

DAILY NEWS

Wednesday 19 Feb 2020

ALKASS[®]
INTERNATIONAL CUP



IT'S A KNOCKOUT!

 FC INTER MILANO 0/1

 ALTINORDU FK ★

 SPORTING CLUBE DE PORTUGAL 4/4

 FC ZENIT SAINT PETERSBURG

THE FARMHOUSE AND THE FACTORY

HOW BARCELONA AND REAL MADRID INVEST IN YOUTH (PART 2)



They are perhaps the two biggest football clubs on the planet. They each have glittering, trophy-laden histories. They have millions of supporters across the globe. And - famously - they each have distinctive systems when it comes to recruiting and coaching their young players, who all have dreams of making it into the first team setups at Barcelona or Real Madrid.

As this year's Al Kass International Cup is graced by the dual presence of Spain's 'Big Two', 'Daily News' takes a special, two-part look at the youth system at each of these gigantic institutions: Yesterday, we explored La Fabrica (The Factory) in Madrid. Today, we focus on FC Barcelona's 'La Masia' (The Farmhouse).

Since the late 1970s, La Masia has produced a string of magnificent players who have made the grade at the very highest level. Its illustrious rollcall includes the man whose goal gave Spain its first World Cup final triumph; one of the leading managers in the game today; and arguably the finest footballer in history. And Andrés Iniesta, Pep Guardiola and Lionel Messi are just three of the many multitalented maestros who have passed through the doors of La Masia on their way to becoming some of the brightest stars in world football.

Although La Masia was officially founded in 1979, Barcelona's youth policy can be traced back 120 years. It was in 1901 that Lluís d'Ossó - the club's secretary of the board of directors and sometime striker - created their second, third and fourth-string sides.

In 1918, a directive came from the club's hierarchy to establish more youth and children's teams. However, it was many years before the visionary idea of La Masia begun to crystallise.

THE ELECTION OF ENRIC LLAUDET AS BARCELONA'S PRESIDENT IN 1961 WAS LARGELY PREDICATED UPON HIS PROMISE TO CREATE A RESIDENTIAL

YOUTH ACADEMY, WITH THE AIM OF EVENTUALLY BUILDING A TEAM "FORMED BY BOYS TRAINED IN THE STYLE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CLUB."

During the construction of what was to become Barcelona's new stadium, Camp Nou, in the mid-1950s, La Masia, a stone farmhouse built in 1702, had become a logistical hub. It was then repurposed as a social club for Barca members, before being officially unveiled as the youth development headquarters on October 20, 1979. One of the project's early innovations, initially viewed with scepticism but nowadays considered part and parcel of every young player's development, was to place an emphasis on traditional education alongside football, and teachers were assigned to individual teams.

Despite adopting this holistic approach, evidence of tangible progress remained elusive. And, by the 1980s, La Masia's relative stagnation was compounded by the resounding success of arch-rivals Real Madrid's youth system. However, in May 1988, Johan Cruyff was appointed club manager. Suddenly, everything changed.

ONE OF CRUYFF'S FIRST DECISIONS WAS TO MAKE THE 3-4-3 FORMATION MANDATORY ACROSS THE CLUB'S 13 SIDES, WITH RAPID ATTACKING PLAY PLACED AT THE HEART OF BARCA'S FOOTBALLING PHILOSOPHY. MOREOVER, THE DUTCH LEGEND WAS KEEN TO SEE YOUNG PLAYERS PUSHED OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES TO LEARN THE GAME AT A QUICKER PACE, FAST-TRACKED THROUGH THE AGE

GROUPS AND, IF READY, GIVEN A SHOT AT PLAYING FOR THE FIRST XI.

Cruyff gave first-team debuts to no fewer than 32 La Masia graduates in seven seasons at the Camp Nou helm. In May 1992, his innovations bore fruit when Barcelona won the club's first ever European Cup. A 1-0 extra-time triumph over Italian side Sampdoria at Wembley Stadium featured two La Masia graduates in right-back Albert Ferrer and Guardiola, who was then a highly-rated holding midfielder.

Sixteen years later, the wheel turned full circle as Guardiola was appointed Barcelona manager. In his first season he won a league and cup double and the club's third European Cup, now rebranded as the UEFA Champions League - the youngest-ever coach to achieve the feat, at the age of just 38.

Another European crown followed within two years, with Guardiola intent on utilising La Masia-honed talent as far as possible. Indeed, Barca's 2009 and 2011 Champions League final line-ups featured seven homegrown players, confirming their youth development programme as the most successful of the modern era.

Yet, nothing lasts forever, and the same year that Barcelona played Manchester United off the park in the 2011 final, the original La Masia building was closed and replaced by a new purpose-built facility, albeit one which retained the old name. A year later, Guardiola left Barca, having led the club to an astonishing 14 honours in just four years. On the national stage, nine of the Spanish squad that lifted the World Cup in 2010 were La Masia graduates, including match-winner Iniesta.

Since those incredible high points, Barcelona's recruitment policy has become a little more conventional, and they have made some major deals for the likes of Neymar, Luis Suarez and Philippe Coutinho. Nevertheless, youth players continue to make the fabled journey from La Masia to Camp Nou, including midfielder Carles Alena and

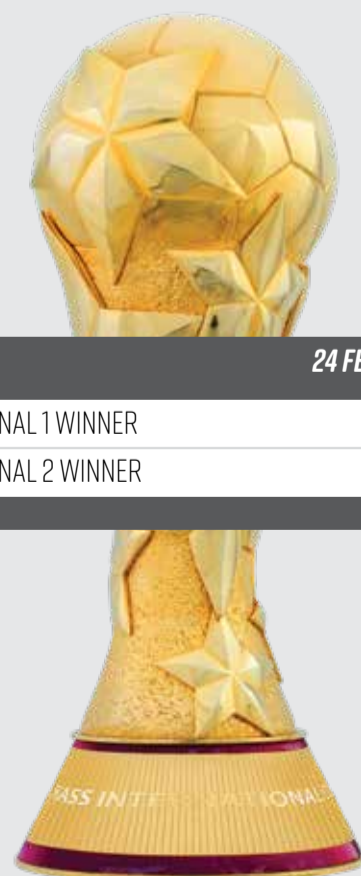
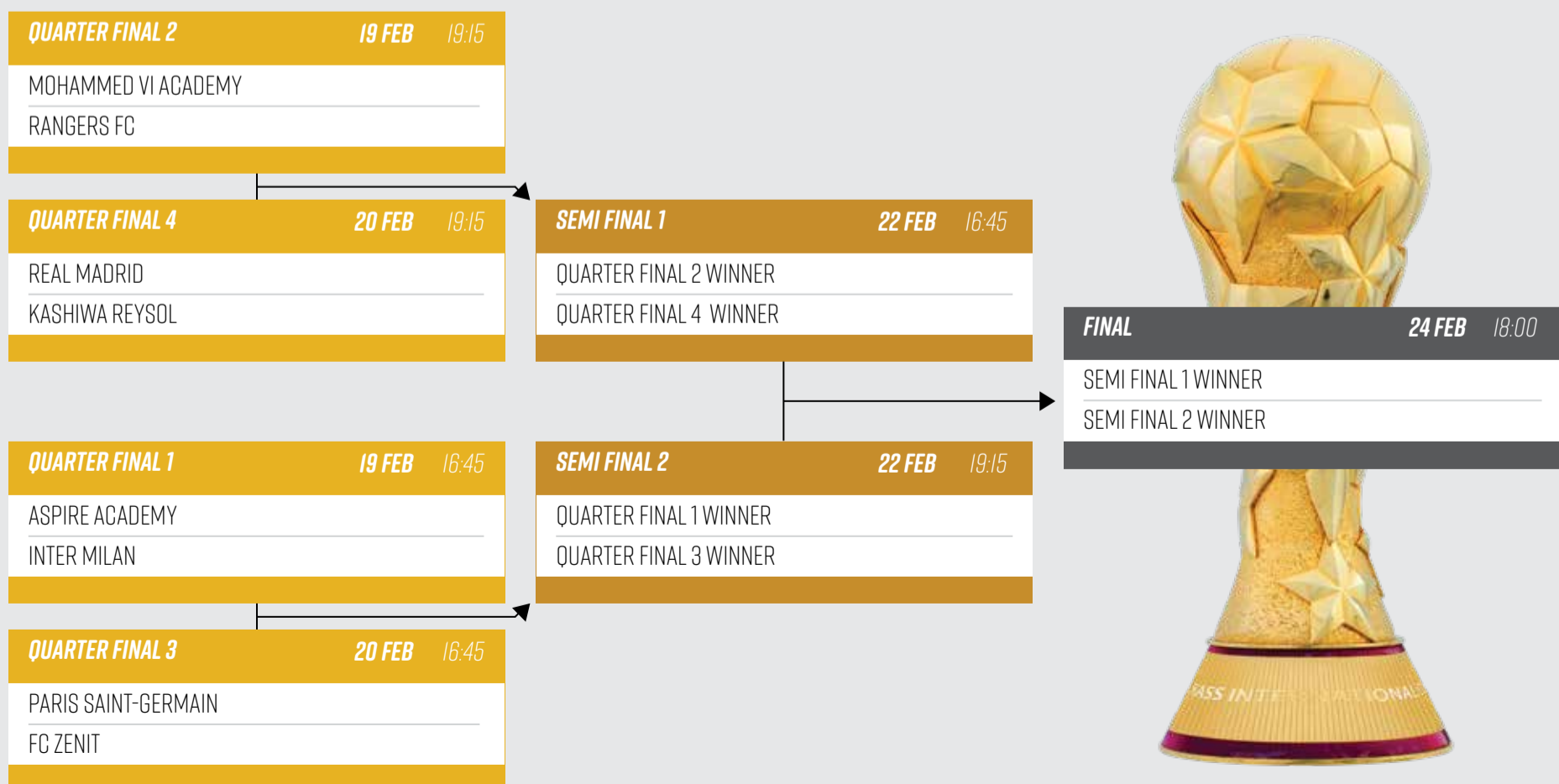


utility man Sergi Roberto.

This year's crop of Under-16s has suffered great misfortune in being eliminated from Al Kass International Cup at the group stage, given that many seasoned observers felt they were the best side in the tournament. But regardless of this setback, the players can hold their heads high, safe in the knowledge that they continue to carry the torch of La Masia.



ROAD TO THE CUP



THERE'S NO TURKISH DELIGHT AT AL KASS, DESPITE AN ALTINORDU WIN



Turkish academy side Altinordu defeated Italians Inter Milan in the Al Kass International Cup, but it wasn't enough to prevent them finishing bottom of Group C.

Altinordu had given themselves a huge task to stay in the competition after losing 3-0 to Mohammed VI Academy of Morocco in their opener and they needed to win by three goals to progress to the quarter-finals.

Given that Italian sides are notoriously solid defensively, Altinordu were never likely to reach the last eight but their hopes were helped by the fact Inter made the maximum possible number of changes – nine, as squads consist of 20 players – following their 3-1 opening match victory over Mohammed VI Academy.

Altinordu, meanwhile, made just four changes and they produced a much improved display. They went close after just 45 seconds, Ernesto Greco throwing himself at full stretch to keep out Hakan Ozturk's well-struck shot.

It was the 20th minute until another good opportunity presented itself, but Inter striker Dennis Curatolo failed to connect with a header following a corner when well placed to score.

Ozturk was the main thrust of Altinordu's attacks and he fired wide on 26 minutes before setting up the only goal of the match one minute later.

The striker curled a ball towards the edge of the box and Greco came out to try and claim it, only to be caught well out of position and Muhammet Turan sent a superb chip over the stranded keeper to give Altinordu the lead.

Most of Inter's chances were falling to Curatolo and he had a couple of efforts on goal without worrying the Turkish keeper. Kifle Gambato and Nicolo Uberti saw efforts blocked as Inter pushed for a first-half equalizer but Altinordu went in at the break with a narrow lead, despite having had just 41% of the possession.

Seckin Firinci was sent through on goal on the hour-mark following a superb pass by Furkan Yontem but he failed to get his effort on target. The flag went up for offside to save his blushes, although he did appear to be onside.

The Italians went close to an equalizer midway through the second half as Federico Motti let fly with a fine half-volley but player of the match Atahan Arslan pulled off a superb save to keep the Turks ahead.

Despite Inter's efforts, Altinordu held on for the win – a result that saw the Italians finish second in the group while the Turkish side finished bottom.

Altinordu, based in the Turkish west coast city of Izmir, are more noted for the youth set-up than their senior side. That youth set-up has produced talents such as Roma's speedy winger Cengiz Under and Leicester City defender Caglar Soyuncu, who is currently making a name for himself in the English Premier League.

This victory over Inter was more like the displays they produced at Al Kass last year, where they held German giants Bayern Munich to a draw, but that could in part be down to Inter making so many changes.

The Italians have reached the semi-finals in each of their two previous visits to Doha and will be hoping to go even better this time.

They will get just 24 hours' rest though and now face a very tough test in the semi-finals where they take on debutants Mohammed VI Academy.

Altinordu, meanwhile, will face Barcelona to decide their exact position in the competition.

0
INTER MILAN

X

1
ALTINORDU



INTER MILAN

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| GK ERNESTO GRECO | FW KIFLE GAMBATO |
| DF NICOLO PERIN | DF RICCARDO SILBA |
| MF RICCARDO NAVA | DF ANCIET GRIECO |
| MF GABRIELE MENEGATTI | MF FEDERICO MOTTI |
| MF SIMONE BONAVIDA © | FW DENNIS CURATOLO |
| MF NICOLO UBERTI | |



ALTINORDU

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| GK ATAHAN ARSLAN | DF ILKER AKAR |
| DF BERKE KILIC | MF ERSIN ERSOY |
| DF KEREM ERDEM © | MF MUHAMMET TURAN |
| FW HAKAN OZTURK | FW SECKIN FIRINCI |
| MF MELIH ISTAR | MF FURKAN YONTEM |
| DF ARDA KIRGIL | |



PLAYER OF THE MATCH

Atahan Arslan

"I'm very happy to receive this prize, but I got to say that the whole team deserve this! We were hoping to go to the quarterfinals, but we did not get lucky. This is a great experience and I'm just happy to be here."

THE EXPERTS SAY...

COMMENTATOR - CHRIS MAKIN

“

Great reaction from Altinordu. With their first game against Mohammed VI Academy, didn't really give a good performance, but tonight, they responded. The coach should be pleased with the performance and the result. They were more dangerous, and the pace of the game was quicker. They actually might consider themselves a bit unlucky not to get a better result."

"It's a very tight tournament. If there's one team that stands out for me, maybe it would be Real Madrid, purely because of how many goals they scored so far. But PSG also look very strong, as well as Rangers who played well against Aspire Academy yesterday."

”

INTER MILAN COACH

Gabriele Bonacina

“

We played with 9 new players from the first match, including two matches we are playing with 20 players, now we are concentrated on the next match, we are trying to play in a better way and score more goals. We will play the match against Rangers with the same players and same strategy we are going to try play even better than the first two matches

”



ALTINORDU F.K. HEAD COACH

Murat Ozkutukcu

“

This has been a good experience for the team. We prepared well for this game. After the first goal, we thought we could make it, but regardless of the score, you simply can't buy this experience - Al Kass cup. For next year, Altinordu will be looking to play as a team that performs at the highest level all through the 90 minutes of every game.

”



HEAR IT FROM THE FANS

MUJEEB, AN INTER MILAN FAN:



“

I'm a big fan of Inter Milan. This is my first time at the tournament but I'm looking forward to coming back and watching the team play in the finals.

”

GHADA, AN ALTINORDU FAN

“

I'm here at Al Kass Cup today with my children to support the Turkish team. My children are having a fantastic time. The overall organisation of the tournament is spectacular and the atmosphere at Aspire Academy is beyond amazing!

”



IMRAH, AN ALTINORDU F.K. SUPPORTER, SAID:

“

As Turkish people living and working in Doha, we're happy to start with a score of 1-0 so far. We're proud of the team and we're looking forward to seeing them reach the finals and hopefully take the cup home.

”





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KOZLOV'S LATE EQUALISER BREAKS SPORTING HEARTS



Zenit St Petersburg midfielder Igor Kozlov grabbed a dramatic equaliser just 90 seconds from the end of normal time to send Sporting Clube de Portugal crashing out of the Al Kass International Cup.

Skipper Mateus Fernandes looked set to be a two-goal hero for Sporting but Kozlov had other ideas and he struck late to send FC Zenit into the quarter-finals where they will face Paris Saint Germain.

A keenly-contested clash saw play flowing from end to end throughout the 90 minutes, producing the second 4-4 draw in the space of two days following Aspire Academy's match with Glasgow Rangers a day earlier.

Zenit go through as runners-up of Group D, which produced 21 goals in just three matches with both of these teams having lost to Real Madrid earlier in the tournament.

Sporting, needing to win the progress, started positively and Youssef Chermiti saw an early effort blocked. The Lisbon side took the lead on 15 minutes though following a fine move down the left-hand side.

Influential striker Diogo Travassos produced an excellent backheel to send Martim Marques clear down the wing, where he sent an enticing ball into the box that was flicked goalwards by Chermiti. Zenit goalkeeper Bogdan Moskivchev blocked the effort but

Fernandes was following up to score.

Sporting's second followed on 20 minutes and came courtesy of a fine solo goal by Malam Mane, who received the ball in his own half wide on the right. He outpaced two Zenit players before cutting inside and unleashing a powerful left-foot shot that beat the outstretched hand of Zenit skipper Moskvichev.

The Russians, who gave Real Madrid a tough test before losing 5-3 in their opener, found a way back into the match on 23 minutes when Evgenii Pshennikov's right-wing cross hit the arm of Rui Carreira and Hussein Sayed pointed to the spot. Nikita Luzan made no mistake from the penalty, but Sporting were soon back on the attack when Chermiti saw an effort blocked by Moskvichev.

At the other end, Iliia Rodionov crossed low for Pshennikov who just failed to get on the end of it. Travassos then stung the palms of Moskvichev with a powerful shot on 39 minutes after being teed up by Tiago Octavio as Sporting looked for a third, but instead they found themselves pegged back to 2-2 just a minute later with a powerful header by Iliia Kirsh.

A superb end to the first half saw Sporting back in front just a minute later when Travassos sent in a perfect cross for Chermiti to tap in.

Sporting fully deserved their half-time lead and they started the second half well with Fernandes firing just over while Mane did well to get in a good position but then sent his shot well over.

Sporting extended their lead on 58 minutes when Mane nutmegged Pavel Kulakov before squaring for Fernandes to sidefoot home for his second of the night.

Zenit reduced the arrears on 61 minutes when Sergei Muradian rose well to head powerfully past Diego Calai, who hit his head against the post in trying to keep it out.

Chermiti should have restored Sporting's two-goal advantage but he shot straight at the keeper's leg, and it proved costly as Zenit grabbed a dramatic equaliser when Kozlov got in behind the Sporting defence and slotted past Calai.



SPORTING CLUBE DE PORTUGAL

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| GK DIEGO CALAI | FW DIOGO TRAVASSOS |
| DF RICARDO PIEDADE | DF DAVID MONTEIRO |
| DF RUI CARREIRA | MF RAFAEL BESUGO |
| MF TIAGO OCTAVIO | FW MARTIM MARQUES |
| FW YOUSSEF CHERMITI | FW MARIAM MANE |
| MF MATEUS FERNANDES © | |



FC ZENIT

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| GK BOGDAN MOSKVICHEV © | MF ILIA RODIONOV |
| DF IURII KOLEDIN | MF IGOR KOZLOV |
| DF SERGEI MURADIAN | MF EVGENII PSHENNIKOV |
| DF ILIA KIRSH | FW NIKITA LUZAN |
| FW ANDREI MARIANOV | FW KIRILL STOLBOV |
| FW ALEKSEI FILOMONOV | |



PLAYER OF THE MATCH

ILIA KIRSH

This is a team work although I am very happy to receive player of the match. My goal is to keep up my performance and see my team playing in the finals and winning Al Kass International Cup

THE EXPERTS SAY...

RHODRI WILLIAMS

“

We are on the track to beat a record here, 107 goals in 2014 and we have 56 goals in 12 games so far. We are not seeing teams built on defenses, they are all about attacking and going forward, there's nothing wrong with that we all love seeing goals.

Zenit and Sporting showed us they love scoring goals that was a great game, 8 goals in one game, 4:4 was not enough for Sporting to go through, I feel sorry for them but this is football.

It's a really entertaining Tournament because the players here are at a standard, they're technically gifted, they are physically fit, they are mentally conditioned as well. This year's Tournament is different because it's under 16, some teams have 13 year old players and they are fantastic!

”

SPORTING CP HEAD COACH

Jose Joao Gomes



“

Our players were obviously tired, and FC Zenit is a good team. We made a few mistakes and Zenit scored. This is how football goes after all. However, coming to Al Kass Cup has been a great experience and an opportunity for the development of our players' skills. We've enjoyed our stay here in Qatar for the tournament.

”

FC ZENIT ST PETERSBURG HEAD COACH

Dimitrii Poliakov



“

I'm really proud of the team because the match was really challenging, I would like to thank the boys for playing a tough game and it was hard for them. Two of the national team players are injured, and yet the team played very well, very proud of them for fighting till the last second. Al Kass Cup has been a great learning experience for the team and we look forward for playing good football in the knock out stage.

”



TOP SCORERS



OMAR SADIK

3 GOALS



CHARLIE LINDSAY

3 GOALS



NICOLÁS PAZ MARTÍNEZ

3 GOALS



DAVID PEGELLÍN GARCIA

3 GOALS

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GAMES SCHEDULES

GROUP STAGE

| GROUP A | | GROUP B | | GROUP C | | GROUP D | |
|---|----------------|---|------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Aspire Academy |  | Paris Saint-Germain FC |  | FC Internazionale Milano |  | Real Madrid CF |
|  | Rangers FC |  | FC Barcelona |  | Altinordu FK |  | FC Zenit Saint Petersburg |
|  | Suwon Samsung |  | Kashiwa Reysol |  | Mohammed VI Football Academy |  | Sporting Clube de Portugal |

| DATE | NO. | TEAMS | | TIME | VENUE | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-----|----------------------------|-------|---|
| Thu 13.02. | 1 | Paris Saint-Germain | 3-0 | Kashiwa Reysol | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 2 | Aspire Academy | 3-1 | Suwon Samsung | 19:00 | 5 |
| Fri 14.02. | 3 | Inter Milan | 3-1 | Mohammed VI Academy | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 4 | FC Zenit | 3-5 | Real Madrid | 19:00 | 4 |
| Sat 15.02. | 5 | Suwon Samsung | 2-3 | Rangers FC | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 6 | Kashiwa Reysol | 2-1 | FC Barcelona | 19:00 | 5 |
| Sun 16.02. | 7 | Altinordu FK | 0-3 | Mohammed VI Academy | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 8 | Real Madrid | 4-1 | Sporting Clube de Portugal | 19:00 | 4 |
| Mon 17.02. | 9 | Aspire Academy | 4-4 | Rangers FC | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 10 | Paris Saint-Germain | 2-2 | FC Barcelona | 19:00 | 5 |
| Tue 18.02. | 11 | Inter Milan | 0-1 | Altinordu FK | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 12 | Sporting Clube de Portugal | 4-4 | FC Zenit | 19:00 | 4 |
| POSITION 9 - 12 | | | | | | |
| Wed 19.02. | 13 | FC Barcelona | VS | Altinordu FK | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 14 | Suwon Samsung | VS | Sporting Clube de Portugal | 19:15 | 5 |
| QUARTER FINALS | | | | | | |
| Wed 19.02. | 15 | Aspire Academy | VS | Inter Milan | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 16 | Mohammed VI Academy | VS | Rangers FC | 19:15 | 4 |
| Thu 20.02. | 17 | Paris Saint-Germain | VS | FC Zenit | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 18 | Real Madrid | VS | Kashiwa Reysol | 19:15 | 5 |
| PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8 | | | | | | |
| Fri 21.02. | 19 | Loser Game No. 16 | VS | Loser Game No. 18 | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 20 | Loser Game No. 15 | VS | Loser Game No. 17 | 19:15 | 4 |
| SEMI FINALS | | | | | | |
| Sat 22.02. | 21 | Winner Game No. 16 | VS | Winner Game No. 18 | 16:45 | 5 |
| | 22 | Winner Game No. 15 | VS | Winner Game No. 17 | 19:15 | 5 |
| PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8 | | | | | | |
| Sun 23.02. | 23 | Loser Game No. 19 | VS | Loser Game No. 20 | 16:45 | 4 |
| | 24 | Winner Game No. 19 | VS | Winner Game No. 20 | 19:15 | 4 |
| POSITION 3 - 4 & FINAL | | | | | | |
| Mon 24.02. | 25 | Loser Game No. 21 | VS | Loser Game No. 22 | 15:30 | 5 |
| | 26 | Winner Game No. 21 | VS | Winner Game No. 22 | 18:00 | 5 |

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