

UEFA Champions League 2012 / 2013

Group Stage

(FRA) Montpellier HSC		1:1		FC Schalke 04 (GER)
04 December 2012, 20:45 CET – La Mosson – Montpellier – France				

Match Officials	Name	Origin	Mark ¹	Mark ²	Difficulty ³
Referee	Antonio MATEU LAHOZ	ESP	8.3	---	Normal
Assistant Referee 1	Pau CEBRIÁN DEVIS	ESP	8.3	---	Challenging
Assistant Referee 2	Javier AGUILAR RODRÍGUEZ	ESP	8.4	---	Challenging
Additional AR 1	Carlos CLOS GÓMEZ	ESP	8.0	---	Normal
Additional AR 2	Carlos DEL CERRO GRANDE	ESP	8.1	---	Normal
Fourth Official	Raúl CABAÑERO MARTÍNEZ	ESP	8.0	---	Normal
UEFA Referee Observer	Iouri BASKAKOV	RUS			
Blog-Referee Observer ⁴	Niclas E	GER			

¹ Final mark according to evaluation scale. Expected level for AARs and fourth official is 8.0!

² Mark if the final mark had not been influenced by a crucial mistake (only in case of a crucial mistake, to be held empty if no crucial mistake occurred).

³ Difficulty has to be integrated into the final mark. Levels of difficulty are: "normal", "challenging" and "very challenging".

⁴ Blog-Referee Observer = Inofficial referee observer appointed by our blogs' community

Evaluation scale	Description of the Marks
9.0 – 10.0	Excellent.
8.5 – 8.9	Very good. Important decision(s) correctly taken.
8.3 – 8.4	Good. Expected level.
8.2	Satisfactory with small areas for improvement.
8.0 – 8.1	Satisfactory with important areas for improvement.
7.9	One clear and important mistake, otherwise 8.3 or above.
7.8	One clear and important mistake, otherwise 8.0 – 8.2.
7.5 – 7.7	Below expectation, poor control, significant point(s) for improvement.
7.0 – 7.4	Disappointing. Below expectation with one and clear important mistakes or a performance with two or more clear and important mistakes.
6.0 – 6.9	Unacceptable.

Description of the match:

Last matchday of this UEFA Champions League group stage; Montpellier HSC and FC Schalke 04 were combatting in Group B on a basically poor football pitch in front of an audience of 23.000 supporters. Weather conditions were regular, at least it was dry. Due to the level of the pitch, which was honestly speaking not of Champions League proportions, there were several technical errors unintentionally committed

by both teams, specially by the German side that normally focus on technical abilities more than on physical play. High pace was nonetheless guaranteed, also because of many misdirected passes resulting from the many dents in the pitch. Generally, Schalke managed to control the first half and to enable a few dangerous goal attempts, while Montpellier were better in the second half. Finally, it was a match of low quality ending with a draw that was adequate with regards to both teams' efforts.

Some Montpellier fans misbehaved at the start of the game when both teams entered the pitch and lined up: during the Champions League anthem, there were plenty of whoomphs induced by pyrotechnics.

Referee

I. Knowledge, Application and Interpretation of the Laws of the Game, Disciplinary Control and Technical Management of the game with special reference to the situations and the minutes when they occurred.

(Crucial decisions, if available, have to be explicitly mentioned in the grid and highlighted).

Comments:

The referee has shown a generally good knowledge of the Laws of the Game, all needed technical procedures were executed in the required manner. Also due to his clement approach (see II.), the amount of given fouls corresponded to the high degree of fairness of both sides.

The only yellow card of the evening was issued to Montpellier #4 for a rude challenge against Schalke #20 in the 84th minute. Throughout the entire game, a certain proportionality in the way he dealt with less serious and more serious infringements was safeguarded. Another good facet of his performance was that he did not reward too easy attempts to gain a free-kick with a whistle. He always ignored too clumsy falls whose intention was clear. However, at least once this try to get a free-kick was even obvious simulation the referee should have punished with a booking (Montpellier #20, 19th minute).

The main and actually only weakness of his performance was an overall too high number of missed infringements. Thus, he missed a hard foul from Schalke #22 (28th minute) and some others that should have entailed promising free-kick positions for the French side. He must improve the difference between simulation and fouls, even if they are close together.

Further remark: Pay attention to a more thorough assessment whether it was high leg or low head (17th minute).

Minute	Description of the situation
27/28	The referee missed a row of clear fouls committed by Schalke. Their #10's challenge for the ball was still acceptable, but potentially crossed the border of a fair tackle – no replay available here. Schalke #22 then with two clear fouls that were not punished, the first one appeared a metre before the box (AAR2 should have seen it), the second one was a tackle with feet forward in the midfield, should have been a yellow card.
59	When Montpellier scored the equalizing goal, there was a handball before this scene. Schalke defender #21 got the ball on his hand on the goalline. Even though no deliberation was at hand, it would have been a penalty and red card. Good that the referee did not overreact and facilitated the pending shot that resulted in the goal then.

II. Tactical approach and its Degree of Consistency, Personality, Match Control and Management of the Teams and Players with special reference to the situations and the minutes when they occurred.

Comments:

The referee showed an extremely lenient line offering the players much room for physical play, which was inevitable at this awful pitch. It is not easy to say whether this approach led to the large amount of missed fouls, but anyway, the style worked. He should however keep in mind that tackles which are dangerous for opponents must be dealt with more carefully and cannot be beared.

He savoured a high authority from the players, showed a certain and adequate distance to them but was able and willing to interact with the players to explain his decisions to them. This strength also worked to remind the players who is in charge of the match (15th minute e.g.). In a word: this referee has charisma.

Positive Points		
	1.	Showing willingness to accept physical play and give the game a certain level of freedom to unfold (no unnecessary stoppages..)
	2.	switching his passive attitude to an active one if needed by a good interaction with players (charisma, personality)
	3.	Feeling for the game

Points to improve	1.	Improve detection of obvious fouls, combining a consistent foul selection with his leniency may go hand in hand
	2.	Without questioning his neutrality, he really should pay attention to not pose different yardsticks to both teams in foul detection, do not take obvious simulation of team X as a reason to ignore coming fouls against team X

Minute	Description of the situation

III. Physical Shape, Stamina, Positioning, Movement as well as Mental Awareness, if needed, with reference to the minutes when they occurred, always in case of a "-".

Physical Condition (very good, good, average, poor): good

Further Aspects:

+	Expected	-	
	X		Always close to play, follows play at all times with a flexible diagonal system and impedes interference with play
	X		Efficient positioning (at set pieces e.g.) and movement to be ready to take a (crucial) decision (specially in the box; be able to enter the box in some cases when it is necessary)
	X		Shows awareness and is able to anticipate the action

Minute	Description of the situation

IV. Teamwork (co-operation with (A)ARs and fourth official with reference, if needed, to special situations and the minutes when they occurred)

Comments:

A reasonable level of teamwork. There was not too much co-operation, the assistants were not too much involved in e.g. foul detection, but not too little either. Every team-member seemed to be mentally focused.

V. If needed: General comments or advices for improvement; explanation of the chosen mark; further matters (can be left empty).

Comments:

Absolutely an expected level performance, which however should not tarnish the fact that he must improve some things.

Assistant Referee 1

Assistant referee's performance (please mention some important decisions either by integrating them into a coherent comment or mentioning them in the grid below; mandatory if a "-" (negative point) is selected)

Relevant Aspects:

+	Expected	-	
	X		Correct offside decisions by means of a good application of the "wait and see"-technique
	X		Good positioning and movement
X			Mental alertness and reaction to incidents in his area of vicinity
	X		Reasonable degree of co-operation with referee (not flagging too much/too little; being able to support referee in crucial decisions)
	X		Efficient control at set pieces

Comments:

The assistant referee 1 was a good support for the referee in the little situations that appeared in his area of vicinity. After a good advantage procedure in the early stage of the match (see grid), he had to cope with several tight offside situations; with one exception (88th minute, missed offside nearly immediately led to Montpellier's winning goal), every decision was correctly taken (two tight NO offsides in a great Schalke goal attempt, 25th minute; good application of wait-and-see-technique in minute 7).

Minute	Description of the situation
4	Good dealing with advantage rule: Too high leg of Montpellier #5 against Schalke #8 recognized, the assistant waited whether #8 is still able to continue attempt, which he was not. Correct flag then – free-kick to Schalke.

Assistant Referee 2

Assistant referee's performance (please mention some important decisions either by integrating them into a coherent comment or mentioning them in the grid below; mandatory if a "-" (negative point) is selected)

Relevant Aspects:

+	Expected	-	
X			Correct offside decisions by means of a good application of the "wait and see"-technique
	X		Good positioning and movement
	X		Mental alertness and reaction to incidents in his area of vicinity
	X		Reasonable degree of co-operation with referee (not flagging too much/too little; being able to support referee in crucial decisions)
	X		Efficient control at set pieces

Comments:

Also the second assistant referee conveyed a good impression due to mental focussing and many correct offside decisions (15th, 34th, 51st, 54th and 85th minute). These offside decisions were partly not easy to detect,

as some strikers always moved on the edge of an offside position; the majority of the offside decisions were even challenging due to contrary movements.

Minute	Description of the situation

Additional Assistant Referee 1

Assistant referee's performance (please mention some important decisions either by integrating them into a coherent comment or mentioning them in the grid below; mandatory if a "-" (negative point) is selected)

Relevant Aspects:

+	Expected	-	
	X		Good positioning and movement
	X		Mental alertness and reaction to incidents in his area of vicinity based on a reasonable degree of co-operation with referee
	X		Efficient control at set pieces

Comments:

He seemed to be a concentrated member of the officiating team always being ready to take a decision. He could have been involved in the 1-1 goal (59th minute) when a Schalke defender first touched the ball with his hand on the goalline, allowing the advantage then led to the goal, so everything fine.

Minute	Description of the situation

Additional Assistant Referee 2

Assistant referee's performance (please mention some important decisions either by integrating them into a coherent comment or mentioning them in the grid below; mandatory if a "-" (negative point) is selected)

Relevant Aspects:

+	Expected	-	
X			Good positioning and movement
	X		Mental alertness and reaction to incidents in his area of vicinity based on a reasonable degree of co-operation with referee
	X		Efficient control at set pieces

Comments:

Extremely aesthetic movement on the goalline, always targeted at creating the best position to the situations possible. There was only one involvement to be presumed, when a corner-kick was awarded to Montpellier (3rd minute).

Minute	Description of the situation

Fourth Official

Fourth official's performance (reference to technical management like substitutions or signalling of additional time, dealing with benches in case of conflicts)

Comments:

The fourth official executed all technical procedures in a normal manner. He could have restricted the persistent complaints, even if they were justified, of the French coach more determinedly.
