UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2019/20 SEASON
MATCH PRESS KITS
Stade Geoffroy Guichard - Saint-Étienne
Thursday 28 November 2019
18.55CET (18.55 local time)
Group I - Matchday 5

Last updated 25/11/2019 15:31CET

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Match background

Group I leaders Gent arrive in Saint-Étienne with a three-point lead at the top of the standings and the knowledge that a draw will suffice to ensure their presence in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase. Their hosts, however, have every incentive to deny their Belgian visitors that point as they seek a first victory in the section that will keep alive their hopes of further progress.

- Gent are unbeaten after four games, having collected four points from six both home and away, a come-from-behind 3-1 win at Wolfsburg on Matchday 4 catapulting them into a dominant position after they had drawn 2-2 at home to the German side a fortnight earlier. St-Étienne were beaten 3-2 at Gent on Matchday 1 and have drawn all three games since, Olexandriya denying them a first win with two late goals in Ukraine on their most recent outing.
- If Gent win at the Stade Geoffroy Guichard, they are guaranteed to top the group, but a draw will be enough to take them through. Their French hosts will be out of contention if they do not win and Wolfsburg do away to Olexandriya.

Previous meetings
- The clubs' first meeting in UEFA competition proved to be a close contest as Gent ran out 3-2 winners on Matchday 1 in a game that featured an own goal apiece and a double from Gent's Canadian midfielder Jonathan David.
- That defeat ended St-Étienne's unbeaten record against Belgian clubs. They have only hosted opposition from the country once before, drawing 1-1 against Anderlecht in the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League thanks to a 94th-minute equaliser.
- Gent have lost four of their previous five UEFA encounters in France, the only victory a memorable last-gasp 2-1 triumph at Lyon in the 2015/16 UEFA Champions League group stage that helped them become the first Belgian side to reach the knockout phase of that competition. Their most recent visit brought a 2-0 defeat by Bordeaux and elimination, by the same aggregate score, from last season's UEFA Europa League play-offs.

Form guide
St-Étienne
- Absent from Europe since they reached the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League round of 32, St-Étienne returned by finishing fourth in Ligue 1 last term to secure a fourth group stage appearance in this competition.
- Unable to get out of their group in 2014/15, when they drew their first five matches and lost the last, they were successful in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 before exiting both times at the round of 32 stage, latterly to eventual winners Manchester United (0-3 a, 0-1 h).
- Les Verts are unbeaten at home in the UEFA Europa League group stage, but nine of those 11 matches have been drawn. They were on a run of ten matches undefeated in group fixtures, home and away (W5 D5), until their Matchday 1 reverse at Gent, but in the competition as a whole, including the qualifying phase, they have not scored more than once in any of their last eight home fixtures, managing just four goals in total – the same number as their opponents.

Gent
- Fifth in the 2018/19 Belgian top flight, and also runners-up in the domestic cup, Gent qualified for Europe for the fifth successive season, extending the longest sequence in the club's history.
- Ousted in the qualifying phase of the UEFA Europa League in each of the past two seasons, they came through three ties to reach the group stage this term, defeating Romania's Viitorul (6-3 h, 1-2 a), AEK Larnaca of Cyprus (1-1 a, 3-0 h) and, in the play-offs, Croatian club Rijeka (2-1 h, 1-1 a). Their two previous participations at this juncture of the competition had different outcomes, with elimination in 2010/11 and progress through to the round of 16 in 2016/17.
- Gent have won only twice away in the UEFA Europa League, group stage to final (D4 L4) – a dramatic qualification-sealing 1-0 victory at Konyaspor on Matchday 6 in 2016/17 and this season’s success at Wolfsburg, which prolonged their unbeaten away run in the competition proper to five matches.

Links and trivia
- Gent midfielder Sven Kums is a former team-mate of St-Étienne's Gabriel Silva (Udinese 2016/17) and Robert Berič (Anderlecht 2017/18).
- St-Étienne's Wahbi Khazri and Gent's Dylan Bronn are fellow Tunisian internationals who were both squad members at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and this year's CAF Africa Cup of Nations. Khazri scored a late consolation goal against Belgium in a 5-2 defeat at the World Cup in Russia; he also found the net against Gent on Matchday 1.
- Gent are one of two clubs whose starting XI has been unchanged for all four group stage fixtures thus far, Wolfsberg in Group J the other.
The coaches

• The experienced Claude Puel replaced Ghislain Printant as St-Étienne boss on 4 October, returning to Ligue 1 after spells in the English Premier League at Southampton and Leicester City following his departure from Nice in 2017. A former midfielder who accumulated over 600 appearances in all competitions during his 17 seasons at Monaco, he led the Principality side to the French league title in 1999/2000 and as coach of LOSC Lille and Lyon guided the teams into the UEFA Champions League, reaching the semi-finals with the latter in 2009/10.

• A tall striker who spent most of his playing career in his native Denmark with OB and Esbjerg but also had short spells in Germany, Austria and Norway, Jess Thorup has lately become one of his country's most upwardly mobile coaches. After a two-year stint in charge of the Danish Under-21 side he became Midtjylland's head coach in 2015 and steered the Jutland club to the Superliga title in 2017/18. That prompted interest from abroad and he was recruited in October 2018 by Gent, whom he guided to a runners-up spot in the Belgian Cup and a fifth-placed finish in the league in his first season.
AS Saint-Étienne - KAA Gent
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Legend

Competitions

Club competitions
- **UCL**: UEFA Champions League
- **ECCCC**: 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
- **CONFCUP**: 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
- **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
- **GS**: Group stage
- **GS2**: Second group stage
- **R1**: First round
- **R3**: Third round
- **PR**: Preliminary round
- **QF**: Quarter-finals
- **QR**: Qualifying round
- **1QR**: First qualifying round
- **2QR**: Second qualifying round
- **FT**: Final tournament
- **ELITE**: Elite round
- **3rdPO**: Third-place play-off
- **GS-FT**: Group stage – final tournament
- **(aet)**: After extra time
- **No.**: Number
- **ag**: Match decided on away goals
- **Pld**: Matches played
- **Pos.**: Position
- **Pts**: Points
- **R**: Sent off (straight red card)
- **Res.**: Result
- **sg**: Match decided by silver goal
- **GF**: Goals for
- **gg**: Match decided by golden goal
- **Y/R**: Sent off (two yellow cards)
- **f**: Match forfeited
- **pens**: Penalties
- **og**: Own goal
- **P**: Penalty
- **agg**: Aggregate
- **AP**: Appearances
- **Comp.**: Competition
- **D**: Drawn
- **DoB**: Date of birth
- **ET**: Extra Time
- **GA**: Goals against
- **t**: Match decided by toss of a coin
- **W**: Won
- **Y**: Booked
- **L**: Lost
- **Nat.**: Nationality
- **N/A**: Not applicable

Other abbreviations
- **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**: Current season total UEFA Europa League appearances from the group stage onwards prior to the current matchday
- **UEFA**: 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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