



Union des associations européennes de football



Media Release

Date: 16/05/2005

Communiqué aux médias

No. 65

Medien-Mitteilung

Referee appointed for UEFA Cup final

Graham Poll to handle Sporting Clube de Portugal v PFC CSKA Moskva

The UEFA Referees Committee today announced that English referee Graham Poll will officiate at the 2004/05 UEFA Cup final between Sporting Clube de Portugal and PFC CSKA Moskva, to be played at the Estádio José Alvalade in Lisbon on Wednesday 18 May 2005, kicking-off at 19.45 local time (20.45 CET).

His assistant referees will be Glenn Turner and Michael Tingey, while the Fourth Official will be Steve Bennett. All four members of the team are from England.

Graham Poll, 41, has been a referee since 1980; has been a first-division referee since 1993 and was awarded his FIFA badge in 1996.

He was selected for the EURO 2000™ finals in Belgium and the Netherlands, officiating at the Czech Republic v France and Slovenia v Norway matches. At the 2002 FIFA World Cup finals in Japan and Korea, he was the referee of the Italy v Croatia match.

Although Graham Poll has handled 70 international matches, this will be his first visit to Lisbon. He has had no previous encounters with either Sporting Clube de Portugal or PFC CSKA Moskva in UEFA club competitions.

"I have been to Porto four times, but this will be my first visit to Lisbon," Graham Poll comments. "I imagine the city will be bouncing and I'm sure there'll be a great sense of occasion. For me, it represents a real honour, a boost for English referees and a reward for a lot of hard work that has been done within English refereeing. It may sound strange to say, but handling a European final has never really been a target as such. I think that, when you start out as a young referee, the targets you set yourself are based on domestic competitions. Mine was to be the referee of the FA Cup final in England, so actually going up a step further into a European final makes me feel absolutely delighted."

"UEFA have very kindly allowed me to fly out some friends and family, so I'll have my own little 'supporters club' in Lisbon. It's an even more special occasion because we haven't had an English referee in a UEFA final since Philip Don was called in as a late replacement for the UEFA Champions League final in Athens in 1994. Before that, I think you have to go back to Joe Worrall, who did the first leg of the 1992 UEFA Cup final in Turin. But, having said that, I don't want to make too much of being English. I'm going to Lisbon as a UEFA referee to handle a game between two clubs from opposite extremes of the continent that I've never met before. What I want them to see is a European referee for what I hope will be a great European final."

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