

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE - 2020/21 SEASON MATCH PRESS KITS



AFC Ajax

Johan Crujff Arena - Amsterdam

Thursday 8 April 2021
21.00CET (21.00 local time)
Quarter-finals, First leg



AS Roma

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Match background

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Legend

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Match background

The last remaining representatives from the Netherlands and Italy in 2020/21 European competition meet in Amsterdam, where Ajax, seeking a record-equalling 11th successive home win in the UEFA Europa League proper, take on a Roma side, who, like their hosts, have won all four matches in this season's knockout phase.

- Erik ten Hag's Ajax finished third in UEFA Champions League Group D during the autumn, behind Liverpool and Atalanta, before kicking off their record-breaking ninth appearance in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase by beating Ligue 1 high fliers LOSC Lille 2-1 twice in the round of 32. They did another double in the round of 16, over Swiss league leaders Young Boys (3-0 h, 2-0 a).
- Roma kicked off their 2020/21 European campaign in the UEFA Europa League group stage, registering 13 points as they topped Group A, three ahead of fellow qualifiers Young Boys. They then convincingly ousted two of coach Paulo Fonseca's former clubs, overcoming Braga in the round of 32 (3-0 a, 3-1 h) and Shakhtar Donetsk in the round of 16 (3-0 h, 2-1 a).

Previous meetings

- Although both clubs have rich European histories, they have only been drawn together once previously, in the second group stage of the 2002/03 UEFA Champions League, when Ronald Koeman's Ajax won the home game 2-1 – with Zlatan Ibrahimović and Jari Litmanen the scorers – and drew the return 1-1 at the Stadio Olimpico to secure their progress to the quarter-finals as Fabio Capello's Roma went out.
- That December 2002 success against Roma was Ajax's last home win against an Italian club. Since then they have gone ten games without a victory in Amsterdam (D6 L4), most recently going down 0-1 to Atalanta in a Matchday 6 decider in this season's UEFA Champions League.
- That defeat by Atalanta was nevertheless Ajax's first against a Serie A side, home and away, in nine matches (W2 D6). Their all-time record against Italian clubs is W13 D17 L17, with 50 goals both scored and conceded.
- In two-legged ties against Italian opposition Ajax's record is W6 L7, the most recent ending dramatically in their favour as they eliminated Juventus in the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League quarter-final (1-1 h, 2-1 a). They also defeated an Italian side, Torino, to win the two-legged 1991/92 UEFA Cup final on away goals (2-2 a, 0-0 h) and were 6-1 aggregate conquerors of AC Milan in the 1974 UEFA Super Cup (0-1 a, 6-0 h).
- Five of Ajax's six European Cup/UEFA Champions League finals have been against Italian clubs. They beat Internazionale in 1973 (2-0), Juventus in 1974 (1-0) and Milan in 1995 (1-0), but lost to Milan in 1969 (1-4) and Juventus in 1996 (1-1; 2-4 pens).
- Roma have played only six previous UEFA games against Dutch opposition, winning two, drawing two and losing two. Their most recent encounters were against Feyenoord in the 2014/15 UEFA Europa League round of 32, when they drew the first leg 1-1 in Rome before taking the tie with a 2-1 win in Rotterdam – the club's first victory on Dutch soil after defeats in the other two.

Form guide

Ajax

- Although no Dutch title was awarded in 2019/20, Ajax were leading the standings at the time of the Eredivisie stoppage in March and were entered directly into this season's UEFA Champions League group stage.
- The Amsterdam club's 16th participation in the UEFA Champions League group stage ran along similar lines to their 15th, a closing 0-1 home defeat sending the 2018/19 semi-finalists out of the competition and into the UEFA Europa League knockout phase. Defeated 1-0 by Liverpool home and away, Ajax did the double over Danish debutants Midtjylland (2-1 a, 3-1 h), their only other point coming from a 2-2 draw at Atalanta in which they surrendered a two-goal lead.
- The victories over LOSC and Young Boys have enabled Ajax to reach the UEFA Europa League quarter-finals for only the second time in nine knockout phase participations. They won their previous last-eight tie, in 2016/17, scoring twice in extra time of the second leg to knock out Schalke (2-0 h, 2-3 a) en route to the final, which they lost 2-0 to Manchester United.
- Ajax have won their last nine home games in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase, making their overall competition record in Amsterdam during the spring W11 L4. Additionally, their last ten home matches in the UEFA Europa League, group stage to final, have also resulted in victory – one short of Sevilla's competition record – and they are unbeaten in 15 (W12 D3) since going down 0-3 to Salzburg in the first leg of the 2013/14 round of 32.

Roma

- Roma finished fifth in Serie A last term to qualify for the UEFA Europa League group stage for the second season

running and fourth time in all. Fonseca's side were defeated 2-0 by eventual winners Sevilla in last season's round of 16, which was the furthest the club had gone in the UEFA Europa League until this season – though they were UEFA Cup runners-up in 1990/91.

- The Giallorossi made it four qualifications from as many UEFA Europa League group stage participations this term, and a third as section winners. They secured this season's round of 32 place with two group games to spare, doing the double over both Young Boys (2-1 a, 3-1 h) and CFR Cluj (5-0 h, 2-0 a) but dropping points in both games against bottom-placed CSKA-Sofia (0-0 h, 1-3 a).
- The Rome club's handsome knockout phase victories over Braga and Shakhtar, in which Spanish striker Borja Mayoral scored four goals to become the UEFA Europa League's joint top marksman this season with seven in total, has put them into the last eight of this competition for the first time. The Giallorossi had lost five European quarter-finals in a row before they memorably ended that sequence in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League with a remarkable comeback against Barcelona (1-4 a, 3-0 h).
- Roma's overall away record in the UEFA Europa League knockout phase is W4 D2 L2, with two wins out of two this term, though the victory in Braga ended a seven-game run without a victory outside Rome in springtime European football (D1 L6).

Links and trivia

- Ajax goalkeeper Maarten Stekelenburg ended his first spell at the club with a move to Roma in 2011. He spent the next two seasons with the Giallorossi, making 55 appearances in all competitions.
- Roma's Dutch full-back Rick Karsdorp is a former Feyenoord player and national team-mate of Ajax duo Daley Blind and Davy Klaassen.
- Blind, who made his debut for the Netherlands against Italy in a February 2013 friendly in Amsterdam, is a former Manchester United team-mate of Roma pair Chris Smalling (2014–18) and Henrikh Mkhitaryan (2016–18). All three played together for United in the 2017 UEFA Europa League final win against Ajax in Stockholm.
- Ajax assistant coaches Michael Reiziger (AC Milan 1996/97) and Christian Poulsen (Juventus 2008–10) both played in Serie A.
- Roma midfielder Lorenzo Pellegrini scored for Italy in a 1-1 UEFA Nations League draw at home to a Netherlands side featuring Blind on 14 October 2020.
- Ajax's tenth participation in the UEFA Europa League, group stage to final, is a competition record that they share with Salzburg. The Dutch club have only featured in the group stage twice but have appeared in the knockout phase nine times, more than any other club.
- Ajax are one of two former European champions in this season's UEFA Europa League quarter-finals, alongside Manchester United. They are also the sole former UEFA Cup winners in the last eight, with United the only previous winners of the UEFA Europa League.

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
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	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	QR: Qualifying round
R32: Round of 32	1QR: First qualifying round
1st: first leg	2QR: Second qualifying round
2nd: second leg	FT: Final tournament
PO: Play-off	ELITE: Elite round
Rep: Replay	3rdPO: Third-place play-off
PO - FT: Play-off for Final Tournament	GS-FT: Group stage – final tournament

Other abbreviations

(aet): After extra time	pens: Penalties
No.: Number	og: Own goal
ag: Match decided on away goals	P: Penalty
Pld: Matches played	agg: Aggregate
Pos.: Position	AP: Appearances
Pts: Points	Comp.: Competition
R: Sent off (straight red card)	D: Drawn
Res.: Result	DoB: Date of birth
sg: Match decided by silver goal	ET: Extra Time
GF: Goals for	GA: Goals against
gg: Match decided by golden goal	t: Match decided by toss of a coin
Y/R: Sent off (two yellow cards)	W: Won
f: Match forfeited	Y: Booked
	L: Lost
	Nat.: Nationality
	N/A: Not applicable

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: 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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