

# Barça vs Roma Talking Points

Posted on [@April 11, 2018 9:26 AM](#) by [Yazdan Basir](#)

Before I start, the credit goes to Roma last night for showing up with nothing but a winning mentality and absolutely dominating us over two legs. Fans expected them to be a walkover team but for those who had watched Roma, a tough match-up was what we expected. Last year's *remontada* means I know exactly what the Roma fans feel currently. Congratulations to Di Francesco and all his players, especially Dzeko and De Rossi, who played their hearts out the whole game.

Although we didn't expect it at all, the idea of getting knocked out by Roma was in the back of our heads all along. There's no shame in admitting that we weren't the team we should've been in the first leg and were lucky to walk away with a 4-1 lead – that one away goal always seems to haunt everyone. That, however, should've been changed in the second leg and the team should've come out with more desire to get the game wrapped up. When you make mistakes in the first leg, you expect your manager to fix them for the second leg.

That didn't happen. Last night was a disaster. Here goes (nothing):

1. No rotations and a fatigued squad: Valverde, who a lot of fans, wishful thinkers at best, believed to be Guardiola's second-coming, has some severe prioritization issues and a weird obsession with winning the league unbeaten. To salvage one point against Sevilla (against whom a defeat would've been no issue at all because our lead in the league is large enough for us to lose around 3-4 matches out of the next 7) he brought on a Messi who wasn't playing due to the very fact that he had some hamstring concerns. Long story short, he risked an injured Messi to save one point in the league knowing that an important CL fixture was to be played 2 days later. Then there's Suarez who has been a shadow of himself for most of the season and looks ready to drop any second due to playing more games than he should. Iniesta was half-fit but Valverde still tries to play him every game, Rakitic has played almost every game this season, Umtiti not the same after his media rumors, and all these little things led up to one big disaster. No Dembele meant no pace or ability for us to play wide and that meant we were going to stick with the 442.

2. 442: You have a 4-1 lead against Roma and for the second leg you decide to channel your inner-Mourinho and play a defensive 442 which means you try to bear 90mins of Roma's attacking football? Recipe for disaster, obviously.

3. No width: Dembele getting substituted on allowed us to attack Roma finally but it was too late. His ability to stretch the game wide and pace on the ball troubled the spaces Roma were leaving behind due to their high press and it's just sad to think about what could've been had we gone attacking from the start and had Dembele been playing earlier.

4. No Busquets: Not much explanation needed here. No Busquets meant literally no control in the midfield and where Rakitic was playing conservative football, Busquets, with a few turns and pauses, would have put together much-needed attacks.

5. Pique, Ter Stegen, and Messi: Pique and Ter Stegen were our best players throughout and were the only reason we weren't trailing 7-0. Messi was left isolated and no matter how good he is, if he can't get the ball in the center and is being left out of the game, then we're not the same team. Everyone was wary of the day when Messi would have a below-par game this season. That came yesterday and look at what happened.

6. Victories have papered over the cracks: Grinding out results in La Liga and being unbeaten so far have hidden the many problems with the team to the point that Valverde is made to look like some sort of miracle worker. Yes, defence has been better this year but we've had so many buildup and midfield issues that don't cross our minds because we got 3 points from a certain team on a certain day. Valverde's cowardice to not take risks, to not play Dembele, to continue his non-Barca 442 should be the things that dominate our discussions but for some reason they don't. This is all similar to the Paulinho issue. Every time he plays for us he looks out of his depth and a complete misfit in midfield but that's fine to many because he scores sometimes?

The worst part out of everything is that there was no desire in the players to play yesterday and that's on Valverde, who instructed them to defend for 90mins and when the attacks started rolling in, he just stood there and watched and didn't fix the situation, despite being reactive and adaptive manager. He lost the trust of the veterans like Busquets and Pique yesterday because there was no support from his side and he refused to listen to the players. Pique went up to him and cameras

caught him suggesting tactics to Valverde, who simply replied with a “You’re not the one in charge” statement.

What’s even worse is that if we win the league unbeaten and hopefully the Copa Del Rey, every issue with Valverde will be thrown down the drain and fans will accept him for another year. Exiting the CL in the Quarter-Finals for the 3rd time in a row is simply disgraceful for a club like Barcelona and leads many to make assumptions and theories based on knowledge they do not have. We can hope all we want for things to change, for Bartomeu to step down and lose the elections, for someone like Thiago, Seri, or Trigueros to be signed, for someone like Quique Setien or Garcia to be our manager, but at the end of the day, it is wishful thinking and nothing else. Nothing is going to change.