

SPORTS
sports

Riffa Sports' partnership with KHK MMA off to winning start

Riffa Sports Club ease past Ittihad Tanger in Arab Champions Cup

TDT | Manama

Riffa Sports Club made an instant impact in Arab football with an excellent away victory.

It was the first match held under the new partnership with KHK MMA, which is set to empower the biggest team in the Kingdom of Bahrain nationally and internationally.

The match against Ittihad Tanger was held away in Tanger, Morocco, and ended with a 2-0 score in favour of Bahrain's national champions.

The match was held in the preliminary round of the King Mohammed VI Champions Cup and means Riffa is leading its group, alongside Al-Zawraa of Iraq, which beat Somalia's Horseed in the first round.

The Bahraini Premier League winners need to top their group to progress to the next phase of the tournament, which will put together the best of the best in the Arab World.

Both goals of the match were scored in the second half, as Riffa captain and leader Ko-



Riffa Sports Club players celebrate after a goal

mail Hasan Alaswad scored the first goal of the season, getting a great rebound after a penalty save.

The second goal was a work of art, as Hashim Isa Radhi lost its

marker and flicked the ball with his heel towards the net, after a great cross.

Riffa SC will once again represent the Kingdom of Bahrain in the Champions Cup when fac-

ing Horseed, from Somalia, also in Morocco, as the KHK MMA supported team looks to get two victories out of two games. The game will take place on August 21, at 8 PM (Bahrain time).

Concussion substitute stars as Australia draw second Test



Australia's Marnus Labuschagne reacts as the ball, bowled by England's Jofra Archer (unseen) hits him on the helmet

AFP | London

Marnus Labuschagne made history as international cricket's first concussion substitute before his valuable fifty helped Australia draw the second Ashes Test against England at Lord's on Sunday.

Labuschagne was not confirmed as playing until Sunday morning when Australia star Steve Smith was ruled out with concussion, having been hit by a Jofra Archer bouncer during his 92 on Saturday.

Previously, a substitute would only have been permitted to field.

But this series is the first in the ICC's inaugural World Test Championship featuring new rules that allow replacement players to bat or bowl if they are covering for concussed team-mates.

Labuschagne, in just his sixth Test, responded to his late call-up by top-scoring with 59, having been hit on the grille of his helmet second ball by a 91.6 mph Archer bouncer, in Australia's eventual second-innings 154-6.

"Marnus played superbly," said Australia captain Tim Paine. "He got hit hard in the face second ball and I thought he showed great character, great skill and technique."

England pressed hard late on to level the series at 1-1 after captain Joe Root declared to set Australia a stiff target of 267 in 48 overs following Ben Stokes's 115 not out.

It seemed the match was destined for a draw, with Australia 132-3 after tea in a Test where five sessions were washed out and rain also delayed Sunday's start by over an hour.

Brazil's Dani Alves scores winner on Sao Paulo debut

AFP | Sao Paulo, Brazil

Brazil veteran Dani Alves scored the winning goal on his debut for Sao Paulo on Sunday, weeks after signing a three-year deal with the club.

Alves, 36, found the back of the net in the 40th minute to score the only goal of the game against Ceara.

Alves and Spanish international Juanfran, 34, are the stars for Sao Paulo, who snapped up both players after their contracts with European clubs expired.

Alves' return to Brazil after 17 years playing for top clubs in Europe has had a big impact on his home country.

The right-back played for Sevilla before going on to play for Barcelona, Juventus and PSG, collecting nine national league titles along the way -- six in Spain, one in Italy and two in France.

He has collected 40 trophies in all with club and country including three Champions League titles with Barcelona and two UEFA Cups with Sevilla.

He has also won two Copa Americas with Brazil, most recently in July when he was named player of the tournament as he captained them to victory over Peru in the final at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro.

Keys locks up WTA Cincy title

Madison Keys claims career's fifth title with victory over Svetlana Kuznetsova in final

AFP | Cincinnati

Madison Keys came from a break down in both sets to defeat Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) on Sunday to win the WTA Cincinnati crown.

The 2017 US Open finalist notched her fifth career title and second this season after a win in Charleston in April.

She'll return to the top 10 in the world rankings with the US Open a week away.

Kuznetsova, a two-time Grand Slam champion working her way back up the rankings after a series of injuries, was broken back in the 10th game of each set by 16th-seeded Keys -- who fired 13 aces on the way to victory.

"If my team had told me a week ago that I would be here, I would have laughed in their face," admitted Keys, who had endured two opening-match defeats since a second-round exit at Wimbledon.

Keys belted a total of 43 winners with 33 unforced errors and broke Kuznetsova three times.

Kuznetsova was the fourth Grand Slam winner Keys beat during the week, a string that included Spain's Garbine Muguruza, reigning Wimbledon champion Simona Halep and



Madison Keys poses with trophy after defeating Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia

Venus Williams.

"It was a tough draw from the very start," Keys said. "I definitely think I played some of my best tennis consistently this week."

"I'm obviously really happy and really proud of myself," she added, while stressing she won't let the performance put more pressure on her at the US Open.

"It's definitely more of a building block," she said.

Despite leading both sets, Kuznetsova never had a set point in either, Keys winning the final four games of the first set before dropping her serve

in the third game of the second. Keys broke Kuznetsova to level at 5-all and ran out the winner in the ensuing tiebreaker as the Russian sent a service return long on Keys's second match point.

"I just really focused in on obviously really important games and was able to make her play a lot of balls," Keys said.

"I think when I was doing a good job at moving forward and kind of trying to neutralize some of her deep, heavy, spinny shots, I was able to get out in front in the point and play a little bit more offense."



Madison Keys jumped eight spots in the WTA rankings and is now at the 10th place

Former world number two Kuznetsova, who received a wildcard into the draw, beat top seed Ashleigh Barty, world number three Ashleigh Barty and 2017 US Open champion Sloane Stephens on her way to the final.

"I had a lot of matches where they could have gone either way, including this one," said Kuznetsova, who will jump from 118th to 31st in the rankings and said she'd had a "great week."

"I had chances but she hit the ball well and was more aggressive. I'm happy with how I played, I'm feeling great," she said.

"It could give me more motivation in the future," Kuznetsova added. "I just want to rest and get ready for the Open."

Balotelli signs for home town team Brescia

AFP | Milan

Mario Balotelli will return to Italy with home town team Brescia after it was confirmed on Sunday he has signed for the newly-promoted club.

The Italian forward has penned a "multi-year contract" and will be officially presented yesterday, the northern team confirmed on their website.

"Mario returns home," Brescia said in a statement.

"The return to Italy, after three years, was made possible by Mario's determination and enthusiasm to return to Brescia, the city where he grew up and where, since he was a child, he stood out for his physical and technical skills," the club continued.

Balotelli, who was born in Sicily but adopted and raised just outside Brescia, has reportedly agreed a three-year deal with the Serie B champions after being released by Marseille in June.



Mario Balotelli