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Referee of UEFA Champions League final named

The UEFA Referees Committee today announced the referee for the final of the 2006/07 UEFA Champions League to be played at the Olympic Stadium in Athens on Wednesday 23 May, kicking-off at 21.45 local time (20.45 CET). The grand finale between AC Milan and Liverpool FC will be handled by 43-year-old German referee Herbert Fandel.

It will be the first time that he has handled a game in Athens, but he is no stranger to the two finalists. He has met AC Milan five times, dating back to a 2-0 home win in the UEFA Cup against Hapoel Tel Aviv on 21 March 2002. He then handled three 1-0 UEFA Champions League victories – against Club Brugge KV in Belgium on 4 November 2003; against FC Shakhtar in Donetsk on 14 September 2004; and at home to Manchester United FC on 8 March 2005. This season, he was the referee of the 4-1 win against RSC Anderlecht at San Siro – which meant that he finally saw AC Milan concede a goal.

On the other hand, he has never seen Liverpool FC score a goal. He handled their 2-0 defeat in Valencia on 17 September 2002; the goalless draw away to Chelsea FC on 6 December 2005; and the 1-0 home defeat by FC Barcelona at Anfield in this season's 1st Knock-Out Round on 6 March.

Herbert Fandel, born on 9 March 1964, started his refereeing career in 1979; made his Bundesliga debut in 1996; and became an international referee in 1998. His debut was at the European Under-16 finals in Scotland that same year and, since then, he has been selected for the 1999 Meridian Cup in South Africa; the 2000 European Under-21 finals in Slovakia; the 2000 Olympic Games; and the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2005. He was the referee of last season's UEFA Cup final in Eindhoven, where Sevilla FC beat Middlesbrough FC 4-0.

Herbert Fandel's curriculum vitae includes 17 UEFA Champions League games and on his 69-match international track record there's an Under-21 game between Italy and England on 27 May 2000 when Gennaro Gattuso and Andrea Pirlo (he scored the penalty that clinched a 2-0 win) were in action against Jamie Carragher.

His most recent UEFA Champions League match was also at an 'Olympic Stadium'. He was at the Stadio Olimpico for the AS Roma v Manchester United FC fixture (2-1) in the first leg of the quarter-finals. His team on that night is the one he will lead out in Athens: Carsten Kadach, 43, and Volker Wezel, 41, are his Assistant Referees, while Florian Meyer will act as 4th Official. Carsten Kadach ran the line for Markus Merk in Liverpool's 1-0 defeat by Chelsea FC in the first leg of the semi-finals.