

Man City v Napoli preview: Maresca needs a fast start against Allegri and De Bruyne

Description

default watermark

Man City v Napoli on Tuesday 24 November is the next test for a side that has stopped winning. Enzo Marescaâ??s team host Massimiliano Allegriâ??s Napoli at the Etihad in the Champions League, kick-off 8pm GMT, which is 4am Wednesday in Singapore.



City celebrate at the Etihad during the 1-1 draw with Fulham. Source: Manchester City official website (mancity.com)

Man City v Napoli: where City stand

The mood around the Etihad is not great. City were held 1-1 by Fulham on Saturday and are winless in four Premier League games, a run that includes a 3-1 home defeat to Tottenham. Our build-up to the Fulham game set the scene, and the Arsenal draw at Newcastle shows how much ground City still need to make up.

This is Cityâ??s fifth Champions League league-phase match of the season. A win would move them a step closer to knockout qualification, and the clubâ??s own preview makes clear that is the aim. Maresca and a first-team player were due to face the media at the City Football Academy on Monday at about 12pm UK time.

The Maresca problem: early goals

After the Fulham draw, Maresca was blunt. Conceding early is hurting City, he said, because falling behind makes his players rush, and that is not how the team wants to play. Rodrigo Muniz scored on 16 minutes on Saturday, and it is a pattern worth fixing before a European night.



Phil Foden and a City teammate. Source: Manchester City official website (mancity.com)

The good news is that there are signs of life. Elliot Andersonâ??s volley showed the quality available, Phil Foden returned to the starting line-up, and Haaland was denied only by a debatable foul call. Against a Napoli side likely to sit deep, those moments of quality will matter.

What to expect from Allegriâ??s Napoli

Allegri has six Serie A titles, including one with Milan and five in a row with Juventus between 2015 and 2019. He reached two Champions League finals with Juventus, in 2015 and 2017, so big European nights do not scare him. He returned to Napoli last summer, taking over from Antonio Conte.

His teams prize defensive structure. Expect Napoli to stay compact, wait, and try to hit City on the counter. That is exactly the type of game in which City have struggled lately: plenty of the ball, not enough breakthroughs, and a nagging risk of being punished by one quick break.

De Bruyneâ??s return and last seasonâ??s lesson

default watermark

There will be one special storyline. Kevin De Bruyne, now at Napoli, comes back to the stadium where he won so much. Any team with the Belgian in it is a tough proposition, as the clubâ??s own preview notes, even if City have recent history on their side.



Elliot Anderson celebrates his equaliser against Fulham. Source: Manchester City official website (mancity.com)

The sides met in the opening league-phase game last season, and City cruised to a 2-0 win. Erling Haaland headed in on 56 minutes to become the fastest player to reach 50 Champions League goals, and Jeremy Doku added a superb solo goal. City will want a repeat, though the table looks different now and the confidence is not the same.

Set-pieces could be another route in. Andersonâ??s goal against Fulham came from a half-cleared corner, and Napoliâ??s compact approach means City may need to be patient, recycle possession and work the ball wide to Doku before delivering. Haaland only needs one sight of goal, as the 2-0 win last season proved, and City will back him to find it.

Our verdict

This is a game City should win if they start sharply. The key is the opening 20 minutes: if they avoid conceding early and force Napoli to come out, the pressure will tell. If they do fall behind again, expect a long, nervy night against a team that is very comfortable defending a lead.

Supporters in Singapore who want to follow it live should note the 4am start on Wednesday, so a late night or an early alarm is in order. The clubâ??s app offers live text and audio coverage, while UK viewers can watch on TNT Sports 1.

Then comes the real prize. City travel to the Emirates on Sunday 29 November, 4.30pm UK time, to face Arsenal. A good Napoli result would give them momentum for that game. For more European coverage, see our report on Liverpool 4-0 Manchester United and the rest of the Little Big Red Dot Sports section.

Date Created
23/11/2026
Author
jadeyeo

default watermark