

# Fakhreddine, Said Maalem reignite war of words

Mohammad Fakhreddine and Mohammed Said Maalem react after a cancelled title fight at BRAVE CF 50

● Fakhreddine fell ill hours before their scheduled vacant Light Heavyweight world title fight

TDI | Manama

Mohammad Fakhreddine and Mohammed Said Maalem didn't have the chance to settle their differences inside the BRAVE CF arena last week, as Fakhreddine fell ill hours before their scheduled vacant Light Heavyweight world title fight. But that doesn't mean the heat between the two men has diminished - in fact it has only increased.

A very irritated Said Maalem published a meme of his rival in his social media profiles, which didn't go well with Fakhreddine and his fans, who in turn made several other memes directed at Said Maalem.

The Algerian powerhouse then sent out a video statement in which he questioned Fakhreddine's actions during fight night. The Middleweight champion, who was looking to become the first double world champion in Arab and BRAVE CF history, was forced to back out from the bout with hours to go due to medical issues. Accord-



Mohammad Fakhreddine and Mohammed Said Maalem during Weigh-Ins

ing to Said Maalem, however, he was looking for a way out.

"You made fun of my boxing and said my wrestling is bad, kept acting up on weigh-ins thinking I would get scared of you, then your coach comes an hour before the fight to tell me you are not fighting. You had all day to let me know that you weren't feeling well, but you

waited until the last minute. If I had a stomach ache and there was an hour left, I would fight unlike you and have respect to my audience and not chicken out", commented Said Maalem, who went on to say he hopes BRAVE CF makes the match-up again.

"I really hope they reschedule this. I can't wait to show

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you how bad my boxing is and how bad my wrestling is so you can be very surprised", said Maalem, ironically.

While both men have been going back and forth with ferocity at each other, they recognize this is about them, and not their countries or cultures. Said Maalem guaranteed he had no issue with Lebanese people, except for Mohammad Fakhreddine.

## Arwa supports BRAVE CF and return to Kombat Kingdom



A BRAVE CF fighter with an Arwa bottle

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation official beverage partner Arwa has been part of the Kombat Kingdom Returns journey providing nourishing refreshments to fighters, officials, staff and volunteers throughout the four magnificent events that took place in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the support it provided to everyone involved was pivotal to the smooth running of the events.

Part of the Coca-Cola Middle East family, Arwa has been a staple in the region for decades favored by the youths and adults alike for its perfectly balanced and safe waters which motivate people to live a more balanced way of life.

BRAVE CF is proud to have had Arwa on board to assist in the mission to promote sports in Bahrain, as well as a healthy lifestyle for the youth

in the Kingdom. Arwa's contributions have supported the biggest sporting endeavor in the region, and have made a noticeable change in fighters' career internationally.

The Return to Kombat Kingdom series featured four massive events during the 21 days of mayhem taking place in the Kingdom of Bahrain from March 11 to April 1st. The first event, BRAVE CF 47: Asian Domination featured the best fighters from Asia, while the second event BRAVE CF 48: Arabian Night on March 18 enabled the next generation of Arab MMA fighters to rise within the global ranks. As for BRAVE CF 49: Super Fights on March 25, it included the most anticipated fights in MMA taking place in one night, while BRAVE CF 50 on April 1st was a celebration of BRAVE CF being the only MMA promotion to visit 21 countries, 5 continents, in its first 50 events.

## Veteran bigman Mamaril 'ends' PBA career

TDI | Manila

Gentle giant Billy Mamaril's career in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) is almost over and chances are, he would be trading his basketball jersey for a nurse scrub suit one of these days.

The grizzled veteran is almost done with his nursing school and could be joining the country's medical force.

San Miguel team manager Gee Abanilla admitted that management can no longer offer the 40-year-old son of PBA legend Romulo "Mama" Mamaril a new contract after a three-year stay with the ballclub.

Being let go by the Beermen meant he is now a free agent and is available to negotiate with other teams should he wish to.

Although he has not yet announced officially his retirement, Abanilla personally thinks the 6-foot-6 power forward won't be playing basketball anymore.

"I don't think he's going to play anymore because he's about to finish his nursing course," said Abanilla.

But while retirement beckons for the former first-round pick in the 2003 draft, Abanilla doesn't want to preempt Mamaril's plans as far as his playing career is concerned.

"He did not say that he was officially retired. Because maybe later I will say he retired,



Mamaril is set to pursue a career in nursing

then later he will play with others," said Abanilla, leaving it to Mamaril to make any announcement.

Abanilla added Mamaril was already preparing for his future after basketball by taking up nursing while he was still playing with the Beermen.

The 2003 first round draft pick signed with San Miguel Beer back in 2017 as back-up for franchise player June Mar Fajardo and then to rookie Christian Standhardinger who wasn't available yet as he was still playing with Hong Kong Eastern with the ASEAN Basketball League (ABL).

But even after the arrival of Standhardinger, Mamaril stayed on and suited up for the



team for the next three seasons, including last year's Philippine Cup bubble.

Mamaril is part of the San Miguel team that won the 2018 and 2019 Philippine Cup titles and the 2019 Commissioner's Cup championship.

In his final season with the Beermen last year, Mamaril was used sparingly averaging 1.6 points and 2.3 assists in 9.3 minutes as a back-up in the middle for Filipino Tongan big man Mo Tautuaa and Arwind Santos in the absence of the injured 6-foot-10 Fajardo.

Before joining the Beermen, he also played for Purefoods, Shell, Coca-Cola, Barangay Ginebra, Air21, and NorthPort.

He plays the forward and, at times, center positions. Like his father, a former Barangay Ginebra Kings slotman, the young Mamaril is known for his physical and rugged defence.

## Vinicius double puts Real on top against Liverpool

AFP | Madrid

Vinicius Junior scored twice as Real Madrid made Liverpool pay for more defensive errors, a 3-1 victory putting them in sight of the Champions League semi-finals.

Vinicius and Marco Asensio both profited in the first half after darting behind Liverpool's makeshift back-line before a simple move from a throw-in gave Vinicius a simple finish in the second.

Mohamed Salah's strike shortly after the interval briefly made it a contest at Valdebebas, with an away goal certainly a significant consolation for Liverpool to take into the second leg at Anfield next week.

But without fans and with a miserable recent record at home, Jurgen Klopp will know his side have it all to do to avoid his team's season becoming solely about scraping into the Premier League's top four.

"We didn't play well enough, that's my first concern," said Klopp. "We didn't deserve to win tonight, but the good news is that there is another match."

"We are going to fight, 3-1 is not good, but we have a chance."

Except for two spells after half-time and at the finish, when their opponents were holding on to what they had, Liverpool were overpowered by Real Madrid, whose only disappointment might be missing out on a clearer margin ahead of the return in eight days' time.

Before then, they go up



Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior (L) scores a goal past Liverpool's Nathaniel Phillips

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JURGEN KLOPP

against Barcelona on Saturday and this result, their fifth consecutive victory, should be another huge boost to morale going into what will be a crucial fixture in La Liga's title race.

"Nothing is close, nothing is won," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "We are alive in two competitions and we will keep fighting. We will start the

second leg like it's 0-0 because it will be another very difficult game."

Madrid were without Sergio Ramos, who throughout was bellowing at his team from the stands, while Raphael Varane testing positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday morning meant both sides were fielding patched-up back fours.

The last time these two clubs met, Ramos dislocated Salah's shoulder and Madrid went on to win their 13th European Cup but Klopp insisted there was no desire for revenge in the minds of his players.

They could have done with some extra fire because Madrid were superior in the first half, more controlled in possession and more aggressive out of it. Liverpool seemed caught between trying to match Madrid's intensity and slowing the game down to gain a foothold.