

Bayern boss Tuchel threatens Man City's Champions League dream once more

Manchester City and Pep Guardiola have a Champions League score to settle against Thomas Tuchel, when the newly-appointed Bayern Munich boss visits the Etihad in today's quarter-final, first leg.

Tuchel emerged victorious as Chelsea manager in City's first, and so far only, run to the Champions League final in 2021, AFP reported.

That was also the closest Guardiola has come in 10 tries during spells at Barcelona, Bayern and City to land his third European Cup as a coach.

Chelsea's 1-0 win in front of largely empty Estadio do Dragao in Porto due to coronavirus restrictions two years ago was a case of the apprentice outshining the master.

As a young coach Tuchel studied and admired Guardiola's dominant Barcelona side that won 14 trophies in four years from 2008 to 2012, including two Champions League titles.

Their paths then crossed during Guardiola's three years in charge at Bayern, while Tuchel was coach of Mainz and then Borussia Dortmund.

Two football obsessives, the pair even talked long into the night at a Munich bar in 2014, using glasses and salt and pepper shakers to mimic formations.

"I was such a huge admirer of Pep when he was a player and then when he became a coach it was like learning on the job for me," said Tuchel prior to the 2021 Champions League final. "I was an academy coach and then in the Bundesliga with Mainz, but I don't think I missed a game (of Guardiola's Barcelona) because there was so much to learn."



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The respect is mutual. Guardiola described Tuchel last season as "one of the few managers I learn from to develop (into) a better manager myself."

Champions League pedigree

Guardiola has tended to have the upper hand in clashes between the two.

Three Chelsea wins in the space of six weeks towards the end of the 2020/21 season are Tuchel's only victories in 10 meetings between the two to Guardiola's six.

But he won the most important one and his Champions League

pedigree played a large part in Bayern's sloop to secure his services and sack Julian Nagelsmann in a shock move last month.

Tuchel also took Paris Saint-Germain to their maiden final in Europe's premier club competition in 2020 and took eventual winners Real Madrid to extra-time in the quarter-finals last year despite Chelsea being thrust into crisis by sanctions imposed on then owner Roman Abramovich.

The 49-year-old now has the challenge of succeeding where Guardiola failed in leading Bayern back to Champions League glory.

But the weight of expectation falls much more heavily on the City boss. In his seventh season in Manchester, Guardiola is in the running for his fifth Premier League title.

Yet the failure to get over the line in Europe remains a blot on his copybook.

"It doesn't mean I agree with that but absolutely we will be judged by this competition," said Guardiola on the importance of winning the Champions League to his legacy at the Etihad.

The presence of Erling Haaland adds even more pressure on Guardiola to finally get the job done this year.

The Norwegian scored twice on his return from injury in a 4-1 win at Southampton on Saturday to take his tally for the season to 44.

Those numbers saw Guardiola draw comparisons between his star striker, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

But it was to make the difference when the fine margins count most in the latter stages of the Champions League that forced City to fight off competition from around Europe to land Haaland. The 22-year-old has scored 33 goals in 25 Champions League appearances, including five in a 7-0 rout of RB Leipzig in the last 16.

'Chaotic, wild, intense' draw leaves Klopp caught in two minds



Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp (R) reacts as his team play Arsenal in the Premier League at Anfield, Liverpool, Britain, on April 9, 2023.

● PAUL ELLIS/GETTY IMAGES

It was "chaotic," "wild" and "intense" but Jurgen Klopp was at a loss as to how Liverpool did not win "one of the best games" in the Premier League.

"Wow" added Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta after his side gave up a two-goal lead at Anfield on Sunday, BBC reported.

Liverpool rarely have a quiet game against Arsenal but when the league leaders arrived in Merseyside few could have predicted the drama that would follow.

The Reds came from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 thanks to substitute Roberto Firmino's 87th-minute equaliser after team-mate Mohamed Salah had missed a penalty. Arsenal goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale produced two world-class saves at the death, Granit Xhaka and Trent Alexander-Arnold's tussle got the crowd going in the first half and an extraordinary incident between assistant referee and Liverpool defender Andy Robertson also added controversy.

"It's one of the best games I've ever seen, I'm not exaggerating," former England defender Micah Richards told Sky Sports, after Arsenal's lead over second-place Manchester City extended to six points.

Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard described it as "a crazy game" while Arteta was witness to the "jungle" atmosphere at Anfield he said he anticipated on Friday.

But Liverpool boss Klopp could not believe his side had not got all three points after Ramsdale's heroics in stoppage time.

"It was a spectacular game in the end. How we didn't win it with those late chances I don't know," added Klopp.

"It was a bit typical of us this season. An open game, completely open. They score with the first situation and the second one. Our reaction was good.

"I'm caught in between [being happy and not]. I have no problems with drawing. Arsenal were good but they could and should have lost this game. The point for them is better. All of a sudden we were in charge of a wild game."

Liverpool had 19 shots inside the opposition box at Anfield – the most efforts Arsenal have faced in a Premier League match since data became available (2003-04 onwards).

Arsenal boss Arteta said: "The game was under control but after that we concede a really sloppy goal and the game shifted momentum. Then we lost control.

"It became a very transitional game, very chaotic. Liverpool could score three or four. It is true we could have scored two or three so maybe at the end the score is fair."

Warriors set NBA record to secure play-off spot on final day



Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) shoots during an NBA victory over the Trail Blazers in Portland, OR, US, on April 9, 2023.

● SOOBUM IM/USA TODAY SPORTS

The Golden State Warriors set a first-quarter NBA record as the defending champions won 157-101 at the Portland Trail Blazers to clinch a play-off spot on the final day of the regular season.

The Warriors needed a win for a top-six finish in the Western Conference, BBC Sport reported.

And they scored a record 55 points in the first quarter to lead 55-27, as two-time MVP Stephen Curry finished with 26 points from 22 minutes.

The Los Angeles Clippers secured the other remaining play-off spot. They won 119-114 at the Phoenix Suns to secure the number five

seed and a rematch with Phoenix in the first round of the play-offs as the Suns had already secured the fourth seed. The Clippers' win left the Warriors as the sixth seed, meaning they will face the Sacramento Kings next. The Los Angeles Lakers were hoping to snatch a guaranteed play-off

spot on the final day and LeBron James scored 36 points with eight three-pointers as they beat the Utah Jazz 128-117.

But with the Clippers and Warriors both winning, they had to settle for the seventh seed in the West and a spot in the play-in tournament.

The Lakers will have home advantage tonight against the Minnesota Timberwolves, for whom Karl-Anthony Towns scored 30 points against the New Orleans Pelicans to win 113-108 and move past the Pelicans into eighth place.

All the play-off and play-in spots in the Eastern Conference had already been decided before the final day. Teams ranked seven to 10 will compete in the play-in tournament, which features three games in each conference from 11-14 April, to determine seeds seven and eight for the play-offs.

Djokovic returns to Tour seeking strong start to clay swing



● VICTOR JOLY/ALAMY

Novak Djokovic said he hopes to hit the ground running at Monte Carlo having begun preparations for the clay season early after the world number one was forced to skip tournaments in the United States last month.

Djokovic, 35, who is unvaccinated against COVID-19, was unable to enter the country after unsuccessfully applying to the U.S. government for special permission to play at Indian Wells and Miami, Reuters reported.

"I've done more training on clay, which is positive if you think about the clay season," said Djokovic, the 2013 and 2015 champion who meets Mackenzie McDonald in a qualifier first. "I've not had much success in Monte Carlo in the past two seasons. I haven't played great tennis here,

so I'm hoping this year I can start the clay season better than previous years and build my form."

With Rafa Nadal skipping Monte Carlo due to injury, Djokovic will also look to build momentum ahead of the French Open where the Serbian will target a 23rd Grand Slam to go ahead of the Spaniard.

Djokovic, who trains at Monaco, said home comforts could prove helpful in his quest for a record-extending 39th Masters 1000 crown at Monte Carlo.

"It's a club I know well. Quite a few top players reside in Monaco and use this club as a training base, Djokovic said.

"The club transforms incredibly during the weeks of the tournament but it's a great feeling to sleep in your own bed."