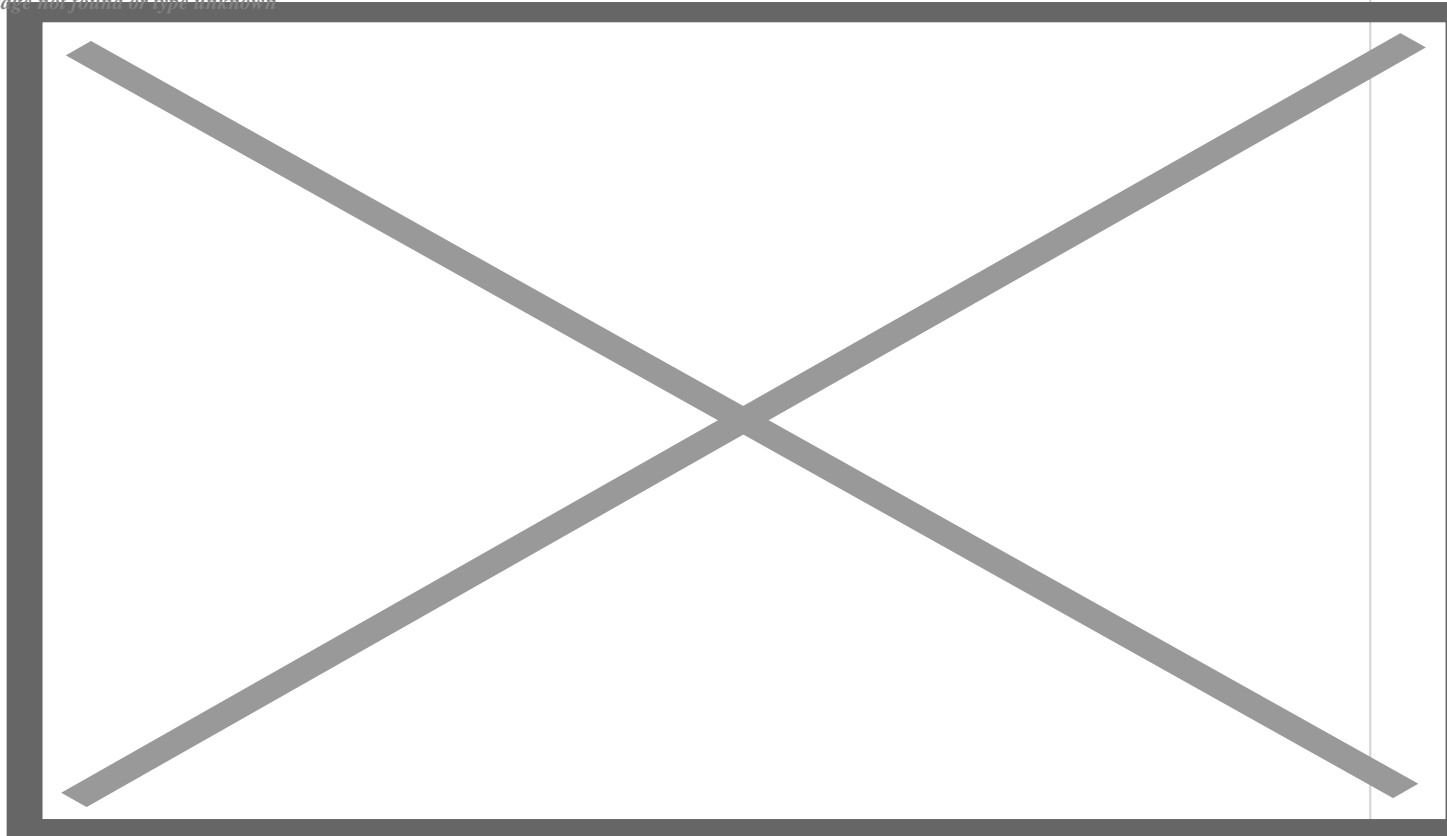


PSG begins defense of French soccer crown without Mbappé

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Havana, August 6 (RHC)-- French soccer reigning champions Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) will face Clermont today in their debut in the 2022-2023 Ligue 1 season, without Kylian Mbappé due to injury.

The Gabriel Montpied stadium in the central city will be too small with its mere 11,000 seats to see the home side challenge the red-and-blue power, which will include star strikers Lionel Messi and Neymar.

The day before, the Parisian club announced that Mbappé has abductor problems and did not make the trip to Clermont, where new coach Christophe Galtier will be in the PSG dugout for the second time, after the good start of the campaign with the French Super Cup win in Tel Aviv against Nantes.

The coach is expected to use a three-man backline with Presnel Kimpembe, Sergio Ramos and Marquinhos; attacking full-backs Nuno Mendes and Achraf Hakimi; Vitinha and Marco Verratti as midfielders and the attacking trident of Messi-Neymar-Pablo Sarabia, with Gianluigi Donnarumma in goal.

In the other Saturday match of the first day, Monaco will visit the difficult Strasbourg with the aim of getting the season off to a good start, but above all in the key second leg on Tuesday in Eindhoven, Netherlands, against PSV, a match that will define the qualifier for a ticket to the UEFA Champions League.

On Friday, Olympique Lyon marked the start of Ligue 1 with a 2-1 win over promoted Ajaccio.

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