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INTERNATIONAL CUP



# DAILY NEWS

Friday 26 Jan 2018



# VVS



# BATTLE 4 THE CUP BEGINS

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	2-0	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE
FENERBAHÇE S.K.	1 (4) - 1 (5)	WYDAD AC



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# PRIDE ON THE LINE IN CONSOLATION ROUND



Though the quarterfinals don't start until today at the 2018 Al Kass International Cup, the competitive spirit hadn't dimmed during the consolation round at Aspire Zone yesterday. With the cup out of reach, the four teams used the opportunity to improve their play and try new approaches.

The first match featured two teams who were no doubt wondering might have been. Guangzhou Evergrande were seconds away from reaching the quarterfinals before a last-gasp Aspire Academy goal put them out on goal differential. Tottenham Hotspur, meanwhile, lost their opener to Kashiwa Reysol despite controlling the game, then suffered from fatigue in a loss to Paris Saint-Germain the next day.

Yesterday, in the first consolation match, the Spurs' potential came to early fruition. Just five minutes in, Maurizio Grippaldi scooted up the right side and send a pass across to Max Robson, who one-timed it past keeper Xiaofeng Wang for a 1-0 lead.

The Spurs remained aggressive on the attack, but the Chinese defence, which had proved doughty all tournament, remained strong. Five minutes after the break, however, that toughness backfired on Guangzhou. A rough tackle on Tottenham forward Enock Asante in the area put him on the spot, and he calmly slotted the penalty

home to double the lead. That was all the English side needed, leaving Guangzhou winless and the Spurs with some measure of redemption.

In the nightcap, Moroccan side Wydad AC pulled out a tense shootout win over Fenerbahçe, prevailing after a 1-1 tie in full time. Fenerbahçe struck first, capping their aggressive first half with a goal on 42 minutes. Omer Beyaz set up Oguzhan Ozgan with a crisp pass in the area to give the Turks a 1-0 lead at the break.

Wydad keeper Taha Mourid continued his star turn in the tournament, palming away two Fenerbahçe efforts that seemed netbound. On the other side, Omer Yalman saw virtually no action until the 65th minute, and then he likely wished he hadn't. Substitute Ayman Rchoq evaded a defender and put a low shot on. Yalman got his hands on it, but what looked to be a routine save snuck by and into the net for the equaliser.

In the shootout, Fenerbahçe's first effort went high and Mourid stopped the second, putting Wydad in the driver's seat. But Yalman followed suit, and after the next three efforts were converted, he did it again, and the shootout went to sudden death.

After the teams traded conversions, Kaan Ayyildiz shot high for Fenerbahçe, leaving Yasser Alfirdaous to calmly knock home the winner for Wydad.

The quarterfinals kick off today, with the first game, between Benfica and AC Milan, at 3:30 pm, followed by Espérance de Tunis and Aspire Academy at 5:55 pm. Tomorrow sees Real Madrid and Kashiwa Reysol square off at 3:30 pm, with Paris Saint-Germain and Aspire Football Dreams following at 5:55 pm.



# AL KASS DAY FIVE HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

*ON THE EVE OF THE QUARTERFINALS, LOCAL FOOTBALLS FANS DESCENDED ON ASPIRE ZONE FOR THE FIFTH DAY OF THE AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP, WHICH SAW TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR, GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE, FENERBAHÇE AND WYDAD AC COMPETE IN THE CONSOLATION FIRST ROUND.*

One such fan was Iman, a Qatari who plays for the women's football team at Qatar University.

*"I love coming to Al Kass to watch world-class teams play in the tournament. Qatar is building a generation of football players, and it's become well known on an international level. The organisation done by Aspire and Al Kass is amazing and the games are super competitive."*

Tottenham Hotspur lost its first two matches despite playing strong in both games, and they won 2-0 against Guangzhou and will now play their final match of the tournament for 9th or 10th place on Sunday. That pleased James Tuck, an English expat.

*"I'm quite disappointed that my team weren't able to progress in the tournament, but I'm glad I got the chance to see them play. They are a very strong team, luck just wasn't on their side. Nonetheless, I'm sure they gained a lot from competing against some international teams, and hopefully next year they'll return and win the tournament."*

The last game of the night pitted Fenerbahçe against Wydad AC and their vocal fans, who have been supporting their side all tournament.

Mohammed Mursid, from Morocco, is one such fan, saying, *"The tournament is on international level and it's very beneficial, it gives players a chance to measure their skills against top teams. I've been a big fan of the tournament for the past 7 years and each year it gets better and better."*

## Quote of The Day

*"This is my second time attending Al Kass, and this year is really special because my favourite team, Benfica, is playing in the tournament. This is great opportunity for them to play against a wide range of different teams and to improve their skills."*

**Marco Da Souza**, Qatar resident and Benfica supporter

## TOP PLAYERS OF TODAY'S MATCH

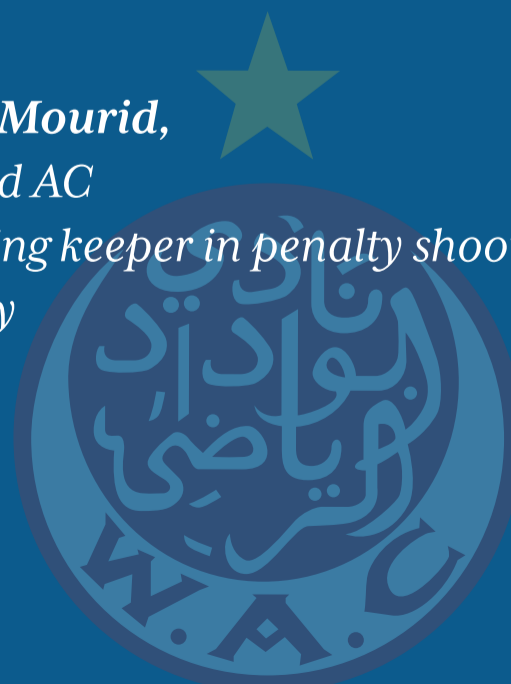
### Match 1

**Chukwunonso Madueke,**  
Tottenham Hotspur  
Anchored midfield in 2-0 win over  
Guangzhou Evergrande



### Match 2

**Taha Mourid,**  
Wydad AC  
Winning keeper in penalty shootout  
victory



# TOTTENHAM TASTE VICTORY AT GUANGZHOU'S EXPENSE



Tottenham Hotspur eased to a straightforward 2-0 win against a feisty but limited Guangzhou Evergrande team, ending their debut Al Kass experience on a high note.

For both sides, it was a case of what might have been. The previous evening, Guangzhou had been five minutes away from qualifying for the knockout stage, only for Aspire Academy to muster a late, late goal against Benfica to finish above the Chinese on goal difference.

Tottenham, meanwhile, had roared into Al Kass 2018, dominating Kashiwa Reysol in their opening match – the best of the tournament so far - yet a tale of unconverted opportunities and ill fortune hitting the post on a few occasions led to defeat in a game they had dominated. The hectic back to back fixture list then worked against the Londoners, as they were required to play again just 24 hours later and, visibly jaded, succumbed to PSG by four goals to two.

Still, Spurs' rich potential was there for all to see, and it was once again on display against Evergrande, as they took the lead

within five minutes when winger Maurizio Grippaldi escaped down the right and cut the ball back for Max Robson to lash home first time.

Guangzhou had adopted a determined approach in their previous matches, even when four down to Benfica, and their perseverance also shone through against Tottenham. Well-organised and defensively robust, they reacted to conceding early by carving out a couple of chances, although they did not unduly trouble Spurs keeper Kacper Kurylowicz.

As half time approached, Spurs looked to extend their lead. The lively Grippaldi played a long, diagonal ball over the top that Enock Asante sprinted onto, only for Zhihao Zhang to make a fabulous recovery tackle as the striker bore down on goal. The incident encapsulated much of the first 45, with Spurs' expansive instincts generally stifled by the tough-tackling Chinese who put more men behind the ball in a solid defensive stance.

However, five minutes into the second half, this tough-tackling tendency would have

consequences, when Asante was upended inside the Evergrande penalty area. Referee Ali Al Haddad pointed to the spot without hesitation. The Spurs striker got to his feet to send keeper Xiaofeng Wang the wrong way and slot the penalty home, claiming his third goal of the tournament.

Tottenham were now dominating, as Guangzhou sat ever deeper, with lone striker Pahaerding Airexiding isolated on the halfway line, just as he had been during the 4-0 defeat to Benfica in Evergrande's Al Kass debut match.

By way of contrast, Tottenham poured forward in numbers at every opportunity, only to be crowded out in a congested Evergrande penalty area. A succession of half chances came and went, and a stalemate ensued, with Spurs comfortably holding on to their two-goal advantage.

## MATCH SCORE



X



2

0

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE

## TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR

13	Kacper Kuylowicz	GK
2	Marqes Muir	DF
4	Dennis Cirkin	DF
5	Maximus Tainio	DF
7	Maurizio Grippaldi	FW
11	Chukwunonso Madueke	MF
15	Eddie Alberdi	FW
16	Rayan Clarke (Cap.)	FW
17	Harvey White	MF
18	Max Robson	MF
19	Enock Asante	FW



TOTTENHAM  
HOTSPUR

## GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE

1	Xiaofeng Wang	GK
5	Zhihao Zhang	DF
9	Pahaerding Airexiding	FW
11	Shilong Wang (Cap.)	DF
13	Yujie Zhang	MF
14	Kaiyuan Tan	MF
16	Pinxi Zhou	MF
25	Junhao Fu	DF
26	Yu Hou	MF
27	Kun Chen	MF
32	Wenzhe Zhao	DF



GUANGZHOU



**Chukwunonso Madueke, Tottenham**  
MVP of the Match



*"It was a great match. I think there were excellent individual performances from our players, and overall the win was a small victory, so we're pleased."*

**Matt Wells,**  
Tottenham Hotspur



*"It was a difficult game. We faced a lot of tactical challenges and had to keep probing and create chances to score. We're pleased with the end result, but we could have scored more goals."*

**Chukwunonso Madueke**  
Tottenham Hotspur

## THE EXPERTS SAY...

**Chris Makin –**  
Al Kass Analyst

The game kicked off to a lively start; Scott Parker's team was playing really well today.

An early goal from Max Robson, in less than five minutes, separated the two teams.

The ball came in from the back and rolled into the box, making it 1-nil for the English side. The Tottenham players were playing in a wide range of positions,

and they were trying to finish the first half strongly.

The Guangzhou players, on the other hand, were struggling really hard to create anything at all today. There was no time to take the corner, when the whistle went off and the first came to an end.

**Mark Tompkins –**  
Al Kass Analyst

It was looking fairly comfortable for Tottenham this afternoon, when the second half started.

There were some good challenges from Asante, and the referee gave a penalty kick to Tottenham. The English team scored another goal 5 minutes into the start of the second half.

Guangzhou was putting on pressure in the last few minutes, and Tottenham was starting to

look troubled in the final third of the match. It is good that these teams have a recording of the match – they can watch the matches that they played, and see what they did wrong, or right, and start making changes in the way they play.

It was twelve minutes to go, and Tottenham was leading 2-nil.



Wydad produced an unlikely victory over Fenerbahce thanks to a dramatic sudden death penalty shootout, after the game had ended 1-1 in normal time. It was a match that the Turkish side had dominated, only to fall at the last.

Indeed, when Fenerbahce look back on their overall experience at Al Kass 2018, they may conclude that luck was not on their side. They had been a little unfortunate to have been drawn in Group B - the 'group of death' - alongside Real Madrid and Aspire Football Dreams, who are undoubtedly two of the tournament's strongest sides.

Wydad, on the other hand, had been outfought in their 3-0 opening defeat to Esperance Tunis before succumbing to AC Milan in a game dominated by the Italians, despite the slender margin of victory.

The Moroccans' star performer thus far had been keeper Taha Mourid, who had produced a string of fine saves against AC to keep the score down to 1-0. Given this focus on goal-stopping rather than goal-getting, it was perhaps no surprise that Wydad were the only team not to have scored in the group stages, and the attacking formation that they adopted this time round suggested they were aiming to improve this record.

However, it was Fenerbahce who started strongest, testing the Wydad backline, but not the keeper, in the opening exchanges.

Then, on 20 minutes, Omer Beyaz went close for the Turkish side with a skilful overhead kick. However, his effort lacked power and Mourid gathered comfortably.

An end product was lacking for the Turks, who wasted a succession of corners and free kicks in advanced positions. A rare shot on target by diminutive forward Oguzhan Ozgan, on 35 minutes, again brought a routine save from Mourid, although he was certainly the busier of the two keepers.

Fenerbahce's stopper, Omer Yalman had been a virtual spectator for much of the first half, with physically imposing centre back Cenk Alptekin marshalling a high backline that snuffed out any potential danger.

With half time approaching, Fenerbahce upped the intensity, and found reward on 42 minutes. The impressive Beyaz collected the ball in a central position 20 yards from goal, and charged into the area before setting up Ozgan to his left, who finished with aplomb into the bottom right corner.

Fenerbahce maintained their dominance as the second half began. Two minutes in, Beyaz carried the ball forward through the

middle before laying off to Kannturk Akgul, who cracked a low shot that asked questions of Mourid, who once again found an answer, getting down sharply to his left to palm the goalbound effort away.

The Wydad keeper was enjoying another fine game, and minutes later he reacted quickly once more to prevent a certain goal, after Serhat Bulbul had been sent clear by left back Abdulcebrail Akbulut. The Fenerbahce striker went one-on-one with Mourid, who got a strong hand to the well-struck effort and palmed the ball over the bar.

It was one-way traffic until 65 minutes, when Wydad grabbed an unlikely equaliser with their first real attack on the game. Running from his own half, Ayman Rchoq latched on to a ball over the top and sprinted goalwards, turning inside to evade the challenge of Alptekin before firing in a low shot that Yalman got his hands to, but could not keep out. The Fenerbahce stopper would have expected to make a fairly routine save, and his costly misjudgement stood in marked contrast to the heroics of his opposite number.

Ultimately, neither side could conjure a decisive goal, and the first penalty shootout of Al Kass 2018 got underway.

Alptekin was up first for Fenerbahce, and skied his effort over the bar. Rchoq stepped up next and nonchalantly put Wydad ahead. Star stopper Mourid then saved from Beyaz, his opposite number following suit to deny Ashraf Alaoui. It was 1-0 to Wydad with each side having taken two spot kicks. The next three efforts were converted before Fenerbahce's Yalman produced a flying save to deny Saad Bouanana. Ozgan calmly converted next, leaving Wydad captain Mhammed Rabii to equalise.

With the score tied at 3-3, the shootout entered sudden death. Akgul made no mistake for the Turks, piling the pressure on Mounir Elharcha, who kept his cool to make it 4-4. Kaan Ayyildiz then fired over for Fenerbahce, leaving Yasser Alfridaous to become the hero of the hour, dispatching his kick to see Wydad home.

<b>MATCH SCORE</b>		X	
	1 [ 4 ]		1 [ 5 ]
	FENERBAHÇE S.K.		WYDAD AC

## FENERBAHÇE S.K.



12	Ömer Yalman	GK
2	Muhammet Ali Çetinkaya	DF
3	Abdulcebrail Akbulut	DF
4	Gürkan Baskan	DF
5	Cenk Alptekin	DF
7	Batuhan Ekinci	MF
9	Oguzhan Özcan	FW
10	Emre Nasuh (Cap.)	FW
11	Serhat Bülbül	FW
15	Ömer Beyaz	MF
18	Kanntürk Akgül	



## WYDAD AC



1	Taha Mourid	GK
2	Saadeddine Ayar	DF
4	Saad Bouanane	DF
5	Mhammed Rabii (Cap.)	MF
7	Nadir Lougmani	FW
9	Ayeman Hamdi	FW
11	Youness El Oualsi	MF
13	Youssef Chahid	DF
14	Abdelmoughit El Oualji	MF
15	Mounir Elharcha	FW
25	Yasser Alfirdaous	MF



**Taha Mourid, Wydad AC**  
MVP of the Match



*"Unfortunately, we didn't fulfil our ambitions of progressing far in the tournament, but we have learnt some invaluable lessons while playing some of the top teams. We have pinpointed many of our mistakes and shortcomings and in the coming months we are going to work on improving skills and tactics."*

**Kannturk Akgul,**  
Fenerbahçe



*"I think we played a really great game, it was for sure our best performance in this tournament. We have gained a lot from competing in Al Kass and it has motivated us to work on improving our skills."*

**Taha Mourid**  
Wydad AC

## THE EXPERTS SAY...

**Nick Summerbee –**  
Al Kass Analyst

Fenerbahçe was absolutely brilliant at defense, in the first half; they looked like they were defending for their lives.

Fenerbahçe missed a great chance to bring a goal in the box in the 27th minute.

Chances don't come that often, which is why players need to get behind each other and be there when the ball comes in. It looked like it would

be lucky if Wydad got their first goal of the tournament today.

Rabii was going in with a header, after 38 minutes on the clock, but the ball was too high and over the head of the Fenerbahçe goalkeeper.

Finally it was Ozcan, who came in with the first goal for Fenerbahçe. When the ball went across, he got it back, and used his left foot to pass it on to the left hand corner.

**Mark Tompkins –**  
Al Kass Analyst

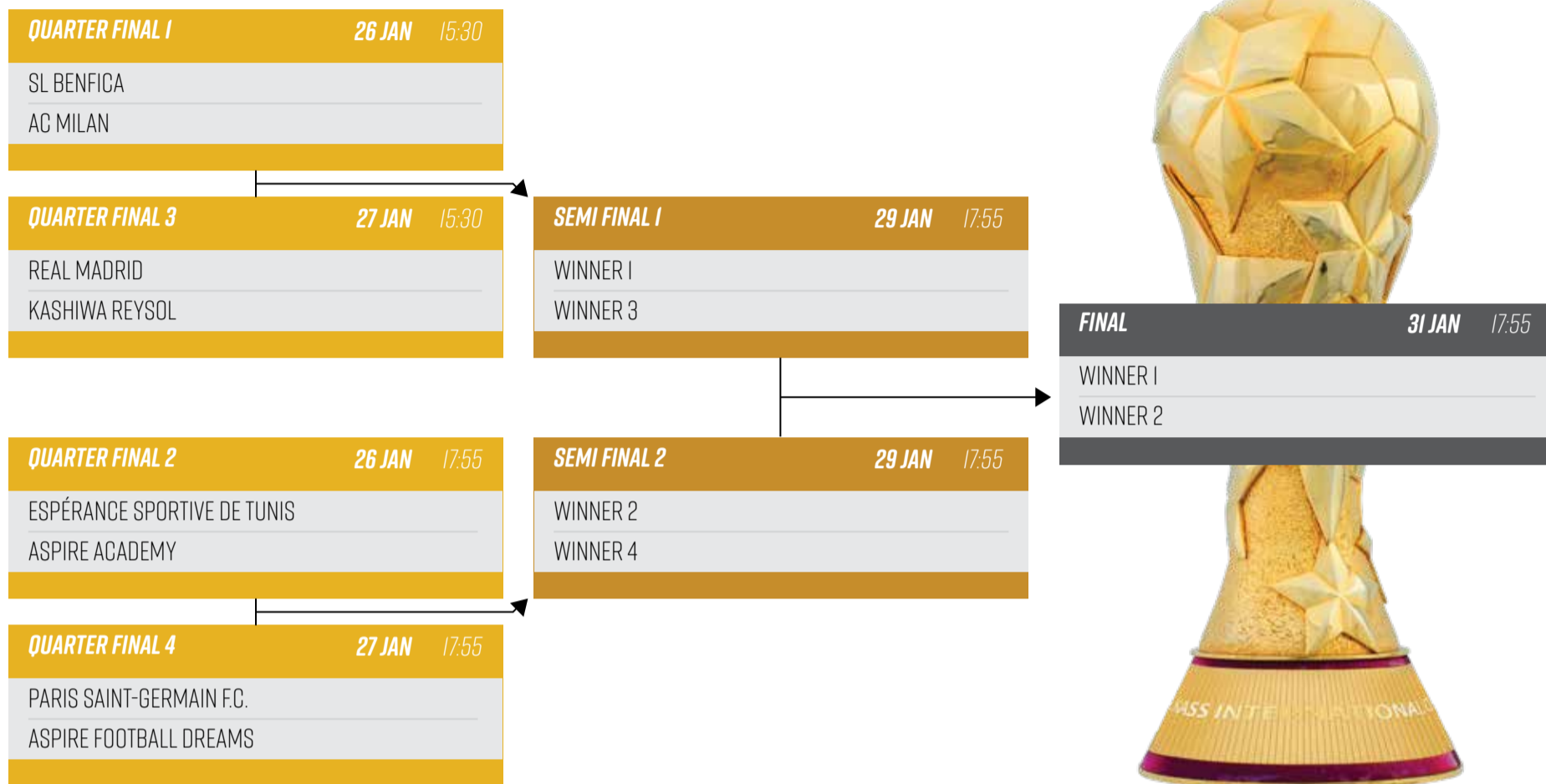
When Wydad's first shot came in, the Fenerbahçe goalkeeper had both hands to the shot, but he couldn't keep the ball out; he let it slip by beneath him.

I was happy that Wydad were not going to go home empty handed in this tournament.

It was 1-1 when the full time whistle went off and then it was penalty shootout.

Finally, it was Wydad who came out as the winning team – What a heartfelt game it was!

# ROAD TO THE CUP



# TOP SCORERS



**NAIF ALHADRAMI**  
ASPIRE ACADEMY

**3** GOALS



**GONÇALO RAMOS**  
BENFICA

**3** GOALS



# WYDAD FANS REJOICE



## TODAY'S MATCHES

## TOMORROW'S MATCHES



×



15:30

*BENFICA*                      *AC MILAN*



×



15:30

*REAL MADRID*                      *KASHIWA REYSOL*



×



17:55

*ESPÉRANCE*                      *ASPIRE ACADEMY*



×



17:55

*PSG*                      *ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS*

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# GAMES SCHEDULE

## GROUP STAGE

GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C		GROUP D	
	SL Benfica		Aspire Football Dreams		AC Milan		Paris Saint-Germain F.C.
	Guangzhou Evergrande		Fenerbahçe S.K.		Espérance Sportive de Tunis		Tottenham Hotspur F.C.
	Aspire Academy		Real Madrid		Wydad AC		Kashiwa Reysol

DATE	NO.	TEAMS				TIME	VENUE	
Sun 21.01.	1	Real Madrid	6	VS	2	Fenerbahçe S.K.	16:25	5
	2	Guangzhou Evergrande	0	VS	4	SL Benfica	18:30	5
	3	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	3	VS	0	Wydad AC	20:35	5
Mon 22.01.	4	Aspire Football Dreams	2	VS	0	Fenerbahçe S.K.	15:30	4
	5	Guangzhou Evergrande	1	VS	1	Aspire Academy	17:35	4
	6	Kashiwa Reysol	3	VS	2	Tottenham Hotspur F.C.	19:40	4
Tue 23.01.	7	AC Milan	1	VS	0	Wydad AC	15:30	5
	8	Aspire Football Dreams	1	VS	1	Real Madrid	17:35	5
	9	Tottenham Hotspur F.C.	2	VS	4	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	19:40	5
Wed 24.01.	10	AC Milan	0	VS	2	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	15:30	4
	11	SL Benfica	7	VS	3	Aspire Academy	17:35	4
	12	Kashiwa Reysol	1	VS	1	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	19:40	4
<b>POSITION 9 - 12</b>								
Thu 25.01.	13	Tottenham Hotspur F.C.	2	VS	0	Guangzhou Evergrande	15:30	5
	14	Fenerbahçe S.K.	1(4)	VS	1(5)	Wydad AC	17:55	5
<b>QUARTER FINALS</b>								
Fri 26.01.	15	SL Benfica		VS		AC Milan	15:30	4
	16	Espérance Sportive de Tunis		VS		Aspire Academy	17:55	4
Sat 27.01.	17	Real Madrid		VS		Kashiwa Reysol	15:30	5
	18	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.		VS		Aspire Football Dreams	17:55	5
<b>PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8</b>								
Sun 28.01.	19	Loser Game No. 16		VS		Loser Game No. 18	15:30	4
	20	Loser Game No. 15		VS		Loser Game No. 17	17:55	4
<b>SEMI FINALS</b>								
Mon 29.01.	21	Winner Game No. 16		VS		Winner Game No. 18	15:30	5
	22	Winner Game No. 15		VS		Winner Game No. 17	17:55	5
<b>POSITION 5 - 8</b>								
Tue 30.01.	23	Loser Game No. 19		VS		Loser Game No. 20	15:30	4
	24	Winner Game No. 19		VS		Winner Game No. 20	17:55	4
<b>POSITION 3 - 4</b>								
Wed 31.01.	25	Loser Game No. 21		VS		Loser Game No. 22	15:30	5
<b>FINAL</b>								
Wed 31.01.	26	Winner Game No. 21		VS		Winner Game No. 22	17:55	5

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