

Dar Kulaib to face Muharraq in Crown Prince Cup final

● Crown Prince Cup final set for Saturday

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib survived a major scare to reach the Crown Prince Cup final with a 3-1 semi-final win over Bani Jamra at Isa bin Rashid Volleyball Arena last night, before Muharraq beat Al Ahli to set up the title clash.

Bahrain Volleyball Association President Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa was among those in attendance for a night that featured two contrasting semi-finals: Dar Kulaib endured a tense battle and Muharraq produced a straight-sets win.

In the opening semi-final, Bani Jamra, coached by Mohammed Al Jaboori, made a strong start and took the first set 25-21. Dar Kulaib, led by Ivan Joksimovic, responded immediately, levelling the match with a dominant 25-16 second set as Enock Mogeni's influence grew.

The third set followed a similar pattern, with Dar Kulaib taking early control and closing it 25-18. Mahmood Abdulwahab and Enock Mogeni were decisive



Kenyan professional Enock Mogeni attacks at the net for Dar Kulaib

in transition, repeatedly punishing Bani Jamra, who struggled for consistency in longer rallies.

The fourth set delivered the night's defining drama, with both teams locked together early and neither able to establish control. At 10-10, Mogeni brought Dar Kulaib level before play was briefly halted after

a collision between two Bani Jamra players at the net. When action resumed, Abdulla Jaffar put Bani Jamra ahead 12-10, but was later penalised for over-celebration.

From there, the set became a tense exchange of runs and errors. Abdulwahab's touch at the net gave Dar Kulaib an 18-17



Jacob Link in action for Muharraq against Al Ahli in the semi-final

lead, before Mogeni finished a long rally for 19-18. The lead continued to swing amid net violations, disputed calls, and mounting pressure as the score reached 23-23. At 25-25, Abdulwahab struck again to edge Dar Kulaib ahead, and despite Bani Jamra briefly going 29-28 up, Dar Kulaib held firm. Abdulwahab and Mogeni then combined for the decisive block-touch winner to seal a 30-28 fourth set and a 3-1 victory.

In the second semi-final, Muharraq produced a far more comfortable performance to defeat bitter rivals Al Ahli 3-0 (25-18, 25-22, 25-17). Muharraq controlled proceedings throughout, closing out the match in straight sets after a decisive final sequence. An Al Ahli service error opened the door for Muharraq to reach match point, before Sayed Hashim Ali played the final rally. Although his attack was initially thought to be out, a video challenge review confirmed a block touch, sealing Muharraq's victory.

The final is now set for Saturday, with Dar Kulaib taking on Muharraq. Dar Kulaib are targeting a domestic double following their Isa bin Rashid League triumph last month, while Muharraq go into the final as reigning champions.

Ahmedabad to host IPL final after Bengaluru switch



A general view of the stadium

AFP | New Delhi

The Indian Premier League final will be held in Ahmedabad on May 31 instead of Bengaluru as originally planned, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said the venue was shifted because of "certain requirements" from local authorities and the state association.

Bengaluru was cleared to host five games this IPL season despite a stampede last year outside its main cricket stadium that killed 11 young fans.

Qualifier 1, featuring the top two teams in the standings, will be played on May 26 at Dharamsala, with a direct berth in the final at stake.

Chandigarh will host the Eliminator on May 27 between the third and fourth-placed teams. The same venue will also stage Qualifier 2 on May 29, where the loser of Qualifier 1 will face the winner of the Eliminator to determine the second finalist.

The title clash will be held at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium, the world's largest cricket stadium with a capacity of 130,000.

The IPL, the world's richest cricket league, attracts leading international players and is broadcast globally, with several franchises backed by Bollywood stars.

It is also a top revenue earner for the BCCI and was estimated in 2020 to generate more than \$11 billion a year for the Indian economy.

PSG on Brink of European Crown Defence

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Paris Saint-Germain are through to the Champions League final after a 1-1 draw with Bayern Munich in the second leg, securing a 6-5 aggregate victory. They will face Arsenal in the final on May 30 in Budapest, as they move within one match of claiming a second European title.

PSG made a fast start, with Ousmane Dembélé scoring in the 3rd minute to extend their advantage in the tie. The move came down the left, where Khvicha Kvaratskhelia combined with Fabián Ruiz before delivering a low cross that Dembélé finished past Manuel Neuer.

Bayern gradually took control of possession and territory but struggled to create clear chances against a well-organised PSG defensive shape. Despite sustained pressure, the visitors limited space in key areas and



Dembélé celebrates PSG's goal against Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-final

managed the game with composure for long spells.

The match came alive in stoppage time when Harry Kane equalised for Bayern, finishing from close range to give the home side hope in the dying moments. However, the goal was not enough to alter the outcome, with PSG still holding a narrow aggregate lead.

There was also controversy in the first half when Bayern appealed for a penalty after a handball incident involving João Neves, but the referee waved play on. Earlier physical exchanges involving Nuno Mendes also added to Bayern's frustration as the atmosphere inside the Allianz Arena grew increasingly tense.

In the end, PSG's first-leg advantage proved decisive. Despite Bayern's late push and Kane's stoppage-time goal, the French side held on across both legs to reach another Champions League final.

Andorra owner Pique banned for two months after referee row

AFP | Andorra la Vella

Former Barcelona star and current FC Andorra owner Gerard Pique was banned for two months yesterday after a heated row with a referee.

The 39-year-old businessman, who retired from playing in 2022, became embroiled in an argument after Andorra's 1-0 defeat by Albacete last week in



Former Spanish footballer Gerard Pique

the second division.

Referee Alonso de Ena Wolf wrote in his report after the game that Pique, as well as other members of Andorra's staff and playing squad, were confronting the officiating team.

The Spanish football federation's disciplinary committee said Pique has been "suspended for two months for notorious and public acts that undermine sport-

ing dignity and decorum, based on the facts recorded in the referee's report". Separately the committee also banned Pique for "six matches for acts involving minor violence toward the referees".

Andorra president Ferran Vilasaca was issued a four-month suspension, while the sporting director Jaume Nogues, and several other members of club staff were also banned.