

# KBS Cup semi-finals tip off tonight

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TDT | Manama

The semi-finals of the 2025/26 Khalifa bin Salman Cup begin today at Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town, with the competition's final four set to battle it out in best-of-three series for a place in this season's championship game.

The opening night features two highly anticipated matchups that also mirror the current Zain Basketball League standings. League leaders Muharraq face fourth-placed Al Ahli at 8:30pm, before second-placed Manama take on third-placed Al Najma at 10:30pm.

Both semi-finals follow a best-of-three format, with Game Two scheduled for March 14 and a deciding Game Three, if necessary, set for March 18.

## Muharraq vs Al Ahli

Reigning champions Muharraq arrive in the semi-finals in emphatic fashion after pro-



Holders Muharraq gather in a team huddle

ducing one of the most dominant performances in recent Bahraini basketball history. The Red Wolves powered past Sitra 153-94 in the quarter-finals, setting a post-2016 record for points scored in a Bahraini competition.

Kris Clyburn led the charge with 41 points, seven rebounds and four assists, while Mohamed Nasser added 22 points and Nader Ali contributed 20 in a performance that underlined Muharraq's attacking depth.

Their opponents Al Ahli also advanced confidently after defeating Al Hala in their quarter-final clash to secure their place in the final four.

Historically, both teams are among the competition's most successful. Al Ahli share the record for the most Khalifa bin Salman Cup titles with three, alongside Manama, while Muharraq have lifted the trophy twice, including last season when they defeated Manama 89-86 in the final.

## Manama vs Al Najma

The late game sees Manama face Al Najma, two sides currently separated by just one place in the league standings.

Manama secured their semi-final berth with a 71-58 victory over League B leaders Al Ettihad. After trailing early, Manama tightened defensively and gradually pulled away, with Alex Young scoring 20 points and Ahmed Salman adding 17 points and five steals.

Al Najma, meanwhile, advanced after a convincing 100-80 win over Nuwaidrat, controlling the game for long stretches. Donovan Smith led the way with a 16-point, 14-rebound double-double, while the team showcased impressive balance with six players scoring in double figures.

With the top four teams in the league standings now facing off in the semi-finals, the stage is set for two tightly contested series as the race continues for one of Bahrain's most prestigious basketball trophies.

## Scholes makes peace with Carrick after jibe at former Man Utd team-mate



Manchester United's English Interim head coach Michael Carrick applauds the fans (file photo)

AFP | London

Paul Scholes claims he did not mean to offend former Manchester United team-mate Michael Carrick after taking a swipe at the Old Trafford interim boss on social media.

Responding to United's 2-1 defeat at Newcastle in the Premier League last Wednesday, Scholes took to Instagram to point out his old team's run of disappointing performances.

"Michael has definitely got something special about him, because United have been c\*\*p last four games," Scholes wrote on Instagram.

It was a first defeat for Carrick since he replaced the sacked Ruben Amorim in January.

United have climbed to third in the Premier League and are challenging for Champions League qualification after going unbeaten in Carrick's first seven matches prior to the Newcastle loss.

Scholes played alongside Carrick in United's midfield

for seven years and another of their old team-mates Patricia Evra criticised Scholes' comments, saying he hoped he "was hacked".

Scholes, speaking on 'The Good, The Bad and The Football' podcast with former United colleagues Wes Brown and Nicky Butt, tried to bury the hatchet with Carrick on Monday.

"Michael is one of the nicest people you will ever meet in football - he'd be the last person I would want to offend," the former England star said.

"I messaged Michael anyway. I went straight to Michael and said, 'Look, I never intended to upset you.' And I don't think I needed to say that anyway, and he told me himself he wasn't upset by it.

"I think people have just took it differently from what was meant. The only thing I was saying was that I don't think they played that well the last four games, and he's still managing to get results."

## Luis Enrique confident PSG can raise game ahead of Chelsea showdown

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique said yesterday his side had "no doubts whatsoever" that they can rediscover the form that led them to Champions League glory last season as they prepare to face Chelsea in the last 16.

"We have no doubts whatsoever. We are going into the best part of the season and we need to be able to handle the step up," the Spaniard told re-

porters at PSG's training ground when asked whether his team could return to the level of performance they showed a year ago.

PSG welcome Chelsea to the Parc des Princes on Wednesday in the first leg of their last-16 tie, as the sides meet for the first time since the English outfit's 3-0 victory in last July's Club World Cup final.

That was the only blemish on a remarkable last campaign for PSG which saw the Qatar-backed

club win the Champions League for the first time in their history.

But the demands of that marathon season have left a trace, with numerous players struggling for form and fitness in 2025/26.

PSG lost 3-1 at home to Monaco last weekend, a result which left them just a point clear of Lens at the top of Ligue 1.

They finished 11th in the league phase of the Champions League after winning just one

of their last five matches, and then scraped past Monaco in the play-off round.

But Luis Enrique is hoping that meeting Chelsea can bring the best out of his team, who eliminated three Premier League sides in the knockout rounds on the way to last season's final.

"All the English teams are exceptional, top-class sides, and Chelsea we know very well from having played against them last summer," he said.

## India team to pocket \$14 million for T20 World Cup win

AFP | New Delhi

India's all-conquering men's cricket team will pocket \$14 million after lifting the T20 World Cup for a record third time, the country's cricket board said yesterday.

The co-hosts and pre-tournament favourites swept aside New Zealand by 96 runs in Sunday's final in Ahmedabad to become the first team to retain the trophy and the first to win it on home soil.

Cricket commands an unrivalled following in the world's most populous country, with top players enjoying star status and the game serving as a rare unifying force in an otherwise diverse nation.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the world's richest and most powerful cricket body, praised the players, support staff and selectors for the "historic achievement" as it announced the cash



India's Arshdeep Singh (L) and Abhishek Sharma dance during a victory lap

reward.

The victory cemented India's place "among the most successful teams in the history of the format", BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a statement.

The prize money will be

shared among the entire team, including coaches and support staff.

The Indian team will separately receive \$2.34 million from the International Cricket Council while runners-up New

Zealand will earn \$1.17 million.

Midnight celebrations broke out across the country on Sunday as delirious fans in blue Indian shirts took to the streets, beating drums and dancing to Bollywood hits.