



Union des associations européennes de football



Media Release

Date: 19/04/2004

Communiqué aux médias

No. 057

Medien-Mitteilung

Referee appointed for semi-final in Porto

The UEFA Referees Committee today announced that German referee Markus Merk will officiate at the first leg of the 2003/04 UEFA Champions League semi-final between FC Porto and RC Deportivo La Coruña to be played at the Estádio do Dragão in Porto on Wednesday 21 April, kicking-off at 19.45 local time (20.45 CET).

His assistant referees will be Christian Schräer and Jan-Hendrik Salver, while the 4th Official will be Helmut Fleischer. All four members of the team are from Germany.

Markus Merk, 42, has been a referee for 30 years and won his FIFA badge in 1992, when he handled two matches during the Barcelona Olympics. He was selected for the EURO 2000 final tournament and the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Japan/Korea.

Markus Merk was the referee at FC Barcelona's 1-0 win over Paris Saint-Germain FC in the 1997 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup final played in Rotterdam (when José Mourinho was assistant to Bobby Robson at the Catalan club) and was also appointed to officiate at last season's UEFA Champions League final between AC Milan and Juventus at Old Trafford, Manchester.

This will be his third encounter with FC Porto but his first in a home game. He handled their 3-1 defeat by NK Dinamo in Zagreb on 4 November 1998 and the 1-0 defeat by Real Madrid CF at the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu on 19 February 2002.

He has yet to witness a victory for RC Deportivo La Coruña either. He handled their 0-1 home defeat by Paris Saint-Germain FC in the 1995/96 Cup Winners' Cup; their 1-1 draw with Olympiacos CFP in Athens on 31 October 2001 in the UEFA Champions League; and the 3-2 defeat by Manchester United FC at Old Trafford in the quarter-finals of the same competition on 10 April 2002.

Two weeks ago, Markus Merk was the referee of Chelsea FC's 2-1 victory over Arsenal FC in the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second leg played at Highbury and on Saturday, by officiating at the game between BV Borussia Dortmund and FC Bayern München, he set a new German record of 241 matches in the Bundesliga.

He is one of the twelve referees selected for UEFA EURO 2004™ in Portugal.

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