

DAILY NEWS

Thursday 07 Feb 2019



ROMA AND RANGERS: TOURNAMENT DANGERS



ALKASS[®]
INTERNATIONAL CUP

RAJA CLUB ATHLETIC 0 - 3 RANGERS FC

AS ROMA 5 - 2 PSG

& A RED CARD ON A NIGHT OF OUTSTANDING FOOTBALL

10 GOALS



Scottish youth international Cole McKinnon to neatly turn and fire home. Another talented international to impress was highly-rated midfielder Kai Kennedy, and his cool finish gave Rangers a 2-0 interval lead. Matt Yates added a third in the closing stages of the game to complete an emphatic victory for Rangers, who enjoyed 67% of possession.

Roma were every bit as impressive when smashing five goals past PSG keeper Louis Mouquet in a game that featured three penalties. Edoardo Bove's brace and Tommaso Milanese's strike had seen the Italians scorch into a 3-0 lead, and Nicola Zalewski added two more from the spot, even though Matteo Cancellieri had earlier missed a penalty.

PSG, who scored through Isaac Karamoko and skipper Kenny Nagera, have been far from their best this week, and have failed to impress in either of their games. Rangers and Roma, however, were full of skill, slick passing and quick thinking, and both sides will feel confident of going all the way in the competition.

Views of the coaches David McCallum, Glasgow Rangers head coach "Our players were terrific today. It was 11

men versus 10 men, and we controlled most of the game. Our boys produced their best football, but I hope they do not get too comfortable with this win because we have other games coming up. I am confident that, with this performance, our team will easily make it to the quarter-finals. Alkass is definitely an amazing tournament. We want our players to have the opportunity to play against the best teams in the world and prove themselves. You just have to look around - Aspire Academy is fantastic, and we are delighted with the facilities and the way we have been treated since we came here."

Fabrizio Piccareta, AS Roma head coach "It was quite clear that we were the better team. Although I knew PSG were the champions last year and won the first Alkass tournament, every year is different, and my team were well prepared. "The first match is always not easy, and I believe we can do even better, but I am proud of the players and we will make sure to improve as we did in the second half, in order to stay in the lead."

Laurent Huard, PSG head coach "It's very difficult this year, and I feel disappointed. Roma attacked very quickly from the very start. There were some technical problems, and maybe a lack of passion, but that is not an excuse."

Glasgow Rangers and Roma produced the most dominant performances of the tournament so far, brushing aside Raja Casablanca and reigning champions PSG respectively on the third day of the 2019 Alkass International Cup.

The likes of Real Madrid, Etoile Sportive Du Sahel and Spartak Moscow have conjured moments of outstanding creativity and goalscoring prowess this week, but Rangers and Roma played well for the full 90 minutes and were full value for their victories.

Moroccans Raja had been impressive when defeating hosts Aspire Academy two days earlier but, despite being roared on by their enthusiastic fans, they had no answer to the skill and passing movement of the Scottish outfit. Their chances were not helped when defender Lahya Laamech was sent off after 20 minutes after bringing down the former England Under-15 international Nathan Young-Coombes on the edge of the box.

Raja were already a goal down by then as the impressive Young-Coombes, who recently joined the Gers from Chelsea, had set up



"THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR YOUNG LADS HERE IS INCREDIBLE. THEY'VE PLAYED VERY WELL AGAINST THE RAJA TEAM. IT'S THE FIRST AL KASS TOURNAMENT I'VE BEEN AT. SOME OF THE OTHER GUYS HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE. IT'S GREAT, FANTASTIC."

"WHEN I HEARD ROMA WAS PLAYING, I IMMEDIATELY CAME HERE BECAUSE I TRY NOT TO MISS ANY OF THEIR GAMES, AND I HAVE EVEN BEEN TO ROME TO WATCH THEM PLAY IN THEIR HOME GROUND. ROMA DID NOT PERFORM WELL IN PREVIOUS TOURNAMENTS, BUT THEY ARE VERY ORGANIZED THIS YEAR AND I HAVE HIGH HOPES FROM THEM."

"WE CAME TO SEE OUR TEAM! OUR BLOOD IS GREEN LIKE RAJA CASABLANCA!"



TOP PLAYERS - MATCHDAY THREE

MATCH 1

Kai Alexander KENNEDY, Rangers
1 goal for Rangers in their 3-0 win over Raja Club Athletic

MATCH 2

Edoardo BOVE, Roma
2 goals for Roma in their 5-2 win over PSG



RANGERS ROMP HOME AGAINST 10-MAN RAJA

Glasgow Rangers ran out easy winners against Raja Casablanca in a match that the young Scots dominated from start to finish.

Raja had come into the game off the back of a narrow victory over Aspire Academy, thanks in no small part to their Qatari opponents being reduced to nine men. This time round, it was the Moroccans' turn to face a numerical disadvantage, although they struggled to cope against the well-drilled Scots from the outset.

After a strong start, Rangers went ahead on 15 minutes. Cole McKinnon set off on a driving run into opposition territory before laying off to Nathan Coombes, who beat his man down the left before cutting back from the byline. McKinnon pounced, turning sharply and firing a rising drive into the roof of the net.

Coombes went close to doubling the advantage five minutes later, seizing on a low free kick to spin and drill a low shot that Yassine Zoubir struggled to hold. The Rangers winger was terrorising the Casablanca backline and, on 22 minutes, he forced an ill-timed lunge from right back Yahya Laamech on the edge of the box. Australian referee Reibelt reached straight for her pocket, showing Laamech his second yellow of the game, which was immediately – and inevitably – followed by a red.

Things soon got worse for the Moroccans, when livewire Kai Kennedy latched onto a

pass from the right, jinking effortlessly past two defenders before burying the ball low to the keeper's left.

The best that Raja had managed in the opening exchanges was a succession of free kicks from wide on the right, each of which had floated harmlessly into the arms of Rangers keeper Lewis Budinauckas. Reduced to ten men, they suddenly found it difficult to get out of their own half. However, just before the interval, they almost reduced the deficit when Elhoussine Rahimi was set free down the right by a defence-splitting cross-field pass. The tall winger did the difficult part by rounding Budinauckas, but was then unable to direct the ball home from a wide angle.

But it was the boys in blue who were undoubtedly in the ascendancy, and they tightened their grip on the game in the second period.

Rangers' senior side is currently enjoying a renaissance under the management of Steven Gerrard. The Liverpool legend was once described by none other than Zinedine Zidane as the best midfielder in the world, and his winning combination of talent, determination and hard work remains an inspiration to footballers everywhere, not least this talented group of Glaswegian youngsters. And, if Gerrard was watching from afar, he would undoubtedly have been impressed by the tenacity shown by his young charges,

with Coombes delivering a particularly eye-catching performance. On 65 minutes, he almost scored with an impudent overhead kick, only for Zoubir to produce a stunning save to tip the ball over.

Moments later, Ross McCausland cut in from the left, but his low shot rolled just wide of the far post. And, with 10 minutes remaining, the pacy attacker once again broke free inside the area and should have made it three, but his weak shot from 12 yards out did not unduly trouble Zoubir.

The traffic was by now almost entirely one way, and substitute Alexander Lowry spurned another chance moments later when one-on-one with the keeper, choosing to shoot when he had the option of rounding the Moroccan stopper. Ciaran Dixon then set off on a powerful surge down the right, unleashing a strong shot that Zoubir did brilliantly to keep out, but the Rangers midfielder was first to the rebound, cutting back for Matt Yates to apply the simplest of finishes.

Seconds later, Reibelt pointed to the spot after Dixon went to ground under a challenge from Abdellah Azrou, only for VAR to make its now customary intervention. The referee amended her decision and awarded a free kick instead, although replays suggested there had been little or no contact. In the event, it mattered little, as the final whistle sounded seconds later.



X



MATCH SCORE

0

3

RAJA CLUB ATHLETIC

RANGERS FC

RAJA CLUB ATHLETIC

- GK Yassine ZOUBIR
- DF Walid HAOUZI
- DF Adham EL KHALFY
- DF Abdelkhalek CHOUROUKI (C)
- DF Yahya LAAMECH
- MF Rayane MOURAJID
- MF Oussama ZEMRAOUI
- MF Anas MTITACH
- FW Chiboub ABDENNABI
- MF Ismail EL IDRISSE EL ARARI
- FW Elhoussine RAHIMI



RANGERS FC

- GK Lewis Kevin BUDINAUCKAS
- DF David Kyle MCCLELLAND (C)
- DF Harris David OCONNOR
- MF Ciaran DICKSON
- MF Kai Alexander KENNEDY
- MF Murray Joseph MILLER
- DF Leon John Phillips THOMSON
- MF Cole MCKINNON
- DF Matthew HENDERSON
- FW Ross Leslie Alan MCCAUSLAND
- FW Nathan Jay YOUNG COOMBES



MAN OF THE MATCH

Kai Alexander KENNEDY,
Rangers
MVP of the Match



THE EXPERTS SAY...

Rhodri Williams -
Al Kass Analyst

I know that Raja Casablanca had Yahya Laamech sent off and, after that, Rangers dominated the game but to be honest they were dominating before that. They look extremely strong, they're physically strong, and also very mature in the way they play. This looks like a real mature team who could maybe go quite far in this tournament, even win it. The man of the match, Kai Kennedy, has trained with the Rangers' first team so he's already performing at the highest level and that showed. Along with Aslan Mutaliev of Spartak Moscow he is one of the players of the tournament so far.





THE SUCCESS STORIES OF FRANCIS UZOHO AND MOUSSA WAGUE

FROM AL KASS TRIUMPH IN 2014 TO THE 2018 FIFA WORLD CUP

It was January 23, 2014, when the U17 sides of Real Madrid and Aspire International faced each other in the final of the Al Kass International Cup in Doha. After the game ended 1-1, a penalty shoot-out had to decide the winner. Moussa Wague, Aspire's young defender, was the first one to step up for his team and he kept a cool head and scored from the spot. In the end, it was up to his team-mate and goalkeeper Francis

Uzoho to clinch the victory by saving Javier Carrera's shot and securing the 4-3 win after penalties.

Both Wague and Uzoho had proven throughout the 2014 Al Kass International Cup, that they were able to deal with pressure and to make the right decisions in challenging situations. Attributes that would be beneficial in their future careers and especially when both of them had their international breakthrough representing their respective countries, Senegal and Nigeria, at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

Former Aspire Football Dreams goalkeeper Uzoho, who was part of the Nigerian national team that won the U17 FIFA World Cup in 2013, made his debut in the 2018 FIFA World Cup starting in the 2-0 defeat of his home country in their first group match against Croatia, where he was only beaten by an unlucky own goal by Etebo (32') and a Modric penalty (71'). In the final minute of the game, Uzoho produced another great save against Real Madrid's Kovacic.

The 19-year-old keeper was the fourth youngest player in the 2018 FIFA World Cup and he also started in Nigeria's 2-0 win against Iceland and the 1-2 defeat by Argentina.

Uzoho, who was born on October 28, 1998 in Nwangele, originally started as a striker before putting on the goalkeeper gloves at the age of 12. After being part of Aspire Football Dreams from 2013 to 2017, he joined

La Liga club Deportivo de La Coruna's reserve team, where he impressed enough to be moved up to the senior team where he kept a clean sheet on his debut in a match which ended in a goalless draw against Eibar on October 15, 2017. At the age of 18 years and 352 days, he became the youngest ever foreign goalkeeper to make his debut in La Liga, and the second-youngest player to appear in the league during the campaign, only behind Real Madrid's Achraf Hakimi, who had actually played in the 2014 and 2015 editions of the Al Kass International Cup and who also played all three games for Morocco at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Via Belgium to FC Barcelona While Uzoho, who made his debut for Nigeria's senior team against Argentina on November 14, 2017, joined Segunda División side Elche CF on loan after returning from Russia, his former Aspire International team-mate Wague took a detour to Spain. By the time of the 2018 FIFA World Cup, Wague played for KAS Eupen, having joined the Belgium club that is owned by Aspire Zone Foundation, in 2016 after coming out of the AFD-program.

His profile continued to rise in Russia. By scoring for Senegal in a 2-2 against Japan, Wague became the youngest African goal scorer in the history of World Cup finals, at the age of only 19 years and 263 days. Playing in all games for Senegal in the group stage against Poland (1-2), Japan (2-2)

and Columbia (0-1), many clubs expressed an interest in signing the promising young defender.

As had always been the dream of Wague to play for FC Barcelona, Aspire Zone-owned club KAS Eupen and FC Barcelona agreed a transfer of the Senegalese, who kicked off his new chapter in Spain in the 2018-19 season by playing games for the club's B-team. As a potential player for Barcelona's first team, the right-back has also been registered as a part of the UEFA Champions League squad for the knockout fixtures, starting with the Round of 16 game against Lyon in February 2019.

Memories of the 2014 Al Kass International Cup Undoubtedly, many things have happened in the careers of Wague and Uzoho since they celebrated winning the Al Kass trophy together in 2014. Successfully making the step into professional football, taking on the challenge of going abroad to play in Europe and, of course, being in the world's spotlight at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia – these are just some of their achievements after Al Kass. Nonetheless, according to both players, the experience they made competing in Doha five years ago was a very valuable one.

"We thought it was spectacular and we were quite excited to get the chance to play against teams from all over the world. Real Madrid from Spain, Fluminense from Brazil

or Aspire Academy from Qatar, all teams were completely different, but each one of us gave his best and we were up to the challenge," says Wague.

Uzoho also remembers the great team spirit within the group. "Everyone was very focused, everyone knew what he had to do on the pitch and we helped each other in the game as good as we could. Some might say that winning the final in a penalty shoot was lucky, but we had beaten Real Madrid already in the group stage and we knew that we would have a chance to beat them again in the final, if we showed the same focus and determination as in the games before."

Did this tournament have an effect on their future careers? According to Wague, it definitely did. "It was a big stage for us, the environment was very professional, the competition level was very high. Winning this cup definitely showed us that we can compete with some of the world's best and that was definitely very motivating for all of us to keep on working hard in order to make our dreams come true to play one day on a big stage as professional footballers." And there is not much stage bigger than a FIFA World Cup...



ROMAN CONQUERORS ARE FAR TOO GOOD FOR THE REIGNING CHAMPIONS



Roma were the first to threaten in the third minute but Louis Mouquet comfortably saved Mory Bamba's effort. The Romans then took control of the game with two goals in as many minutes. Bamba crossed for Edoardo Bove on 11 minutes and his neat side-footed shot gave Mouquet no chance. Just a minute later the French keeper was picking the ball out of the net again after Tommaso Milanese produced a powerful drive after being set up by the influential Bove. Roma's dominant start continued when Bove made it 3-0 from close range after Nicola Zalewski's flick on and the latter almost made it four just seconds later. PSG, the most successful team in the history of the tournament with three wins, were certainly on the backfoot but Isaac Karamoko pulled one back when Roma keeper Pietro Boer's save fell to the French striker who sent a left-foot volley into the net. Roma had a chance to restore their three-goal advantage four minutes before the

break when being awarded a penalty but Matteo Cancellieri tried to be too clever and his chipped effort from the spot came back off the woodwork. Roma were awarded another penalty on 51 minutes when Cancellieri's shot hit the hand of Gaylord Kitenge and Milanese made no mistake from the spot as the Italians went 4-1 ahead. Amazingly Roma were awarded a third penalty of the night on 57 minutes when Bove was clipped in the box and, after analyzing the VAR TV screen, the referee pointed to the spot and Zalewski coolly slotted home. PSG's star striker and skipper Kenny Nagera scored a consolation five minutes from time when heading home after Daniel Labila's effort was parried by Mouquet. Nagera, along with Anfone Ahamada and Herve Malebe, were in last year's successful side but on the evidence of this display Roma have every chance of becoming the first Italian side to lift the trophy.

Reigning champions PSG were crushed by a superb display from Italian side Roma, leaving the Parisians with just one point from their opening two games. Denied by a last-minute goal from last year's runners-up Kashiwa Reysol two days earlier, PSG were never in the match as the Italians started like an express train.



X



MATCH SCORE

5

AS ROMA

2

PSG

AS ROMA

- GK Pietro BOER
- MF Andrea ASTROLOGO
- MF Mory BAMBA
- MF Edoardo BOVE
- DF Alessio BUTTARO
- FW Matteo CANCELLIERI
- MF Tommaso Pantaleo MILANESE
- DF Vincenzo Venturino MUTEBA
- DF Samuele SUFFER
- MF Filippo TRIPI (C)
- FW Nicola ZALEWSKI



PSG

- GK Louis MOUQUET
- DF Gaylord KITENGE
- DF Abdoulaye KAMARA
- DF Hubert MBUYI MUAMBA
- DF Soumaula COULIBALY
- MF Nathan BITUMAZALA
- MF Hervé MALEBE
- FW Tidjany CHABROL
- FW Isaac KARAMOKO
- FW Kenny NAGERA (C)
- FW Samuel NOIREAU



MAN OF THE MATCH

Edoardo BOVE, Roma
MVP of the Match



THE EXPERTS SAY...

Nick Summerbee – Al Kass Analyst

I was very surprised by how easily PSG were beaten. They've won it three times before and I don't know if they've got a younger side this time but the first game we saw them play they didn't seem very strong. We thought tonight they would bounce back and it wasn't to be the case, but it was a very strong Roma. Without a shadow of a doubt Roma can win the tournament. I would say Spartak Moscow, Real Madrid, Roma, Etoile Sportive all have a chance. We're starting to see more quality coming through. It's a little bit of a slow starter but now we're slowly starting to see a better football. Rangers as well by the way. Rangers have a chance as well. It's getting good now, it's getting exciting.



Qatar

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GAMES SCHEDULE

GROUP STAGE

GROUP A		GROUP B		GROUP C		GROUP D	
 Aspire Academy	 Paris Saint Germain FC	 FC Bayern München	 Real Madrid CF				
 Rangers FC	 AS Roma	 Altinordu FK	 FC Spartak Moscow				
 Raja Club Athletic	 Kashiwa Reysol	 Etoile Sportive Du Sahel	 Suwon Samsung F.C				

DATE	NO.	TEAMS	TIME	VENUE
Mon. 4 Feb	1	Paris Saint Germain FC	16:35	5
	2	Aspire Academy	18:45	5
Tue. 5 Feb	3	FC Bayern München	16:35	4
	4	FC Spartak Moscow	18:45	4
Wed. 6 Feb	5	Raja Club Athletic	16:35	5
	6	AS Roma	18:45	5
Thu. 7 Feb	7	Altinordu FK	16:35	4
	8	Real Madrid CF	18:45	4
Fri. 8 Feb	9	Aspire Academy	16:35	5
	10	Kashiwa Reysol	18:45	5
Sat. 9 Feb	11	FC Bayern München	16:35	4
	12	Suwon Samsung F.C	18:45	4

POSITIONS 9 - 12

Sun. 10 Feb	13	Position 9	VS	Position 10	16:35	4
	14	Position 11		Position 12	19:00	4

QUARTER FINALS

Sun. 10 Feb	15	1st Group A	VS	2nd Group C	16:35	5
	16	1st Group C		2nd Group A	19:00	5
Mon. 11 Feb	17	1st Group B	VS	2nd Group D	16:35	5
	18	1st Group D		2nd Group B	19:00	5

PLAY OFFS POSITIONS 8 - 5

Tue. 12 Feb	19	Loser Game No. 15	VS	Loser Game No. 18	16:35	4
	20	Loser Game No. 16		Loser Game No. 17	19:00	4

SEMI FINALS

Wed. 13 Feb	21	Winner Game No. 15	VS	Winner Game No. 18	16:35	5
	22	Winner Game No. 16		Winner Game No. 17	19:00	5

PLAY OFFS POSITIONS 8 - 5

Thu. 14 Feb	23	Loser Game No. 19	VS	Loser Game No. 20	15:00	4
	24	Winner Game No. 19		Winner Game No. 20	17:45	4

POSITIONS 3 - 4 & GRAND FINAL

Fri. 15 Feb	25	Loser Game No. 21	VS	Loser Game No. 22	15:00	5
	26	Winner Game No. 21		Winner Game No. 22	17:45	5

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