1 INTERNATIONAL CUP Monday 04 Feb 2019

WELCOME TO THE STARS OF TOMORROW

ISS 11











00

f 🖸 🖸 @alkassintlcup www.alkassinternationalcup.com





As-salamu alaykum.

It is a true pleasure for me to welcome you all to the eighth edition of the Alkass International Cup, a tournament that will be filled with action, suspense and excitement, and feature some of the best young footballers in the world.

We enter this tournament on a high, off the back of a historic footballing win for the State of Qatar at the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. I would like to extend my congratulations to Qatar's heroic national football team for their resounding success – one that has inspired us all.

I was so proud to see our gifted footballers - many of whom are graduates of the incredible Aspire Academy - lifting the Asian Cup. Some of the stars of the victory over Japan, like Al Moez Ali and Akram Afif, learned their craft on the very pitches that will host this tournament. They are an inspiration to the youngsters who will be taking to the field over the next 12 days.

As a small nation we have shown that, with careful planning and continuous hard work, we are able to compete with - and prevail against - the very best. As the celebrations continue, they serve as the perfect platform for the Alkass International Cup 2019 - a unique offering to the world of football.

Since its inauguration in 2012, the Alkass International Cup has established itself as one of the world's premier youth football tournaments. We now receive countless requests from teams all across the globe hoping to compete in our illustrious tournament. This enviable and hard-earned reputation allows us to once again welcome back some of the world's most loved and supported clubs, as well as five newcomers to the competition.

This year, the Alkass International Cup will host 12 under-17 squads, each from different countries, proving that this is truly a global tournament befitting the world's most popular sport. Amongst the participating teams are European giants Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain and Bayern Munich, each of whom are making a return trip to the competition.

With Qatar increasingly in the footballing spotlight as the country prepares to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, we hope this tournament will enable participating clubs and their fans to build a lasting relationship with our nation - one that will flourish in advance of 2022 and beyond.

Here in Qatar, our footballing efforts focus both on and off the field, developing world-class teams while also building a lasting legacy to pass on to our future generations. Doha is rapidly establishing itself as one of the leading sports capitals of the world. This tournament provides ample evidence of Qatar's hosting capabilities for major international sporting events, and reinforces our love for the beautiful game.

To keep up with the latest technological advances, this year we will adopt the use of Video Assisted Referee (VAR). Moreover, in preparation for the Women's World Cup in France this June, we are welcoming an all-female team of FIFA referees to officiate at the 2019 Alkass International Cup.

As the eighth year of the tournament kicks off, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Organising Committee for the hard work they have put in ahead of this competition. We are also indebted to Aspire Zone Foundation for providing its pitches, event planning expertise and world-class facilities to the competition.

Of course, the Qatar Football Association continues to offer expert support, enhancing the competition and assisting with tournament governance and sponsorship.

Last but not least, this world-class tournament has also benefitted from its association with the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy who have provided wise leadership and guidance over the years, helping the Alkass International Cup become part of Qatar's unique footballing vision.

Qatar's victory in the Asian Cup has created a thrilling atmosphere across the country, and I am sure that we will see young fans coming to watch the next generation of world football stars, dreaming of becoming the next Akram Afif or Al Moez Ali.

Afif, Ali and the entire Qatar team were the standout performers of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. Equally important was their impeccable behavior both on and off the field – a superb display of sportsmanship. I believe that such ideals can help unite the world through football by promoting tolerance and cultural understanding. Alkass International Cup 2019 is another step in this direction.

I wish all competing teams the best of luck over the coming tournament, as football fans across the world witness the stars of tomorrow, today.

Let the games begin!

Ahead of the eighth edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup, which will be held in nine cities across France from the 7th of June to the 7th of July, the Alkass International Cup offers a chance for the very same referees to officiate in another international setting.





ALL-FEMALE TEAM OF FIFA REFEREES TO OFFICIATE THE ALKASS INTERNATIONAL CUP

Each year, the Alkass International Cup features some of the best young footballers from across the globe in a unique, world-class setting. Therefore, it is a necessity to move with the times. This year, the tournament has two firsts, the implementation of a VAR system and an all-female team of referees – a rarity in men's international football.

This February, FIFA are holding a seminar for both male and female referees in Doha, and the women are linking up with the Alkass International Cup to continue their preparation for the World Cup in June.

It is not the first time that female referees have been selected for a men's international football tournament. In 2017, seven female match officials were picked as support referees for the FIFA U-17 World Cup in India. Reflecting a change in football worldwide, a statement by the tournament's organising committee said,

"For the first-ever time, FIFA has selected female referees for a men's tournament. The results and improvements seen in the joint preparations have shown that the time has come for the elite female referees to officiate in men's competitions together with their male colleagues."

In another first for the Alkass International Cup, this year the refereeing teams will be using Video Assisted Refereeing (VAR), a system whereby an assistant referee reviews

decisions made with the use of video footage. In 2018, VARs were written into the Laws of the Game by the International Football Association Board (IFAB) following trials in a number of major competitions.

Of late, VAR has started to be implemented internationally. Having been used most recently from the quarter-finals of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup onwards, this summer it was implemented at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, for the first time in a World Cup. It is also in operation in Italy and Germany's top divisions, as well as some FA Cup and Carabao Cup games in England. VAR is set to be introduced in the English Premier League next season, following "non-live" trials this season.

Monday 04 Feb 2019



AL KASS 2019



"With the 2022 FIFA World Cup rapidly approaching, we take immense pride in co-organising and sponsoring this tournament. In addition, Al Kass International Cup continues to contribute towards the development of football skills among our youth at the Aspire Academy. This falls within helping us in the accomplishment of our AZF vision to become the reference for sports excellence worldwide by 2020, and our mission of enhancing sports performance."

Mohammad Khalifa Al-Suwaidi CEO of Aspire Zone Foundation

The next generation of football stars have arrived in Qatar ahead of the eighth edition of the Alkass International Cup.

Back for the eighth consecutive year, the tournament brings together the world's best Under-17 football teams, giving talented young players from 12 of the world's bestknown clubs an opportunity to showcase their abilities at Aspire Zone. Known for hosting exceptional moments in sports achievements, the Aspire Pitches are a place where future sporting stars are made.

Representing Qatar, Aspire Academy is competing in this year's edition of the tournament. The Academy's football

program is recognised as one of the strongest in the world in many aspects, including detection and selection of talents, in addition to training, competition and evaluation of players. In 2017, for the first time in the tournament's history, Qatar's own Aspire Academy made it through to the final, facing Real Madrid who went on to secure the title.

Today, fans can look forward to two Group A clashes. Picking up where we left off, the first match of the competition will be between last year's finalists - three time reigning champions Paris Saint Germain, and runnersup Kashiwa Reysol. Qatar's own Aspire Academy will then face Moroccan side Raja Club Athletic.

In this year's tournament, VAR will be used for the first time, as well as welcoming the FIFA Women's Referees to take part in the Alkass International Cup.

The Alkass International Cup games will be broadcasted live on Al Kass Sports Channels, with both English and Arabic commentary. In addition, live streaming of the matches will be available on Alkass' website. The tournament will also be covered on Alkass International Cup's Social Media platforms.

The world-class tournament will take place on Aspire pitches four and five, and will be open for the public to attend through the 12 day duration.



Coaches from some of the world's finest football academies gathered in Doha yesterday ahead of the first games of the 2019 Alkass International Cup.

2012	PA
2013	FLI
2014	AS
2015	PA
2016	AS
2017	
2018	PA

ASPIR

1st place

\$75,000

FOLLOW US ON

PSG RETURN AS DEFENDING CHAMPIONS

Winners of the seventh edition of Alkass International Cup, Paris Saint-Germain, return this year as defending champions, and are hoping to retain their title using their unique French flair.

Paris Saint-Germain triumphed over Kashiwa Reysol in the final of 2018 Alkass International Cup, and produced a gripping performance worthy of football's grandest stages. After conceding a goal by Kashiwa Reysol in only the fourth minute of the final, PSG's Tanguy Coulibaly managed to strike two goals, helped the team lift their third Alkass International Cup.

After the match, Coach Laurent Haurd spoke about the team's performance: "I am feeling very happy for the staff and the players, as it was a difficult final against a great team." H.E. Eric Chevallier, French ambassador at the

time, was delighted to have seen a Parisian team lifting the trophy,"I saw a real team spirit, and they were very strong together." This year's Paris Saint-Germain squad has three returning players, including defensive-midfielder Anfane Ahamada, attacking-midfielder Herve Malebe and forward Kenny Nagera. Nagera returns to the competition this year as PSG's top scorer of the team in the U17 National Championship, having scored 7 goals.

Coach Laurent Haurd expressed his excitement about the tournament, "The recent history of the club is much related to Qatar, and we now have a strong relationship with this tournament. It's already a pleasure for us to come and participate," he stated.

Adding, "The high quality of the welcome, the facilities and structure are always amazing and allow us to come with total confidence to work with great professionalism... This tournament is a very important moment in the season for the staff and especially for the young players. Year after year, the oldest transmit to the youngest a great motivation to participate and this atmosphere creates an important link between the generations."

"Last season's victory was the highlight of our year, and we hope it will not be the last. The victory created an even stronger excitement to come to participate in this magnificent event."

TECHNICAL MEETING



Team officials from clubs including Paris Saint Germain, Bayern Munich and Real Madrid met at The Torch Doha for a final technical meeting ahead of the opening matches. During the one-hour conference, tournament organisers welcomed participating teams to Qatar and gave them a full briefing on the competition's history and regulations.

As revealed in the technical conference, the

2019 winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$75,000 (USD), as well as a trophy and gold medals for the victorious side's players.

This year a total of 12 teams will compete during the 12-day tournament, with all games played according to FIFA regulations.

Matches will be played on the pristine pitches of the Aspire Zone and will be open to the public. In addition, football fans will be able to view the games from the comfort of their own homes. During the tournament Al Kass Sports Channels will be broadcasting the games live with English and Arabic

commentary, as well as live streaming the matches via the official tournament website.

Today, the games begin with a spectacular line-up of fixtures for fans to enjoy. At 4:35 pm the inaugural game of the 2019 Alkass International Cup will get underway between defending champions Paris Saint-Germain and last year's runners up, Kashiwa Reysol, followed by Aspire Academy face Raja Club Athletic at 6:45pm.

THE WINNERS SO FAR...

S SAINT-GERMAIN

RE INTERNATIONAL

S SAINT-GERMAIN

RE FOOTBALL DREAMS

SAINT-GERMAIN

MADRID

RETURNING TEAMS

THE AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP 2019 WILL SEE THE RETURN OF EIGHT CLUBS: DEFENDING CHAMPIONS AND THREE-TIME WINNERS PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN, LAST YEAR'S FINALISTS KASHIWA REYSOL, LOCAL FAVOURITE ASPIRE ACADEMY, 2017 CHAM-PIONS REAL MADRID, BAYERN MUNICH, RAJA CLUB ATHLETIC, AS ROMA.

2019 CLUB PRIZES

2nd place

\$25,000

3rd place

\$10,000

🛉 🎔 🕑 😩 @ALKASSINTLCUP 🛛 🔠 ALKASS CUP

WWW.ALKASSINTERNATIONALCUP.COM #ALKASSUI7





GROUP







AL KASS 2019 TEAM PROFILES

ASPIRE ACADEMY

"This is the competition our boys have been waiting for the entire season. Everyone is highly motivated to give his best on the pitch."

Representing Qatar at the 2019 Alkass International Cup is Aspire Qatar, a team made up almost entirely of home-grown talent. All players have been scouted by Aspire Academy in Doha and are amongst the best young footballers in the region. Since its establishment in 2004, the Academy has produced a steady stream of players who have gone on to play professional football at both the club and international levels. The Academy is distinguished by its holistic philosophy towards player development. Rather than focusing solely on a student's sporting abilities, the Academy also aims to provide each of its young talents with a comprehensive academic and social education.

RANGERS FC

"The Alkass tournament fits perfectly with our strategy of challenging our players against the best in the world."

Representing Scotland in the Alkass International Cup 2019 is Rangers FC. Founded in 1872, Rangers is a Scottish football club that has developed one of the most successful football academies in Scotland and in the UK. Through an all-inclusive football curriculum and sports science programme, created to meet the needs of each individual player, the academy guarantees to provide the young talents with the best practices in different fields, such as technical development, game awareness development, tactical and physical development.

RAJA CLUB ATHLETIC

Representing Morocco in the Alkass International Cup 2019 is Raja Club Athletic. Founded in 1949, Green Eagles, also known as Raja Mondial, is a Moroccan football team. Raja Club Athletic's training centre is a specialised school that allows young talents to develop and grow to become educated and professional football players. Raja Casablanca participated in the 2017 Alkass International Cup tournament, where they reached the quarter-finals stage. GROUP









AL KASS 2019 TEAM PROFILES

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

"The recent history of the club is much related to Qatar, we now have a strong relationship with this tournament. It's already a pleasure for us to come and participate."

Representing France in the Alkass International Cup 2019 is Paris Saint-Germain (PSG). The club was founded in 1970, and despite its relatively short history, PSG is now one of only two French teams to have collected a European title, having won the UEFA Cup Winners Cup in 1996. The Qatar Sports Investments-owned club's historic trophy haul includes eight French Cups (Coupe de France) and three Ligue 1 titles. Their most recent league triumph came in the 2012-13 season, and they are currently the team to beat in France. Their first team squad includes some of the game's global greats, including Brazil's Neymar, Uruguay's Edinson Cavani, and Brazil's Thiago Silva. The PSG Youth Academy was founded in 1974, and has produced several international stars, including Nicolas Anelka, Mamadou Sakho, Adrien Rabiot, Alphonse Areola, Presnel Kimpembe.

AS ROMA

"We are honored to be present again at a world-class event. Our children will live a new experience in a nation that they have never visited, and the confrontation with different realities from their everyday life will be a moment of growth, both from a sporting and human point of view."

Representing Italy in the Alkass International Cup 2019, Roma is a professional Italian football club that was founded in 1927, has won the Serie A three times and is a ninetime winner of Coppa Italia. In addition to the football academy in Italy, AS Roma has established its academy in the USA and UAE, where they aim to promote football and develop young talents. AS Roma participated in the 2017 edition of the tournament, where they made it to the quarter-finals.

• KASHIWA REYSOL

Representing Japan in the Alkass International Cup 2019 is Kashiwa Reysol. Founded in 1940, Kashiwa Reysol were original members of the Japan Soccer League, inaugurated in 1965. In 2011, Kashiwa set a Japanese record by winning the top tier J. League championship the season after topping the Japanese second division (J2). The team has continued adding to its trophy cabinet since then, claiming the Emperor's Cup and Japanese Super Cup in 2012, followed by the J. League Cup in 2013. Kashiwa Reysol's senior team is captained by Hidekazu Otani. One of the most successful products of the club's youth system, Otani has made around 250 appearances for Kashiwa since making his debut in 2003.

> TAKING PART IN TODAY'S FIXTURES ARE TEAMS FROM GROUP A & GROUP B. GROUP C & D MATCHES WILL TAKE PLACE FROM TOMORROW ONWARDS.



ASPIRE ACADEMY'S STARS OF THE ALKASS INTERNATIONAL CUP

14 MEMBERS OF QATAR'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM ARE ASPIRE ACADEMY GRADUATES, TWO OF WHOM PLAYED IN THIS VERY TOURNAMENT, AND WERE PART OF THE WINNING 2019 AFC ASIAN CUP SQUAD.



AKRAM AFIF

The 22-year-old forward joined Aspire Academy as a full-time student in 2009. From a family of footballers, with his father playing for Qatari club Al Gharafa, and his brother playing for Al Duhail, Akram Afif seemed destined to keep the legacy alive. In the 2013 Alkass International Club, Afif was voted the "Most Valuable Player" twice for his performances, displaying skills at an international level.

Through his determination, Afif was amongst the first participants in Aspire Academy's "Europe Project", a foreign exchange programme offering gifted players at the academy an opportunity to train at professional European clubs. Afif's first destination was Seville FC's U18 squad in Spain. A few months later, Afif went on to train with Villarreal CF. Before joining the Qatar team for the 2014 AFC U-19 Championship in Mynamar, Afif faced adversity due to an injury which had the potential to put him out of action, however through his intense rehab and training he was able to join the squad, and was able to score a goal in every game. He became the catalyst for his team in their match against DPR Korea as he scored to seal the game 1 nil, and win the championship.

In 2015 Afif joined Belgium team KAS Eupen. Once he turned 18, he played in Eupen's first team and scored a goal in his first match - a 2-1 win against Eendracht Aalst. Afif also traveled with Qatar's U20 national team to the 2015 FIFA U20 World Cup in New Zealand, where he scored Qatar's first and only goal in the competition in their 2-1 defeat against Senegal. Afif was called on by the Qatar national football team, where, in his debut, he scored against Bhutan in his team's 15-0 victory during the 2018 World Cup Qualification rounds. Afif's strong performance caught the attention of the Spanish club Villarreal CF and led to him being loaned out from Al Sadd, making history by being the first Qatari player ever to play in La Liga.

Afif's recent success with the Qatar national football team in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup marks a huge milestone in his career. Afif was a key player in his country's historical win, scoring the final goal against Japan to seal the game and crown them the new champions.



YOUSEF HASSAN

Born in 1996, Yousef Hassan Ali started his footballing career as a defender. However, during his time at Aspire Academy, many of his coaching staff suggested that Hassan should take on the role of goalkeeper, a position in which it was thought the young football star would excel. They were not wrong.

Hassan was part of the 2014 U19 Qatar national football team which brought home the trophy from the 2014 AFC U-19 Championship in Myanmar. After returning back home to Qatar and later joining Al Gharafa sports club, he further developed his goalkeeping skills. In 2015, Hassan and his teammate Akram Afif were on loan to Belgium club KAS Eupen for the 2015-2016 season. The move played an important part in Hassan's international development, as well as furthering his ability to adapt to a new team.

In his 2016/2017 breakout season with AI Gharafa, Hassan showed significant signs of improvement in his game. At only 20 years of age, Hassan played every match for Al Gharafa during this season, registering 2,496 minutes. Also notable is that the young keeper had a save success ratio of 67.7%. His efforts rightly earned him a nomination at the Qatar Football Association awards for the best U23 player, and even caught the attention of the Qatar U23 national football team.

In April of 2018, Yousef Hassan suffered an injury which many saw as season ending. However, in August, Al-Gharafa Head Coach, Christian Gourcuff, decided to use Hassan for a match against Al Sadd, and he did not disappoint. Fans expected a blowout win by Al Sadd, but the young goal keeper excelled under pressure and was able to contest many of the shots by fearsome striker Baghdad Bounedjah. The game ended with a 1-1 draw, however many saw it as the start of a promising future for Hassan.

Yousef Hassan's greatest milestone yet was being part of the Qatar national team who travelled to the UAE and won the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.







XAVI'S SHIRT SIGNING MARKS START OF ALKASS INTERNATIONAL CUP



The Alkass International Cup is an incredibly prestigious football tournament. It is also an event that has a unique brand with a global reach. This brand has been carefully created by a very talented team at Alkass Sports Channels. The team responsible have been led from the very beginning by a respected leader and creative director who has been instrumental in defining the look of not just the Alkass International Cup but also the look of Alkass Sports Channels. Faisal Masoud Al-Khaldi was exceptional in his work, but more importantly he was a great man who always saw good in others and gave so many people involved in The Alkass International Cup the chance to be part of it. We will always thank and remember Faisal.

1978 - 2018

FAISAL MASOUD AL-KHALDI

10





ORGANISING **COMMITTEE**



QATAR FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (QFA)

Was formed in 1970 as the regulatory body governing all football initiatives and events in the country.

As Qatar's main footballing authority, QFA aims to be one of the nation's major contributors to all football-related initiatives.

QFA's vision is to ensure that the world's most popular sport for amateurs and professionals is administered and promoted according to standards laid out by FIFA, the sport's ruling body.

QFA remains committed to encouraging the youth of Qatar to play the game in a true spirit of sportsmanship. At the same time, QFA has extensive plans to expand the existing infrastructure of professional football in Qatar, hosts of the FIFA World Cup 2022.



AL KASS SPORTS CHANNELS

Is the official broadcast channel of the Cup Qatar in 2011.

AFC Champions League. Quality programs, world-class production standards, nel in Qatar and most of the GCC.

sports networks in the Middle East. Al Kass



ASPIRE ZONE FOUNDATION (AZF)

Is a Doha-based sports body comprising three member organisations— Aspire Academy, Aspetar and Aspire Logistics—each of whom has a unique role to perform in realising the vision and mission of AZF. In recent years, AZF has proven itself as a favourite destination for sports industry decision-makers and elite athletes thanks to its intense year-round activities calendar.

Its range of services appeal to local, regional and international event organisers and combine to make Aspire Zone a centre of excellence that services the needs of the sports world to the highest standard. Rising to international prominence through the successful staging of the 2006 Asian Games, AZF is the home to some of the world's finest sporting stadia and venues, offering a stimulating combination of sport, sports medicine and research, and sports education. In addition, AZF works tirelessly to promote healthy lifestyles through sporting pursuits within the community, offering a diverse range of initiatives designed to improve the fitness and well-being of the entire population.

STRATEGIC PARTNER THE SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY (SC)

للمشاريــــع والإرىث Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy



Ensures the successful delivery of all stadiums and infrastructure required for Qatar to host an unforgettable and historic 2022 FIFA World Cup, in line with national development plans for the nation.

The SC also aims to utilize the power of Qatar's hosting of the FIFA World Cup to drive achievement of the nation's long-term goals and initiatives, while ensuring that a lasting human, social, environmental and economic legacy is created for 2022 and beyond.



See You in 2022

The SC is also making rapid progress in building stadiums and other infrastructure, and ensuring the tournament and its preparations contribute to Qatar's sustainable development.

From the stadiums where football history will be made to infrastructure, accommodation and transport, the SC and our stakeholders are making sure that Qatar is ready to welcome the world in 2022.



F.F.F.Leg See youin 2022

www.sc.qa 💿 🕑 🞯 @roadto2022

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) is well advanced in the planning and delivery of host country operations for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™. We aim to showcase Qatar's unique identity through a 2022 FIFA World Cup[™] which connects people in a shared celebration of football and our region. Every fan will have an unforgettable and seamless experience in Qatar, feeling at home as they, their friends and families explore an amazing world of experiences with hospitality at its heart.

Hosting the tournament is already creating a lasting legacy. Through infrastructure, education, football for development, support for regional innovation and a dedication to improving workers' welfare, our efforts are forging a better future for Qatar, the Middle East, Asia and the world.

GAMES SCHEDULE



Al Kass International Cup