

Champions League Review - 23 February 2006

Chelsea's hopes to claim the Champions League for their own took a major setback after Barcelona won the first leg at Stamford Bridge. The Blues had Asier del Horno sent off after 36 minutes but the 5/4 favourites took the lead on the hour through a Thiago Motta own goal.

From then on it was all Barcelona and their breakthrough came with 20 minutes left when Ronaldinho's free kick was glanced in by John Terry for the second own goal of the evening. Samuel Eto'o sealed the win for the 9/4 outsiders with 10 minutes left.

Arsenal had better fortune against Spanish opposition, producing a stunning win against favourites Real Madrid at odds of 9/2. The under-strength Gunners took the lead seconds after the break through Thierry Henry and became the first English side to beat Madrid at their own ground.

Liverpool may have seen Benfica as a favourable draw but it was the Portuguese side who took the initiative. Both sides struggled to create chances and a draw at 21/10 looked likely. But defender Luisao headed in for Benfica to give the home side a slender 9/5 win.

Rangers came from behind twice to earn a 2-2 draw against Villarreal. Juan Roman Riquelme gave the 13/8 Spaniards the lead with a penalty after eight minutes but Rangers hit back through Peter Lovenkrands. Diego Forland gave the visitors the lead again 10 minutes before the break but an own goal from Pena eight minutes from time handed the Gers a lifeline.

Rank outsiders Werder Bremen caused an 11/5 shock against Italian giants Juventus. Christian Schulz bundled in for the home side six minutes before half time but it looked as though 13/10 Juventus would come out victorious with goals from Pavel Nedved and David Trezeguet. However, Bremen were not discouraged and levelled through Tim Borowski with three minutes to go and found a stoppage time winner in Johan Micoud.

A free kick from Brazilian midfielder Juninho was enough to earn 9/5 Lyon an away victory against last season's semi finalists PSV Eindhoven.

European giants Bayern Munich and AC Milan could not be separated in Germany. Michael Ballack gave 13/10 favourites Bayern the lead but Andriy Shevchenko equalised from the penalty spot.

Finally, Inter Milan battled back from 2-0 down to draw 2-2 at Ajax. Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Mauro Rosales gave 23/10 long-shots Ajax a dream start but Dejan Stankovic and Julio Cruz levelled for the Italians.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

David Walker has made a free email course, "Seven Days to Better Betting" available at his following websites: <http://www.betbonus.co.uk>
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