

Lions roar to glory



Morocco lift second Arab Cup title

● **Frenzied Lusail final leaves Atlas Lions victorious and Jordan devastated**

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

After 18 days of glorious competition, Morocco and Jordan delivered an unforgettable climax in the FIFA Arab Cup 2025 final at Lusail Stadium – and what a spectacle it was. Packed with drama, sensational goals, and moments of

pure footballing brilliance, the Atlas Lions came out 3-2 victors in a match that had everything, despite having fielded their second team for the entire tournament as they focused on the upcoming AFCON.

The contest exploded in the 3rd minute when Ousmane Tannane scored a mind-blowing strike from inside his own half, catching Jordan goalkeeper Yazeed Abulaila off his line and giving Morocco an early lead. The impact was immediate as Abulaila collided with the post but continued after treatment. Morocco then also suffered a setback in the 20th minute when

El Berkaoui, their most reliable scorer, was forced off and replaced by Achraf El Mahdioui. Shortly after, Jordan nearly leveled when Mohannad Abu Taha's shot struck a Moroccan defender's arm, but the referee waved away the penalty appeal.

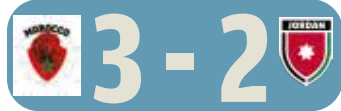
The second half saw a shift in momentum. Jordan equalized in the 47th minute as Ali Olwan powered a towering header from a quickly taken corner. Buoyed by the goal, Jordan pressed relentlessly, and Olwan struck again in the 64th minute to give Jordan a 2-1 lead, securing his Golden Boot for the tournament. Morocco responded in the 83rd

minute when Hamed Allah scored from a rebound header following a corner, restoring parity at 2-2.

The dying minutes of regulation time delivered near-misses and controversy. Morocco were denied a late penalty after VAR ruled contact on Hamed Allah insufficient, and Jordan immediately countered, with Olwan narrowly missing a one-on-one chance. As the match entered extra time, Abu Taha unleashed a stunning outside-of-the-boot half-volley, a goal worthy of any occasion. However, after VAR intervention, it was cruelly ruled out for handball.

Morocco struck back in the 105th minute. A free kick from the wing caused chaos, and Marwane Sadane's overhead attempt fell to Hamed Allah, who re-directed the ball past Abulaila to make it 3-2. Hamed Allah's brace ultimately decided the final, crowning Morocco champions. Reflecting on the win, Tarik Sektioui praised his players' professionalism, sincerity, and respect for the shirt, saying, "from the very first day, it was always in our eyes that we would lift the cup".

Earlier, the third-place match between Saudi Arabia and the UAE at Khalifa International



Stadium was abandoned due to heavy rain after a tense goalless first half, leaving the contest officially 0-0. But it was the main event that truly stole the show. Like the 2022 World Cup final at the same Lusail Stadium, the Arab Cup final was gripping, with dramatic swings, sensational goals, and near-miss moments. Morocco celebrated their second Arab Cup title, while Jordan marked a historic first-ever Arab Cup final appearance.

59 injured in clashes after Colombia football final

Bogotá, Colombia

At least 59 people were injured in clashes between football fans during Colombia's cup final in the city of Medellín on Wednesday night, authorities said.

The unrest broke out at the end of the match which saw Atletico Nacional beat fellow Medellín side, Deportivo Independiente Medellín 1-0.

Images of the rioting shared on social media showed dozens of supporters from both sides invading the pitch in Atanasio Girardot stadium, hurling projectiles.

Riot police were deployed to restore order.

Medellín's security secretary Manuel Villa said 52 fans were treated for injuries.

The police said seven officers were also hurt.

No arrests were reported.

Villa said the authorities were reviewing CCTV images of the disturbances to try identify the perpetrators.

The violence marred celebrations among the 43,000-strong



Picture for representation

crowd gathered in the stadium.

The ceremony to award Atletico Nacional the Copa Colombia trophy and the players their medals was cancelled due to the unrest.

In Colombia, visiting fans are usually prohibited from attending matches between major teams to prevent incidents.

But Medellín city hall had decided to allowed fans of Atletico Nacional -- the visitors in

Wednesday's game -- to attend the match, to promote peace in football.

Mayor Federico Gutierrez called those involved in the violence "criminals" and "misfits."

Violence in Colombian football has left at least 150 fans dead since 2008, according to independent investigations.

There are no official figures on the issue.

Ecuadorean footballer Mario Pineida shot and killed

Quito, Ecuador

Ecuadoran footballer Mario Pineida was shot and killed in the port city of Guayaquil on Wednesday, his team said.

Guayaquil has become a hotspot for gang violence linked to drug trafficking and several football players in Ecuador have been targeted in recent months.

Pineida, 33, was part of Ecuador's national team for the 2018 and 2022 World Cup qualifiers, but was not selected for the squad for the 2022 finals in Qatar. He also played for Fluminense in 2022.

In a post on X, his club, Barcelona SC, said it "regrets to inform, with deep sorrow, that it has been officially notified of the death of our player Mario Pineida, an event that occurred following an attack against him" in Guayaquil.

Barcelona face potential El Clasico in Women's Champions League

AFP | Paris, France

Barcelona could face a Women's Champions League quarter-final with fierce rivals Real Madrid, while Chelsea could meet holders Arsenal after the knockout stage draw for the tournament was made yesterday.

Barca and English champions Chelsea finished in the top four in the league phase and qualified directly for the quarter-finals, alongside Bayern Munich and record eight-time winners Lyon.

To set up the mouthwatering encounters, Real Madrid must

first beat Paris FC in the knockout play-offs, while Arsenal face a rematch with Belgians OH Leuven, who they beat 3-0 in the final league phase matchday on Wednesday.

In the other knockout ties, Manchester United will face Atletico Madrid with the victors set to meet Bayern Munich, and Wolfsburg take on Juventus for the right to play Lyon in the last eight.

The two-legged knockouts will take place between February 11-19, with the quarter-finals scheduled for March 24 to April 2.

