

UEFA EUROPA CONFERENCE LEAGUE - 2021/22 SEASON MATCH PRESS KITS



FK Jablonec

**Strelnice Stadion - Jablonec nad
Nisou**

Thursday 25 November 2021
21.00CET (21.00 local time)
Group D - Matchday 5



AZ Alkmaar

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Match background

The top two teams in UEFA Europa Conference League Group D meet in the Czech Republic, with Jablonec hoping to reduce a five-point deficit on table-topping Dutch visitors AZ Alkmaar, who are closing in on a place in the knockout phase.

- Jablonec have five points from their four matches, three from an opening 1-0 home win against CFR Cluj and two from a pair of 2-2 draws on Matchdays 3 and 4 against Randers, who sit a point behind them. AZ, also held 2-2 by the Danish side on opening night, have won their last three fixtures, doing the double over CFR (1-0 a, 2-0 h) in the two most recent.
- AZ need only to avoid defeat against Jablonec to secure a round of 16 spot as group winners, and will be certain of finishing in the top two regardless of their own result if Randers, who have drawn all of their first four matches, fail to win at home to CFR in the other Matchday 5 fixture. Jablonec will be confirmed in the top two if they win and Randers lose.

Previous meetings

- A 53rd-minute goal from AZ's Icelandic international midfielder Albert Gudmundsson was sufficient to give the Dutch side all three points when they hosted Jablonec in Alkmaar on 30 September.
- The clubs have met in one previous tie, AZ beating Jablonec 3-1 on aggregate in the 2011/12 UEFA Europa League third qualifying round (2-0 h, 1-1 a).
- Jablonec have yet to record a win against Dutch opponents, their only other matches, against Ajax in the 2015/16 UEFA Europa League play-offs, resulting in a 0-1 away defeat and a 0-0 home draw. They have therefore drawn both previous home games against Eredivisie visitors.
- AZ by contrast are unbeaten in their seven matches against Czech sides (W4 D3), the only other away fixture a 1-0 win at Jablonec's local rivals Slovan Liberec in the first leg of the 2013/14 UEFA Europa League round of 32 – a tie the Alkmaar club went on to win 2-1 on aggregate.

Form guide

Jablonec

- Third in the 2020/21 Czech Liga, 17 points adrift of champions Slavia, Jablonec thus qualified for a fourth successive season of European football, all under coach Petr Rada. They were well beaten in their UEFA Europa League third qualifying round tie by Celtic (2-4 h, 0-3 a) but made amends in the UEFA Europa Conference League play-offs against Žilina, storming through 8-1 on aggregate (5-1 h, 3-0 a).
- This is the club's second appearance in a European group stage, the first having come in the 2018/19 UEFA Europa League, when they finished bottom of a section including Dynamo Kyiv, Rennes and Astana with five points.
- Jablonec had failed to win in eight European home games (D4 L4) until their 5-1 victory over Žilina in the first leg of the UEFA Europa Conference League play-off. The Matchday 1 defeat of CFR enabled them to record two successive European home wins for the very first time.

AZ

- AZ finished third in the Dutch Eredivisie last season, one point behind runners-up PSV Eindhoven and 17 adrift of champions Ajax. They also featured in the UEFA Europa League group stage for the seventh time, registering eight points but failing to progress from a tightly-contested section including Napoli, Real Sociedad and Rijeka.
- The Alkmaar side, led since December 2020 by rookie head coach Pascal Jansen, are one of three Dutch sides competing in the inaugural UEFA Europa Conference League group stage – a consequence of their UEFA Europa League play-off defeat by Celtic (0-2 a, 2-1 h).
- Despite taking four points from their first two games on the road in Group D, the 1980/81 UEFA Cup runners-up have lost six of their last nine European away games, five of them without scoring. The victory in Romania on Matchday 3 was their first in five European games outside the Netherlands (D1 L3).

Links and trivia

- Jablonec midfielder Tomáš Hübschman is the UEFA Europa Conference League group stage's oldest participant. He was aged 40 years 61 days when he started the Matchday 4 encounter away to Randers.

Legend

Competitions

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