

# Knockout night belongs to **Morocco, Saudi**

Atlas Lions and Green Falcons storm into the Arab Cup last four

● **Morocco to face Algeria/UAE**

● **Saudi meet Jordan/Iraq winner**

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Football's magic and unpredictability shone brightly last night as Morocco and Saudi Arabia secured their spots in the FIFA Arab Cup semi-finals after a pulsating night of quarter-final drama in Doha. Both sides delivered decisive performances, proving that in knockout football, anything can happen.

At Khalifa International Stadium, Morocco edged Syria 1-0 in a match they largely controlled. Under head coach Tarik Sektioui, the Atlas Lions dictated possession and rhythm, while Jose Fernandez's Syria defended deep and relied on counterattacks. The first major flashpoint came in the 26th minute when Syria appealed for a penalty after Mahmoud Al Aswad went down under a shove from Marwane Saadane. VAR reviewed the contact but deemed it normal, keeping the scores level



Action from Saudi Arabia's thrilling extra-time win vs Palestine

**Saudi Arabia now await the winner of today's Jordan vs Iraq clash at Education City Stadium. Both semi-finals are set for December 15, with the final and third-place match on December 18.**

and tension high.

Morocco intensified their pressure after halftime, carving out chance after chance as Syria struggled to escape their own half. The breakthrough finally arrived in the 79th minute.

Mountassir Chouiar unleashed a powerful long-range strike

that Syria's goalkeeper parried straight into the path of Waleed Azaro, who had come on earlier due to injury. Azaro reacted sharply and buried the rebound to give Morocco a deserved lead.

Their momentum was briefly dampened in the 89th minute when substitute Mohamed Mofid was shown a

red card for a dangerous stamp on Anas Al Dahhan's Achilles, ruling him out of the semi-final. Even with ten men, Morocco created further chances and comfortably saw out the win to advance to the last four, where they will face the winner of Algeria vs UAE.

At Lusail Stadium, Saudi Arabia, managed by Herve Renard, triumphed 2-1 over Palestine after an exhausting, high-drama battle that stretched into extra time. The Green Falcons opened the scoring in the 58th minute when Salem Al Dawsari was fouled in the box, allowing Feras Al Buraikan to convert the penalty. Palestine equalised six minutes later as Ameer Sawarfa's early ball found Oday Dabagh, who controlled expertly and fired past Nawaf Al Aqidi.

Regular time ended in chaos: Majrashi struck the bar, Saudi had a handball appeal denied, and an apparent winner was ruled offside. Extra time saw Saudi pour forward relentlessly, and in the 115th minute Al Dawsari delivered a perfect cross that Mohamed Kanno headed home from close range to break Palestinian hearts and finally reward Saudi's pressure.



Morocco's squad erupts in joy after securing qualification

## Bahrain crash out of U23 Gulf Cup



Action from the match  
**Hussain Almaskati**  
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Bahrain's U23 national team saw their Gulf U23 Cup campaign come to an end yesterday following a 2-1 defeat to Kuwait at Aspire Zone 2 in Doha, a result that confirmed their exit from the tournament with no points from three matches.

Kuwait took control early, breaking the deadlock in the 15th minute through a moment of brilliance from Ahmad Boodai, who unleashed a sensational free kick from nearly 40 yards. His strike sailed over the wall and rocketed into the top corner, leaving Bahrain goalkeeper Mohamed Arhama with no chance.

The Kuwaitis extended their lead before the break when Montaser Al Abdull-

salam converted from the penalty spot, sending Arhama the wrong way with a calm finish.

Bahrain showed greater purpose in the second half and were rewarded in the 68th minute. Captain for the night Ali Aldoseri received the ball wide on the flank, drove into a dangerous area, and fired low at the near post, sneaking the ball past Kuwait goalkeeper Abdulrahman Al Harbi to reduce the deficit.

Despite the late surge, Bahrain could not find an equaliser, closing their group-stage run with three consecutive defeats: 5-0 to Saudi Arabia, 1-0 to Qatar, and 2-1 to Kuwait. The result leaves Bahrain bottom of the group and eliminated, while Kuwait finish their campaign with their first victory.

## Ipswich beat Stoke to climb to fourth in Championship

London, United Kingdom

Ipswich beat Stoke 1-0 in the Championship to move up to fourth, just a point behind Millwall. Jaden Philogene scored after 100 seconds, and although Ipswich missed further chances, Stoke failed to threaten despite dominating possession, slipping to eighth after a third

straight loss.

Millwall drew 1-1 at Derby, missing the chance to close on second place. Derby's Matt Clarke scored an own goal to give Millwall the lead, but Jake Cooper diverted another into his own net late on. Bristol City fought back from two down to draw 2-2 with Leicester, while Hull defeated Wrexham 2-0.

Jaden Philogene



# Relentless Muharraq leave Al Hala behind

**Hussain Almaskati**  
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Champions Muharraq delivered one of their most dominant performances of the season, overwhelming Al Hala 97-67 last night at the BBA Arena in Um Al Hassam and solidifying their status as favourites in the Zain Bahrain Basketball League title race. Under head coach Peter Shommers, Muharraq have been in fine form, coming off wins over Nuwaidrat, Al Ahli, and Manama in the Super Cup final, and look well-placed to retain the title.



Top scorer Mohamed Nasser looks for a way through

The opening quarter was competitive, with Al Hala's Joshua Corey, Ahmed Khalifa, and Hussain Jan keeping their side close. Muharraq gradually took control through Mohamed Nasser and Wayne Chism's early layups, while Himothy Lamount added a key three-pointer and inside points, giving Muharraq a 21-10 lead by the end of the period.

In the second quarter, Muharraq pulled away decisively. Nasser scored multiple layups and free throws, eventually totaling 22 points, while Ali Hussain Rashed contributed drives and

a three-pointer. Chism's mid-range shooting and defensive rebounds fuelled fast breaks, with Lamount and Mohamed Ameer adding timely baskets. Al Hala's Corey (11 points), Jan, and Khalifa (9 each) briefly kept their team in the contest, but turnovers and missed shots limited their challenge. By half-time, Muharraq held a comfortable lead.

The third quarter saw Muharraq extend their dominance. Rashed and Nasser orchestrated fast breaks and scored layups, Chism added jumpers, and Lamount's dunks and assists

highlighted their offensive fluency, leaving Al Hala struggling. Even Corey's late free throws and Alwatheq Ali's layups could not redue the deficit.

In the final quarter, Muharraq sealed the win with Nasser's tip-ins and driving layups, Chism's jump shots, and contributions from Ameer and Rashed, finishing 97-67.

The Zain Basketball League continues today at Um Al Hassam Arena, with Isa Town facing Samaheej at 6 PM, followed by Al Najma against Al Ahli at 8 PM.