

# ALKASS U17 UPDATES

**10 MAN PSG GET THE JOB DONE ;  
RANGERS CRASH OUT**

**DAY 08**





# RECAP: 19.02.2025

**K**ashiwa Reysol capped off their U17 AL KASS International Cup campaign with a dramatic 8-7 penalty shootout victory over Aspire Academy after an intense contest ended level in regulation time.

Despite being a placement match, both sides played with knockout-level intensity, showcasing fluid attacking play and relentless pressing. Reysol's sharp build-up was met with Aspire's dangerous counterattacks, making for an electrifying encounter.

In the shootout, Reysol held their nerve, converting the decisive spot-kick to secure fifth place in style.

Mohammed VI Academy delivered a dominant performance, dismantling Al Ahly 5-0 to claim seventh place at the U17 AL KASS International Cup on Wednesday. The Moroccan side controlled the match from start to finish, pressing high and punishing defensive lapses to seal an emphatic victory.

Adam Boughazir opened the scoring with a close-range finish before Bachir Kitab converted on a rebound after his penalty was initially saved. A defensive error gifted Boughazir his second, while captain Ayman Ezzarky added a composed strike to put the result beyond doubt. Boughazir then completed his hat-trick—the first of the tournament—capping off a ruthless display.



# MATCH 1: SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC VS REAL MADRID CF

**R** Real Madrid secured their place in the U17 AL KASS International Cup final with a commanding 2-0 victory over the Seattle Sounders on Thursday, showcasing their trademark intensity and tactical discipline.

The first half was a tightly contested battle, with both sides displaying resilience and fighting spirit. Seattle held their own, staying compact in defense and absorbing Madrid's pressure to head into the break on level terms.

However, the second half saw a shift in momentum as coach Alvaro Lopez Bermejo's men turned up the heat. Madrid's relentless high press and quick ball recoveries suffocated the Sounders, forcing errors and keeping them pinned in their own half. Seattle struggled to break free, and their cautious approach was soon punished.

The breakthrough came in the 43rd minute when Iker Diepa Diaz rose highest in the box, meeting a pinpoint cross with a towering header to give Madrid the lead. The Spanish giants continued to dictate play, and their aerial dominance struck again just over 15 minutes later. This time, it was Pablo Martinez Mena who found the back of the net, directing a well-delivered cross past the helpless keeper with another clinical header.

With a two-goal cushion, Madrid comfortably saw out the match, their defensive organization and game management ensuring Seattle had little hope of a comeback. Now, with a spot in the final secured, they set their sights on lifting the trophy.

*"IT WAS A DESERVED LOSS, THE EXPERIENCE SO FAR HAS BEEN GREAT FOR OUR BOYS, THERE IS NO SHAME OF LOSING"*

**-WADE WEBBER**  
TEAM MANAGER OF SEATTLE SOUNDERS



*"IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO OUR OPPONENT IS IN THE NEXT MATCH, WHAT MATTERS IS THAT WE FOCUS ON WINNING THE TOURNAMENT.."*

**-ALVARO LOPEZ BERMEJO**  
HEAD COACH OF REAL MADRID





# PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS:



# PRESS CONFERENCE: SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC VS REAL MADRID CF



It's still a long way home for the Seattle Sounders who will be playing for the 3rd or 4th place after losing 0-2 to Real Madrid at the semi-finals match on Thursday, Team Manager Wade Joseph Webber said at a post-match press conference.

Webber said it was a deserved loss for the team while acknowledging that Real Madrid was a more threatening and a great team. He was quick to add that there's no shame in losing and that it has been a great experience for the boys to compete with big clubs at the tournament which have been displaying exceptional levels.

Seattle Sounders will be playing against the losing team between the Paris Saint-Germain and Rangers Football Club match. He however stressed that the team is now aiming for a 3rd place at the Cup.

Speaking about the growing popularity of football in the US, Webber said 'soccer' is a fast growing sport, and while the Club, which has been formed in the 1970's is not as old as Real Madrid, it is growing and is currently learning what it means to compete internationally.

"Soccer is a very popular game amongst the section of the population. People have to remember America as a nation of immigrants. It's the game of the world. So for us, it's not new, but I think for the United States, it's always going to be outside of the mainstream, but the mainstream is getting more and more different I think in the United States," Webber added.



Also addressing the media, Real Madrid Head Coach Alvaro Lopez Bermejo thanked his players for their great efforts and making it to the finals.

Bermejo added that the boys played a tough match and he was satisfied with the team's consistent efforts.

He added that it doesn't matter at this point which team they are going to face in the finals, and all that matters is the team come prepared and ready to battle.

"We benefited a lot from participating in this tournament, both on and off the field playing against a lot of high level competition in this tournament. Even representing our club outside our country here in international waters is also a learning experience for a lot of the boys. We're happy to be here," added Bermejo.



# MATCH 2: PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C. VS RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

**P**aris Saint-Germain delivered a courageous performance in the U17 AL KASS International Cup semifinals, defeating Rangers 3-1 on Thursday - despite being reduced to 10 men midway through the first half.

The French side showcased defensive resilience and clinical finishing, punishing Rangers before the Scottish team also went down to 10 men in the second half.

PSG's game plan was forced to change after a straight red card, prompting them to sit deep and rely on quick counterattacks. The strategy paid off in the 35th minute, when Noha Tiehi dribbled past defenders before slotting the ball home. Just ten minutes later, Tiehi doubled the lead with another composed finish from inside the box.

Despite Rangers' efforts to claw back, PSG extended their advantage in the 60th minute as Seydou Konate pounced on a loose ball outside the box and fired it past the keeper to make it 3-0. Rangers found a glimmer of hope in the 67th minute, when Conor Owen rose highest to power home a header, reducing the deficit. However, it proved too little, too late, as PSG's disciplined defense saw out the win.

*"THERE IS A LOT MORE TO LOSE IN THE KNOCKOUTS STAGE, BUT HOPEFULLY WE WILL GIVE THE SAME PERFORMANCE WE GAVE SO FAR."*

**-YANNICK DUMAS**  
HEAD COACH OF PSG



*"WE HAVE SOME BRILLIANTLY TALENTED PLAYERS IN THIS TOURNAMENT, IT'S A GREAT LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR US."*

**-LAURENCE ELLIS**  
HEAD COACH OF RANGERS FC





# PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS:



# PRESS CONFERENCE: PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN F.C. VS RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB



Paris Saint-Germain, which is moving on to the finals after winning 3-1 against Rangers Football Club will try to bring home the fourth Alkass U-17 International Cup title in the tournament's history, said Head Coach Yannick Dumas while addressing the media on Thursday.

PSG currently has the most number of wins at the tournament. However, Dumas admitted that the boys had a great and tough match against the Scottish team.

Commenting on their upcoming match against Real Madrid, Dumas said he expects a tough match but the team will stick to their tactics and let the players figure out how to adapt in terms of a tough situation in the finals. PSG has previously lost 1-2 in their first match against Real Madrid. "The difference between facing Real Madrid in the group stages and now is that they were in the group stages and being in knockout stages, there's a lot more to do, so there's more added pressure on both sides. So we are just going to prepare the best that we can for the matchup, and hopefully that we can repeat the same results that we did," Dumas said.



Also addressing a post-match press conference, Rangers Football Club Head Coach Laurence Ellis said there have been moments of missed opportunities for the team, but quickly added that the boys have also played well at times during the match.

"You got to applaud that and recognise that there's lots of good, young, and talented football players at this tournament and it's a brilliant tournament for their development. It was an eventful game. I think every semi-final should be played with passion and energy and full commitment from both teams. There were a couple of incidents, but we we're not gonna concentrate on that. We're gonna concentrate on the effort put in this week. And we've got an opportunity to win our final game of the tournament and fly back to Glasgow as better players," Ellis added.



# ONE-ON-ONE: SEATTLE SOUNDERS HEAD COACH, ETHAN O'NEILL

**How has your team been enjoying the games so far?** "It's a once in a lifetime experience for the group. The players can only get better coming away from this. This is the club's first time in the tournament. We got the invite and we said yes within seconds. So it's an experience that you can't turn down and it's been amazing. The club have gone to England, Japan and Mexico and different countries, but never in the Middle East. It's just been an amazing experience so far".

**How do you balance between training the young players to be at their best while at the same time nurturing them to grow holistically?** "As coaches, we need to create a love for the game that when they come to our training sessions, yes they wanna be serious and they wanna get better, but joy has gotta be a part of it. We got to create a love for the game where the players want to come back and strive to be the best they can be. And wherever that might be, some will be professionals. The main focus for us as coaches is making them better people, first and foremost. And if they become a better player and push them to the highest level they can go, I think we did our job as coaches".

**What life skills do the boys learn through this tournament?** "For example, we lost the first game. So making sure they know that a failure is a part of success, and that it doesn't define who you are and to be successful you need to fail. We lost the first game and the guys had the character to bounce back and not affect them. Those type of life skills are I think the most important thing. They become good people no matter what industry they go into, which I think is really important, giving them a platform that they can go be successful no matter what they do".

**How has your team been enjoying the games so far?** "It's a once in a lifetime experience for the group. The players can only get better coming away from this. This is the club's first time in the tournament. We got the invite and we said yes within seconds. So it's an experience that you can't turn down and it's been amazing. The club have gone to England, Japan and Mexico and different countries, but never in the Middle East. It's just been an amazing experience so far".

**How is the team responding and improving throughout the tournament?** "Oh, they love it. I actually think this tournament has brought the team together even more. Because we're together so long, the tournament has been the best tournament I've ever been part of. From the facilities to how many people are working to liaison to media, to the fields, the pitches, and the opposition. It's been amazing. And the players can only get better from this experience".

**Your advice to youngsters out there when it comes to discipline and working hard to be successful?** "It's easy to work hard when everyone's looking; it's hard to work hard when no one's looking. It's what you do behind the scenes in your own time in terms of nutrition, sleep, the extra training you want to get in to making your weaknesses stronger and your strengths super strengths. I've seen players with loads of talent, but lack that discipline and attitude and not make it; and I've seen players with less talent with a high work rate and a high yield attitude and they've surpassed these players. I also think players develop at different ages; they go through different physical cycles and different distractions in life. The people that have this stamina within their motivation are the ones that make it through top".



# PHOTO OF THE DAY





GROUP A				GROUP B			
	ASPIRE ACADEMY				REAL MADRID CF		
	MOHAMMED VI FA				PARIS SAINT GERMAIN F.C.		
	RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB				AL AHLY FC		
	SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC				KASHIWA REYSOL		
DATE	NO.	TEAMS				KICK-OFF	
Thursday 13.02	1	Aspire Academy		4 vs 1		Mohammed VI FA	15:30
	2	Rangers Football Club		2 vs 0		Seattle Sounders FC	17:50
Friday 14.02	3	Real Madrid CF		2 vs 1		Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	15:30
	4	Al Ahly FC		0 vs 1		Kashiwa Reysol	18:00
Saturday 15.02	5	Aspire Academy		1 vs 1		Rangers Football Club	15:30
	6	Mohammed VI FA		0 vs 3		Seattle Sounders FC	18:00
Sunday 16.02	7	Real Madrid CF		1 vs 0		Al Ahly FC	15:30
	8	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.		3 vs 1		Kashiwa Reysol	18:00
Monday 17.02	9	Aspire Academy		0 vs 1		Seattle Sounders FC	15:30
	10	Mohammed VI FA		1 vs 1		Rangers Football Club	18:00
Tuesday 18.02	11	Real Madrid CF		1 vs 1		Kashiwa Reysol	15:30
	12	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.		1 vs 1		Al Ahly FC	18:00
POSITION PLAYOFF (8-5 Pos.)							
Wednesday 19.02	13	Aspire Academy		0 vs 0		Kashiwa Reysol	15:30
	14	Mohammed VI FA		5 vs 0		Al Ahly FC	18:15
SEMI-FINAL							
Thursday 20.02	15	Seattle Sounders FC		0 vs 2		Real Madrid CF	15:30
	16	Paris Saint-Germain F.C.		3 vs 1		Rangers Football Club	18:15
POSITION 4 & 3							
Saturday 22.02	17	Seattle Sounders FC		vs		Rangers Football Club	13:15
	18	Real Madrid CF		vs		Paris Saint-Germain F.C.	16:00

