Ahead of Champions League warm-up, PSG are soaring and Brest slumping

AFP – Paris Saint-Germain, already galloping away at the top of Ligue 1, take on last season's surprise team Brest in the fourth round, with French police on alert as fans protest the league's broadcast deal.
PSG are the only team to have won their first three games and are two points clear of Marseille at the head of the table.

Brest, who finished third last season to qualify for the Champions League for the first time, started this season in disastrous fashion.

They were thrashed 5-1 at home by Marseille on opening day and then went down 2-0 to 10-man Lens.

Brest rebounded with a 4-0 won over promoted Saint-Etienne in their last match. The international break might have robbed them of any momentum ahead of their visit to Parc des Princes on Saturday and their Champions League debut against Austrians Sturm Graz on Thursday.

PSG, meanwhile, will be warming up for their Champions League opener at home to Girona on Wednesday.

Momentum should not be a problem for a side that have banged in 13 goals in their first three games. PSG's strikers kept scoring on Nations League duty for France.

Bradley Barcola struck after 13 seconds against Italy, but Les Bleus lost 2-1. Randal Kolo Muani and Ousmane Dembele then both scored to give France a 2-0 victory over Belgium and end a brief national crisis.

Meanwhile, a police memo, seen by AFP, went out on Wednesday

to the regional police services and local government to alert them to possible protests by supporters during the next round of games.

Fans are unhappy at the decision to award broadcasting rights for games to internet streaming service DAZN.

The British-based company initially priced subscriptions at 29.99 euros (33 dollars) a month which outraged fans. Even a recently unveiled promotional offer of 19.99 euros per month has not dampened the discontent.

Player to watch: Mason Greenwood

Less than two months after Marseille signed Mason Greenwood, despite the objections of some fans, the English striker is the top scorer in France with five goals. The 22-year-old, who has played once for England, was suspended in January 2022 by Manchester United following allegations of attempted rape and sexual assault. Prosecutors dropped charges in February 2023. Greenwood faces Nice on Sunday but there is no prospect of him returning to the national squad. Interim England coach Lee Carsley said during the international break that Greenwood was not in his plans.

Key stats

– 125 weeks and six days: When Saint-Etienne, who have lost their first three games on their return to Ligue 1 without scoring, host Lille on Friday they will be seeking their first top-tier win since beating Brest on April 16, 2022.

– 309: Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, another of Marseille's summer recruits, is completing more than a pass every minute. Only Vitinha of PSG, with 302 passes, is close. No one else in Ligue 1 has managed 200.

Fixtures (times GMT)

Friday

Saint-Etienne v Lille (1845)

Saturday

Marseille v Nice (1500), Auxerre v Monaco (1700), Paris Saint-Germain v Brest (1900)

Sunday

Rennes v Montpellier (1300), Nantes v Reims, Toulouse v Le Havre, Strasbourg v Angers, Lens v Lyon (1845)

AFP