

10-man Muharraq stun Al Ahli to reach final



Soufiane Mahrouk celebrates after doubling Muharraq's lead

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Muharraq overcame rivals Al Ahli in the Kingdom's "Clásico" yesterday to book their place in the final of the 49th edition of the King's Cup.

In doing so, they set up a meeting with Riffa, who also advanced after a dramatic semi-final win against Al Khalidiya on Friday.

Muharraq held on for a 2-1 victory at Khalifa Sports City Stadium despite playing more than half the match with 10 men.

The contest was defined by early mistakes, VAR interventions, and relentless late pressure.

The Red Wolves, led by Portuguese head coach Fernando Manuel de Jesus Santos, made a dream start.

Just two minutes in, they capitalised on a costly defensive error as Saud Al Asam's misplaced pass was intercepted by Abdulwahab Al Malood.

The move was worked quickly into the path of Edimar Ribeiro da Costa, who released Arthur Rezende. The Brazilian finished first time with a composed side-foot past Sayed Shubbar Ebra-



Arthur Rezende receives his marching orders

him.

Al Ahli responded almost immediately when Rodrigo Varanda tapped into an empty net. However, the effort was ruled out for a foul in the build-up, denying the Eagles a swift equaliser.

The match then swung dramatically early in the second half. In the 48th minute, Rezende was sent off after a high boot caught Hamza Buihamghet, leaving the Moroccan bloodied.

Following a lengthy VAR review, referee Mohammed Rashid brandished a straight

red card, reducing Muharraq to 10 men.

Even so, Muharraq struck again in the 57th minute to extend their lead. Edimar once more proved pivotal, threading a precise pass through the defence to Soufiane Mahrouk.

He held off pressure from Saud Al Asam and finished powerfully to make it 2-0.

Al Ahli responded with sustained pressure and were rewarded in the 68th minute. Abdullah Al Hashash reacted quickest to a loose ball in the area and fired a bouncing half-volley into the corner, setting up a tense

final stretch.

The closing stages brought further controversy. In stoppage time, Al Ahli were initially awarded a penalty after a challenge involving Muharraq captain Waleed Al Hayyam on Sayed Mohammed Amin. However, following another VAR review, the decision was overturned and the yellow card rescinded.

Ultimately, Muharraq withstood the pressure to secure victory, booking their place in the final where they will meet Riffa, who beat them in last February's Khalid bin Hamad Cup decider.

Iyer leads Punjab's chase of 220 to down Hyderabad



Punjab Kings' Shreyas Iyer (R) plays a shot

AFP | Chandigarh

Shreyas Iyer led from the front with an unbeaten 69 to steer Punjab Kings to a six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in a high-scoring IPL contest on Saturday.

Opens Priyansh Arya, who hit 57 from 20 balls, and Prabhsimran Singh (51) set up Punjab's chase of 220 in a stand of 99 before Iyer played anchor and then bossed the opposition bowling in Chandigarh.

It was Punjab's 10th chase of over 200 in the T20 tournament.

Punjab registered their third win in four matches to stay unbeaten in this edition of the 10-team tournament. They shared one point with Kolkata Knight Riders in one rained-off match.

Left-handed Arya came out roaring as he hit a string of fours and sixes to dominate the first six overs of powerplay with good support from Prabhsimran.

But the two departed in quick succession to left-arm wrist spinner Shivang Kumar who also dismissed Cooper Connolly for 11 to finish with 3-33.

Muharraq move closer to title

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Muharraq moved within one win of retaining their Zain Bahrain Basketball League title after defeating Manama 88-80 in Game 2 of their best-of-five final series at Khalifa Sports City Arena last night.

The Red Wolves now lead the series 2-0 under head coach Peter Schomers, leaving Manama, coached by Salman Ramadhan, needing a response in Tuesday's Game 3.

Manama made the stronger start, taking a 21-17 lead in the opening quarter after a dominant 9-0 run led by Ahmed Salman, Mohamed Ghazi, and new signing Donovan Smith. Muharraq struggled early with turnovers from Mohammed Buallay and Mohamed Nasser disrupting their rhythm.

The lead grew to 19-6 midway through the period as Smith controlled the paint and Salman created from the perimeter. Muharraq settled late through Nick West's free throws and Mahmood Abbas Isa's midrange scoring, but still trailed at the end of the quarter.

Muharraq responded in the second, gradually working their



Muharraq's Younis Kuwayed drives past Ali Jaber

way back into the game. The teams traded baskets before the score was level at 39-39, with Manama briefly edging ahead again through Salman and Smith.

Defensive pressure proved key for Muharraq as Michael Warren

sparked a shift in momentum with steals and transition points. Isa and Nader Ali added timely shooting, with Ali's three-pointers helping Muharraq edge in front 46-44 by halftime.

Manama regained the lead in a closely contested third quarter.



American Donovan Smith goes for a shot under pressure from his compatriot Wayne Chism

Ali Jaber provided energy off the bench with rebounds and second-chance points, while Emran Hasan hit key three-pointers to push Manama ahead.

Ahmed Salman continued to score efficiently, while Muharraq stayed in touch through

Bader Abdulla and Isa. Manama finished the quarter stronger to take a 67-64 lead into the final period.

Muharraq took control in the fourth.

In a physical closing stretch, their defence tightened, forc-

ing turnovers and limiting Manama's scoring opportunities. Abdulla led the decisive run, knocking down crucial jump shots and converting from the line, while Isa added important three-pointers.

Warren controlled the tempo as Muharraq's experience showed down the stretch. They pulled clear in the final minutes, while Manama's offence faltered under pressure with missed shots and costly turnovers.

Captain Abdulla led Muharraq with 18 points to earn Man of the Match honours. Isa added 16, Warren scored 14, and Nasser contributed 13 in a balanced effort.

Smith finished with 25 points for Manama, Salman added 22, and Emran Hasan had 16, but their late-game execution proved decisive in the outcome. Muharraq now stands one win away from history. Manama are the league's most decorated side with 25 titles, but now face the reality of the champions closing in on a fifth crown of their own.

If Manama win Game 3 on Tuesday, the series will continue with Game 4 on April 17 and, if needed, Game 5 on April 20. All remaining games are scheduled for 7pm at Khalifa Sports City.