

DAILY NEWS

Tuesday 25 Feb 2020

ALKASS[®]
INTERNATIONAL CUP



CHAMPIONS

MAGNIFICO MADRID



TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT



PAOLO RAIMONDI



VIMOJ MUNGU



LORENZO PERETTI



ALEX SIBACHA



ALESSANDRO MAROCCO



ANDREA PELAMATTI



WARREN EMERY



JORDI AUSIN



CHARLIE LINDSAY



OMAR SADIK



ILYES HOUSNI

AS THE TOURNAMENT DRAWS TO A CLOSE, AL KASS EXPERT ANALYSTS NICK SUMMERBEE (NS) AND CHRIS MAKIN (CM) PICK THEIR LEADING 11 FROM THE 2020 AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP.

GOALKEEPER: PAOLO RAIMONDI (INTER MILAN)

CM: Previous editions of Al Kass Cup have seen some goalkeeping performances that stick in the memory. Zinedine Zidane's son Luca was named best goalkeeper in 2014 as part of the Real Madrid side who lost in the final to Aspire International. And then there's Leo Kokubo, who played in three tournaments here for Kashiwa Reysol. This year, it's not been easy to pick a standout keeper, but I think Raimondi deserves his place in this line-up. Inter only conceded three goals en route to the final, and Raimondi has been rock-solid throughout.

LEFT-BACK: VIMOJ MUNGU (PSG)

NS: Mungu is one of the smallest players on the pitch, but he's more than made up for that with his performances for PSG. What a player he is – he has everything that a modern full back needs. He's great going forward, and I just love his attitude. Perhaps more than any other team, Paris Saint-Germain have brought a succession of players to Doha throughout the history of Al Kass who have really caught the eye – the likes of Kingsley Coman and Adrien Rabiot – and he could be the latest in a long line of successes.

CENTRE-BACK: LORENZO PERETTI (INTER MILAN)

CM: Peretti has popped up with a couple of important goals, which is always such a bonus for a centre back, but his main strength is his defensive quality. He's been instrumental in keeping Inter's goals conceded count so low.

It shows the extent to which Milan have grown into the tournament because, during the early stages, we were focussing on players from other teams who had caught the eye, and now we've got four Italians in our team of the tournament. Peretti thoroughly deserves his place.

CENTRE-BACK: ALEX SIBACHA (REAL MADRID)

NS: Alongside Peretti we have Sibacha. Real's strike power has rightly been the focus of their success at Al Kass 2020, but their attacking approach has been built on a defence that has generally been really well-organised. Sibacha has been key in this respect. He was taken off in the semi-final against Mohammed VI Academy with a groin problem, but he's been outstanding. He's a confident passer of the ball, and a really good all-round defender.

RIGHT-BACK: ALESSANDRO MAROCCO (INTER MILAN)

NS: Over the years, this tournament has featured several right-backs with genuine pedigree. Eder Militao played here for Sao Paulo in 2015, and he's now at Real Madrid after Zidane signed him for 50 million Euros. And then there's Achraf Hakimi, who is also at Real, but currently on loan at Borussia Dortmund. He's one of only two defenders in Europe so far this season who has got double figures for assists - the other is Trent Alexander-Arnold at Liverpool, who are obviously the greatest team in the world at the moment.

So it shows that modern day full-backs need to defend and attack, and Marocco has that in his locker.

CENTRAL MIDFIELD: ANDREA PELAMATTI (INTER MILAN)

CM: Inter's captain was outstanding in their semi-final victory over PSG. More than any other player, he stopped the Parisians from getting their game going. Strong in the challenge, first to the ball, he broke up a lot of PSG's attacks. He actually played at full back earlier in the tournament, and he reminds me a bit of Pablo Zabaletta in terms of his physique and commitment. When he's playing in the middle of the park, his positional sense is key, and he's a real leader.

CENTRAL MIDFIELD: WARREN EMERY (PSG)

NS: This lad has been our favourite from the very first game of the tournament, when he was outstanding against Kashiwa Reysol. It's astonishing to think that he is only 13 years of age – not only has he stood out against players two or three years older than him, but he gives off an aura of someone who is ready for football at an even higher level. His composure is sensational, and putting him in central midfield alongside Pelamatti, with such a solid backline behind them, allows us to go with four up front.

RIGHT WING: JORDI AUSIN (BARCELONA)

NS: It was a really difficult decision to leave Madrid's Nico Paz out of this line-up, as he's been so influential. However, once we decided to go with an attacking 4-2-4 formation – in keeping with the attack-minded approach that we've seen in this tournament, Jordi was the obvious choice on the right wing. In my opinion, the Barca squad had the ability to go all the way this year, but suffered from not putting the ball in the net – especially in their opener against

Keshiwa, where they also conceded a freak own goal and a late penalty. Despite this bad luck, several of their players shone through, and Jordi was the pick of the bunch. He's rapid, he's tenacious – he's a top-quality player.

LEFT WING: CHARLIE LINDSAY (RANGERS)

CM: This Rangers side had so much to live up to, given the fabulous performance of their predecessors last year. And, to be fair, I'm not sure they had the same quality running through the squad as was the case in 2019, but this lad has been the obvious exception. I don't think anyone has had a tournament like him. Joint top scorer heading into the last day, and a natural finisher, he reminds me so much of Wayne Rooney. Lindsay gets in on the left of this team, allowing him to cut in, which we've seen him do so well in this tournament, although he's shown he can play anywhere across the front line.

CENTRE FORWARD: OMAR SADIK (MOHAMMED VI ACADEMY)

CM: Mohammed VI Academy under-performed in their opener against Milan, but even then it was obvious that Sadik was a player of real quality. His team-mates struggled to get the ball to him in that match, but they soon remedied the situation, and he scored a devastating hat-trick in their next game against Altinordu. He's got everything you could wish for in a striker – as the captain he leads from the front, scores from distance and from inside the box, is unplayable in the air, and is just so strong. The Moroccans were really unlucky to go out in the semis, and Sadik was key to their impressive performances.

CENTRE FORWARD: ILYES HOUSNI (PSG)

NS: Playing off the big man, we have Housni. What a revelation he has been. Only a small kid, but with a heart as big as a lion.

We saw in the semi against Milan what a clever player he is, when he won a penalty with his trickery inside the box, but he also scored two of the best goals of the tournament. He plays across the lines, so he's difficult for defenders to pick up. He clearly revels in the spotlight too, and seems to have that star quality about him. I think there was considerable disappointment after the semis that Housni would not feature in the final, and he would certainly have graced the highest stage.



POTENT PARISIANS' POLISHED PENALTIES DELIVER THIRD PLACE PRIZE



Paris Saint-Germain secured third place at the 2020 Al Kass International Cup, triumphing over Mohammed VI Academy in a penalty shootout after an enthralling contest finished 3-3 in normal time, providing a wonderful advertisement for this world-class youth tournament.

Both sides came into the game with points to prove. PSG needed to forget the disappointment of their shock semi-final defeat to Milan, and demonstrate their top-class credentials once more. The Moroccans, meanwhile, were keen to show that their hugely impressive showing at Al Kass thus far was not merely a flash in the pan. However, key players were missing from each line-up, with PSG's Ilyes Housni and the Academy's Omar Sadik dropped to the bench.

The game got underway with a tempo that belied its playoff status, and it quickly became apparent that the two teams were playing to win. A fascinating duel unfolded between PSG's superb holding midfielder Warren Emery and his opposite number Mohammed Jazouli, restored to the starting 11 after serving a semi-final suspension.

And yet, despite the game's competitive nature, clear-cut chances were at a premium early on – perhaps a reflection of the fact that both sides' star forwards had been rested.

Indeed, when the deadlock was broken midway through the first-half, it was in freakish circumstances. Stand-in Moroccan keeper Zakaria Nakhly had the ball at his feet with no one near him, but somehow contrived to

pass it straight to Ismael Gharbi on the edge of the area. PSG's prolific midfielder stroked the ball home with a minimum of fuss to claim his fifth goal of the tournament.

Moments later, the scoreline almost doubled after Gharbi teed up Yohan Tade through the inside left channel, and he beat his man before shooting just wide of the far post. Suddenly, the game had opened up and, 10 minutes before the break, the Moroccans levelled. There seemed little danger when a high ball over the top sent Hassan Aqboub scuttling away down the left, but the rapid winger cut inside and produced a fabulous finish, his low shot evading PSG keeper Henri Maton's despairing dive for one of the goals of the tournament.

Mohammed VI made three changes at half-time, with Sadik remaining notable by his absence. Nevertheless, coach Laurent Cauger's bold move brought instant rewards as the Moroccans plundered two goals within five minutes of the restart. First, Aqboub found himself at the heart of things once again, as he cut in from the left and hammered a low, diagonal shot that Maton could only parry into the path of substitute Oussama Lyakoubi, who made no mistake from close range. Minutes later, the lively winger claimed his second, after beating Younes El Hannach in a foot race down the left and deftly lobbing the loose ball over Maton into an empty net.


The Academy were threatening to run riot, with Jazouli - playing with a swagger

reminiscent of the Dutch Master Frank Rijkaard - the heartbeat of their team. On the hour mark, PSG coach Herve Guegan introduced Housni for the tiring Gharbi and, soon after, the deficit was reduced. Wilson Odobert produced a deft chip from the right of the penalty area, which was met by Tade at the far post, and his fierce header gave Nakhly no chance.

With 20 minutes remaining, PSG should have been level after referee Khaled Al Nabet pointed to the spot following Abdellah Baallal's foul on Jouvenice Americo in the area. Astonishingly, the normally surefooted Housni blasted the resultant penalty high over the bar. However, the diminutive striker did not have to wait much longer to make his mark, applying an impudent first-time finish to Tade's cutback to level matters at 3-3.

Housni's fresh legs were testing the tired limbs of the Moroccan backline as he chased every loose ball and generally harried the defenders into losing possession. And yet, despite the undoubted impetus that his introduction had given the Parisians, they could not claim a fourth, and the clock ticked down towards an inevitable penalty shootout.

It was cruel on the Moroccans, who have made many friends with their fearless approach and will surely be welcomed back to Doha, as will their Parisian opponents.


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MOHAMMED VI ACADEMY
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN



MOHAMMED VI ACADEMY

GK Walid Hasbi	MF Youssef Charouq
DF Ilyass Lagrimi	DF Ayoub El Hammami
FW Hassan Aqboub	MF Yassine Khalifi
MF Abdellah Baalal	MF Youness Akharraz
FW Omar Sadik ©	DF Taha Souiri
MF Mouad Dahak	



PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN

GK Louis Mouquet	FW Wilson Odobert
DF Hugo Lamy	MF Ayman Kari
DF Vimoj Mungu	FW Ilyes Housni
DF Nehemiah Veliz	MF Ismael Gharbi
DF El Chadaille Bitshiabu ©	MF Pascal Lemina
MF Warren Zaire Emery	



PLAYER OF THE MATCH

Mohamed Yassine Hamdoune

“ This was a good match and we played well, and we did our best to reflect a good image of our your academy. We managed to reflect a good level of sportsmanship in comparison to other clubs who have longer experience

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THE EXPERTS SAY...

RHODRI WILLIAMS

“ The first 20 minutes of the game were terrible and felt like a typical end-of-the-tournament game for two teams who are very upset that they weren't in the final. But then, the 23rd minute came, and it all kicked off with a bizarre first goal. Mohammed VI Academy made 7 changes and PSG made 5, but that turned out to be another fantastic. On the 67th minute, Yohan Tade got the score to 3-2, then PSG missed a penalty, and you think it's Mohammed VI Academy's lucky night to get at least the third spot. But then, second-highest scorer of the competition Ilyes Housni scores his 5th goal of the tournament and off we go to a penalty shootout. PSG looked like they're not going to miss, but with Mohammed VI Academy I just had that doubt. But Mohammed VI Academy have been amazing.

”

MOHAMMED VI ACADEMY HEAD COACH



Laurent Cauger

“

It was a bit of a misfortune to lose as we were winning the game at a certain point, but it's alright as we were a bit tired after all the games we played recently. But after all, this is a young team and I see that they did great. At this point of the tournament, I am satisfied with the result. Our team formation has done us well and I can see we are getting closer to our vision of reaching an international level.

”

PARIS SAINT GERMAIN HEAD COACH



Herve Guegan

“

We are very happy about the third place in the tournament. As I said before, we are a very young team, and this is a good result. Today, it was very difficult because I think the players are physically tired. They gave their everything in their first three games, but they didn't give up and finally won this match. It's definitely been a good tournament and for sure we'll be here again next year.

”

FANS FROM THE PITCH





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RAMPANT REAL PRODUCE A FIVE-STAR PERFORMANCE TO WIN THE AL KASS INTERNATIONAL CUP



Real Madrid produced a dominant display to regain the Al Kass International Cup, with a stunning 5-0 victory over Inter Milan at Aspire Academy.

Inter had only conceded four goals all tournament prior to this final, but that figure had doubled inside an hour as 2017 champions Real created wave after wave of attack to entertain a big crowd.

The Spaniards were supreme as they recorded the biggest winning margin ever in an Al Kass International Cup final, as they took the number of goals in the tournament to 120, 13 more than the previous best.

Real netted three times during the first half, which saw them enjoy 61% possession and have 13 attempts on goal – while the Italians failed to muster a single shot.

The opening 25 minutes were tight, though, and seemed to be going the way of most previous Al Kass finals as Inter's impressive defensive capabilities kept the Spaniards at bay.

But once Yeray Lancha broke the deadlock it was one-way traffic. Linking up with player of the match David Pecellin (Pece), Lancha fired home a powerful shot for his third goal of the tournament.

Having provided an assist just minutes earlier, Pece forced a fine save out of Paolo Raimondi and Real added two more before the break.

Their second goal on 37 minutes was a disaster for defender Lorenzo Peretti, who had played a major role in their semi-final victory over PSG. Pece beat two defenders but his shot was going wide until Peretti sent a miscued clearance into his own net.

Two minutes later Abraham sent a brilliant dipping shot into the net and Pece, Marc Cucalon and Abraham all had further efforts on target as Inter struggled to contain them. Lancha also lashed an effort against the post as rampant Real turned on the style.

Real continued to entertain after the break and Lancha showed great skill before feeding Abraham who shot narrowly wide. Abraham had more joy when he sent a beautiful lob over the keeper for Real's fourth on 58 minutes, and Pece almost added another but his effort hit the post.

Raimondi, who enjoyed an excellent tournament, pulled off a fine point-blank save to deny Ekaitz Redondo after fine approach play by the classy Lancha.

At the other end, Tommaso Clerici had two efforts on goal but couldn't find a way past Real keeper Guillermo Sunico.

Pece went close with a free-kick in the final 10 minutes and he then put the ball into the net only for his effort to be ruled out for offside.

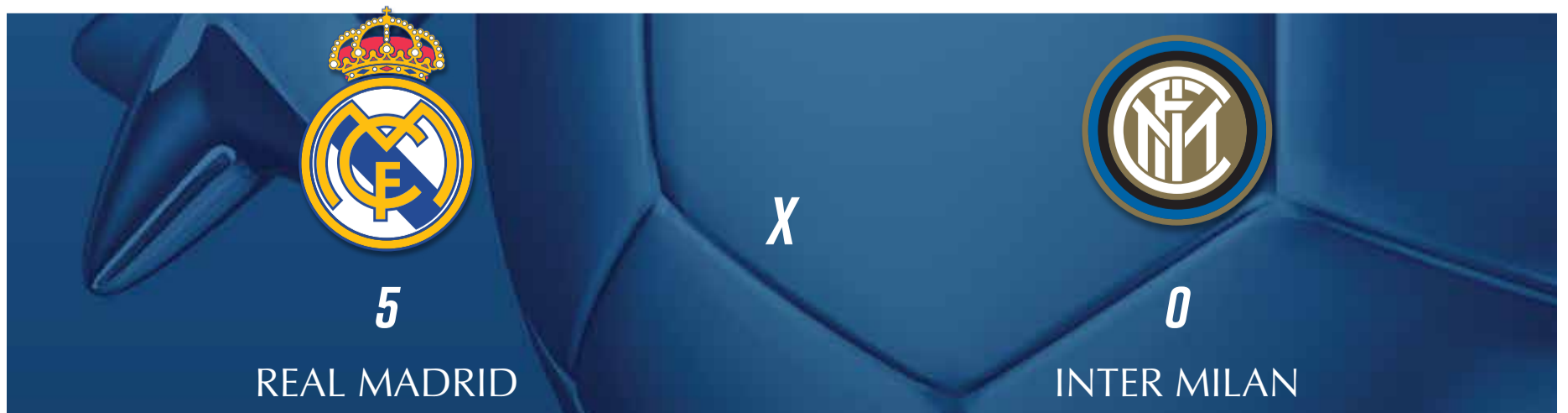
There was still time for a fifth Real goal though as Gonzalo Garcia crossed for Redondo to head home from close range.

Real enjoyed a massive 63% possession and had 22 shots compared to the seven by Inter, as they regained the trophy in style.

As well as keeping a clean sheet on the night, Sunico received the Golden Glove award for best goalkeeper in the post-match presentations, while Igor Kozlov (Zenit) and Charlie Lindsay (Rangers) finished as the tournament's top scorers with six goals apiece.

Lindsay was named player of the tournament, having also picked up for player of the match awards, while Kashiwa Reysol received the fair play award having received just one yellow card.

But the biggest cheers were for the magnificent Real squad who deservedly lifted the trophy. Having gone into the final as the only unbeaten team, they leave Doha with hopes of going on to become first team favourites at the Bernabeu Stadium.





REAL MADRID

GK Guillermo Alonso	FW Abraham Nobrega
DF David Jimenez ©	MF Nicolas Paz
DF Manuel Serrano	FW David Pecellin
DF Alex Sanchez	DF Diego Jurado
MF Marc Cucalon	FW Gonzalo Garcia
FW Yeray Lancha	



INTER MILAN

GK Paolo Raimondi	MF Gabriele Menegatti
DF Alessandro Marocco	FW Amadou Sarr
DF Nicolo Perin	DF Andrea Pelamatti ©
MF Mattia Ortelli	MF Federico Motti
DF Lorenzo Peretti	FW Tomasso Clerici
MF Riccardo Nava	



PLAYER OF THE MATCH

David Pecellin Garcia

“Despite the result this was a difficult game. The team did a great job with it, and with the contribution of all the players we pulled it off and won the tournament.”

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THE EXPERTS SAY...

RHODRI WILLIAMS

“Brilliant game. What was interesting about it is that when it started, up until the 25th minute, Inter were right on Real Madrid, marking them tight and they were getting a little bit frustrated. Then boom, once that first goal went in, which was an incredible shot fired right into the top corner, that was the beginning of a world-class performance. It was a pleasure to watch and without a doubt, there’s a number of players there that we will see at the top level. It was definitely a deserved win and a brilliant performance.”

On the evolution of Al Kass Cup and the participating football youth academies:

“I’ve done them all, so this is my ninth one (tournament) and I’ve seen the tournament grow in stature, it’s got a lot more support globally now through our digital platform as well, so congrats to Al Kass Digital team on covering every single nook and cranny of this tournament. You also see (this growth) in the support as well; all the games were very well supported. I’ve also seen the quality of football improve, and that’s because it is improving around the world. Players are learning from an earlier age to play at a higher quality. I think maybe we’re going to start seeing more and more 17 and 18-year-olds playing in the first team. Maybe it’s (football) becoming a younger player’s game, I don’t know. And that’s what these academies are doing. What we’re seeing is players being more intelligent on-and-off the field and being rounded individuals. They have their schooling here as well, so it’s not just football. That whole package, if you like, I’ve seen that growth as well over the years. It’s all going in the right direction with how these academies are changing and developing.”

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REAL MADRID HEAD COACH



Tristan Celador

“

I am very happy for the team! They made a very impressive tournament throughout. We played a very good first half in this game and we managed to contain the opponents in the second half until the end of the game.

”



AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN
TO THE STATE OF QATAR

HE Belen Alfaro Hernandez

“

First of all, I would like to thank Al Kass for organizing this championship, which is very good for youngsters to promote a sports culture. We are very happy that the Spanish team (Real Madrid) has won. They played really well and got an amazing result. I would also like to congratulate the Italian team, Inter Milan, on reaching the final as well as all the other participating teams, especially Aspire Academy – which has the best facilities for training in the world. This tournament has been exciting right from the very beginning with many teams from different countries. The level of participation has been high, as some very good teams were here. I'm very pleased that Real Madrid has reached and won the final. I hope that the next stage for Qatar (in sports), the 2022 World Cup, will be a great success. Qatar has not only been preparing with a lot of infrastructure works, but it has been making great contributions in terms of values it's implementing with the World Cup like sustainability and legacy.

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INTER MILAN HEAD COACH



Gabriele Bonacina

“

I am happy to reach the final, this tournament is world class and it was not easy to compete against such big teams. Today Real Madrid was stronger and have wonderful players. Today we tried to give them hard time but they were stronger and we were not able to express our full potential. In the end we are satisfied with the big experience we got from this tournament.

”

MVP OF THE TOURNAMENT

Charlie LINDSAY
Rangers FC



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