ALKASS INTERNATIONAL CUP E Sunday 28 Jan 2018



SEMI FINALS











LATE HEROICS SEND KASHIWA REYSOL, PSG TO SEMI-FINALS





A PAIR OF THRILLING MATCHES PROVIDED AN EXCITING CONCLUSION TO THE 2018 AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP QUARTERFINALS, SETTING UP A SEMI-FINAL FIELD WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR EVEN MORE DRAMA.

Kashwia Reysol avenged their quarterfinal loss to Real Madrid a year ago with a 3-2 victory over the Spanish side, ousting the defending tournament champions. They'll be joined in the final four by Paris Saint-Germain, who outlasted Aspire Football Dreams on penalties after a scoreless full time.

In the night's first match, Kashiwa Reysol maintained its disciplined defence, absorbing Madrid's repeated attacks and looking for their own chances on the counterattack. The strategy came to fruition eight minutes into the match, when Kashiwa captain Mao Hosoya pounced on the ball in a goalmouth scrum and fired it past keeper Toni Ribera for the lead.

But Kashiwa's raucous fans had barely finished celebrating when Real equalised. On the very next attack, Jorge Camunas picked the ball up midway inside Reysol's half and manoeuvred to the area before blasting a low shot past Leo Kokubo.

It was Kashiwa's turn to counter-punch, and they did in the 23rd minute. A poor clearance on a Ribera save fell to the feet of Hiryu Okuda, who easily finished for a 2-1 lead. Real followed the script, finding another equaliser in the 60th minute, courtesy of a Juan Latasa header off a Camunas cross. With penalties looming—the method of Real's win over Kashiwa last year—Kashiwa erased memories of 2017. In the 88th minute, Sohki Tamura found Hosoya in the area, and his goal sent the Japanese side to the semifinals, where they'll play mighty Benfica.

The last quarter-final match saw a different kind of drama, as a scoreless full time gave way to a penalty shootout. PSG prevailed, 4-2, dealing Aspire Football Dreams a tough loss in a game they largely controlled. The first half saw PSG's Massinissa Oufella hit the woodwork with a rocket shot, followed by AFD's Christian Otabil having his own scoring chance turned away by PSG keeper Trey Vimalin.

Vimalin remained a thorn in AFD's side in the second half, and never more than late in the game, when AFD's Umar Lutalo stepped to the spot for a penalty kick following a handball in the area. Vimalin, at full stretch, somehow stopped Lutalo's low shot, and the game went to penalties.

In the shootout, Appiah Kubi turned away PSG's first effort, but Vimalin answered with a save of his own on AFD's third shot, and their fourth went high. Alexandre Fressange calmly

slotted home the winner, sending PSG to the semi-finals.

In today's matches, Aspire Academy and Aspire Football Dreams face off at 3:30 pm, followed by Real Madrid and AC Milan at 5:55 pm. The winners will play each other in the fifth-place game on Tuesday, with the losers fighting for seventh the same day.

Tomorrow, the semi-finals get underway with Espérance de Tunis going up against Paris Saint-Germain. That will be followed by Kashiwa Reysol versus Benfica for the other spot in Wednesday's tournament final.

JOY AND DISAPPOINTMENT FOR AL KASS FANS

WITH TWO BERTHS LEFT IN THE SEMIFINALS UP FOR THE TAKING, THRONGS OF FANS TURNED OUT YESTERDAY AT THE AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP TO CHEER ON THEIR FAVORITE CLUBS' FUTURE STARS.

THE FIRST MATCH PITTED KASHIWA REYSOL AGAINST DEFENDING CHAMPIONS REAL MADRID IN WHAT HAS BECOME ONE OF THE TOURNAMENT'S HALLMARK RIVALRIES. THIS MARKED THE THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR THE TWO TEAMS HAVE MET IN THE KNOCKOUT ROUND, AND THE THIRD TIME WAS A CHARM FOR KASHIWA, WHO PULLED OUT A TENSE 3-I WIN. THE WIN DELIGHTED KASHIWA'S LOYAL FAN BASE, WHICH WAS OUT IN FULL FORCE, ARMED WITH SONGS, BANNERS AND COSTUMES.

For fan Akio, attending her sixth Al Kass tournament, the Kashiwa win had special meaning.

"It's great to have Kashiwa in the tournament, as they are from the Chiba prefecture, where my husband is from, so it makes it a special experience," she said. "We are incredibly proud their performance in the tournament and hoping to see them clinch the title." Of course, in football one fan's joy is another's disappointment, and for Real Madrid's own sizeable contingent of supporters, the loss was a bitter pill.

"I was so upset when Real Madrid lost today—I really thought they would make it further in the tournament," said Spanish fan Alina. "It's fun to be at Al Kass, there's a great atmosphere here. This tournament showcases Qatar to rest of the world, while giving expats a chance to support teams from their home countries."

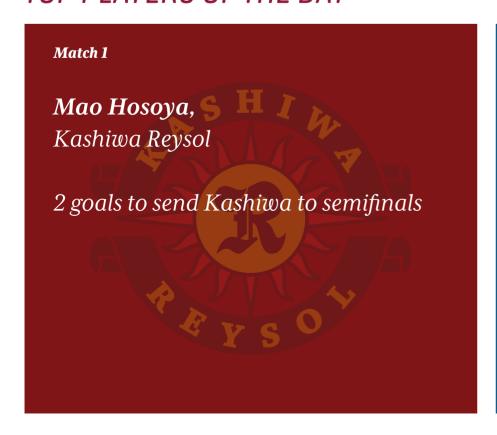


Quote of The Day

"We lost against Real Madrid the past two years, so we couldn't let them defeat us for a third time. Now it's to face Benfica, which we know is going to be a challenging match. We've watched their last two matches, and they're definitely the strongest team in this tournament."

Shin Yamanaka, Coach, Kashiwa Reysol

TOP PLAYERS OF THE DAY



Match 2

Trey Vimalin,Paris Saint-Germain

Turned away two penalties in shootout win





KASHIWA SNATCH LATE VICTORY OVER MADRID IN CUP CLASSIC

Kashiwa Reysol delivered an outstanding display of fortitude and tactical brilliance to overcome strong favourites Real Madrid and advance to the Al Kass 2018 semifinals.

Repeating a pattern established in their previous games, Reysol defended stoutly throughout and sought to hit their opponents on the counterattack, while absorbing continual pressure from a highly accomplished Madrid side who created enough chances to win several matches.

The Madridistas were in command from the first whistle and, just three minutes in, were almost in front when Alvaro De Frias collected the ball in a central area just outside the box and curled a delicious left-footed strike that looked destined for the top corner, only for Reysol keeper Leo Kokubo to make an athletic save, diving to tip the ball over the bar.

The chance was indicative of Madrid's early dominance, with De Frias – playing 'in the hole' behind strike partner Juan Latasa – pulling the strings. But on eight minutes, Kashiwa – as they have done so often in the past at Al Kass – ripped up the formbook, with Mao Hosoya capitalising on a goalmouth scramble to fire the Japanese into an unexpected lead.

It was a lead they held for just one minute because, with the very next attack, Real were level. Jorge Camunas picked the ball up midway inside Reysol's half, and advanced unchallenged before shooting hard and low past Kokubo from the edge of the area.

With parity quickly restored, the match began to develop into a fascinating contest of contrasting styles, with Madrid enjoying plenty of possession, only for their precise build-up play to be frequently disrupted by the highly disciplined Reysol backline, who then looked to feed their forwards in the hope of launching rapid counterattacks.

The tactic worked to perfection on 23 minutes when Fumiya Unoki was set free through the middle and shot, his effort well-saved by Real keeper Toni Ribera. However, the ball was only half-cleared and instantly returned to the area. With the static Madrid defence appealing in vain for offside, Hiryu Okuda slotted into the bottom left corner.

On 38 minutes, Madrid coach Manual Fernandez made an early switch, withdrawing Carlos Gonzalez for fellow midfielder Eneko Gines, as Los Blancos patiently attempted to pick a way through Reysol's well-drilled formation, but mainly confined to long-range efforts.

Within seconds of the restart, however, Real almost drew level when substitute Christian Garcia tested Kokubo from eight yards out, the Reysol keeper reacting smartly to ensure he was not beaten at his near post. Undaunted, the Spanish youngsters continued to fashion opportunities and, with the game an hour old, their patience paid off

Camunas beat his man down the left and delivered an inviting cross that Latasa rose to meet, planting a firm header to square the score at 2-2.

Kashiwa were now struggling to cope with Real's attacking potency and, within seconds, Garcia had the ball in the net, having run clear and rounded Kokubo before applying a side-footed finish, only for the referee to signal offside – a decision that the Madrid bench loudly contested.

Real were beginning to get on top of Kashiwa, yet the Spaniards were never fully in



control, nor entirely comfortable. The game was reminiscent of Reysol's opener against Tottenham, where Kashiwa had taken the lead against the run of play three times en route to a 3-2 victory, despite the London side dominating throughout.

And, with five minutes remaining, Reysol almost delivered a sucker punch, when substitute Koki Takeda got on the end of a cross from the left and somehow contrived to hit the post, with keeper Ribera stranded.

Madrid had been warned and, with a penalty shootout looming, the irrepressible Japanese snatched a sensational victory. Sohki Tamura got on the ball midway inside Real's half, dashing forward before feeding Hosoya, who made no mistake from six yards out.

Kashiwa will now play the highly fancied Benfica on Monday evening in a clash that seems certain to enthral the Aspire crowd. And, based on their track record, the formidable Japanese side will firmly believe they are capable of delivering yet another upset.



REAL MADRID



- 13 Toni Ribera2 Diego Lopez
- 3 Marcos Blazquez (Cap.)

GK

DF

DF

DF

MF

MF

FW

MF

MF

DF

MF

- 4 Sergio Santos
- 8 Carlos Gonzalez
- 10 Alvaro De Frias
- 11 Javier Lancho14 Javier Diez
- 15 Jorge Camuñas
- 18 Julio Escoria
- 20 Juan Latasa



KASHIWA REYSOL

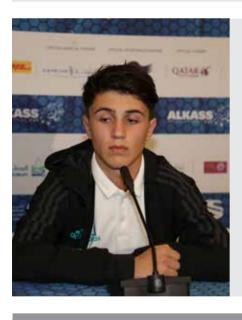


1	Leo Brian Kokubo	Gl
12	Fumiya Unoki	F٧
14	Mao Hosoya	F٧
19	Hiryu Okuda	F٧
20	Keita Ide (Cap.)	DF
22	Hayato Fujimoto	DF
23	Yuusuke Shimizu	MI
28	Sohki Tamura	MI
29	Naito Saito	MI
30	Fumito Okihara	DF
34	Shunto Ibi	MI





Mao Hosoya, Kashiwa Reysol MVP of the Match



"It's upsetting that we didn't manage to advance to the semifinals as I felt we played really well, but we didn't get off to a good start in this match and missed a lot of opportunities."

Eneko Gines, Real Madrid



"For the past two years, we have lost against Real Madrid, so it was good to finally defeat them. Also, our fans really gave us that extra boost - it was great to have their support."

Keita Ide Kashiwa Reysol

THE EXPERTS SAY...

Mark Tompkins – Al Kass Analyst

Real Madrid couldn't do anything to stop the first goal from Kashiwa. Toni made a fine save, but Hosoya made sure to bring that first goal for his team.

Just minutes after that first goal from Kashiwa, Real Madrid handed in an equalizer, and we were back to all square again. Hiryu Okuda made it 2-1 for Kashiwa - the big striker had quickly put Kashiwa back in front.

Real Madrid had two great chances in less than 90 seconds, since the opening of the second half. Toni, the Real Madrid goalkeeper, was a spectator for most of second half. There was a real balance of play between both teams today.

Latasa, the tallest man on the field, used his height to push the ball into the net, and it was game on again! Toni was furious, after a third goal from Kashiwa. This game had really lived up to expectations.

Chris Makin – Al Kass Analyst

There was some real pressure coming in from Real Madrid in the second half. There was plenty of space on the far side. It was a wonderful delivery, a great movement there by Latasa, to get that second ball in for Real Madrid.

The Spaniards were really working it down, on the sides, to bring their third goal; their crossings were absolutely wonderful today.

The Kashiwa players were really up on defense, for most of the second half. Hosoya, in the last few minutes, made it 3-2 for Kashiwa. This was a fantastic game, I really enjoyed it.





PSG PREVAIL ON PENALTIES OVER ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS



Paris Saint-Germain made it to the semi-finals of Al Kass 2018, winning a penalty shootout against Aspire Football Dreams in a game that the French youngsters could easily have lost.

Both sides had been quietly impressive in the group games, progressing to the knockout stage with a minimum of fuss. Stylistically, PSG and AFD are strikingly similar, combining solid organisation with technical prowess and high fitness levels.

AFD had the better of the opening exchanges, and Isaac Nuhu went close to opening the scoring on four minutes with a good effort from the left-hand corner of the area that curled just wide of the far post.

But, with the game 10 minutes old, PSG produced a moment of brilliance that almost broke the deadlock. Tanguy Coulibaly chipped a diagonal ball from the left into the path of Massinissa Oufella, advancing towards the penalty area, and the Paris captain smashed a rising drive against the crossbar.

Despite pre-match predictions of a cagey encounter, it was soon clear that the fourth of the quarter-finals was developing into an open match, and it was soon AFD's turn to fashion a goalscoring chance, when Christian Otabil intercepted a sloppy back pass and went one-on-one with Trey Vimalin, but the keeper was equal to his first-time effort.

Nuhu put a free kick just wide from 25 yards out, as Aspire began to take control of proceedings, although PSG generally

managed to restrict their opponents to shots from distance, with the AFD number 11 once again going close from the edge of the box on the half hour.

Five minutes later, PSG coach made a bold tactical move, with a like-for-like triple substitution. Perhaps the changes – highly unusual at such an early stage of the game — represented a tacit admission that PSG were struggling to match AFD's energetic approach. Whatever the rationale, the gambit did little to alter the balance of play, with Aspire retaining control of the game for the remainder of the first half.

A fourth PSG substitution – this one enforced – was made shortly before the interval, with the injured Oufella making way for Anfane M'Ze. The injury was a blow for the Parisians, as their skipper – along with Coulibaly - had been among the side's most influential performers.

As the second half got underway, it seemed clear that Aspire coach Serine Dia had instructed his players to get into the opponent's penalty area and resist the temptation to shoot from distance.

The tactic almost paid off on 52 minutes when the impressive Nuhu lofted a ball into the area from deep on the left, which Sibiry Keita nodded over the onrushing Vimalin, only to see his effort bounce wide of the left post.

Aspire made a double change on the hour, with midfielder Djakaria Barro replacing defender Shafic Ssebyala, and Otabil

withdrawn for fellow-striker Umar Lutalo, as coach Dia attempted to reinforce his attacking options.

AFD continued to dominate, but could not convert this dominance into goals, wasting chance after chance as the game drifted towards a seemingly inevitable penalty shotout.

But then, out of nowhere, referee Ali Al Haddad awarded a spot kick to Aspire, having spotted a handball from Adil Aouchiche as he jumped to defend a corner. Lutalo stepped up and put his shot low to Vimalin's left but the keeper, at full stretch, produced a wonderful save to somehow keep the ball out and his side in the game.

The incident provided a spark which belatedly brought the match to life, as PSG began to mount attacks with a renewed sense of urgency. However, neither side could change the stalemate, and it was little surprise that the game finished goalless.

A tense shootout ended with PSG running out winners by 4-2, with Alexandre Fressange the hero of the hour as he converted the winning penalty.

The young Parisians will meet Esperance Tunis
— a side that is yet to concede during Al Kass
2018 — in Monday's second semi-final. A more
clinical approach in front of goal will therefore
be required if PSG are to reach the final.



PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.



16	Trey Vimalin	GK
3	Arthur Zagre	DF
4	Loic Mbe Soh	DF
5	Curtis Fiawoo	DF
7	Timothee Pembele	DF
9	Massinissa Oufella (Cap.)	MF
11	Maxen Kapo	MF
12	Adil Aouchiche	MF
15	Tanguy Coulibaly	FW



ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS

FW

FW

Ruben Providence

Alexandre Fressange

DREAMS







Trey Vimalin, Paris Saint-Germain MVP of the Match



"I don't think we played our best—we didn't show our technical ability or stuck to our usual tactics. In the end, we are happy to be going through to the semi-final, but we will have to ensure we work harder and focus on playing our style to secure a win."

Loic Mbe Soh,Paris Saint-Germain F.C.



"The match was difficult and we missed many opportunities to score in the first half which meant we lost control of the game. However, I am really proud of my team as we fought until the end, but unfortunately luck was not on our side."

Abdel Nassere Mfouatah
Aspire Football Dreams

THE EXPERTS SAY...

Nick Summerbee – Al Kass Analyst

There were some missed opportunities by Aspire Football Dreams early on in the match.

The higher you go in the tournament, you might not get a lot of opportunities, and this was certainly not a time to miss these wonderful opportunities.

Paris Saint-Germain, on the other hand, were working in packs, and looking very organized. Oufella really deserved that goal coming in 10 minutes into the clock; it was a wonderful shot into the box, and deserved at least a sneak into the back of the net.

It looked like a good game of football from two equal sides. It was still ni-nil in the end of the first half, but Aspire Football Dreams seemed to be putting in more pressure.

Mark Tompkins – Al Kass Analyst

Halfway into the second half, we still had no way of guessing who was going to win the match tonight. Aspire Football Dreams were making it really hard for Paris Saint-Germain tonight – they were really keeping the pressure up.

The Paris Saint-Germain goalkeeper made another great save in the last 10 minutes. The referee must have spotted a handball from Paris Saint-Germain – he gave a penalty kick to Aspire.

It was a fantastic save by the goalkeeper, and the game was back on. When the full time whistle was heard, we were headed straight to the first penalties of the quarterfinals; and finally it was Paris Saint-Germain who moved on to the semifinals.







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TOMORROW'S MATCHES



×



15:30



×



15:30

ASPIRE ACADEMY

ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS

ESPÉRANCE DE TUNIS

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.



X

17:55



×



17:55

AC MILAN

REAL MADRID

SL BENFICA

KASHIWA REYSOL



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GROUP STAGE

CROST STACE								
GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C		GROUP D		
***	SL Benfica	**************************************	Aspire Football Dreams	ACM (899)	AC Milan	QAR/S Second	Paris Saint- Germain F.C.	
	Guangzhou Evergrande	TO SPORT	Fenerbahçe S.K.	**	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	FOTTENHAM MOTSPUK	Tottenham Hotspur F.C.	
ASPIRE	Aspire Academy		Real Madrid	**************************************	Wydad AC	e R	Kashiwa Reysol	

DATE	NO.			TEAMS	5		TIME	VENUE		
C	1	Real Madrid	6	VS	2	Fenerbahçe S.K.	16:25	5		
Sun 21.01.	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		
20.01.	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		
24.01.	12	Kashiwa Reysol	1	VS	1	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	19:40	4		
			POSI	ITION 9	7 - 12					
Thu	13	Tottenham Hotspur F.C.	2	VS	0	Guangzhou Evergrande	15:30	5		
25.01.	14	Fenerbahçe S.K.	1(4)	VS	1 (5)	Wydad AC	17:55	5		
			QUA	RTER FI	INALS					
Fri	15	SL Benfica	6	VS	0	AC Milan	15:30	4		
26.01.	16	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	1	VS	0	Aspire Academy	17:55	4		
Sat	17	Real Madrid	2	VS	3	Kashiwa Reysol	15:30	5		
27.01.	18	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	0(4)	VS	O (2)	Aspire Football Dreams	17:55	5		
		PLA	AY OFF	S POSI	TION 5	- 8				
Sun	19	Aspire Academy		VS		Aspire Football Dreams	15:30	4		
28.01.	20	AC Milan	VS			Real Madrid	17:55	4		
			SE	MI FINA	ALS					
Mon	21	Espérance Sportive de Tunis		VS		Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	15:30	5		
29.01.	22	SL Benfica		VS		Kashiwa Reysol	17:55	5		
			POS	ITION	5 - 8					
Tue	23	Loser Game No. 19		VS		Loser Game No. 20	15:30	4		
30.01.	24	Winner Game No. 19		VS		Winner Game No. 20	17:55	4		
			POS	ITION	3 - 4					
Wed 31.01.	25	Loser Game No. 21		VS		Loser Game No. 22	15:30	5		
FINAL										
Wed 31.01.	26	Winner Game No. 21		VS		Winner Game No. 22	17:55	5		

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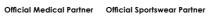








































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