

ALKASS[®] INTERNATIONAL CUP DAILY NEWS

Wednesday 31 Jan 2018



CLASH FOR THE CUP

ASPIRE ACADEMY 1 (4) - 1 (5) AC MILAN
ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS 3 - 1 REAL MADRID

WITH PRIDE ON THE LINE, AFD AND AC MILAN PREVAIL



THE PENULTIMATE DAY OF COMPETITION AT AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP 2018 SAW STRONG PLAY FROM FOUR TEAMS WHO, BUT FOR A FEW UNLUCKY BOUNCES, COULD HAVE BEEN PLAYING IN TODAY'S FINAL.

Aspire Football Dreams topped defending tournament champion Real Madrid, 3-1, to capture fifth place, and AC Milan outlasted host Aspire Academy on penalties to snag seventh.

The fifth-place tilt was a rematch of a group stage game that saw the sides draw, 1-1. This game started just as competitively, and Aspire grabbed the lead with aggressive play. Salim Diaby chased down and dispossessed Julio Escorcía inside the area, and set up Christian Otabil for the most routine of goals.

Each side had opportunities to change the scoreline, and on 55 minutes, Real's Juan Latasa equalised with a thunderbolt cross-shot that squeezed under AFD keeper Appiah Kubi. But the night ultimately belonged to AFD, who found the winning rhythm as the game progressed.

In the 65th minute, Isaac Nuhu launched a splendid first-time curling shot into the far corner from 18 yards for a 2-1 lead. With five minutes left, Umar Lutalo outjumped the defence on a corner and headed in the insurance third goal.

The seventh-place match featured AC Milan, with only one goal to their name in their first three matches, against hosts Aspire Academy, tough-luck losers to Espérance de Tunis in the quarter-finals.

Much of the focus of the match was on the penalty spot. On 27 minutes, AC Milan's Riccardo Martimbianco drew a penalty on Aspire Academy's Naif Alhadhrami in the area. Riccardo Tonin's shot was too good for the keeper and the Italian side led 1-0.

Aspire held fast in the face of an organised Milan side that dominated possession for most of the first half, and the hosts were rewarded on the one-hour mark. Ahmed Alganehi drew contact at 25 yards out, and his resulting free kick gave Niccolò Zanellato no chance.

The teams traded attacks as the second half progressed, with none finding fruition. In the ensuing penalty shootout, the first five kicks were good before Zanellato saved from Aspire's Mohammed Al-Naimi. Tonin calmly sent home the winner, securing victory and seventh place for Milan.

Today, the third-place game between Benfica and Espérance de Tunis begins at 3:30 pm, followed by the cup final between Paris Saint-Germain and Kashiwa Reysol at 5:55 pm.

FANS SHOW SUPPORT DURING CONSOLATION GAMES

FOOTBALL FANS FROM ACROSS DOHA BRAVED THE CHILLY WEATHER YESTERDAY TO WATCH AC MILAN, ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS, ASPIRE ACADEMY AND REAL MADRID COMPETE FOR POSITIONS FIVE THROUGH EIGHT DURING THE CONSOLATION MATCHES.

Rob Osborne, a British expat who has been to Aspire Zone to watch nearly all the matches in the tournament, said:

"This has been a fantastic tournament with so many top teams competing, so all the matches have been great to watch. I was rooting for Benfica and seeing them lose to Kashiwa in the semi-final was a huge upset, but I guess that's the nature of the game and all the teams leave the tournament stronger players."



Mohamed Khaled, from Egypt, said:

"I look forward to Al Kass every year, as great football is always guaranteed with the top teams that participate in the tournament. The final is going to be an extremely tough game for both teams — may the best team win."

NASSER AL KHATER LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

NASSER AL KHATER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL FOR THE SUPREME COMMITTEE FOR DELIVERY & LEGACY, TOOK IN THE AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP AND SPOKE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FOOTBALL IN QATAR

How crucial a role does Aspire Academy play in nurturing young footballers for Qatar clubs, and for Qatar's national football team?

Aspire Academy has a huge role and it also has a huge burden on its shoulders to make sure that it finds the best talent and to ensure they nurture this talent to make them ready to play for the national team at all different age levels. They shoulder a big brunt of the responsibility.

How big a role does Al Kass International Cup play in bringing the international playing field to Qatar in preparation for the World Cup?

To the credit of Al Kass, I think that it has become the go-to tournament for this age group. It is in its seventh edition, and has become quite prominent and I think it is only going to grow in stature. This is a joint effort between Aspire Academy, Qatar Football Association, and the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, and I think it's another opportunity to get teams to work together and to start creating synergies ahead of the World Cup.

It's important that these different teams work together. Of course, Al Kass is responsible for this tournament and I think it's good. It's a good opportunity in terms of giving people the experience of event management in its different aspects, whether that's transportation, accommodation, venue management or even managing the competition itself.

TOP PLAYERS OF THE DAY

Match 1

Fahad Al-Abdulla,
Aspire Academy

Anchored home side midfield in shootout loss

ASPIRE
ACADEMY

Match 2

Salim Diaby,
Aspire Football Dreams

Solid defence in win over Real Madrid

FOOTBALL
DREAMS

MILAN DEFEAT ASPIRE ON PENALTIES



AC Milan defeated Aspire Academy on penalties to take in a low-key encounter that finished 1-1 in normal time, giving the Italian side seventh place in the Al Kass International Cup.

In their previous three matches, despite showing plenty of attacking intent, the Rossoneri had managed to score only one goal, in their opener against Wydad – a match they should have won far more convincingly.

At the other end, Milan had leaked eight goals, so Aspire had every reason to feel confident, having acquitted themselves well throughout the tournament, and only narrowly failing to reach the semis due to a 1-0 defeat at the hands of Espérance de Tunis.

Milan were almost ahead on seven minutes when Daniel Maldini found space inside the area to the left of goal, but his powerful rising shot was beaten away by Mahmoud Abunada. The young keeper, who has been in fine form throughout Al Kass 2018, then showed great awareness to deny Riccardo Tonin from close range.

As the game reached the midway point of the first half, Milan were playing the more composed football, stringing a series of intelligent moves together but still lacking a cutting edge up front.

However, on 27 minutes, they were awarded a penalty when Aspire midfielder Naif Alhadhrami was adjudged to have shoved Riccardo Martimbianco as they tussled for possession in the area. Tonin's hard and low spot kick went straight down the middle, and Milan were in front.

The Italians were good value for their lead at this stage, having dominated possession and kept Aspire largely confined to their own half. On the stroke of the interval, they almost doubled their lead when Tonin advanced into the area and cut inside, before firing in a low shot that Abunada was again equal to.

As the second half commenced, Aspire upped their game as they sought a route back into the match, and a chance arrived on the hour, when Ahmed Alganehi was upended 25 yards from goal in a central position. The classy forward picked himself up and took the resultant free kick, producing a magnificent effort that curled into the left corner, leaving keeper Niccolo' Zanellato with no chance.

With the very next attack, Alganehi had a great chance to give his side the lead, having been played in from the left by Mekki Tombari, but he got under his shot from the edge of the area and it sailed over the bar.

Aspire were enjoying their best spell of the game, with the industrious Faisal Azadi dictating proceedings from a deep-lying position in central midfield.

However, with 15 minutes remaining Milan broke clear and had a golden chance to go ahead when Tonin rounded Abunada, but he was somehow unable to apply the finishing touch with the goal at his mercy.

The action swung to the other end, with Fahad Al-Abdulla meeting a corner with a firm header that Zanellato only just managed to keep out. Aspire sensed opportunity and, with five minutes remaining, Tombari sprinted clear down the right and fashioned a glorious chance, but his weak shot allowed the Milan keeper to save easily.

There was nothing to separate the sides at full time, and a penalty shootout ensued. The first five kicks were all converted, and then Zanellato saved well from Aspire's Mohammed Al-Naimi. It meant that Tonin, with Milan's fifth, was required to repeat his feat from earlier in the game to secure victory, which he did with a minimum of fuss.



ASPIRE
ACADEMY

X



MATCH SCORE

1 [4]

1 [5]

ASPIRE ACADEMY

AC MILAN

ASPIRE ACADEMY

ASPIRE

22	Mahmoud Abunada	GK
2	Mohamed Mohamed	DF
3	Abdulla Al-Ali	DF
4	Mohamed Aiash (C)	DF
5	Talal Faraj	DF
6	Faisal Azadi	MF
8	Naif Alhadhrami	MF
9	Mekki Tombari	FW
11	Ahmed Alganehi	FW
12	Mohammed Al-Naimi	DF
14	Fahad Al-Abdulla	MF



AC MILAN



1	Niccolo' Zanellato	GK
3	Gabriele Basani	DF
5	Edoardo Brusa	DF
6	Niccolo' Corti	FW
8	Marco Romano Frigerio	MF
9	Riccardo Tonin	FW
10	Daniel Maldini	FW
11	Siaka Haidara	FW
13	Riccardo Martimbianco (C)	DF
15	Andrea Porrini	MF
20	Tommaso Merletti	DF



Fahad Al-Abdulla, Aspire Academy
MVP of the Match



"We didn't play well in the first half, but the coach spoke to us during half time and we changed some tactics and improved our game. Congratulations to AC Milan for the win."

Ahmed Alganehi,
Aspire Academy



"The Al Kass tournament was a good chance for me to improve as a player. We learned a lot through playing against top teams and also had a lot of fun. Thank you to Al Kass for giving us this opportunity."

Siaka Haidara,
AC Milan

THE EXPERTS SAY...

Mark Tompkins –
Al Kass Analyst

Aspire Academy players seemed like they were in good spirits today. There was a chance for AC Milan in the early stages, which was not taken well, and Abunada made a great save.

It had been a positive start from AC Milan; they were showing a lot of quality in the beginning of the first half. Aspire Academy was temporarily down to 10 men when Mohamed was

getting some treatment, but he could not make it back into the game.

There was nothing much to choose between these two teams, coming up to a quarter into the second half.

AC Milan got a penalty kick, and Abunada went the wrong way. Tonin kept his composure, and it was 1-nil for AC Milan at half time.

Nick Summerbee –
Al Kass Analyst

Both teams looked a bit flat today; hopefully the managers had talked to them before the start of the second half, and we hoped they could show more spirit on the pitch.

That strike, right into the box, from Alganehi, was exactly what we needed to lift this game up a bit. Aspire Academy had come out more alive in the second half.

There was not much happening in midfield, and we were seeing some sloppy game from AC Milan, 70 minutes into the game.

I was not seeing any players coming off sweating; they had to be quick, fast and take their chances. This game was not one of those classic games that we had seen this tournament.

ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS TOO STRONG FOR MADRID



Aspire Football Dreams ran out deserving 3-1 winners against Real Madrid in an engrossing clash between two of the strongest squads at Al Kass 2018.

The teams had met earlier in the tournament, sharing the spoils in a 1-1 group game. Both sides were unlucky to have had their progress curtailed at the quarter-final stage, with Football Dreams going out on penalties to PSG, and Real falling victim to the now-familiar smash-and-grab tactics of Kashiwa Reysol.

All in all, it meant that there was little left to play for but pride in this encounter. So it was a credit to all concerned that this game quickly developed into a highly competitive affair.

Initially, there was little to choose between the teams, but Aspire were soon in the ascendancy, and took a deserved lead on 25 minutes. Real's Julio Escorcia was somewhat casual in attempting to play the ball out from the back, and was charged down by Salim Diaby inside the area. The attack-minded midfielder then squared for Christian Otobil to convert the simplest of chances.

Escorcia was again at fault on the half hour when he slipped and, in trying to recover possession, hacked down Sibiry Keita as he advanced into the area. The referee awarded

a penalty, but Keita's kick was too close to keeper Toni Ribera, who made a routine save to keep the score at 1-0.

Aspire kept the pressure up, but Real almost grabbed an equaliser against the run of play on 42 minutes. Striker Cristian Garcia latched onto a cross on the edge of the six-yard area, but he wafted the ball over the bar under pressure from AFD keeper Appiah Kubi.

Madrid upped the tempo as the second half got underway, belatedly asking questions of the AFD backline. And, on 55 minutes, Juan Latasa struck an equaliser when his fierce cross-shot squirmed under Kubi's body and crept over the line. The Spanish striker had looked marginally offside as he latched on to the through ball, but the goal stood.

There was no controversy about AFD's second, however, which arrived ten minutes later. Aspire's forwards worked the ball across the edge of Real's area from right to left, and Isaac Nuhu arrived late to stroke a splendid first-time curler into the far corner from 18 yards.

With 20 minutes remaining, Madrid coach Manuel Fernandez sacrificed midfielder Jorge Camunas for right-sided forward Alex Mendoza as Los Blancos sought a way back into the game.

Aspire held firm in the face of intense waves of pressure, and added a third with five minutes remaining, when Umar Lutalo rose highest – and unchallenged – to head home a corner from the left.

Outfought at every turn, Real's frustration now boiled over, and Javier Lancho was shown a straight red card – the first of the tournament – after a crude two-footed challenge on Djakaria Barro.

Ultimately, Football Dreams ran out worthy winners, securing fifth place at Al Kass 2018 in a match that would have made for a great final. Indeed, it says much about the professionalism of both sides that they approached this fixture with complete focus and determination, despite there being little at stake.

			
	FOOTBALL DREAMS	X	
MATCH SCORE	3		1
	<i>ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS</i>		<i>REAL MADRID</i>

ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS

DREAMS

22	Appiah Kubi	GK
3	Moussa Ndiaye	DF
4	Momodou Jallow	DF
5	Salim Diaby	DF
7	Dao Ismael Ouattara	FW
8	Leslie Adeniah (C)	MF
10	Sibiry Keita	MF
16	Jumai Jallow	FW
17	Abdel Nassere Mfouatah	DF
18	Shafic Ssebyala	DF
19	Christian Otabil	FW



REAL MADRID



13	Toni Ribera (C)	GK
2	Diego Lopez	DF
4	Sergio Santos	DF
8	Carlos Gonzalez	MF
10	Alvaro De Frias	MF
11	Javier Lancho	FW
14	Javier Diez	MF
15	Jorge Camuñas	MF
17	Cristian Garcia	FW
18	Julio Esorcia	DF
20	Juan Latasa	FW



Salim Diaby, *Aspire Football Dreams*
MVP of the Match



"We knew it wouldn't be an easy game playing against Real Madrid, but we gave it our all and managed to finish in a good position."

Jumai Jallow,
Aspire Football Dreams



"We played a good game, but unfortunately luck wasn't on our side and we were physically taking strain at this late stage in the Cup."

Toni Ribera,
Real Madrid

THE EXPERTS SAY...

Chris Makin –
Al Kass Analyst

Aspire Football Dreams looked like they had a great pace on the game today; and the Real Madrid players were really quick on their feet.

The white shirts were creating good opportunities, but they were not really hitting target.

The pressure finally paid off, when Otabil brought that first goal for Aspire Football Dreams; they really deserved that goal.

Once again, Real Madrid could not seem to put away their terrible record against Aspire Football Dreams tonight.

Manuel Fernandez was shouting in the background at the goalkeeper. The first half had been dominated completely by Aspire Football Dreams.

Mark Tompkins –
Al Kass Analyst

Real Madrid was kicking in a right to left direction in the second half. The referee did not spot a handball in this half; it should have been a penalty.

Kubi was claiming that there should have been an offside flag, when the first goal came in from Real Madrid; there were also a couple of complaints rising from the benches.

There was enough space on the ball, and Real Madrid was back in the game, when Latasa brought that first goal for Real Madrid.

It was a great finish from Nuhu, which put Aspire Football Dreams in the lead at second half. A free header from Lutalo made it 3-0 for Aspire Football Dreams. It had not been a happy night for the Spaniards.

ROAD TO THE CUP

QUARTER FINAL 1	26 JAN	15:30
SL BENFICA		
AC MILAN		

QUARTER FINAL 3	27 JAN	15:30
REAL MADRID		
KASHIWA REYSOL		

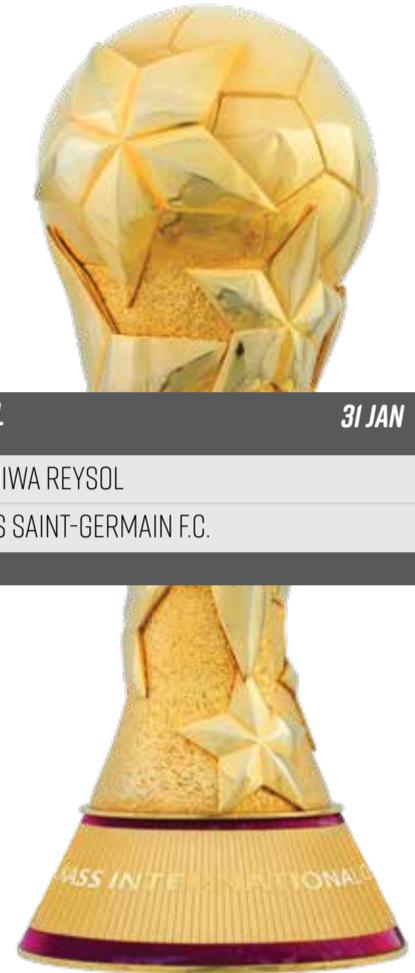
SEMI FINAL 1	29 JAN	17:55
SL BENFICA		
KASHIWA REYSOL		

QUARTER FINAL 2	26 JAN	17:55
ESPÉRANCE SPORTIVE DE TUNIS		
ASPIRE ACADEMY		

SEMI FINAL 2	29 JAN	17:55
ESPÉRANCE SPORTIVE DE TUNIS		
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.		

QUARTER FINAL 4	27 JAN	17:55
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.		
ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS		

FINAL	31 JAN	17:55
KASHIWA REYSOL		
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.		



TOP SCORERS



GONÇALO RAMOS
BENFICA

5 GOALS



MAO HOSOYA
KASHIWA REYSOL

5 GOALS

RAÚL GONZÁLEZ



TODAY'S MATCHES



×



15:30

ESPÉRANCE DE TUNIS

SL BENFICA



×



17:55

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C.

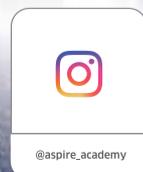
KASHIWA REYSOL

BEST BANNER



بطولة الكأس الدولية 2018

AI KASS International Cup 2018





اللجنة العليا
للمشاريع والبرث
Supreme Committee
for Delivery & Legacy

Join us in Delivering Amazing

The Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) and our stakeholders are designing and constructing the stadiums that will host millions of fans at the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™. Together, we are also planning host country operations for the tournament and ensuring the readiness of all other infrastructure required for its success.

The stadiums, precincts and other infrastructure are an important part of the amazing legacy the SC is delivering. We are also improving the lives and long-term prospects of workers on our projects. Using football as a catalyst for development, we are equipping young people locally and globally with the tools to build better futures for themselves and their communities. We are creating unprecedented opportunities for skills and career development in Qatar and across the Middle East. And we are providing vital support to the innovators and entrepreneurs who will contribute to Qatar's becoming a knowledge-based economy.



www.sc.qa

📍 @roadto2022

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
POSITION 9 - 12								
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
QUARTER FINALS								
Fri 26.01.	15	SL Benfica	6	VS	0	AC Milan	15:30	4
	16	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	1	VS	0	Aspire Academy	17:55	4
Sat 27.01.	17	Real Madrid	2	VS	3	Kashiwa Reysol	15:30	5
	18	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	0(4)	VS	0(2)	Aspire Football Dreams	17:55	5
PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8								
Sun 28.01.	19	Aspire Academy	0	VS	1	Aspire Football Dreams	15:30	4
	20	AC Milan	0	VS	4	Real Madrid	17:55	4
SEMI FINALS								
Mon 29.01.	21	Espérance Sportive de Tunis	2	VS	4	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	15:30	5
	22	SL Benfica	3 (7)	VS	3 (8)	Kashiwa Reysol	17:55	5
POSITION 5 - 8								
Tue 30.01.	23	Aspire Academy	1 (4)	VS	1 (5)	AC Milan	15:30	4
	24	Aspire Football Dreams	3	VS	1	Real Madrid	17:55	4
POSITION 3 - 4								
Wed 31.01.	25	Espérance Sportive de Tunis		VS		SL Benfica	15:30	5
FINAL								
Wed 31.01.	26	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.		VS		Kashiwa Reysol	17:55	5

Organizers



Strategic Partner



Platinum Sponsors



Official Partners



Official Medical Partner

Official Sportswear Partner



Official Carrier



Official Hotel



Hospitality Partner



Official Travel Agency



Branding Partner



Technical Partner



Al Kass International Cup