

Club Brugge v Liverpool: Wirtz Form and a 48-Year Wait

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Club Brugge v Liverpool is the Champions League tie fans have waited decades for. The sides meet at the Jan Breydel Stadium on Wednesday 25 November 2026, both on nine points, with the Reds buzzing after a 4-0 demolition of Manchester United. Kick-off is 8pm GMT, which means 4am on Thursday in Singapore.



Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

Club Brugge v Liverpool: a first meeting since 1978

This is no ordinary league-phase fixture. The clubs have met only twice before, and both times a European trophy was on the line. Liverpool beat Brugge 4-3 on aggregate in the 1976 UEFA Cup final, then won the 1978 European Cup final 1-0 at Wembley. That was 48 years and 199 days ago, the second-longest gap between any Liverpool fixture against the same opponent.

Bruggeâ??s own staff talk about it with real affection. They like to call themselves the â??Belgian Liverpoolâ?•, and the connection between the two sets of supporters is part of the story. On the pitch,

though, the hosts insist they are here to compete, not to reminisce. Liverpool have never lost to them, with two wins and a draw across those three meetings.

Wirtz is flying, and Isak travels well

Andoni Iraolaâ??s side arrive in confident mood. Florian Wirtz scored and assisted in the win over United, having done exactly the same away at Crystal Palace before the international break. Speaking in Bruges, the 23-year-old said he believes he is in the best form since he arrived at Anfield, putting it down to being physically sharper and understanding the English game better.

Iraola was careful not to reduce it to numbers. He said he values plenty of what Wirtz does that never shows up in the final pass or the goal. That is the right reading. Wirtz drifts between the lines, makes the press tick and gives Liverpool a calm head in the busiest moments.

Elsewhere, Alexander Isak has scored in each of his last five away appearances for Liverpool, six goals in all. Virgil van Dijk could become the 11th player to make 75 European appearances for the club. And there is a streak worth noting: none of Liverpoolâ??s last 47 European outings, or 36 in the Champions League, has ended in a draw. Expect a winner.

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Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

Bruggeâ??s threats: Tresoldi and the wide men

Do not mistake the hosts for easy opposition. The reigning Belgian champions have won 10 and lost one of their opening 12 league matches, and sit second, a point behind Union SG. In Europe they have taken three wins from four, including a thrilling 4-3 away victory at Internazionale and wins over Lens and PSV Eindhoven. Their only defeat was at home to Aston Villa on the opening night.

Nicolo Tresoldi is the man to watch. The striker has 16 goals in 18 appearances this season, five of them in the Champions League. Behind him, Carlos Forbs has five goals and eight assists, Hugo Vetlesen has six goals and four assists, and left-back Joaquin Seys has laid on seven goals himself.

Ivan Lekoâ??s team are aggressive, energetic and love to press.

Iraola summed it up neatly. He said analysing most opponents can be a little boring, but with Brugge that definitely was not the case, calling them attractive and aggressive in the press. He expects an open game with plenty of one-v-one battles. Brugge are without Jan Virgili (groin) and Joel Ordonez (broken metatarsal).

Liverpool team news: who misses out in Belgium

Cody Gakpo has a soleus injury and Ryan Gravenberch is struggling with pain in the fascia, so neither made the trip. Frimpong is another dealing with a muscle problem, while Bradley is still recovering from knee surgery. Iraola has options in midfield and attack, but the depth will be tested over a demanding week that finishes with the 249th Merseyside derby at Everton on Sunday.

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Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

Rio Ngumoha, who has been nominated for the Premier League Player of the Matchweek award alongside Wirtz, is another reason for optimism. Iraola has asked for patience with the teenager, saying he deserves time to grow step by step, but he has already shown he can hurt good teams.

Key storylines to watch

- **Tempo:** two pressing sides should create space in transition, so the first goal could decide it.
- **Set pieces and second balls:** Brugge scored four at Inter, so Liverpool cannot switch off.
- **The Wirtz-Isak link:** if the pair connect again, Bruggeâ??s defence will be in trouble.

What to expect at the Jan Breydel

Liverpool have won 13 of their previous 17 matches against Belgian clubs, scoring 31 and conceding 13, and they have scored in all but one of those games. Twenty-one goals have been scored across their last three European fixtures, their highest tally in three consecutive games in Europe. Everything points to goals.

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Source: Liverpool FC official website (liverpoolfc.com)

Our prediction is a lively contest that Liverpool edge, with Wirtz at the heart of it. For more of our European coverage, read our Arsenal v Dortmund Champions League preview and our Man City v Napoli preview. We also looked at how Iraolaâ??s team got here in our report on Liverpoolâ??s 4-0 win over Manchester United. Catch every story in the Little Big Red Dot sports section.

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