

UEFA NATIONS LEAGUE - 2018/19 SEASON MATCH PRESS KITS



Cyprus

GSP - Nicosia
Sunday 9 September 2018
20.45CET (21.45 local time)
Group C3 - Matchday 2



Slovenia

Last updated 29/11/2018 20:13CET



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Previous meetings

Head to Head

FIFA World Cup

Date	Stage reached	Match	Result	Venue	Goalscorers
10/09/2013	QR (GS)	Cyprus - Slovenia	0-2	Nicosia	Novakovič 12, Iličić 80
12/10/2012	QR (GS)	Slovenia - Cyprus	2-1	Maribor	Matavž 38, 61; Aloneftis 83

UEFA EURO 2004

Date	Stage reached	Match	Result	Venue	Goalscorers
11/10/2003	PR (GS)	Cyprus - Slovenia	2-2	Limassol	Georgiou 70, Yiasemakis 82; Šiljak 12, 42
02/04/2003	PR (GS)	Slovenia - Cyprus	4-1	Ljubljana	Šiljak 4, 14, Zahovič 38 (P), Čeh 43; Konstantinou 10

	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																		
Cyprus	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	-	-	-	-	8	1	2	5	6	15
Slovenia	2	2	0	0	2	1	1	0	-	-	-	-	8	5	2	1	15	6

Squad list

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	23	Omonia	-			0	0
22	Urko Pardo	28/01/1983	35	Alki Oroklini	-			1	0
Defenders									
3	Nicholas Ioannou	10/11/1995	22	APOEL	-			1	0
4	Giorgos Merkis	30/07/1984	34	APOEL	-			1	0
5	Valentinos Sielis	01/03/1990	28	Gangwon	-			0	0
6	Jason Demetriou	18/11/1987	30	Southend	-			1	0
13	Ioannis Kousoulos	14/06/1996	22	Omonia	-			1	0
17	Margaça	17/07/1985	33	Nea Salamis	-			1	0
21	Georgios Vasiliou	12/06/1984	34	Apollon	-			1	0
Midfielders									
2	Gerasimos Fylaktou	24/07/1991	27	Ermis	-			0	0
7	George Efrem	05/07/1989	29	APOEL	*			1	0
8	Charalambos Kyriakou	09/02/1995	23	Apollon	-			1	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	-			1	0
19	Kostas Laifis	19/05/1993	25	Standard Liège	*			1	0
20	Grigoris Kastanos	30/01/1998	20	Juventus	-			1	0
23	Georgios Economides	10/04/1990	28	Anorthosis	-			0	0
Forwards									
9	Nestor Mytidis	01/06/1991	27	AEL	-			0	0
10	Pieros Sotiriou	13/01/1993	25	København	-			1	0
14	Onisiforos Roushias	15/07/1992	26	AEK Larnaca	-			0	0
15	Fotis Papoulis	22/01/1985	33	Apollon	-			1	0
Coach									
-	Ran Ben Simon	28/11/1970	47		-			1	0

Slovenia

No.	Player	DoB	Age	Club	D	League phase		Pld	Gls		
Goalkeepers											
1	Vid Belec	06/06/1990	28	Sampdoria	-			1	0		
12	Matic Kotnik	23/07/1990	28	Panionios	-			0	0		
16	Aljaž Ivačič	29/12/1993	24	Olimpija Ljubljana	-			0	0		
Defenders											
2	Nejc Skubic	13/06/1989	29	Konyaspor	*			1	0		
3	Jure Balkovec	09/09/1994	23	Verona	-			0	0		
4	Petar Stojanović	07/10/1995	22	Dinamo Zagreb	-			0	0		
5	Nemanja Mitrovič	15/10/1992	25	Jagiellonia	-			0	0		
13	Bojan Jokić	17/05/1986	32	Ufa	-			1	0		
17	Miha Mevlja	12/06/1990	28	Zenit	-			1	0		
22	Luka Krajnc	19/09/1994	23	Frosinone	-			0	0		
23	Miha Blažič	08/05/1993	25	Ferencváros	-			0	0		
Midfielders											
6	René Krhin	21/05/1990	28	Nantes	*			1	0		
7	Amir Dervišević	04/07/1992	26	Maribor	-			1	0		
8	Jasmin Kurtič	10/01/1989	29	SPAL	-			1	0		
10	Miha Zajc	01/07/1994	24	Empoli	-			1	1		
14	Leo Štulac	26/09/1994	23	Parma	-			0	0		
15	Domen Črnigoj	18/11/1995	22	Lugano	-			0	0		
21	Benjamin Verbič	27/11/1993	24	Dynamo Kyiv	-			1	0		
Forwards											
9	Tim Matavž	13/01/1989	29	Vitesse	-			1	0		
11	Roman Bezjak	21/02/1989	29	Jagiellonia	-			1	0		
18	Luka Zahovič	15/11/1995	22	Maribor	-			0	0		
19	Andraž Šporar	27/02/1994	24	Slovan Bratislava	-			1	0		
20	Robert Berič	17/06/1991	27	St-Étienne	-			0	0		
Coach											
-	Tomaž Kavčič	28/11/1953	64		-			1	0		

Head 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.

Tomaž Kavčič

Date of birth: 28 November 1953

Nationality: Slovenian

Playing career: Gorica, Svoboda

Coaching career: Gorica (assistant), Črnuče Factor, Svoboda, Bela Krajina (three times), Grosuplje (twice), Ljubljana, Factor, Livar, Slovenia U-21, Qingdao Jonoon, Hunan Billows, Slovenia

- A modest playing career ended with Kavčič scoring his first goal in the Slovenian top flight, for Gorica, at the age of 38, setting a new record for the Prva Liga. He started coaching at the same club and was on the staff as an assistant to Milan Miklavič when they won their first Slovenian title in 1995/96.
- Branched out on his own in Slovenia's lower leagues, serving as head coach of several clubs over the next decade, including three spells at his local side Bela Krajina and a number of promotions and relegations.
- Put in charge of Slovenia's Under-21 side in February 2008, Kavčič remained in the position for over six years, overseeing the development of several well-known future internationals such as Jan Oblak and Kevin Kampl.
- Left Slovenia for China in July 2014, becoming coach of second-tier side Qingdao Jonoon and 18 months later moving to Hunan Billows.
- Returned home to assist Srečko Katanec in Slovenia's 2018 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign before replacing him as head coach in December 2017, claiming his first win six months later with a 2-0 friendly success away to Montenegro.

Match officials

Referee	Andris Treimanis (LVA)
Assistant referees	Haralds Gudermanis (LVA) , Aleksejs Spasjonnikovs (LVA)
Additional assistant referees	Aleksandrs Golubevs (LVA) , Edgars Malcevs (LVA)
Fourth official	Raimonds Tatriks (LVA)
UEFA Delegate	Oleg Harlamov (EST)
UEFA Referee observer	Georgios Bikas (GRE)

Referee

Name	Date of birth		UEFA matches
Andris Treimanis	16/03/1985	0	49

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
24/07/2013	UCL	2QR	NK Maribor	Birkirkara FC	2-0	Maribor
25/09/2013	U17	QR	Norway	Cyprus	4-2	Paphos
27/09/2013	U17	QR	Cyprus	Spain	0-1	Paphos
28/03/2016	U21	QR	Slovenia	Republic of Ireland	3-1	Koper
28/07/2016	UEL	3QR	Grasshopper Club Zürich	Apollon Limassol FC	2-1	St Gallen
26/07/2017	UCL	3QR	NK Maribor	FH Hafnarfjörður	1-0	Maribor
02/11/2017	UEL	GS	Apollon Limassol FC	Atalanta BC	1-1	Nicosia

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

Cyprus

UEFA Nations League - Group stage – final tournament

Group C3

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

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-Slovenia

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

Slovenia

UEFA Nations League - Group stage – final tournament

Matchday 1 (06/09/2018)

Slovenia 1-2 Bulgaria

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

Slovenia: Belec, Skubic, Aljaž Struna, Krhin (66 Bezjak), Kurtič, Kampl (83 Dervišević), Jokić, Zajc, M. Mevlja, Šporar (73 Matavž), Verbič

Matchday 2 (09/09/2018)

Cyprus-Slovenia

Matchday 3 (13/10/2018)

Norway-Slovenia

Matchday 4 (16/10/2018)

Slovenia-Cyprus

Matchday 5 (16/11/2018)

Slovenia-Norway

Matchday 6 (19/11/2018)

Bulgaria-Slovenia

Legend

Competitions

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