

MARK O'HAIRE'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL BLOG

Champions League Final

PSG vs Arsenal

Saturday 30 May, 17:00

The biggest game in European club football takes centre-stage in Budapest on Saturday evening as Paris Saint-Germain look to defend their Champions League crown against an Arsenal side fresh from ending their 22-year wait for Premier League title honours.

It's a beauty against the beast scenario as the swashbuckling style of PSG faces off against Mikel Arteta's immovable object in a fascinating clash of styles. Paris have been chalked up as fair 13/10 favourites, though it's difficult to make a strong case against either team here in what could be a tight and competitive contest.

Where Arsenal hold an edge

It's already been a historic campaign for the Gunners and the pressure-release of securing Premier League silverware should aid Arsenal here. Players, staff and supporters have had the opportunity to celebrate their overdue success, as well as rest, refresh and reset ahead of what could prove to be a monumental May.

Arteta's outfit have the edge in physicality, intensity and boast a serious set-piece threat – PSG won't have faced a team with characteristics close to Arsenal's and the Gunners' compact nature has the capacity to frustrate Les Parisiens. It's true too, the Londoners came very close to ousting the eventual winners at the semi-final stage last term.

Paris are weaker on paper compared to their 2024/25 campaign. Achraf Hakimi looks unlikely to be fit enough in time to start, whilst goalkeeper Matvey Safonov is a downgrade between the sticks when compared to predecessor Gianluigi Donnarumma.

PSG still the side to beat

The case for PSG is clear. The French champions have posted 13 wins and only two losses across their past 17 UCL knockout games and Paris have been beaten just once in 12 when facing English opposition. Since the start of last season, Luis Enrique's side have eliminated Liverpool (x2), Aston Villa, Arsenal and Chelsea from Europe.

PSG have proven themselves on the biggest stage of all and impressed everyone with their altered approach in the second leg of their semi-final against Bayern Munich. If Les Parisiens bag the opening goal, it's going to be very difficult for an Arsenal side that's struggled to score freely of late. State the obvious alert but that opening goal is pivotal.

Arguably, the biggest plus for PSG here is Arsenal's issues at right back. With Jurien Timber and Ben White unavailable, Cristhian Mosquera will be tasked with keeping

outstanding left-sided Paris pair Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Nuno Mendes quiet. Fabian Ruiz also likes to drift left, putting more pressure on Arsenal's right-sided rearguard.

Oppose goals and cards

Champions League finals rarely turn into high-scoring shootouts and Arsenal's presence here should ensure a relatively low-scoring clash. Under 2.5 Goals is a worthy wager to consider at 4/5 quotes, though I'm looking to package Under 3.5 Goals alongside Under 4.5 Cards via the Bet Builder at a [boosted price of 6/4 \(from even-money\)](#).

Six of the past seven finals were settled via a 1-0 or 2-0 scoreline, none of which saw both sides score. Go further back and 13 of the most recent 19 showpiece finales finished with a maximum of two strikes and 14 of those fixtures featured Under 3.5 Goals. Meanwhile, none of Arsenal's last 19 matches produced 4+ goals.

Cards-wise, Daniel Siebert is officiating and whilst his Champions League career suggests he likes to flash his yellows about, UEFA do instruct referees to keep a lid on cards and avoid spoiling the spectacle. Five of the previous eight finals have seen fewer than five bookings and Arsenal and PSG are amongst the cleanest in the competition.

Only two of Arsenal's Champions League matches saw a five-card count or more with six of their most recent nine seeing Under 2.5 Cards bank. For PSG, 10 of 12 UCL dates delivered Under 4.5 Cards and the aforementioned Siebert has produced Under 2.5 Cards in three of his past four in Europe's premier club competition.

Player props angle

Mosquera is bound to be targeted as he aims to keep tabs on Mendes and Kvaratskhelia. Thwarting the latter looks a tall order with the Georgian wing wizard offering the ability to beat his man on both sides through skill, speed and industry. Kvaratskhelia is a nightmare to defend against and draws plenty of fouls.

With that in-mind, backing Mosquera to collect a card alongside Kvaratskhelia to land at least one shot on-target stands-out at a [boosted price of 11/2 \(from 9/2\)](#) through the Bet Builder. "Kvaradona" has scored seven times during the UCL knockout stage, managed an on-target attempt in 14 of his last 16 outings in this competition, as well as 2+ in five of his most recent six.

Best Bets

- [Under 3.5 Goals and Under 4.5 Cards \(Was 1/1, Now 6/4\)](#)
- [Cristhian Mosquera to be carded and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia Over 0.5 Shots on-Target \(Was 9/2, Now 11/2\)](#)