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Referee appointed for UEFA Cup final

Pierluigi Collina to handle Valencia CF v Olympique de Marseille in Gothenburg

The UEFA Referees Committee today announced that Italian referee Pierluigi Collina will officiate at the 2003/04 UEFA Cup final between Valencia CF and Olympique de Marseille to be played at the Nya Ullevi stadium in Gothenburg on Wednesday 19 May 2004, kicking-off at 20.45.

His assistant referees will be Marco Ivaldi and Narciso Pisacreta, while the fourth official will be Roberto Rosetti. All four members of the team are from Italy.

Pierluigi Collina, 44, has been a referee for 27 years and won his FIFA badge nine years ago. He was the referee at the 1999 UEFA Champions League final between Manchester United FC and FC Bayern München at the Nou Camp in Barcelona.

He had previously handled the 1996 Olympic final in Atlanta, Georgia, where Nigeria beat Argentina 3-2 to take the gold medal in the USA. At the 1998 FIFA World Cup he had officiated at the Netherlands v Belgium (0-0) and France v Denmark (2-1) fixtures.

At EURO 2000, he was the referee of the Netherlands v Czech Republic (1-0), England v Germany (1-0) and Spain v France (1-2) games in Amsterdam, Charleroi and Bruges respectively. After handling the Argentina v England and Japan v Turkey games (0-1 in both cases) Pierluigi Collina was selected to officiate at the 2002 FIFA World Cup final between Germany and Brazil (0-2).

Although this will be his 93rd international match, Pierluigi Collina had not crossed paths with Valencia CF until their 0-0 UEFA Champions League draw in Leeds in the semi-finals of the 2000/01 campaign. He has not met the Spanish side since then. His first contact with Olympique de Marseille was, at it happens, in Spain, when they drew 0-0 with RC Celta in Vigo on 16 March 1999. He then met OM at the Stade Vélodrome in November of the same year when they drew their UEFA Champions League match against NK Dinamo Zagreb 2-2. He will meet the French club for the third time in Gothenburg.

His most recent match in UEFA club competitions was the UEFA Champions League semi-final between RC Deportivo La Coruña and FC Porto.

Pierluigi Collina is one of the twelve referees selected for UEFA EURO 2004™ in Portugal, along with his two assistants. All three were at the UEFA Preparatory Workshop in Portugal last month, where Pierluigi Collina, as one of four 'ambassadors' alongside Anders Frisk, Markus Merk and Lubos Michel, took part in the official launch of the joint UEFA/International Committee of the Red Cross campaign to protect children in war.

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