

# Prologue

Prologue and match report: Stefan Görke, Holm Göldner

Greece and Derby? That's what you certainly connect to the big clubs in Athens, Piraeus and Thessaloniki with. Aside from those big cities there is another match, nevertheless rich of tradition. BLICKFANG ULTRA takes you to Volos, to the derby between the blue-white of "Niki" and the red-white of "Olympiacos". A three-and-a-half-hour car ride north of Athens lays the city of Volos with its population of about 130.000 people. The important commercial- and ferry harbour with its shoreward laid beaches of the Gulf of Pagasai is the doorway for the peninsula Pilion.

With more than 18.000 students attending the national University of Thessaly, the streets and plaza buzz even outside of the touristy summer months. Volos got its historical importance due the population exchange when the Greek lost the Greek-Turkish war in 1922. Parts of the Greek descendants of West-Anatolia had to be relocated, amongst other cities, to Volos. From this historical development arose the district Neo Ionia – Home of the Niki Volos Football Club founded in 1924. To this day every home match of Niki Volos is still hosted in Neo Ionia. However, the games are no longer played in the old Pandedis-Magoulas-Stadium, named after the founder and the first president, but in the two kilometres away newly constructed Panthessaliko stadium.

It was built for the Summer Olympic Games 2004 who hosted in Greece. In 2017 the Panthessaliko stadium was the scene of the national cup-final between PAOK Football Club und AEK Athens. The finale was overshadowed by heavy riots in- and around the venue.

To this day the old stadium is the property of the club Niki Volos. The Magoulas stadium is commonly known as "Klouva". That means "cage". The nickname of the smaller stadium, with only 4.500 seats, has developed over the past bygone centuries. The entire complex has very little space because of the three different stands and one wall alongside the back straight which all very close to the actual pitch – Almost like a cage.

Beside the football section Niki Volos also has its own teams and athletes in basketball, volleyball, water polo, swimming and several track and field disciplines. The local domination over the city rival Olympiacos Volos Football Club (founded in 1937) is practiced especially aggressive within the sports of football, basketball and swimming.

On top of that the red-white team also has a section in lifting weights which Niki does not. The historical small-holding of Olympiacos is located in the eastern part of the city. The history and origin of both clubs differs immensely, almost like day and night. Olympiacos Volos stands for the middle- and upper-class, as proven by several fusions of the Reds as well as certain benefits through public administration within the townhall. The followers of Niki Volos remember their roots of their Greek inheritance more as they had to flee from Turkey. They see themselves of the club of the poor and working class because of that. The supporters feel Niki as a gift from their escaped ancestors. The Blue Ones are perceived as a little crazy and on the hoof because of this. Those fans also view the power dynamics in the city as 60 to 30, pro Olympiacos. Even though the actual part in the city is within a firm grasp of the blue-whites. The smaller towns around Volos as well as the people in the region of Magnesia all show a tendency to one or the other team. That's why the small city of Nea Anchialos, which lies south of Volos and near the coast, stands firmly and united behind the Red Ones. Just a few kilometres away in Almyros though, Niki has the support of the population. Another club has to be mentioned when it comes to the history of football in Volos: since 2017 the Volos New Football Club is a part too. A retort emerged from a province club, with its colours and emblem analogue to the previous forerunner from Germany and Austria. They don't have much fans, and currently play in the second league.

## NIKI



## vs.



## OLYMPIAKOS



Sunday, 04.11.2018, 6:30 pm  
6. Round, Gamma Ethniki Group 4  
Niki Volos – Olympiacos Volos 0:0  
Panthessaliko Stadium

On a Sunday afternoon 6:30 pm in November the first derby of the season of 2018/2019 was about to start. Sixth round of the third league, group four. As championship leader the guests visited Neo Ionia. The hosts themselves entered the game in second place in the championship. Therefore, derby and a top game and quite good requirements too. By the way, at the end of the season just the champion of the group gets promoted to 2nd league. The runners-up spot must detour by the pain of play-off matches within

the second league. Most of Olympiacos fans drove as a march made of scooters and some cars into the venue in northern Volos, about an hour early. 48 hours before the start of the match it was still unsure if any guests were going to be allowed to enter the stadium. On Friday around 7:20 pm, last-minute before the Derby, the host Niki Volos announced the permission of away supporters. Furthermore, their own fans were informed of the ticket agency. Both the home and away side had to pay the sweeping ticket price of 10,00 Euro. To explain the problems of the guest fans better we'll quote a sentence from an Email, which reached us from Volos in addition of our research after the game:



„After a lot of fights all over Greece at many stadiums all the ultras are very difficult for away ultras. As you said till Friday the plan was that only Niki Volos fans will be at the stadium, but after a lot of pressure from us and from both the presidents of Niki and Olympiacos we achieve to get tickets for Olympiacos fans.”

The police, as usual in Greece, constructed a barrier consisted of coaches in front of the main stand. A clear separation of rivaling fans was the scope. This worked pretty well as the opposing clubs had no interest in each other. These circumstances could be explained by the sporty gloom of the third league as the main percentage of the people simply was unhappy. The main stand as well as the two curves were opened that night. The back straight though, with its 22.700 seats of the Panthessaliko-stadium stayed closed in lack of popularity. Both curves were evenly filled, though Olympiacos had mobilized a few more people. While the Ultras of Niki were standing very central in the curve, the main heap of voices of Olympiacos were placed in the left area of the home curve. Consequently, a lot of potential was left unused. The away side put their best-known flag "Austrian Boys" on the fence.

The story behind this begins in World War II: to avoid an attack of the

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is immense. In the past both groups made sure that every attempt of a fusion with the so much hated rivals of Olympiacos failed.

went back to their known and owned areas. All in all, 25 people of the Riot Police were scattered within the inner room of the field. A nice, small prelude.

With the start of the match blue and white smoke arose from the home curve. Also, some flares were lightened. A beautiful picture, considering the entire situation. The guest fans too had organized a smoke show, and to top it off, two or three firecrackers exploded somewhere along the track. To be honest, the football on the field was not good. While the mood was pretty good in the first half of the game, as it continued into its second part the spirit of both parties dropped. Only when there was a real chance on the field, or even just half a chance, got the volume back up to its usual happy intensity. This too, is very typical for Greece. The Blue Angles and the Blue Club lit up a few more flares around the second half of the game as well as 20 minutes before the official end. Sadly, it didn't help to motivate the teams. As the match then came to an end, both teams had to accept a 0:0.

That's why the extermination of Niki Volos was successfully avoided. While we talked about the flags in detail, the team of the Reds entered the playing field to warm up. To our surprise the people standing behind Niki Volos sweated as well. Some of the home-side Ultras did not like that at all. They interrupted the hanging of their flags and started to provoke, distract and make rude gestures towards the players on the track. The Greek Riot Police finally arrived at the venue of the interaction. Some players of Olympiacos were not going to let that stand and formed a contra line in front of the goal corner. Before anything violent could happen between fans and players though, both groups

German and Austrian groups, the residents of Volos hoisted the ensign of Austria. The harbour as well as the city were captured without any fight and destruction. Because of this action, the Greek people call the town-folk of Volos Austrians. Besides the "Austrian Boys" there is an extreme left-wing group, the Malavetas, named after a former player who executed anti-Fascistic acts of sabotage. Also, a right-wing group with the Name of Mirmidones exists.

Tied to the fence hung the flags of the Niki Volos Ultra Club and the Blue Angles. The Blue Club Gate 3 already exists since 1985, while the Blue Angles were founded in 1994. The Ultras have a similar philosophy: Their love and devotion to their club



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