

# DAILY NEWS

Friday 14 Feb 2020

**TALKASS**<sup>®</sup>  
INTERNATIONAL CUP



3 PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN X KASHIWA REYSOL 0

3 ASPIRE ACADEMY X SUWON SAMSUNG 1

## QATARI CHARACTER & PARISIEN PROWESS



## PSG and Kashiwa with the officials prior to the opening match



## FLASHBACK: Remembering Madrid's Al Kass Campaigns



Real Madrid get their 2020 Al Kass campaign underway this evening against Zenit Saint Petersburg. This is the eighth Al Kass International Cup that the Spanish side have competed in, having only been absent from the inaugural 2012 edition.

Unsurprisingly, given the weight that their name carries, Real are always named amongst the favourites before each tournament begins. Perhaps more surprising is the fact that they have only carried the Cup home to Madrid on one occasion, in 2017, having finished as runners-up in 2014 and 2016. However, the Spanish giants have made it to through the group stage every time they've competed in Doha. And, whenever they have been knocked out, it has been to an eventual finalist...apart from last year, when they were sent home by third-placed Kashiwa Reysol.

Closer examination of Real's record shows a succession of near misses, and provides an indication of why – once again – they are one of the favourites. And it also suggests that, this time round, it would do no harm to brush up on penalty-taking techniques!

Making their debut in 2013, Real cruised through the group stage with a comfortable 3-0 victory over Egypt's Zamalek, followed up with a win over Aspire International by the odd goal in five. Los Blancos looked set fair for the final, but were sensationally dumped out in the quarters by eventual tournament winners Fluminense following a dramatic penalty shootout.

The following year, Real began with a 3-2 reverse at the expense of Aspire International. The result came as a surprise, mainly because Aspire were an unknown quantity at that stage, but by the end of the tournament they would be the toast of Al Kass. Madrid recovered from this setback to smash Porto by six goals to two. Central midfielder Oscar was at the heart of this impressive display, and he would go on to be one of the tournament's outstanding performers.

With their confidence restored, Real knocked out Manchester City at the quarter-final stage, with Achraf Hakimi scoring the only goal of the game. A mouth-watering semi-final clash against AC Milan lived up to its billing, the Spaniards prevailing 2-1 with Hakimi again on the scoresheet.

The final was a repeat of Madrid's first game, and it produced the same result as Aspire International took home the Al Kass trophy following a penalty shootout.

In 2015, with Oscar once again marshalling the Madrid midfield, Real began with a 4-1 thumping of Schalke 04, before succumbing to Aspire International for a third time in two years. Nevertheless, the Spaniards made it to the knockout stage, only to be sent home early by Sao Paolo, going down 3-2 in an Al Kass classic.

Real came roaring back in 2016, opening their campaign with a 4-0 rout of pre-tournament favourites PSG, and following up with a straightforward 3-1 victory over Saudi's Al Ahli.

Despite these commanding group-stage performances, Madrid rode their luck in the quarter-final, scraping past Kashiwa Reysol on penalties to set up a semi-final against Red Bull Salzburg. It was a classic encounter, ending 2-2 before the Spanish side again won through following a shootout.



However, if Real had been fortunate to win two consecutive games on penalties, their luck ran out in the final when Aspire Football Dreams deservedly won 2-0 to lift the 2016 Al Kass International Cup.

Having reached the final twice in three years, 2017 was the year when Real Madrid finally beat all-comers to become Al Kass champions. Beginning with a 6-1 hammering of Al Ahli, the Spaniards put a 2-1 reverse to PSG in their second game behind them, squeezing past Kashiwa Reysol on penalties to reach the semis. Their opponents were Eintracht Frankfurt – a repeat of what is considered to be the greatest European Cup final of all time, when Real defeated the Germans 7-3. This semi ended with the rather more conventional scoreline of 3-1, and Madrid then lifted the trophy after a 2-1 win over Aspire.

No team has successfully defended their title in Al Kass history, and Madrid proved to be no different in 2018. Yet they began in indomitable fashion with a 6-2 triumph over Fenerbahce, before drawing 1-1 with Aspire Football Dreams to ease into the quarter-finals. But they would go no further, with Kashiwa Reysol producing the shock of the tournament to beat the Spaniards 3-2 in a tremendous contest.

And, last year, the Japanese youngsters once again accounted for Real at the quarter final stage, after the Spaniards had spluttered to a 3-2 victory over Spartak Moscow before drawing to Suwon Samsung in the group stage.

One of the most striking elements of the Real Madrid at Al Kass story is that, despite arriving

in Doha with a strong side every year, none of their players have gone on to play regularly for the senior team.

Of those who stood out in previous years, Achraf Hakimi moved on loan to Borussia Dortmund after making nine appearances for Los Blancos, while Oscar is currently turning out for Leganes, again on loan from Real. Madrid tend to buy readymade talent

from around the world for their first team, making it all the more difficult for homegrown youngsters to make the breakthrough.

For the Class of 2020, the Al Kass International Cup will be an ideal opportunity to prove their credentials against tough, talented and determined opponents.



## TOURNAMENT RECORD

**2012:**

*DID NOT PLAY*

**2013:**

*QUARTER-FINALS - LOST ON PENALTIES TO FLUMINENSE **(WINNERS)***

**2014:**

*FINAL - LOST ON PENALTIES TO ASPIRE INTERNATIONAL **(WINNERS)***

**2015:**

*QUARTER-FINALS - LOST 3-2 TO SAO PAULO **(FINALISTS)***

**2016:**

*FINAL - LOST 2-0 TO ASPIRE FOOTBALL DREAMS **(WINNERS)***

**2017:**

**WINNERS**

**2018:**

*QUARTER-FINALS - LOST 3-2 TO KASHIWA REYSOL **(FINALISTS)***

**2019:**

*QUARTER-FINALS - LOST 2-0 TO KASHIWA REYSOL **(THIRD PLACE)***





## GHARBI AT THE DOUBLE FOR PERFECT PARISIANS

Lemina then saw an effort blocked after the talented duo of Mungu and Americo again opened up the Japanese defense.

PSG deservedly doubled their advantage on 63 minutes when Lemina found Housni on the right and his cross set up player of the match Gharbi for his second goal of the match.

As PSG turned on the pressure substitute Wilson Odobert saw a powerful right-foot shot saved by Itoh, but it seemed only a matter of time before the French side increased their lead.

Kashiwa forced a good save by Henri Maton after an excellent turn by Ota Yammamoto and the Japanese striker then tried his luck with a header without troubling the PSG keeper.

Lemina limped after 77 minutes after an excellent performance and Kashiwa almost reduced the arrears two minutes later but Yammamoto was again denied by Maton.

Two PSG substitutes combined the PSG's third in added on time when Odobert found Yohan Tade who produced a fine shot into the corner to complete the scoring.

The three-goal victory was thoroughly deserved by PSG, who will now face Barcelona on Monday.

Paris Saint Germain, the most successful club in the history of the Al Kass International Cup, got the ninth edition of arguably the world's best Under 16 tournament off to a fine start with an impressive victory over Japanese outfit Kashiwa Reysol.

The two clubs had met in the final of the 2018 edition, when PSG recorded their third success in the competition, and Herve Guegan's promising youngsters will now be hoping to add to that trophy haul in the first competition since the tournament became an Under 16 event,

PSG were better than Kashiwa in every department, displaying great skill to open up Kashiwa on numerous occasions with French Under 16 international Ismael Gharbi scoring twice before substitute Yohan Tade made it 3-0 in the 92nd minute.

Al Duhail striker Mario Mandzukic, who recently moved to Qatar from Italian giants Juventus, was the guest of honor and he would have been impressed with the talented Parisians.

Lively winger Pascal Lemina had the ball in the net on six minutes with a low right-foot drive but his effort was ruled out for offside. Lemina again found himself in space two

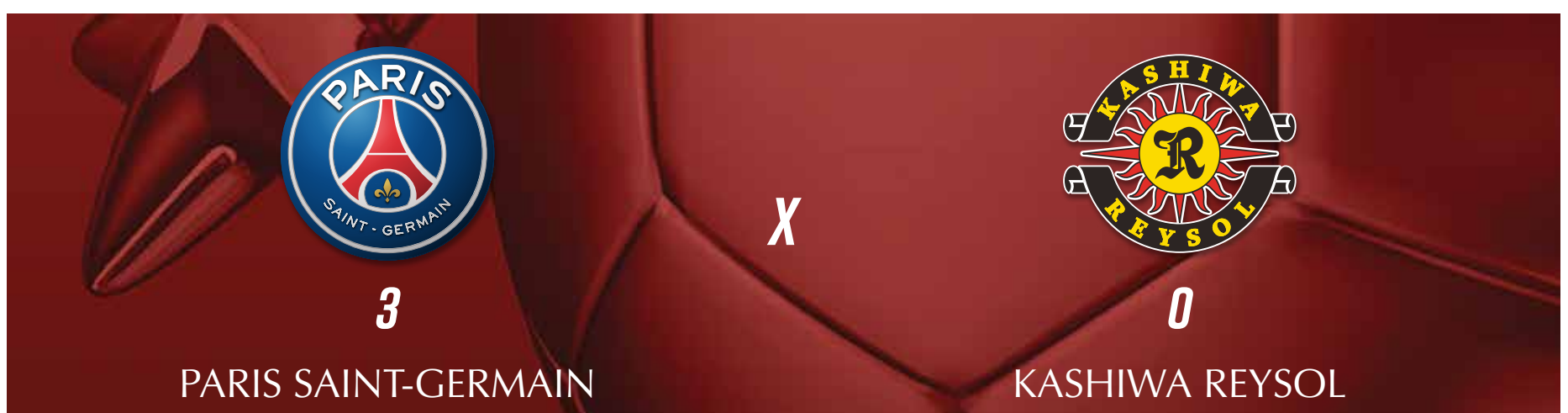
minutes later and his right wing cross found Ilyes Housni who tried an acrobatic backheel flick that went wide.

PSG went close to scoring the tournament's first goal after half an hour with a good low effort by talented midfielder Ismael Gharbi after Lemina had again caused Kashiwa problems, but Takumi Itoh got down well to save.

Gharbi fared better on 35 minutes when giving PSG a deserved lead. Ryoga Tanaka was harshly adjudged to have handled a high ball into the box by Housni and Abdulkareem Al Anazi pointed to the spot. Gharbi sent Itoh the wrong way with a well-taken spot-kick and it was no more than the Parisians deserved as they had dominated the game up to that point.

PSG had a golden chance to double their advantage shortly after the break but Jouvence Americo was stretching for the ball and couldn't keep his effort down.

PSG produced the move of the match on 55 minutes when Vimoj Mungu and Americo combined down the left and Housni's effort was on target but lacked the power to cross the line and Kashiwa were able to clear.







## PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

<b>GK</b> Henri Daniel MATON	<b>MF</b> Warren ZAIRE EMERY
<b>DF</b> Hugo Florent LAMY	<b>MF</b> Ayman Fomou Kari
<b>DF</b> Vimoj MUNTU MUNGU	<b>FW</b> Ilyes Housni
<b>DF</b> Nehemiah FERNANDEZ	<b>MF</b> Ismael GHARBI
<b>VELIZ</b> ©	<b>FW</b> Jouvence AMERICO
<b>DF</b> El Chadaille BITSHIABU	<b>MF</b> Pascal Georges LEMINA



## KASHIWA REYSOL

<b>GK</b> Takumi ITOH	<b>DF</b> Yudai MATSUMOTO
<b>DF</b> Go OTSUKI ©	<b>DF</b> Ryoga TANAKA
<b>DF</b> Ryunosuke HANAMATSU	<b>DF</b> Toi OHASHI
<b>MF</b> Takumu NAKAMURA	<b>FW</b> Isshin TAKIZAWA
<b>FW</b> Ota YAMAMOTO	<b>MF</b> Tsubasa IKEBATA
<b>DF</b> Kai ADACHI	



### PLAYER OF THE MATCH

## Ismael Gharbi, PSG

“

“I’m very happy we won the game; it was a full team effort and I scored two goals that allowed us to win the game today.

We went on the field with one objective in mind and that was to win the match and from the beginning we played the way we were trained, and without any pressure which at the end of the day paid off. We should always play our way, the way we know - which of course showed results today.”

”

# THE EXPERTS SAY...

### COMMENTATOR - RHODRI WILLIAMS

“

“PSG has come here with a really strong side even though its under 16 this year so they were born before January 2004. There was a big gulf in class between the two teams. When they’ve played each other in previous tournaments, there have always been much closer contests, such as in 2018, when they contested the final. Kashiwa Reysol defended really well, and we never talk about that maybe because they are always so good with the ball and so good going forward. They just found it a bit tough against a side I suspect will be a PSG side that will be getting quite far in the tournament.”

In terms of players who stood out; for Kashiwa Reysol, goalkeeper Takumi Itoh made some fantastic saves even though he was under a lot of pressure all the time. He is a great talent. And of course, Ismael Gharbi from PSG scored two goals and he’s looking very confident and comfortable in a good side. PSG look more mature and had great composure on the wall. I like PSG. They have won three times, not forgetting they had some disastrous years. I’d be surprised if we don’t see them in the final four this year.”

”



**PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN COACH**

**Florian Le Gall**

“

*I'm very satisfied with the players. They played well and demonstrated good organization and spirit. We deserved to win. I'm a little bit disappointed because we had many opportunities to score, but it's good to start with a win. Now we can prepare for our game against FC Barcelona.*



**KASHIWA REYSOL COACH**

**Shunta Nagai**

“

*Our players did their best to put on a good game. Our next match with FC Barcelona is after tomorrow, and we will do everything we can to be prepared for the game.*



**MARIO  
MANZUKIC**

**Question: Can you remember your time as a player at that age?**

*“For me as a player at that age, it was a little bit different. I'm happy for the players; they have everything, and the Cup is well organized. It's high level, they play against good teams. For them it's a start, they are young. I hope they will go on to big careers. It's nice to be here to see this.”*

**Question: How have you settled in Qatar?**

*“I'm happy to be here in Qatar. I like this country and Doha is very beautiful. I was here before with my ex-club Juventus. I like the people. I like the city. It's very nice and it's growing. The World Cup is coming. There are a lot of preparations and it will be amazing I'm sure. I'm sure people who come here will enjoy it.”*







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# HOSTS ASPIRE TO BECOME AL KASS CHAMPIONS FOLLOWING CONVINCING START

Hosts Aspire Academy made a winning start to the ninth Al Kass International Cup, with a solid 3-1 victory over Koreans Suwon Samsung.

Aspire, once again displaying a steely nature to go with their undoubted skill and hardworking attitude, came from behind to record a deserved victory.

The game was physical from the start and Mohamed Surag went into the book with just five minutes on the clock after his high foot caught Junbo Shim, who needed treatment for a cut to the head.

Shim was still off the pitch receiving treatment when Aspire had their first effort of the game on seven minutes but Surag's free-kick hit the wall and went wide.

Suwon went ahead on 12 minutes when skipper Seongho Lee sent a looping header over Amir Katoul following a fine cross by Hyeongpin Lee. Sangmin Lee started the move when receiving the ball on the left wing and beating off several challenges to force his way into the box before the ball bobbed to Hyeongpin Lee and his fine cross was met by the skipper, who got to the ball before Hassan Alghareeb and headed home.

The Koreans had started positively but Aspire responded well to the setback and were the better team for much of the half. They



deservedly equalized on 31 minutes when Yousef Elkhatib drove home a low right-foot shot after Jassem Alsharshani's goalbound effort had been touched onto the post.

Surag then finished well to put the hosts ahead on 52 minutes following a defense-splitting pass from Mahdi Almejaba, and it was no more than Luca Nardi's side deserved.

Aspire were very much the better team but Suwon substitute Hojun Yoo gave a warning sign that the Koreans couldn't be ignored as he had an effort on goal that was well blocked midway through the second half.

Another Suwon opportunity came following a corner five minutes later but Shim couldn't keep his far-post header down.

Aspire made sure of victory three minutes from time when substitute Abdulaziz Al-Naimi floated in a curling free-kick from the left and Mobark Hamza threw himself at it but couldn't get his head to the ball as it went straight past the keeper into the net.

Aspire felt they should have had a penalty shortly afterwards when Mohammed Al-Quraishi was tugged back by Shim on the edge of the box but Abdurahman Al Saoud waved away the appeals.

It was a deserved win for Aspire, who had former Australian international and FIFA 2022 ambassador Tim Cahill among their coaches. Aspire have played a major role in the emergence of Qatar's national team in recent years, with several of its graduates going on to represent Felix Sanchez's side.

With interest in football continuing to grow the nearer we get to 2022, the hosts are hoping they can now go on to see off the big guns of PSG, Real Madrid and Barcelona to be crowned Al Kass champions.

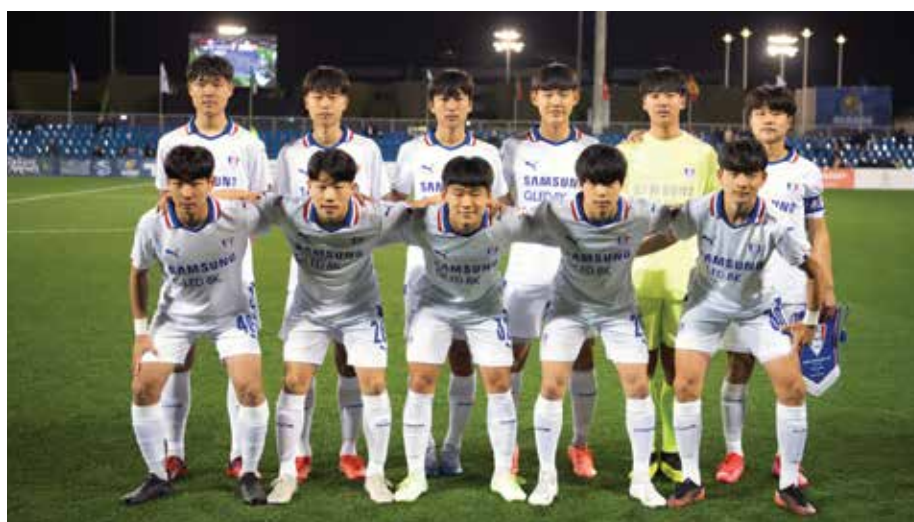
Aspire, unlucky to go out at the semi-final stage last year when Roma defeated them on penalties, will take on reigning champions Glasgow Rangers on Monday when they can expect to face a tougher test against the skillful Scots.





## ASPIRE ACADEMY

<b>GK</b> Amir KATOUL	<b>MF</b> Mobark HAMZA
<b>DF</b> Chalpan ABDULNASIR	<b>MF</b> Jassem ALSHARSHANI
<b>DF</b> Saifeldeen FADLALLA	<b>MF</b> Mahdi ALMEJABA
<b>DF</b> Mohammed ALI (C)	<b>FW</b> Mohamed SURAG
<b>DF</b> Hassan ALGHAREEB	<b>DF</b> Yousef ELKHATIB
<b>MF</b> Mostafa ABOUELELA	



## SUWON SAMSUNG

<b>GK</b> Hyunjin JOO	<b>MF</b> Seongjin KIM
<b>MF</b> Seongho LEE (C)	<b>DF</b> Jeyi LEE
<b>MF</b> Junseo PARK	<b>MF</b> Hyeongpin LEE
<b>FW</b> Junsu KIM	<b>MF</b> Jongseok YU
<b>MF</b> Hyeongjin MOON	<b>MF</b> Junbo SHIM
<b>FW</b> Sangmin LEE	



### PLAYER OF THE MATCH

Mahdi Al Mejba

“

*I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this win, and the better is yet to come.*

”

## THE EXPERTS SAY...

### QATAR'S NATIONAL TEAM COACH FELIX SANCHEZ

“

*“The players had a good game. The first game is usually not easy, and I think they reacted well after the goal and had a good performance. The players demonstrated a lot of individual quality and as a team as well. I hope they're going to go far in the competition.”*

*“There are many good talents, and we are keeping an eye on them. They are very young but there's a lot of promising talents here. It's also important to support our players and see how they perform in a tournament like this.”*

”



**ASPIRE ACADEMY COACH**

**Tim Cahill**

“

*I've had just over a month of preparing with the team, and we've had some good games, and camps here, in Italy and Oman. The boys were good right from the start and well organized, but it's also how we reacted. We stuck together as a team and I'm very proud of the team. I'm with the team for the whole tournament and we're going to progress and try our best to play as good as we can.*

”

**Tim Cahill**

“

*I would like to congratulate my teammates on winning the match. Our next game is going to be more challenging, but we're always up for a good challenge.*

”



**SUWON SAMSUNG TEAM MANAGER**

**Chang Young Hong**

“

*The first half went well and as planned but the second half there was a little more pressure and players were a bit nervous. For the next game, the first thing we have to do is prepare well, both mentally and physically. We will try hard to dominate the game.*

*While many teams are here looking to win, we are looking to gain experience from the playing against teams and players with high standards so when we go back, we will start the season playing a good game against teams in Korea.*

”



**BEST-BANNER-OF-THE-MATCH WINS PRIZE**



Fans who brave the cold to show support for their teams during the tournament stand in line to win prizes for creating the most eye-catching poster. Each 'best banner of the match' wins a cash prize of QR 1,500.

Fans attending the Kashiwa Reysol and PSG showed their creativity and raised some truly artful posters. The friendly rivalry between the two camps also raised the spirit of the match and helped create a supportive atmosphere and camaraderie at the games. Meanwhile, fans of Aspire Academy came out to show off their designs.

The prize for the winning banner went to fans of Aspire Academy for their highly original poster showing their support for the players.



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# GAMES SCHEDULES

## GROUP STAGE

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

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	VS	Mohammed VI Academy	16:45	4
	4	FC Zenit	VS	Real Madrid	19:00	4
Sat 15.02.	5	Suwon Samsung	VS	Rangers FC	16:45	5
	6	Kashiwa Reysol	VS	FC Barcelona	19:00	5
Sun 16.02.	7	Altinordu FK	VS	Mohammed VI Academy	16:45	4
	8	Real Madrid	VS	Sporting Clube de Portugal	19:00	4
Mon 17.02.	9	Aspire Academy	VS	Rangers FC	16:45	5
	10	Paris Saint-Germain	VS	FC Barcelona	19:00	5
Tue 18.02.	11	Inter Milan	VS	Altinordu FK	16:45	4
	12	Sporting Clube de Portugal	VS	FC Zenit	19:00	4
<b>POSITION 9 - 12</b>						
Wed 19.02.	13	Position 10	VS	Position 9	16:45	5
	14	Position 12	VS	Position 11	19:15	5
<b>QUARTER FINALS</b>						
Wed 19.02.	15	1st Group A	VS	2nd Group C	16:45	4
	16	1st Group C	VS	2nd Group A	19:15	4
Thu 20.02.	17	1st Group B	VS	2nd Group D	16:45	5
	18	1st Group D	VS	2nd Group B	19:15	5
<b>PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8</b>						
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
<b>SEMI FINALS</b>						
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
<b>PLAY OFFS POSITION 5 - 8</b>						
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
<b>POSITION 3 - 4 &amp; FINAL</b>						
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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