

Chelsea Prepare for Palmeiras Clash with Key Selection Decisions

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Chelsea are gearing up for a high-stakes encounter against Palmeiras in the Club World Cup quarter-finals, and all eyes are on how manager Enzo Maresca will shape his starting eleven. The Blues have already shown their ambitions in the competition but must now navigate injuries, suspensions, and fresh faces in the squad.

One of the biggest talking points is the potential debut of João Pedro. The Brazilian forward recently completed a £60 million move from Brighton, arriving just before the new player registration deadline. Although he has been training with his new teammates and settling

into life at Stamford Bridge, he is expected to start on the bench. Instead, Liam Delap, another summer signing, is likely to lead the attack once again after impressing in previous rounds.

Chelsea will be relieved to have Nicolas Jackson available after serving a two-match ban for his red card in the group stage defeat to Flamengo, which remains the team's only loss in the tournament so far. However, it is unclear whether Jackson will start or feature later in the match.

Adding to the uncertainty, Pedro Neto may not play due to personal reasons. The winger is under no pressure to return immediately following the death of his close friend, Diogo Jota. His absence would be a blow, but it could also create an opportunity for Cole Palmer to offer width and creativity on the flank.

Midfield selection is another area where Maresca faces big decisions. Moises Caicedo is suspended after picking up his second yellow card of the competition during extra time against Benfica. This suspension could see Enzo Fernandez drop into a deeper midfield role alongside Romeo Lavia, providing stability and control. Alternatively, Maresca might keep Fernandez in an advanced position and opt to move captain Reece James into central midfield, a tactical switch he has used before when depth was limited.

Defensively, Chelsea have concerns after Benoit Badiashile limped off during the last match and was later seen on crutches. His injury casts serious doubt over his availability for the quarter-final. If Badiashile is ruled out, Trevoh Chalobah is expected to step in to partner Levi Colwill at the heart of the defense.

Chelsea supporters will be eager to see how these challenges are addressed as the club continues its pursuit of silverware. The match against Palmeiras promises to test the squad's depth and resilience, but it also offers a platform for new signings to make their mark. With a place in the semi-finals on the line, every decision from Maresca could prove decisive.