

= Arsenal F.C. in European football =

Arsenal Football Club is an English professional football club based in Holloway, North London. The club's first European football match was played against Copenhagen XI on 25 September 1963, and it has since participated in European club competitions on several occasions, most of which organised by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). Arsenal has won two European honours: the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup in 1970 and the Cup Winners' Cup in 1994, the latter title recognised by the European confederation. The club played the 1994 European Super Cup and repeated its presence in the following year's Cup Winners' Cup final. Arsenal also reached the final of the UEFA Cup in 2000, and became the first London team to appear in a UEFA Champions League final, in 2006.

Qualification for European club competitions is determined by a team's position in its domestic league, as well as how successfully a team fares in domestic cup competitions in the previous season. Following the Heysel Stadium disaster in 1985, UEFA placed an indefinite ban on all English teams from competing in Europe; the ban was lifted in the 1991–92 season, giving Arsenal the opportunity to play in the European Cup. Between 1998–99 and 2016–17, Arsenal qualified in nineteen successive UEFA Champions League seasons, an English football record, and is only surpassed in Europe by Real Madrid.

French striker Thierry Henry holds the club record for most appearances with 89, and is the club's record goalscorer in European competitions with 42 goals. Arsenal's biggest winning margin in Europe is a 7–0 scoreline, a feat achieved twice: firstly away at Standard Liège, during their successful Cup Winners' Cup campaign, and secondly at home against Slavia Prague, for the 2007–08 UEFA Champions League. Arsenal hold the European club competition record for the most consecutive clean sheets with ten, set between September 2005 and May 2006.

= = Background = =

Club competitions between teams from different European countries can trace their origins as far back as 1897, when the Challenge Cup was created for clubs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, who did not meet under normal circumstances. The Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy, named after entrepreneur and sportsman Thomas Lipton, was established in 1909 and was contested between clubs from Italy, Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland; the competition lasted for two years. The earliest attempt to create a cup for national champion clubs of Europe was made by Swiss club FC Servette. Founded in 1930, the Coupe des Nations featured clubs of ten major European football leagues and was deemed a success. Due to financial reasons, the competition was abandoned.

In December 1954, French sports magazine L'Equipe published an article by journalist and former professional footballer Gabriel Hanot, who proposed the introduction of a European club competition. He initially suggested that each country should nominate a club to play in a mid-week European league; many clubs favoured a cup competition, which required less matches to play. A year later, L'Equipe sent out invitations to 18 clubs, selected by Hanot, Jacques Ferran and Jacques Goddet, with UEFA agreeing to administrate the competition named as the European Champion Clubs' Cup. The European Cup Winners' Cup, later retitled the UEFA Cup Winners' Cup, was founded in 1960 and involved the winning clubs of national cup competitions in Europe. Arsenal, in the First Division at the time, were ineligible for both competitions, given that the club did not win a league championship or domestic cup for almost two decades. They however were invited to participate in the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup, an annual European club competition which was set up to promote international trade fairs; where a club finished in their domestic league had no relevance to qualification as teams were selected from cities holding trade fairs. The Inter-Cities Fairs Cup was regarded as the predecessor to the UEFA Cup, rebranded as the UEFA Europa League in 2008. Each competition round was staged over a two-legged tie, with the winner determined by the aggregate score. The away goals rule is activated if the aggregate score is equal.

To reinvigorate the European Champion Clubs ' Cup , the competition was expanded and rebranded as the UEFA Champions League in 1992 . From the 1997 ? 98 season , it was further expanded to include eight domestic league runners @-@ up selected by a UEFA coefficient and preliminary spots the following season were awarded to the third placed team ; in some leagues fourth from 2002 ? 03 . The expansion and constant growth of the competition led to the decline of the Cup Winners ' Cup , abolished in 1999 and by which point instigated proposals for a European Super League . Arsène Wenger has , on numerous occasions predicted the latter , arguing the pressure of television companies will force it to happen : " It 's all about money . More games equal more money through TV revenue and I think the next few years will see not just two , but three or four teams from the top countries competing against each other . It 's what television wants ? big teams in big matches . That is why the Champions ' League was introduced . " Although Arsenal qualified for a fifteenth successive season of Champions League football in May 2012 , this coincided with the club not winning a domestic honour since 2005 , which led to open criticism over the competition 's present format . Wenger however has gone on to defend the club policy , stating a trophy for Arsenal is winning the Premier League or the Champions League ; " Would you like to finish tenth in the league but win the League Cup and say you have won a trophy ? Certainly not . "

= = History = =

= = = Early years : 1963 ? 1978 = = =

Arsenal first participated in European football during the 1963 ? 64 season , via the Inter @-@ Cities Fairs Cup . The competition was set up to promote international trade fairs in European cities , featuring clubs from cities playing in matches that hosted trade fairs . As London 's representative , Arsenal was paired with Copenhagen team Copenhagen XI in the first round , played over two matches . The first match ended in a 7 ? 1 victory for Arsenal , with Geoff Strong and Joe Baker both scoring hat @-@ tricks . Copenhagen XI won the second match 3 ? 2 , but lost 9 ? 4 on aggregate . Arsenal faced Royal Football Club de Liège in the second round ; the Belgian club won 4 ? 2 on aggregate to progress into the quarter @-@ finals .

In the 1969 ? 70 season , Arsenal again participated in the Inter @-@ Cities Fairs Cup , after a six @-@ year absence . Having beaten Glentoran of Northern Ireland , Portugal 's Sporting Lisbon and Rouen of France , Arsenal played Romanian club Dinamo Bac?u in the quarter @-@ finals . A 1 ? 9 victory on aggregate saw the club progress into the last four , where they faced Ajax of Amsterdam . The pairing of both clubs pleased Arsenal manager Bertie Mee , who wanted to play Ajax in the semi @-@ finals to set up a possibility of meeting Internazionale in the final . At Highbury in the first leg , Arsenal won 3 ? 0 and restricted Ajax to a 1 ? 0 win at the Olympisch Stadion to reach the final of the Fairs Cup . It was the fourth successive year the final featured an English club and the first for a London club . Arsenal played Belgian opposition Anderlecht in the 1970 Inter @-@ Cities Fairs Cup Final , played in the space of a week . Anderlecht won the first leg 3 ? 1 , with Arsenal midfielder Ray Kennedy scoring a crucial away goal , seven minutes from the final whistle . An early goal scored by Eddie Kelly helped Arsenal to what earlier looked to be an improbable victory ; John Radford and Jon Sammels overturned Anderlecht 's advantage to win 3 ? 0 on the night and 4 ? 3 on aggregate . The result ended Arsenal 's 17 @-@ year wait for a trophy and ensured the club became the third successive English club to win the honour .

Arsenal entered the Inter @-@ Cities Fairs Cup the following season as holders of the competition , but did not progress further than the semi @-@ finals , losing on away goals to 1 . FC Köln of Germany . The club did however win the league championship for the first time in 18 years , ensuring qualification for the European Champion Clubs ' Cup in the 1971 ? 72 season . Arsenal reached the quarter @-@ finals , where the team lost to holders Ajax , who went on to retain the trophy . In subsequent seasons , the departure of Mee and lack of domestic honours meant that the club did not contest in European football .

= = = Cup Winners ' Cup finalists , winners : 1978 ? 1995 = = =

Mee was succeeded by Terry Neill in July 1976 . Arsenal returned to European club football in the 1978 ? 79 season , having finished fifth in the previous league campaign . The club contested in the UEFA Cup for the first time and won their opening leg 3 ? 0 against 1 . FC Lokomotive Leipzig ; a commanding performance away from home in the second leg allowed Arsenal to win 1 ? 4 at the Bruno @-@ Plache @-@ Stadion and 7 ? 1 on aggregate . Arsenal progressed past the third round , winning on aggregate against Hajduk Split but were eliminated by Red Star Belgrade in the third round after striker Du?an Savi? scored an away goal , two minutes from the end of the match .

As winners of the 1979 FA Cup Final , Arsenal entered the European Cup Winners ' Cup in the 1979 ? 80 season . The club defeated Fenerbahçe , 1 . FC Magdeburg and IFK Göteborg , before facing Juventus in the semi @-@ finals . After conceding an early penalty scored by Antonio Cabrini , Arsenal defender David O 'Leary was injured and substituted in the 20th minute , when Juventus striker Roberto Bettega tackled him . Marco Tardelli was later sent off for a foul on Liam Brady and in the 85th minute , Arsenal managed to score an equaliser through a mix @-@ up between Frank Stapleton and Bettega ; the Italian put the ball into his goal net . Neill in his post @-@ match comments expressed his anger over Bettega 's tackle after the game : " I was shocked by a most vicious foul . I was shocked because I have always had the greatest admiration for him . " A headed goal by substitute Paul Vaessen two minutes from the end , in the second leg was enough to take Arsenal into the 1980 European Cup Winners ' Cup Final , where they faced Valencia in Brussels . A goalless draw after normal and extra time meant the final was to be decided on a penalty shootout , with Valencia winning 5 ? 4 .

Arsenal competed in the UEFA Cup in the 1981 ? 82 and 1982 ? 83 seasons and departed in the first and second round to FC Winterslag and Spartak Moscow respectively . The Heysel Stadium disaster of May 1985 , during the 1985 European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus resulted in UEFA , and later FIFA , imposing a ' worldwide ' ban on English teams from participating in European club competitions , initially for an indefinite period . Under George Graham , Arsenal returned to the European Cup in the 1991 ? 92 season , having won the league championship a season earlier . They went out in the second round to Portuguese team Benfica in November 1991 . The ban arising from the Heysel disaster had prevented Arsenal from competing in the European Cup when they won the league title two years previously , as well as preventing them from competing in the UEFA Cup on two occasions .

In the 1993 ? 94 season , Arsenal contested in the European Cup Winners ' Cup , having won the 1993 FA Cup Final . The club beat Odense BK and Standard Liège to reach the quarter @-@ finals , with the latter described as a " breathtaking performance " by Graham , after winning 7 ? 0 at the Stade Maurice Dufrasne . Arsenal defeated Torino of Italy and French representative Paris Saint @-@ Germain to reach the 1994 European Cup Winners ' Cup Final alongside Parma , staged at Copenhagen . Without top goalscorer Ian Wright and markers John Jensen and Martin Keown , Arsenal went into the final as outsiders . Although Parma began the match the strongest of both teams , Arsenal opened the scoring through a well taken volley by striker Alan Smith . Defending in numbers , the team held on to record an improbable victory and win the club 's second European trophy , after a 24 @-@ year wait . After the match Graham praised his team 's performance and defended his pragmatic approach ; " Sometimes we could go forward a little bit more and entertain a bit more , but we play to our strengths , like we did in this match . There 's nothing wrong with having a very , very good defence , believe me . We 've proved it , and it 's a big plus . "

As holders of the competition , Arsenal was admitted into the Cup Winners ' Cup for the 1994 ? 95 season . They moreover contested in the 1994 European Super Cup , losing to Milan 2 ? 0 on aggregate . In February 1995 , Graham was sacked by Arsenal after it emerged he accepted an illegal £ 425 @,@ 000 payment from Norwegian agent Rune Hauge for two of his clients : Jensen and Pål Lydersen . He was replaced by caretaker manager Stewart Houston ( Bruce Rioch in the close season ) , who managed to take Arsenal into the 1995 UEFA Cup Winners ' Cup Final after beating Sampdoria on penalties in the semi @-@ finals . They however , did not retain the trophy after Real Zaragoza midfielder Nayim scored an extra @-@ time goal , lobbing Arsenal goalkeeper

= = = Arrival of Wenger : 1996 ? 2005 = = =

In August 1996 , Rioch was dismissed by Arsenal . He was replaced by Arsène Wenger , who became the club 's first manager born outside the British Isles . Wenger had creditable experience in UEFA club competitions ; at Monaco he reached the final of the Cup Winners ' Cup in 1992 , losing 2 ? 0 to Werder Bremen and took the club into the semi @-@ finals of the European Cup in 1993 ? 94 . Wenger wanted Arsenal to become one of the biggest clubs in Europe , emphasising on buying talent from all over the world and patience shown by the club 's board and supporters . His first involvement in a European match for Arsenal was against Borussia Mönchengladbach on 26 September 1996 in the UEFA Cup ; Arsenal lost 6 ? 4 on aggregate . Having watched the game from the stands in the first half , he assumed control in the second , suggesting the formation should accommodate four defenders instead of five .

Arsenal finished third in the 1996 ? 97 league season , missing out on qualification for the UEFA Champions League by goal difference . They , however qualified for the UEFA Cup first round , but lost to PAOK Salonika of Greece over two legs in September 1997 . Arsenal completed the double in the 1997 ? 98 season , and winning the league ensured the club participated in the Champions League for the first time since its rebranding in 1992 . To benefit from increased revenue and higher attendances , Arsenal was granted permission from the Football Association and UEFA to host their home Champions League matches at Wembley Stadium .

The club faced French champions Lens , Ukraine 's Dynamo Kiev and Panathinaikos of Greece in the group stages of the competition . Although they began the campaign in good stead , with two draws and a win , Arsenal lost 3 ? 1 to Dynamo Kiev and at home to Lens ? watched by a record crowd of 73 @, @ 707 , meaning the club could not reach higher than third place , failing to make the quarter @-@ finals . Arsenal ended the 1998 ? 99 league season as runners @-@ up , qualifying for the group stages of the Champions League for the second successive year . Again , Arsenal finished in third spot in their group , this time behind Barcelona and Fiorentina . The team , however advanced into the UEFA Cup third round and Arsenal chose to revert to playing their home matches at Highbury , on the advice of the players . Arsenal beat Nantes and Deportivo de La Coruña over two legs and defeated Werder Bremen in the quarter @-@ final ; midfielder Ray Parlour scored a hat @-@ trick in the second leg . In the semi @-@ final against Lens , Arsenal secured a 3 ? 1 aggregate win to face Turkish opposition Galatasaray in the final , who beat Leeds United .

At Copenhagen , the venue for the 2000 UEFA Cup Final , both Arsenal and Galatasaray played out to a goalless draw in normal and in extra time . Arsenal lost 4 ? 1 in a penalty shootout , with striker Davor ?uker and midfielder Patrick Vieira hitting the post and underside of the crossbar respectively . Wenger reflected on the defeat by saying , " We did not play well in the first half , but we were much better afterwards . It is very disappointing . " The final was overshadowed by events at the city centre , where Arsenal supporter Paul Dineen was stabbed in the back . Referred to as the " Battle of Copenhagen " , the incident escalated into a riot between English and Turkish fans , forcing the Danish police to use tear gas in order to restore calm .

Arsenal qualified for the group stages of the Champions League in the 2000 ? 01 season , having ended the previous league season in second . The club won their first three matches in Group B , against Sparta Prague , Shakhtar Donetsk and Lazio . A draw away to Lazio at the Stadio Olimpico ensured qualification into the second group stage , where they were partnered with Bayern Munich , Lyon and Spartak Moscow . In spite of defender Sylvinho scoring an early goal in their opening game against Spartak Moscow , Arsenal plummeted to a 4 ? 1 defeat , leaving Wenger to assess that " as a team , we didn 't look as solid as we are used to . " Wins at Lyon and at home to Spartak Moscow helped Arsenal to qualify for the quarter @-@ finals as the French club failed to capitalise on Arsenal 's defeat at Bayern Munich . They faced Spanish club Valencia , winning 2 ? 1 at Highbury but the team were beaten 1 ? 0 at the Estadio Mestalla , knocked @-@ out on aggregate .

In the 2001 ? 02 season , Arsenal played in the Champions League . The club qualified for the second group stage on goal difference but did not reach the quarter @-@ finals , losing their final

two matches against Deportivo La Coruña and Juventus . Having won the domestic league for the first time in four years , Wenger revealed the club 's and his own intent to win the Champions League , telling French newspaper L 'Equipe " I can 't imagine finishing my life without winning the European Cup " . Arsenal began the following season impressively , winning 0 ? 4 at PSV Eindhoven . The match set a new club record , as midfielder Gilberto Silva scored the fastest goal , in 20 @.@ 07 seconds . Although Arsenal lost their last two matches against Borussia Dortmund and Auxerre , coinciding with a blip in form domestically , they qualified for the second group stage for the third consecutive season . Striker Thierry Henry scored his first hat @-@ trick in Europe for Arsenal against Roma on 27 November 2002 with the player stating ; " It 's wonderful to score a hat @-@ trick but it 's even more important that I did so in a game we 've won . " Arsenal failed to replicate their form at Roma , drawing their next four matches and losing to Valencia in the final match to finish third in their group and thus , out of the competition .

Arsenal entered the Champions League group stage in the 2003 ? 04 season and faced Dynamo Kiev , Internazionale and Lokomotiv Moscow . Without a win in their first three matches , Arsenal faced an early exit from the competition but managed a victory against Dynamo Kiev , after defender Ashley Cole scored via a header . At the San Siro , Arsenal beat Internazionale 1 ? 5 , in a performance described as " one of the greatest results in [ the club 's ] history " . A win in their final group game against Lokomotiv Moscow was enough for Arsenal to top their group and play an unseeded team in the last 16 . Arsenal eliminated Celta Vigo and faced fellow English club Chelsea at the quarter @-@ final stage . Going into the first leg , Arsenal were favourites , having played their London rivals three times during the course the season , winning each occasion . Former Dutch international Johan Cruyff backed Arsenal to win the competition , saying " If Arsenal win it playing football the way only they know how then Europe would be proud to have such champions " . In spite of Robert Pirès scoring a vital away goal at Stamford Bridge , Chelsea beat Arsenal 1 ? 2 at Highbury to progress into the semi @-@ finals . A year later , Arsenal exited the Champions League after losing 2 ? 3 to Bayern Munich on aggregate , in the last 16 stage .

= = = Regular qualification : 2005 to present = = =

Arsenal qualified for the group stages of the Champions League in the 2005 ? 06 season , finishing first in a group containing Ajax , Sparta Prague and Thun . The club faced Real Madrid in the last 16 ; a solo goal by Henry at the Estadio Santiago Bernabéu in the first leg inflicted the home team 's first defeat in 18 Champions League matches . Arsenal produced a disciplined display at home a fortnight after to reach the quarter @-@ finals and become the sole English representative left in the competition . At home to Juventus , Arsenal won 2 ? 0 , and a goalless draw at the Stadio delle Alpi meant the club progressed into the semi @-@ finals against Villarreal . In the club 's final European match at Highbury , Kolo Touré scored a first @-@ half winner to give Arsenal a 1 ? 0 win . A late penalty save by goalkeeper Jens Lehmann in the second leg sent Arsenal into the 2006 UEFA Champions League Final , staged at the Stade de France , Paris . The result , another goalless draw , was Arsenal 's tenth clean sheet in a row ? a new competition record . Defender Sol Campbell , returning from injury praised the team performance in his post @-@ match interview : " It 's brilliant for us . It 's also great for the manager Arsène Wenger to get to the final in France ? I 'm sure he will get a great reception . "

In the final against Barcelona , Lehmann was sent off in 18th minute for a professional foul on striker Samuel Eto 'o . Wenger reacted by substituting Robert Pirès for goalkeeper Manuel Almunia , thus altering the formation . In spite of the disadvantage , Arsenal took the lead in the 37th minute , after Henry 's free kick was headed in by Campbell . Henry missed a chance in the second half to give Arsenal a two @-@ nil lead before Eto 'o equalised with 14 minutes left . Substitute Henrik Larsson set up Juliano Belletti to score the winner for Barcelona . Wenger criticised referee Terje Hauge for sending off Lehmann , a view shared by club captain Henry and FIFA president Sepp Blatter .

As Arsenal finished fourth in the league , in the following season the club needed to play a third qualifying round , against Dinamo Zagreb in order to participate in the Champions League group

stages . The team won 1 ? 5 on aggregate , including a 3 ? 0 victory in the first European match at the Emirates Stadium . Arsenal was eliminated in the Round of 16 stage , losing on the away goal ruling to PSV Eindhoven . In the 2007 ? 08 season , Arsenal equalled their biggest home win in European football , scoring seven against Slavia Prague . The club beat holders Milan in the subsequent round , earning critical acclaim for their style of football , not least from Marcello Lippi : " It would be good for football if Arsenal could win . They play on the ground , they manoeuvre the ball , very , very well . It 's very fast and very technical . " At the quarter @-@ final stage , Liverpool defeated Arsenal 5 ? 3 on aggregate to set up a semi @-@ final tie against Chelsea .

Arsenal progressed past the group stages of the 2008 ? 09 Champions League season and beat Roma and Villarreal to face Manchester United in the semi @-@ finals . A 1 ? 0 defeat at Old Trafford meant Arsenal needed to win by two clear goals to progress , but goals from Park Ji @-@ Sung and Cristiano Ronaldo in the first eleven minutes ended the club 's chances of reaching the 2009 UEFA Champions League Final . Wenger in his post @-@ match press conference described the match as " the most disappointing night of my career " , adding " I felt the fans were really up for a big night and to disappoint people who stand behind the team so much hurts . " Arsenal lost to holders Barcelona 5 ? 3 on aggregate in the quarter @-@ finals the following season , and in spite of beating the Spanish club 2 ? 1 at the Emirates Stadium in 2010 ? 11 , Arsenal again were eliminated , this time at the Round of 16 . Arsenal exited at the same stage of the competition for the second consecutive season , against Milan . Having lost the away leg 4 ? 0 , the team gave a valiant performance in the second leg at home , winning 3 ? 0 on the night , but unable to find the final goal that would have taken the game to extra time .

In the 2012 ? 13 season , Arsenal fell at the last 16 stage for the third time in three years , losing 3 ? 1 to Bayern Munich at home , but managing to win 2 ? 0 in the return leg , meaning they went out on the away goals rule . They were once again eliminated by Bayern Munich in the 2013 @-@ 14 season after losing 2 @-@ 0 at home , and drawing 1 @-@ 1 away at Munich . Monaco eliminated it in Round of 16 in the 2014 @-@ 15 season , and again by Barcelona in 2015 @-@ 16 .

= = Records = =

Arsenal was the first British side to defeat Real Madrid and Juventus away from home . The club was also the first to win against both Milanese teams : Internazionale and Milan at the San Siro . Goalkeeper Jens Lehmann kept ten consecutive clean sheets in the run @-@ in to the 2006 UEFA Champions League Final ; the defence went 995 minutes until conceding a goal . Against Hamburg in the UEFA Champions League group stage on 13 September 2006 , Arsenal became the first team in the competition 's history to field a first eleven of different nationalities .

Most appearances in European competition : Thierry Henry , 78

Most goals in European competition : Thierry Henry , 41

First European match : Copenhagen XI 1 ? 7 Arsenal , Inter @-@ Cities Fairs Cup , first round , 25 September 1963

First goal scored in Europe : Johnny MacLeod , against Copenhagen XI

Biggest win :

Standard Liège 0 @-@ 7 Arsenal , in the Cup Winners Cup , 2 November 1993

Arsenal 7 ? 0 Slavia Prague , in the UEFA Champions League , 23 October 2007

Biggest defeat : FC Bayern Munich 5 ? 1 Arsenal , in the UEFA Champions League , 4 November 2015

Highest European home attendance : 73 @, @ 707 , against Lens in the UEFA Champions League

= = = By season = = =

Information correct as of 16 March 2016 .

Key

= = = By competition = = =

Information correct as of 16 March 2016 .

= = = By country = = =

Information correct as of 20 March 2015 .

= = Honours = =