UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2019/20 SEASON
MATCH PRESS KITS

OSK Metalist Stadion - Kharkiv
Thursday 20 February 2020
18.55CET (19.55 local time)
Round of 32, First leg

FC Shakhtar Donetsk

SL Benfica

Last updated 19/02/2020 03:19CET

Match background 2
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Match background

Shakhtar Donetsk host Benfica in the first leg of the only UEFA Europa League round of 32 tie between teams that competed in this season's UEFA Champions League group stage. Both clubs are participating in this round for the sixth time.

- Shakhtar's hopes of prolonging their UEFA Champions League campaign into the spring were dashed on Matchday 6 when, needing a win against Atalanta in Kharkiv to guarantee qualification from Group C, they lost 0-3 – their joint heaviest home European defeat. The Ukrainian side ended up with six points, one fewer than Benfica, whose chances of further UEFA Champions League progress ended with a 2-2 draw at RB Leipzig on Matchday 5 but who subsequently sealed third spot in Group G by defeating Zenit 3-0 in Lisbon.

Previous meetings

- The clubs' only previous pairing was in the 2007/08 UEFA Champions League group stage, when both claimed away wins, Shakhtar 1-0 in Lisbon and Benfica 2-1 in Donetsk, with current Shakhtar goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov playing in both games. Neither club made it through to the knockout phase, Benfica finishing third and Shakhtar fourth behind AC Milan and Celtic.

- Shakhtar's nine home games against Portuguese visitors have yielded three wins, three draws and three defeats. They have won the last two, both in the UEFA Europa League against Braga in Lviv, the first 4-0 in the 2015/16 quarter-final second leg to seal a 6-1 aggregate victory, the second 2-0 in the following season's group stage. Viktor Kovalenko scored in both matches, with Taras Stepanenko finding the net in the 2016/17 win. This is Shakhtar's first game against a Portuguese team in Kharkiv.

- Benfica have won three of their five previous UEFA encounters in Ukraine, losing the other two. The Eagles were triumphant on their most recent visit, beating Dynamo Kyiv 2-0 in the 2016/17 UEFA Champions League group stage. They have won their last four fixtures, home and away, against Ukrainian sides.

Form guide

Shakhtar

- Shakhtar won the Ukrainian league last season, claiming the title for the 12th time and also completing a domestic double for the third season in a row, which gave them a third successive appearance in the UEFA Champions League group stage – and 14th in all.

- The Pitmen picked up only one win in the group stage, 2-1 at Atalanta with an added-time winner on Matchday 2. They then drew three games in succession, two against Dinamo Zagreb (2-2 h, 3-3 a) and the third, 1-1, away to a Manchester City side who had beaten them 3-0 in Kharkiv on Matchday 1. They ended the section exactly as they finished it with that decisive defeat by Atalanta to book a fourth UEFA Europa League round of 32 berth in five seasons.

- The 2008/09 UEFA Cup winners have been successful in only one of their previous five UEFA Europa League round of 32 ties, overcoming Schalke 3-0 on aggregate (0-0 h, 3-0 a) in 2015/16, when they went all the way to the semi-finals. The defeats have come against Fulham in 2009/10 (1-2 a, 1-1 h), Viktoria Plzeň in 2013/14 (1-1 a, 1-2 h), Celta Vigo in 2016/17 (1-0 a, 0-2 h) and Eintracht Frankfurt in 2018/19 (2-2 h, 1-4 a). They have yet to win a home leg in this round of the competition (D3 L2).

- The Donetsk club are without a win in seven home European fixtures (D4 L3), though they won four in a row prior to that sequence – all in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League, the last of them 2-1 against Roma in the round of 16 first leg. Their last home win in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase was that 4-0 victory against Braga in 2015/16.

Benfica

- Champions of Portugal for a record 37th time last season, Benfica thus qualified for a tenth successive appearance in the UEFA Champions League group stage – and 15th in all. They finished third in their section last season, going on to reach the UEFA Europa League quarter-finals, where they were eliminated on away goals by Eintracht Frankfurt (4-2 h, 0-2 a).

- Benfica lost their opening two fixtures in this season's UEFA Champions League group stage – 1-2 at home to RB Leipzig, 1-3 at Zenit – before trading home wins with Lyon and then conceding twice late on at Leipzig to draw 2-2 and drop out of the competition.

- Three second-half goals without reply against Zenit on Matchday 6 put Benfica back in the UEFA Europa League, where they will be hoping to protect a perfect record in the round of 32, all of their previous five ties at this stage having ended in victory – against Hertha Berlin in 2009/10 (1-1 a, 4-0 h), VfB Stuttgart in 2010/11 (2-1 h, 2-0 a), Bayer Leverkusen in 2012/13 (1-0 a, 2-1 h), PAOK in 2013/14 (1-0 a, 3-0 h) and Galatasaray in 2018/19 (2-1 a, 0-0 h). They
are undefeated in all ten of their round of 32 matches, boasting four successive away wins.

- The 2012/13 and 2013/14 UEFA Europa League runners-up have won only three of their last 16 fixtures outside Portugal (D3 L10). Their away record in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase is W8 D5 L5.

**UEFA Europa League squad changes**

- **Shakhtar**
  - **In:** Artem Bondarenko, Fernando, Maycon, Oleksandr Pikhalonok
  - **Out:** Andriy Boryachuk (Rizespor), Bogdan Butko, Andrii Totovytskyi (Desna Chernihiv), Vitão

- **Benfica**
  - **In:** Dyego Sousa (Shenzhen, loan), Morato, Julian Weigl (Dortmund)
  - **Out:** Celton Biai (Vitória), Gedson Fernandes (Tottenham, loan), Germán Conti, Raúl de Tomás (Espanyol), Ljubomir Fejsa (Alavés, loan), Caio (Sharjah, loan), Nuno Santos

**Links and trivia**

- Shakhtar are led by a Portuguese coach, Luís Castro, whose record in his homeland against Benfica is W3 D1 L11. Those matches include two 0-1 home defeats in four days in January 2019 as Vitória SC coach; they were opposite number Bruno Lage's first two matches after he had been confirmed as Benfica's head coach.

- Luís Castro and Bruno Lage are two of eight Portuguese head coaches on duty in this season's UEFA Europa League Round of 32. The others are Nuno Espírito Santo (Wolves), Emanuel Ferro (Sporting), Sérgio Conceição (Porto), Pedro Martins (Olympiacos), Paulo Fonseca (Roma) and Micael Sequeira (Braga).

- Shakhtar's Brazilian left-back Ismaily played in Portugal from 2009 to 2013 for Estoril, Olhanense and Braga; he was never on the winning side against Benfica (D3 L5). Among Ismaily's team-mates at the first two clubs was current Benfica captain Jardel.

- Shakhtar right-back Dodô spent 2018/19 in Portugal on loan at Vitória SC.

- Júnior Moraes made his debut for the Ukrainian national team in a UEFA EURO 2020 qualifier against Portugal at the Estádio do Sport Lisboa e Benfica on 22 March 2019. The match ended 0-0.

- This is Benfica's 39th match in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase – a competition high, five more than any other club. They have reached at least the quarter-finals in all of their five previous participations in the competition.

- Benfica's transfer to the UEFA Europa League means that Portugal has retained a four-team complement in the competition, with Vitória SC having been eliminated at the end of the group stage and Porto, Braga and Sporting CP all going through. The next represented nations are England, Germany and Spain, who all have three teams in the round of 32.

- Although still top of the Portuguese Liga, Benfica have lost their last two matches in the competition having won all of the previous 16. They went down 0-1 at home to Braga on Saturday, seven days after losing 3-2 at title rivals Porto.

**The coaches**

- Appointed Shakhtar Donetsk head coach in June 2019, Luís Castro replaced his compatriot Paulo Fonseca – a move he had also previously made back in 2014 when he stepped in as an interim replacement for the current Roma boss at Porto. A right-back, he spent most of his 17-year playing career in the lower leagues, and he also made a relatively discreet start in coaching before joining top-flight Penafiel in 2004. He was on Porto's coaching staff for a decade (2006–16) before spending one season apiece as the head coach of Rio Ave, Chaves and Vitória SC.

- Bruno Lage was appointed as Benfica coach on 14 January 2019, initially until the end of the season, having previously been in charge of the club's B team then served in an interim capacity following Rui Vitória's dismissal. He later agreed a contract until 2023 and led the Eagles to the 2018/19 Liga title with 18 wins and one draw in his 19 matches. The 43-year-old from Setubal had never previously served as a head coach in the top flight, although he has considerable experience in auxiliary roles. He was Benfica's youth coach from 2004–12 and subsequently worked in English football as the assistant to Carlos Carvalhal at Sheffield Wednesday and Swansea.

**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  
UEFA: UEFA Europa League  
UCUP: UEFA Cup  
UCWC: UEFA Cup Winners' Cup  
UCF: UEFA Cup Winners' Cup  
UEL: UEFA Europa League  
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  
GS: Group stage  
GS1: First group stage  
3QR: Third qualifying round  
R1: First round  
R2: Second 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  
Pli: 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: 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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