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Referee appointed for UEFA Champions League semi-final

Italian referee Pierluigi Collina to handle Wednesday's second-leg match in Madrid

UEFA has appointed the match officials for the second leg of the UEFA Champions League semi-final between Real Madrid CF and FC Barcelona, to be played on Wednesday 1 May at the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu in Madrid at 20.45 CET.

42-year-old Italian referee Pierluigi Collina has been assigned to the game and his team is completed by Narciso Pisacreta and Claudio Puglisi, who will operate as Assistant Referees, plus Fiorenzo Treossi, who will act as Fourth Official.

Pierluigi Collina, a financial adviser from Viareggio, made his international debut at a match between Turkey and France on 8 March 1995 during the Military World Cup and his first UEFA club competition match was a fixture between Karlsruher SC and Sheffield Wednesday FC in the UEFA Intertoto Cup in July of the same year. Just over a year later, he handled the final of the Olympic tournament, when Nigeria beat Argentina 3-2 in Athens, USA, to take the gold medal.

This will be his third visit to the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu in Madrid. The first was on 22 October 1997 when he was the referee of Real Madrid CF's 5-1 UEFA Champions League win over Olympiakos Piraeus FC when the side coached by Jupp Heynckes was en route to victory in the Amsterdam final. His second visit was on 28 September 1999 when the Spanish side beat FC Porto 3-1, also in the UEFA Champions League. Pierluigi Collina has also officiated at three UEFA Champions League away games involving Real Madrid CF. The first was the 3-2 victory over Manchester United FC at Old Trafford in April 2000; the second was the 3-2 defeat by Galatasaray SK in Istanbul in the first leg of last season's quarter-final; and the third was the 2-1 win in Porto on Matchday 10 of the current campaign.

His first contact with FC Barcelona was during the Catalan club's 3-2 UEFA Champions League defeat in Newcastle in September 1997. He then saw them lose for a second time (2-1 at home to FC Bayern München) on 4 November 1998 and finally saw them win when he returned to the Nou Camp on 8 December 1999 for the 5-0 UEFA Champions League victory over AC Sparta Praha. Earlier this season, on 17 October 2001, he handled the 2-1 home win over Bayer 04 Leverkusen.

Pierluigi Collina also met players from both teams when he was the referee of France's 2-1 victory over Spain in Bruges during the EURO 2000 finals.