

## Inter Milan odds to win UEFA Champions League

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 Sunday, 28 January 2007  
 Last Updated Sunday, 28 January 2007

Swedish prolific goal scorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic leads FC Internazionale into the UEFA Champions League tournament. Bodog.com has Inter Milan at 9 to 1 (Bet \$1.00 to win \$9.00) to win the UEFA Champions League. Football Club Internazionale Milano is an Italian football club based in Milan, Lombardy, which plays in Serie A. The club was founded March 9, 1908. It is more commonly known as Inter, and often named Inter Milan in foreign English speaking countries.

Inter has been one of the most successful clubs in the history of Italian football, having won 14 Scudetti, 5 Coppa Italia, and 3 Italian Super Cups. Inter has also won 2 European Cups (Champions League), 3 UEFA Cups, and has been World Champions two times. In Italy, Inter also has the distinction of being the only team to never be relegated from Serie A.

The club wears blue and black stripes, which gives the origin of their Nerazzurri nickname. Inter has one of the biggest fan bases in Italy, along with its two biggest rivals, AC Milan and Juventus. Inter is a member of the G-14 organization of leading European clubs.

Inter has never been relegated to Serie B (second division) in their history, a fact the fans hold in high regard. As of 2007, Inter's 99-year run in the top flight is one of the longest of any club in the world.

The current honorary president and owner of Inter is Massimo Moratti. His father, Angelo Moratti, was the president of Inter during the golden era of the 1960s. Massimo, trying to emulate his father's great success, has spent a great deal of money to bring some of the world's best players to the club in an effort to win the scudetto on the field for the first time since 1989. One of those players was Ibrahimovic.

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Zlatan Ibrahimovic started professional football with the Swedish club Malmö FF in the 1999 season (Allsvenskan, the Swedish top division, begins in spring, not in autumn like in Central and Southern Europe). During his stay at the club, Arsène Wenger tried to persuade him to join Arsenal but Malmö did not allow the transfer.

Other than Wenger, Leo Beenhakker also showed interest in Zlatan after observing him practicing in La Manga, Spain. Watching Zlatan score an amazing goal in a training game against Norwegian side Moss, Beenhakker became convinced of Zlatan's talent. He went back to Amsterdam and on March 22, 2001, a deal between Ajax and Malmö regarding Zlatan's transfer to Amsterdam was announced and in July of the same year, he joined Ajax for record breaking &euro;7.8 million. The deal is by far the most lucrative any Swedish player has struck.

Under manager Co Adriaanse, Zlatan received little exposure. Adriaanse was let go in November, however, and Zlatan's fortune started to change with the arrival of Ronald Koeman. Following Koeman's arrival, Zlatan was consistently chosen in Ajax's starting lineup. Ajax then went on to win the Eredivisie.

The next year Zlatan had a major breakthrough at the biggest stage of European football, UEFA Champions League. In his first game ever in the Champions League against French Champions Olympique Lyonnais, Zlatan scored two goals, including a true masterpiece when he dribbled past Brazilian Edmilson before shooting past the goalkeeper from a difficult angle. Zlatan helped Ajax make it all the way to the quarter-finals where they were narrowly beaten by eventual winners AC Milan.

The Champions League success took its toll in the domestic league, however, and Ajax finished second behind PSV. In the 2002-2003 season, Ajax was back at the top of Eredivisie, though. Zlatan continued to do well both in the league and, in particular, in the Champions League, scoring another spectacular goal against Celta Vigo, while in a Group H match against Milan on September 16, 2003, Milan midfielder Gennaro Gattuso was sent off late in second half injury time after backhanding Zlatan in the face. In spite of these incidents Ajax did not advance past the group stage.

Zlatan moved from Ajax to Juventus for a &euro;19 million transfer fee. Surprisingly, he made it rather quickly in to the starting eleven. This was due in part to the fact that the team's top scorer, David Trézéguet was injured, in part to Zlatan being one of coach Fabio Capello's favorite players (Capello had tried to get him already at Roma), but mostly thanks to Zlatan's fine performances. He scored 16 goals and this in a league that is considered to be very hard for strikers, especially foreign striker.

UEFA club competition honors

European Champions Clubs&rsquo; Cup

1963/64, 1964/65

EUSA Cup  
1964, 1965/66

UEFA Cup  
1990/91, 1993/94, 1997/98