Qarabağ FK

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APOEL FC

Match background
Legend
The serial champions of Azerbaijan and Cyprus go head to head for the third time this season as Qarabağ host APOEL in Baku hoping for a different outcome from the clubs' summer encounter in the UEFA Champions League third qualifying round.

• Qarabağ recovered from an opening 0-3 defeat at home to Sevilla in UEFA Europa League Group A with a 4-1 win against Dudelange in Luxembourg last time out, but APOEL are still searching for their first points of the section after narrow defeats by Dudelange (3-4 h) and Sevilla (0-1 a).

Previous meetings
• There were away wins for both clubs when they met for the first time in August. Qarabağ emerged 2-1 victors from the first leg in Cyprus but APOEL, having changed coach between legs, bringing in Thomas Doll for Paolo Tramezzani, took the tie with a 2-0 success in Baku.

• Those were Qarabağ's first matches against Cypriot opposition, whereas APOEL had played two previous qualifying ties against another Baku-based side, Neftçi, winning the first, in the 1995/96 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup preliminary round (3-0 on aggregate), and losing the second, in the 2012/13 UEFA Europa League play-offs (2-4 agg). The Nicosia club drew both away legs so remain undefeated in three visits to the Azerbaijani capital.

Form guide
Qarabağ
• Qarabağ were crowned champions of Azerbaijan for the sixth season running in 2018/19 – and seventh overall – having finished eight points clear of runners-up Neftçi. They also made it to a fifth successive European group stage, in the UEFA Europa League, though lost five of their six matches, including both against Sporting CP and Arsenal, the only consolation a 1-0 win away to Vorskla Poltava.

• This season, as in 2018/19, Qarabağ began their European journey in the UEFA Champions League first qualifying round but were eliminated two rounds later by APOEL before an away-goals win against Linfield in the UEFA Europa League play-offs (2-3 a, 2-1 h). They have never extended their European involvement into the spring.

• Qarabağ have not won any of their last eight home European group games, losing seven, the exception a 0-0 draw against Atlético Madrid in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League. They lost all three last season, incurring their heaviest European home defeat as they went down 6-1 to Sporting on Matchday 5. That goal was the only one they have scored at home in their last four UEFA Europa League group games.

APOEL
• Cypriot champions a record 28 times, APOEL made it seven national titles in a row with last season's triumph, which came at the end of a campaign in which they were absent from Europe in the autumn for the first time in six years having lost their UEFA Europa League play-off against Astana on penalties.

• This season, having comfortably eliminated Montenegro's Sutjeska in the UEFA Champions League second qualifying round (1-0 a, 3-0 h), APOEL ensured a return to European group stage football with that comeback win against Qarabağ. They were then defeated 2-0 on aggregate by Ajax in the play-offs (0-0 h, 0-2 a) to move into the UEFA Europa League.

• APOEL failed to reach the knockout phase in their first two UEFA Europa League group participations (in 2013/14 and 2015/16) but made it all the way to the round of 16 on their most recent appearance, in 2016/17, having topped their group thanks in part to a 1-0 victory at Olympiacos – their solitary win in 12 away fixtures during the competition proper. They have lost ten of those games, including all of the last five.

Links and trivia
• This is Qarabağ coach Gurban Gurbanov's 100th European match in charge of the club.

• Qarabağ's Bulgarian midfielder Simeon Slavchev spent 2015/16 on loan at Apollon Limassol – where he was a team-mate of current APOEL defender Giorgos Merkis – and scored a penalty in a Cypriot Cup semi-final shoot-out win against APOEL. Having eliminated the holders, Apollon went on to beat Omonia in the final.

• Another Qarabağ player, Araz Abdullayev, spent 2017/18 in Cyprus on loan at Anorthosis. The Azeri midfielder was also in the Neftçi side that beat APOEL in the 2012/13 UEFA Europa League play-offs, coming off the bench in both matches.

• Qarabağ midfielder Richard Almeida was a member of the Astana side that knocked APOEL out of last season's UEFA Europa League play-offs, scoring the Kazakh club's first penalty in a 2-1 shoot-out success.

• Filip Ozobić (Qarabağ) and Antonio Jakoliš (APOEL) played together for various Croatian youth selections and also for Hajduk Split in 2013.
APOEL’s Serbian striker Andrija Pavlović scored for Copenhagen in a 2-1 home win against Qarabağ in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League play-offs.

The coaches

- Qarabağ boss Gurbanov is Azerbaijan’s highest-scoring international with 12 goals in 64 matches. While he regularly changed club as a player, he celebrated 11 years as head coach of Qarabağ in August 2019, during which time he has led the club to six successive national league titles, four Azerbaijani Cups and European group stage involvement in each of the last six seasons, including a maiden UEFA Champions League adventure in 2017/18. He doubled up as the coach of Azerbaijan from January to December 2018.

- A gifted attacking midfielder who played for both East Germany and the unified German national side, scoring a total of eight goals in 47 full internationals, Doll won two Oberliga titles with BFC Dynamo and later plied his trade in both the Bundesliga and Serie A, where he spent three seasons at Lazio. Doll hit the ground running as a coach with former club Hamburg, but was less successful at Borussia Dortmund before he reasserted his credentials during a five-year spell in Hungary with Ferencváros. He was appointed APOEL coach in August 2019.

FootballPeople weeks

The FootballPeople weeks take place from 10 to 24 October 2019 and are organised by UEFA’s social responsibility partner Fare. The weeks are a global campaign aimed at tackling discrimination and celebrating diversity in football. The UEFA Europa League is offering its full support to the FootballPeople weeks; teams will line up for a mixed photo with the referees, while an #EqualGame hashtag will also be on display. Videos will be played on giant screens at stadiums across Europe, and child mascots will be wearing #FootballPeople t-shirts. UEFA’s collaboration with the Fare network’s FootballPeople weeks has been running since 2001. The aim of this initiative fits in perfectly with the goals of #EqualGame, which is looking to promote inclusion, diversity and accessibility.
Legend

Competition stages

F: Final  GS: Group stage  (aet): After extra time  pens: Penalties  No.: Number
GS1: First group stage  GS2: Second group stage  ag: Match decided on away goals  og: Own goal
3QR: Third qualifying round  R1: First round  Pld: Matches played  P: Penalty
R2: Second round  R3: Third round  Pos.: Position  agg: Aggregate  
R4: Fourth round  PR: Preliminary round  APS: Points  AP: Appearances  
SF: Semi-finals  QF: Quarter-finals  Res.: Result  Comp.: Competition  
R16: round of 16  QR: Qualifying round  D: Drawn  
R32: Round of 32  1QR: First qualifying round  DoB: Date of birth  ET: Extra Time
1st: first leg  2 QR: Second qualifying round  sg: Match decided by silver goal  GA: Goals against  
2nd: second leg  2ndQR: Second qualifying round  GF: Goals for  W: Won  
FT: Final tournament  ELITE: Elite round  gg: Match decided by golden goal  Y: Booked  
PO: Play-off  Rep: Replay  L: Lost  Nat.: Nationality  
PO - FT: Play-off for Final Tournament  3rdPO: Third-place play-off  t: Match decided by toss of a coin

Statistics

-: Denotes player substituted  +: Denotes player introduced  +/-: Denotes player introduced and substituted

Squad list

D: Disciplinary  -: Misses next match if booked  S: Suspended  QUAL: All UEFA qualifiers
*: Denotes player sent off  UEL: Current season total UEFA Europa League appearances from the group stage onwards prior to the current matchday

UEL: Total appearances in the UEFA Europa League, group stage to final only  Uefa: All-time total appearances in UEFA club competition including qualifying

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