

UEFA Champions League Draw: Reaction

[Patrick Hook-Willers](#) assesses the fall-out from yesterday's UEFA Champions League group stage draw...

Friday 31 August 2018



The famous UEFA Champions League logo: Ronnie Chan

For football fans across Europe, the end of August brings with it one potentially life-changing event - the UEFA Champions League group stage draw. Unlike last season, four English teams were in the draw this year: Manchester City in **Pot 1** as Premier League champions, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur in **Pot 2**, with last season's runners-up Liverpool in **Pot 3**.

Now that the draw is finalised and the groups decided, players, managers and fans alike will be experiencing a wide range of feelings, and it is my job to assess whether there is excitement in the Manchester air, anticipation on the Hackney Marshes, or trepidation on Merseyside.

GROUP B: *Barcelona, **TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR**, PSV Eindhoven, Inter Milan.*

For fans of Tottenham Hotspur, the Champions League anthem has now become a familiar sound ringing in the ears, and based on this draw, it will once again be met with a sense of excitement and quiet confidence. Last year's draw of Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund and APOEL saw many be quick to write off Tottenham's chances, however, Spurs showed their prowess on the European stage, dismantling the European Champions at home and topping the group with sixteen points. This season's draw is arguably harder, Spurs facing a group containing the Spanish and Dutch champions, as well as the European heavyweights Inter Milan, a side synonymous with the Champions League in Tottenham. As a devout Lilywhite myself, I can say with confidence that this is the most exciting draw we've had in the competition so far and is one that is not insurmountable by any stretch. The performances against Real Madrid, Dortmund and Juventus make the fans confident that Tottenham can progress out of this year's

group with some more 'glory glory' nights under the belt, and aside from the group standings, having the chance to watch Lionel Messi with my own eyes will mean a near life-long ambition will be realised.

Group C: *Paris Saint-Germain, Napoli, **LIVERPOOL**, Red Star Belgrade.*

In the week that Noel Gallagher described Liverpool as "like the Queen Mother" for "thinking everyone loves them", Liverpool were handed one of the toughest groups of this year's competition. Big spenders Paris Saint-Germain are now a household European name, possessing one of the few attacking trios more potent than the Reds' own. Despite a new found defensive stability on Merseyside, there won't be too many Liverpool fans confident of containing Neymar, Edinson Cavani and Kylian Mbappé home and away. Aside from PSG, Napoli pose a great threat to any team they face. Last season they ran Juventus to the last two weeks of the season, finishing second in Serie A with 91 points, just four behind the Turin based giants. However, Liverpool supporters will take refuge in the fact that Napoli went out at the group stage last season in a group they should have progressed from, which will give the Reds added confidence going into this campaign. Rhys Carey, a York student and Liverpool fan told Nouse that "it could be an easier draw for sure... I think we'll be aiming for six points from Red Star Belgrade, and I fancy us to win at home against Napoli which would almost see us through. Hopefully we can sneak something away at Napoli or in the PSG games to take top spot." After their outstanding performance in Europe last season in becoming Champions League runners-up, I fully expect Liverpool to progress from this group.

Group F: ***MANCHESTER CITY**, Shakhtar Donetsk, Lyon, Hoffenheim.*

For the second year running, the blue half of Manchester has been drawn in a favourable group, and again with Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk. Although they were defeated away to Shakhtar, they will not be worried in the slightest about drawing them again in a group like this. Avoiding disrespect as best I can, Manchester City's three opponents on paper will have Pep Guardiola wondering whether they have been demoted to the Europa League. Former French giants Lyon are a shadow of their former selves, while German outfit Hoffenheim making their first ever appearance in the group stages of the Champions League, after losing in the play-offs last season to Liverpool. Manchester City fans won't be disappointed in not playing another big team early on, as they will likely be reaching the latter stages and facing the giants there, so I expect they'll be delighted. One Manchester City fan said on twitter, "It's about time we got a good draw instead of the usual group of death". Last year's group was not a group of death by any stretch of the imagination, but this person has probably been supporting Manchester United for the past twenty years, so I'll let this one slide.

Group H: *Juventus, **MANCHESTER UNITED**, Valencia, BSC Young Boys.*

Manchester United are in a bit of a rut at the moment, so getting a draw uncharacteristically tough to what they are used to will only add to the anxiety currently floating around Old Trafford. Being up against 34-time Italian champions and two-time UCL winners Juventus will prove a mammoth task to overcome. Tottenham should have surpassed the Old Lady last season, but the Italian side's big game knowledge and determination saw them through, a test that Manchester United would likely fall short in also, especially given Juventus' recent purchase of Manchester United's favourite son - Cristiano Ronaldo. Spanish side Valencia are also no strangers to Europe's top competition, but have not featured in it since 2015, which will give United fans some comfort. The Swiss side BSC Young Boys will be no pushovers, which is clear when looking at last season's Swiss Super League table. Young Boys finished 15 points clear of UCL regulars FC Basel, which shows that they are not a team to be taken lightly. That being said, Manchester United will still feel they are more than capable of taking six points from them. On the whole, Manchester United fans should be feeling confident of progressing from the group stages, barring any more Mourinho madness.

Even from this very early point, I'd place money on all the English sides making it out of the group stages. As a future point of reference for my talents as a footballing oracle, here is my predicted Last 16:

Atletico Madrid, Borussia Dortmund; FC Barcelona, **Tottenham Hotspur**; Paris Saint-Germain, **Liverpool**; FC Porto, Galatasaray; Bayern Munich, AFC Ajax; **Manchester City**, Shakhtar Donetsk; Real Madrid, AS Roma; Juventus, **Manchester United**.



Most Read **Discussed**

1. [Men's Football 3s fight back to win on Derby Day](#)
2. [Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 15](#)
3. [Zidane the greatest of all time](#)
4. [Mind over Matter: An insight into the psychology of boxing](#)
5. [Women's sport to open and close Roses 2019](#)
6. [Is lad culture really a bad thing?](#)

Write for Nouse Sport

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

More in Sport

[York 'Movember' total revealed](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 15](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 14](#)

[Men's Football 3s fight back to win on Derby Day](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 13](#)

[Netball 1s show Roses mettle in front of large crowd](#)

[About Nouse](#)
[Who's Nouse](#)
[Website Credits](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Advertising](#)

- [Archives](#)
- [Student Discounts](#)
- [Print Editions](#)
- [Mini-Sites](#)
- [Nouse on Twitter](#)
- [Nouse on Facebook](#)
- [Nouse on Google+](#)

© 1964–2018 Nouse

[Policies](#) |

