

## 2013-14 Champions League Group Stage

September 14th 2013

This week, the [Champions League](#) group stages get under way, so we take a look at some of the talking points in Europe's premier competition.

### A. Main Idea – note taking

Listen to the report and take notes under the following headings.

The Favourites	
The Group of Death	
Dark Horses	
Minnows	

### B. Listening - vocabulary

Listen to the first part of the report and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase.

#### The Champions League – Group Stages

##### Favourites

Choosing a winner for this season's Champions League competition can never be easy, as we are still waiting for the group games to kick off. However, there are plenty of teams with \_\_\_\_\_ and good league form. The two Spanish giants, Real Madrid and Barcelona will always \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ come April/May next year, and of course, the holders, Bayern Munich must be counted as a favourite – in fact they are the favourites with most bookies. There are \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Manchester City's ability to perform on the big stage, despite the millions they have spent on the team. So, from England Chelsea have experience, strength in depth and are always hard to beat. They also have Mourinho's \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ from the dugout, too. Joining these teams should be Juventus and Paris St Germain.

## C. Listening – Verb tenses

*Listen to the next part of the report (Group of Death) and choose the appropriate tense of the verb.*

### Group of Death

On paper, easily the most difficult group and therefore the one dubbed ‘the group of death’

**a. is / was** group F. This **b. contained / contains** a Napoli side who **c. have come / has**

**come** out of the blocks quickly in Serie A with 3 wins from 3. They also **d. bought / did buy**

**/ have bought** well in the transfer window and **e. looks like / look like** a tough proposition

for any side. Dortmund, the only team to come close to Bayern and last year’s losing finalists

**f. prove / proved / will prove** stiff opposition, as will Marseille, who will rely on their

intimidating home ground. The last team in this group are Arsenal, who have bags of

Champions League experience, but still no trophy. None of these teams are favourites to

win, but all **g. had / has / have** a similar level of class. Too tight to call.

## Answers

### B. Listening - vocabulary

*Listen to the first part of the report and fill in the gaps with the appropriate word or phrase.*

#### The Champions League – Group Stages

##### Favourites

Choosing a winner for this season's Champions League competition can never be easy, as we are still waiting for the group games to kick off. However, there are plenty of teams with **pedigree** and good league form. The two Spanish giants, Real Madrid and Barcelona will always **be in the mix** come April/May next year, and of course, the holders, Bayern Munich must be counted as a favourite – in fact they are the favourites with most bookies. There are **question marks over** Manchester City's ability to perform on the big stage, despite the millions they have spent on the team. So, from England Chelsea have experience, strength in depth and are always hard to beat. They also have Mourinho's **know how** from the dugout, too. Joining these teams should be Juventus and Paris St Germain.

### C. Listening – Verb tenses

*Listen to the next part of the report (Group of Death) and choose the appropriate tense of the verb.*

#### Group of Death

On paper, easily the most difficult group and therefore the one dubbed 'the group of death' **a. is** group F. This **b. contains** a Napoli side who **c. have come** out of the blocks quickly in Serie A with 3 wins from 3. They also **d. have bought** well in the transfer window and **e. look like** a tough proposition for any side. Dortmund, the only team to come close to Bayern and last year's losing finalists **f. will prove** stiff opposition, as will Marseille, who will rely on their intimidating home ground. The last team in this group are Arsenal, who have bags of Champions League experience, but still no trophy. None of these teams are favourites to win, but all **g. have** a similar level of class. Too tight to call.

## Transcript

### The Champions League – Group Stages

#### Favourites

Choosing a winner for this season's Champions League competition can never be easy, as we are still waiting for the group games to kick off. However, there are plenty of teams with **pedigree** and good league form. The two Spanish giants, Real Madrid and Barcelona will always **be in the mix** come April/May next year, and of course, the holders, Bayern Munich must be counted as a favourite – in fact they are the favourites with most bookies. There are **question marks over** Manchester City's ability to perform on the big stage, despite the millions they have spent on the team. So, from England Chelsea have experience, strength in depth and are always hard to beat. They also have Mourinho's **know how** from the dugout, too. Joining these teams should be Juventus and Paris St Germain.

#### Group of Death

**On paper**, easily the most difficult group and therefore the one **dubbed** 'the group of death' is group F. This contains a Napoli side who have come out of the blocks quickly in Serie A with 3 wins from 3. They also have bought well in the transfer window and look like a tough proposition for any side. Dortmund, the only team to come close to Bayern and last year's losing finalists will prove **stiff opposition**, as will Marseille, who will rely on their intimidating home ground. The last team in this group are Arsenal, who have bags of Champions League experience, but still no trophy. None of these teams are favourites to win, but all have a similar level of class. Too tight to call.

#### Dark Horses

A dark horse is very different from an outsider, its the kind of club that everyone knows is good but goes about their work quietly while the bigger clubs attract more attention on and off the field. This year, Napoli and Atletico Madrid may well be the dark horses. Napoli will hope Benitez can engineer another cup success, as he did with Liverpool in 2005, and Atletico Madrid, if they get past the group stages, will believe that their **strike force** of Villa and Falcao can help them progress.

#### Minnow

Plzeň, Czech champions, will struggle in the Champions League but after finishing in the last 16 in last year's Europa League they can't be considered minnows. If we have to pick a minnow from the 32 teams it has to be Austria Vienna. Austrian champions but this is their first time in the group stages. They may get **stage fright**.

## Predictions

Napoli are the [dark horses](#), Arsenal to fail to get out the [group of death](#), no English teams in the semi finals, and a Real Madrid v PSG final.

## Vocabulary

- **pedigree:** a long history; proven experience
- **be in the mix:** play an important part; (in this context) be involved in the last stages of the tournament
- **question marks over:** doubts about
- **know how:** knowledge; experience; wisdom
- **on paper:** in theory; making a decision based on imagination not fact
- **dubbed:** called; named
- **stiff opposition:** difficult opponents; tough and strong opposition
- **strike force: the striking partnership; the attackers on a team**
- **stage fright:** (in this context) to feel fear when you are in an important game; to freeze