

Arab Cup drama hits final four

Morocco meet UAE, Saudi Arabia face Jordan



Moroccan players in high spirits during training

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Football fans are in for a treat tonight as the FIFA Arab Cup semi-finals take center stage in Doha, with Morocco facing UAE at 5:30 PM at Khalifa International Stadium and Saudi Arabia taking on Jordan at 8:30 PM at Al Bayt Sta-

dium. With the quarter-finals providing stunning upsets and drama, both semi-finals promise another night of football fireworks. The Atlas Lions and the Green Falcons booked their semi-final spots last Thursday. Morocco narrowly defeated Syria 1-0 at Al Rayyan, with substitute Walid Azaro scoring the decisive late



Mohamed Kanno celebrates Saudi Arabia's quarter-final winning goal

goal after a parried attempt from Mounir Chouiar, ensuring the Atlas Lions advanced after largely controlling the match. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia secured a 2-1 extra-time win over Palestine at Education City Stadium, with Mohamed Kanno heading home the winner from a perfect cross by Salem Al Dawsari, sending the Green Falcons into

the last four. Meanwhile, UAE and Jordan both booked their places last Friday. Neither side could be separated in 120 minutes as UAE stunned defending champions Algeria in a marathon penalty shootout following a riveting 1-1 draw. Richard Akonnor eventually converted the decisive spot-kick



Jordan players work through drills before semi-final match

after goalkeeper Hamad Almqbaali made a crucial save in sudden death. Earlier on, Jordan edged Iraq 1-0 thanks to Ali Olwan's controversial first-half penalty, holding on despite losing star forward Yazan Al Naimat to an early knee injury. With so much on the line, the Arab Cup semi-finals feature four sides that have advanced

through a dramatic knockout stage. Morocco remain undefeated in the tournament, while UAE are riding the momentum of a narrow escape. Jordan are also yet to be beaten, while Hervé Renard's men, Saudi Arabia, will be looking for a comfortable route to the final, which is set for December 18, alongside the third-place decider.

Green says no complacency as Australia aim to seal Ashes in Adelaide

AFP | Adelaide

All-rounder Cameron Green said Sunday there was no room for complacency in the third Test this week, conscious that Australia let England bounce back from 2-0 down in the last Ashes series. Australia were on top in England in 2023, winning at Edgbaston and Lord's, before the hosts won two of the last three Tests with the other drawn. Despite the series ending 2-2, Pat Cummins' side retained the



Australia's Cameron Green in action

Ashes as holders.

"That's a good reminder for our team to stay really level," Green told reporters ahead of the third Test at the Adelaide Oval starting on Wednesday. "I think you can at times look a bit far ahead, but that's a great reminder for us to stay as good as we can be and finish it off." The odds are stacked in Australia's favour on home soil after eight-wicket wins in Perth and Brisbane, with England winless Down Under since their 2010-11 tour.

Ben Stokes' side have been widely panned for their lack of fight and perceived poor preparation, with the team under an intense media glare. A security guard for the team had a run-in with a cameraman on Saturday as they departed Brisbane airport for Adelaide, with pictures showing him seemingly pushing the Channel Seven operator away. Green said he had sympathy for England. "You never like getting filmed, especially when you want to get away from it," he said.

Maresca bemoans 'worst 48 hours at Chelsea' after lack of support



Chelsea's Italian head coach Enzo Maresca (R) embraces Chelsea's Argentinian midfielder #08 Enzo Fernandez (L) on the pitch

AFP | London

Enzo Maresca said he had suffered his "worst 48 hours" since joining Chelsea after a 2-0 win at home to Everton on Saturday as he lamented a lack of support. Victory took the London club into fourth place in the Premier League table and ended a run of four winless games in all competitions, with Cole Palmer scoring on his first home start since August. Yet Chelsea boss Maresca, who in his debut 2024/25 season in charge guided the Blues to both the Europa Conference League and Club World Cup titles, was far from happy, although he stressed he was not criticising the London club's fans. "The last 48 hours has been the worst since I joined the club because many people didn't support me and the team," he said.

Maresca, asked whether he was referencing Chelsea supporters, replied: "I love the fans and we are very happy with the fans." Maresca was initially responding to a question about the performance of Malo Gusto, the scorer of Chelsea's second goal, before he made his comments about an absence of backing, although he did not specify who he was talking about. During a pre-match press conference on Friday, the Chelsea manager insisted only victories would stop supporters from complaining on social media, saying all his decades in football meant "I know that if you don't win everyone complains". But there was no doubting Maresca's backing for his players, and Palmer in particular, as they ended a poor run of results that included losses away at Leeds and Atalanta and a goalless draw at Bournemouth.

Bhalla, Singh and Al Shaikh Win Black Knights Blackball Title



Zuzar Madarwala ringing the bell as individual winner and on behalf of the sponsor, the Black Knights.

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Sanjeev Bhalla, Balbir Singh and Abdulrahman Abdulwahed Al Shaikh claimed the Blackball team title at the annual "Black Knights" Blackball competition, one of the most anticipated events on the club calendar. The traditional format, sponsored by the Black Knights social group since 2013, sees teams of three share a single black golf ball, with each player responsible for scoring with it every third hole. Only teams able to return the black ball at the end of the round are eligible for the main prize, adding pressure and drama throughout the day.

Bhalla, Singh and Al Shaikh topped the team standings with 38 points, ahead of Hamad Salem Al Aathem, Hussain Salem and Abdulrahim Fakhroo on 35. Individual honours were also decided across three divisions, with Lee McIllear taking the Division One title on countback after a strong gross 71, James Wil-



Winners, Balbir Singh and Abdulrahman Abdulwahed Al Shaikh, with Captain Steve Newall

liamson winning Division Two, and Zuzar Madarwala posting the best score of the day with 40 points to win Division Three. Prizes were presented by club captain Steve Newall and tournament director Balbir Singh, with players and guests rounding off the event at a post-competition dinner.