UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2019/20 SEASON
MATCH PRESS KITS

KAA Gent Stadium - Ghent
Thursday 12 December 2019
21.00CET (21.00 local time)
Group I - Matchday 6

KAA Gent

Last updated 06/12/2019 11:53CET

FC Olexandriya

Match background
Legend
Match background

Undeveloped in Group I and already guaranteed a place in the UEFA Europa League round of 32, Gent will hope to clinch first place in the section with a closing win at home to eliminated Ukrainian group stage debutants Olexandriya.

- A goalless draw last time out at St-Étienne, the team they beat 3-2 in Belgium on the opening night in September, was enough to secure Gent's qualification; that took them on to nine points, five more than the French side and one more than fellow qualifiers Wolfsburg. Olexandriya's first autumn campaign in Europe has not gone as they hoped, two defeats by Wolfsburg accompanied by three draws.

- Gent will secure top spot with a win, or if Wolfsburg fail to beat St-Étienne at home in the group's other Matchday 6 fixture.

Previous meetings

- Olexandriya's first official match against a Belgian club brought them their first group point as they held Gent 1-1 at home on Matchday 2, Artem Sitalo's maiden European goal levelling on the hour following Laurent Depoitre's sixth-minute opener for the visitors.

- That was the first time in five matches against Ukrainian opposition that Gent had avoided defeat, having been heavily beaten in all four previous fixtures. They were eliminated from the UEFA Champions League third qualifying round by Dynamo Kyiv in 2010/11 (0-3 a, 1-3 h) and lost both UEFA Europa League group games to Shakhtar Donetsk in 2016/17 (0-5 a, 3-5 h).

Form guide

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 Viitorul (6-3 h, 1-2 a), AEK Larnaca (1-1 a, 3-0 h) and, in the play-offs, 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 are undefeated in their last ten European home games against foreign opposition (W6 D4), winning four in a row before Wolfsburg held them 2-2 on Matchday 3. The last European fixture they lost on home soil was against another Belgian club, Genk, in the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League round of 16 (2-5); the last team from abroad to defeat them in front of their own fans were Shakhtar.

Olexandriya

- Olexandriya finished third in the 2018/19 Ukrainian Premier League — the club's highest ever final placing — to gain direct access to the UEFA Europa League group stage and sample European football in the autumn for the first time.

- This is only the club's third European campaign, their 2016/17 debut having ended in the UEFA Europa League third qualifying round (against Hajduk Split), the second, in 2017/18, concluding in the play-offs (against BATE Borisov). Their only victory in 11 European matches came at home to Astra Giurgiu (1-0) in the 2017/18 third qualifying round, a subsequent 0-0 draw in Romania taking them through.

- Olexandriya have yet to win away in Europe (D3 L2), scoring four goals and conceding eight.

Links and trivia

- Gent's Ukrainian international striker Roman Yaremchuk spent the first half of 2016/17 on loan at Olexandriya from Dynamo Kyiv. He played in Olexandriya's maiden European tie against Hajduk Split and scored five goals for the club in the Ukrainian Premier League.

- There are two other Ukrainians in Gent's squad — defender Igor Plastun and midfielder Roman Bezus.

- Olexandriya's Valeriy Luchkevych was a Standard Liège player from 2017–19. He and Bezus played together for Dnipro, helping the Ukrainian club reach the UEFA Europa League final in 2014/15.

- Plastun is a former team-mate of Olexandriya's Anton Shendrik, Kyrylo Kovalets (both Obolon Kyiv, 2011/12) and Pavlo Pashayev (Karpaty Lviv, 2013/14).

- Olexandriya are one of six UEFA Europa League group stage debutants this season, the others being Espanyol, Ferencváros, Wolverhampton Wanderers and two Austrian clubs, LASK and Wolfsberg. The Ukrainian side are the only one of the six yet to register a win and one of two, alongside Wolfsberg in Group J, whose elimination is already confirmed.

The coaches
• 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.

• A one-cap Ukrainian international midfielder who won two domestic league titles with Dynamo Kyiv in the early 1990s, Volodymyr Sharan has been the Olexandriya coach for the best part of a decade, a first spell, lasting two years, preceding a brief stint at Karpaty Lviv before he returned in 2013 and steered the club into the Ukrainian top flight two years later. He has since qualified Olexandriya for the UEFA Europa League on three occasions, their third-place finish in 2018/19 securing a first experience of group stage football.
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Legend

Competition stages

F: Final
GS: Group stage
GS1: First group stage
GS2: Second group stage
3QR: Third qualifying round
R1: First round
R2: Second round
R3: Third round
R4: Fourth round
PR: Preliminary round
SF: Semi-finals
QF: Quarter-finals
R16: round of 16
R32: Round of 32
1st: first leg
1st: first leg
2nd: second leg
FT: Final tournament
ELITE: Elite round
PO: Play-off
3rdPO: Third-place play-off
Rep: Replay
PO - FT: Play-off for Final Tournament

National team competitions

EURO: UEFA European Football Championship
WC: FIFA World Cup
CONF: 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

Other abbreviations

(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

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: Current season total UEFA Europa League, group stage to final only
UEFA: All-time total appearances in UEFA club competition including qualifying

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