UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2019/20 SEASON
MATCH PRESS KITS

GSP Stadium - Nicosia
Thursday 20 February 2020
21.00CET (22.00 local time)
Round of 32, First leg

APOEL FC

FC Basel 1893

Last updated 19/02/2020 03:16CET

Match background
Legend
Match background

The sole European survivors this season from Cyprus and Switzerland meet in Nicosia as APOEL and Basel seek a first-leg advantage in their UEFA Europa League round of 32 tie.

• APOEL came through Group A in the autumn, finishing second to runaway section winners Sevilla thanks to a remarkable recovery that brought them ten points from their final four fixtures after defeats in the opening two. Basel's progress was much more straightforward as they clinched qualification with two games to spare after doing the double over fellow Group C qualifiers Getafe, eventually topping the section with 13 points.

Previous meetings
• The clubs have never previously met in UEFA competition.

• APOEL's home record against Swiss opponents is W1 L1, the win having come in the most recent encounter, 1-0 against Young Boys in the 2016/17 UEFA Europa League group stage.

• Basel have unhappy memories of their only previous visit to Cyprus, Apollon Limassol defeating them 1-0 on the island in last season's UEFA Europa League play-off second leg to win the tie on away goals and deny Basel European group stage participation for the first time in 15 years.

Form guide
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, APOEL ensured a return to European group stage football with a 3-2 aggregate success against future Group A rivals Qarabağ. They were then defeated 2-0 on aggregate by Ajax in the play-offs to move into the UEFA Europa League, where they lost their opening game 3-4 at home to Dudelange of Luxembourg but progressively improved over the course of the next five matches, clinching qualification with a 1-0 home win against Sevilla.

• 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 to the last 16 in 2016/17 thanks to a momentous round of 32 success against Athletic Club of Spain (2-3 a, 2-0 h).

• Their all-time record in Nicosia in the UEFA Europa League proper is W8 D1 L5.

Basel
• Having won the Swiss Super League eight seasons running from 2009/10 to 2016/17, Basel have finished second to Young Boys in each of the past two campaigns. Last season they were eliminated from both the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League in the qualifying phase.

• This season they again missed out on the UEFA Champions League proper, an away-goals success against PSV Eindhoven in the second qualifying round preceding a 5-2 aggregate defeat by LASK. That meant a transfer to the UEFA Europa League group stage, where they opened with a 5-0 home win against Krasnodar, then drew 2-2 at Trabzonspor before beating Getafe 1-0 in Spain and 2-1 in Switzerland to ensure premature qualification.

• This is Basel's fifth appearance in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase. Although they lost in the round of 32 against Spartak Moskva in 2010/11 (2-3 h, 1-1 a), they have succeeded in each of their three subsequent attempts at qualifying from this stage of the competition – against Dnipro in 2012/13 (2-0 h, 1-1 a), Maccabi Tel-Aviv in 2013/14 (0-0 a, 3-0 h) and Saint-Étienne in 2015/16 (2-3 a, 2-1 h). Their best campaign was in 2012/13 when they reached the semi-finals.

• Winners on the road three times out of four in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League, when they prevailed at CSKA Moskva, Benfica and Manchester City, Basel have won only two of their eight European away games since (D1 L5). Their overall away record in ten UEFA Europa League knockout phase games is W1 D4 L5, falling to defeat in each of the last three. The sole success came at Salzburg (2-1) in the 2013/14 round of 16.

UEFA Europa League squad changes
• APOEL
  In: Mike Jensen (Rosenborg), Stelios Karapatakis*, Björn Sigurdarsson (Rostov, loan), Georgios Theodoulidis *, Christos Wheeler (AEL Limassol)
  Out: Roman Bezjak, Savvas Gentsoglou (Al-Adalah), Joaozinho (Estoril)

*B List
• Basel

In: Orges Bunjak*, Jasper van der Werff (Salzburg, loan)
Out: Konstantinos Dimitriou (Wil, loan), Yves Kaiser, Noah Okafor

*B List

Links and trivia

• Dragan Mihajlovic is a Swiss national who played in his homeland for Bellinzona, Chiasso and Lugano before joining APOEL in 2019. He played youth football for Switzerland alongside Basel's Taulant Xhaka and Luca Zuffi.

• Basel midfielder Valentin Stocker scored eight minutes into his international debut for Switzerland against Cyprus on 20 August 2008 – a 4–1 friendly win in Geneva in which APOEL’s Stathis Aloneftis featured for the opposing side.

The coaches

• Marinos Ouzounidis was appointed as APOEL head coach on 12 February, succeeding Kåre Ingebrigtsen, who had replaced Thomas Doll only in late December. Ouzounidis thus returned to the club where he had won the Cypriot league both as a player (2001/02) and in his first season as a head coach (2006/07). A former central defender who starred in the mid-1990s for a successful Panathinaikos side and won 50 caps for Greece, he has coached a number of clubs in his homeland, most recently Panathinaikos and, in 2018/19, AEK Athens, whom he steered into the group stage of the UEFA Champions League.

• A former Swiss international midfielder who won 55 caps between 1982 and his first and last major tournament, EURO ’96, Marcel Koller spent his entire club career with Grasshoppers from his native Zurich, winning seven league titles and five domestic cups. Early Swiss title successes as a coach with St Gallen and Grasshoppers were followed by spells in Germany with Köln and Bochum before he took charge of Austria in 2011, eventually leading them to UEFA EURO 2016. He became Basel's head coach in August 2018, winning the Swiss Cup in his debut campaign.

UEFA Europa League knockout debut for VAR system

Video Assistant Referees (VAR) will be deployed in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase. The decision was taken by the UEFA Executive Committee last September, following the introduction of the system in several UEFA competitions in the 2018/19 campaign.
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
- **CONFUC**: 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)
- **Sg**: Match decided by silver goal
- **GF**: Goals for
- **gg**: Match decided by golden goal
- **Y/R**: Sent off (two yellow cards)
- **DoB**: Date of birth
- **ET**: Extra Time
- **GA**: Goals against
- **T**: Match decided by toss of a coin
- **GF**: Goals for
- **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**: 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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