## Match background

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Match background

Wolverhampton Wanderers’ first European campaign for 39 years will extend into the spring, but the Group K Matchday 6 encounter at Molineux is the last continental engagement of the season for Turkish visitors Beşiktas.

• Wolves sealed their place in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase with a 3-3 draw at Braga on Matchday 5 – though they were 3-1 up at half-time – to reach ten points and qualify alongside the Portuguese side, who defeated them 1-0 in Wolverhampton on Matchday 1 and top the group on 11. Beşiktas lost their first four group encounters but earned their first win last time out, beating Slovan Bratislava 2-1 with an added-time Adem Ljajić penalty.

• Wolves need to beat Beşiktas to stand a chance of topping the group. Should they do so and Braga fail to win at Slovan, the English side will go through as section winners.

Previous meetings
• Wolves’ first match against a Turkish club in UEFA competition had a dramatic denouement as Willy Boly’s 93rd-minute strike earned them a 1-0 win in Istanbul on Matchday 2 – the first of three successive victories in the section for the Premier League side.

• Beşiktas have now played 21 matches against English clubs and won only six (D5 L9), with just two victories coming in England – UEFA Champions League group stage successes against Chelsea (2-0 in 2003/04) and Manchester United (1-0 in 2009/10). The club’s heaviest European defeat also took place in England – an 8-0 loss to Liverpool in the 2007/08 UEFA Champions League group stage.

Form guide
Wolves
• In their first season after promotion to the Premier League, Wolves finished seventh in 2018/19 to qualify for European competition for the first time since they lost in the 1980/81 UEFA Cup first round to PSV Eindhoven.

• The West Midlanders’ best European experience by some distance came in the inaugural UEFA Cup of 1971/72, when they went all the way to the final before losing 3-2 on aggregate to English rivals Tottenham Hotspur.

• Wolves won all six of their qualifying matches this season, knocking out Crusaders (2-0 h, 4-1 a), Pyunik (4-0 a, 4-0 h) and, in the play-offs, Torino (3-2 a, 2-1 h), but the Matchday 1 defeat by Braga ended a seven-match European winning streak at Molineux that had lasted since they were beaten 2-1 by Spurs in the first leg of that 1972 UEFA Cup final. They also won their most recent European outing at home, 1-0 against Slovan on Matchday 4 thanks to a 92nd-minute Raul Jimenez strike.

Beşiktas
• Third in the 2018/19 Turkish Süper Lig, Beşiktas’s reward was direct access to the UEFA Europa League group stage; they also participated last season, failing to reach the round of 32.

• This is the Istanbul club’s sixth participation in the UEFA Europa League group stage, from which they qualified at the first three attempts but have now come up short on each of the last three occasions. Their best season in the competition came in 2016/17 when, after finishing third in their UEFA Champions League group, they went on to reach the quarter-finals, where they succumbed on penalties to Lyon.

• Beşiktas’s 35 matches in the UEFA Europa League group stage have yielded 16 wins, eight draws and 11 defeats. Outside Istanbul their record is W6 D5 L6, with defeats this season at both Slovan (2-4) and Braga (1-3).

Links and trivia
• Beşiktas defender Rebocho has played for Portugal’s Under-21s alongside Wolves pair Rúben Neves and Diogo Jota.

• Douglas (Beşiktas) was a Benfica team-mate of Wolves striker Jimenez in 2017/18.

• Two Beşiktas players are currently on loan from English clubs – Loris Karius (Liverpool) and Mohamed Elneny (Arsenal). Another, Georges-Kévin Nkoudou, joined in a permanent deal from Tottenham in the summer.

• Wolves are among six UEFA Europa League group stage debutants this season; the others are Espanyol, Ferencváros, Olexandriya and two Austrian clubs, LASK and Wolfsberg. The English side are one of three, alongside Espanyol and LASK, who have already qualified for the round of 32.

• Beşiktas made it six Süper Lig wins in a row with a 3-2 success at Kasimpasa on Sunday, a result that lifted them into second place three points behind leaders Sivasspor.

The coaches
• A former goalkeeper who was in Portugal’s UEFA EURO 2008 squad but never won a senior cap, Nuno Espírito Santo was mostly a back-up during his playing career but as a manager he is very much at the forefront, having
emerged as a studious, progressive coach during spells at Valencia, Porto and, since May 2017, Wolves. He first made his mark by taking Portuguese provincial club Rio Ave to two cup finals and into Europe before shining in Spain during an 18-month stint at Mestalla. He led Wolves into the Premier League in his first season and into the UEFA Europa League in his second.

• Appointed by Beşiktaş on a three-year contract in May 2019 to replace Şenol Güneş, who had left to take charge of the Turkish national side, Abdullah Avcı moved across the city having just led İstanbul Başakşehir to a runners-up spot in the Süper Lig. That ended the second of his two five-year spells with the club, which was preceded by an unsuccessful two-year sojourn in charge of the Turkish national side. He had previously led the country to victory in the 2005 UEFA European Under-17 Championship in Italy.
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  
CONFUCUP: 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

**Statistics**

:+: Denotes player introduced  
+/-: Denotes player introduced and substituted  
*: Denotes player sent off  
**: Denotes player substituted  
*: Misses next match if booked  
D: Disciplinary  
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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