



2009 UEFA EUROPEAN WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

MATCH PREVIEW



Denmark



Netherlands

Lahti Stadium, Lahti

Saturday 29 August 2009 - 16.30CET (17.30 local time)

Group A - Matchday 3

Contents

Pauw preparing to break new ground	2
Bito signals Dutch intent	3
Røddik Hansen spurred on by Danish support	4



Committed to the future of European football

Pauw preparing to break new ground

With the Netherlands sitting on the brink of qualifying for the quarter-finals in their first appearance in a UEFA Women's European Championship final tournament, coach Vera Pauw has described the Oranje's concluding Group A fixture with Denmark as "the biggest game" in the national team's history.

Achievement

The Dutch participated in three two-legged quarter-finals in the late 1980s and early 1990s but, prior to reaching UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009™, had not come close to reaching the competition proper since the format was changed for the 1997 edition. Moreover, while getting to Finland was certainly a landmark for women's football in the Netherlands, gaining the draw they require to finish as runners-up in the section would not only break new ground in sporting terms, it would also take media coverage of the team back home to new heights.

'Huge' impact

"It's the biggest game in the history of the national team," Pauw, who expects to have a full squad to pick from despite several knocks, told uefa.com. "If we qualify for the knockout stage, we've been promised that our games will be televised on national TV. At the moment footage is only available on Eurosport and on the internet, not on the main channels. It will be the first time there will have been women's football televised live so the impact [of qualifying] will be huge."

'Chance'

Pauw is nonetheless aware that her team will have to play above themselves if they are to stand a chance of getting a result against a country which has a rich history of reaching the latter stages of tournaments. "We know where we stand – Denmark are so far ahead of us and we know we need to have a top, top day to have a chance."

Improvement

Denmark trail their opponents on goal difference and would also progress as one of the two best third-placed teams with a draw. Rather ominously for the Netherlands, Kenneth Heiner-Møller says there is much more to come from his team after taking three points from their first two matches. "We haven't reached our peak yet," he said. "We have improved a little bit and hopefully the confidence gained from getting three points [against Ukraine] will take us to another level."

'Impressed'

That said, the 38-year-old has warned his side to be on their guard against the Dutch attacking trio of Manon Melis, their seven-goal leading scorer in qualifying, Kirsten van de Ven and Karin Stevens. "They were surprising against Ukraine [when they won 2-0 on Matchday 1]; I didn't expect them to be so good on the counterattack."

Bito signals Dutch intent

While a draw with Denmark will be sufficient to confirm the Netherlands' passage into the last eight of UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009™ as Group A runners-up, right-back Dyanne Bito has pledged that the Oranje will "play on the front foot" at all times on Saturday.

Helsinki loss

The 28-year-old's stance will certainly strike a chord with those who were present at Helsinki's Olympic Stadium on Wednesday, when Vera Pauw's team opted to sit back and accept a 2-1 defeat by Finland to protect their goal difference and ensure only a point is needed to qualify in Lahti. Bito, though, says all of the squad were supportive of Pauw's decision and is confident that the same thing will not happen again when they meet Denmark, with whom they are level on three points, for the first time in almost three years.

Title success

"There is a danger we could sit back too much but I don't think we will," Bito, an Eredivisie winner with AZ Alkmaar last season, told uefa.com. "We will try to play on the front foot – we are not playing for a draw that is for certain. The atmosphere in the squad was OK [after the Finland match] because we understood the coach's decision [to protect the goal difference] and we can live with it."

Watching brief

The Oranje's last meeting with Denmark was a 1-0 defeat in the Peace Queens Cup in Seoul, South Korea in October 2006, a result which stretched the Nordic nation's unbeaten record against the Netherlands to 13 matches. Unsurprisingly, given the time which has elapsed since they last met, Bito admits to not knowing much about Kenneth Heiner-Møller's squad. "We haven't seen too much of them but we will [watch their matches] later so we will know what they are like for tomorrow."

Too passive

Despite the gaps in her knowledge, Bito – who has started both matches at the finals so far – is certain the Netherlands must improve upon the performance they delivered against the hosts. "We have to rise above our normal level because Denmark are sixth in the world rankings," she said. "We played too passively the other day, not aggressive enough."

Røddik Hansen spurred on by Danish support

Line Røddik Hansen has praised the fervent band of supporters who have followed Denmark so far at UEFA WOMEN'S EURO 2009™ and has vowed to repay their faith by getting the point needed against the Netherlands to reach the quarter-finals.

Presence felt

Despite being vastly outnumbered in their Group A opener against Finland in Helsinki, the Danish supporters more than made themselves heard as their team slipped to a 1-0 defeat by the hosts. Nevertheless, they were out in force again on Matchday 2 when Kenneth Heiner-Møller's charges kick started their campaign with victory against Ukraine and Røddik Hansen has been quick to highlight the impact they can have on the team's performance.

Fan 'boost'

"It's been great to have such big support from our fans," said the Brøndby IF defender. "There has been a lot of them here and it's great to hear them play the samba band – it gives us a boost when we're on the pitch."

Positive thoughts

Røddik Hansen and Co require a point in Lahti to guarantee their presence in the last eight as one of the best third-placed teams but the 21-year-old only has her sights on collecting all three points. "We don't think about that [only needing a draw] at all, we just want to go out and win the match not thinking too much about technicalities," she added.

Not swayed

Denmark boast a formidable record against their opponents with just one defeat in 16 meetings, a 1-0 defeat all of 27 years ago, a sequence which does not cut any ice with the blonde centre-back. "We are playing a different team and we don't think about statistics," she countered. "That has no bearing on this match."

'Good atmosphere'

Despite having never won a major tournament, Denmark are one of the fancied sides in the tournament and, after reigniting their hopes of glory with a 2-1 defeat of Ukraine, Røddik Hansen cannot wait to get going against Vera Pauw's Dutch outfit. "The atmosphere is very good after the victory against Ukraine, it was a big lift for the team," said Røddik Hansen, who, at 19, was the youngest player in Denmark's 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup squad. "We're very much looking forward to the Netherlands match, there's a lot of excitement about."