48	13.48	
Gwangju		Asani	5	2	14	12.50	5.00	4.87	22.37	
Ulsan		U.Wonsang	2	2	64	5.00	5.00	22.26	32.26	
<b>Total</b>				<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best FW</b>	Daegu	G.Jaehyeon	0	1	1	0.00	1.25	0.17	1.42	
	Daegu	Edgar	1	1	1	1.25	1.25	0.17	2.67	
	Incheon	Hernandes	2	1	3	2.50	1.25	0.52	4.27	
	Jeju	Yuri Jonathan	0	0	2	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.35	
	SuwonFC	L.Seungwoo	1	1	7	1.25	1.25	1.22	3.72	
	Pohang	Zeca	9	9	63	11.25	11.25	10.96	33.46	
	Ulsan	J.Minkyu	6	10	96	7.50	12.50	16.70	36.70	
	Daejeon	Tiago	5	1	57	6.25	1.25	9.91	17.41	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## RESULTS K League 2

Award	Club	Name	Votes			Weighted Score			Final Score	
			Managers	Captains	Journalists	Managers	Captains	Journalists		
<b>Manager of the Season</b>	Gimpo	K.Jeongwoon	3	3	42	6.92	6.92	16.63	30.48	
	Busan	P.Jinsub	1	6	24	2.31	13.85	9.50	25.66	
	Bucheon	L.Youngmin	3	4	7	6.92	9.23	2.77	18.93	
	Gimcheon	C.Jungyong	6	0	28	13.85	0.00	11.09	24.94	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>MVP of the Season</b>	Jeonnam	Valdivia	6	10	52	13.85	23.08	20.59	57.52	
	Gimcheon	W.Dujae	3	1	35	6.92	2.31	13.86	23.09	
	Busan	L.Hando	1	2	11	2.31	4.62	4.36	11.28	
	Chungbuk Cheongju	Jorge	3	0	3	6.92	0.00	1.19	8.11	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Young Player of the Season</b>	Gimcheon	K.Minjun	2	2	6	4.62	4.62	2.38	11.61	
	Bucheon	A.Jaejoon	9	7	80	20.77	16.15	31.68	68.61	
	Gimpo	C.Seonggwon	0	1	4	0.00	2.31	1.58	3.89	
	Busan	C.Wijae	2	3	11	4.62	6.92	4.36	15.89	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best GK</b>	Gyeongnam	G.Dongmin	1	2	8	2.31	4.62	3.17	10.09	
	Busan	K.Sangmin	9	6	38	20.77	13.85	15.05	49.66	
	Gimpo	P.Cheonghyo	2	4	32	4.62	9.23	12.67	26.52	
	Gimcheon	S.Songhun	1	1	23	2.31	2.31	9.11	13.72	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best DF (Left back)</b>	Anyang	K.Dongjin	4	8	19	9.23	18.46	7.52	35.22	
	Gimcheon	P.Mingyu	4	2	45	9.23	4.62	17.82	31.67	
	Gyeongnam	P.Minseo	4	3	21	9.23	6.92	8.32	24.47	
	Busan	E.Jeongwon	1	0	16	2.31	0.00	6.34	8.64	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best DF (Centre back)</b>	Gimcheon	K.Jaewoo	1	1	23	1.15	1.15	4.55	6.86	
	Gimpo	K.Taehan	1	2	18	1.15	2.31	3.56	7.03	
	Bucheon	Nilson	3	3	41	3.46	3.46	8.12	15.04	
	Gimcheon	L.Sangmin	7	2	28	8.08	2.31	5.54	15.93	
	Busan	L.Hando	9	10	58	10.38	11.54	11.49	33.41	
	Chungbuk Cheongju	L.Hansaim	1	2	9	1.15	2.31	1.78	5.24	
	Seongnam	J.Sungwook	0	3	3	0.00	3.46	0.59	4.06	
	Busan	C.Wijae	4	3	22	4.62	3.46	4.36	12.43	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	<b>Best DF (Right back)</b>	Chungbuk Cheongju	K.Myungsun	2	2	3	4.62	4.62	1.19	10.42
Gimpo		P.Kwangil	1	2	18	2.31	4.62	7.13	14.05	
Anyang		J.Hyunwoo	2	3	20	4.62	6.92	7.92	19.46	
Busan		C.Jun	8	6	60	18.46	13.85	23.76	56.07	
<b>Total</b>				<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best MF (Left midfielder)</b>	Busan	K.Jeonghwan	0	2	13	0.00	4.62	5.15	9.76	
	Gimcheon	K.Jingyu	10	9	69	23.08	20.77	27.33	71.17	
	Gimpo	S.Jaemin	2	0	7	4.62	0.00	2.77	7.39	
	Chungbuk Cheongju	Peter	1	2	12	2.31	4.62	4.75	11.68	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Best MF (Centre midfielder)</b>	Gimpo	K.Yiseok	3	0	10	3.46	0.00	1.98	5.44	
	Chungnam Asan	P.Sejik	1	2	6	1.15	2.31	1.19	4.65	
	Jeonnam	Valdivia	8	11	74	9.23	12.69	14.65	36.58	
	Seoul E	Bruno	0	0	2	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.40	
	Gyeongnam	S.Hongmin	0	3	11	0.00	3.46	2.18	5.64	
	Gimcheon	W.Dujae	9	9	78	10.38	10.38	15.45	36.21	
	Busan	L.Minhyeok	1	0	17	1.15	0.00	3.37	4.52	
	Chungbuk Cheongju	J.Hyeokjin	4	1	4	4.62	1.15	0.79	6.56	
	<b>Total</b>			<b>26</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	<b>Best MF (Right midfielder)</b>	Ansan	K.Beomsu	0	1	9	0.00	2.31	3.56	5.87
Gyeongnam		M.Jaehyeon	8	5	40	18.46	11.54	15.84	45.84	
Anyang		Yago	4	5	21	9.23	11.54	8.32	29.09	
Jeonnam		PLlana	1	2	31	2.31	4.62	12.28	19.20	
<b>Total</b>				<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>30</b> </			



# 02

TALKING POINTS





TOPIC 1  
Final A Teams with a Clear and Firm Plan A

A common theme found among the Final A teams this season is that they all established a clear and firm Plan A. Throughout the season, teams that developed a distinct style with tactical consistency performed well and picked up good results. All teams in Final A except for Jeonbuk who experienced managerial changes showed that they were moving in the direction they had intended. Top teams in K League 1 usually have a firm Plan A, while others at the bottom end tend to use an array of different tactics. This is because bottom-end teams are forced to change things constantly if their Plan A was no longer working. However, despite this being factored in, this year's top teams showed a higher degree of sticking to Plan A. As already mentioned, all teams in Final A except for Jeonbuk maintained their own approach, without some degree of change to the tactics. For Ulsan and Pohang, they occasionally made some tweaks to their primary tactics depending on the opposition, but they maintained their original game plan. Hong Myung-bo's Ulsan prepared a tactical change with a back three for a more defensive approach. This modification was only put into use when they took on Jeonbuk and Pohang. Other than that, a 4-2-3-1 had been their primary formation.

Gwangju FC kept a clear framework of playing a passing brand of football. Although there was a change in formation game by game, their philosophy of keeping possession was never lost. Also, the change in formation was more like a means of maximising their strengths, rather than responding to the opponent's tactics. Throughout the season Gwangju successfully managed to retain their principle of dominating matches regardless of formation. Incheon United played a style of football that was similar to 2022 within Jo Sung-hwan's back three-based-tactic. Their style remained largely unchanged aside from a switch of formations, between a 3-4-3 and a 3-5-2. Incheon were clinical, playing with clear and simple goals in attack and defence. Finally, Daegu FC once again became a team that showed the most consistent pattern of using their own Plan A among all teams. Daegu under manager Choi Won-kwon sat even deeper than ever. Daegu's possession rate of 35.1% this season was the lowest in K League 1 since 2015. The Sky Blues formed a deep defensive shape with an emphasis on counterattacking whoever they played against. Their stubbornness for their own Plan A enabled them to make it to Final A Group in the end.

Positions	Team	Formation	Manager(s)
1	Ulsan	4-2-3-1	Hong Myung-bo
2	Pohang	4-4-2	Kim Gi-dong
3	Gwangju	4-4-2	Lee Jung-hyo
4	Jeonbuk	4-4-2, 3-4-3	Kim Sang-sik → Kim Do-heon → Dan Petrescu
5	Incheon	3-4-3, 3-5-2	Jo Sung-hwan
6	Daegu	3-4-3	Choi Won-kwon
7	Seoul	4-3-3, 4-4-2, 3-4-3	An Ik-soo → Kim Jin-kyu
8	Daejeon	3-5-2, 4-4-2	Lee Min-sung
9	Jeju	3-4-3, 4-4-2	Nam Ki-il → Jung Jo-gook
10	Gangwon	3-4-3, 4-4-2	Choi Yong-soo → Yoon Jong-hwan
11	Suwon FC	4-2-3-1, 3-4-3	Kim Do-kyun
12	Suwon	4-2-3-1, 3-4-3, 4-3-3	Lee Byung-geun → Choi Sung-yong → Kim Byung-soo → Yeom Ki-hun

Formations and K League 1 managers this season



TOPIC 2  
Emergence of Man-Marking Systems in K League 2

Two teams in K League 2 used a strict man-marking system this season, Busan IPark and Chungbuk Cheongju. Usually, a man-marking system is interchangeably used with zonal marking because it can be risky to only follow the opponents without protecting the space. However, Busan and Chungbuk Cheongju stuck to a man-marking system throughout the season and performed better than expected. Busan finished the runner-up in the regular season, while Chungbuk Cheongju finished eighth despite them being the newly established K League team. They also have another thing in common in that they were located in the upper end of the table in terms of the fewest goals conceded with Busan second, and Chungbuk Cheongju fifth. The man-marking systems for the two teams started with two key principles. First, they were not restricted by zonal marking but focused on keeping track of the opposition's attacking players. All players moved to their designated man. Secondly, they retained one more defender at the back, and one fewer attacker up front so that they could secure more stability in defence. This mechanism is based on the fundamentals of a man-marking system. Busan IPark applied a strong press based on their man-mark-

ing system. The key was the channelling defending executed by a striker, which is a form of defending whereby the opposing attacker is lured out towards the flank. Busan could overcome having a man fewer upfront by boxing the attacking side in on the flank. Because of the pressure from the side, the centre back of the attacking team couldn't send the ball to the other centre back. In this way, Busan started to develop a press based on their man-marking system. Meanwhile, the way Chungbuk Cheongju utilised a man-marking system was different. They left one of the opposition's centre backs unmarked and, instead, they implemented very tight man-marking on the other players, while the last defender with the ball was free but with limited options available for the ball to be passed. This did not prove to be as effective as Busan's method, but it provided Chungbuk Cheongju with a resolute defence.



Busan and Chungbuk Cheongju got the results they wanted based on a man-marking system this season.

## TOPIC 3

## Tactical Diversification of Central Midfielders



### An Option for Stability, Pohang Midfielder Oberdan

Pohang Steelers added a bit of extra stability through Oberdan's movement and cover as box-to-box midfielder. Pohang is a team that likes to have plenty of players forward in a 4-4-2 formation by instructing their full-backs to play high, alongside four players in the attacking line. Thus, they often have six players up front. Oberdan really shone as a box-to-box midfielder. Part of his mission was to provide support to the front line. But having six players up front led to more space in midfield, but the Brazilian did a great job to minimise the risk through his movement and tackling ability. He was the only outfield player who earned a full ninety minutes in every game up until Round 33. This just shows how important he was to Pohang's success.



Pohang made the best use of Oberdan to cover space in midfield.



### A Hybrid of Midfielder and Striker Kim Yi-seok

There are different types of box-to-box midfielders. Gimpo FC's Kim Yi-seok, for example, who used him as one of the main goal-scoring routes. Gimpo were usually set up in a 3-4-1-2 formation with two strikers tending to drop deep to receive the ball. Every time they became outnumbered, they tended to drop deep or to shift the side to break down the defence. Instead, midfielder Kim Yi-seok moved forward into the space left by the two strikers coming to receive the ball. Kim, along with the two wingbacks, would then quickly attempt to penetrate the defence; this was the key to their attacking strategy this season. It was difficult to defend against as this swapping of positions was executed swiftly. Kim Yi-seok scored four goals this season as a result of his ability to break into the box or show off his attack instinct from distance. He was Gimpo's second-top scorer after Luis Mina who got 16 goals and was a solid attacking option.



Box-to-box midfielder Kim Yi-seok was actively involved with Gimpo's frontline.



### Aggressive Use of Central Midfielders Suwon FC

Suwon FC wanted their midfielders to be attacking. What stands out the most is how they started to utilise Lee Seung-woo in the summer. From July to August, Suwon FC played Lee centrally in the midfield of a 4-3-3 and were able to pick up a 2-0 win over Suwon Bluewings in Round 25 and a 2-1 win over Gangwon in Round 27. The advantages of playing Lee centrally can be summarised in three parts. First, he was able to receive the ball without being under pressure. Secondly, he was able to pick the ball up while facing toward goal. Thirdly, Suwon were able to capitalise on his pace by getting him to run in behind. Suwon FC seemed to enjoy having Lee play between midfield and attack and picked up some good results along the way. It was interesting how Suwon FC utilised central midfielder Lee Young-jae as well. The midfielder, standing on the left of three in a 4-3-3, offered a lot down that side thanks to his passing accuracy. He also contributed by supplying a target man in the box by going back and forth between the left and centre. By the end of the season there was a strong connection again between Lee and Kim Hyun.



Suwon FC utilised central midfielders in an attacking way



03

ANALYSIS

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# GOAL SCORING

A tendency of low-scoring matches in K League 1 has become something of a trend. This year's K League 1 saw a total of 567 goals scored in 228 games. This figure is only four goals fewer than the record set in 2021 and the second-lowest season in the last eight years. There has been a low goal-scoring trend in K League 1 over the last three years.



## Will the low-scoring trend continue in K League 1?

There has been a bit of a low-scoring trend in K League 1 since the 2021 season. Between 2016 and 2020 the goals per game figure had never dropped below 2.6 goals on average. However, the recent three seasons haven't been able to reach that figure. This season saw the second-lowest goals scored after 2021 in the last eight years.

This trend can be explained by two factors. First, defensive cohesion has become more solid in 2023. Absolute xG for this season has significantly dropped compared to last season, with 547.7 xG from 607.8. In other words, this means there was a decrease of fifty goal chances in the space of a year.

Here comes another point to look at - the number of shots made. There was no significant difference in that indicator between this season's 11.5 per game and 11.4 for the last season. However, the difference becomes more apparent when looking at the xG between the two seasons. It means that there were more shots attempted this season from less danger-

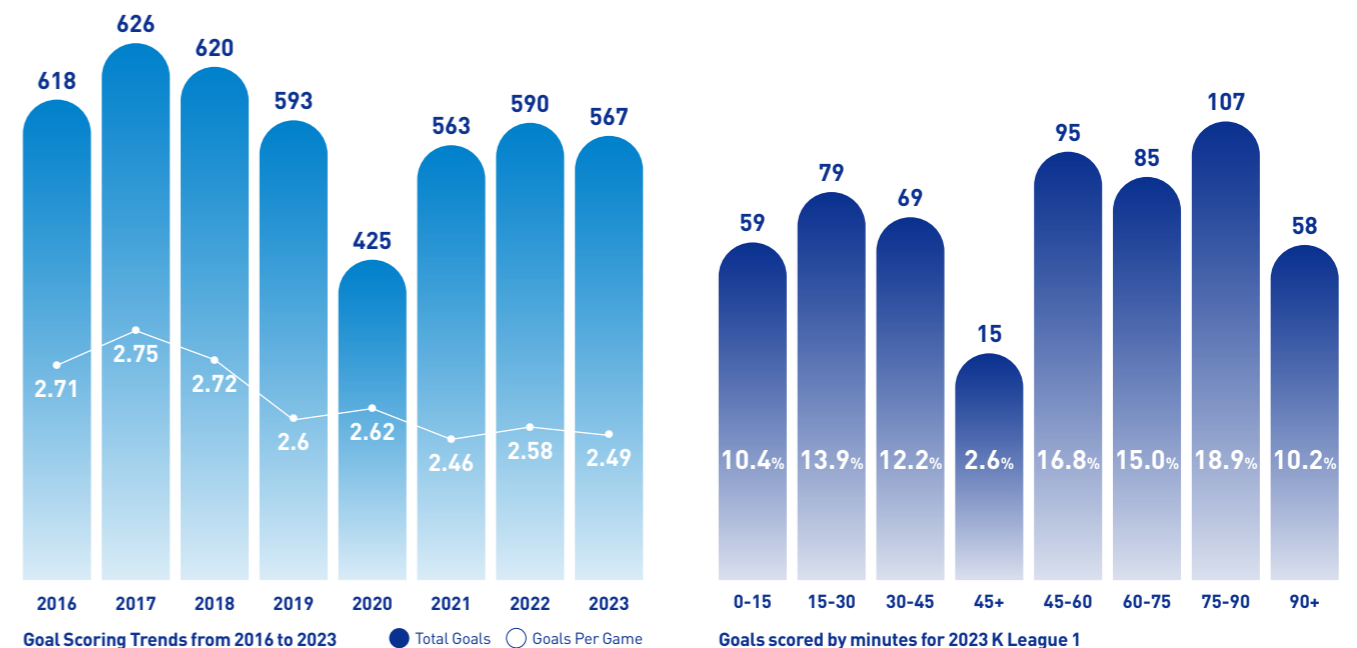
ous places on the pitch than last season. Secondly, teams at the bottom end of the table did not score the number of goals they were expected to. This season saw two teams with the most goals scored since 2021 when Jeonbuk scored 71. Ulsan Hyundai and FC Seoul both scored 63. However, Suwon Bluewings and Gangwon FC scored 35 and 30 goals respectively, which is below a goal per game on average. In particular, Gangwon FC, with only 30 goals, registered the joint-lowest goals per game average (0.79) since Sangmu Sangmu in 2012. Three more teams have equalled Gangwon in that regard since 2012: Gyeongnam FC in 2014, Busan IPark in 2015, and Seongnam FC in 2019. They all scored 30 goals in 38 games.

## A New Phenomenon Caused by Increase of Stoppage Time

One of the notable features of the K League in 2023 is the significant increase in goals scored in stoppage time of the second half. There were five to 10 goals more than the previous two seasons (48 in 2021 and 53 in 2022), and this accounts for a 1% increase

in the proportion of total goals. This appears to be related to an increase in stoppage time. The Actual Play Time (APT) in K League 1 rose to 36 minutes and 29 seconds in 2023 from 35 minutes and 10 seconds in 2022, which is a one-minute and 20-second increase. The increase in APT eventually led to an increase in goals scored in stoppage time of the second half as concentration levels usually drop towards the end of the game. On the other hand, goals scored in the second half decreased to only 287. This is the first time that the figure dropped below 300 since 2016. The League hadn't seen figures drop below 300 in the last eight years.

This decrease may suggest that concentration levels among K League 1 teams have improved. In particular, consistency in defensive cohesion has significantly increased, while there was a decrease in occasions where defensive shape collapsed. This may be due to an improvement in tactics and physicality overall. It was also down to brilliant performances from defensive midfielders such as Oberdan, Lee Soon-min, Nana Boateng, and Kim Do-hyeok.



## ANALYSIS

Team	Goals Scored (Exc. Own Goals)	Expected Goals (xG)
Ulsan	62	56.7 (-5.3)
Seoul	61	52.6 (-8.4)
Daejeon	55	40.5 (-14.5)
Pohang	53	51.0 (-2.0)
Gwangju	46	39.6 (-6.4)
Incheon	45	47.0 (+2.0)
Jeonbuk	44	49.5 (+5.5)
Suwon FC	44	45.3 (+1.3)
Jeju	42	46.4 (+4.4)
Daegu	42	43.5 (+1.5)
Suwon	34	37.6 (+3.6)
Gangwon	28	38.0 (+10.0)

### Finishing, A Decisive Factors for Goals

One feature found in goal-scoring records is that teams at the top end were more clinical finishers, but not so much at the other end. A team's ability to convert a chance proved to be the difference in K League 1 this year.

A team that scored more than what the xG indicator predicted is Daejeon Hana Citizen. This season Daejeon scored 55 goals from an xG of 40.5, 15 goals more than expected. Looking back on the last two seasons, there's been no better team than Daejeon in terms of clinical finishing.

The figure for FC Seoul is interesting, too. Seoul in 2022 scored 43 goals out of the lowest xG of 50.8 among the 12 K League 1 teams. This record was the second-lowest after relegated side Seongnam FC. Although FC Seoul in 2022 set a record-high possession record since 2015 with 61.9%, they were also the team that scored the second-fewest goals.

However, the 2023 season saw them turn things around. They were the second-best in terms of finishing in the league, scoring 8.5 goals more than their xG value through prolific forwards Na Sang-ho and Willyan Barbosa. Na Sangho scored 12 goals and became the third-top goal scorer in the league among the first among all wingers.



Meanwhile, Gangwon had the league's worst finishing record. Their xG value (38.0) was similar to Gwangju (39.6) and Suwon Bluewings (37.6), but their actual goals scored didn't go near 30 goals as Galego, Gabriel, and Yang Hyun-jun failed to convert chances they were expected to. Among them, Galego was the least successful, scoring only two from an xG of 5.4.

### Joo Min-kyu Climbed to the Top, Tiago Better than Expected

Joo Min-kyu once again became the winner of the K League 1 Golden Boot. But he won it by the skin of his teeth this year by beating Tiago through goals per minute after the two ended the season on 17. Joo has now finished as the K League 1 top scorer for three years in a row.

A keyword for his success would be 'concentration'. In the 2022 season with Jeju United, Joo Min-kyu helped his team by holding the ball up. He used to drop deep to get involved in the build-up in a 3-4-3 formation to form a 3-4-1-2, helping to add numbers in midfield.

However, in 2023 his focus was further forward. While he continued to get involved in the hold-up play, he did not spend much time in midfield and instead battled with defenders.

Ulsan Hyundai made the most of his ability. The striker moved fluidly from being deep to between the lines. While dragging defenders into deep areas, he occasionally dropped in to receive the ball. Once he did so, the pacey Um Won-sang was ready to run in behind into the space.

When Joo was paired with Martin Ádám up front, he took a supporting role by staying in the space around the Hungarian international, who was tasked with the long balls. In this role, Joo either took the second ball or attempted to confuse the defenders. When Qazaishvili was played up front, Joo also played a role in the link-up, and created chances for the Georgian

Player	Goals	xG	xGOT	Attempted Shots	Shots On Target
Joo Min-kyu	17	14.9 (-2.1)	14.9	69	35
Tiago	17	10.4 (-6.6)	11.7	71	28
Zeca	12	11.4 (-0.4)	12.1	73	29
Na Sang-ho	12	8.7 (-3.3)	7.06	79	24
Valeri Qazaishvili	11	9.4 (-1.6)	10.5	81	35
Lee Seung-woo	10	11.3 (+1.3)	11.1	80	34
Yuri Jonathan	10	9.6 (-0.4)	9.2	58	24
Edgar	9	8.5 (-0.5)	8.1	72	32
Go Jae-hyeon	9	8.4 (-0.6)	8.8	64	22
Lars	9	5.9 (-3.1)	4.2	48	16

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Tiago was excellent, too. His performances can be viewed from two points of view. First, he scored the most goals per xG among all players in K League 1. The Brazilian scored 6.5 goals more than the value, and he is two goals ahead of his teammate Kim In-gyun, who is the second in that indicator (-4.6). That is, Tiago was the most effective forward in the league.

We need to consider xGOT values to analyse his performances. xGOT is an indicator that shows the probability that a shot on target leads to a goal, and is determined by the xG value and the goalmouth

location. In other words, this indicator suggests how probable a shot attempt is to end up as a goal.

This xGOT indicator is a great yardstick to compare a forward's performances if taken into consideration with xG. We can conclude that if what is likely to be a good shot is attempted from a location where the likelihood of it being a goal is slim, the xGOT is high with a low xG. This season Tiago has the highest value of xGOT-xG among the top ten goalscorers. That means that he attempted shots in low xG situations. Tiago was at the centre of Daejeon's stellar season back in the top flight.



# SET PLAYS

The 2023 K League 1 season saw 143 goals scored from set plays. This is ten more than last season's 133 and the most in the last three seasons. This year, set-play tactics have diversified more, which can be understood as an effort to keep up with modern football trends.



Jeju United is the team that scored the most goals from set pieces this season. Of the 43 goals Jeju scored, 16 of them were from set pieces which is the most out of any K League team including the second division.

The most impressive point to look at is the corner kicks which produced 11 out of the 16 goals. Jeju United often had their corner kicks taken by Reis. The Brazilian midfielder has excellent accuracy and created goal-scoring opportunities by sending the ball to a target man near the far post.

Suwon Bluewings' figures draw attention. Suwon Bluewings have the highest proportion of goals scored being from set pieces in the K League, with 14 from a total of 35 which is close to half (40%). In fact, Suwon was the team that scored the most goals from corner kicks last season in K League 1 as well. They rank high again in this category.

Team	Goals from Set Pieces	Percentage
Jeju	16	37.2%
Gwangju	15	31.9%
Suwon	14	40.0%
Seoul	14	22.2%
Ulsan	13	20.6%
Suwon FC	12	27.3%
Daegu	11	26.2%
Jeonbuk	11	24.4%
Pohang	11	20.8%
Incheon	10	21.7%
Daejeon	10	17.9%
Gangwon	6	20.0%

K League 1 teams ranked by goals scored from set pieces (free kicks and corners)



## Jeju United Reis more accurate than anyone else

A key player for Jeju United's set piece tactics is Reis. He took corners from both sides and delivered the ball to individual players specifically rather than just whipping it in because they had tall players like Yuri Jonathan, Lim Chai-min, and Song Ju-hun. In most cases, his delivery was sent to a target man at a high height level with power. When hitting an in-swing, he aimed for the far post because it would be difficult for a goalkeeper to deal with the ball and there were fewer defenders there. Sometimes, a corner kick was played short. In this case, he hit the ball into the box firmly after a one-two with a teammate.



## Ulsan Hyundai Details in zonal marking, success behind conceding the fewest goal from corners

Ulsan boasted the most convincing figures in defensive indicators. They conceded from a corner just once, which came

from Oh Ban-suk in Round 37 against Incheon. The key to this can be found in Ulsan's defensive positioning. The Horangi used a mixture of man-marking and zonal marking when defending corner kicks. Four to five players were placed in front of the goalkeeper in a zonal system. If a ball was sent inwards the defenders moved into the six-yard box to deal with it. When the opposite happened, defenders moved outside the six-yard box to deal with the cross which then led to the ball as it was easier to cope with the ball's trajectory this way.



## Gwangju FC Diverse and Innovative Set Piece Tactics

Gwangju attempted very diverse set piece tactics and one of the most interesting ones was a corner kick pattern executed in October. During this period, none of Gwangju's players stayed inside the box for corner kicks. Instead, they remained outside and ran into the box when the ball was played. Through this tactic, they were able to outnumber the defending team at the far post because the defending teams had to stand inside the six-yard box in a zonal marking system. Although this did not result in any goals, it is worth a look from a tactical point of view.

# COUNTERATTACK

The 2023 K League season saw an overall decrease in the speed of attacks compared to the 2022 season, with a fall in Average Direct Speed from all 12 teams in K League 1. In particular, the decrease is noticeable among the teams who performed well in this regard last year. Last season, the top three teams Suwon FC, Daegu FC, and Gangwon FC recorded above 14.9 m/s, however, the best figure this season was only 14.4 m/s, set by Daegu FC.

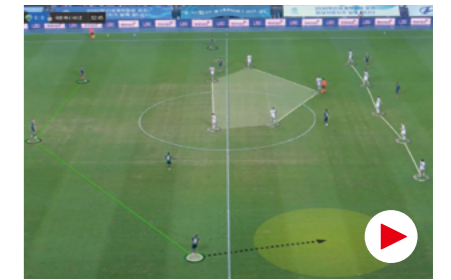


One interesting record this season is that there was no significant change in the average passes per sequence with the decline in Average Direct Speed compared to last season. This year's figure was 3.94, which is very similar to 3.89 from 2022. This result means that there is a reduction in speed when moving forward, while overall connectivity remains similar. In other words, this suggests that teams took a less aggressive approach to the games this season. Overall, K League 1 teams had the higher number of passes recorded in defence and midfield areas, with a decline in the attacking area of the pitch. This statement indicates that teams tended to stay low in possession.



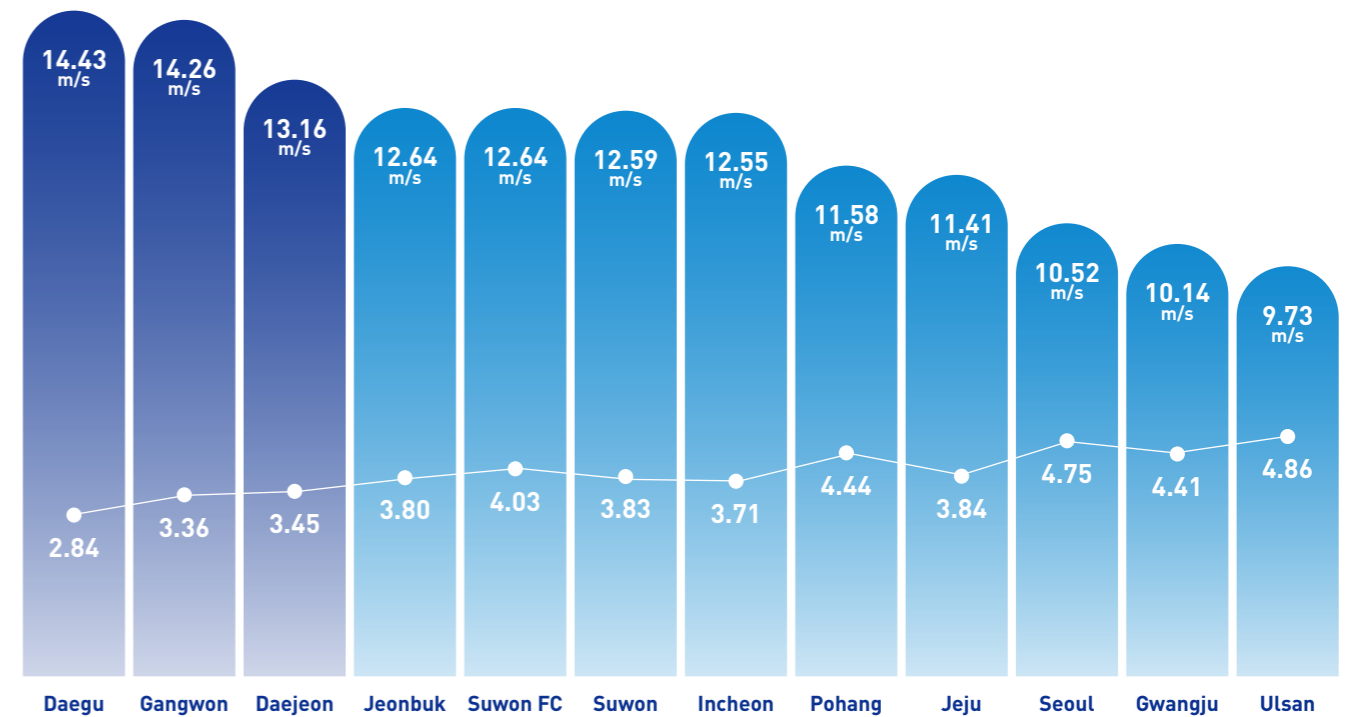
## Gangwon FC

Gangwon's strength was that they had an abundance of fast and attacking players. They bolstered their squad with the additions of Gabriel and Welinton this summer to complement the existing players such as Kim Dae-won, Lee Jung-hyeop, and Galego. They are all regarded as fast and agile. Since the appointment of Yoon Jong-hwan, Gangwon lined up with a back four and were a team that was able to counterattack regardless of formation. Their strengths were simultaneous bursts forward with equal space distribution among the players. The counterattack was key to their turnaround.



## Daejeon Hana Citizen

Daejeon would aim at space left down the flanks when counterattacking. This came from their defensive form. They set themselves up in a 5-4-1 or 5-3-2 formation. The key is that five players in the attacking area pushed opposition players to the side by standing in a narrow line. The attacking teams tended to have their wingers or wingbacks high up the pitch. This played into Daejeon's hands who exploited the space behind and went on to counterattack once they regained possession. This season Daejeon had players suitable for that tactic such as Kim In-gyun, Jeon Byung-kwan, and Shin Sang-eun.



Average direct speed and number of passes per sequence

\*Average direct speed is calculated based on the length of straight line distance towards the opponent's goal.

**Daegu FC**  
The team with the most iconic style of football, Daegu FC

Daegu FC are a team that has an iconic style of football in K League 1. But since the appointment of Choi Won-kwon, they've tended to take a defensive approach. The change began in the second half of the 2022 season and the team became more defensive with Choi in charge. Possession went down to 34.1% from 43% in the first half of the 2022 season under Alexandre Gama. Their game plan has completely changed.

Year	Team	Possession(%)
2023	Daegu	35.1%
2022	Daegu	40.4%
2021	Daegu	42.5%
2022	Gangwon	42.6%
2023	Gangwon	43.3%

Lowest Possession in K League 1 since 2015

Team	Player	Sprints in Attacking Situations
Daegu	Go Jae-hyeon	691
Gangwon	Kim Dae-won	542
Seoul	Na Sang-ho	499
Incheon	Gerso	496
Jeju	Reis	493

Most Sprints in Attacking Situations in 2023 K League 1

Team	Player	Sprints in Defending Situations
Daegu	Hwang Jae-won	561
Seoul	Kim Ju-sung	522
Pohang	Oberdan	503
Daejeon	Anton	502
Daegu	Go Jae-hyeon	489

Most Sprints in Defending Situations in 2023 K League 1

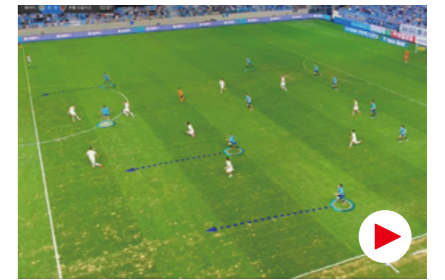


**Extreme Defensive Approach in Data**

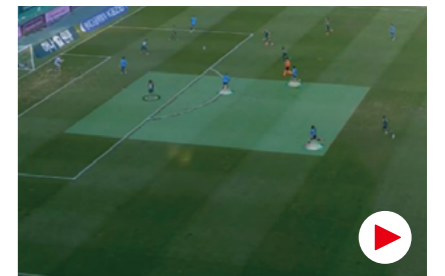
Daegu's defensive approach continued in the 2023 season. They only recorded 35.1% possession on average, which was the lowest for any team since 2015 and 5% lower than the previous figure (40.4%), also set by Daegu in 2022. Sprints is another indicator that sums up Daegu's approach. Go Jae-hyeon became the player with the most sprints in K League 1 with 691. He attempted to make the most in a team that is very much specialised in counterattacking. He was also aggressive from the front when Daegu were in possession. It was also a Daegu player who attempted the most sprints in defending situations. That is wingback Hwang Jae-won. With Daegu's tactical approach, both wingbacks were required to make runs. Both wide midfielders in Daegu's 5-4-1 formation stood narrowly, which left a lot of space for the wingbacks to cover. Daegu spent most of the time out of possession, and in turn, this resulted in an increase in the number of sprints made by the wingbacks. Hwang made 561 sprints in defending situations.

**Daegu's Counterattacking Pattern**

Daegu's counterattack was more dangerous this season. Their defensive tendencies became clearer and their counterattacking style became much more defined. This tactical cohesion helped when they were without the services of Cesinha. They picked up a lot of points in September and October even when Cesinha was out injured. Striker Edgar was at the centre of Daegu's counterattack. When a teammate picked the ball up in the defensive third of the pitch, Edgar got ready to receive it with the wide midfielders and wingbacks joining the attack as quickly as possible. The key here is that both a winger and a wingback would run forward together so that they would outnumber the defending team in wide areas. Edgar played a pivotal role in this by providing the link-up. Daegu's use of the flanks continued regardless of where Edgar was positioned. If the Brazilian was moving toward the side then the opposite flank was exploited as the defending team would be dragged out of shape when following Edgar. Daegu players looked to break forward aggressively, regardless of their positions when counterattacking. This is what led to Go Jae-hyeon having the most sprints in attacking situations.



Daegu's main counterattacking pattern: Edgar receives the ball in the middle with the both wingers making quick runs forward.



When Edgar moved out to the side, the other side was exploited.





# PRESSING

The PPDA (Passes allowed Per Defensive Action) value range among the K League 1 teams this season was much more varied compared to last year. In 2022, Champions Ulsan were the only side that had a PPDA value of below 8.0, but this year the PPDA of the top four teams ranged from 7.8 to 9. Meanwhile, the PPDA of defensive-minded teams suggest that they tended to sit back deeper. The two teams that ranked the lowest in PPDA, Incheon and Daegu, both recorded a worse PPDA value than the lowest-ranked team in this regard in 2022, Suwon FC (11.26). In spite of this, it is interesting that both teams made it into the Final A Group.



Team	PPDA
Ulsan	7.81
Jeonbuk	7.90
Pohang	7.91
Daejeon	7.92
Jeju	8.35
Seoul	9.03
Gwangju	9.18
Suwon	9.93
Suwon FC	9.97
Gangwon	10.59
Incheon	12.14
Daegu	13.59

The results of pressing intensity measured by PPDA (Passes allowed Per Defensive Action)



## Jeonbuk Hyundai

Teams that tend to have more possession end up with a higher score in PPDA because the index is calculated by the number of passes the opponent makes against them. So, if the absolute number of passes the opponent makes is low, then it is probable that a high PPDA could be obtained. However, Jeonbuk were second in this year's PPDA scores although they had as much possession as the mid-table sides - 50.5% of possession (6th) and 7.90 PPDA (2nd). This means that Jeonbuk allowed the opponent to be in possession as much as they wanted in the defending half of the pitch than any other team. Jeonbuk tended to put pressure on the opponent's frontline. Specifically, the two strikers and midfielders did what they could to disrupt the opposition's build-up play.



## Jeju United

One of Jeju's strengths is that they were capable of playing with a back three or a back four. Since the appointment of Jung Jo-gook as interim manager, they switched to a back four from Nam Ki-il's back three. Jeju's midfielders had a clear division of roles when applying pressure. Set up in a 5-4-1 (or 3-4-3) formation, they put pressure on opponents in order for them to move to the side. Two central midfielders aligned vertically and moved close to the ball to protect the back three by pressing the opponents, while the wingers closed down their direct opponents. In a 4-4-2 formation, midfielders blocked the middle of the park by going narrow.





**Defensive tendencies based on data**

FC Seoul was the most active team in K League this year with the highest average total distance ran (118.3km) and the fifth-most for sprints (216.6). FC Seoul ran the most in 2022 too with 119.4km.

Another team that draws attention is Pohang Steelers. They had the highest number of sprints (228.5) with an average total run distance of 115.5km, which ranks them 6th in this regard. This means that their movement was more intense.

When out of possession, Pohang's defenders were aggressive in trying to win the ball back. This came down to their tactics of mixing zonal marking with man-marking. They utilised zonal marking in a 4-4-2 formation but within that, individual players would also go man-to-man.

This resulted in leaving some space for the opponents to exploit, but they tried to cover it through quick reactions and a quick press. In other words, this was possible through a mixture of zonal marking

and a man-marking and of effective involvement. With all this, Pohang posted a notable number of sprints.



Gwangju FC's stats are worth a look, too. Although they were second in terms of the average total distance ran, they were only sixth in the number of sprints. This means that they were the opposite of Pohang even though the Steelers and Gwangju finished second and third in the table this season.

The reasons behind Gwangju's performances in this area can be summarised in two parts. First, Gwangju played possession-based football with a distinct shape in terms of positioning. The foundation of their football is to occupy 'good space'. Thus, Gwangju players were not required to make sprints as they attempted to win possession through positioning.

The second reason is their defensive tactic. Gwangju had a more distinctive zonal marking system than any other team. They tried to secure a man advantage in the area around the ball with zonal marking in tight spaces. Their key pattern was to push the opponents away from goal and restrict the number of options. In this situation, there were very few moments that an individual player was able to make a sprint.



Team	Total Distance Ran(km)	Sprints
Seoul	118.3	216.6
Gwangju	117.8	205.6
Incheon	116.8	204.7
Gangwon	116.7	222
Daejeon	116.5	225.2
Pohang	115.5	228.5
Suwon FC	115.2	192.9
Jeju	115.0	216.8
Daegu	114.5	200.2
Suwon	114.4	190.2
Ulsan	114.1	191.9
Jeonbuk	110.8	203.3

Average total distance ran and number of sprints in 2023 K League 1

# BUILD UP

Statistics from this season show that there's been more emphasis on build-up play than in the past. While the number of passes per sequence remains similar, the average straight-line distance a pass has travelled has decreased. This suggests that a tendency of forward movement has diminished with a similar level of connectivity overall. Pohang Steelers are the team with the biggest change in this regard as they have seen an increase in the number of passes per sequence and average straight-line distance travelled. This season, they put more focus on build-up play through the acquisitions of Oberdan, Kim Jong-woo, and Han Chan-hee, not to mention link-up with forward Zeca. The Steelers recorded the fourth most possession in K League 1 this season with 54.9%.



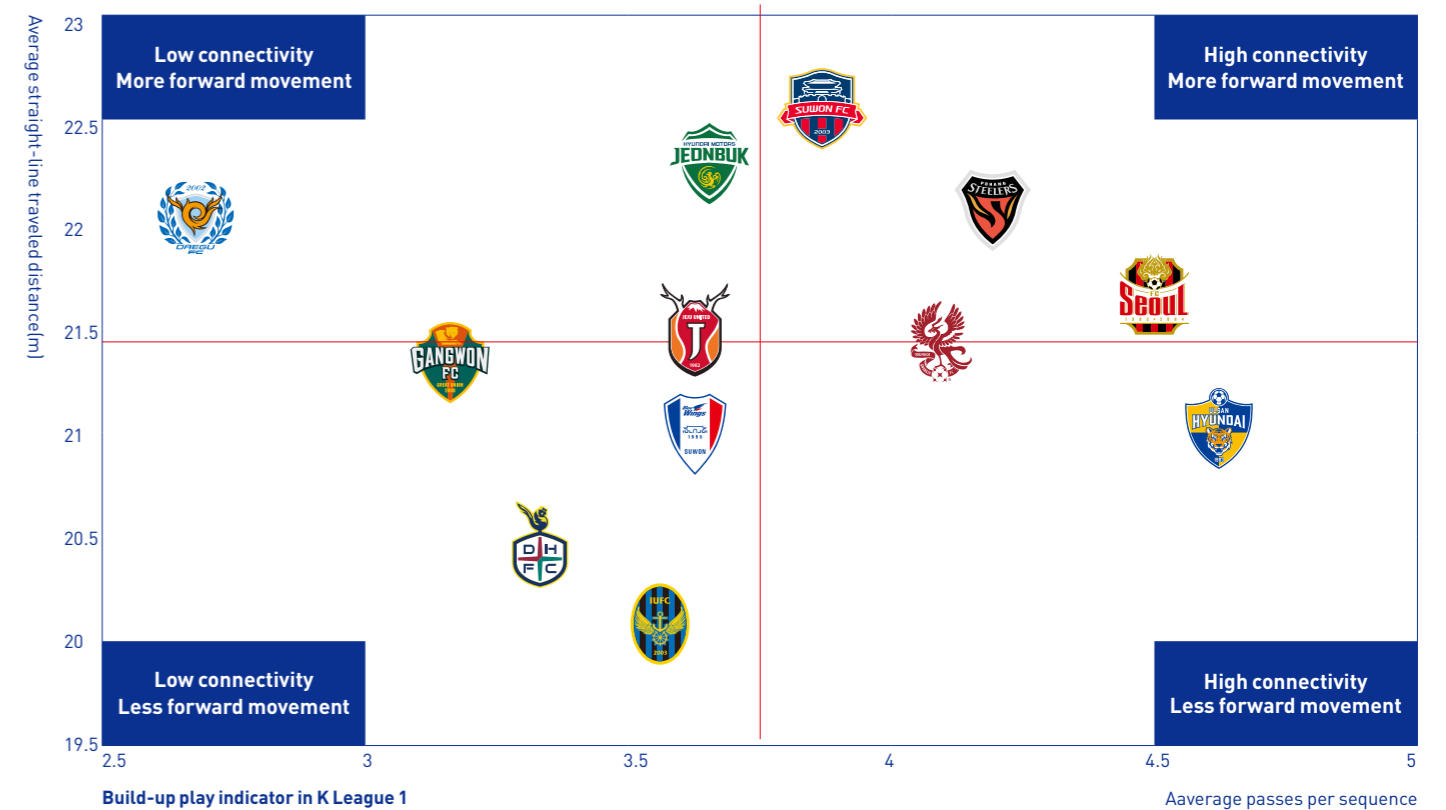
Suwon FC recorded the highest average straight-line passing travel distance. Their build-up play had two features. One was to make the best use of both wings. Central midfielders stepped up to support the wingers with the ball high up the pitch. Their use of a target man is the second. When a long ball was played into the target man striker, other players around him quickly moved and Suwon gained a man advantage.



Ulsan played possession-based football with high intensity. They recorded the highest possession and the highest number of passes per sequence. Their play can be characterised by a clear division of roles as a team with versatile players like Joo Min-kyu, Gustav Ludwigson, Valeri Qazaishvili, and Ataru Esaka. It was a clear pattern that whoever dragged the defence line deep, the space left around the box was quickly exploited by others.



FC Seoul had some degree of freedom in their attacking shape. They also used a mixture of a back three and back four after Kim Jin-kyu took over as interim manager. Two phrases for the capital team are 'organic system', and 'getting number in the box'. In the middle of the park, they moved the ball forward by being well-organised, with discipline and tried to put as many players as possible inside the box once they got into the final third. For example, fullbacks and midfielders didn't hesitate to make runs to occupy better space.



### Doo Hyeon-seok with the highest xT value (Expected Threat)

Expected Threat (xT) shows how influential a player is in contributing to their team's attack. The more involved with attacking activity, the higher the value. In K League 1 in 2023, Gwangju FC's Doo Hyeon-seok came out on top with a value of 4.79. He surpassed Ulsan's Kim Tae-

hwan who had been first for the last three years to become the most influential player in K League 1.

What stands out most is his statistics in proportion to the club's as a whole. Let's compare them to Ulsan. The xT values at Ulsan were widely shared by several players, those being Kim Young-gwon, Seol Young-woo, and Lee Chung-yong who are ranked from second to fourth. That means they all made similar contributions to the

team's performances.

However, at Gwangju, Doo Hyeon-seok contributed to most of the team's expected threat stats with a score of 4.79 out of 37.59, which accounts for 13%. There is a significant difference in comparison to the second-highest in the team, Lee Hee-gyun. Doo's contributions were almost 1.5 times that of Lee's (3.07).



### Reason Behind Highest xT, Versatility

Doo Hyeon-seok's biggest strength is his versatility as he can play in various positions such as full back, wingback, winger, or anywhere in midfield. Under manager Lee Jung-hyo, he started to play as a full back.

Gwangju's style of play is all about occupying space. Whenever there is good space, whoever finds it first needs to secure that space and that's at the core of 'Jung-hyo Ball'. There is no clear distinction between the attackers and defenders, all players need to attack and defend together. In this idea, Doo has been well-drilled in Gwangju's tactics since 2022.

Doo Hyeon-seok has an excellent understanding of space. When 'good space' was created, he was often the first to move into it and receive the ball. He is comfortable on the ball whenever or wherever he receives it. This is a result of his experience of playing in different positions.

A prime example of his ability in this area would be Round 7 against Daegu FC. Gwangju were moving forward towards

the back four and Doo Hyeon-seok was playing as right full back. Once the ball was played to the left, right midfielder Jung Ho-yeon moved out wide. At this moment, Doo Hyeon-seok was about to cover the space left by Jung's movement and became free as the defenders were dragged out to Jung. This was how Gwangju created good space and Doo was able to play a pivotal role in the

link-up play in midfield.

But it doesn't end here. Once Doo Hyeon-seok played the ball forward, he attempted to run into the box to continue the attack and give his team a man advantage. As a result, he could benefit from crosses being played in by Gwangju's right winger Joo Young-jae. Doo displayed clever positioning from the start of the attack to the end.



# GOALKEEPING

Gwangju and Jeonbuk, who conceded the fewest goals this season, have another thing in common - the highest number in the saving index. Both teams recorded the lowest conceding rates. In contrast, Suwon FC with the most goals conceded, recorded the worst saving rate figures with 75 goals from an xGOT of 66.7, excluding own goals. That means that their goalkeepers did not perform in line with what was expected of them.



Team	Saving Index
Gwangju	+4.47
Jeonbuk	+3.74
Jeju	+2.04
Pohang	-0.34
Incheon	-0.38
Seoul	-1.19
Daejeon	-1.54
Ulsan	-1.97
Gangwon	-4.80
Daegu	-5.60
Suwon	-5.75
Suwon FC	-8.25

Ranking of K League 1's 12 teams by saving index.

'Saving Index' is a value that is obtained by subtracting actual conceded goals from the opponent's xGOT, and xGOT represents the actual shots on target out of their expected goals. Thus, we can calculate how many saves a goalkeeper makes if we subtract actual conceded goals from xGOT.

Gwangju and Jeonbuk have another thing in common - they played two goalkeepers throughout the season with Kim Kyeo-ning-min and Lee Jun for Gwangju, and Kim Jeong-hoon and Jeong Min-ki for Jeonbuk. Similarly, their second goalkeepers played well. In particular, Jeonbuk's record is outstanding as they had two keepers ranked first and second in the saving

rate with 79.5% for Kim Jeong-hoon and 78.3% for Jeong Min-ki. Their conceding rate with 133 saves this season was the lowest since 2020.

Meanwhile, the league-wide saving index has decreased significantly from +0.21 in the 2022 season to -1.63 this season. However, the average saving rate remains similar with only a 1% difference (68.1% in 2022 and 67.1% in 2023). This indicates that the number of saves changed little, but goalkeepers conceded easier goals than before.

The standard deviation for the Saving Index is something to pay attention to. The value in K League 1 in 2023 was smaller than in previous years, which suggests that there was not much difference in goalkeeper ability. Not many games were determined by goalkeepers this season. Last year, though, Incheon United were the first to record a Saving Index value of over seven but this year the best team in this regard Gwangju didn't surpass five.

## Ulsan and FC Seoul - Out of the Ordinary in Utilising Goalkeepers

Ulsan Hyundai and FC Seoul recorded a much better goal kick success rate than any other team in the league. Both sides' figures were at almost 80%. This means that most of their goal kicks were successful, and what makes their figures more impressive is that the other teams in the division only managed around 50% success.

Team	Success Rate
Ulsan	80.8%
Seoul	77.0%
Jeonbuk	70.1%
Suwon FC	66.9%
Gwangju	66.5%
Pohang	66.2%

Top six clubs by success rate of goal kicks this season

The secret was short goal kicks. Most of Ulsan and Seoul's goal kicks were played short, 35.1% for Ulsan and 37.1% for Seoul. Even when under pressure near the box, they showed their intentions to play out from the back starting with the goal kick.

The most impressive player is FC Seoul's Baek Jong-bum. He recorded the most short passes among all K League 1 goalkeepers with an average of 8.84 per game. He was also second in goal kick success rate. This season, FC Seoul attempted to play out from the back through Baek. His biggest strength is his composure. He's able to send the ball to teammates and receive it inside the box even when under pressure. He keeps the ball and doesn't panic. His kicking accuracy is also good and can find teammates even when sending the ball long. FC Seoul were able to evade a team's press and exploit space at the opposite end of the pitch through Baek's long passes forward.



# 04

## TEAM PROFILES

K League  
1

ULSAN HYUNDAI  
POHANG STEELERS  
GWANGJU FC  
JEONBUK HYUNDAI  
INCHEON UNITED  
DAEGU FC

FC SEOUL  
DAEJEON HANA CITIZEN  
JEJU UNITED  
GANGWON FC  
SUWON FC  
SUWON SAMSUNG

K League  
2

GIMCHEON SANGMU  
BUSAN IPARK  
GIMPO FC  
GYEONGNAM FC  
BUCHeon FC 1995  
FC ANYANG  
JEONNAM DRAGONS

CHUNGBUK CHEONGJU FC  
SEONGNAM FC  
CHUNGNAM ASAN FC  
SEOUL ELAND FC  
ANSAN GREENERS  
CHEONAN CITY FC

All records in this chapter were based on the results at the end of Round 38 for K League 1 and Round 40 for K League 2. You can watch videos for the key features by scanning the QR codes on the top.



# ULSAN HYUNDAI

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



### SUMMARY

K League 1 champions for the second year in a row. Ulsan have embarked on a journey to establish their own kingdom. They overcame a mid-season crisis thanks to a firm Plan A and contingent Plan B enabling them to be crowned kings.

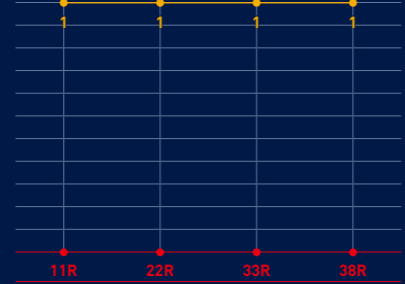


Manager | Hong Myeongbo

Date of Birth | 1969. 02. 12

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	23	7	8
K League	66	28	20

### Match Results and Rank Regular Season 23W 7D 8L



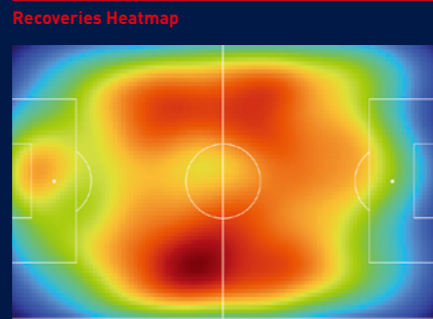
### Formation 4-2-3-1



### SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	SUHUK	2	206	4	0
	HYEONWOO	36	3,558	38	13
DF	KEEHHEE	27	2,471	0	0
	YOUNGGWON	32	2,975	1	0
	TAEHWAN	21	1,810	1	1
	YOUNGWOO	32	2,811	3	4
	MYUNGJAE	30	2,665	0	5
	JONGEUN	5	284	0	0
	SIYOUNG	10	257	1	0
	SEUNGHYUN	23	1,919	1	0
	HYUNTAEK	30	690	0	0
MF	YUNGU	19	600	1	1
	MINHYEOK	32	2,159	2	3
	SUNGJOON	6	381	0	1
	LUDWIGSON	27	1,769	6	3
	VAKO	35	2,456	11	1
	YONGWOO	19	1,528	1	2
	BOJANIC	9	391	0	1
	ATARU	21	1,444	3	3
	WONSANG	28	1,930	4	4
	GYUSUNG	32	2,260	0	2
	JAEUK	2	84	0	0
	CHUNGYONG	34	1,705	1	2
	JAEHWAN	11	265	2	0
FW	JIHYUN	5	163	0	0
	MARTIN	30	1,405	5	4
	ILLOK	1	48	0	0
	DONGGYEONG	9	549	2	1
	MINKYU	36	2,621	17	2

### AVERAGES

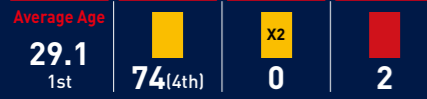


### TEAM STATS



### KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-2-3-1 in possession with wingbacks high and a clear division of duties among four players up-front.
- Active overlapping from both wingbacks with the movement of wingers dragging opponents out of shape.
- The deployment of five to six players upfront with a direct style of play.
- A tendency to use two target men, Martin Adam and Joo Min-kyu, for the second half with long balls played into them.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 out of possession, compact around the ball, attempted to win the ball back through quick and prompt pressing.
- The option to switch to a 5-4-1 formation to provide stability at the back.
- Issues defensively in central midfield when trying to stifle the opposition.



### PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
WONSANG	12	26	7.7
LEONARDO	11	32	12.9
MARTIN	9	13	5.4
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
WONSANG	6	33	67
MARTIN	4	14	0
LEONARDO	4	28	21



# POHANG STEELERS

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



### SUMMARY

The club that stood against the tide in 2023. They proved again that they could achieve anything they wanted with excellent managerial ability and strong desire from the players.

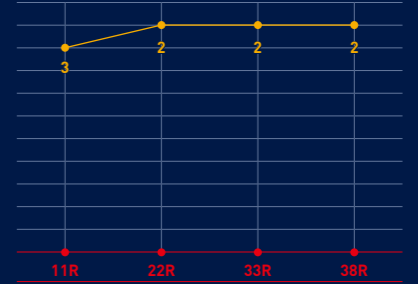


Manager | Kim Gidong

Date of Birth | 1972. 01. 12

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	16	16	6
K League	73	50	48

### Match Results and Rank Regular Season 16W 16D 6L



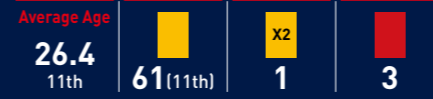
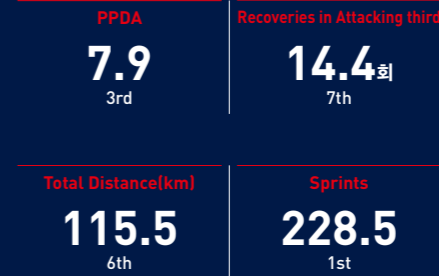
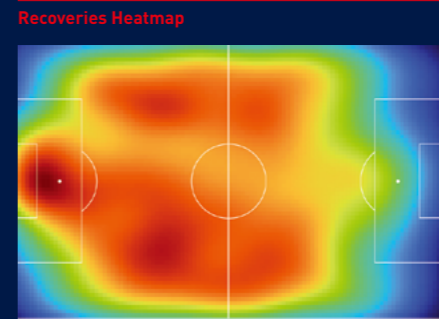
### Formation 4-2-3-1



### SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	INJAE	38	3,785	40	12
DF	GRANT	32	3,063	4	0
	YONGHWAN	10	439	0	0
	KEONWOO	2	57	0	0
	SEUNGWOOK	32	3,002	1	1
	CHANYONG	26	1,892	0	0
	SANGMIN	21	1,903	0	2
	HYUNWOUNG	2	11	0	0
	CHANGRAE	29	2,524	2	0
MF	YOUNGJUN	28	2,187	8	1
	JONGWOO	20	1,340	0	1
	JUNHO	25	1,151	0	0
	KWANGHOON	22	1,155	0	0
	OBERDAN	33	3,237	1	2
	MINHO	6	254	0	1
	SEUNGMO	11	640	0	0
	JAEHUN	13	289	0	0
	CHANHEE	19	1,145	2	0
FW	HYUNJE	2	159	1	0
	SEUNGDAE	35	2,589	3	7
	INSUNG	35	1,655	1	1
	HYEONGWOO	2	72	0	0
	SUNGDOG	26	1,763	4	8
	WANDERSON	20	1,717	2	3
	JAEWON	6	254	0	1
	HOJAE	37	1,361	8	1
	JAEHEE	7	406	2	0
	ZECA	37	2,611	12	7
	YUNSANG	11	727	2	0

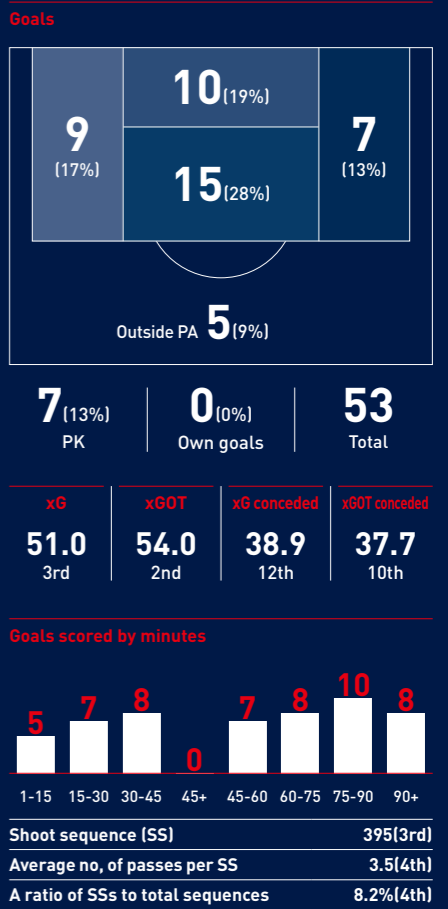
### AVERAGES



### PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
ZECA	12	29	11.4
YOUNGJUN	8	27	6.0
HOJAE	8	17	6.5
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
SUNGDOG	8	31	103
ZECA	7	39	27
SEUNGDAE	7	34	55

### TEAM STATS



### KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-2-4 formation in possession with four players upfront standing compact and with wingbacks high up.
- A tendency for wingbacks to move forward, covered by central midfielders providing different options in the attacking third.
- Creation of space through dynamic movement from attacking players.
- Use of width in the attacking third.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 formation out of possession with two forwards forming a block in the middle and man-marking on the flanks.
- An excellent division of duties between attackers and midfielders when pressing high with two attackers suppressing the build-up.
- Team with the most goals conceded from outside the box (13 out of 40 goals conceded).

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

### SUMMARY

Lee Jung-hyo and his team made national headlines. Gwangju players grew at a remarkable pace game by game, and all their achievements were the result of their efforts, not a miracle.

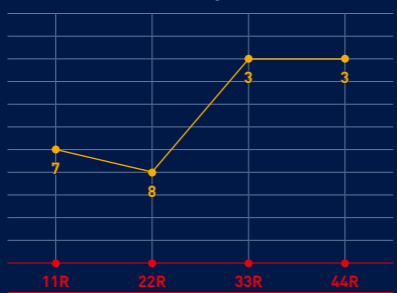


Manager | Lee Junghyo

Date of Birth | 1975. 07. 23

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	16	11	11
K League	41	22	15

### Match Results and Rank Regular Season 16W 11D 11L



### Formation 4-4-2



### SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	KYEONGMIN	26	2,526	22	12
	JUN	13	1,216	13	3
DF	GYEONGJAE	3	40	0	0
	SEUNGWOO	5	346	0	0
	HANGIL	29	1,619	3	0
	HANBIN	12	453	1	0
	AARON	20	1,376	0	0
	YOUNGKYU	32	3,047	2	2
	MINGI	28	2,243	1	1
	SANGGI	19	777	0	0
	EUDDEUM	2	23	0	0
	TIMO	27	2,464	3	1
	MF	JISUNG	28	2,150	5
HUSEONG		6	143	0	0
KANGHYUN		26	1,251	1	1
SOONMIN		35	3,088	1	2
HOYEON		34	3,070	2	4
FW		HYEONSEOK	38	3,423	2
	BEKA	10	567	2	0
	SANDRO	12	797	1	2
	CHANGMOO	9	148	0	0
	ASANI	33	2,319	7	3
	KUNHEE	26	857	5	0
	HUIGYUN	34	2,291	2	1
	JIHUN	12	460	0	0
	YOUNGJAE	8	278	1	0
	THOMAS	28	1,706	2	1
	SEUNGUN	18	679	2	1
YOOL	33	1,763	3	3	

Average Age

27.0	80(2th)	x2	2	0
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### PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
ASANI	7	23	3.8
JISUNG	5	27	6.2
KUNHEE	5	9	3.1
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
HYEONSEOK	7	44	195
ASANI	4	36	160
JISUNG	3	17	47

### AVERAGES

Possession

**56.2%**(2nd)

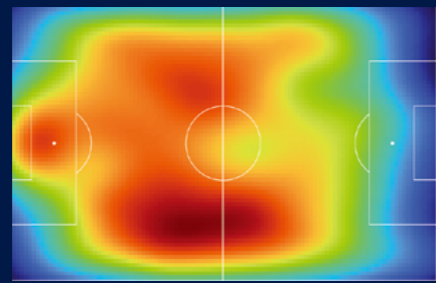
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
<b>49.1%</b> 2nd	<b>57.5%</b> 2nd	<b>58.3%</b> 1st

Passes	Pass Accuracy	Key Passes
<b>495</b> 4th	<b>87.1%</b> 1st	<b>6.4</b> 9th

Pass Distance

Long (30m-)	<b>47</b> (10%)
Medium (15m-30m)	<b>186</b> (38%)
Short (-15m)	<b>262</b> (53%)

### Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	<b>9.2</b> 7th	Recoveries in Attacking third	<b>13.6</b> 11th
Total Distance(km)	<b>117.8</b> 2nd	Sprints	<b>205.6</b> 6th

### TEAM STATS

Goals

10 (21%)	5 (11%)	5 (11%)
7 (15%)		
Outside PA <b>19</b> (40%)		

0 (0%) PK	1 (2%) Own goals	47 Total
-----------------	------------------------	-------------

xG	xGOT	xG conceded	xGOT conceded
<b>39.6</b> 10th	<b>44.1</b> 6th	<b>42.8</b> 9th	<b>39.5</b> 8th

Goals scored by minutes

Shoot sequence (SS)	<b>403</b> (2nd)
Average no. of passes per SS	<b>4.1</b> (1st)
A ratio of SSs to total sequences	<b>9.0%</b> (1st)

### KEY FEATURES

- The use of diverse tactical options in attack, and tactical flexibility in response to the opponent's shape.
- Intentionally lured opponents in when in possession in their own half.
- The active switching of positions as a team in attack while remaining in a consistent shape.
- Attempted to exploit the half-spaces in the final third.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 formation out of possession and were excellent at managing defensive roles and the timing of the press.
- Midfielders excellent at covering the space.
- Vulnerable to counterattacks, exposure of space diagonally.

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

### SUMMARY

Jeonbuk proved their credentials in the end as one of the K League's big clubs. Despite having something of a turbulent campaign, they managed to earn a place in the AFC Champions League. Jeonbuk will now look forward to next season, Dan Petrescu's first full season in charge.

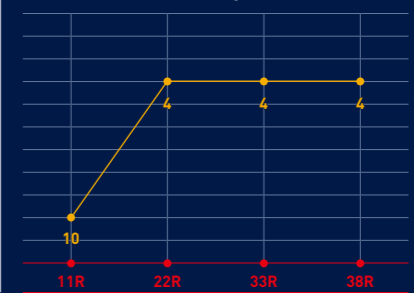


Manager | Dan Petrescu

Date of Birth | 1967. 12. 22

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	8	6	6
K League	8	6	6

### Match Results and Rank Regular Season 16W 9D 13L



### Formation 4-2-3-1



### SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	JEONGHOON	29	2,905	25	10
	MINKI	9	898	10	4
DF	JARYONG	23	1,993	0	0
	MOONHWAN	11	938	0	1
	JINSU	19	1,867	0	1
	JINSEOP	32	3,002	1	2
	CHANGWOO	15	496	0	0
	HYEONBEOM	10	811	2	1
	YOUNGSUN	1	28	0	0
	WOOJAE	26	2,141	0	1
	TAEWOOK	31	2,979	1	0
	CHULSOON	19	965	0	1
	PETRASEK	7	430	0	0
	JEONGHO	22	1,660	0	0
MF	SANGYOON	1	14	0	0
	GEONWOONG	11	692	0	0
	JAEMOON	14	1,075	1	2
	SEONGUNG	17	807	0	1
	SEUNGHO	27	2,314	3	1
	BOATENG	13	1,083	1	0
	AMANO	25	1,409	1	3
	JAEHYEOK	4	154	0	0
	MINHYEOK	3	168	0	0
	SOOBIN	14	902	0	0
FW	KYOWON	28	1,543	5	2
	GUSTAVO	30	1,543	6	0
	SEONMIN	34	1,957	6	1
	JAERYONG	8	449	2	0
	MINKYU	30	2,090	7	3
	ANDRELUIS	13	596	0	0
	DONGJUN	23	1,219	0	2
	JUNHO	8	294	0	1
	GUESUNG	12	972	5	0
	RAFA SILVA	25	1,411	3	1

Average Age

27.4	68(7th)	x2	3	1
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### PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
MINKYU	7	17	4.8
GUSTAVO	6	19	7.9
SEONMIN	6	15	4.3
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
MINKYU	3	29	61
AMANO	3	14	88
KYOWON	2	15	40

### AVERAGES

Possession

**50.5%**(6th)

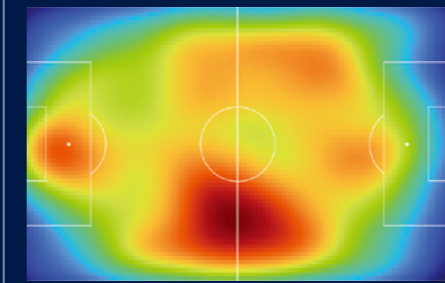
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
<b>46.1%</b> 9th	<b>52.2%</b> 6th	<b>52.6%</b> 6th

Passes	Pass Accuracy	Key Passes
<b>467</b> 7th	<b>82.5%</b> 7th	<b>6.9</b> 6th

Pass Distance

Long (30m-)	<b>53</b> (11%)
Medium (15m-30m)	<b>167</b> (36%)
Short (-15m)	<b>247</b> (53%)

### Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	<b>7.9</b> 2nd	Recoveries in Attacking third	<b>16.7</b> 3rd
Total Distance(km)	<b>110.8</b> 12th	Sprints	<b>203.3</b> 8th

### TEAM STATS

Goals

9 (21%)	7 (16%)	8 (18%)
11 (24%)		
Outside PA <b>5</b> (11%)		

4 (9%) PK	1 (2%) Own goals	45 Total
-----------------	------------------------	-------------

xG	xGOT	xG conceded	xGOT conceded
<b>49.5</b> 4th	<b>46.8</b> 5th	<b>41.6</b> 10th	<b>37.7</b> 9th

Goals scored by minutes

Shoot sequence (SS)	<b>358</b> (9th)
Average no. of passes per SS	<b>3.2</b> (6th)
A ratio of SSs to total sequences	<b>7.6%</b> (7th)

### KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-2-3-1 formation with a tendency to play long balls from the back.
- Central midfielders were influential during build-up play, four players along the front with both full backs high.
- A pattern of playing the ball into the area between the opposition's defence and midfield with a division of roles between the frontline players.
- The use of tactical variations in response to the opposition under caretaker manager Kim Do-heon : asymmetrical attacking and inverted full backs.
- Set up in either a 4-4-2 or 4-5-1 with a tendency to have a higher defensive line.
- Centre backs with strong physicality such as Jeong Tae-wook and Park Jin-seop excelled in aerial duels.



# INCHEON UNITED

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

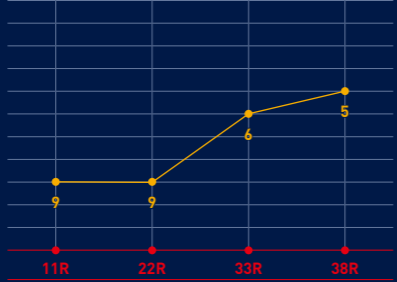
## SUMMARY

They are no longer minnows fighting for survival. They are a club reborn and one that can fight for a place in the top six. The pace of progression seen by young players has been incredible.



<b>Manager</b>	Jo Sunghwan		
<b>Date of Birth</b>	1970. 10. 16		
<b>Manager Records</b>	W	D	L
2023	14	14	10
K League	107	81	95

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 14W 14D 11L



## 주요 포메이션 | 3-4-3



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	DONGHEON	24	2,415	26	8
	SEONGJUN	5	496	4	2
	TAEHUI	9	880	12	2
DF	YUNKOO	6	348	0	0
	HANJIN	18	1,585	1	0
	GEONHUI	9	335	0	0
	DONGMIN	27	2,631	0	0
	YEONSOO	22	1,938	0	0
	JUNYUB	28	2,405	1	2
	DELBRIDGE	25	2,153	0	0
	JIHWAN	27	1,647	2	0
	BANSUK	27	2,589	3	0
	HYEONGJIN	1	101	0	0
	DONGYOON	28	1,434	0	1
MF	DOHYEOK	32	2,308	1	3
	SEHOON	1	14	0	0
	HYUNSEO	1	25	0	0
	GYUNGHYUN	27	1,897	0	1
	JINHONG	2	81	0	0
	HYUNBIN	5	289	0	0
	JINHO	17	1,526	1	3
	REUM	2	86	0	0
	MPOKU	24	1,452	3	2
	DONGSU	6	250	0	0
	MYUNGJOO	25	2,120	2	1
FW	WOOJIN	5	349	1	1
	DAEJUNG	6	111	0	0
	MINSEOK	18	535	2	0
	BOSUB	33	2,100	3	4
	MUGOSA	9	645	3	1
	SEUNGHO	9	559	1	0
	SIWOO	7	218	0	1
	HERNANDES	33	2,462	6	5
	GERSO	34	2,246	7	6
	SEONGHOON	18	987	6	0
	SIHO	12	473	2	1

<b>Average Age</b>	27.1	6th
<b>Yellow Cards</b>	66	(9th)
<b>Red Cards</b>	0	
<b>Goals</b>	2	

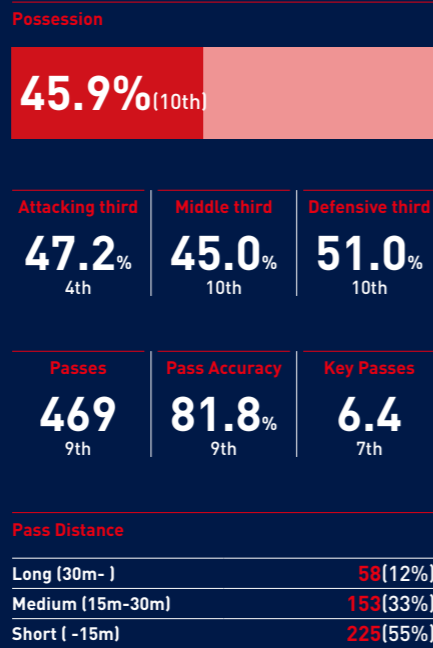
## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
GERSO	7	21	7.9
HERNANDES	6	16	5.7
SEONGHOON	6	11	3.9

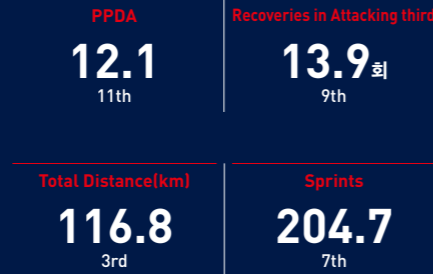
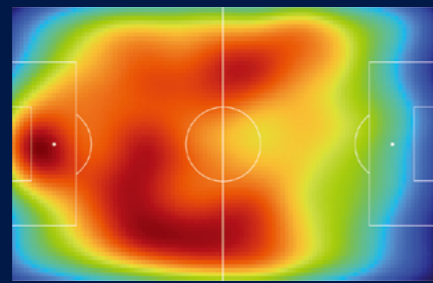
  

	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
GERSO	6	24	58
HERNANDES	5	24	41
BOSUB	4	19	50

## AVERAGES



## Recoveries Heatmap



## TEAM STATS



## KEY FEATURES

- Set up in either a 3-4-3 or 3-5-2 in possession depending on the opponent.
- The creation of goal-scoring opportunities through Kim Do-hyeok's forward movement.
- The use of width through wingbacks when in possession.
- Pacey attacking players like Hernandez and Gerso Fernandes deployed centrally go face opposition defenders head-on.
- Set up in either a 5-4-1 or 5-3-2 when out of possession with midfielders narrow to control the opponents centrally.
- Show man-marking proficiency in a back five with clear awareness of knowing when to man-mark and stay in shape.

# DAEGU FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

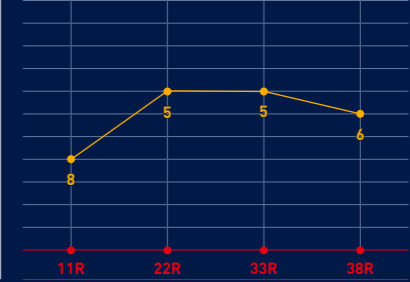
## SUMMARY

It was a meaningful season that showed Daegu can achieve things without the services of Cesinha. Daegu fought hard as a team and reached Final A.



<b>Manager</b>	Choi Wonkwon		
<b>Date of Birth</b>	1981. 11. 08		
<b>Manager Records</b>	W	D	L
2023	13	14	11
K League	18	18	13

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 13W 14D 11L

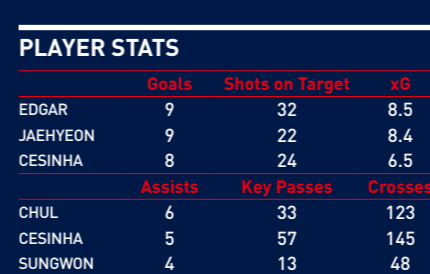
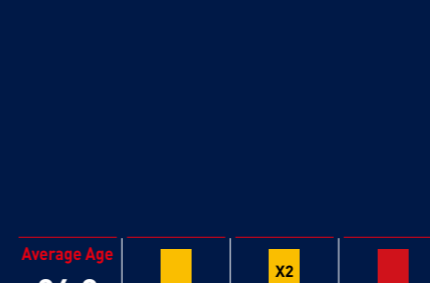


## Formation 3-5-2



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	SEUNGHOO	21	2,028	25	6
	YOUNGEUN	18	1,717	18	7
DF	KANGSAN	25	1,474	1	0
	JINHUYK	38	3,597	1	1
	WONWOO	2	39	0	0
	JINYONG	31	2,056	0	1
	SUNGWON	29	1,616	1	4
	JINWOO	33	3,081	0	1
	KEITA	26	1,325	2	0
	JEONGUN	33	3,207	0	1
	CHUL	29	2,267	1	6
	JAEWON	33	3,082	1	3
	MF	JAEHYEON	37	3,283	9
HEESEUNG		2	19	0	0
SEJIN		33	1,716	1	1
BELTOLA		11	897	1	0
CERATO		11	346	0	0
FW	YONGRAE	29	1,317	0	1
	YOUNGJUN	9	238	0	0
	BARCELOS	31	1,917	5	1
	YONGHUI	1	7	0	0
	CESINHA	23	2,007	8	5
	EDGAR	34	2,809	9	3
KEUNHO	32	986	2	1	
JONGHUN	2	35	0	0	



## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
EDGAR	9	32	8.5
JAEHYEON	9	22	8.4
CESINHA	8	24	6.5

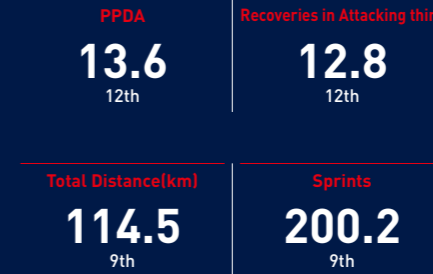
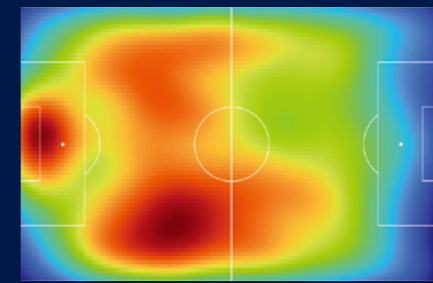
  

	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
CHUL	6	33	123
CESINHA	5	57	145
SUNGWON	4	13	48

## AVERAGES



## Recoveries Heatmap



## TEAM STATS



## KEY FEATURES

- Possession of the ball at the back during build-up play and direct passing to the front line.
- Central midfielders ran forward when the ball was played into the final third.
- Utilised the individual play of Barcelos out wide.
- Set up in a 5-4-1 when out of possession with one forward dropping into midfield and a central midfielder moving across.
- A distinctive pattern when counterattacking: centre forward moved to receive the ball with linear movement of wingers and wingbacks on both sides.
- Active involvement from the opposite flank provided more options when the centre forward moved out to the side when counterattacking.







# SUWON FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



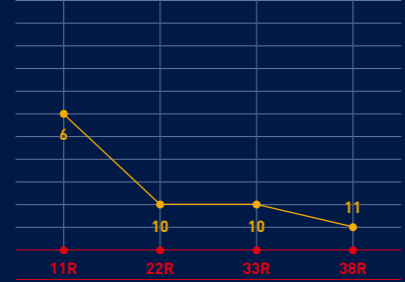
## SUMMARY

They were unable to fix their defensive problems even by the end of the season. However, their attacking ability rose to the fore just in time in the most important game of the season to keep their place in K League 1.



Manager | Kim Dokyun  
Date of Birth | 1977. 01. 13  
Manager Records W D L  
2023 8 9 22  
K League 52 31 60

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 8W 9D 22L



## Formation 4-3-3



## SQUAD

Table with columns: Position, Player, App, Min, GC, CS. Lists players for GK, DF, MF, and FW.

Average Age: 28.2 (2nd), 63 (10th), 2, 3

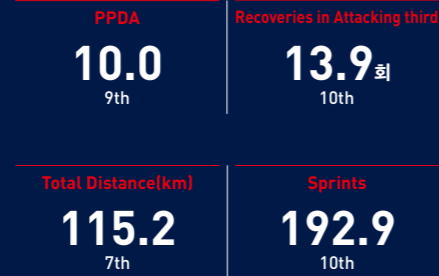
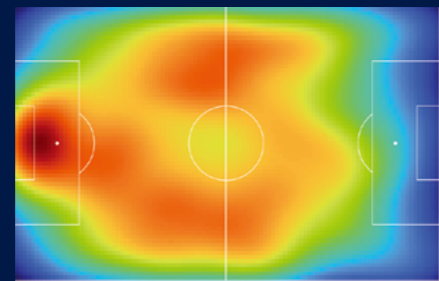
## PLAYER STATS

Table with columns: Goals, Shots on Target, xG, Assists, Key Passes, Crosses. Lists stats for SEUNGWOO, LARS, BITGARAM, LARS, BITGARAM, GWANGHYEOK.

## AVERAGES



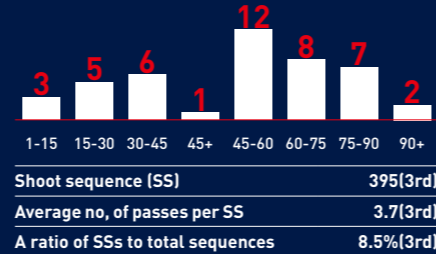
## Recoveries Heatmap



## TEAM STATS



## Goals scored by minutes



## KEY FEATURES

- 1 Set up in a 3-4-3 when in possession with full backs high up and central midfielders providing support.
2 Preferred the use of a target man in the build-up process and played the ball forward in simple sequences by moving midfielders and full backs upwards.
3 With Lee Seung-woo in a free role in attack, created chances through penetration from midfield.
4 Had a range of formation options when out of possession with defenders and midfielders attempting to press.
5 Tended to leave opposition players unmarked in dangerous areas.
6 Sluggish reactions at the back.



# SUWON SAMSUNG

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

Having survived the 2022 Promotion-Relegation Playoffs, Suwon ultimately suffered relegation in 2023. They need to recalibrate but the discovery of promising talent Kim Ju-chan was one consolation for them.



Manager | Yeom Kihun  
Date of Birth | 1983. 03. 30  
Manager Records W D L  
2023 3 2 2  
K League 3 2 2

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 8W 9D 21L



## Formation 4-4-2



## SQUAD

Table with columns: Position, Player, App, Min, GC, CS. Lists players for GK, DF, MF, and FW.

Average Age: 28.1 (3rd), 76 (3rd), 3, 2

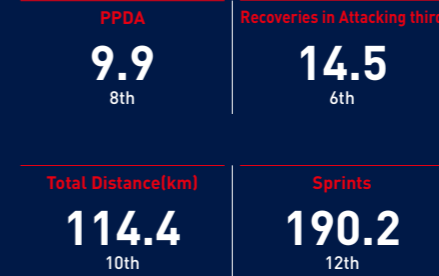
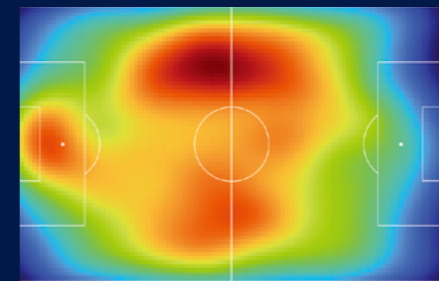
## PLAYER STATS

Table with columns: Goals, Shots on Target, xG, Assists, Key Passes, Crosses. Lists stats for BYONGJUN, JOOCHAN, ACOSTY, KIJE, ACOSTY, SANGMIN.

## AVERAGES



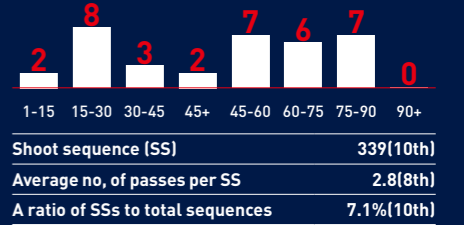
## Recoveries Heatmap



## TEAM STATS



## Goals scored by minutes



## KEY FEATURES

- 1 Used a 2-3-5 and 3-2-5 during build-up play with asymmetrical movement on the sides.
2 A fast transition on both wings and a division of roles in attack.
3 Used an asymmetrical 4-2-3-1 and 4-3-3 with Lee Byung-keun in charge, made attempts to build up centrally.
4 With Kim Byung-soo in charge, used a back three or back four depending on the opponent's formation to have a man advantage advantage.
5 Maintained a narrow 4-4-2 formation when defending with players covering for each other centrally.
6 Set up in a 5-4-1 under Kim Byung-soo with three forwards dropping to the middle and wingbacks stepping up.
7 Left space exposed between full backs and centre backs in a 4-4-2 formation.





# GIMPO FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

Ko Jeong-woon's warriors were bold in defence. Their back three suffocated teams and was probably the best defence in K League 2.

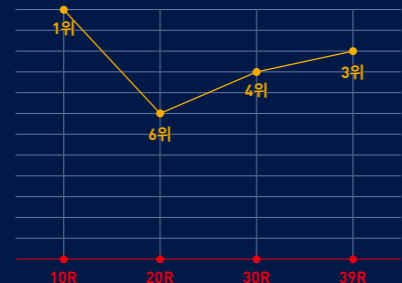


Manager | Ko Jeongwoon

Date of Birth | 1966. 06. 27

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	17	13	8
K League	39	32	43

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 16W 12D 8L



## Formation 3-4-3



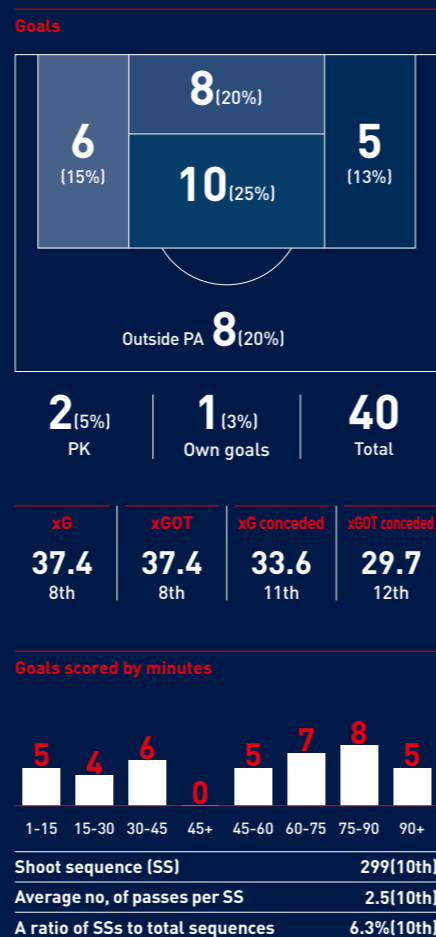
## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	MINJAE	2	23	0	0
	CHEONGHYO	33	3,231	21	18
	SANGWOOK	3	287	4	1
DF	MINHO	25	1,943	0	0
	JONGMIN	4	95	0	0
	TAEHAN	33	3,231	1	0
	KYUNGROK	24	1,784	1	0
	KWANGIL	31	2,068	2	1
	JUNSEOK	16	602	0	0
	MINYONG	1	24	0	0
	SANGHYEOK	13	370	0	2
	DOHOON	1	60	0	0
	SEONGGWON	34	3,306	0	0
MF	SEONGMIN	31	1,714	1	2
	YISEOK	32	2,747	4	0
	JONGSUK	21	1,271	2	3
	JAEMIN	33	2,682	2	0
	KANGYEON	9	659	0	0
	SEONGJAE	11	446	0	0
	YUNHO	25	1,516	2	0
	JAEHUN	16	1,288	0	0
FW	LUIS	34	3,125	16	4
	SUNGYEON	12	313	0	1
	SUKYONG	26	1,191	1	1
	CHANGSEOK	12	550	0	1
	MINHO	19	1,187	2	4
	JUNIOR	29	1,644	3	2
	PABLO	18	1,100	2	5

## AVERAGES



## TEAM STATS



## KEY FEATURES

- Three forward players were positioned close together and linked up with each other.
- Wide area of covered by the wingbacks and central midfielders to provide an attacking option.
- Individual players looked to make runs in the final third.
- Set up in a 3-4-3 formation out of possession with the three forwards narrow to control the midfield area.
- A quick transition to three attackers from a defensive shape.
- Quick and aggressive pressing once they were dispossessed.
- Picked up second balls through quick reactions from the wingbacks and central midfielders.



## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
LUIS	16	32	11.5
YISEOK	4	15	2.7
JUNIOR	3	13	3.5
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
PABLO	5	18	43
LUIS	4	33	65
MINHO	4	10	10



# GYEONGNAM FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

They continued to play their own brand of football by keeping possession for as long as possible and exploiting the space. Their future looks exciting as a team, full of young players.

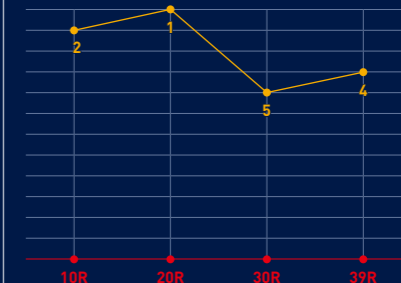


Manager | Seol Kihyeon

Date of Birth | 1979. 01. 08

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	15	13	10
K League	53	43	49

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 15W 12D 9L



## Formation 4-4-2



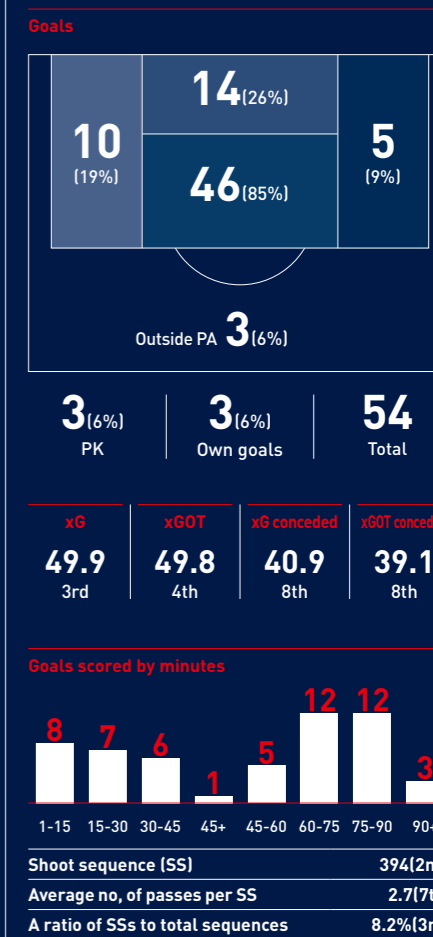
## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	DONGMIN	34	3,310	38	8
	JEONGHYEON	2	198	2	1
	YUNOH	1	53	2	0
DF	BYEOMYONG	5	314	0	0
	YOUNGCHAN	8	554	0	0
	JAEHWAN	30	2,862	2	0
	JOOSEONG	28	2,206	0	3
	KWANGSEON	11	907	0	0
	MINGI	16	604	0	0
	JUNJAE	29	2,182	2	1
	CHANOUK	7	596	1	0
	HYUNWOOK	1	17	0	0
	LEO	11	442	0	0
	MINSEO	36	3,100	2	5
	HONGMIN	36	3,116	1	3
	KANGHEE	34	2,864	0	0
	KWANGJIN	16	824	0	4
	MINHYEOK	8	520	0	0
MF	JISEUNG	1	47	0	0
	CASTRO	34	2,228	6	4
	GIPYO	12	419	0	0
	GLEYSOON	34	2,329	13	2
	JAEHYEON	30	2,238	6	6
	MIRANDINHA	10	415	0	0
	MINSEO	16	1,037	2	1
	JAEWON	2	95	0	0
FW	HYEONJIN	28	1,400	2	2
	KIJONG	32	2,445	10	3
	JOONHA	8	230	0	0
	JONGEON	9	367	1	1
	SANGJUN	25	980	1	2
	HYANGGI	8	266	2	0

## AVERAGES



## TEAM STATS



## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
GLEYSOON	13	20	7.9
KIJONG	10	23	8.6
JAEHYEON	6	12	4.6
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
JAEHYEON	6	29	118
MINSEO	5	59	285
CASTRO	4	16	20



## KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-2-2 formation when attacking with two strikers in advanced positions backed up by midfielders just behind.
- Found a way to move forward through switching play when high up the pitch.
- Attacked down the centre with use of both full backs on the side.
- When defending against two strikers, a midfielder dropped between the centre backs to form a back three.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 formation when out of possession and maintain a tight defensive line with two strikers covering a lot of space.
- Vulnerable at set pieces with players showing a tendency to lose their individual battles.









# SEONGNAM FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

Most of the time they stood in a 4-1-4-1 formation to stand up against the opposition. Experienced forward Lee Jong-ho fought hard and managed to bag seven goals. The team scored nine goals outside the box.



Manager | Lee Kihyung

Date of Birth | 1974. 09. 28

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	11	11	14
K League	26	37	37

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 11W 11D 14L



## Formation 4-1-4-1



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	YOUNGKWANG	17	1,642	24	5
	PILSU	20	1,940	26	6
DF	EUBIN	24	2,165	1	0
	TAEJEONG	2	200	0	0
	JISOO	1	64	0	0
	JINRAE	25	2,238	0	4
	HUNMIN	12	724	0	0
	SIHOO	6	150	0	0
	SUN	7	548	0	0
	SANGMIN	23	2,124	0	0
	JIHUN	23	1,471	0	1
	HYOJUN	5	303	0	0
	SEUNGYONG	14	1,190	1	0
	SUNGWOOK	33	2,871	4	0
	PATRICK	22	1,945	2	0
MF	SOONHYUNG	26	2,030	1	0
	HYUNTAE	13	947	0	1
	CHANGJIN	6	343	0	0
	SANGHYEOK	25	1,544	1	5
	JIWON	19	1,213	2	0
	TAEJUN	20	1,754	1	2
	JAEWON	13	598	2	0
	TAEYANG	6	129	1	0
	JAEWON	19	1,640	0	0
	YOUNGGI	5	94	0	0
FW	GABRIEL	11	1,000	4	3
	WONJOON	9	233	1	0
	DENILSON	20	749	3	0
	DONGWOON	12	661	1	3
	JONGHO	28	1,824	7	3
	JUNSANG	12	488	0	1
	SEONGSOO	17	743	0	2
	HANMIN	25	1,385	2	2
	SEONGGUK	15	958	3	1
	CHRIS	19	1,359	6	0

Average Age	26.2	69(4th)	3	2
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## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
JONGHO	7	17	5.4
CHRIS	6	13	3.2
GABRIEL	4	14	1.8
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
SANGHYEOK	5	26	99
JINRAE	4	13	93
JONGHO	3	14	26

## AVERAGES

Possession **50.9%**(6th)

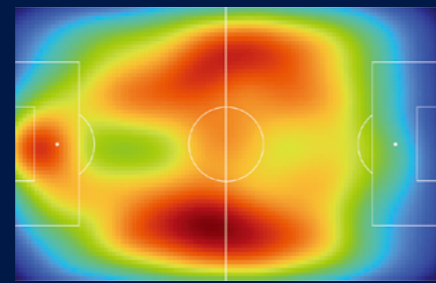
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
47.6% 5th	52.4% 5th	52.6% 7th

Passes **456** (5th) Pass Accuracy **81.7%** (5th) Key Passes **6.1** (8th)

Pass Distance

Long (30m- )	54(12%)
Medium (15m-30m)	159(35%)
Short ( -15m)	243(53%)

## Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	8.1	4th
Recoveries in Attacking third	16.1	5th
Total Distance(km)	114.1	9th
Sprints	215.6	7th

## TEAM STATS

Goals

5 (12%)	8 (19%)	6 (14%)
PK	Own goals	Total

Outside PA **9** (21%)

1 (2%)	0 (3%)	43
PK	Own goals	Total

xG **39.8** (7th) xGOT **38.7** (7th) xG conceded **42.1** (7th) xGOT conceded **45.0** (4th)

Goals scored by minutes

Shoot sequence (SS) **349**(6th) Average no. of passes per SS **2.7**(8th) A ratio of SSs to total sequences **7.4%**(4th)

## KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-2-3-1 formation when in possession, and an attacking midfielder was tasked to cover a lot of space and receive the ball, moving from the attacking midfield position to upfront.
- Attacking midfielders had a link-up role and attempted to receive the ball between the lines.
- In a 3-4-3 formation, wingbacks on both sides stayed high and used the width of the pitch.
- The likes of Gabriel Ramos and Christy Manzinga looked to attack down the flanks.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 formation with the strikers looking to press from the front and with central midfielders interfering with the opposition's build-up.
- Defensive line didn't deal with the opposition's attacks well.
- Less compact shape in the middle when out of possession.



# CHUNGNAM ASAN FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

They had difficulty in being consistent in front of goal. Their goal-scoring ability was good until around midway through the second half, but afterwards, they rapidly lost control of games. It was a season full of possibilities and limitations.

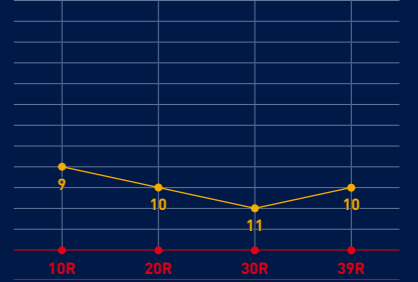


Manager | Park Donghyuk

Date of Birth | 1979. 04. 18

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	12	6	18
K League	74	51	86

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 12W 6D 18L



## Formation 3-4-3



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS	
GK	HYUNHO	13	445	2	1	
	JUWON	15	1,422	21	3	
	HANKEUN	18	1,676	23	6	
DF	JUNHYUK	17	1,250	0	1	
	SUNGJU	16	1,076	0	1	
	JUSUNG	13	509	0	1	
	SEONGWOO	10	661	1	0	
	SOOYONG	4	186	0	0	
	EUNBUM	28	2,658	1	0	
	JAESEONG	7	664	1	0	
	HAKMIN	25	1,577	0	1	
	HOIN	24	2,048	0	0	
	JUNYOUNG	20	1,820	2	0	
	YUNSEONG	31	2,834	0	1	
	MF	SUNGHYUN	12	317	0	1
		KANGGUK	36	3,481	3	2
MINSEOK		4	152	0	0	
JONGKOOK		10	450	0	0	
TAEKGEUN		3	93	0	0	
HYESEONG		14	904	0	0	
SEJIK		33	3,191	1	5	
FW		MINGEU	30	1,975	6	1
		MOOYUL	9	224	1	0
		SEUNGHO	24	1,373	3	1
		DUARTE	25	1,335	4	1
	DAEHOON	18	1,014	6	4	
	MINSEO	14	901	3	2	
	SEUNGMIN	27	1,885	1	1	
	APONZA	12	672	1	0	
	CHANGHOON	5	128	0	0	
	SUNGHO	20	804	1	0	
EONHAK	10	493	2	1		
RAPHAEL	16	555	1	1		

Average Age	29.1	1st	74(4th)	0	2
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## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
WONSANG	12	26	7.7
LEONARDO	11	32	12.9
MARTIN	9	13	5.4
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
WONSANG	6	33	67
MARTIN	4	14	0
LEONARDO	4	28	21

## AVERAGES

Possession **45.8%**(11th)

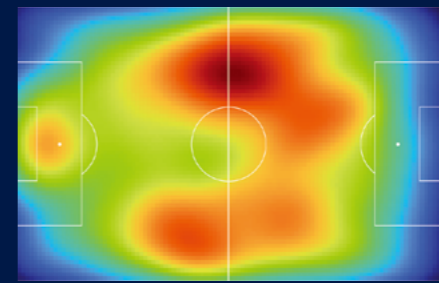
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
45.5% 9th	46.5% 11th	49.2% 13th

Passes **397** (13th) Pass Accuracy **76.2%** (13th) Key Passes **5.7** (11th)

Pass Distance

Long (30m- )	64(16%)
Medium (15m-30m)	134(34%)
Short ( -15m)	200(50%)

## Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	9.0	9th
Recoveries in Attacking third	17.7	1st
Total Distance(km)	114.7	6th
Sprints	244.4	2nd

## TEAM STATS

Goals

8 (21%)	3 (8%)	4 (10%)
PK	Own goals	Total

Outside PA **7** (18%)

2 (5%)	1 (3%)	39
PK	Own goals	Total

xG **39.9** (6th) xGOT **36.9** (9th) xG conceded **44.4** (6th) xGOT conceded **42.2** (7th)

Goals scored by minutes

Shoot sequence (SS) **322**(9th) Average no. of passes per SS **2.3**(12th) A ratio of SSs to total sequences **6.6%**(9th)

## KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 3-2-5 formation when in possession.
- Central midfielders and wingbacks were quickly involved in the play when the ball was played into the frontline.
- Prompt response from the three forwards to run in behind after duels.
- Flexible transformation in defence with the option of a back three or back four. Press was strong and high in a man-marking system.
- Fast transition down the sides when counterattacking with pacy wingbacks involved.
- Vulnerable at the back with the balls up in the air.

# SEOUL ELAND FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

## SUMMARY

They'd have been desperate just to get a point in some games as Seoul E-Land suffered too many defeats. As a team, they picked up a total of 70 yellow cards this season which was the second-highest in K League 2.

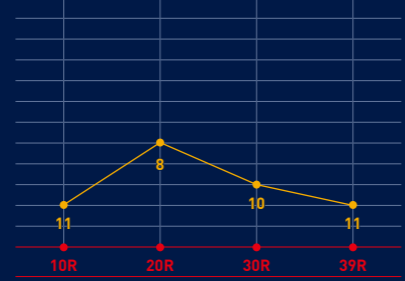


Manager | Park Chungkyun

Date of Birth | 1973. 06. 20

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	10	5	21
K League	10	5	21

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 10W 5D 23L



## Formation 4-4-2



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	JEONGMOOK	1	99	2	0
	JUNGIN	25	2,471	35	5
	BOSANG	6	590	12	1
	HYUNSUNG	4	388	5	1

Position	Player	App	Min	G	A
DF	MINKYU	31	2,963	0	1
	KYUNGMIN	7	275	0	0
	JUNYOUNG	3	228	0	0
	INJAE	25	2,277	0	3
	JAEIK	21	1,846	0	0
	JUNGMUN	7	246	0	0
	DONGJAE	14	853	0	1
	SEUNGHYUN	23	1,651	3	1
	YONGSU	4	187	1	0
	JUNGWOOK	2	46	0	0
	TAEHYEON	14	897	0	0

Position	Player	App	Min	G	A
MF	SEONGUK	7	322	0	0
	WONSIK	27	1,743	0	0
	CHANGHWAN	22	1,112	0	0
	BRUNO	30	2,226	6	2
	BOMIN	25	1,834	0	0
	JEONGWAN	30	2,387	4	1
	SANGMIN	36	3,181	0	2
	SIHEON	22	1,219	3	1
	TSUBASA	17	1,199	1	0
FW	SUAN	13	556	0	1
	JEONGHWAN	12	550	0	0
	JEONGIN	17	1,293	1	0
	JUNYOUNG	6	175	0	0
	VANTOAN	9	436	0	0
	GYUNJUN	32	2,012	3	4
	SIWOO	19	1,028	2	0
	DONGRYUL	20	1,206	2	0
	RONAN	29	1,483	7	2

Average Age	Yellow Cards	Red Cards
26.1 8th	70(2nd) x2	1

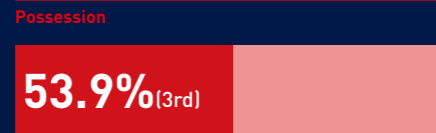
## PLAYER STATS

Player	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
RONAN	7	22	8.7
BRUNO	6	16	2.8
JEONGWAN	4	11	3.0

Player	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
GYUNJUN	4	17	89
INJAE	3	7	6
RONAN	2	10	5

## AVERAGES



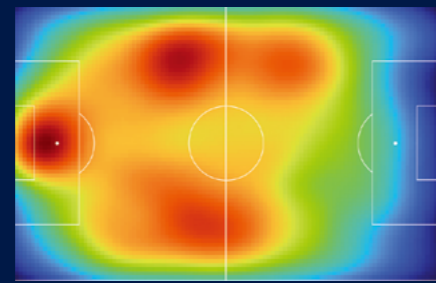
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
47.3% 8th	54.3% 3rd	56.5% 3rd

Passes	Pass Accuracy	Key Passes
484 3rd	82.7% 3rd	5.8 10th

Pass Distance

Long (30m- )	Medium (15m-30m)	Short ( -15m)
57(12%)	177(37%)	251(52%)

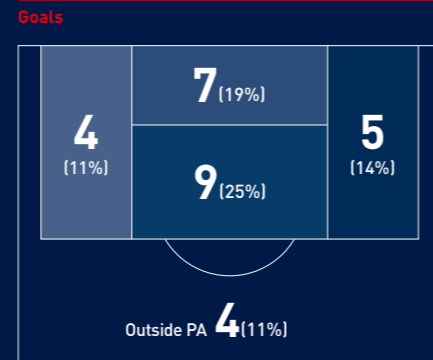
## Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	Recoveries in Attacking third
8.4 7th	13.6회 12th

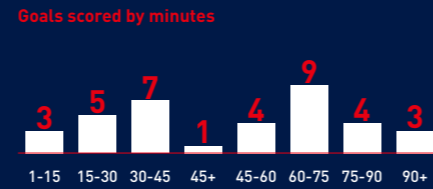
Total Distance(km)	Sprints
116.5 2nd	220.6 5th

## TEAM STATS



PK	Own goals	Total
4 [11%]	3 [8%]	36

xG	xGOT	xG conceded	xGOT conceded
35.0 12th	33.7 11th	45.1 5th	44.8 5th



Shoot sequence (SS) **296**(12th)

Average no. of passes per SS **3.1**(3rd)

A ratio of SSs to total sequences **6.3%**(12th)

## KEY FEATURES

- 1 Flexible transformation in shape between a back three and a back four with a range of formation options.
- 2 The tendency to use a target man, tried to create chances by putting the ball into the frontline as fast as possible.
- 3 Full backs flexible in how high up the pitch they stood during build-up play and varied between staying wide and moving centrally in the half-spaces.
- 4 Set up in a 4-4-2 formation when defending with centre back moving closer to the touchline to channel-line defend.
- 5 Allowing too much space between the midfielders and the defence was a consistent problem.
- 6 Susceptible to space behind the defence, exploited by the opponent's midfielders.

# ANSAN GREENERS

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >

## SUMMARY

The individual ability shown by striker Yun Ju-tae was outstanding. Ansan scored the most goals in K League 2 after the hour mark, this means that their concentration levels remained high towards the end of matches.

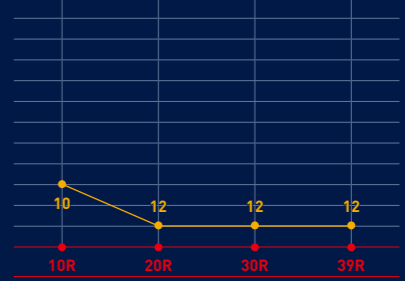


Manager | Lim Kwansik

Date of Birth | 1975. 07. 28

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	2	2	8
K League	2	2	8

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 6W 7D 23L



## Formation 4-4-2



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	SUNWOO	1	96	3	0
	SEUNGBIN	35	3,478	69	5

Position	Player	App	Min	G	A
DF	TAEGYU	17	1,329	1	0
	DAEKYUNG	14	907	0	0
	JAESUNG	32	3,116	0	1
	JEUNGHO	31	2,803	1	2
	CHAEWOON	18	1,138	0	1
	JUNYEONG	1	51	0	0
	MINKI	1	53	0	0
	GUNWOONG	3	110	0	0
	JUNHEE	19	998	0	1
	TACKKYUN	9	776	1	0
	YUSEOP	30	2,841	1	0
	YONGHEE	19	1,091	0	0

Position	Player	App	Min	G	A
MF	JAEMIN	27	1,388	5	1
	JOONMO	16	562	0	0
	YOUNGNAM	5	439	0	0
	JINHYUN	24	1,721	1	0
	KYUNGHO	16	1,514	1	1
	JUNBAE	4	135	0	0
	WANDREW	3	100	0	0
	JUNSOO	16	1,588	1	0
	GYUBIN	7	297	0	1
	SEUNGMIN	7	292	0	0
	JAEHYUN	1	15	0	0
	HANSOL	15	1,412	2	0
	GABRIEL	18	1,120	4	2

Position	Player	App	Min	G	A
FW	KYUNJUN	33	1,879	3	4
	BEOMSU	34	2,799	4	4
	JAEHYUK	5	148	1	0
	JUTAE	25	1,208	9	1
	KEUNHO	5	313	0	0
	HYEONGYU	24	921	3	1
	JIYONG	30	1,882	1	4
	THIAGO	16	669	1	1
	JAEHOON	1	53	0	0

Average Age	Yellow Cards	Red Cards
26.0 9th	62(5th) x2	2

## PLAYER STATS

Player	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
JUTAE	9	28	5.2
JAEMIN	5	8	4.0
BEOMSU	4	9	2.1

Player	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
BEOMSU	4	27	71
KYUNJUN	4	21	29
JIYONG	4	27	88

## AVERAGES



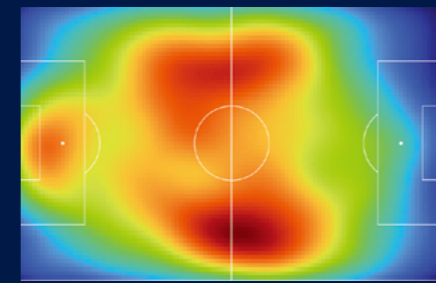
Attacking third	Middle third	Defensive third
43.1% 12th	48.2% 7th	51.7% 12th

Passes	Pass Accuracy	Key Passes
435 7th	79.5% 7th	5.6 12th

Pass Distance

Long (30m- )	Medium (15m-30m)	Short ( -15m)
58(13%)	140(32%)	237(55%)

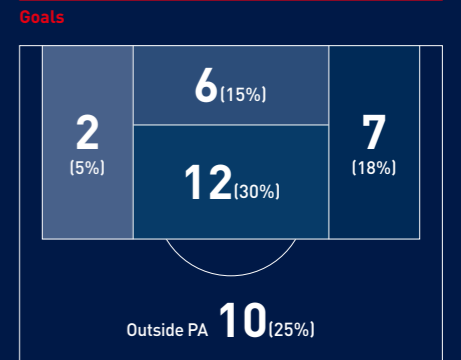
## Recoveries Heatmap



PPDA	Recoveries in Attacking third
9.4 12th	14.8회 8th

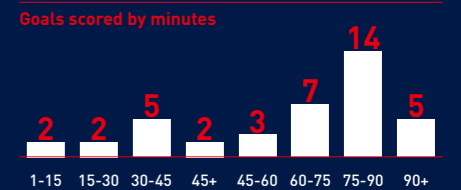
Total Distance(km)	Sprints
113.5 11th	211.8 10th

## TEAM STATS



PK	Own goals	Total
2 [5%]	0 [0%]	40

xG	xGOT	xG conceded	xGOT conceded
35.8 11th	30.7 12th	60.7 1st	65.8 1st



Shoot sequence (SS) **345**(7th)

Average no. of passes per SS **2.4**(11th)

A ratio of SSs to total sequences **7.0%**(7th)

## KEY FEATURES

- 1 Set up in a 2-4-4 formation with two strikers occupying wide positions to get involved in the build-up.
- 2 Wingers tended to stay high to run into the space behind when centre backs were dragged out of position.
- 3 Used a quick switch from side to side to find a breakthrough.
- 4 Set up in a 4-4-2 formation with midfielders sitting narrow to interfere with the opponent's build-up.
- 5 Even when trying to press, man-marking wasn't firm enough which created space for the opposition to exploit.
- 6 Central midfielders lacked mobility which led to space left exposed on the counter.



# CHEONAN CITY FC

KEY FEATURES Scan to watch video >



## SUMMARY

It was the club's first season in K League 2 and one in which they will have learned a lot. Bruno Mota and Paulo Silva produced 18 goals in total between them. Experienced midfielder Shin Hyung-min led by example.

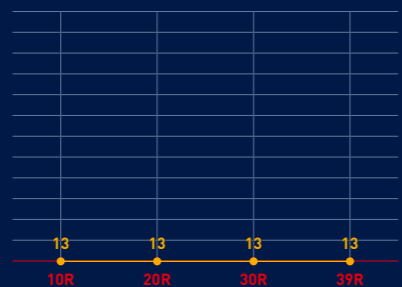


Manager | Park Namyel

Date of Birth | 1970. 05. 04

Manager Records	W	D	L
2023	5	10	21
K League	5	10	21

## Match Results and Rank Regular Season 5W 10D 21L



## Formation 4-2-3-1



## SQUAD

Position	Player	App	Min	GC	CS
GK	MINJUN	28	2,744	45	5
	HYOJUN	2	203	7	0
	MINHYEOK	6	597	10	1
DF	DESENG	3	105	0	0
	JOOHEON	14	1,008	0	0
	JUHWAN	31	2,740	0	2
	CHANGSOO	13	319	0	0
	GEONHO	1	35	0	0
	JOONKANG	23	1,727	0	1
	WONHO	11	503	0	0
	YONSEOK	27	1,776	1	1
	HYUNGYO	25	1,471	1	0
	KWANGJUN	26	2,189	1	1
	JAEWON	28	2,210	0	0
	OHYEON	23	1,797	0	0
MF	SUNGJOO	10	622	0	0
	SEYUN	5	213	0	0
	HYUNJUNG	19	1,430	2	0
	DAMIR	23	1,312	1	0
	HYUNGMIN	17	1,640	0	0
	YONGHO	28	1,450	2	2
	MINSOO	19	1,260	1	0
	BAEKGYU	24	1,257	2	3
	SANGHEON	2	76	0	0
	JAEHUN	4	104	0	0
FW	JONGMIN	25	1,010	1	0
	MOTA	35	2,626	10	1
	BAKAYOKO	12	1,095	0	0
	SEOKGYU	25	1,488	2	0
	CHANHYEOP	7	234	0	0
	SUKHWA	19	1,515	0	2
	PAULINHO	19	1,758	8	5
	SEOKHEE	8	241	0	0
	SEUNGWOO	7	205	0	0

Average Age	26.5 5th	70 (3rd)	x2 1	0
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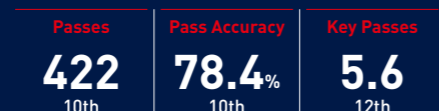
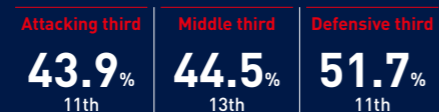
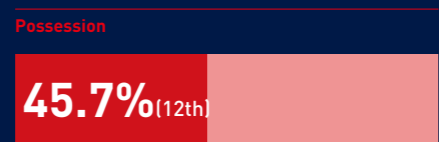
## PLAYER STATS

	Goals	Shots on Target	xG
MOTA	10	26	7.0
PAULINHO	8	23	4.9
YONGHO	2	11	1.0

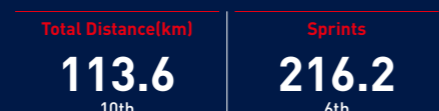
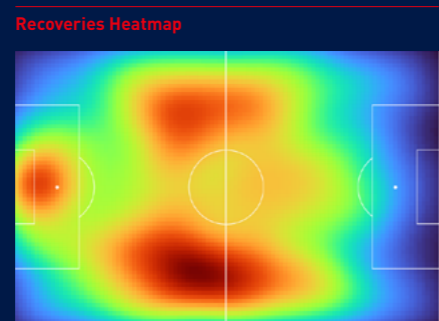
	Assists	Key Passes	Crosses
PAULINHO	5	33	70
BAEKGYU	3	23	92
YONGHO	2	14	67

## AVERAGES

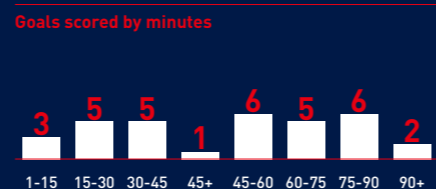
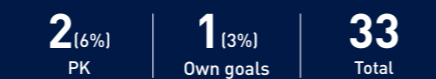
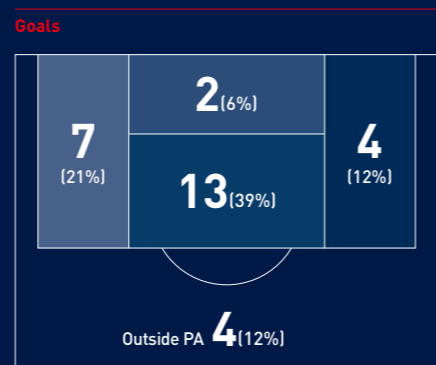


Pass Distance

Long (30m- )	<b>61</b> (15%)
Medium (15m-30m)	<b>150</b> (35%)
Short ( -15m)	<b>211</b> (50%)



## TEAM STATS



Shoot sequence (SS)	<b>271</b> (13th)
Average no. of passes per SS	<b>2.8</b> (6th)
A ratio of SSSs to total sequences	<b>5.7%</b> (13th)

## KEY FEATURES

- Set up in a 4-3-3 or 4-4-2 formation with two striker options: Bruno Mota in a target man role and Paulo Silva as a link-up option.
- Little of the central areas of the pitch during build-up but with quick delivery into the frontline.
- Bruno Mota was best used in a situation when crosses were played into him from wide areas. Mota stayed on the far side from where the ball came from.
- Set up in a 4-4-2 formation when out of possession with a strong man-marking system in the midfield area.
- Allowed the ball to be put into space between the lines, due to a lack of awareness from the midfielders.
- Team with the highest goal conceded in the last 15 minutes of games.



# 2023 K LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT

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K LEAGUE

# 2023 K LEAGUE TECHNICAL REPORT

