

Mighty draw for L'pool, Gunners

Bayern MU face off again



AFP, Geneva

English Premiership giants Liverpool will have to overcome Barcelona and AS Roma to progress to the Champions League quarter finals while Manchester United on Friday again drew old rivals Bayern Munich.

The second phase group draw pitted Liverpool against the Spanish and Italian giants whom they had to beat on the way to winning last season's UEFA Cup and they also face a tough trip to Istanbul to face Turkish champions Galatasaray in Group B.

In Group A, the only one actually composed solely of champions of their respective leagues, United were grouped with reigning European champions Bayern - the team they beat in the dramatic 1999 final but who knocked them out in last season's quarter-finals - and France's Nantes and Boavista of Portugal.

The winners of this trophy in 2000, Real Madrid, have perhaps a clearer passage, having drawn Panathinaikos of Greece, Portuguese giants FC Porto and surprise Czech qualifiers, Sparta Prague, in Group C.

England's other representatives Arsenal also have a mammoth task against Juventus, impressive Spaniards Deportivo La Coruna

and Bayer Leverkusen of Germany in Group D.

The first matches take place on November 20-21 and the final ties are on March 19-20. The top two teams in each group qualify for the quarter-finals.

Liverpool and United's draw will have fans looking forward to some titanic clashes.

Liverpool Chief Executive Rick Parry said: "We know Barcelona and Roma from last year and we have some very good memories but we don't fear them."

"This is a very tough group but at this stage there is no easy group."

Asked about manager Gerard Houllier, who left hospital on

Friday three weeks after undergoing emergency heart surgery, Parry said the Frenchman was in regular contact with his stand-in, Phil Thompson.

"He was with us in spirit (in the decisive victory against Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday) if not in body. He's in touch several times a day but let's give credit to Phil and the other boys... they're all pulling together."

"We're only too aware of the weight of expectation at Liverpool, but this team has only shown its potential so far, I'm sure there's a lot more to come."

Roma spokesman Franco Baldini said of the draw with Liverpool: "It was an excellent

game last year, there were several controversial decisions such as the penalty that went against us."

United's general secretary Ken Merrett said the English champions had almost expected to draw Bayern.

"Every time we look one another, we say yes, we're playing again," he said. "We know each other so well now, even the two managers are friends and we play them as often as we play teams in our league."

"There's nothing we don't know about each other. But we won't take Nantes lightly, we haven't played them before."

Arsenal will face the cream of Europe just days after four of their players return from a 46-hour round trip to play for France against Australia.

Arsenal's vice-chairman David Dein said: "We played Juventus 20 years ago and we beat them then."

"We've never played Bayer Leverkusen are in a tough group and it's there to be won," he added.

Bayer spokesman Reiner Calmund said simply: "We're in shock. Bayern have all the luck."

Dein added that the selection row over the France v Australia match was not over: "It has wider implications than just this match," he said. "The whole thing is very unfortunate."

SECOND PHASE DRAW

European Champions League second phase group draw made here on Friday:

<p>Group A</p> <p>Bayern Munich (Ger) Nantes (Fra) Manchester United (Eng) Boavista (Por)</p> <p>Group B</p> <p>Barcelona (Spa) Liverpool (Eng) Galatasaray (Tur) AS Roma (Ita)</p>	<p>Group C</p> <p>Real Madrid (Spa) Panathinaikos (Gre) FC Porto (Por) Sparta Prague (Cze)</p> <p>Group D</p> <p>Juventus (Ita) Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) Arsenal (Eng) Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)</p>
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* Matches to be played November 20-21, December 4-5, February 19-20, February 26-27, March 12-13, March 19-20

Serie A preview

Chievo look to stay atop

REUTERS, Milan

Surprise Serie A leaders Chievo face a new challenge when they travel to Venice to play Venezia on Saturday (Kick off 1930 GMT) - the need to cope with being clear favourites.

Both teams were promoted from Serie B last season, but while Chievo have made a hugely impressive start with six wins from their opening eight games, Venezia are winless and rooted to the foot of the table.

Chievo coach Luigi Del Neri revealed last week that before every game he tells his team that they are inferior to their opponents, but after wins against the likes of Fiorentina and Parma, it is hard to see Venezia as a real threat to his side.

But Del Neri says his players will not be taking anything for granted.

"Every game is difficult for Chievo and that includes Venezia. They will be no problem with motivation, the motivation is always there for us," Del Neri told Reuters earlier this week.

Since Chievo extended their lead at the top of Serie A to four points with last week's impressive 3-0 win over Torino, the club has been the focus of huge media attention with even an Italian filmmaker promising to make a movie out of what has been called the "Italian fairytale."

OTHER FIXTURES: Sunday (Kick off 1400 GMT unless stated, league positions in brackets):

Atalanta (16) v AS Roma (2), Bologna (5) v Fiorentina (12), Inter Milan (4) v Lecce (11), Lazio (15) v Brescia (7), Parma (14) v Perugia (10), Piacenza (13) v Udinese (9), Torino (17) v AC Milan (3), Verona (8) v Juventus (6)

Celtic's heartbreaking exit



REUTERS, London

Porto scraped into the second phase of the Champions League with a 1-0 win over Rosenborg Trondheim on Wednesday to become the 16th and final team to qualify for the next stage.

A 36th minute goal from Jesus Pena gave the 1987 European champions the vital victory they needed over the Norwegians.

Celtic, who beat already-qualified group winners Juventus 4-3 in a thrilling match at Parkhead, had to settle for third place in group E and a consolation spot in the UEFA Cup.

Juventus won the group with 11 points, followed by Porto (10), Celtic (9) and Rosenborg (4). Rosenborg were eliminated.

All the other Champions League issues were settled before Wednesday's final round of matches, and as well as Celtic taking their place in the UEFA Cup, Lille and Feyenoord also secured their places in the secondary competition.

Porto join Boavista as the two Portuguese teams going into Friday's draw for the second phase of the Champions League.

The other qualifiers include three teams from England: Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal; three from Spain: Real Madrid, Barcelona and Deportivo Coruna, two from Italy: AS Roma and Juventus, and two from Germany: reigning champions Bayern Munich and Bayer Leverkusen.

The four remaining qualifiers are Nantes (France), Panathinaikos (Greece), Galatasaray (Turkey) and Sparta Prague (Czech Republic).

Lille qualified for the UEFA Cup by finishing third in group G thanks to their 1-1 draw in the nearby town of Lens with Manchester United.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer scored a stunning opener after six minutes for United when he lashed in an unstoppable angled left-footed cross-shot, but Bruno Cheyrou equalised for the French team after 65 minutes with a powerful shot that perhaps United's stand-in keeper Roy Carroll could have stopped.

But Lille owed a measure of thanks to already-qualified Deportivo Coruna.

Olympiakos were looking set for third spot thanks to Aleks Alexandris's 51st minute goal, but with just seven minutes to go, Joan Capdevila equalised for Deportivo and that changed everything.

With both matches ending in 1-1 draws, Deportivo finished first in the group with 10 points, followed by Manchester United (10), Lille (6) and Olympiakos (5).

Feyenoord salvaged something from their woeful campaign with a 2-1 victory over Spartak Moscow which gave them their first win in group H.

Jon Dahl Tomasson scored to put Feyenoord ahead after five minutes and although the prolific Vladimir Beschastnykh equalised for Spartak nine minutes later, a goal four minutes after that from Johan Elmander was enough to give Feyenoord the points.

Feyenoord finished third with five points while Spartak finished bottom with just two. European champions Bayern Munich beat Sparta Prague 1-0 in Prague to win the group with 14 points, Sparta also qualifying with 11.

In other matches on Wednesday, Olympique Lyon beat Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 in Germany in their group F match while Barcelona beat Fenerbahce 1-0

with a fantastic injury-time free-kick goal from the brilliant Brazilian Rivaldo.

The Turkish side deserved at least a draw from a gutsy performance but instead lost their sixth successive match and became only the second side in the history of the competition to complete a group phase without a point.

Kosice of Slovakia were the only other team to perform that unwanted feat in the 1997-98 season.

Barcelona won the group with 13 points, followed by Leverkusen (12), Lyon (9) and Fenerbahce (1).

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Collated Champions League results on Wednesday:

Group A
At Glasgow
Celtic (Sco) 4 (Valgaeren 24, Sutton 45, 64, Larsson 57-pen) Juventus (Ita) 3 (Del Piero 19, Trezeguet 51, 77)
At Oporto, Portugal
FC Porto (Por) 1 (Pena 37) Rosenborg (Nor) 0

Group F
At Leverkusen, Germany
Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 2 (Sebesten 45, Berbatov 52) Lyon (Fra) 4 (Carriere 32, 38, Nee 64, Govou 81)
At Barcelona, Spain
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Rivaldo 89) Fenerbahce (Tur) 0

Group G
At Lens, France
Lille (Fra) 1 (Bruno Cheyrou 65) Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Solskjaer 6)
At Athens
Olympiakos (Gre) 1 (Alexandris 51) Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 1 (Capdevila)

Group H
At Prague
Sparta Prague (Cze) 0 Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Novotny-og 40)
At Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Feyenoord (Ned) 2 (Tomasson 5, Elmander 18) Spartak Moscow (Rus) 1 (Beschastnykh 14)

Ronaldinho case

FIFA order PSG to pay Gremio

AFP, Zurich

World governing body FIFA ruled here Thursday that Paris St Germain must pay 5.9 million dollars to Brazilian First Division club Gremio as compensation for striker Ronaldinho.

Paris St Germain will have 30 days to pay the sum, which is vastly inferior to Gremio's initial claims of 25 million dollars, and there is no right of appeal.

A special meeting chaired by FIFA and including representatives of both clubs had to be scheduled here in a bid to settle the dispute which has raged since the 21-year-old Brazilian striker's move to the French capital earlier this year.

Ronaldinho joined PSG on a free transfer at the end of last season following the expiry of his contract with the Brazilian First Division club on February 15.

The player claimed rights to a free move due to the so-called "Pele" law in Brazil, which was introduced on March 26 and stipulates that players may become free agents after serving initial contracts of five years with a Brazilian club.

UEFA Cup

Celtic- Valencia, clash of round three

AFP, Geneva

Valencia, the beaten finalists in the last two Champions League finals, face Scottish champions Celtic in one of the most attractive ties of the UEFA Cup third round draw made here on Friday.

Other mouthwatering ties will be Portugal's Sporting Lisbon against Italian giants AC Milan, Paris St Germain against the other Scottish representatives Rangers and Fiorentina against plucky French side Lille.

The reward for Hapoel Tel Aviv's elimination of England's Chelsea was a tie against Lokomotiv Moscow.

Inter Milan will be hoping Brazilian star Ronaldo finally recovers from injury in time to play English side Ipswich, who won the UEFA Cup in 1981.

The team Valencia beat in last season's Champions League semi-final, Leeds United, were lucky to survive against French side Troyes on Thursday and David O'Leary's team now face another potentially tricky trip to Grasshoppers Zurich.

The winners of this week's second round ties were joined in the draw by the teams who failed to qualify for the next stage of the Champions League but finished third in their groups.

Those 'backdoor' entrants included Lille, Celtic, and Germany's Borussia Dortmund, who must tussle with FC Copenhagen, the Danes who sprang one of the surprises of the second round by knocking out former European champions Ajax.

But Valencia appear the team to watch. The Spaniards who were beaten by Real Madrid in the Champions League final in 2000 and lost out on penalties to Bayern Munich this year failed to qualify for Europe's premier competition this season. But they are blazing a trail through the UEFA Cup, after thrashing Legia Warsaw of Poland 7-2 on aggregate.

The first leg ties will be played on November 22 with the return leg on December 6.

UEFA Cup

Chelsea shown the door



AFP, Paris

Chelsea manager Claudio Ranieri insisted his players had been "brilliant" as they were dumped out of the UEFA Cup by Hapoel Tel-Aviv on Thursday after failing to overcome the first-leg defeat when key players refused to go to Israel.

After his multi-million-dollar squad were held to a 1-1 draw in the second round second leg match at Stamford Bridge, Italian Ranieri said: "The result went against us but the performance was brilliant for Chelsea."

"I think my players deserved to win tonight, but in the end it is Tel Aviv who go through because they were calm, they kept possession and they countered well."

Chelsea had lost the first leg 2-0 after six key players including French internationals Emmanuel Petit and Marcel Desailly and England's Graeme Le Saux declined to travel because of the security situation in the Middle East.

On Thursday, Milan Osterc gave the visitors the lead 10 minutes from half time before Chelsea substitute Gianfranco Zola levelled the scores with a curling right-foot shot 26 minutes from time.

Despite having an overwhelming share of possession, the English Premiership club were denied by bad finishing and heroics from Hapoel goalkeeper Shavit Elimelech.

"My players are not happy but this is normal," added Ranieri. "They know their performance was very good and so was the spirit."

Hapoel coach Dror Kashtan paid tribute to his team, who reached the third round for the first time.

"It's a great time for a small nation like Israel and it's a huge step for Hapoel Tel-Aviv," he said. "It's nice to bring a little happiness to our country at such a difficult time."

Leeds United's David O'Leary was another manager with plenty to smile about as his side survived a scare at modest French club Troyes to enter Friday's draw.

Troyes were winning the tie on away goals before a 78th-minute header from Irish international Robbie Keane made the score 3-2 to the French club on the night but 6-5 to Leeds on aggregate.

"It was a difficult match," said O'Leary. "But I am absolutely delighted because it's all about being in the next round and I am looking forward to a nice draw."

"I told people from the start just what Troyes were like. They might not be a big name club, but they are a team which work very hard for one another."

"I admit my heart was in my mouth and I was a very worried man when they were leading 3-1, but we are a side which is always

Primera Liga preview

It doesn't get any bigger than this



AFP, Madrid

Most of the world's great derbies are same-city affairs but the bitter rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid stretches over nearly half of Spain and the 143rd league encounter between the two Spanish football giants on Sunday will galvanise not just the two cities but the entire nation.

The traditional antipathy between the regions of Catalonia - which prides itself on being the workers of Spain - and Castile - which, in turn, prides itself on being the rulers of Spain since Madrid was chosen as the capital of the country in 1561 - stretches back centuries, far beyond the formation of the two clubs.

However, in modern times, the rivalry has found a focal point on the football field.

This year's match will be no different and neither side will be lacking motivation, despite the fact that both teams are now multinational entities with few players having roots in the cities where their clubs hail from.

Barcelona are currently second in the Spanish First Division, with 19 points from 10 games and just one point away from league leaders Deportivo La Coruna, while Real Madrid are slowly inching their way up the table after one of their worst ever starts to the season and lie in tenth.

The Catalans record on their trips to Madrid is poor, with only 12 wins in 71 games, but they are can point to two draws and a victory in the last four visits to prove that the current generation wearing the famous claret-and-blue strip have little fear of what lies in wait in front of a capacity, and rabidly pro-Madrid, 75,000-strong crowd at

Real's historic Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

"We are not going with any worries to the Bernabeu. It's a test, nothing more - which we could pass or fail - but the Bernabeu doesn't scare us. The team is very capable of handling the pressure," said Barcelona coach Charly Rexach calmly earlier this week.

Rexach can speak with the experience of a man who saw just about everything during his 16 years as a Barcelona player from 1965 to 1981.

His opposite number Vicente Del Bosque lined up against Rexach several times, with their careers overlapping during Del Bosque's 11-year stint as a Real Madrid player between 1973 to 1984 but it is the first time that both men will face each other along from the sidelines for the match.

Del Bosque cast aside suggestions this week that the defending Spanish champions might struggle against an on-song Barcelona, in the wake of their poor league form.

"We always raise our game against Barcelona and I expect the same this year. We won last Sunday against Villarreal but it would not have mattered if we had lost. This is a different match to the rest, in many respects," commented Del Bosque on Wednesday.

Barcelona had a boost when FIFA on Friday allowed players involved in next week's South American World Cup qualifying matches to also play in league games shortly before travelling, meaning Barcelona's Brazilian star Rivaldo will be available.

Real Madrid will however be without dynamic Brazilian defender Roberto Carlos, who is not playing ahead of World Cup duty for his country. The man expected to fill the breach, for his first ever derby, is 20-year-old Raul Bravo, who spent most of last season playing for Real Madrid's

third team in the Spanish fourth division.

"It is clear that Raul Bravo is not of the same standard as Roberto Carlos because he doesn't have the same years of experience. But I've been very happy with his progress, I've known him for six or seven years, and I'm confident he has the ability to substitute adequately for Roberto Carlos," said Del Bosque.

There are doubts about the fitness of central defender Aitor Karanka and it is likely that another youngster Fernando Pavon will accompany club captain Fernando Hierro in the back four.

"If I do play, then it will be a dream come true," said Pavon.

Barcelona will be without their injured Spanish international midfielder Luis Enrique Martinez. However, after being out injured for two months, Dutch international Marc Overmars was back in action on Wednesday in the 1-0 in the Champions League win over Fenerbahce and should fill the gap left by Luis Enrique.

Derby clashes are the theme of the weekend with Athletic Bilbao playing host to their local Basque rivals Alaves on Saturday while Malaga are at home to nearby Sevilla in Andalusia.

Deportivo La Coruna could retain their place at the top of the Spanish First Division by beating visitors Osasuna, a team they have never lost to at home in the league.

FIXTURES

Saturday (all kick off times 1500 GMT, except where stated): Athletic Bilbao v Alaves

Sunday: Real Betis v Real Zaragoza, Deportivo La Coruna v Osasuna, Espanyol v Real Sociedad, Malaga v Sevilla, Real Mallorca v Tenerife, Valencia v Rayo Vallecano, Valladolid v Villarreal, Las Palmas v Celta Vigo, Real Madrid v Barcelona

Iran breeze past UAE

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Iran advanced to a showdown with the Republic of Ireland for a 2002 World Cup berth here Wednesday after wrapping up a 3-0 Asian playoff win against the United Arab Emirates.

The Iranians, who had fluffed their chance of an automatic World Cup spot after losing to Bahrain earlier this month, completed a 4-0 aggregate win over the UAE with goals from Ali Daei, Karim Bagheri and Mehrdad Minavand.

Striker Daei, who missed last week's 1-0 first-leg victory in Tehran through suspension, set up the win with a seventh minute free-kick which flew into the Emirates net past Mutaez Abdallah.

The Iranians were put on the back foot a minute later however when Pejman Jamshidi was sent off by Japanese referee Turo Kamikawa. Not to be outdone, Minavand got in on the goalscoring act with a spectacular effort four minutes later, a 35-metre shot ripping into Abdallah's goal.

Veteran Zouhair Bekhit was denied a consolation goal for the Emirates in the final minute of the match after it was disallowed for offside.

Iran, who have qualified for the World Cup twice before in 1978 and 1998, now face Mick McCarthy's Republic of Ireland over two legs on November 10 and 15 for a place in next year's finals in Japan and South Korea.

Premiership preview

All roads lead to Anfield



REUTERS, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier's recovery from heart surgery should be further aided if his side extend their three-match winning streak against champions Manchester United at Anfield on Sunday.

Liverpool go into one of the premier league's biggest games of the season, having beaten United home and away in the league last season and also in the pre-season Charity Shield in Cardiff in August.

Victory on Sunday could put either side top if other results go their way, but historical rivalry alone is enough to motivate English soccer's two most successful clubs of the last 30 years.

Liverpool come fresh from qualifying for the second round of the Champions League, topping their group with a 2-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday.

United, who had already booked their place in the second phase, drew 1-1 away to Lille on Wednesday.

Fit-again Michael Owen is set to

DRAW FOR THIRD ROUND

Draw for UEFA Cup third round made on Friday:

PSV Eindhoven (Netherlands) v PAOK Salonika (Greece)
FC Fiorentina (Italy) v OSC Lille (France)
Valencia (Spain) v Celtic (Scotland)
Servette (Switzerland) v Hertha Berlin (Germany)
Ipswich Town (England) v Inter Milan (Italy)
Paris Saint Germain v Rangers (Scotland)
Feyenoord (Netherlands) v SC Freiburg (Germany)
AEK Athens (Greece) v Litex Lovech
Grasshopper (Switzerland) v Leeds United (England)
Borndby (Denmark) v Parma (Italy)
Bordeaux (France) v Roda JC Kerkrade (Netherlands)
Slovan Liberec (Czech Republic) v Real Mallorca (Spain)
Hapoel Tel Aviv (Israel) v Lokomotiv Moscow (Russia)
FC Copenhagen (Denmark) v Borussia Dortmund (Germany)
Sporting Lisbon (Portugal) v AC Milan (Italy)
Club Bruges (Belgium) v Olympique Lyon (France)

* First leg matches will be played on November 22 and second leg matches will be played on December 6