

UEFA Champions League 2012 / 2013

Round of 16

(ESP) FC Barcelona		4:0		AC Milan (ITA)
12 March 2013, 20:45 CET – Camp Nou, Barcelona, Spain				

Match Officials	Name	Origin	Mark ¹	Mark ²	Difficulty ³
Referee	Viktor Kassai	HUN	8.6	---	Challenging
Assistant Referee 1	Gábor Erös	HUN	7.8	8.1	Normal
Assistant Referee 2	György Ring	HUN	8.5	---	Normal
Additional AR 1	Tamás Bogнар	HUN	8.1	---	Normal
Additional AR 2	Mihaly Fabián	HUN	8.0	---	Normal
Fourth Official	Robert Kispál	HUN	8.1	---	Normal
UEFA Referee Observer	Jaap Uilenberg	NED			
Blog-Referee Observer ⁴	Niclas E.	GER			

¹ Final mark according to evaluation scale. Expected level for AARs and fourth official is 8.0, crucial mistake 7.9 as usual!

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 the blog administrator.

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:

Second leg of the UEFA Champions League Round of 16 tie between Spanish side FC Barcelona and Italy's AC Milan. The 'Milanisti' had won the first leg (2:0), so that a tense and open match could be expected. The match definitely held this promise. With an early and brilliant goal by Lionel Messi, Barcelona intensified their forward efforts throughout the entire match, resulting in a deserved 4:0 win which facilitates their presence in this season's quarterfinals.

The match was played in excellent circumstances; Camp Nou's supporters created a hot but always fair atmosphere and with their beautiful choreo, they provided the match with a certain flair suitable for Champions League matches.

The match revealed a couple of tight situations the Hungarian officiating team had to solve. They will be analyzed in the following.

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, similar to the matches he had already overseen during the past, had a very good application and interpretation of the Laws of the Game which expressed itself in many exemplary situations. He found a very lenient approach and hence did not award free-kicks for minor contacts. As this way to interpret the rules fully worked, one has to emphasize the fact that the match very much benefitted of that, even though he once exaggerated it with this leniency (allowed a too harsh tackle by Mascherano on Niang, 8').

He furthermore had to deal with three more relevant situations, at least one of them is of crucial nature. In the 11th minute, Milan's Abate touched Barcelona's Pedro in a cursorial duel in the penalty area. The arm obviously carted out, Pedro fell too easily though. Many replays were needed to identify that this situation could have been a penalty, however, the decision to let the game flow suits to the official's line and is certainly no crucial mistake. A few minutes later (22'), Pedro again claimed for a penalty kick. It was a small body-check by Ambrosini, but Pedro sought for the contact which was then inevitable for the Italian defender. So no penalty was the correct call. Also correct to not whistle Piquè's undeliberate handball while falling in Barcelona's box (38').

The referee issued four yellow cards. His card selection was overall good. While he ignored some unsporting behaviour here and there (tactical fouls e.g.), he yellow-carded Boateng for a rough tackle, Pedro for a reckless tackle, Flamini for a slightly failed tackle – yellow was unnecessary here – and finally Mexès for a tactical tackle (unsporting behaviour) at the sideline.

Minute	Description of the situation
11	No penalty after the duel Abate-Pedro in the box. Very difficult (borderline) decision, to my mind acceptable that there was no whistle.
29	Flamini had to change his kit, as there were bloody spots on it. He re-entered the pitch without permission and while pulling the new kit on. Thus, he did not wear a kit on the pitch. Strictly following the Laws of the Game, it should have been a yellow card. Kassai well applied common sense and kindly asked him to leave the pitch.

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:

Complete leniency. He offered both teams a lot of freedom which created a huge benefit for the match and its pace. Kassai however recognized, with one exception, when a borderline was crossed and did not fall into blindness for obvious infringements. The players accepted and respected this style and also his decisions. Personally, I have rarely seen a Barcelona match with that little protests from the players' side, which was due to Kassai's excellent personality, having a good but clear relationship with the players. His match control was never in question. 100% control for 94 minutes. Therefore, this match did not reveal any obvious lack that is to be improved!

Positive Points	1.	Tactical approach, totally consistent and harmonious throughout the entire match.
	2.	Game-feeling, common sense, harmoniously combined with the Laws of the Game.
	3.	Relationship with players, of whom he was fully respected.
	4.	Great personality, which was his medium to manage the match and not the mere usage of cards and whistles.

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): very 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		
90	Quick re-positioning after goal attempts (quickly running to the midfield circle to expect the goalkeeper's goalkick. Always in movement, flexible. His movement and positioning partly replaced gestures (e.g. for throw-in decisions). Very aesthetic movement.		

IV. Teamwork (co-operation with (A)ARs and fourth official with reference, if needed, to special situations and the minutes when they occurred)
Comments: The rest of the team was normally involved in the match, while the other teammates had only a restricted influence. It was a good and well-chosen degree of teamwork, although we never know how much they discussed via micro.

V. If needed: General comments or advices for improvement; explanation of the chosen mark; further matters (can be let empty).
Comments: In general a very good performance with correctly taken important decisions and very good other skills, such as match control, personality and his quite unique tactical approach. It is a pity that he does not come into question for Wembley 2013, as he already handled a CL final in his still young and promising career. Only one exaggerated yellow card tarnishes the very good overall impression – and a wrongly given goal, which was not his mistake though.

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's performance revealed several lacks of concentration and mental alertness. He wrongly did not raise the flag for offside when Messi scored the 2:0 goal. Furthermore, he made two further pretty obvious offside errors that cannot be defended. Later in the match, he took some good decisions of lower difficulty.

Minute	Description of the situation
37	Villa (Barcelona) was clearly offside, the assistant referee lets the flag down as he did not reach the ball. Can be done like that, but the officials also could have marked the offside.
40	Messi's 2:0 goal should not have counted. He was actively offside by approximately 50 cms. He formed contrary movements with the defense, so that it was not the easiest call to make. But still, it was a crucial mistake.
45	Wrong offside: Villa got the ball after a backheel pass. He was not even level and thus he was not offside.
76, 81, 90	Clear offside correctly signaled.
87	Wrong offside. The player was not offside, it was not even level.

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:

Very good performance by the second assistant referee. He well helped the referee in giving a yellow card to Mexès and made two brilliant onside/offside decisions that were partly of huge importance.

Minute	Description of the situation
51	Excellent onside decision, very difficult to see. Villa was not in the prohibited area.
78	Sánchez appears freely in front of Milan's goal. Contrary movements. Very tight situation. The striker was about 30 cms offside. Excellent offside flag, also against the background of the immense pace of the scene.

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:

Good movement on the pitch, he adjusted his position in a good goal attempt, his head was perfectly on the goalline, as replays showed. Furthermore, some minor involvement here and there.

Minute	Description of the situation
17	Good detection of a corner kick after Milan's goalkeeper slightly touched the ball.

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:

No remarkable involvement. His body language and movement indicated a good level of concentration though.

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:

All technical procedures were normally executed, he had no bigger problems with the team managers. Once, he even helped with the allocation of a throw-in (8'). Good performance.