

Bayern, PSG set for European classic

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TDT | Manama

Eight days after a chaotic first leg in Paris, Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain meet again tonight at the Allianz Arena (10 PM Bahrain time) with a place in the Champions League final at stake.

The first leg at the Parc des Princes ended 5-4 to PSG, the highest-scoring Champions League semi-final in history. It was a relentless, end-to-end contest defined by transition football, attacking brilliance, and defensive vulnerability on both sides. Ousmane Dembélé, Désiré Doué, and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia repeatedly exploited Bayern's high line as PSG surged into a 5-2 lead.

Bayern, though, refused to collapse. A late rally brought a flurry of their own goals, dramatically altering the tone of the tie and leaving everything to play for in Germany. Still, conceding five goals for the first time in over 30 years of European competition underlines the scale of their defensive concerns.

Vincent Kompany returns



Ousmane Dembélé celebrates after scoring in the first leg

to the touchline after suspension and has doubled down on his aggressive philosophy. He insists the Bavarians will not abandon the high-risk style that defines them. History is not on their side, though, with Bayern progressing from just one of their last ten European ties after losing the first leg.

Recent form adds another layer of uncertainty. A 3-3

draw with Heidenheim once again exposed defensive fragility, despite continued attacking output from Harry Kane and Michael Olise. Meanwhile, the French side are in strong away form under Luis Enrique, unbeaten in six on the road and having kept five consecutive clean sheets.

Both teams rotated over the weekend to ensure their key

players are physically primed for the decider. PSG carry a one-goal advantage, but Bayern's home aggression promises an open contest, with the hosts forced to chase the game while PSG look to control the tempo and protect their lead. All signs point to another compelling spectacle for the fans and another Champions League classic in the making.

Chelsea's Champions League hopes fade away



Chelsea's players react in disappointment after conceding a goal

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Chelsea's hopes of returning to the UEFA Champions League are effectively over after a 3-1 home defeat to Nottingham Forest, a result that highlights their decline this season.

The loss was their sixth consecutive defeat in the Premier League, leaving them ninth and 10 points adrift of the top five with only three matches remaining. João Pedro's late overhead kick briefly lifted the atmosphere at Stamford Bridge, but frustration from supporters was evident at full time.

The club is currently without a permanent manager following the departure of Liam Rosenior, with Calum McFarlane in interim charge. However, the issues run deeper than coaching instability, with Chelsea struggling for consistency, cohesion and con-

fidence throughout the squad.

Pundits have been critical of their performances. Jamie Carragher described Chelsea as a "broken club", while Mark Schwarzer questioned the players' commitment during their recent poor run.

Missing out on the Champions League would be a major financial setback for the Blues. It would significantly reduce income from prize money, broadcasting, and commercial deals, especially as the club has already invested heavily in the squad. Since the BlueCo takeover, the club has spent over £1.5 billion on signings, but that spending has yet to deliver sustained success.

An FA Cup final still offers a chance of silverware, but Chelsea now face a pivotal summer. Without Champions League football, pressure will intensify on both the squad rebuild and the club's long-term direction.

Injured Mbappe faces backlash over Sardinia trip before Clasico

AFP | Madrid

Sidelined with a hamstring injury, Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe has sparked anger among a section of the club's supporters after a holiday in Sardinia, triggering a fresh media storm ahead of Sunday's Clasico against Barcelona.

For many Madrid fans, the striker's Italian getaway - during rest days granted by Real Madrid to injured players, including Mbappe, Thibaut Courtois and Arda Guler - was the final straw.

United behind a shared image showing Mbappe with a "Fuera (out)" stamp over his face - originally posted by a satirical account and reposted in the comments section of Real Madrid's official posts - some fans are openly calling for the French superstar to leave.

An online petition has also been circulating on social networks, urging Madrid fans to "make their voices heard". "If you believe change is necessary, do not remain silent: sign this petition and defend what you believe is best for the future of the club," it reads.

Fuel was added to the fire by widely shared photos of Mbappe alongside actress Ester Expósito, posted on social media as Real Madrid were preparing for a crucial La Liga match against Espanyol last weekend in an effort to delay Barcelona's title celebrations.



Real Madrid's French forward #10 Kylian Mbappe challenges Alaves' Spanish goalkeeper #01 Antonio Sivera (file photo)

Real Madrid won that match 2-0, and coach Alvaro Arbeloa later insisted that "each player does what they consider appropriate in their free time" and that it was "none of my business". However, several of his comments were perceived as indirect criticism of his leading scorer.

Sweat and mud, not tuxedos

"We didn't build Real Madrid with players who play in tuxedos, but with players who finish

matches with shirts full of sweat and mud, through effort and sacrifice," he said.

Madrid is "a club where, fortunately, no player has ever been, or ever will be bigger than Real Madrid," added Arbeloa.

Contacted by AFP, Mbappe's entourage said "part of the criticism is based on an over-interpretation of elements linked to a recovery period that is strictly supervised by the club", and bears no relation to "the reality of the commitment and

daily work Kylian puts in for the team".

The France captain, accustomed to sometimes excessive scrutiny, addressed his mindset earlier this season on The Bridge, a podcast hosted by his Real Madrid and France teammate Aurelien Tchouameni.

"I've reached a point where you're going to get criticised whatever you do, so you might as well do what you want - at least then you stay true to yourself," Mbappe said.

Isolated in dressing room?

With 41 goals in 41 matches in all competitions this season, Mbappe remains by far Real Madrid's leading scorer. He has nonetheless come under heavy criticism since returning from injury in mid-March, with some observers accusing him of an overly individualistic approach.

According to Spanish media, Mbappe - frustrated by a second season at Madrid without a major trophy - is becoming increasingly isolated in the dressing room, despite having established himself as a leader earlier in the campaign.

Some fans and pundits have pointed to post-match comments from fellow stars Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham after Sunday's win as signs of a growing rift with the France captain.

"We fought and we played together. When we play like that, we are better and stronger," Vinicius told Real Madrid TV, while Bellingham urged his teammates on Instagram to stay "together" and fully committed "until the very last whistle" of the season.

Friendly exchanges between Vinicius and Bellingham on social media - the pair won the Champions League together before Mbappe's arrival - have further fuelled speculation of a new clash of egos within the Madrid squad.

Indian Club to Host Open Badminton Tournament 2026

Pradeep Puravankara
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The Indian Club, Bahrain, has announced the upcoming 'The Indian Club Open Badminton Tournament 2026', scheduled to take place from May 15 to 21 at the Indian Club Arena.

The week-long sporting event will feature a comprehensive lineup of 15 categories, including Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles, and Masters Doubles. The tournament is expected to attract top-tier talent and badminton enthusiasts from across the Kingdom and the wider GCC region.

The event is powered by Guidetech Trading W.L.L. as the Title Sponsor, with Valueline Trading W.L.L. serving as the Main Sponsor. The tournament is further supported by Silver Star Logistics.

Organizers have invited players to showcase their skills and compete for top honors. The registration deadline is set for May 10, 2026.

For registration and further inquiries, interested participants can contact the Club's Badminton Secretary, Mr. Binu Pappachen (+973 39198193), or the Tournament Director, Mr. Anil Koliyadan (+973 37733499).