UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2019/20 SEASON
MATCH PRESS KITS

Astan Arena - Nur–Sultan
Thursday 7 November 2019
16.50CET (21.50 local time)
Group L - Matchday 4

FC Astana

AZ Alkmaar

Match background
Legend
AZ Alkmaar equalled the record margin of victory for a UEFA Europa League group stage match when they beat Astana 6-0 in The Hague on Matchday 3, so they travel with confidence to the capital of Kazakhstan for the rematch against hosts who, without a Group L point to their name, need a win to keep alive their slim hopes of further progress.

• Prior to suffering their heaviest European defeat last time out, Astana lost 1-0 to Manchester United at Old Trafford then 1-2 at home to Partizan, while AZ drew their opening two fixtures, holding Partizan 2-2 in Serbia and United 0-0 in the Netherlands.

Previous meetings
• The Matchday 3 encounter was Astana’s first UEFA fixture against Dutch opposition.
• AZ have made three previous visits to Kazakhstan and are yet to register a win (D1 L2), the most recent visit bringing a 2-0 defeat at Kairat Almaty that contributed to a 3-2 aggregate loss in last season’s UEFA Europa League second qualifying round.

Form guide
Astana
• Astana collected their fifth straight domestic title in 2018 while also playing no fewer than 16 European matches in that calendar year, the last six in the UEFA Europa League group stage, where they finished third in their section with eight points. This season they again came through four summer qualifying ties, the first a defeat by CFR Cluj in the UEFA Champions League, before eventually squeezing past BATE Borisov in the UEFA Europa League play-offs (3-0 h, 0-2 a).
• Astana's maiden UEFA Europa League group campaign in 2016/17 ended unsuccessfully with five points, but they doubled that number the following season to finish second in their section and qualify for a first ever crack at springtime European football. It lasted just two matches, Sporting CP overcoming them 6-4 on aggregate in the round of 32.
• Astana won all four of their home qualifiers this summer, scoring 13 goals and conceding two, and have emerged victorious from nine of their last 12 European games in Kazakhstan, losing the other three. Their home record in the UEFA Europa League group stage is W4 D3 L3, with defeats in each of the last two.

AZ
• Fourth in the 2018/19 Eredivisie at the end of a campaign that started with that shock European defeat by Kairat, AZ are one of three Dutch clubs in this season's group stage, alongside PSV and Feyenoord.
• The Alkmaar club’s six group stage participations have all required pre-qualification and this season they negotiated more summer preliminary ties than ever before, three in total, knocking out BK Häcken, Mariupol and, after extra time in the play-offs, Antwerp (1-1 h, 4-1 a). They have progressed to the knockout phase on three occasions, reaching the quarter-finals in 2011/12 and 2013/14 and the round of 32 in 2016/17.
• The 1980/81 UEFA Cup runners-up are unbeaten in their nine European games this season (W4 D5), keeping six clean sheets, but outside the qualifying phase they have posted just one win on their travels in their last ten continental fixtures (D4 L5), 1-0 against Dundalk in Dublin three seasons ago.

Links and trivia
• Romanian international Dorin Rotariu moved to Astana in the summer after playing eight Eredivisie games on loan for AZ last season.
• Astana's Curacao international striker Rangelo Janga was born in Rotterdam and played for Dutch clubs Willem II, Excelsior and Dordrecht.
• Astana's Aleksandr Mokin and Sergei Khizhnichenko played for Shakhter Karagandy in a 1-1 draw at home to AZ in the 2013/14 UEFA Europa League group stage.
• Astana made it six domestic championship titles in succession on Sunday as they won 1-0 at Tobol while rivals Kairat went down 5-0 at Irtysh, leaving the defending champions holding an unassailable four-point lead with one game to go.

The coaches
• A free-scoring Ukrainian striker, Roman Hryhorchuk has made his name as a coach in eastern Europe, starting out in Latvia, where he won three league titles and two domestic cups during a four-year spell with Ventspils. He went on to coach Chornomorets Odesa in his homeland and Azerbaijan's Gabala for similar periods, overseeing UEFA Europa League group stage campaigns for both, before replacing Stanimir Stoilov at Kazakh champions Astana in June 2018.
He missed the latter weeks of last year’s league title win for personal reasons but has overseen the 2019 triumph from start to finish.

* When John van den Brom ended his five-year stint as AZ’s head coach by moving to Utrecht in summer 2019, his job was passed on to assistant Arne Slot, whose first task was to steer the Alkmaar club through three qualifying rounds into the UEFA Europa League group stage. This is his first post as a head coach although he is a well-known former player in the Netherlands having operated in the Eredivisie for NAC Breda, Sparta Rotterdam and PEC Zwolle, where he started both his playing and coaching careers, the latter in charge of the youth side in 2013/14.
### Legend

#### Competitions

**Club competitions**

- **UCL**: UEFA Champions League
- **ECCC**: European Champion Clubs' Cup
- **UEL**: UEFA Europa League
- **UCUP**: UEFA Cup
- **UCWC**: UEFA Cup Winners' Cup
- **SCUP**: UEFA Super Cup
- **UIC**: UEFA Intertoto Cup
- **ICF**: Inter-Cities Fairs Cup

**National team competitions**

- **EURO**: UEFA European Football Championship
- **WC**: FIFA World Cup
- **CONF Cup**: FIFA Confederations Cup
- **FRIE**: Friendly internationals
- **U21FRIE**: Under-21 friendly internationals
- **U21**: UEFA European Under-21 Championship
- **U17**: UEFA Under-17 Championship
- **U16**: UEFA European Under-16 Championship
- **U19**: UEFA Under-19 Championship
- **U18**: UEFA European Under-18 Championship
- **WWC**: FIFA Women's World Cup
- **WEURO**: UEFA European Women's Championship

**Competition stages**

- **F**: Final
- **GS**: Group stage
- **GS1**: First group stage
- **3QR**: Third qualifying round
- **R2**: Second round
- **R4**: Fourth round
- **SF**: Semi-finals
- **R16**: round of 16
- **R32**: Round of 32
- **1st**: first leg
- **2nd**: second leg
- **PO**: Play-off
- **Rep**: Replay
- **PO - FT**: Play-off for Final Tournament
- **FT**: Final tournament
- **ELITE**: Elite round
- **3rdPO**: Third-place play-off
- **GS-FT**: Group stage – final tournament

**Other abbreviations**

- **(aet)**: After extra time
- **pen**: Penalties
- **og**: Own goal
- **No.**: Number
- **P**: Penalty
- **agg**: Aggregate
- **Pld**: Matches played
- **AP**: Appearances
- **Pos.**: Position
- **Pts**: Points
- **R**: Sent off (straight red card)
- **Comp.**: Competition
- **DoB**: Date of birth
- **ET**: Extra Time
- **Res.**: Result
- **GA**: Goals against
- **t**: Match decided by toss of a coin
- **GF**: Goals for
- **gg**: Match decided by golden goal
- **Y/R**: Sent off (two yellow cards)

**Statistics**

- : Denotes player substituted
- *: Denotes player sent off
- #: Denotes player introduced
- +/-: Denotes player introduced and substituted

**Squad list**

- **D**: Disciplinary
- *: Misses next match if booked
- **S**: Suspended
- **QUAL**: All UEFA qualifiers

**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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