

MANCHESTER NEEDS A GROUP CHAT.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE / 13-14 OCTOBER / MATCHDAY 2

Dear Football Fans,

Europe served midweek drama, and Manchester brought the emergency contact details. Welcome to a Champions League edition in which defending occasionally appeared to be an optional subscription. Please keep your receipts; several reputations may need returning.



UNITED: THE LOADING SCREEN DEFEAT

Atlético 2-0 Manchester United. Pablo Barrios scored inside a minute. Some supporters were probably still negotiating the streaming password; United were already negotiating adversity. Leny Yoro's 74th-minute red card made the rescue mission harder, and Ademola Lookman supplied the second. Michael Carrick's side have now gone five games without a win. This is becoming a loyalty programme nobody remembers joining.

There were chances: Bryan Mbeumo threatened, Bruno Fernandes hit the crossbar, and Jan Oblak did his job. Unfortunately, "we nearly did something" remains a terrible currency in Europe. United need cleaner defending and actual finishing. The motivational wallpaper can wait.

MADRID DECLINED THE FINAL DRAFT

Roma 3-4 Real Madrid. From 3-1 down, Madrid scored three in the final eight minutes through Carlos Espí, Endrick and Antonio Rüdiger. Roma had the plot, the lighting and the closing music. Madrid walked in and demanded script approval. Endrick's player-of-the-match award was the receipt. Never close the laptop while this lot are still buffering.

HAALAND CLOCKED IN. THE DEFENCE DID NOT.

Manchester City 2-4 PSG. Doué, Dembélé and Vítinha had Paris three up inside 32 minutes. That was less a visiting attack than an unannounced property inspection. Haaland scored twice, but Aklouche's goal helped keep the comeback out of reach.

Give the striker his flowers: two goals while the ship takes water is a proper shift. Give PSG theirs too: their first-half precision made City look like they were accepting calendar invites for tackles. Enzo Maresca got a response after the break; he also got a reminder that matches inconveniently include the first half.

BARCOLA BROUGHT A BULK ORDER

Liverpool beat LASK 6-3, with Bradley Barcola supplying a hat-trick. Excellent attacking entertainment; mildly alarming defensive hospitality. Liverpool left with three points and enough goal footage for a content calendar. Aston Villa, meanwhile, beat Fenerbahçe 6-0. Six goals and a clean sheet: apparently somebody did read the instructions.

Lady Whistle's verdict: PSG earned the applause, Barcola earned the spotlight, and Madrid earned another warning label. Manchester earned a shared notes app titled "Things We Must Discuss."

Yours in football and foolishness, Sir Fanter.

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THE RECEIPTS: Opta: United

Opta: City-PSG

UEFA: Wednesday round-up

AI-generated editorial caricatures. Fictional scenes; club-inspired mascots are unofficial.