

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE - 2018/19 SEASON MATCH PRESS KITS



Bulgaria

**Natsionalen Stadion Vasil Levski -
Sofia**

Saturday 13 October 2018
20.45CET (21.45 local time)
Group C3 - Matchday 3



Cyprus

Last updated 13/10/2018 01:12CET



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Previous meetings

Head to Head

FIFA World Cup

Date	Stage reached	Match	Result	Venue	Goalscorers
10/10/2009	QR (GS)	Cyprus - Bulgaria	4-1	Larnaca	Charalambides 11, 20, Konstantinou 58, Aloneftis 78; Berbatov 44
01/04/2009	QR (GS)	Bulgaria - Cyprus	2-0	Sofia	Popov 8, Makriev 90

FIFA World Cup

Date	Stage reached	Match	Result	Venue	Goalscorers
02/04/1997	QR (GS)	Bulgaria - Cyprus	4-1	Sofia	Borimirov 2, Kostadinov 35, 45, Yordanov 66; Okkas 62
14/12/1996	QR (GS)	Cyprus - Bulgaria	1-3	Limassol	Pittas 29; Kostadinov 23, Balakov 34, Iliev 70

FIFA World Cup

Date	Stage reached	Match	Result	Venue	Goalscorers
18/11/1973	QR (GS)	Bulgaria - Cyprus	2-0	Sofia	Kolev 2, Denev 68
19/11/1972	QR (GS)	Cyprus - Bulgaria	0-4	Lyssi	Mihaylov 2, Bonev 16, Denev 19, 77

	Qualifying								Final tournament				Total					
	Home				Away													
	Pld	W	D	L	Pld	W	D	L	Pld	W	D	L	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA
Total																		
Bulgaria	3	3	0	0	3	2	0	1	-	-	-	-	13	12	0	1	31	8
Cyprus	3	1	0	2	3	0	0	3	-	-	-	-	13	1	0	12	8	31

Squad list

Bulgaria

No.	Player	DoB	Age	Club	D	League phase		Pld	Gls		
Goalkeepers											
1	Georgi Petkov	14/03/1976	42	Slavia Sofia	-			0	0		
13	Blagoy Makendzhiev	11/07/1988	30	Cherno More	-			0	0		
23	Plamen Iliev	30/11/1991	26	Astra	*			2	0		
Defenders											
2	Strahil Popov	31/08/1990	28	Kasimpaşa	-			1	0		
3	Petar Zanev	18/10/1985	32	Yenisey	-			0	0		
4	Bozhidar Chorbadzhiyski	08/08/1995	23	CSKA-Sofia	-			2	0		
5	Nikolay Bodurov	30/05/1986	32	CSKA-Sofia	-			2	0		
11	Ivan Bandalovski	23/11/1986	31	Beroe	-			2	0		
14	Anton Nedyalkov	30/04/1993	25	Ludogorets	-			0	0		
15	Vasil Bozhikov	02/06/1988	30	Slovan Bratislava	-			1	0		
20	Ivan Goranov	10/06/1992	26	Levski	-			2	0		
Midfielders											
6	Simeon Slavchev	25/09/1993	25	Qarabağ	*			1	0		
7	Georgi Kostadinov	07/09/1990	28	Arsenal Tula	-			2	0		
8	Todor Nedelev	07/02/1993	25	Botev Plovdiv	-			1	0		
10	Ivelin Popov	26/10/1987	30	Spartak Moskva	*			2	0		
12	Bozhidar Kraev	23/06/1997	21	Midtjylland	-			2	2		
17	Georgi Milanov	19/02/1992	26	Vidi	-			0	0		
18	Galin Ivanov	15/04/1988	30	Slavia Sofia	-			1	0		
21	Kristiyan Malinov	30/03/1994	24	CSKA-Sofia	-			1	0		
Forwards											
9	Radoslav Vasilev	12/10/1990	28	Cherno More	-			1	1		
16	Svetoslav Kovachev	14/03/1998	20	Dunav	-			0	0		
19	Kiril Despodov	11/11/1996	21	CSKA-Sofia	*			2	0		
22	Nikolay Dimitrov	15/10/1987	30	Ural	-			0	0		
Coach											
-	Petar Houbchev	26/02/1964	54		-			2	0		

Cyprus

No.	Player	DoB	Age	Club	D	League phase		Pld	Gls
Goalkeepers									
1	Antonis Giorgallides	30/01/1982	36	Olympiakos	-			0	0
12	Kostas Panayi	08/10/1994	24	Omonia	-			1	0
22	Urko Pardo	28/01/1983	35	Alki Oroklini	-			1	0
Defenders									
2	Stefanos Mouktaris	10/07/1994	24	Doxa	-			0	0
3	Nicholas Ioannou	10/11/1995	22	APOEL	-			2	0
4	Giorgos Merkis	30/07/1984	34	APOEL	-			2	0
5	Valentinos Sielis	01/03/1990	28	Gangwon	-			0	0
6	Jason Demetriou	18/11/1987	30	Southend	-			2	0
7	Marios Stylianou	23/09/1993	25	Apollon	-			0	0
13	Ioannis Kousoulos	14/06/1996	22	Omonia	-			2	0
17	Margaça	17/07/1985	33	Nea Salamis	-			2	0
21	Georgios Vasiliou	12/06/1984	34	Apollon	-			1	0
Midfielders									
8	Gerasimos Fylaktou	24/07/1991	27	Ermis	-			0	0
11	Andreas Avraam	06/06/1987	31	AEL	-			0	0
16	Vasilios Papafotis	10/08/1995	23	Doxa	-			0	0
18	Kostakis Artymatas	15/04/1993	25	APOEL	*			2	0
19	Kostas Laifis	19/05/1993	25	Standard Liège	*			2	0
20	Grigoris Kastanos	30/01/1998	20	Juventus	*			2	0
23	Georgios Economides	10/04/1990	28	Anorthosis	-			0	0
Forwards									
9	Dimitris Christofi	28/09/1988	30	Omonia	-			0	0
10	Pieros Sotiriou	13/01/1993	25	København	-			2	1
14	Onisiforos Roushias	15/07/1992	26	AEK Larnaca	-			1	0
15	Fotis Papoulis	22/01/1985	33	Apollon	-			2	0
Coach									
-	Ran Ben Simon	28/11/1970	47		-			2	0

Head coach

Petar Hubchev

Date of birth: 26 February 1964

Nationality: Bulgarian

Playing career: Osum Lovech, Levski Sofia, Hamburg, Eintracht Frankfurt

Coaching career: Slavia Sofia, Eintracht Frankfurt II, Wolfsburg II, Chernomorets Pomorie, Botev Plovdiv, Beroe Stara Zagora

- Made debut for Bulgaria while playing in the second tier in a friendly against Greece in 1984, the first of 35 caps. Hubchev was one of the mainstays of the great Bulgaria side that reached the 1994 FIFA World Cup semi-finals. He also played at EURO '96.
- Hubchev came through the ranks of Osum Lovech (now known as Litex Lovech). He was a right-back before establishing himself as a central defender.
- In 1989 he moved to Levski, winning the league and cup double in 1993 before departing at the end of that year for Hamburg. In 1996 he moved on to Eintracht, helping them back to the Bundesliga.
- Hubchev began his coaching career as an assistant at Eintracht in 2001 and also served on the staff of the Bulgarian national team. After a six-month stint as head coach at Slavia Sofia in 2005 he returned to Germany for spells with the reserve sides of Eintracht and Wolfsburg.
- In 2009 he was back in Bulgaria at Chernomorets Pomorie, guiding the second division side to the cup final in his first season. Following a brief spell at Botev Plovdiv he had four seasons at Beroe Stara Zagora, leading them to victory in the Bulgarian Cup in 2012/13 and second place in the league two years later. On 3 October 2016, six months after leaving Beroe, Hubchev succeeded Ivaylo Petev as Bulgaria coach.

Ran Ben Shimon

Date of birth: 28 November 1970

Nationality: Israeli

Playing career: Maccabi Petach-Tikva, Hapoel Haifa, Hapoel Petach-Tikva, Bnei Yehuda Tel-Aviv

Coaching career: Hapoel Haifa, Hapoel Kiryat Shmona (twice), Maccabi Tel-Aviv, AEK Larnaca, Hapoel Tel-Aviv, Maccabi Petach-Tikva, Beitar Jerusalem, Ashdod, Cyprus

- Capped 34 times as a defender for Israel, Ben Shimon spent much of his career with home-town clubs Maccabi Petach-Tikva and Hapoel Petach-Tikva, but was perhaps in his prime during a six-year spell at Hapoel Haifa, during which he won the 1998/99 Israeli championship – the club's first league title.
- After hanging up his boots in 2003 following a stint at Bnei Yehuda, Ben Shimon was in charge of Maccabi Tel-Aviv's youth teams, taking his first senior jobs in the second tier with Hapoel Haifa and then Kiryat Shmona, whom he led to promotion in his first campaign at the helm.
- Briefly in the Maccabi Tel-Aviv hot seat in 2008, he guided Kiryat Shmona to another promotion after rejoining them in 2009, then masterminded their shock title success of 2011/12. He moved abroad for the first time in 2012 to coach Cypriot club AEK Larnaca, earning a third-placed finish in his sole season in command.
- Returning to Israel in 2013, he subsequently held the reins at Hapoel Tel-Aviv, Maccabi Petach-Tikva, Beitar Jerusalem and – in 2016/17 – Ashdod.
- Ben Shimon accepted the Cyprus post in July 2017, filling the void left by Christakis Christoforou's departure, and the following month oversaw a memorable 3-2 home win against Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifying.

Match officials

Referee	Srdjan Jovanović (SRB)
Assistant referees	Uroš Stojković (SRB) , Milan Mihajlović (SRB)
Additional assistant referees	Lazar Lukić (SRB) , Zoran Siroki (SRB)
Fourth official	Dragan Bogičević (SRB)
UEFA Delegate	Teuvo Holopainen (FIN)
UEFA Referee observer	Cyril Zimmermann (SUI)

Referee

Name	Date of birth		UEFA matches
Srdjan Jovanović	09/04/1986	0	29

UEFA Nations League matches between the two teams

No such matches refereed

Other matches involving teams from either of the two countries involved in this match

Date	Competition	Stage reached	Home	Away	Result	Venue
09/07/2015	UEL	1QR	Apollon Limassol FC	FC Saxan	2-0	Larnaca
25/03/2016	U21	QR	Bulgaria	Wales	0-0	Stara Zagora
09/07/2017	U19	GS-FT	Netherlands	Bulgaria	1-1	Gori
03/08/2017	UEL	3QR	CS Marítimo	PFC Botev Plovdiv	2-0	Funchal

Competition facts

What is the background to the UEFA Nations League?

The rejuvenation of national team football – and the UEFA Nations League – stems from the desire of UEFA and its 55 member associations to improve the quality and standing of national team football. UEFA and its associations wanted more sporting meaning in national team football, with associations, coaches, players and supporters increasingly of the opinion that friendly matches are not providing adequate competition for national teams.

Extensive consultation and discussions started as far back as the 2011 UEFA Strategy Meeting in Cyprus and continued at a series of Top Executive Programme (TEP) meetings over the following three years. The UEFA Nations League was unanimously adopted at the XXXVIII Ordinary UEFA Congress in Astana on 27 March 2014.

What is the basic format?

The format of the UEFA Nations League features promotion and relegation. The 55 European national teams have been divided into four leagues in accordance with UEFA's national association coefficient rankings on 11 October 2017.

League A includes the top-ranked sides and League D includes the lowest:

League A

Group A1: Germany, France, Netherlands

Group A2: Belgium, Switzerland, Iceland

Group A3: Portugal, Italy, Poland

Group A4: Spain, England, Croatia

Teams have been split into four groups of three, with the group winners then contesting the UEFA Nations League Finals (semi-finals, third-place match and final) in June 2019 to become the UEFA Nations League winners. One host country will be appointed in December 2018 from among the finalist teams.

The four teams that finish bottom of their groups will be relegated to League B for the 2020 edition.

The top four ranked teams that do not qualify for UEFA EURO 2020 will enter a play-off in March 2020, with one final place on offer.

League B

Group B1: Slovakia, Ukraine, Czech Republic

Group B2: Russia, Sweden, Turkey

Group B3: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Ireland

Group B4: Wales, Republic of Ireland, Denmark

Teams have been split into four groups of three.

The four group winners are promoted to League A, with the four sides that finish bottom relegated to League C for the next competition to be played in 2020.

The top four ranked teams that do not qualify for UEFA EURO 2020 will enter a play-off in March 2020, with one final place on offer.

League C

Group C1: Scotland, Albania, Israel

Group C2: Hungary, Greece, Finland, Estonia

Group C3: Slovenia, Norway, Bulgaria, Cyprus

Group C4: Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Lithuania

Teams have been split into one group of three (containing teams from Pots 1, 2 and 3 only) and three groups of four. Due to winter venue restrictions, a group could contain a maximum of two of these teams: Norway, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania.

The four group winners are promoted to League B, with the four sides that finish bottom relegated to League D for the 2020 edition.

The top four ranked teams that do not qualify for UEFA EURO 2020 will enter a play-off in March 2020, with one final place on offer.

League D

Group D1: Georgia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Andorra

Group D2: Belarus, Luxembourg, Moldova, San Marino

Group D3: Azerbaijan, Faroe Islands, Malta, Kosovo

Group D4: FYR Macedonia, Armenia, Liechtenstein, Gibraltar

Teams have been split into four groups of four.

Due to excessive travel restrictions, any group could not contain a maximum of one of these pairs: Andorra & Kazakhstan, Faroe Islands & Kazakhstan, Gibraltar & Kazakhstan, Gibraltar & Azerbaijan

The four group winners are promoted to League C for the 2020 edition.

The top four ranked teams that do not qualify for UEFA EURO 2020 will enter a play-off in March 2020, with one final place on offer.

Leagues A and B consist of four groups of three teams

League C comprises one group of three teams and three groups of four sides

League D is formed by four groups of four teams

The League Phase Draw for the UEFA Nations League took place at the SwissTech Convention Centre in Lausanne on 24 January 2018.

In each league, four group winners are promoted (or play in the Finals, see below) and four teams are relegated for the next competition to be played in 2020.

The overall UEFA Nations League rankings will determine the composition of the draw pots for the subsequent European Qualifiers.

In addition, the UEFA Nations League will provide teams with another chance to qualify for the UEFA EURO final tournament, with four sides qualifying through play-off matches which take place in March 2020 (see below).

When will the UEFA Nations League take place?

The UEFA Nations League will take place as follows:

See the full fixture list.

The UEFA Nations League group games are being held over six matchdays, during the 'double-headers' in September, October and November 2018. The UEFA Nations League Finals competition for the teams that win the four groups within the top division is scheduled for June 2019.

For the UEFA Nations League Finals, the group winners of UEFA Nations League A will play in a knockout format (semi-finals, third-place match and final) in June 2019 to become the UEFA Nations League winners. One host country will be formally appointed by the UEFA Executive Committee in December 2018 from one of the nations competing in the final four. Italy, Poland and Portugal (all in Group A3) have expressed interest.

The play-off matches will be staged in March 2020 (see below).

Will qualifying for the UEFA EURO change?

The changes to UEFA EURO qualifying will make it more streamlined. The equation is now simple: ten groups with the top two teams in each group qualifying automatically, and the other four places being awarded to European Qualifiers play-off winners, in which the 16 group winners of the UEFA Nations League will be in contention.

The UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying draw will be made after the completion of the UEFA Nations League and allow for the four UEFA Nations League Finals participants to be drawn into groups of five teams.

But the key principle of the qualifiers remains: that every team can play every team.

The European Qualifiers for UEFA EURO 2020 commence in March 2019. There will be two matchdays in each of March, June, September, October and November 2019. In total, there will be five groups of five teams and five groups of six teams (ten groups in all) playing over ten matchdays (the same number as now). The winner and runner-up in each of the ten groups will qualify automatically for the UEFA EURO 2020 final tournament (June 2020).

The last four EURO places will be won through the European Qualifiers play-offs, which will take place in March 2020 and which will be contested by the 16 UEFA Nations League group winners.

If a group winner has already qualified via the European Qualifiers, then their spot will go to the next best-ranked team in their league. If a league does not have four teams to compete, the remaining slots are allocated to teams from another league, according to the overall UEFA Nations League ranking.

Each league will have a path of its own and each path will feature two single-leg semi-finals and one single-leg final. The winner of each path will win a ticket to UEFA EURO 2020.

How are the overall UEFA Nations League rankings calculated?

Within each league (A, B, C and D), the overall ranking will be calculated based on position in the group then points, goal difference, goals scored, away goals scored, wins, away wins, disciplinary points, coefficient ranking.

What are the advantages for national associations and teams?

National associations and coaches, in consultations with UEFA, revealed that they feel that friendly internationals are not providing adequate sporting competition. The UEFA Nations League creates more meaningful and competitive matches for teams and a dedicated calendar and structure for national team football.

Top teams can also aspire to take part in the UEFA Nations League Finals, a new top-level event.

For middle-ranking and smaller nations, the UEFA Nations League will offer an extra way to qualify for UEFA EURO final tournaments. Lower-tier countries – the bottom 16 in the rankings – are now guaranteed one of the 24 qualifying slots for UEFA EURO.

Lower-ranking teams who have struggled against sides ranked considerably higher than them will now get the chance to take part in balanced matches. Teams do not learn and progress by repeatedly losing; now some sides will start winning.

While the UEFA Nations League will replace most friendly internationals, there will still be space in the calendar for friendlies, especially for top teams who may want to face opposition from outside Europe as they will be in groups of three teams.

Associations and teams benefit from clarity of the fixture calendar, and there is now a clear buffer between the end of the UEFA EURO and FIFA World Cup, and vice versa, as well as stability of income.

What are the advantages for supporters?

Supporters more than most realise that most friendlies fail to deliver competitive and meaningful football. Now they will have the opportunity to see their teams play in more competitive matches, take part in a new competition and get a second chance to qualify for the major tournaments.

In every even year there are World Cup or UEFA EURO champions; now in every odd year there will be a UEFA Nations League winners. Football is about competition and now, just like in club football, there will be a national team champion at the close of every season.

Will this mean more demands on players and clubs?

No: the UEFA Nations League and European Qualifiers will adhere to the existing agreed international match calendar. UEFA is always keen to preserve the balance between club and international football. The new competition should, in fact, reduce demands on players and clubs with less travel envisaged for friendly games while national teams will be playing more consistently at their own level. With double-header matchweeks, players will even go back to their clubs earlier than is currently the case.

Is this just about generating more revenue?

No, finances are not a driver for the new competition. However, the competition will have the same centralised media rights as have recently been introduced for all European Qualifiers so associations will have even more stability in their income.

Will there be no more friendly internationals?

There will certainly be fewer friendly internationals and undoubtedly fewer meaningless friendlies. However, there will still be space in the calendar for friendly internationals – particularly warm-up matches for final tournaments. UEFA is also keen that European teams will still have the chance to play opponents from other confederations.

Match-by-match lineups

Bulgaria

UEFA Nations League - Group stage – final tournament

Group C3

Team	Pld	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Bulgaria	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Norway	2	1	0	1	2	1	3
Cyprus	2	1	0	1	2	3	3
Slovenia	2	0	0	2	2	4	0

Matchday 1 (06/09/2018)

Slovenia 1-2 Bulgaria

Goals: 0-1 Kraev 3, 1-1 Zajc 40, 1-2 Kraev 59

Bulgaria: Iliev, Chorbadzhiyski, Bodurov, Slavchev, Kostadinov, Nedelev (82 Goranov), Popov, Bandalovski, Kraev (72 Rainov), Bozhikov (46 Lyaskov), Despodov

Matchday 2 (09/09/2018)

Bulgaria 1-0 Norway

Goals: 1-0 Vasilev 58

Bulgaria: Iliev, Popov, Chorbadzhiyski, Bodurov, Kostadinov, Popov, Bandalovski, Kraev (82 Malinov), Ivanov, Despodov (73 Goranov), Rainov (50 Vasilev)

Matchday 3 (13/10/2018)

Bulgaria-Cyprus

Matchday 4 (16/10/2018)

Norway-Bulgaria

Matchday 5 (16/11/2018)

Cyprus-Bulgaria

Matchday 6 (19/11/2018)

Bulgaria-Slovenia

Cyprus

UEFA Nations League - Group stage – final tournament

Matchday 1 (06/09/2018)

Norway 2-0 Cyprus

Goals: 1-0 Johansen 21, 2-0 Johansen 42

Cyprus: Pardo, Merkis, Demetriou, Kyriakou (77 Kastanos), Sotiriou, Kousoulos, Papoulis, Margaça (82 N. Ioannou), Artymatas, Laifis, Vasiliou (46 Efrem)

Matchday 2 (09/09/2018)

Cyprus 2-1 Slovenia

Goals: 0-1 Berić 54, 1-1 Sotiriou 69, 2-1 Stojanović 89 (og)

Cyprus: Panayi, N. Ioannou (67 Margaça), Demetriou, Efrem (92 Merkis), Kyriakou, Sotiriou, Kousoulos, Papoulis, Artymatas, Laifis, Kastanos (60 Roushias)

Matchday 3 (13/10/2018)

Bulgaria-Cyprus

Matchday 4 (16/10/2018)

Slovenia-Cyprus

Matchday 5 (16/11/2018)

Cyprus-Bulgaria

Matchday 6 (19/11/2018)

Cyprus-Norway

Legend

Competitions

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