



AFC
CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2019 TECHNICAL REPORT & STATISTICS



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2019

GROUP A



ZOBAHAN FC
(IRN)



AL NASSR
(KSA)



AL ZAWRAA CLUB
(IRQ)



AL WASL FC
(UAE)

GROUP B



AL WAHDA FC
(UAE)



AL ITTIHAD
(KSA)



PFC LOKOMOTIV
(UZB)



AL RAYYAN FC
(QAT)

GROUP C



AL HILAL SFC
(KSA)



AL DUHAIL SC
(QAT)



ESTEGHLAL FC
(IRN)



AL AIN FC
(UAE)

GROUP D



AL SADD SC
(QAT)



AL AHLI SAUDI FC
(KSA)



PAKHTAKOR
(UZB)



PERSEPOLIS FC
(IRN)

GROUP E



SHANDONG LUNENG FC
(CHN)



KASHIMA ANTLERS
(JPN)



GYEONGNAM FC
(KOR)



JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM
(MAS)

GROUP F



SANFRECCIE HIROSHIMA
(JPN)



GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC
(CHN)



DAEGU FC
(KOR)



MELBOURNE VICTORY
(AUS)

GROUP G



JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC
(KOR)



URAWA RED DIAMONDS
(JPN)



BEIJING FC
(CHN)



BURIRAM UNITED
(THA)

GROUP H



ULSAN HYUNDAI FC
(KOR)



SHANGHAI SIPG FC
(CHN)



KAWASAKI FRONTALE
(JPN)



SYDNEY FC
(AUS)



**CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE**

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Foreword by the **AFC PRESIDENT**



Dear friends

It is once again my pleasure to provide the foreword for one of the most important publications of the year - the Technical Report on the AFC Champions League 2019.

As we all are aware, the AFC Champions League is our pinnacle club competition, which now is ranked among the best of any continental club competition anywhere in the world.

With the increasing intensity and as the standard rises, the need to examine the new trends and developments is ever more important and I am sure you will agree that the AFC Technical team have captured the main talking points of the competition in this publication.

We must thank them for their hard work in producing a document which will be of great use to coaches across the Continent as they embark on the AFC Champions League 2020. Our thanks are also due to the AFC Technical and AFC Competitions Committees for their guidance of the competition.

In the pages that follow, the Technical Study team focus on the key elements of another historic year in which Al Hilal from Saudi Arabia joined a handful of clubs in history to win a major AFC Club Competition for a third time.

Al Hilal also became the first team from the West Zone to win the competition since 2011, when Al Sadd of Qatar achieved the feat. So, congratulations to Al Hilal for their comprehensive victory and also congratulations to Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan for reaching the final.

Also included in this report is an overview of the match officials from a technical perspective and we are grateful to them for their excellence during the season, which saw greater engagement than ever before.

Finally, I would like to thank our commercial and broadcast partners, the media, and the hundreds of millions of fans who follow this competition - either by attending the games, viewing on TV or joining our digital community.

I am sure all will enjoy this excellent Technical Report.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President





COMPETITION OVERVIEW

PRELIMINARY AND PLAY-OFF STAGES



The AFC Champions League's qualifying phase began in early February 2019 as hopefuls from across the Continent's West and East Zones competed to secure the final eight places in the 2019 group stage, where they would join the 24 sides that had qualified automatically.

In West Asia, Kuwait SC overcame Jordan's Al Wehdat 3-2 to earn a place in the second Preliminary Round where, following Christian Osaguona's extra-time goal, they subsequently lost 1-0 to Persepolis FC from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The same stage of the competition also saw Uzbekistan duo Pakhtakor and AGMK FC beat 2018 AFC Cup winners Air Force Club and FC Istiklol respectively, while Iran's Saipa racked up a convincing 4-0 win over Indian champions Minerva Punjab.

Over in the East Zone, and after success in their first Preliminary Round match, Indonesian giants Persija Jakarta went on to be knocked out by Australia's Newcastle Jets, a fate that also befell Yangon United FC who lost 3-1 in Thailand to Chiangrai United.

Meanwhile, Malaysia's Perak held their collective nerve to beat Kitchee SC on penalties and Nguyen Van Quyet's late penalty sent Hanoi FC through to the



next phase thanks to a narrow 1-0 victory against Thai top-flight side Bangkok United.

February's Play-offs then saw eight teams seal their berths in the group stage. In Riyadh, Giuliano scored twice as Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr comfortably beat AGMK 4-0 to progress, while a brace from Venezuelan forward Gelmin Rivas helped Qatar's Al Rayyan SC register a 3-1 win over Saipa at home.

Elsewhere, 2010 runners-up Zobahan went through courtesy of a thrilling 3-2 triumph at Al Gharafa, as did Pakhtakor

thanks to goals from Dragan Ceran and Marat Bikmaev in a creditable 2-1 win against United Arab Emirates outfit Al Nasr.

They were joined from East Asia by Japan's Sanfrecce Hiroshima who beat Chiangrai 4-3 penalties after a 0-0 draw, and two-time quarter-finalists Shandong Luneng FC from China PR after a rousing second-half display ensured them of a 4-1 win over Vietnamese challengers Hanoi.

Also successful were reigning champions Kashima Antlers - Go Oiwa's charges beating Newcastle Jets 4-1 in Japan to advance - and 2012 title winners Ulsan Hyundai FC after their 5-1 defeat of Perak.



GROUP STAGE - WEST



GROUP A

A run of three wins and three draws proved enough for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Zobahan FC to top the Group A standings and seal their place in the Round of 16.

Losing finalists in 2010, Zobahan finished two points clear at the top of the standings as they and second-placed Al Nassr saw off the combined threat of Iraq's Al Zawraa Club and Emirati hopefuls Al Wasl FC to reach the competition's knockout phase.

Although far from prolific in the final third, Zobahan only conceded five times in the club's six matches, impressively resolute displays that helped Alireza Mansourian's charges qualify for what would be a fifth appearance in the AFC Champions League's Round of 16.

After being held to a 0-0 draw by Al Zawraa in their opening fixture, the team from Isfahan went on to claim seven points from a possible nine away from home – results that ensured their progress ahead of the rearranged Matchday Six stalemate with Al Nassr.

Despite eventually failing to overhaul Zobahan, Al Nassr also booked their place in the next round before they played Zobahan in late May. Their progress was assured when goals from Giuliano, Fahad bin Jumayah and Abdullah Al Salim sealed a comfortable 3-1 win over struggling Al Wasl at

Riyadh's King Fahd International Stadium on Matchday Five.

Elsewhere, Al Zawraa rounded off their first AFC Champions League outing since 2007 with a 5-1 win at Al Wasl, a rousing victory at the end of a campaign that had, initially, promised much but ultimately ended in disappointment for head coach Hakeem Shaker and his charges.

Having picked up a win and a draw from their first two matches – which included the first-ever AFC Champions League fixture to be played in Iraq – Al Zawraa seemed well-placed to challenge for a spot in the Round of 16, but back-to-back defeats against Al Nassr on Matchdays Three and Four ultimately proved their undoing as they finished two points behind their Saudi counterparts in third.

Meanwhile, Al Wasl finished fourth after famously beating Al Nassr on Matchday One but then losing their next five matches. The Dubai-based club have now failed to move beyond the group stage in three AFC Champions League appearances.

GROUP B

Al Wahda FSCC reigned supreme in Group B as the United Arab Emirates outfit topped the standings to progress through to the Round of 16 alongside second-placed Al Ittihad from Saudi Arabia.



After losing away to PFC Lokomotiv on Matchday One, Al Wahda went on to record four wins and a draw from their next five matches, a run of form that included an impressive 4-1 defeat of Al Ittihad and a 2-1 win at Al Rayyan SC.

Under the wily guidance of then head coach Henk ten Cate, Al Wahda guaranteed themselves a place in the next round when goals from Sebastián Tagliabué, Leonardo and Khalil Ibrahim helped secure a come-from-behind 3-1 win over Lokomotiv on Matchday Five.

Although far from watertight at the back, Al Wahda shone going forward during the group stage, bagging an average of over two goals per game en route to the club's best performance since reaching the competition's semi-finals in 2007.

Much of that dynamism in the final third was down to the performances of Brazilian livewire Leonardo, who scored eight times – including a four-

GROUP STAGE - WEST



goal haul against Al Rayyan - to top the goalscoring charts at the end of the group stage.

Despite eventually finishing two points behind their Emirati opponents, two-time title winners Al Ittihad also ensured their participation in the knockout phase with a game to spare as goals from Romarinho and 2014 AFC Player of the Year Nasser Al Shamrani secured a 2-0 win at Al Rayyan SC.

Like Al Wahda, Al Ittihad's success came courtesy of their attacking prowess, which saw the Saudi giants, who were also runners-up in 2009, score 13 times in six games en route to what would be an eighth Round of 16 appearance.

Elsewhere in the group, Uzbekistan's Lokomotiv and Al Rayyan were left to reflect on what could have been after finishing third and fourth in the standings respectively.

Lokomotiv picked up all seven of their 2019 AFC Champions League points at home, but three successive defeats on the road ultimately dashed any hopes the Tashkent-based side had of advancing.

Al Rayyan, meanwhile, were left at the foot of the table following a decidedly

disappointing run of results that saw them lose five matches and fail to advance from the group stage for a ninth time since making their competition debut in 2005.

GROUP C

Runners-up in 2014 and 2017, Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SC shone brightly in the competition's 2019 edition as the team from Riyadh beat Qatar's Al Duhail's to top spot in Group C by four points, while Esteghlal FC from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Emirati outfit Al Ain FC were both eliminated.



Four wins and a draw proved enough for Al Hilal to progress, and they assured themselves of pole position thanks to a brace from livewire striker Bafetimbi Gomis in an entertaining 2-2 draw at Al Duhail in the final round of matches in late May.

The Saudi giants had already secured a place in the Round of 16 ahead of that showdown in Doha, as efforts from Hattan Bahebri - responsible for the competition's second-fastest goal ever - and Mohammad Al Shalhoub helped seal a 2-0 defeat of Al Ain on Matchday Five, a victory that only served to further underline their title credentials.

Al Hilal's sparkling form throughout their latest group stage campaign was in stark contrast to the club's AFC Champions League displays just twelve months earlier, when they sensationally failed to reach the knockout phase for the first time since 2006.

Quarter-finalists in 2018, Al Duhail, meanwhile, finished second after booking their ticket to the next round with a 1-1 draw on Matchday Five.

Edmilson Junior's 55th minute equaliser in a 1-1 draw at Esteghlal proved enough to ensure Al Duhail's progress and an eagerly anticipated showdown with

GROUP STAGE - WEST



domestic rivals Al Sadd SC in the Round of 16.

After losing 3-1 to high-flying Al Hilal in Saudi Arabia on Matchday Two, the Qataris – under the guidance of former Manchester United assistant coach Rui Faria – remained unbeaten in their last four group stage outings.

Elsewhere, there was disappointment for both Al Ain and Esteghlal after their latest bids for continental glory ended abruptly on Matchday Five.

The Emiratis – champions in 2002-03 – failed to progress to the AFC Champions League knockout phase for the first time since 2013, and their 2-1 loss at home to Esteghlal on Matchday Six was the club's fourth of the 2019 group stage.

Third-placed Esteghlal impressed at times – not least during the 2-1 win over Al Hilal on Matchday Three – but the 1-1 draw with Al Duhail on Matchday Five ultimately brought an end to their title aspirations.



Group D

Al Sadd SC claimed top spot in Group D as the Qatari-based outfit qualified for the knockout phase by finishing just one point ahead of second-placed Al Ahli Saudi FC, and only three better than Persepolis FC from the Islamic Republic of Iran, who were fourth.

Despite failing to shine on the road, a trio of victories in Doha ultimately proved decisive with Al Sadd's 2-1 defeat of Al Ahli on Matchday Five – courtesy of goals from Ali Asad and Akram Afif – confirming a place in the Round of 16 for then head coach Jesualdo Ferreira's charges.

Their path to the next round was not a straightforward one, however, with the 2011 title winners picking up just four points from their first three group-stage fixtures – a run of results that included a 2-0 loss away to Al Ahli and a 2-2 draw with Pakhtakor in Uzbekistan.

However, Al Sadd bounced back in style to beat Pakhtakor in the return encounter and then Al Ahli to confirm their progress and move a step closer to emulating their 2018 AFC Champions League campaign, when they reached the semi-finals.

Elsewhere, 2012 runners-up Al Ahli entered the final round of fixtures just one point ahead of Pakhtakor and facing a crucial winner-takes-all clash with their Uzbek rivals at the King Abdullah Sports City in Jeddah.

By way of contrast to Pakhtakor's indifferent away form in 2019, Al Ahli had shone brightly at home, with wins over Al Sadd and Persepolis on Matchdays One and Four respectively keeping them in contention.

In the end, goals from Omar Al Somah – the Syria international's sixth of the campaign – and Abdulrahman Ghareeb helped Al Ahli secure a vital 2-1 success, ensuring their place in the Round of 16 for the seventh time in 11 continental campaigns.

The defeat signalled yet more heartbreak for Shota Arveladze's Pakhtakor as the side from Tashkent failed once again to advance from the group stage, something they have now not achieved since 2010.

Meanwhile, there was similar disappointment for Iranian giants Persepolis who, despite a 2-0 win over Al Sadd on Matchday Six, finished fourth in the standings less than 12 months on from losing to Kashima Antlers in the 2018 final.



GROUP STAGE - EAST

GROUP E

A pair of European stars helped Shandong Luneng FC to the top of the table, while defending champions Kashima Antlers also advanced to the knockout stage in Group C.

Shandong's big-name duo of Graziano Pelle and Maroune Fellaini made a decisive contribution, combining for nine of the team's 10 goals as they sealed first place with a game to spare.

Italian international Pelle netted six goals, including five in his first three matches, while former Manchester United midfielder Fellaini marked his arrival in Asia with three, including a crucial late winner against Korea Republic's Gyeongnam FC on Matchday Five.

It was Shandong's sole loss, a 2-1 Matchday Six defeat to Kashima, which eventually saw the holders through to the Round of 16, after earlier slip-ups against both Gyeongnam and Malaysian Group Stage debutants Johor Darul Ta'zim had made life difficult for the Japanese club.

There were few signs of trouble when Kashima opened their campaign with



a 2-1 win over Johor Darul Ta'zim, and they reached the halfway point of the group with a healthy seven points after a 2-2 draw in China was followed by a stunning away win against Gyeongnam, with two goals in stoppage time turning what had looked like a 2-1 defeat into a 3-2 win.

But Gyeongnam, themselves appearing in the competition for the first time, got their revenge with a 1-0 win on Matchday Four, before Johor Darul Ta'zim became the first Malaysian club to achieve an AFC Champions League Group Stage win two weeks later, leaving Kashima on the verge of elimination with one match remaining.

Despite an early goal from Fellaini, a

quickfire double from Sho Ito helped Kashima to a 2-1 win, rendering Gyeongnam's simultaneous 2-0 win over their Malaysian visitors inconsequential in the race for the top two.

While Shandong and Kashima, both clubs with ample experience on the Asian stage, celebrated a successful group stage, Group E's debutants both left the competition with plenty to be buoyed by.

Gyeongnam's haul of eight points put them on the verge of a surprise Knockout Stage appearance, while Johor Darul Ta'zim's long-awaited presence in the Group Stage saw them achieve a landmark win over the defending champions and six creditable performances on the Continent's biggest stage.



GROUP STAGE - EAST



GROUP F

Sanfrecce Hiroshima's five consecutive wins helped them power clear of their opponents, while two-time champions Guangzhou Evergrande FC needed a narrow Matchday Six victory to advance from Group F at the expense of new boys Daegu FC.

An opening night loss to Guangzhou meant Sanfrecce's campaign began on the wrong foot, but they didn't put a foot wrong from then on, stringing together four consecutive clean sheets and five successive wins.

Hiroshi Jofuku's side had needed a penalty shootout win over Thailand's Chiangrai United to squeeze into the Group Stage, but they made the most of the opportunity once there, maintaining a perfect home record and picking up away wins in Korea Republic and Australia to finish five points clear of their nearest rivals.

While the Japanese outfit gathered momentum as the group unfolded, the story of the early matches was the arrival of Korean debutants Daegu, who began with a superb 3-1 away win against Australia's Melbourne Victory,

before defeating Chinese heavyweights Guangzhou by the same margin on home soil seven days later.

With the Brazilian duo of Edgar and Cesinha showing their class, and fervent crowds turning out at the compact Forest Arena, Daegu had their eyes set on the last 16, but back-to-back defeats to Sanfrecce brought them back to the pack, with Guangzhou climbing into second place with two matches remaining.

Daegu regained second place with an emphatic 4-0 win over the hapless Melbourne Victory – who gained just one point and conceded 17 goals in their matches – while their Chinese rivals suffered a 1-0 defeat in Hiroshima, setting up a Matchday Six decider in Guangzhou.

A draw in that match would have been enough for the Koreans to advance with 10 points, but a 63rd-minute own goal from defender Jeong Tae-wook helped Guangzhou to a 1-0 win, and brought Daegu's maiden campaign to an unpleasant end.

Guangzhou's successful navigation of

the Group Stage was their sixth in seven seasons, with Fabio Cannavaro's side giving the 38,000 fans in attendance at the Tianhe Stadium another Round of 16 tie to look forward to.

Guangzhou's Anderson Talisca was one of the top individual performers of the group, scoring four goals in their opening three matches – including home wins over Sanfrecce Hiroshima and Melbourne Victory – to help guide the club to yet another Knockout Stage appearance.



GROUP STAGE - EAST



GROUP G

Two-time champions Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC made light work of the field to finish on top with a 13-point haul, while Urawa Red Diamonds edged out Beijing FC for second place in a Group G which also included Thailand's Buriram United.

Jose Manuel Morais' side were a picture of consistency and, while they only scored seven goals, they never conceded more than once in any given match, with 21-year-old goalkeeper Song Bum-keun conceding just three in six matches.

The Korean heavyweights won home and away against both Urawa and Beijing, only failing to beat Buriram, whose fourth-place finish came with the statistical anomaly of having accrued all four of their points against the group winners.



The Thai League 1 Champions also made a more welcome contribution to the statistical annals of the AFC Champions League, with 16-year-old striker Suphanat Mueanata becoming the competition's youngest-ever goal scorer when he found the back of the net during their Matchday Three defeat to Beijing.

Jeonbuk's 3-1 opening night win at home to Beijing, coupled with Urawa's 3-0 triumph over Buriram, seemed to give a clear indication of the two sides most likely to reach the Round of 16, and while the early risers did ultimately succeed in navigating the Group Stage, the battle for second place went all the way to the end.

Beijing's 0-0 draw at home to Urawa on Matchday Two gave them a foothold in the group, and a Cedric Bakambu

hat-trick away to Buriram, followed by a 2-0 home win against the Thai League champions in Beijing, put Roger Schmidt's side in pole position with two matches remaining.

Urawa, also two-time Asian champions, had just one win and a relatively meagre tally of four points after their first four matches, but goals from Shinzo Koroki and Yuki Muto helped them to a crucial 2-1 victory away to Buriram on Matchday Six, while Beijing's single-goal home defeat to Jeonbuk opened the door for a winner-takes-all finale at Saitama Stadium.

The teams were locked together on seven points after five matches, but Urawa's supremacy was clear on the night with Koroko and Muto on the scoresheet again in a decisive 3-0 win that left the 2017 champions bound



GROUP STAGE - EAST

for the Knockout Stage and Beijing eliminated at the first hurdle.

GROUP H

Korea Republic's Ulsan Hyundai FC finished with a negative goal difference and scored just five of Group H's 32 goals, but still finished comfortably on top of the section ahead of Chinese powerhouse Shanghai SIPG.

The statistics may not have made it clear, but the 2012 champions were a formidable force, maintaining a perfect home record and proving nearly impenetrable in defence, with the exception of their 5-0 defeat against Shanghai SIPG, which came after qualification to the Knockout Stage had already been secured.

SIPG confirmed their own place in the last 16, edging out Japan's Kawasaki Frontale, with that thumping final-day victory, while Australian A-League Premiers Sydney FC finished winless at the foot of the table.

Group H's early action provided scant indication of what lay ahead, with the first four matches producing just three goals and suggesting the road

to the Round of 16 would be one with few twists and turns.

But Sydney FC and Shanghai SIPG injected a healthy dose of goalmouth action when they played out a stunning 3-3 draw on Matchday Three, before the same sides shared the spoils again in a match that finished 2-2 two weeks later.

Score draws became the new normal as Kawasaki Frontale became the first team to score against Ulsan in a 2-2 impasse on Matchday Four, before Kawasaki and SIPG were also deadlocked at 2-2, with Hulk scoring a crucial brace in a Matchday Five thriller.

While their rivals were producing goal-laden draws, Ulsan were the only side registering regular wins, particularly at home, where second half goals secured 1-0 victories in all three matches at Ulsan Munsu Football Stadium, with the Matchday Five success against Sydney confirming their status as group winners with a game to spare.

That result also set up a final day showdown of sorts between Kawasaki Frontale and Shanghai SIPG, with

the Japanese outfit needing to beat Sydney FC and hope their Chinese rivals failed to beat Ulsan in order to advance to the Knockout Stage.

Kawasaki lived up to their end of the bargain with a 4-0 win in Sydney, but it ultimately counted for nothing as Oscar helped himself to a hat-trick in SIPG's 5-0 romp against Ulsan, which took the Chinese champions to the Knockout Stage for a fourth year in a row.



ROUND OF 16 - WEST



Clubs from Saudi Arabia showed why the Kingdom has long been considered one of Asia's top football nations, while Qatar's big two took their battle for domestic supremacy to the continental stage as the West Zone played host to four absorbing Round of 16 ties.

Al Nassr, Al Ittihad and Al Hilal SFC were the three Saudi contenders to continue their march to the last eight, while Al Sadd eliminated Al Duhail in the clash between Doha rivals.

It may well have been four Saudi clubs advancing had Al Hilal not been drawn alongside Jeddah's Al Ahli Saudi FC, with a first leg hat-trick from Bafetimbi Gomis paving the way for a 4-3 aggregate win for the Riyadh giants.



Al Ittihad also found their range in front of goal to secure a 6-4 aggregate win over Zobahan FC, the last remaining entrant from Islamic Republic of Iran.

Goals from Luis Jiménez and Ziyad Al Sahafi had given Al Ittihad a slender 2-1 advantage after the first leg in Dubai, but it was in the Doha-hosted second leg they sealed victory, edging a seven-goal thriller to reach the last eight for the first time in five years.

Al Nassr's win also came thanks to a powerful second leg display, with mercurial Brazilian midfielder Giuliano scoring twice in a 3-2 away win, which put the finishing touches on a 4-3 aggregate success against Emirati outfit Al Wahda.

That left the all-Qatari showdown between Al Sadd and Al Duhail, which saw the nation's two leading clubs go head to head to determine which would be its last representative in the competition.

In a tie packed with stars, Al Sadd showed their class, with Akram Afif scoring in both legs to help Xavi's side cruise to a 4-2 aggregate win.



ROUND OF 16 - EAST



Penalty shoot-outs, domestic derbies and late heroics were on offer as East Asia's top eight clubs battled it out in a compelling Round of 16.

Regional powerhouses Japan, China PR and Korea Republic supplied all eight of the remaining East Zone sides, and they didn't disappoint, with all four ties on that side of the draw delivering top class entertainment.

With their narrow escape from the Group Stage behind them, reigning champions Kashima Antlers continued their title defence against countrymen Sanfrecce Hiroshima, who had breezed into the last 16 thanks to five successive wins in Group F.

After a Serginho goal gave Kashima a 1-0 advantage in the first leg, the

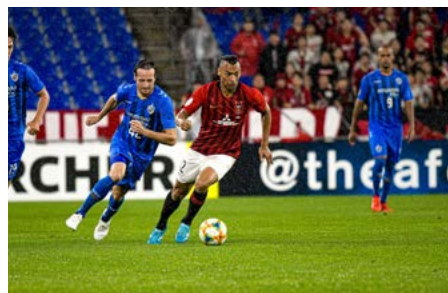
teams played out a five-goal second-leg thriller - with four of them coming in a frantic final half-hour - but despite Sanfrecce's 3-2 win on the night, it was Shoma Doi's double that proved decisive, as the 2018 champions went through on away goals after a 3-3 aggregate draw.

The second Round of 16 clash between domestic rivals was similarly memorable, with China PR's Guangzhou Evergrande FC finally outlasting Shandong Luneng after a gripping tie that needed both extra-time and penalties to determine a winner.

Guangzhou won the first leg at home and looked safe when Paulinho extended the lead early in the return match, but goals from Zhou Haibin and Marouane Fellaini left the sides deadlocked at 3-3 after 180 minutes.

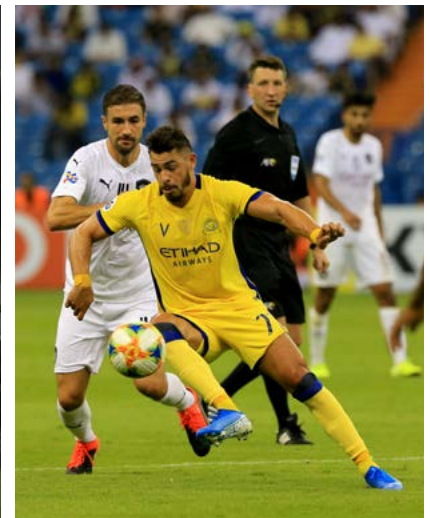


The drama continued when Liu Junshuai put Shandong in front for the first time in the tie, before Paulinho scored again to force a shootout, where Guangzhou finally prevailed in a 6-5 marathon.



Shanghai SIPG became the second Chinese side to advance thanks to spot kicks after a shootout win following a 2-2 aggregate draw with Korea Republic's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors, and Urawa Red Diamonds ensured there would be no further Korean involvement with a 4-2 aggregate win over Ulsan Hyundai on the same night.

QUARTER-FINALS



AL SADD SC 4-3 AL NASSR

Qatar's last club standing continued the nation's remarkable year, becoming the first West Zone side to advance to the AFC Champions League Semi-finals after a thrilling 4-3 aggregate win over Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr.

In 180 engrossing minutes of football, it took until the final 10 for Al Sadd to confirm their victory, with prolific striker Baghdad Bounedjah's penalty kick 83 minutes into the second leg proving decisive.

It was Al Nassr who gained the advantage in the first leg, recovering from the concession of an early Ali Assadalla goal to carve out a 2-1 win on the night thanks to replies from Abdulrahman Al Dosari and Giuliano.

A further goal to each side meant Al Nassr still held that advantage 45 minutes into the return leg in Doha, but Al Sadd overran the visitors after the break, levelling the tie on aggregate through a Hassan Al Haydos screamer with just over

half an hour to play, before Abdullah Madu fouled Akram Afif to present Bounedjah with his golden opportunity.

With an extraordinary 39 goals in 22 league matches under his belt in his 2018-19 Qatar Stars League campaign, few were better equipped than the Algerian to complete the task, and he duly found the bottom corner to take Al Sadd to the Semi-finals for the second year in a row.



AL HILAL SFC 3-1 AL ITTIHAD

Some of Al Hilal's brightest talents came to their rescue as Razvan Lucescu's side eliminated fellow Saudi Arabian club Al Ittihad in a high-quality AFC Champions League Quarter-final.

The Riyadh club's Asian title drought looked set to continue when they found themselves a goal behind 10 minutes into the tie's second leg, but a stirring recovery led by Salem Al Dawsari kept their dream of continental glory alive.

After a first leg draw at Jeddah's King

Abdullah Sports City, which saw 54,000 fans pour through the turnstiles but failed to produce any goals, everything hinged on a winner-takes-all return match at King Saud University Stadium three weeks later.

Al Ittihad took control almost immediately, with Ziyad Al Sahafi punishing Al Hilal's failure to clear a corner kick by scrambling the ball home to grab a crucial away goal, meaning Lucescu's charges needed two goals of their own to stay alive in the competition.

With a passionate home crowd cheering them on, Al Hilal scored three.

Andre Carrillo pulled one back a minute before half-time after being supplied by Al Dawsari, who then found the net himself with a superb header and equally impressive backflipping goal celebration three minutes after the interval.

The turnaround was complete with 12 minutes remaining, when Sebastian Giovinco produced a wonderful third goal to confirm Al Hilal's place in the final four.



URAWA RED DIAMONDS 3-3 SHANGHAI SIPG

Urawa Red Diamonds' two early away goals ultimately proved decisive as their star-studded Quarter-final clash against Chinese powerhouse Shanghai SIPG finished 3-3 after 180 minutes.

The 2017 champions looked Semi-final bound at 2-0 up with just half an hour of the first leg played in Shanghai, but a Hulk-inspired revival, and an arm wrestle of a return clash, meant their place in the last four wasn't safe until the final blow of the referee's whistle in Saitama three weeks later.

It took just three minutes for Tomoaki Makino to shock the Shanghai crowd in the first leg, and they were almost stunned into silence when Shinzo Koroki doubled the tally at the 30-minute mark, but SIPG's key attacking weapon - star Brazilian forward Hulk - netted two second-half penalty kicks to ensure they would arrive in Japan still well in the contest.

Once again, it was Koroki who delivered a key early blow, finding space in the box to nod Takahiro Sekine's pinpoint cross

beyond Yan Junling and into the net six minutes before half-time.

SIPG refused to give in, hauling themselves back into contention when Wang Shenchao volleyed home from close range at the hour mark, but unlike in their earlier encounter, the Chinese side were unable to find the crucial second goal, as Urawa advanced to a second Semi-final in three years.



KASHIMA ANTLERS 1-1 GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC

Anderson Talisca's crucial second-leg goal ultimately ended Kashima Antlers' reign as Asian champions, as Guangzhou Evergrande prevailed on away goals after a 1-1 aggregate draw in the last of the Quarter-finals.

In a tie that brought together two of Asia's superclubs, it was Fabio Cannavaro's charges who triumphed, reaching the final four for the first time since winning the continental title under Luiz Felipe Scolari in 2015.

Guangzhou looked to have missed an

opportunity when they failed to take an advantage from the first leg at Tianhe Stadium, where - in hot conditions and in front of 40,000 fans - neither side was able to find the back of the net.

Despite the presence of Elkeson, who was appearing for the club in continental competition for the first time in over three years, Guangzhou only narrowly avoided suffering a first leg defeat, with only the crossbar preventing Kashima's Ryohei Shirasaki from scoring a late winner for the visitors.

But Talisca headed home the all-important away goal five minutes before half-time in the second leg, and - despite an equaliser from Kashima's Brazilian star Serginho six minutes after the interval - it proved the decisive moment of the tie as the star-studded Chinese club secured the precious score draw they needed to book their place in the Semi-finals.

SEMI-FINALS



AL HILAL SFC 6-5 AL SADD SC *(on aggregate)*

Al Hilal SFC reached the AFC Champions League Final for the third time in six years after a remarkable 11-goal semi-final tie against Qatar's Al Sadd SC.

The Saudi champions' place in the decider looked confirmed after an emphatic 4-1 away win in the first leg in Doha, but Al Sadd launched a spirited recovery in Riyadh, where the teams traded five goals in a frantic opening half-hour before Al Hilal finally prevailed 6-5 on aggregate.

Al Hilal's French striker Bafetimbi Gomis left an indelible mark on the tie, putting the ball into his own net before scoring twice at the correct end in the first leg, then scoring a crucial goal in the second to help Razvan Lucescu's side continue their Asian odyssey.

Gomis' 15th-minute own goal gave Al Sadd the early lead in Doha, but the Qatari side suffered a disastrous collapse late in the first half, with Gomis levelling the tie in the 33rd minute, before reigning AFC Player of the Year Abdelkarim Hassan was sent off for excessively protesting a refereeing decision just two minutes later.

Al Sadd's position became more precarious when Ali Bulayhi headed Al Hilal ahead in the last minute of

the half, and the visitors took full advantage of their extra man after the interval, scoring again through Gomis at the hour mark before substitute Mohammed Al Shalhoub added a fourth in the 77th minute to seal a resounding away victory.

Al Hilal's first leg lead appeared insurmountable, but Al Sadd head coach Xavi backed his side to fight until the final minute of the return leg, and his players lived up to his

prediction as the two sides put on a sensational clash in Riyadh.

The contest seemed all but over when Salem Al Dawsari scored for Al Hilal to make it 5-1 on aggregate after 13 minutes, but Al Sadd refused to give in, turning the tie on its head with three goals in a surreal three-minute plot twist.

Few eyebrows were raised when Akram Afif converted a 17th-minute penalty kick, but there was a palpable sense of belief among the visitors when Nam Tae-hae scored again two minutes later, and an equal dose of panic among the hosts when Hassan Al Haydos punished a defensive error to reduce the deficit to a single goal in the 20th minute.

But just as he had done in the first leg, Gomis intervened on behalf of Al Hilal, finding space in the penalty area to prod the ball beyond Saad Al Sheeb, making it 2-3 on the night and 6-4 on aggregate in the 25th minute.

Gomis' strike - the 10th goal of the tie - proved to be crucial, and despite a last-minute header from Al Sadd's Boalem Khoukhi, Al Hilal emerged from an AFC Champions League classic with their Asian dream still alive.





URAWA RED DIAMONDS 3-0 GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC *(on aggregate)*

The 2017 champions Urawa Red Diamonds secured a return to the Final, winning both legs against Guangzhou Evergrande to claim a commanding 3-0 aggregate victory in the Semi-final.

First leg goals from Fabricio and Takahiro Sekine set Tsuyoshi Otsuki's side on their way, before Shinzo Koroki continued his excellent individual campaign with the only goal of the return leg in Guangzhou to confirm the presence of a Japanese club in the decider for the third consecutive season.

With both clubs chasing a third Asian title, Urawa powered ahead thanks to two stunning strikes in their 2-0 win in Saitama.

The first came from Brazilian forward Fabricio, who punished the Guangzhou defence for affording him an extra yard of space by unleashing a thumping 25-yard strike beyond Zeng Cheng and into the top corner of the net in the 19th minute.

Several more conventional scoring chances followed for Urawa, but Sekine's second came in similarly spectacular fashion, with the midfielder's strike navigating a sea of Guangzhou bodies to fly into the net



from fully 30 yards after the Chinese outfit struggled to clear Kazuki Nagasawa's corner with 15 minutes remaining.

While Urawa's 2-0 advantage was the deserved result of a strong first leg performance, Guangzhou's lacklustre display meant they approached the return bout at Tianhe Stadium needing a minor miracle.

With 40,000 red-clad fans cheering them on, and the likes of Elkeson and Anderson Talisca in their starting line-up, Guangzhou Evergrande had reason to believe they could pull off

an improbable recovery, but Koroki's eighth goal of the tournament put Urawa's progression beyond doubt.

Two early chances for Talisca came and went – the first saved by Shusaku Nishikawa, the second headed ever so slightly wide of the upright – before the Brazilian's frustration continued when he saw a left-footed effort clatter into the crossbar after a superb spin.

Those missed opportunities would come back to haunt Guangzhou when Urawa danger-man Koroki was left unmarked following a pinpoint Daiki Hashioka cross, leaving him with the simple task of nodding the ball home from six yards in the 50th minute.

It wasn't in the same jaw-dropping vein as their two first-leg goals, but Koroki's header gave Urawa a crucial away goal, giving Guangzhou a four-goal mountain to climb in order to salvage their campaign.

Talisca and Paulinho continued their search for goals, but no such breakthrough materialised for the hosts, leaving Urawa to toast a third appearance in the Final since 2007.

FINAL

AL HILAL WIN AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TITLE IN JAPAN



Al Hilal SFC reinforced their credentials as one of the Continent's best clubs by clinching the 2019 AFC Champions League title with a dominant 3-0 aggregate win over Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds over two legs.

Two-time winners of the Asian Club Championship, Al Hilal's victory was richly deserved after they dominated both legs of an intriguing final.

If the first leg in Riyadh had the Al Hilal fans dancing for joy after Razvan Lucescu's side notched a 1-0 win, it was pure ecstasy for the 3,000 supporters who made the long trip to the Saitama 2002 Stadium, and thousands more back home, as goals by Salem Al Dawsari and Bafetimbi Gomis secured Saudi Arabia's dominant club the 2019 AFC Champions League title.

The triumph was well deserved, with Al Hilal having fallen in the 2014 and 2017 finals and Frenchman Gomis, crowned the MVP and Top Scorer, played an integral part in the triumph.

The 34-year-old played every minute of Al Hilal's campaign, 13 matches in total, scoring 11 goals to cap an amazing season.

In the final itself, Al Hilal, backed by a packed King Saud University Stadium, dominated the first leg from the start and Andre Carrillo's second-half goal gave them a lead they richly deserved against an Urawa side who had been totally outplayed.



The pressure was on Urawa to come good in the return leg and they made one change to the side that lost in Riyadh, with Shusaku Nishikawa returning between the posts for Haruki Fukushima. Al Hilal, meanwhile, named an unchanged line-up.

Both sides struggled to take control during a frantic first 15 minutes that featured little goalmouth action despite the energetic efforts of the two sets of players.

Al Dawsari had the game's first sight of goal 16 minutes in, only for Nishikawa to comfortably gather the Saudi international's low shot from outside the area.

Urawa threatened only occasionally, despite the need to score at least once to keep their hopes of a third AFC Champions League title alive.

The home side did open up Al Hilal's defence with a penetrating move down the left in the 24th minute that



saw Takahiro Sekine release Shinzo Koroki and the striker's pass to Kazuki Nagasawa was laid-off to the advancing Sekine, but he failed to make his effort count.

Urawa were labouring in the final third as Al Hilal's well-organised defence held them at bay, leaving Takuya Aoki to unsuccessfully try his luck from distance 12 minutes before the interval.

As the game wore on, it was the visitors who carried the greater threat. Gomis saw his shot blocked at close range by Nishikawa before Jang Hyun-soo sent his effort off target when the Urawa goalkeeper dropped the ball at his feet.

Yasser Al Shahrani also volleyed wide soon after and Gomis was again denied by Nishikawa, the Urawa goalkeeper this time using his chest to deny the tournament's top scorer with 21 minutes remaining.

Eventually, though, the goal did come when Al Dawsari slotted in from close range after a fluent move saw Al Hilal quickly sweep the ball from one flank to the other before Sebastian Giovinco slid the ball into his teammate's path and 28-year-old coolly slotted home.

Gomis then ensured there was no way back deep into added time when Al Hilal hit Urawa on the break to send the visiting fans into hysterics.







WINNING COACH



Like father like son

“A great coach is a coach who has doubts without letting anyone else know about them. He needs to inspire confidence and he needs to have great optimism and a positive attitude.”

The words were spoken by the maestro Mircea Lucescu during a coach education event at UEFA's HQ in Switzerland. Even though the extent to which sons listen to their fathers' words of wisdom is open to debate, it is easy to imagine Razvan Lucescu, winner of the AFC Champions League, echoing the paternal sentiments.

“Confidence plays a huge role in winning games,” he reflected while preparing his team for the return leg of the Final in Saitama. “The first game gave us huge confidence and we tried to channel the Saudi fans' obsession with winning this trophy into positive energy. We went to Japan with our dreams, our motivation and our spirit. This is the most important thing. If you have the correct spirit, you can overcome any situation.”

Like his father, he has used a cosmopolitan coaching career to build an invaluable bank of experience based on an ability to communicate his passion for the game, and, ironically for a former goalkeeper, adherence to a core belief that football is all about scoring more goals than the opposition – a philosophy endorsed by the career statistic that his teams have scored 454 more than his opponents. Within five years of making his coaching debut at Brasov – one of the five Romanian clubs he represented during his playing career – he was handed the helm of the Romania national team, and, after a two-year tenure, headed for Qatar, where he first made acquaintance with the AFC Champions League on the bench of El Jaish, leading the debutants into the Round of 16, where they were beaten by Al-Ahli.

Al Hilal's desire to offer him, in June 2019, a second taste of the competition had certainly been fuelled by a remarkable 2018/19 season when PAOK won 26 of the 30 games in the Greek Super League (and drew the other four) as the Thessaloniki club lifted the championship trophy for the first time in 34 years and rounded off the season by clinching a league and cup double. His reputation as a history-maker was duly polished by the Saudi club's first-ever AFC Champions League title.



Razvan Lucescu, Al Hilal SFC head coach

“I know very well that winning such a competition means working with a lot of people throughout the club,” he commented. “But the players are the ones who have worked hard to achieve such a fantastic performance and accepted me always analysing, commenting, pushing and putting them under a lot of pressure. Like other coaches, I think about every detail, analysing everything about our own game and our opponents. And I try to make the players aware that mistakes in such a competition can have bad consequences. In our home leg of the Semi-final against Al Sadd, the players lost their way after we conceded the first goal – and we let in two quick goals after that. Some players lost their concentration and that affected us. The same thing happened in our Round of 16 tie against Al Ahli Saudi FC. It showed how easy it can be to lose everything that we had achieved.”

At the age of 50, Razvan Lucescu adds his name to the competition's roll of honour (the second Romanian after Anghel Iordanescu) but insists “there is no coach or staff who can win without players. They are the heroes. There is a saying that you should always be happy with what you have achieved. So, we have reason to feel happy.”

His illustrious father might just be proud of him too.



“ There is no coach or staff who can win without players. They are the heroes. ”

-Razvan Lucescu





TECHNICAL TOPICS





“There are big differences and a great diversity in the way teams play. There is no such thing as Asian football.”

It is difficult to disagree with the sentiment expressed at the recent AFC Elite Club Coaches’ Forum in Shanghai by Branko Ivankovic, silver-medallist at the 2018 AFC Champions League with Persepolis. Several schools can be detected in Europe, Africa and even within the much smaller football family in South America. The same applies to Asia, where the East-West division also gives the AFC Champions League a different texture.

“Generally,” Ivankovic continues, “you could discuss a lack of power in the West; you could ask whether fitness levels are always top-level; and you could ask whether there is the same appetite for duels.”

He is by no means alone in raising these points. They became frequently asked

questions over the seven subsequent years - since Al Sadd’s penalty shoot-out win in 2011, that teams from the East have lifted the trophy. In fact, the technical topics related to the 2017 competition opened with a categorical quote from the Elite Club Coaches’ Forum of that year: “teams from the East play with higher intensity than teams from the West”.

In 2019, victory for Al Hilal might provoke comments about a ‘statistical anecdote’ or the ‘law of averages’. But it would be wrong to be so dismissive – not least because of the manner of the victory. After the decisive match in Saitama, the AFC website relayed significant comments by Urawa Reds’ defender Tomoaki Makino: “What stings is that we left everything we had out there and we were still outclassed. Had the performance been even or if we managed to create more chances, it would have been a different story. But it wasn’t.”

The convincing nature of Al Hilal’s victory provided food for thought. “The intensity of Al Hilal’s game was exceptional,” reflected AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh after the second leg of the final in Saitama.

“A positive feature, especially bearing in mind all the comments about lack of intensity among teams from the West. Time will tell whether it sets a trend. But it certainly represented a shift in the tide.”

“Balance and intensity are the key elements in the modern game,” commented Dalian Yifang head coach Rafa Benitez, while Li Xiaopeng, his colleague at Shandong Luneng, reflected: “the AFC Champions League requires more intensity than the domestic game.”

The question to emerge from the 2019 season is whether Al Hilal have set new benchmarks in the competition.

Advanced settings

One of the key components in the intensity of the Al Hilal game was the readiness to press aggressively in advanced areas. Technical observations on the first leg of the final included: “Al Hilal applied high pressure in both defending and attacking and kept pressing high throughout the game. Central striker Bafetimbi Gomis was the initiator right from the first minute, constantly and immediately putting Urawa’s build-up play under pressure.” Sebastian Giovinco, operating in the slipstream of the leading striker, was on hand to turn the screw even further and frustrate the opposition’s construction work.

Al Hilal, however, were not alone. Fabio Cannavaro’s Guangzhou Evergrande also possessed the capacity for aggressive advanced pressing led by front men Talisca and Elkeson, with close support from attacking midfielder Paulinho. The observer at their tie against Kashima Antlers commented: “every player was aware of his responsibilities in defence and performed his tasks from the first minute till the last, with the strikers working in the first line of defence, supported by a well-organised unit.”

Fellow semi-finalists Al Sadd also adopted the high-pressing mentality imported from FC Barcelona by head coach Xavi Hernández. Significantly, three of the season’s top four teams were set up to implement advanced-pressing philosophies.

Middle management

While that trio preferred to launch rapid-response attacks after advanced ball-winning, silver-medallists Urawa Red Diamonds were standard-bearers for a majority of teams who responded to lost possession in attacking areas with immediate pressure on the opposition ball-carrier accompanied by a rapid withdrawal into a defensive block set up to press hard from midfield. The Quarter-finals, for example, brought together two exponents of this modus operandi with, as the AFC technical observer remarked: “the intensity of Urawa’s midfield pressing was high while Shanghai SIPG (whose coach Vítor Pereira acknowledges “it is not easy for our teams to operate sustained high pressing”) also squeezed space in midfield and pressed with high intensity.”

Likewise, defending champions Kashima Antlers, who, in the words of the technical observer at their tie against Guangzhou Evergrande: “pressed with very high intensity in midfield, with all 10 players squeezing spaces in a compact block.”

However, as if to endorse the aforementioned perennial comments, high-intensity advanced or midfield pressing was not highlighted by the technical observers among the most salient characteristics of the other teams from the West.

Fast forward

Counterattacking is a theme addressed in the goalscoring section of this report. But the general trend among the teams already cited was for direct forward play as a response to regains in advanced areas or midfield – as illustrated by regular comments by the AFC technical observers.

“Fast breaks were another key to the Kashima Antlers’ attacking play.”

“Urawa Reds were quick in transition to attack.”

“Evergrande were equipped to play fast collective counters.”

Al Hilal were very direct in their transition play, immediately moving forward after regaining possession, with Gomis often drawing defenders away and creating space for forward runs by Giovinco.”

After ball-winning, the top teams hit the fast-forward button with rapid counters or direct supply into the depth.

Transitions to defence

Al Hilal showcased the art of ‘attacking with and without the ball’ via their collective advanced pressing backed by a high defensive line, which allowed the team to operate as a compact unit. Urawa Reds generally dropped quickly into a deeper 1-5-4-1 defensive block, with one of the three centre-backs ready to move forward if an opposing midfielder pushed into the area



between the two defensive lines. On the other hand, Al Ittihad and Al Nassr were among the teams who preferred to defend deep and look for fast breaks using direct back-to-front deliveries.

Opponents' counterattacking potentials were, in general, well monitored, with teams keeping a balance when attacking and ensuring that the back door was not left unguarded. At the same time, there was a notable use of the 'professional foul' to break up dangerous counters. The observer at one match reported: "once the opponents won the ball, they tried to prevent the counterattack by committing fouls, with the result that the team accumulated six yellow cards - which may help to explain why, in the latter stages of the game, the formation was broken up and tactical discipline suffered."

The long and the short

There is, of course, a difference between the hopeful long ball and the effective use of the long pass. Urawa Reds provided a prime example. The goalkeeper's ability to distribute accurately to the wide areas has already been highlighted. But the two centre-backs produced outstanding

long diagonal deliveries to the two advanced wing-backs, with the right-footed Daisuke Suzuki opening play preferentially to the left and the left-footed Tomoaki Makino to the right. Guangzhou Evergrande also earned praise from technical observers for their ability to switch play from flank to flank with accurate diagonals with, in a much more advanced role than the Urawa centre-backs, Talisca especially adept at opening play to the wide areas.

Underlapping and understanding

Two of the three goals in the final were scored by wide attackers - from central positions. The crucial first away goal in Saitama was struck by Salem Al Dawsari after, in the first leg, the only goal had been headed by Andre Carrillo, cutting inside to make room for the overlapping run by right-back Mohammed Al Burayk.

The top teams underlined the relevance of educating full-backs to operate as wingers. Until the red card that changed the course of the first leg of the Semi-final, Al Sadd left-back Abdelkarim Hassan had emerged as one of the competition's influential performers, his surging runs along the flank combining fluently with the infield

runs by Akram Afif. Similarly, albeit with less exuberance, Pedro Miguel was prepared to go all the way on the right wing, dovetailing his overlapping with movements by the wide attacker - often Hassan Al Haydos.

One of the key components in the Al Hilal mechanisms was the wing play by the full-backs (Al Burayk on the right; Yaseer Al Shahrani on the left which allowed the two 'wingers' to move into more central areas to associate with Gomis and Giovinco. During the second leg in Riyadh, one of the salient features of Al Sadd's success was their ability to shut down the wide areas and restrict the home team to three crosses.

The Eastern Semi-final had a different complexion in terms of wing-play due to the Urawa Reds' structure being based on three central defenders and two wing-backs. The attacking vocation of Daiki Hashioka on the right, and Takahiro Sekine on the left, meant that wide attackers Kazuki Nagasawa and Fabricio worked the interior channels. This persuaded the Guangzhou Evergrande full-backs Zhang Linpeng and Zhong Yihao to be more conservative in their overlapping runs, aware of the need to



cope with the opposition's high wing-backs. This meant that Yang Liyu and Wei Shihao operated in wider roles up front, exploiting the space behind the wing-backs as the team delivered 30 crosses – the second-highest total during the knockout rounds. The choreography of overlapping/underlapping manoeuvres and the highly developed understandings between full-backs and wingers represented one of the common denominators among the top teams.

The shape of things

Once again, the competition reflected a degree of flexibility in terms of team shapes, with structures sometimes varying between home and away or according to game situations – such as Evergrande's late switch to 1-4-4-2 when chasing the result in their Semi-final against Urawa Reds. However, this structure was a rarity among the default settings of the season's top teams. Evergrande, along with Al Hilal and Kashima Antlers, generally operated a 1-4-2-3-1; Al Sadd, Al Ittihad and SIPG Shanghai preferred 1-4-3-3, while Al Nassr joined Urawa Reds in a 1-3-4-3 set-up.

Having a ball

“Asian football needs to be more possession-orientated, more attack-minded and more aggressive,” Ange Postecoglou mused at the Elite Club Coaches' Forum. The Australian coach, winner of the AFC Asian Cup in 2015, led Yokohama Marinos to the 2019 J-League title in Japan by championing a brand of football akin to FC Barcelona's possession-based build-from-the-back style. “The new rules have made building from the back a bit easier,” he commented, “and that is helping our game.”

His team achieved its success with a positive mix of composed possession play and direct, penetrating attack. Emphasis on dominating possession, on the other hand, is not everyone's choice.

“Possession doesn't guarantee a result,” Gérard Houllier commented at the Forum. “Some keep the ball – some keep the result.”

In general, the 2019 AFC Champions League echoed these sentiments, with the majority disregarding possession statistics. Xavi Hernández's Al Sadd could comfortably wear the label



of a ‘possession team’ in that they generally had more of the ball than their opponents. But even they had only 47% in the home leg of their tie against Al Duhail. Al Hilal's statistics fluctuated significantly – as illustrated by the final, when the champions had 70% of the ball at home but only 46% in Saitama, having previously had only 41% of possession during the home leg of the Semi-final against Al Sadd. Interestingly, of the 21 games that produced a result during the knockout rounds, eight were won by the team with less possession than their opponents. Not quite as striking as the statistics from 2017, when five of the competition's last nine games were won by the team with less possession. But sufficient, nevertheless, to endorse Gérard Houllier's comment.

Possession quotas can evidently be inflated by passing the ball around in innocuous areas. Ditto pass completion rates inside ‘comfort zones’. Al Hilal, however, produced eye-catching numbers with regard to the accuracy of their passing in the final third. During the home leg of the final, 82% of their passes in attack were received by a team-mate. Although this dropped to 66% during the return in Saitama, it was still substantially higher than the Urawa Reds' statistics of 56% away and 55% at home, where they struggled to link combination moves against the champions' high-intensity game. Al Sadd displayed similar precision in the final third, with 80% against Al Nassr or 78% against Al Hilal.

The goalscoring section of this report deals with the number of goals directly attributable to combination play – a

facet that had raised eyebrows at the Asian Cup, where it had provided only six per cent of the tournament's open-play goals.

Similar questions were raised in the AFC Champions League where, as the technical notes on one game put it: “there was good combination play, but it all too often resulted in a long forward pass and loss of possession”.

Japanese teams – as illustrated by their national teams at age-limit tournaments – have embraced neat combination play as a footballing culture. As Vítor Pereira commented at the Elite Club Coaches' Forum, “Japanese teams are great technically – they play beautifully”.

Chinese clubs are increasingly focusing on a combination game, while the two semi-finalists from the West emphasised the trend, with Giovenco and Gabi catching the eye for Al Hilal and Al Sadd respectively with their abilities to link and catalyse their teams' box-to-box passing movements. Mentioning the Italian and the Spaniard, however, revives the question raised in the technical report on the 2018 competition about the scarcity of Asian playmakers in this department – a topic summarised by the list of ‘midfield schemers’ mentioned by the AFC technical observers: Paulinho (Evergrande), Oscar (SIPG), Léo Silva (Kashima), Giovenco (Hilal), Gabi (Sadd), Giuliano (Nassr) or Villaneuva (Ittihad). The only ‘intruder’ could be Takuya Aoki, applauded for his work alongside Ewerton in the heart of the Urawa Reds' midfield. Otherwise, the Asian playmaker was, again, conspicuous by his absence.

KEY FEATURES

AL NASSR

- Attack 1-4-2-3-1; defence 1-4-4-1-1
- Compact, deep defensive block
- Brazilian Giuliano dictates the tempo
- Striker Nordin Amrabat a threat from wide areas
- Dangerous deliveries on set plays
- Possession game, including switches of play
- Use back-to-front passes as an option



AL SADD SC

- Attack 1-4-3-3; defence 1-4-5-1
- High pressing whenever possible
- Top-level possession - combination play
- Overlapping and underlapping by the fullbacks
- Midfield creativity, especially Gabi and Afif
- Penetrating passes from middle-to-front
- Switching the play is a feature



SHANGHAI SIPG

- Attack 1-3-4-3; defence 1-5-3-2
- Key link-up play between Oscar and Hulk
- Penetrating runs with the ball, particularly Oscar
- Impressive long-range shooting
- Try to dictate the match tempo
- Narrow attack with overlapping fullbacks
- Sporadic pressing in opponent's half



KASHIMA ANTLERS

- Attack 1-4-2-3-1; defence 1-4-4-2
- Compact, disciplined defensive unit
- Intense middle-to-front pressing
- Fast counters from own half
- React quickly to opponent's counters
- Both fullbacks push forward on the flanks
- Very good individual and collective possession



GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE

- Attack 1-4-2-3-1; defence 1-4-5-1
- Impressive set play delivery
- Very good flank play by fullbacks to wingers
- Paulinho the leader and schemer
- Immediately press on loss of possession
- Dangerous penetrating runs from middle-to-front
- Excellent combination play in fronts 1-3



URAWA RED DIAMONDS

- Attack 1-3-4-3; defence 1-5-3-1
- Outstanding diagonals, left and right
- Quick combination play in attack
- Build-up from goalkeeper and back three
- Keep possession, even under pressure
- Immediate pressure on the ball, then retreat
- Fast transition into attack, often long ball



AL HILAL

- Attack 1-4-2-3-1; defence 1-4-4-1-1
- Advanced pressing with Gomis and Giovenco
- High intensity, with and without the ball
- Fast, collective countering
- Giovenco the creative force, middle-to-front
- Excellent delivery from wide areas
- Build from the back; comfortable possession



AL ITTIHAD

- Attack 1-4-3-2-1; defence 1-4-5-1
- Build-up from the back, but use long ball to front
- Pressing game in own half of the field
- Quick counters whenever possible
- The fast, skilful Romarinho at the apex of the attack
- Carlos Villanueva dictates the play, middle-to-front
- Alert and ready to exploit opponent's mistakes



THE FINAL IN SNAPSHOTS



After Al Hilal had lifted the trophy and the fans had filed out of the Saitama Stadium, coaches were left to consider the take-home messages of the 2019 Final. After match reports had started to gather dust, it was time to reflect, from a coaching perspective, on the way the teams had played; why the two games had panned out the way they did, and what key factors had made the difference.

Inevitably, the second leg is 'the grand finale' where the title is decided. But the first match in Riyadh marked footballing territory and, as Razvan Lucescu admitted, helped to give his players the belief that, even though history tilted the balance towards the East, they possessed enough quality to reverse the trend. Al Hilal, dominating 70% of possession and forging 22 goal attempts, restricted Urawa Reds to a couple of shots at goal. They built through the thirds, using two advanced full-backs and a trio of attacking midfielders

working a fairly narrow front in the wake of target striker Bafétimbi Gomis. The most notable feature, however, was the sustained high-intensity game that earned possession in advanced areas or midfield and provided opportunities for swift counters. Urawa Reds acquitted themselves reasonably well in terms of keeping the ball under such extreme pressure - but possession play was often a prelude to a long forward pass and loss of the ball. In Riyadh, Al Hilal had clearly been the dominant force. But home advantage had yielded no more than a 1-0 victory.

When the curtain went up on the second act in Saitama, the scenery was the same. Tsuyoshi Otsuki remained faithful to his 1-3-4-3 structure with the wing-backs pushing into attack and the two Brazilians, Ewerton and Fabricio, the influential links with key striker Shinzoh Kiroki. Al Hilal were equally loyal to their 1-4-2-3-1 formation with two high full-backs in the zonal

back four; two screening midfielders; three attack-minded midfielders; and the free-scoring Gomis, the mobile advanced striker. Again, overlapping runs by the full-backs allowed the wide midfielders to cut infield to form a narrow attacking unit. The key feature, however, was that the visitors were intent on winning. There was no resting on laurels, no commitment to containment strategies. As in Riyadh, Urawa made determined efforts to play their fluent combination game and open play with long diagonals. But the sustained intensity of the visitors' game frequently forced them to play long. The home team valiantly chased the result, yet Al Hilal approached the game with equal determination to lift the trophy.

Pressing matters

Al Hilal, with a strategy seldom implemented in the AFC Champions League (especially among teams from the West) set benchmarks with Liverpool-style high-intensity pressure,

starting in advanced areas with striker Gomis the first line of defence. Loss of possession triggered an immediate response, often opening up opportunities for a swift counter. Al Hilal set out to regain possession as soon as possible and switch back to attacking mode without the need for transition into a defensive block. Their two goals stemmed from regains and rapid-response attacks with, in the case of the opening goal, a switch from right to left and a return pass into the centre of the box. The second was a regain after an interception and a pass along the right touchline to Gomis, who passed further up the line and then sprinted into the middle to convert the return.

Finding the combination

Both finalists exhibited their capacity to retain possession and execute clever combination moves. Urawa's preference to work the right flank is illustrated by a move in which the keeper is brought twice into play, with the build-up leading to an interchange wide on the right, an infield run, a cross and a header.

Al Hilal's possession play is illustrated by low-tempo combination play – also on their right – with triangular passing options and, finally, a neat through pass and a cross.

The keeper's feet

The two goalkeepers in the final demonstrated that AFC teams increasingly invite them to play an active role in building from the back – and that goalkeeper coaches are encouraging them to work on the accuracy of their distribution. For the record, Al Hilal's Abdullah Al Mayouf executed 276 successful passes while Urawa's Shusaku Nishikawa (suspended for the first match in Riyadh) made 203. They also demonstrated that 'building from the back' does not always signify playing short passes. High pressure frequently obliged them to play long – which they did with aplomb, driving a long pass accurately angled to the low-risk areas near the touchlines.

Counter espionage

Al Hilal's two goals in Saitama provided prime examples of classic counterattacks. Analysis is based on three criteria: firstly, what triggers the counter; secondly, how the ball is transferred forward; and, thirdly, how the move is terminated. The first goal is triggered when centre-back Ali Hadi Albulayhi intercepts deep in the central area and breaks forward to feed André Carrillo on the right to spark a four-man combination. A cut-back to skipper Salman Al Faraj is transferred to

Sebastian Giovinco who feeds Salem Al Dawdari's fast run through the middle to score. The second counter is triggered by Jang Hyung-soo's regain and the pass along the right touchline to Gomis for the French striker to interchange with Carrillo and settle the result.

As Technical Director Andy Roxburgh commented, "the key words in their counterattacking were intent and intensity."

The decisive factors

How did Al Hilal put an end to the West's eight year drought? The first reason could be traced back to the legendary Rinus Michels who, talking about his epoch-marking Ajax team, said "we tried to be masters of space". Razvan Lucescu's team set out to control space by forming a compact unit prepared to hold a high defensive line; dominate or, at least, match the opposition in terms of composed possession play; press opponents in advanced areas or in midfield, disturbing their construction play or forcing them to play long; and, if the intense pressure on the ball-carrier bore fruit, to counterattack at pace and in numbers. Al Hilal were the worthy 2019 champions.







GOALSCORING ANALYSIS



The final score



In terms of goalscoring, the balance sheet reveals a degree of statistical stability. The total of 354 goals was only ten down on the previous season, while the average of 2.81 per match was, as opposed to previous seasons, more closely aligned with the 2.93 registered in Europe's equivalent competition.

Measuring against Asia's national team football, the average was significantly higher than the 2.55 posted at the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. There was also greater consistency throughout the competition in that the average fluctuated modestly between 2.75 during the Group Stage and 2.9 in the knockout rounds. The only statistic that could be thrown on to the debating table when coaches get together is that teams from the West scored far more goals than their rivals from the East. Al Hilal's three unanswered goals in the final rounded-off a balance of 198 v 156. In other words, the West scored 27% more goals than the East. The two sides of the debating table could argue whether there was a greater attacking vocation in the West or whether a more competitive scenario in the East, including the question of defensive compactness, might have translated into lower-scoring matches.

Unsurprisingly, bearing in mind this statistic, four of the top six highest-scoring teams hailed from the West: Al Hilal (26 goals), Al Sadd and Al Ittihad (both 20) and Al Nassr (18) were joined by Urawa Reds (19) and Shanghai SIPG (18) at the head of the scoring chart. In individual terms, Bafétimbi Gomis, with 11 goals, led a scoring chart dominated once again by imported players. The balance is, however, gradually redressing itself. In 2019, five of the dozen players who scored five goals or more hailed from Asia.

A gradual trend also emerged from the data related to finishing efficacy. Just over one-third (34%) of the season's 3,171 goal attempts were on target, down from 35% in 2018 and 36% in 2017. Another downward trend was that 8.96 attempts were required to manufacture a goal, compared with 8.75 in the previous season. Goalkeeping coaches may care to note that the season featured 61 clean sheets (compared with 63 in 2018) but that, once again, one in three (3.1 to be precise) on-target attempts ended in the net.

The goalscoring charts logs the technical and tactical actions that led to the season's 354 goals.

Set Plays

The percentage of goals derived from dead-ball situations represented another chapter in the story of gradual trends.

In 2019, 93 goals from set plays signified 26% in comparison with 27% the previous season and 28% in 2017. This was significantly lower than the 32% at the AFC Asian Cup, yet much higher than the 18% registered during Europe's equivalent competition. In the AFC Champions League, the minimal fluctuation in the overall percentages masks some significant changes in the set-play scenario. Penalty kicks, for example. In 2019, 25 were converted – a massive drop of 33% in comparison with the previous season. Allied with a similar percentage downturn in the number of goals stemming from indirect free-kicks (from 22 to 15), this left room for other dead-ball situations to make up a significant deficit.

Curiously, the shortfall in the indirect free-kick category was remedied by the number of direct free-kicks that hit the net – the successes doubling from six to 12, with Al Sadd accounting for three, perhaps benefitting from the expertise

of head coach Xavi Hernández. Indeed, while he was in the Group Stage as a player, his stunning strike against Pakhtakor earned second place in the chart of the season's best set play goals behind Paulinho's crucial 103rd-minute strike in Guangzhou Evergrande's away game against Shandong. The fact that four other direct free-kicks were in the season's top 10 set-play goals emphasises the value of developing specialists in this facet of play.

Another major upswing allowed corner kicks to regain top spot in the set play league after losing it to penalties in 2018. The total of 37 successful corners represented 40% of the season's set-play goals, with Al Ittihad earning dividends on training-ground work by scoring four and champions Al Hilal scoring three – albeit in 14 games. Whereas the success rate in the previous AFC Champions League (one goal per 41 corners) followed by one in 40 at the AFC Asian Cup had generated doubts about the amount of training-ground time justifiably invested in the rehearsal of corner-kick routines, the 2019 season offered greater encouragement to coaches. The success ratio changed significantly to 1:34 – much closer to the 1:30 posted during the 2018/19 UEFA Champions League.

Four goals derived from a throw-in might appear to be an insignificant statistic but for the fact that three of them were scored by Zobahan, who thus emphasised the potential value of players equipped to deliver long throws from touchline to penalty area.

Open Play

Goals scored in open play registered another gradual, almost imperceptible statistical trend by moving from 72% in 2017 and 73% in 2018 to 74% in 2019. Once again, wing play was the most fertile source of goals with crosses, cut-backs and diagonal passing from the flanks adding up to 44% of the season's open-play goals, compared with fractionally under 40% in 2018. Crosses alone accounted for 29%, with Shanghai SIPG and Al Zawraa the leading beneficiaries with six goals apiece.

While the number of goals derived from wing play increased from 104 to 115, other routes to goal remained largely unchanged. Goals from combination play were, once again, conspicuous by their scarcity and accounted for only



10% of the open-play total. This had emerged as a talking point from the AFC Asian Cup earlier in the year, when combination moves had provided only 6%. Al Ittihad proved to be something of an exception to the general rule by scoring four times from combination attacks but the only 'combo' to break into the top 10 open-play goals was the penultimate goal of the season – the neat move rounded-off by Salem Al Dawsari that put Al Hilal 1-0 ahead in Saitama. The scarcity of combination goals can be gauged by setting the 26 goals in 126 AFC Champions League matches alongside the 59 in 125 during Europe's sister competition.

Shooting from long range once again paid dividends, with no fewer than five spectacular strikes from outside the box earning places among the season's top ten. In fact, Fabricio's strike after cutting-in from the left during the Urawa Reds' Semi-final against Guangzhou Evergrande was voted into top spot, while Oscar's long-range drive for Shanghai SIPG against Ulsan took third place. Al Zawraa, Kashima Antlers, Daegu and Urawa Reds were the most successful from long distance with three goals apiece.

After crosses, the through pass proved to be the second-best route to goal. Successes totalled 49 compared with 51 in the previous season. Al Wahda, Al Ittihad, Kashima Antlers and the champions Al Hilal all converted four goals via the defence-splitting forward pass. At the other end of the spectrum, one of the salient features of the season was the further decline

in the number of goals resulting from individual actions – an aspect of the game that had, despite the presence of solo artists such as Messi or Neymar, also marked the competition in Europe. In the AFC Champions League, the number of successful solo runs fell abruptly, accounting for only 4.6% of open-play goals. Two individual efforts, however, featured among the top ten goals: the infield run from the right by Johor's Safawi Rasid that culminated in an unstoppable left-footed shot; and a very similar move and execution by Guangzhou Evergrande's Brazilian attacker Talisca during the 4-0 home win against Melbourne Victory.

Even though 50 (19%) open-play goals could be attributed to counterattacks, it was therefore unsurprising that only one was an individual action. Otherwise, there was a fairly equal balance between classic counters (21 goals) and collective counters (20). In the latter category, Nam Tae-hee's goal for Al Sadd during the return leg of the Semi-final against Al Hilal was a prime example, while the champions' two goals against Urawa Reds in Saitama illustrated the classic back-to-front counter. The fact that only eight goals resulted from regains and rapid responses in advanced areas was symptomatic of the scarcity of sustained high pressing.

All of which leads into an analysis of the champions' *modus operandi*. Of Al Hilal's 26 goals, only four resulted from dead-ball situations: three corners and one indirect free-kick.





TALKING POINTS



Awaiting development?



Paulinho and Talisca at Guangzhou Evergrande. Leo Silva at Kashima Antlers. Oscar at Shanghai SIPG. Giuliano at Al Nassr. Carlos Villanueva at Al Ittihad. Gabi (and Xavi until he hung up his boots) at Al Sadd. Giovinco at Al Hilal. Flicking through the reports by AFC technical observers at AFC Champions League games, these are random names that catch the eye as 'the key player in creating chances' or 'the creative midfielder who organised the team's attacking play'.

The talking point, it has to be said immediately, has nothing to do with questioning the quality and value of the imported players who do so much to enhance the competition. Nor is it a case of questioning recruitment policies. The talking point is about whether the role-model status of the imported play-makers is being fully exploited in terms of developing Asian players who are equipped to perform this crucial playmaking role.

To get the debating ball rolling, the next question is whether standards and methods of coaching are an influential factor behind the lack of Asian schemers. The diversity among the AFC Member Associations might give the picture different hues or, at least, prompt discussions to take on different complexions. The basic question is whether elite youth football is under-developed in your territory. Is enough work being done in schools and academies to nurture and educate promising talent?

The AFC's recently-introduced Elite Youth Scheme addresses this important issue and offers encouragement for Member Associations and clubs to invest resources in player development. In the Scheme's 'guidelines and regulations' document, the page that outlines the philosophy behind the project states "the development of each youngster's personality, good habits, emotional stability, commitment, physical attributes, technical ability and game appreciation are all important".

The next question is about methodology. Is there a temptation to adhere to 'traditional' teaching methods based on instructing rather than stimulating a guided-discovery approach that is far more likely to encourage creativity? At the AFC Elite Club Coaches' Forum, Oita Trinita's head coach Tomohiro Katanosaka remarked: "the pitfall is that youth coaches tend to limit youngsters rather than allow them to express themselves."

Returning to the AFC Elite Youth Scheme, the project's mission statement includes the sentence "promoting elite youth football in Asia through national programmes and specialised training centres (i.e. academies) will have a long-term impact on raising playing standards." What more can be done to develop the creative talents of the future?

Conveying the right messages?

In the world of communications, social media has changed the landscape. The point of debate is this: to what extent has social media changed or influenced the game of football or, at least, the footballing environment?

Clubs are becoming increasingly aware of the potential dividends in terms of sponsors, branding and other commercial implications. But what about the resonance in the dressing-room? Players have faced disciplinary action and, in extreme cases, transfers have been aborted due to careless comments on social media, sometimes dating from several years prior. Clubs are now paying more attention to setting out clear rules and guidelines – but who monitors social media? Is this an additional responsibility for the coaching staff?

At the Elite Club Coaches' Forum, Rafa Benítez insisted that “the importance of a good media officer must be recognised”, while, still on the subject of communication, Branko Ivankovic stressed that “there are many coaches in Asia who need to rely on a good translator”. But what makes a ‘good’ translator? A football person with average language skills? Or a person with top-class language skills but a lesser understanding of football? Should translation be literal? Or should it be flexible, acknowledging that words that might be interpreted as ‘refreshing honesty’ in one language could be considered disrespectful in another?

The status of the game?

The two legs of the final in Riyadh and Saitama were played in a great atmosphere at packed stadiums. As AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh commented, “they were a great advert for the game and for the competition”.

But was this always the case? Even in the knockout rounds, some attendance figures strayed below 5,000, and, in one case, down into three figures. The debating point is, therefore, what can be done to create a more exciting atmosphere at more AFC Champions League fixtures?

Atmosphere, of course, is not exclusively about numbers. High-capacity stadiums can feel empty. As Rafa Benítez reflected, “in China, I’ve seen that many of the pitches are a long way away from the fans”. And, evidently, the ‘atmosphere’ suffers. There is undoubtedly a need for more football-specific venues where the crowd, as at Premier League or Bundesliga games, for instance, is close to the touchline and better placed to create an exciting atmosphere. Can anything be done to remedy this?

In addition, what more can be done to enhance the image of Asian club football? Better, more recognisable and striking branding? Greater promotion of competitions? Bearing in mind the number of top international stars on show, more intensive efforts to make matches available to TV audiences outside Asia? What can be done to enhance the status of Asia’s top clubs?



Going back to social media, it has undoubtedly given louder voices to supporters (and non-supporters). As Ange Postecoglou reflected during the Forum, “social media has changed the game. After the final whistle, the debate has already taken place. And you, as a coach, need to be ready to deal with that.” How important is it for today’s coach to possess social media skills?







TEAM PROFILES

Group A

AL WASL FC (UAE)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | SULTAN ABDULLA ALMENTHERI | 5/01/1995 | UAE |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | YOUSIF ABDULLA ALZAABI | 15/01/1986 | UAE |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | SUHAIL ABDULLA ALMUTAWA | 26/08/1999 | UAE |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | HUMAID ABDULLA ALNAJJAR | 22/02/1989 | UAE |
| 2 | Defender | ABDULRAHMAN ALI ALSEQETRI | 2/01/1993 | UAE |
| 3 | Defender | ABDALLA SALEH ALJNEIBI | 14/06/1988 | UAE |
| 4 | Defender | ABDULLA JASSIM KHAMIS | 22/02/1997 | UAE |
| 6 | Defender | WAHEED ISMAIL LENGAWI | 1/07/1983 | UAE |
| 14 | Defender | ABDELRAHMAN SALEH KHAMIS | 3/06/1999 | UAE |
| 19 | Defender | YOUSIF ALI ALMHEIRI | 30/11/1999 | UAE |
| 20 | Defender | FARIS KHALIL ALMARZOOQI | 8/10/2000 | UAE |
| 33 | Defender | FAISAL SUROUR ALYASSI | 21/03/1999 | UAE |
| 44 | Defender | SALEM JUMA ALAZEEZI | 25/02/1993 | UAE |
| 55 | Defender | AHMAD ESSA ALBLOOSHI | 3/04/1997 | UAE |
| 77 | Defender | HAZZA SALEM ALFARSI | 19/12/1989 | UAE |
| 96 | Defender | 'ABDULLAH KHAMIS AL MUKHAINI | 28/03/1992 | OMA |
| 5 | Midfielder | ALI HASSAN ALBLOOSHI | 4/02/1995 | UAE |
| 11 | Midfielder | KHALEIL KHAMEIS ALMAZROUEI | 15/07/1992 | UAE |
| 13 | Midfielder | KHAMIS ESMAEEL ZAYED | 16/08/1989 | UAE |
| 15 | Midfielder | KHALID HASSAN ALSHAIBANI | 31/07/1997 | UAE |
| 17 | Midfielder | RONALDO CESAR DE MEDEIROS | 16/08/1992 | BRA |
| 21 | Midfielder | AHMED SALEM ALFARSI | 23/08/1994 | UAE |
| 24 | Midfielder | HAMAD MOHAMMAD ALBALOOSHI | 15/07/1995 | UAE |
| 29 | Midfielder | ABDULLA MOHAMMAD ALSHAMS | 31/07/1996 | UAE |
| 7 | Forward | CAIO CANEDO CORREA | 9/08/1990 | BRA |
| 10 | Forward | FABIO VIRGINIO DE LIMA | 30/06/1993 | BRA |
| 22 | Forward | HASSAN MOHAMMED TAHER | 10/09/1989 | UAE |
| 23 | Forward | YOUSEF AHMED ALBALOOSHI | 27/04/1994 | UAE |
| 99 | Forward | ALI SALEH AMRO | 22/01/2000 | UAE |



CLUB PROFILE

The AFC Champions League's 2019 edition saw Dubai-based Al Wasl return to the competition for only the third time in the club's history. They secured their spot after finishing third in the 2017-18 UAE Pro League standings – a memorable domestic campaign that also saw them narrowly beaten in the President's Cup final by Al Ain FC.

Al Wasl had failed to progress beyond the Group Stage on both of their previous continental appearances, and in 2018 they finished bottom of Group C after losing all six of their matches.

HEAD COACH

Laurențiu Reghecampf

The highly respected Laurențiu Reghecampf guided Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal to the final of the 2014 AFC Champions League before seeing his side lose to Western Sydney Wanderers. The one-time midfielder returned to his native Romania to coach Litex Lovech and Steaua Bucharest but subsequently joined the UAE's Al Wahda in 2017. He took charge of Al Wasl in January 2019.



Group A

AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | HAYDER MOHAMMED AL-ABEDI | 23/10/1996 | IRQ |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | JALAL HASSAN HACHIM | 18/05/1991 | IRQ |
| 20 | Goalkeeper | ALAA GATEA JAAZ | 5/06/1987 | IRQ |
| 2 | Defender | MUSTAFA MOHAMMED MASLUKHI | 14/01/1998 | IRQ |
| 3 | Defender | HUSSEIN ALJWAYED | 1/01/1993 | SYR |
| 4 | Defender | MOHAMMED ABDULZAHRA OBAID | 14/10/1989 | IRQ |
| 14 | Defender | NAJM SHWAN AL-QURASHI | 9/07/1997 | IRQ |
| 16 | Defender | SAMAL SAEED | 7/01/1986 | IRQ |
| 29 | Defender | ABBAS QASIM AL-KAABI | 15/01/1991 | IRQ |
| 33 | Defender | HUSSEIN HAKEEM AL-HRAISHAWI | 14/03/1994 | IRQ |
| 5 | Midfielder | SAFAA HADI AL-FURAIJI | 14/10/1998 | IRQ |
| 6 | Midfielder | MOHAMMED RIDHA AL-ELAYAWI | 17/02/2000 | IRQ |
| 7 | Midfielder | AHMED FADHIL MOHAMMED | 1/01/1992 | IRQ |
| 10 | Midfielder | AHMED MOHSIN ASHOUR | 4/01/1996 | IRQ |
| 11 | Midfielder | AHMED JALAL ALAWADI | 17/03/1998 | IRQ |
| 13 | Midfielder | MOAMEL ABDULRIDHA OGAILI | 28/03/2000 | IRQ |
| 21 | Midfielder | HAYDER AHMED TAMIM | 2/02/1996 | IRQ |
| 24 | Midfielder | ALI MOHSIN AL-ATTABI | 31/01/2000 | IRQ |
| 25 | Midfielder | ALI RAHEEM AL-AZZAWI | 17/02/1995 | IRQ |
| 77 | Midfielder | AMEER SABAH AL-HAMADANI | 10/01/1988 | IRQ |
| 8 | Forward | MOHANAD ABDULRAHEEM | 22/09/1993 | IRQ |
| 9 | Forward | ALAA ABBAS ABDULNABI | 27/07/1997 | IRQ |
| 15 | Forward | OMAR MANSOURI | 15/04/1991 | MAR |
| 17 | Forward | JABBAR KAREEM LAMI | 25/01/1998 | IRQ |
| 22 | Forward | SHADRACH KWESI EGHAN | 18/09/1994 | GHA |
| 35 | Forward | BAHAULDDIN JAMEEL AL-FKAIKI | 24/06/1992 | IRQ |



CLUB PROFILE

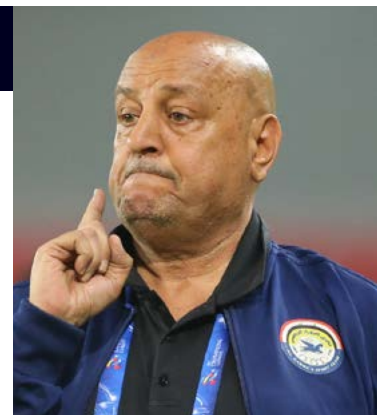
After claiming the 2017-18 Iraqi Premier League title, Al Zawraa made a welcome return to the AFC Champions League following what had been a lengthy 12-year absence for the side from Baghdad.

Since making their debut in the inaugural 2002-03 edition, Al Zawraa had appeared in the competition on three occasions, with the club's impressive 2007 outing – during which they only lost one match en route to a second-place finish behind Al Wahda in Group A – undoubtedly their best to date.

HEAD COACH

Hakeem Shaker

A vastly experienced coach, Hakeem Shaker assumed the reins at Al Zawraa Club in February 2019 following the departure of previous incumbent Ayoub Odisho. Shaker famously guided Iraq to the AFC U-22 Championship title in 2013 and has also been in charge of the country's senior side. Before joining Al Zawraa, the Baghdad native was in charge of Oman's Al Suwaiq.



Group A

ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MOHAMMADBAGHER SADEGHI | 1/04/1989 | IRN |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | RASHID MAZAHERI | 18/05/1989 | IRN |
| 13 | Goalkeeper | MERAJ ESMAEILI | 13/01/2000 | IRN |
| 2 | Defender | MOHAMMAD NEJAD MEHDI | 20/10/1992 | IRN |
| 3 | Defender | VAHID MOHAMMADZADEH | 16/05/1989 | IRN |
| 4 | Defender | HADI MOHAMMADI | 9/03/1991 | IRN |
| 6 | Defender | HAMID BOUHAMDAN | 23/07/1989 | IRN |
| 24 | Defender | MEHRAN DERAKHSHANMEHR | 10/08/1998 | IRN |
| 34 | Defender | POUYA ASADI | 4/09/1997 | IRN |
| 61 | Defender | MASOUD EBRAHIMZADEH | 16/01/1989 | IRN |
| 69 | Defender | MILAD FAKHRODDINI | 26/05/1990 | IRN |
| 8 | Midfielder | GHASEM HADADIFAR | 12/07/1983 | IRN |
| 16 | Midfielder | ALIREZA CHERAGHALIE | 6/01/1997 | IRN |
| 17 | Midfielder | ABBASI MOHMMAD REZA | 27/07/1996 | IRN |
| 20 | Midfielder | ZOBEIR NIKNAFS | 12/04/1993 | IRN |
| 26 | Midfielder | MOJTABA MOGHTADAEI | 22/03/1996 | IRN |
| 32 | Midfielder | HAMID MALEKY | 6/10/1996 | IRN |
| 33 | Midfielder | ALIREZA MONAZAMI | 14/12/2002 | IRN |
| 48 | Midfielder | NIMA TAHERI | 15/04/1997 | IRN |
| 77 | Midfielder | ABOUZAR SAFARZADEH | 26/12/1995 | IRN |
| 99 | Midfielder | MARION SILVA FERNANDES | 7/09/1991 | BRA |
| 7 | Forward | MOHAMMADREZA HOSSEINI | 15/09/1989 | IRN |
| 10 | Forward | MOHAMMAD REZA KHALATBARI | 14/09/1983 | IRN |
| 18 | Forward | OSAGUONA CHRISTIAN | 10/10/1990 | NGA |
| 21 | Forward | ALI KHODADADI | 19/01/1998 | IRN |
| 23 | Forward | REZA HABIBZADEHKOURAEIM | 13/04/1996 | IRN |
| 72 | Forward | AMIRARSALAN MOTAHHARI | 10/03/1993 | IRN |



CLUB PROFILE

AFC Champions League runners-up in 2010, Zobahan booked their place in Asia's premier club competition for an eighth time after finishing as runners-up in the 2017-18 Iran Pro League and then beating Kuwait SC and Qatar's Al Gharafa in the preliminary phase and play-offs respectively.

A year after losing to Korea Republic's Seongnam in the Final, the Isfahan-based outfit reached the last eight before being knocked out by Suwon Samsung Bluewings. Since then, Zobahan's best performances were in 2016 and 2018, when they reached the Round of 16.

HEAD COACH

Alireza Mansourian

A former Islamic Republic of Iran international, Alireza Mansourian was in the Team Melli side that finished third at the 1996 AFC Asian Cup and appeared in the 1998 FIFA World Cup. He went on to be an assistant coach for the national side, head coach of the country's U-23s and to oversee Pas Hamedan, Naft Tehran and Esteghlal. He was made head coach of Zobahan in late 2018.



Group A

AL NASSR (KSA)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | BRAD JONES | 19/03/1982 | AUS |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | ZAID MAJED ALBAWARDI | 26/01/1997 | KSA |
| 33 | Goalkeeper | WALEED ALI | 19/04/1986 | KSA |
| 43 | Goalkeeper | SALEH ABDULLAH ALOHAYMID | 21/05/1998 | KSA |
| 2 | Defender | SULTAN ABDULLAH ALGHANNAM | 6/05/1994 | KSA |
| 4 | Defender | OMAR IBRAHIM OTHMAN | 27/09/1985 | KSA |
| 13 | Defender | ABDULRAHMAN AHMED ALOBAID | 30/04/1993 | KSA |
| 15 | Defender | AHMED AL FRAIDI | 29/01/1988 | KSA |
| 18 | Defender | MAICON PEREIRA ROQUE | 14/09/1988 | BRA |
| 20 | Defender | HAMAD FARIS ALMANSOUR | 19/05/1993 | KSA |
| 21 | Defender | MOHAMMED ALI ALSHANQITI | 15/05/1999 | KSA |
| 26 | Defender | ABDULLAH MOHAMMED MADU | 15/07/1993 | KSA |
| 37 | Defender | NAIF MOUSA ALMAS | 18/01/2000 | KSA |
| 45 | Defender | FARAJ ALGHASHAYAN | 29/04/2000 | KSA |
| 8 | Midfielder | YAHIA ALSHEHRI | 26/06/1990 | KSA |
| 14 | Midfielder | IBRAHIM JAHSHAN | 28/09/1990 | KSA |
| 16 | Midfielder | ABDULAZIZ ALJEBREEN | 13/04/1990 | KSA |
| 17 | Midfielder | ABDULLAH MOHAMMED ALKHAIBARI | 16/08/1996 | KSA |
| 25 | Midfielder | NAWAF ALFARSHAN | 7/07/1998 | KSA |
| 27 | Midfielder | AWADH ALFARAJ | 15/07/1988 | KSA |
| 32 | Midfielder | SAUD SAAD ZAYDAN | 6/11/1999 | KSA |
| 38 | Midfielder | FAHAD MOHAMMED JUMAYAH | 10/05/1995 | KSA |
| 39 | Midfielder | ABDULRAHMAN MUTLAQ ALDOSARI | 25/09/1997 | KSA |
| 46 | Midfielder | KHALID ABDULAZIZ ALGHUWAINEM | 17/04/1999 | KSA |
| 77 | Midfielder | GIULIANO DE PAULA | 31/05/1990 | BRA |
| 9 | Forward | HAMED-ALLAH ABDERRAZZAQ | 17/12/1990 | MAR |
| 10 | Forward | MOHAMMED AL SAHLAWI | 10/01/1987 | KSA |
| 29 | Forward | RAKAN SHAMLAN ALANAZE | 14/07/1998 | KSA |
| 42 | Forward | FERAS TARIQ ALBRIKAN | 14/05/2000 | KSA |
| 71 | Forward | ABDULLAH IBRAHEM SALEM | 19/12/1992 | KSA |



CLUB PROFILE

Al Nassr qualified for the AFC Champions League for the fourth time after coming third in the 2017-18 Saudi Pro League. They subsequently went on to confirm their place in the competition's Group Stage thanks to a comfortable play-off win over Uzbekistan's AGMK.

While the Riyadh-based club won both the Asian Cup Winners' Cup and Asian Super Cup in 1998, their best performance in the AFC Champions League came in 2011 when they progressed to the Round of 16 before losing to Zobahan from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

HEAD COACH

Rui Vitória

Rui Vitória took charge of Al Nassr in January 2019 after leaving Portuguese side Benfica. The former midfielder spent three and a half years in his native Portugal with Benfica, winning two consecutive Primeira Liga titles during his time in Lisbon. Vitória famously helped Vitória de Guimarães beat Benfica to land the 2012-13 Portuguese Cup.



Group B

AL ITTIHAD (KSA)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | RAKAN BASSAM NAJJAR | 31/05/1995 | KSA |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | ASSAF AHMED ALQARNI | 2/04/1984 | KSA |
| 22 | Goalkeeper | FAWAZ BAALQASIM ALQARNI | 2/04/1992 | KSA |
| 44 | Goalkeeper | AMIN MOHAMMEDSALEH ALBUKHARI | 2/05/1997 | KSA |
| 2 | Defender | ABDULLAH KHALID ALAMMAR | 1/03/1994 | KSA |
| 4 | Defender | YASEEN OMAR BARNAWI | 1/10/1993 | KSA |
| 5 | Defender | MATTHEW JURMAN | 8/12/1989 | AUS |
| 8 | Defender | FHAD MOSAED ALMUWALLAD | 14/09/1994 | KSA |
| 13 | Defender | AHMED HASSAN ASIRI | 14/11/1991 | KSA |
| 14 | Defender | ZIYAD ABDULWAHED ALSAHAFI | 3/02/1994 | KSA |
| 19 | Defender | MUHANNAD MUSTAFA ALSHANQITI | 12/03/1999 | KSA |
| 24 | Defender | AMAAR ALI ALDOHAIM | 31/08/1993 | KSA |
| 30 | Defender | AWN MUTLAQ ALSLALULI | 2/09/1998 | KSA |
| 31 | Defender | MANSOUR ATEEQ ALHARBI | 19/10/1987 | KSA |
| 33 | Defender | OMAR KHALID DAKHEL | 8/05/1999 | KSA |
| 66 | Defender | SAUD ABDULLAH ABDULHAMID | 18/07/1999 | KSA |
| 77 | Defender | ABDULAZIZ ALI ALBISHI | 11/03/1994 | KSA |
| 6 | Midfielder | KHALID MOHAMMED ALSAMIRI | 1/01/1997 | KSA |
| 10 | Midfielder | CARLOS VILLANUEVA | 5/02/1986 | CHI |
| 15 | Midfielder | JAMAL ABDULLAH BAJANDOUH | 22/08/1992 | KSA |
| 28 | Midfielder | ESSAM MOHAMMEDSALEH ALMUWALLAD | 11/03/1999 | KSA |
| 35 | Midfielder | SEKOU JUNIOR SANOGO | 5/05/1989 | CIV |
| 9 | Forward | ROMARIO RICARDO DA SILVA | 12/12/1990 | BRA |
| 25 | Forward | NASSIR ALSHAMRANI | 23/11/1983 | KSA |
| 26 | Forward | ABDULAZIZ HASSAN ALARYANI | 13/03/1996 | KSA |
| 49 | Forward | ABDULRAHMAN KAMEL ALGHAMDI | 1/11/1994 | KSA |



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time AFC Champions League winners Al Ittihad sealed a spot in the 2019 Group Stage after claiming the King's Cup title in Saudi Arabia.

The Jeddah-based side lifted the title in 2004 after a 6-3 comeback win over Korea Republic's Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma, before going on to retain their continental crown the following year thanks to a 5-3 aggregate triumph against Al Ain. Since then, Al Ittihad have been runners-up to Pohang Steelers in 2009, while they also reached the competition's last four in both 2011 and 2012.

HEAD COACH

Jose Luis Sierra

Jose Luis Sierra was named Al Ittihad head coach when Slaven Bilic vacated the post in February 2019. A former Chile international who appeared more than 50 times for his country, Sierra returned to the club he coached for two seasons from 2016 until 2018. During his first spell with the Jeddah giants, Sierra guided Al Ittihad to the Saudi Crown Prince Cup in 2017 and the King's Cup a year later.



Group B

AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MOHAMED HASAN ALSHAMSI | 4/01/1997 | UAE |
| 50 | Goalkeeper | RASHED ALI ALSUWAIDI | 2/12/1989 | UAE |
| 60 | Goalkeeper | ESSA AHMAD ABDULLA | 25/04/2001 | UAE |
| 88 | Goalkeeper | SAEED KHAMEIS ALMESMARI | 24/04/1996 | UAE |
| 2 | Defender | MOHAMED SALEH ALMENHALI | 27/10/1990 | UAE |
| 4 | Defender | SALEM SULTAN ALSHARJI | 9/05/1993 | UAE |
| 8 | Defender | HAMDAN ISMAEEL ALKAMLI | 2/05/1989 | UAE |
| 19 | Defender | KHALED EBRAHEIM ALDHANHANI | 17/01/1997 | UAE |
| 23 | Defender | RIM CHANG WOO | 13/02/1992 | KOR |
| 33 | Defender | MAJED ABDULLA ALJNEIBI | 22/07/2000 | UAE |
| 37 | Defender | AHMED RASHID ALMEHRZI | 19/01/1997 | UAE |
| 52 | Defender | HUSSAIN ABBAS AHMAD | 30/11/1994 | UAE |
| 62 | Defender | MOHAMED MESARRI ALDHAHERI | 1/01/2001 | UAE |
| 5 | Midfielder | MOHAMMAD ABDULBASIT | 19/10/1995 | UAE |
| 6 | Midfielder | SULTAN ALI ALGHAFRI | 18/09/1986 | UAE |
| 15 | Midfielder | NASIR ABDELHADI ALMAAZM | 16/12/1989 | UAE |
| 16 | Midfielder | SALEM ABDULLA ALBLOOSHI | 6/08/1998 | UAE |
| 18 | Midfielder | AHMED ALI ALEBRI | 28/01/1990 | UAE |
| 42 | Midfielder | LEONARDO DE SOUSA | 18/03/1992 | BRA |
| 43 | Midfielder | ISMAIL OMAR ALZAABI | 14/07/2001 | UAE |
| 46 | Midfielder | MANSOR IBRAHIM ALHARBI | 14/07/1999 | UAE |
| 56 | Midfielder | TAHNOON HAMDAN ALZAABI | 10/04/1999 | UAE |
| 77 | Midfielder | KHALIL IBRAHIM ALHAMMADI | 4/05/1993 | UAE |
| 10 | Forward | ISMAEIL MATAR ALJNEIBI | 7/04/1983 | UAE |
| 11 | Forward | SEBASTIAN TAGLIABUE | 22/02/1985 | ARG |
| 20 | Forward | YAHYA ALI AL GHASSANI | 18/04/1998 | UAE |
| 30 | Forward | TAREQ AHMED ALANTALI | 19/05/1990 | UAE |
| 57 | Forward | ABDULLA ANWAR ALAMERI | 2/06/1999 | UAE |
| 58 | Forward | MOHAMED ISMAIL ALJNEIBI | 29/05/1998 | UAE |
| 70 | Forward | MOHAMED RASHID ALHAMMADI | 11/05/1997 | UAE |



CLUB PROFILE

Al Wahda finished as runners-up to Al Ain in the 2017-18 UAE Pro League to earn themselves a ninth AFC Champions League group stage appearance.

After making it through to the Quarter-finals in 2004, the club's best AFC Champions League performance came in 2007 when they reached the last four, narrowly losing 2-1 on aggregate to Foolad Mobarakeh Sepahan from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since reaching the Semi-finals, Al Wahda had failed to progress beyond the competition's Group Stage.

HEAD COACH

Maurice Steijn

Highly regarded Dutchman Maurice Steijn was named Al Wahda head coach in June 2019 following compatriot Henk ten Cate's decision to leave the club at the end of the 2018-19 domestic season. Steijn, a midfielder in his playing days, began coaching with ADO Den Haag in 2010 and was with VVV-Venlo before making the move to Asia.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Henk ten Cate (left the club after the Group Stage)

Dutchman Henk ten Cate was no stranger to Asia, having overseen UAE side Al Ahli, Qatar's Umm Salal and China's Shandong Luneng between 2010 and 2013. He began his coaching career in the Netherlands with Go Ahead Eagles, before managing Vitesse Arnhem and Ajax and serving as an assistant at both Barcelona and Chelsea. He joined Al Wahda from Emirati outfit Al Jazira in late 2018.



Group B

PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 12 | Goalkeeper | MAMUR IKRAMOV | 12/06/1982 | UZB |
| 13 | Goalkeeper | ASLONBEK AKHROROV | 11/05/1998 | UZB |
| 35 | Goalkeeper | JAVOHIR ILYOSOV | 6/02/1994 | UZB |
| 5 | Defender | ANZUR ISMAILOV | 21/04/1985 | UZB |
| 19 | Defender | AVAZBEK ULMASALIYEV | 27/03/2000 | UZB |
| 20 | Defender | ISLOM TUKHTAKHUJAEV | 30/10/1989 | UZB |
| 24 | Defender | DAVRONBEK KHASHIMOV | 24/11/1992 | UZB |
| 28 | Defender | SHUKHRAT MUKHAMMADIEV | 24/06/1989 | UZB |
| 33 | Defender | OLEG ZOTEEV | 5/07/1989 | UZB |
| 44 | Defender | PROKHOROV SERGEY | 16/10/1996 | UZB |
| 77 | Defender | DIYORJON TURAPOV | 9/07/1994 | UZB |
| 80 | Defender | FARRUKHJON IBROKHIMOV | 15/05/1996 | UZB |
| 88 | Defender | IGOR JELIC | 28/12/1989 | SRB |
| 7 | Midfielder | AZIZBEK KHAYDAROV | 8/07/1985 | UZB |
| 8 | Midfielder | JAMSHID ISKANDEROV | 16/10/1993 | UZB |
| 9 | Midfielder | FILIP RAJEVAC | 21/06/1992 | SRB |
| 10 | Midfielder | SARDOR MIRZAYEV | 21/03/1991 | UZB |
| 14 | Midfielder | AZIZBEK AMONOV | 30/10/1997 | UZB |
| 17 | Midfielder | HUSNIDDIN GAFUROV | 29/07/1994 | UZB |
| 23 | Midfielder | JOVAN DOKIC | 13/08/1992 | SRB |
| 71 | Midfielder | AMANOV ARSLAN | 28/03/1990 | TKM |
| 72 | Midfielder | BOBURBEK ERGASHEV | 18/01/1997 | UZB |
| 74 | Midfielder | SHARAFIDDIN SHOBIROV | 8/12/1999 | UZB |
| 76 | Midfielder | KHURMATBEK YULDASHOV | 25/04/2000 | UZB |
| 79 | Midfielder | SHERALIEV ALISHER | 6/05/1998 | UZB |
| 81 | Midfielder | ABDULLAEV BEK | 11/08/1999 | UZB |
| 11 | Forward | TEMURKHUJA ABDUKHOLIKOV | 25/09/1991 | UZB |
| 70 | Forward | SHAGULYAMOV ALISHER | 2/06/1994 | UZB |
| 75 | Forward | VLADISLAV FOMIN | 5/02/2000 | UZB |



CLUB PROFILE

Lokomotiv's 2018 Uzbekistan Super League title success saw them secure a fifth appearance in the Group Stage of the AFC Champions League. The Tashkent-based club memorably reached the Quarter-finals of the competition in 2016 before going out 1-0 on aggregate to Al Ain from the United Arab Emirates.

Since then, however, Lokomotiv had failed to progress into the knockout phase, although they came desperately close in 2018 when Iranian side Zobahan only beat them to second spot in Group B thanks to a superior head-to-head record.

HEAD COACH

Andrey Miklyaev

A renowned footballer during his playing days, Andrey Miklyaev took charge of Lokomotiv in April 2018 and subsequently guided them to that year's Uzbekistan Super League crown. The former Uzbekistan international also has coaching experience with Neftchi Fergana where he oversaw four league title wins.



Group B

AL RAYYAN FC (QAT)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | FAHAD YOUNIS BAKER | 30/07/1994 | QAT |
| 28 | Goalkeeper | ABDULAZIZ FAHAD EISSA | 24/02/1999 | QAT |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | OUMAR BARRY | 18/07/1986 | QAT |
| 2 | Defender | MOHAMED ALAAELDIN ABDELMOTAAL | 24/01/1994 | QAT |
| 4 | Defender | MUSA HAROON JAMA | 13/09/1985 | QAT |
| 5 | Defender | DAME TRAORE | 15/05/1986 | QAT |
| 12 | Defender | MOHAMED BADER SAYYAR | 16/02/1991 | QAT |
| 13 | Defender | GONZALO VIERA | 8/02/1987 | ITALY |
| 15 | Defender | MOUFAK AWAD AHMED | 11/05/1997 | QAT |
| 16 | Defender | SALAH ALAWI ALYAHRI | 25/08/1995 | QAT |
| 20 | Defender | ALI SANAD AL-NUAIMI | 31/10/1985 | QAT |
| 21 | Defender | MOHAMMED JUMA ALALAWI | 24/03/1986 | QAT |
| 34 | Defender | ABDULRAHMAN AL-KARBI | 25/11/1999 | QAT |
| 36 | Defender | YOUSIF UMAR | 23/08/1999 | QAT |
| 6 | Midfielder | ABDULRAHMAN MOHAMMED ALKORBI | 18/08/1994 | QAT |
| 22 | Midfielder | KOH MYONGJIN | 9/01/1988 | KOR |
| 29 | Midfielder | ALI AHMED ALYAZIDI | 28/08/2000 | QAT |
| 31 | Midfielder | DANIEL GOUMOU | 4/10/1990 | QAT |
| 32 | Midfielder | AHMED MOHAMED ELSAYED | 23/03/1990 | QAT |
| 3 | Forward | GELMIN RIVAS BOADA | 23/03/1989 | VEN |
| 7 | Forward | ABDULRAHMAN ALHARAZI | 1/01/1994 | QAT |
| 9 | Forward | LUCCA DE BRITO | 14/02/1990 | BRA |
| 10 | Forward | RODRIGO BARBOSA TABATA | 19/11/1980 | QAT |
| 11 | Forward | KHALFAN IBRAHIM | 18/02/1988 | QAT |
| 17 | Forward | ALDOUKALI SIDE | 20/12/1993 | QAT |
| 18 | Forward | AHMED MOHAMMED ALSADI | 2/10/1995 | QAT |
| 23 | Forward | ANDRES SEBASTIAN QUINTANA | 8/11/1983 | QAT |
| 35 | Forward | ABDULAZIZ HAZAA ALHASIA | 31/08/1999 | QAT |



CLUB PROFILE

Al Rayyan finished a highly creditable third in the 2017-18 Qatar Stars League standings to guarantee themselves a ninth AFC Champions League appearance.

After failing to progress beyond the Group Stage in 2018, Al Rayyan began their latest continental campaign with a relatively comfortable 3-1 home win over Saipa from the Islamic Republic of Iran in the play-offs. Heading into their 2019 title tilt, the Doha-based club had failed to reach the competition's knockout rounds since making their debut in 2005.

CARETAKER HEAD COACH

Yuri de Souza

Caretaker head coach Yuri de Souza took charge of Al Rayyan following the departure of previous incumbent Bülent Uygün in the wake of the Qatari side's hefty loss to Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad on Matchday One. The Brazilian, who stepped up from his role with Al Rayyan's U-23 team, performed a similar role when Argentinian Rodolfo Arruabarrena left the club in 2018.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Bülent Uygün (left the club after Matchday One)

Bülent Uygün took charge of Al Rayyan in October 2018. The former Turkey international was more than familiar with Qatar, having been in charge of Umm Salal between 2010 and 2013, as well as Al Gharafa until May 2018. The former attacking midfielder earned plaudits galore during his time as head coach of Turkish side Sivasspor, who he helped qualify for the UEFA Champions League.



Group C

AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | SHEHAB MAMDOUH ELLETHY | 18/04/2000 | QAT |
| 16 | Goalkeeper | KHALIFA ABABACAR | 7/07/1989 | QAT |
| 33 | Goalkeeper | AHMAD ALI HATAMI | 25/08/1980 | QAT |
| 40 | Goalkeeper | LECOMTE CLAUDE AMINE | 26/04/1990 | QAT |
| 2 | Defender | MOHAMED MUSA ALI | 1/01/1986 | QAT |
| 3 | Defender | MOHAMMED KHALID | 25/03/2000 | QAT |
| 4 | Defender | MEDHI BENATIA | 17/04/1987 | FRA |
| 5 | Defender | BASSAM HUSHAM ALRAWI | 16/12/1997 | QAT |
| 6 | Defender | AHMED YASSER ABDELRHMAN | 17/05/1994 | QAT |
| 18 | Defender | SULTAN HUSSAIN AL-BRAKE | 7/04/1996 | QAT |
| 22 | Defender | MURAD NAJI HUSSEIN | 12/06/1991 | QAT |
| 32 | Defender | FAHD AHMED ALSORI | 12/01/1998 | QAT |
| 8 | Midfielder | LUIZ MAIRTON JUNIOR | 13/01/1989 | QAT |
| 12 | Midfielder | KARIM BOUDIAF | 16/09/1990 | QAT |
| 14 | Midfielder | ABDULLAH ABDULSALAM ALAHRAK | 10/05/1997 | QAT |
| 15 | Midfielder | ASSIM OMER MADIBO | 22/10/1996 | QAT |
| 25 | Midfielder | SALEH SAEED BINHALABI | 29/02/2000 | QAT |
| 26 | Midfielder | KHALED WALID MANSOUR | 25/12/1999 | QAT |
| 27 | Midfielder | AHMAD YASSER SEBAIE | 6/01/1999 | QAT |
| 7 | Forward | ISMAIL MOHAMAD | 5/04/1990 | QAT |
| 9 | Forward | YOUSSEF EL ARABI | 3/02/1987 | FRA |
| 10 | Forward | SHOYA NAKAJIMA | 23/08/1994 | JPN |
| 11 | Forward | MOHAMMED MUNTARI | 20/12/1993 | QAT |
| 13 | Forward | HAZEM AHMED SHEHATA | 2/02/1998 | QAT |
| 17 | Forward | EDMILSON JUNIOR SILVA | 19/08/1994 | BEL |
| 19 | Forward | ALMOEZ ALI ABDULLA | 19/08/1996 | QAT |
| 20 | Forward | ALI HASSAN YAHYA | 20/01/1988 | QAT |
| 21 | Forward | KHALID MUNEEER MAZEED | 24/02/1998 | QAT |
| 23 | Forward | SALMIN ATIQ ALRUMAIHI | 11/01/1997 | QAT |
| 24 | Forward | NASSER ALYAZIDI | 2/02/2000 | QAT |



CLUB PROFILE

Al Duhail qualified as back-to-back Qatar Stars League champions and winners of the 2018 Emir of Qatar Cup. While still known as Lekhwiya, the Doha-based club reached the AFC Champions League Quarter-finals in both 2013 and 2015, before losing to Guangzhou Evergrande from China PR and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal respectively.

In 2018, Al Duhail famously recorded nine successive victories only to then bow out over two legs in the last eight to eventual runners-up Persepolis from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

HEAD COACH

Rui Faria

Portuguese tactician Rui Faria arrived to take charge of Al Duhail at the beginning of the year following the departure of former head coach Nabil Maaloul. Until his appointment, Faria had been an assistant to renowned coach Jose Mourinho at a host of top clubs including Chelsea, Inter Milan, Real Madrid and Manchester United.



Group C

AL HILAL SFC (KSA)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | ABDULLAH IBRAHIM ALMUAIOUF | 23/01/1987 | KSA |
| 23 | Goalkeeper | MARWAN ABDULAZIZ ALHAIDARI | 12/04/1996 | KSA |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | MOHAMMED AHMED ALWAKID | 25/03/1992 | KSA |
| 40 | Goalkeeper | NAWAF ALGHAMDI | 21/01/1999 | KSA |
| 2 | Defender | MOHAMMED ALBURAYK | 15/09/1992 | KSA |
| 5 | Defender | ALI HADI AL BULAYHI | 21/11/1989 | KSA |
| 12 | Defender | YASIR GHARSAN ALSHAHRANI | 25/05/1992 | KSA |
| 13 | Defender | HASSAN KADISH MAHBUB | 26/09/1992 | KSA |
| 32 | Defender | MOHAMMED SALEM ALDOSSARY | 11/07/1999 | KSA |
| 33 | Defender | AHMED SHARAHILI | 8/05/1994 | KSA |
| 34 | Defender | WALEED ABDULWAHAB ALAHMAD | 3/05/1999 | KSA |
| 45 | Defender | MILOS DEGENEK | 28/04/1994 | AUS |
| 70 | Defender | MOHAMMED YAHYA JAHFALI | 24/10/1990 | KSA |
| 3 | Midfielder | CARLOS EDUARDO ALVES | 17/10/1989 | BRA |
| 6 | Midfielder | ABDULMALEK ABDULLAH ALKHAIBRI | 13/03/1986 | KSA |
| 7 | Midfielder | SALMAN ALFARAJ | 1/08/1989 | KSA |
| 8 | Midfielder | ABDULLAH OTAYF | 3/08/1992 | KSA |
| 9 | Midfielder | SEBASTIAN GIOVINCO | 26/01/1987 | ITALY |
| 10 | Midfielder | MOHAMMED AL SHALHOUB | 8/12/1980 | KSA |
| 16 | Midfielder | NASSER ESSA ALDAWSARI | 19/12/1998 | KSA |
| 24 | Midfielder | NAWAF SHAKER ALABID | 26/01/1990 | KSA |
| 27 | Midfielder | HATAN SULTAN BAHBRI | 16/07/1992 | KSA |
| 28 | Midfielder | MOHAMED IBRAHIM KANU | 22/09/1994 | KSA |
| 29 | Midfielder | SALEM ALDAWSARI | 19/08/1991 | KSA |
| 35 | Midfielder | MANSOR FAIEZ ALBESHE | 24/04/2000 | KSA |
| 39 | Midfielder | NAWAF MOHAMMED SHARAHILI | 20/03/1999 | KSA |
| 18 | Forward | BAFETIBI GOMIS | 6/08/1985 | FRA |
| 31 | Forward | ABDULRAHMAN HASHIM ALYAMI | 19/06/1997 | KSA |
| 38 | Forward | KHALID FAHAD AL JUBAYA | 1/08/1999 | KSA |
| 41 | Forward | THAAR HUSSAIN ALOTAIBI | 14/08/1999 | KSA |



CLUB PROFILE

One of Asia's most successful clubs, with victories in the Asian Club Championship in 1991 and 2000, Al Hilal qualified for the AFC Champions League for an impressive 11th consecutive season following their 2017-18 Saudi Pro League title success. The Riyadh-based club have been semi-finalists twice, as well as runners-up to Australia's Western Sydney Wanderers in 2014 and then Japan's Urawa Red Diamonds three years later. In the 2018 edition, they failed to progress beyond the Group Stage for the first time since 2006.

HEAD COACH

R zvan Lucescu

Razvan Lucescu was announced as the new head coach of Al Hilal in June 2019. The Romanian left PAOK Thessaloniki a month earlier after guiding them to their first Greek Super League title since 1985. Prior to his successful stint in Greece, Lucescu had managed Rapid Bucharest, Brasov and Petrolul Ploiesti in his native Romania. He also had a two-year spell in Asian football, which saw him win the Qatar Stars Cup with El Jaish in 2012-13.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Péricles Chamusca (vacated his position at the end of the Group Stage)

Péricles Chamusca was installed as head coach of Al Hilal following the departure of predecessor Zoran Mamić at the end of April 2019. The highly regarded Brazilian, who arrived in Riyadh on loan from Saudi Pro League rivals Al Faisaly until the end of the 2018-19 domestic season, has also overseen clubs in Japan, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Zoran Mamić (left the club after Matchday Four)

Zoran Mamić enjoyed much coaching success in his homeland, winning three consecutive Croatian league titles with Dinamo Zagreb. The former Croatia international defender arrived in the Middle East in 2016 to take charge of Saudi side Al Nassr before his appointment by Al Ain FC in January 2017. He officially took charge of Al Hilal at the end of January 2019.



Group C

AL AIN FC (UAE)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MOHAMMED SAEED ALFALAH | 20/06/1995 | UAE |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | HAMAD ABDULLA ALMANSOORI | 28/03/1996 | UAE |
| 17 | Goalkeeper | KHALID EISA BILAL | 15/09/1989 | UAE |
| 36 | Goalkeeper | DAWOUD SULAIMAN ALQUWAITAEI | 21/03/1990 | UAE |
| 2 | Defender | ALI MOHAMMED AL HAIDHANI | 7/01/1998 | UAE |
| 4 | Defender | SAEED MUSABBEH ALMENHALI | 4/02/1994 | UAE |
| 5 | Defender | ISMAIL AHMED MOHAMED | 7/07/1983 | UAE |
| 14 | Defender | MOHAMMED FAYEZ ALALAWI | 6/10/1989 | UAE |
| 15 | Defender | KHALED ABDULRAHMAN ALAMOUDI | 10/09/1988 | UAE |
| 19 | Defender | MOHNAD SALEM AL AMIM | 1/03/1985 | UAE |
| 23 | Defender | MOHAMED ALI GHARIB | 16/04/1989 | UAE |
| 44 | Defender | SAEED JUMA ALSAADI | 8/07/1998 | UAE |
| 51 | Defender | KHALED MOHAMMED ALBLOOSHI | 22/03/1999 | UAE |
| 56 | Defender | SALEM ABDULLA ALJABERI | 17/09/1998 | UAE |
| 3 | Midfielder | TONGO HAMED DOUMBIA | 6/08/1989 | FRA |
| 6 | Midfielder | AMER ABDULRAHMAN | 3/07/1989 | UAE |
| 7 | Midfielder | CAIO LUCAS FERNANDES | 19/04/1994 | BRA |
| 11 | Midfielder | BANDAR MOHAMMED AL AHBABI | 9/07/1990 | UAE |
| 13 | Midfielder | AHMED BARMAN ALHMOUDI | 5/02/1994 | UAE |
| 16 | Midfielder | MOHAMED ABDULRAHMAN ALRAQI | 4/02/1989 | UAE |
| 18 | Midfielder | DIAKY IBRAHIM AMUAH | 24/05/1982 | UAE |
| 20 | Midfielder | SAAD KHAMIS ALABADLA | 15/02/1995 | UAE |
| 28 | Midfielder | SULAIMAN HMOUD ALAMERI | 23/06/1997 | UAE |
| 30 | Midfielder | MOHAMMED KHALFAN AL HARASI | 28/08/1998 | UAE |
| 33 | Midfielder | TSUKASA SHIOTANI | 5/12/1988 | JPN |
| 43 | Midfielder | RAYAN YASLAM AL JABERI | 23/11/1994 | UAE |
| 58 | Midfielder | FALAH WALEED ALJNEIBI | 13/09/1998 | UAE |
| 9 | Forward | BENGT ERIK BERG | 17/08/1986 | SWE |
| 99 | Forward | JAMAL IBRAHIM ALBLOOSHI | 23/11/1991 | UAE |



CLUB PROFILE

Winners of the inaugural AFC Champions League in 2002-03 when they beat Thailand's BEC Tero Sasana 2-1 on aggregate, Al Ain returned to the competition for a seventh consecutive season following their UAE Pro League and the UAE President's Cup title successes.

After entering via the play-offs, the Emirati outfit reached the Round of 16 in 2018 before going on to lose to Qatar's Al Duhail. The competition heavyweights have been runners-up twice - losing to Al Ittihad and Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors in 2005 and 2016 respectively.

HEAD COACH

Juan Carlos Garrido

Former Villarreal and Real Betis head coach Juan Carlos Garrido replaced Zoran Mamić in the Al Ain hotseat after parting company with Moroccan side Raja Casablanca. In his first full season with Villarreal in 2011, Garrido guided the club to fourth place in La Liga, and, in the process, helped them qualify for the UEFA Champions League.



Group C

ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MAHDI RAHMATI | 3/02/1983 | IRN |
| 19 | Goalkeeper | MAHDI NOROLLAHI | 3/04/1997 | IRN |
| 22 | Goalkeeper | HOSSEIN HOSSEINI | 30/06/1992 | IRN |
| 2 | Defender | KHOSRO HEIDARI | 14/09/1983 | IRN |
| 3 | Defender | MILAD ZAKIPOUR | 29/04/1995 | IRN |
| 4 | Defender | ROOZBEH CHESHMI | 24/07/1993 | IRN |
| 12 | Defender | MEISAM TEYMOURI | 6/07/1992 | IRN |
| 13 | Defender | ARMIN SOHRABIAN | 26/07/1995 | IRN |
| 18 | Defender | SHAHIN TAHERKHANI | 7/01/1997 | IRN |
| 21 | Defender | VORYA GHAFOURI | 20/09/1987 | IRN |
| 33 | Defender | PEJMAN MONTAZERI | 6/09/1983 | IRN |
| 44 | Defender | FARSHAD MOHAMMADIMEHR | 4/09/1994 | IRN |
| 70 | Defender | MOHAMMAD DANESHGAR | 20/01/1994 | IRN |
| 5 | Midfielder | AYANDA PATOSI | 31/10/1992 | RSA |
| 6 | Midfielder | ALI KARIMI | 11/02/1994 | IRN |
| 8 | Midfielder | FARSHID ESMAEILI | 23/02/1994 | IRN |
| 14 | Midfielder | FARSHID BAGHERI | 5/06/1992 | IRN |
| 17 | Midfielder | HUMAM TAREQ FARAJ | 10/02/1996 | IRQ |
| 23 | Midfielder | DARIUSH SHOJAEIAN | 7/04/1992 | IRN |
| 25 | Midfielder | MEHDI GHAYEDI | 5/12/1998 | IRN |
| 28 | Midfielder | SEYED MOHSEN KARIMI | 20/09/1994 | IRN |
| 30 | Midfielder | OMID NOR AFKAN | 9/04/1997 | IRN |
| 77 | Midfielder | REZA AZARIKOURAEIM | 10/02/1998 | IRN |
| 10 | Forward | ROUHOLLAH BAGHERI | 12/02/1991 | IRN |
| 11 | Forward | MORTEZA TABRIZI | 6/01/1991 | IRN |
| 16 | Forward | ALLAHYAR SAYYADMANESH | 29/06/2001 | IRN |
| 20 | Forward | ESMAEL RUTI GONCALVES | 25/06/1991 | POR |
| 88 | Forward | REZA KARIMI | 23/08/1998 | IRN |
| 90 | Forward | GODWIN MENSHA | 2/09/1989 | NGA |
| 99 | Forward | SAJAD AGHAEI | 19/03/1999 | IRN |



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time Asian Club Championship winners Esteghlal reached the 2018 Quarter-finals before losing to Qatar's Al Sadd.

After qualifying courtesy of their 2017-18 Hazfi Cup title triumph, 2019 marked yet another AFC Champions League appearance for the club who enjoyed their best campaign to date in 2013 when they won four of their six Group Stage games, before going on to beat the UAE's Al Shabab in the last 16 and Buriram United from Thailand in the Quarter-finals. Their impressive run was, however, eventually brought to an end by FC Seoul in the Semi-finals.

HEAD COACH

Farhad Majidi

Former assistant Farhad Majidi was named Esteghlal's caretaker coach until the end of the 2018-19 domestic season following previous incumbent Winfried Schäfer's suspension from the club in May. Known as a dynamic attacking midfielder, the Iranian enjoyed a stellar playing career - most notably with Esteghlal - and was capped 45 times by his country.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Winfried Schäfer (left the club ahead of Matchday Five)

Winfried Schäfer arrived at the club in October 2018 to replace Alireza Mansourian in the Esteghlal hotseat. The German was no stranger to Asia, having previously worked in the United Arab Emirates with both Al Ahli and Al Ain. The former Borussia Mönchengladbach midfielder was also head coach of Thailand from 2011 to 2013, and won the 2002 Africa Cup of Nations with Cameroon.



Group D

PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | ALI REZA SAFARBEIRANVAND | 21/09/1992 | IRN |
| 12 | Goalkeeper | ABOLFAZL DARVISHVAND | 13/01/1997 | IRN |
| 44 | Goalkeeper | BOZIDAR RADOSEVIC | 4/04/1989 | CRO |
| 3 | Defender | SHOJAE KHALILZADEH | 14/05/1989 | IRN |
| 4 | Defender | SEYED JALAL HOSSEINI | 3/02/1982 | IRN |
| 13 | Defender | HOSSEIN MAHINI | 16/09/1986 | IRN |
| 15 | Defender | MOHAMMAD ANSARI | 23/09/1991 | IRN |
| 17 | Defender | MEHDI SHIRI | 31/01/1991 | IRN |
| 28 | Defender | MOHAMMAD NADERI | 5/10/1996 | IRN |
| 69 | Defender | ALI MOSLEH TAKLIMI | 25/06/1993 | IRN |
| 2 | Midfielder | OMID ALISHAH | 10/01/1992 | IRN |
| 5 | Midfielder | BASHAR RESAN BONYAN | 22/12/1996 | IRQ |
| 7 | Midfielder | SOROUGH RAFIEI | 24/03/1990 | IRN |
| 8 | Midfielder | AHMAD NOOROLLAHI | 1/02/1993 | IRN |
| 9 | Midfielder | MAHDI TORABI | 10/09/1994 | IRN |
| 11 | Midfielder | KAMALEDDIN KAMYABINIA | 18/01/1989 | IRN |
| 18 | Midfielder | MOHSEN RABIKHAH | 24/12/1987 | IRN |
| 21 | Midfielder | ADAM HEMATI | 22/01/1995 | IRN |
| 26 | Midfielder | SAEED HOSSEINPOUR | 12/10/1998 | IRN |
| 38 | Midfielder | SEYED MOHAMMAD HOSSEINI | 3/10/1998 | IRN |
| 88 | Midfielder | SIAMAK NEMATI | 17/04/1994 | IRN |
| 10 | Forward | MEHDI SHARIFI | 16/08/1992 | IRN |
| 19 | Forward | MARIO BUDIMIR | 12/02/1986 | CRO |
| 23 | Forward | MOHAMMAD AMIN TODAR | 24/12/1998 | IRN |
| 66 | Forward | SAEID KARIMI LISHTER | 31/01/2000 | IRN |
| 70 | Forward | ALI ALIPOURGHARA | 11/11/1995 | IRN |



CLUB PROFILE

Persepolis shone brightly in the AFC Champions League's 2018 edition when they reached the Final before narrowly losing 2-0 on aggregate to Japan's Kashima Antlers.

Prior to their 2019 title-tilt, the Tehran-based club, which returned to the competition after winning an 11th Iran Pro League title, had only failed to progress beyond the Group Stage on two previous occasions – an impressive run that also includes a Semi-final appearance against Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in 2017.

HEAD COACH

Branko Ivankovic

Veteran Croatian coach Branko Ivankovic is one of Asian football's most experienced tacticians. As head coach of the Islamic Republic of Iran national team, he guided Team Melli to a third-place finish at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and qualification for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. After spells in China and Saudi Arabia, he returned to Iran in 2015 to take charge of Persepolis.



Group D

AL SADD SC (QAT)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | SAAD AL SHEEB | 19/02/1990 | QAT |
| 22 | Goalkeeper | MESHAAL AISSA BARSHAM | 14/02/1998 | QAT |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | JEHAD MOHAMMAD HUDIB | 14/10/2000 | QAT |
| 83 | Goalkeeper | YOUSEF ABDULLAH BALIDEH | 30/10/2002 | QAT |
| 2 | Defender | PEDRO CORREIA | 6/08/1990 | QAT |
| 3 | Defender | ABDELKARIM HASSAN FADLALLA | 28/08/1993 | QAT |
| 12 | Defender | HAMID ISMAEIL KHALEEFA | 16/06/1986 | QAT |
| 15 | Defender | TAREK SALMAN | 5/12/1997 | QAT |
| 34 | Defender | HATIM KAMAL HASSANIN | 9/05/1997 | QAT |
| 52 | Defender | HUSSAIN ALI BAHZAD | 8/04/1998 | QAT |
| 55 | Defender | KHALID MUBARAK AL-NAIMI | 22/10/1998 | QAT |
| 65 | Defender | BAHAA MAMDOUH ELLETHY | 18/04/1999 | QAT |
| 66 | Defender | YASIR ISA | 10/01/1992 | QAT |
| 4 | Midfielder | AHMED BADER SAYYAR | 6/10/1993 | QAT |
| 5 | Midfielder | JUNG WOORYOUNG | 14/12/1989 | KOR |
| 6 | Midfielder | XAVIER HERNANDEZ | 25/01/1980 | ESP |
| 8 | Midfielder | ALI ASADALLA THAIMN | 19/01/1993 | QAT |
| 14 | Midfielder | GABRIEL LUIS ARENAS | 10/07/1983 | ESP |
| 16 | Midfielder | BOUALEM KHOUKHI | 9/07/1990 | QAT |
| 20 | Midfielder | SALEM AL HAJRI | 10/04/1996 | QAT |
| 10 | Forward | HASAN AL HAYDOS | 11/12/1990 | QAT |
| 11 | Forward | BAGHDAD BOUNEDJAH | 24/11/1991 | ALG |
| 17 | Forward | HASSAN AHMAD PALANG | 2/04/1998 | QAT |
| 27 | Forward | MESHAAL IBRAHIM I S FARAJ | 9/09/1998 | QAT |
| 78 | Forward | AKRAM HASSAN AFIF | 18/11/1996 | QAT |
| 87 | Forward | SAOUD IBRAHIM AL-NASR | 1/02/1998 | QAT |
| 95 | Forward | IBRAHIM AL-SAEED | 10/12/2001 | QAT |
| 96 | Forward | JASSIM ALI ALSHAMMARI | 15/10/1996 | QAT |



CLUB PROFILE

Winners of the AFC Champions League in 2011 – when they beat Korea Republic’s Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors – Al Sadd qualified for the competition’s latest edition following their second-place finish behind Al Duhail in the 2018-19 Qatar Stars League.

After failing to progress beyond the Play-offs in 2016 and 2017, the club from Doha enjoyed a stellar campaign in 2018, going all the way to the Semi-finals before losing 2-1 on aggregate to eventual runners-up Persepolis. Striker Baghdad Bounedjah was the competition’s top scorer in 2018 with 13 goals.

HEAD COACH

Xavi Hernandez

Barcelona and Spain great Xavi Hernandez ended his playing career with Al Sadd last season, before becoming the club’s head coach in the wake of Jesualdo Ferreira’s departure. Xavi originally moved to Al Sadd in 2015, after winning eight La Liga titles, three Copa del Rey crowns and four UEFA Champions League titles with Barcelona.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Jesualdo Ferreira (left the club after the Group Stage)

A vastly experienced coach, Ferreira moved to Asia following a glittering career in his native Portugal. As well as a spell with Portugal’s U-21 side, the 72-year-old guided Porto to three Primeira Liga titles, before overseeing Egyptian giants Zamalek when they sealed a league and cup double in 2015. He was named Al Sadd coach later that same year.



Group D

AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | YASSER ABDULLAH AL MOSAILEM | 27/02/1984 | KSA |
| 33 | Goalkeeper | MOHAMMED ALOWAIS | 10/10/1991 | KSA |
| 66 | Goalkeeper | BASIM SALEH ALBAQI | 7/11/1989 | KSA |
| 2 | Defender | SAEED FAWAZ ALMUWALLAD | 9/03/1991 | KSA |
| 3 | Defender | MOHAMMED AL FATIL | 4/01/1992 | KSA |
| 17 | Defender | PAULO HUINCALES | 25/08/1994 | CHI |
| 20 | Defender | ALI ALZUBAIDI | 4/01/1993 | KSA |
| 23 | Defender | ABDULLAH HASSUN TARMIN | 19/03/1997 | KSA |
| 24 | Defender | HUSSAIN OMAR SULAIMANI | 21/01/1977 | KSA |
| 25 | Defender | MOTAZ HAWSAWI | 17/02/1992 | KSA |
| 27 | Defender | MOHAMMED ALZUBAIDI | 25/08/1997 | KSA |
| 30 | Defender | HANI ISMAIL ALSIBYANI | 21/07/1999 | KSA |
| 32 | Defender | FAISAL MOHAMMED DARISI | 11/02/1997 | KSA |
| 37 | Defender | ABDULBASIT MOHAMMED HINDI | 2/02/1997 | KSA |
| 75 | Defender | ADERLLAN SANTOS | 9/04/1989 | BRA |
| 77 | Defender | OMAR SIRAJ ALZAYNI | 20/01/1996 | KSA |
| 8 | Midfielder | TAISEER JABIR AL JASSAM | 25/07/1984 | KSA |
| 11 | Midfielder | HUSSAIN ALMOQAHWI | 24/03/1988 | KSA |
| 15 | Midfielder | ABDULAZIZ ALSHAHRANI | 30/10/1994 | KSA |
| 16 | Midfielder | NOUH IBRAHIM ALMOUSA | 23/02/1991 | KSA |
| 35 | Midfielder | YOUSEF SAAD ALHARBI | 16/03/1997 | KSA |
| 40 | Midfielder | YAHYA MOHAMMED ALQARNI | 4/05/1998 | KSA |
| 7 | Forward | SALMAN MOHAMMED MUWASHAR | 5/10/1988 | KSA |
| 9 | Forward | OMAR ALSOMA | 23/03/1990 | SYR |
| 10 | Forward | ABDULFATTAH TAWFIQ ASIRI | 26/02/1994 | KSA |
| 14 | Forward | MUHANNAD AHMED ABU RADIYAH | 14/10/1986 | KSA |
| 21 | Forward | JORGE SEMEDO | 21/03/1991 | CIV |
| 28 | Forward | AYMAN ALKHULAIF | 22/05/1997 | KSA |
| 29 | Forward | ABDULRAHMAN ABDULLAH GHAREEB | 31/03/1997 | KSA |
| 49 | Forward | FERAS SIRAJ ALGHAMDI | 3/12/1999 | KSA |



CLUB PROFILE

Jeddah-based Al Ahli returned to the AFC Champions League after finishing second behind Al Hilal in the 2018-19 Saudi Pro League standings. In the competition's 2018 edition, a fine Group Stage campaign saw them remain unbeaten en route to the Round of 16 where they would eventually lose to Al Sadd from Qatar. Besides three Quarter-final appearances – the most recent of which was in 2017 – the club's best run by far came in 2012 when they reached the Final, only to lose 3-0 to Korea Republic's Ulsan Hyundai.

HEAD COACH

Branko Ivankovic

Branko Ivankovic took charge of Al Ahli in June 2019. He replaced Yousif Anbar who had been installed as caretaker following April's dismissal of Uruguayan manager Jorge Fossati. As head coach of the Islamic Republic of Iran national team, Ivankovic took Team Melli to third place at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and qualification for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. After spells in China and Saudi Arabia he returned to Iran in 2015 to take charge of Persepolis.



CARETAKER HEAD COACH

Yousef Anbar (vacated his position after the Group Stage)

Yousef Anbar stepped up from his position as assistant coach to handle first team affairs following the departure of previous incumbent Jorge Fossati. The experienced Saudi was also in charge of Al Ahli's U-23 side between 2000 and 2006.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Jorge Fossati (left the club after Matchday Three)

Jorge Fossati was appointed head coach of Al Ahli in February 2019. The Uruguayan, who was in charge of the Qatar national team until July 2017, has a wealth of experience at club level in Asia, notably overseeing Saudi Arabian side Al Shabab's Semi-final finish in the 2010 edition of the AFC Champions League and Qatari outfit Al Sadd SC's title success just 12 months later.



Group D

PAKHTAKOR (UZB)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | BOTIRALI ERGASHEV | 23/06/1995 | UZB |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | ELDORBЕК SUYUNOV | 12/04/1991 | UZB |
| 35 | Goalkeeper | SANJAR KUVVATOV | 8/01/1990 | UZB |
| 50 | Goalkeeper | UMIDJON KHAMROEV | 13/05/1997 | UZB |
| 3 | Defender | KHOJIAKBAR ALIJONOV | 19/04/1997 | UZB |
| 4 | Defender | AKRAMJON KOMILOV | 14/03/1996 | UZB |
| 5 | Defender | SALIMOV ALISHER | 22/07/1999 | UZB |
| 10 | Defender | DRAGAN CERAN | 6/10/1987 | SRB |
| 15 | Defender | EGOR KRIMETS | 27/01/1992 | UZB |
| 23 | Defender | SHERZOD AZAMOV | 14/01/1990 | UZB |
| 29 | Defender | VLADIMIR KOZAK | 12/06/1993 | UZB |
| 34 | Defender | FARRUKH SAYFIEV | 17/01/1991 | UZB |
| 55 | Defender | MARKO SIMIC | 16/06/1987 | SRB |
| 6 | Midfielder | JAKHONGIR AKHMADOV | 21/09/1998 | UZB |
| 7 | Midfielder | SADRIDDIN ABDULLAEV | 11/06/1986 | UZB |
| 8 | Midfielder | DILSHOD RAKHMATULLAEV | 17/02/1989 | UZB |
| 16 | Midfielder | AZIZBEK TURGUNBOEV | 1/10/1994 | UZB |
| 17 | Midfielder | DOSTONBEK KHAMDAMOV | 24/07/1996 | UZB |
| 18 | Midfielder | ABDURAKHIMOV BAKHROM | 11/12/1988 | UZB |
| 20 | Midfielder | ODILJON XAMROBEKOV | 13/02/1996 | UZB |
| 22 | Midfielder | JASURBEK YAKHSHIBOEV | 24/06/1997 | UZB |
| 27 | Midfielder | SARDOR SABIRKHODJAEV | 6/11/1994 | UZB |
| 99 | Midfielder | JAVOKHIR SIDIKOV | 8/12/1996 | UZB |
| 2 | Forward | BOBIRJON ASKAROV | 9/02/1999 | UZB |
| 9 | Forward | JALOLIDDIN MASHARIPOV | 1/09/1993 | UZB |
| 11 | Forward | IGOR SERGEEV | 30/04/1993 | UZB |
| 14 | Forward | KHUMOYUNMIRZO IMINOV | 15/01/2000 | UZB |
| 19 | Forward | SHOKHRUKH MAHMUDXOJIYEV | 19/07/1998 | UZB |
| 21 | Forward | MARAT BIKMAEV | 1/01/1986 | UZB |
| 45 | Forward | SOBIT SINDAROV | 15/02/1997 | UZB |



CLUB PROFILE

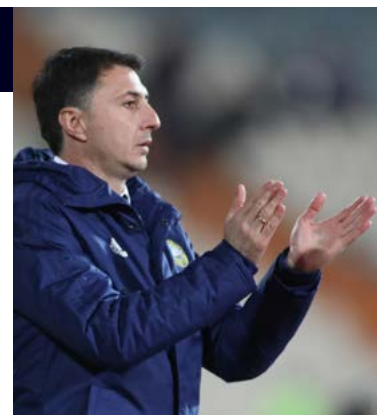
Having claimed a domestic league and cup double in 2018, Pakhtakor qualified for the Group Stage of the AFC Champions League after claiming a 2-1 victory away at Al Nasr against the United Arab Emirates in the play-offs.

Including their 2018 Play-off defeat, this was the Tashkent-based club's 15th AFC Champions League campaign. However, despite reaching the Semi-finals in 2002-03 and 2004, as well as the Quarter-finals in 2009, they had not qualified for the competition's knockout phase since 2010.

HEAD COACH

Shota Arveladze

Former Georgia international Shota Arveladze took charge of Pakhtakor in June 2017 following, amongst others, coaching spells with Maccabi Tel Aviv in Israel and Turkey's Trabzonspor. The Tbilisi native, who has played for the likes of Ajax and Glasgow Rangers, remains Georgia's all-time top goal-scorer with 26 goals in his 61 games for the national team.



Group E

GYEONGNAM FC (KOR)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | KANG SIN-WOO | 21/04/1999 | KOR |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | LEE BUM SOO | 10/12/1990 | KOR |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | SON JEONGHYUN | 25/11/1991 | KOR |
| 2 | Defender | PAK KWANGIL | 10/02/1991 | KOR |
| 5 | Defender | KWAK TAEHWI | 8/07/1981 | KOR |
| 6 | Defender | CHOI JAESOO | 2/05/1983 | KOR |
| 12 | Defender | LEE JAE MOUNG | 25/07/1991 | KOR |
| 15 | Defender | WOO JUSUNG | 8/06/1993 | KOR |
| 16 | Defender | LEE KWANG JIN | 23/07/1991 | KOR |
| 17 | Defender | YEO SUNGHYE | 6/08/1987 | KOR |
| 23 | Defender | LEE KWANG SEON | 6/09/1989 | KOR |
| 44 | Defender | JO SUNG WOOK | 22/03/1995 | KOR |
| 50 | Defender | KIM JONGPIL | 9/03/1992 | KOR |
| 53 | Defender | BAE SEUNG JIN | 3/11/1987 | KOR |
| 90 | Defender | SONG JUHUN | 13/01/1994 | KOR |
| 4 | Midfielder | HA SUNGMIN | 13/06/1987 | KOR |
| 7 | Midfielder | BAE KIJONG | 26/05/1983 | KOR |
| 8 | Midfielder | ANN SEONGNAM | 17/04/1984 | KOR |
| 14 | Midfielder | JO JAEHEOL | 18/05/1986 | KOR |
| 80 | Midfielder | JORDON MUTCH | 2/12/1991 | ENG |
| 13 | Midfielder | KIM JUNBUM | 14/01/1998 | KOR |
| 22 | Midfielder | TAKAHIRO KUNIMOTO | 8/10/1997 | JPN |
| 32 | Midfielder | LEE YEONGJAE | 13/09/1994 | KOR |
| 9 | Forward | LUC CASTAIGNOS | 27/09/1992 | NED |
| 10 | Forward | KIM SEUNGJUN | 11/09/1994 | KOR |
| 11 | Forward | DO DONGHYUN | 19/11/1993 | KOR |
| 18 | Forward | PARK GIDONG | 1/11/1988 | KOR |
| 19 | Forward | KO KYUNGMIN | 11/04/1987 | KOR |
| 20 | Forward | KIM HYOGI | 3/07/1986 | KOR |
| 77 | Forward | GUILHERME FERREIRA PINTO | 7/04/1992 | BRA |



CLUB PROFILE

Founded as recently as 2006, Gyeongnam were making their first-ever appearance in the AFC Champions League after an impressive second-place finish in the 2018 K League standings.

The club's best-ever domestic performance came just one year after they secured promotion to the top-flight of football in Korea Republic by winning the country's second-tier title.

HEAD COACH

Kim Jong-boo

Former Korea Republic international striker Kim Jong-boo took over as head coach of Gyeongnam FC in 2016 with the club in the second division, and, over a three-year period, built a team capable of challenging for the K League title. He led the team into the top-flight of Korean football by winning the second division in 2017, and, in their first season in the upper tier, Kim secured a second-place finish and the club's first-ever AFC Champions League appearance.



Group E

JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MOHD FARIZAL MARLIAS | 29/06/1986 | MAS |
| 24 | Goalkeeper | MOHD IZHAM TARMIZI | 24/04/1991 | MAS |
| 26 | Goalkeeper | MUHAMMAD HAZIQ NADZLI | 6/01/1998 | MAS |
| 2 | Defender | DOMINIC TAN | 12/03/1997 | MAS |
| 3 | Defender | ADAM NOR AZLIN | 5/01/1996 | MAS |
| 6 | Defender | MUHAMMAD SYAZWAN ANDIK | 4/08/1996 | MAS |
| 7 | Defender | MOHAMAD AIDIL ZAFUAN | 3/08/1987 | MAS |
| 12 | Defender | KUNANLAN SUBRAMANIAM | 15/09/1986 | MAS |
| 20 | Defender | MOHD AZRIF NASRULHAQ | 27/05/1991 | MAS |
| 22 | Defender | CORBIN ONG LAWRENCE | 22/04/1991 | MAS |
| 27 | Defender | MOHAMAD FADHLI MOHD SHAS | 21/01/1991 | MAS |
| 30 | Defender | FRANCISCO INSA BOHIGUES | 25/01/1988 | MAS |
| 35 | Defender | HASBULLAH ABU BAKAR | 26/10/1994 | MAS |
| 4 | Midfielder | MOHD AFIQ BIN FAZAIL | 29/09/1994 | MAS |
| 5 | Midfielder | IGNACIO INSA BOHIGUES | 9/06/1986 | MAS |
| 11 | Midfielder | GONZALO-GABRIEL GIORDANO | 15/01/1989 | ESP |
| 13 | Midfielder | GARY STEVEN ROBBAT | 3/09/1992 | MAS |
| 14 | Midfielder | HARISS HARUN | 19/11/1990 | SIN |
| 16 | Midfielder | MOHAMED SYAMER KUTTY | 1/10/1997 | MAS |
| 19 | Midfielder | MUHAMMAD AKHYAR RASHID | 1/05/1999 | MAS |
| 21 | Midfielder | MUHAMMAD NAZMI FAIZ | 16/08/1994 | MAS |
| 28 | Midfielder | MUHAMMAD SYAFIQ AHMAD | 28/06/1995 | MAS |
| 8 | Forward | DIOGO LUIS SANTO | 26/05/1987 | BRA |
| 9 | Forward | AHMAD HAZWAN BAKRI | 19/06/1991 | MAS |
| 10 | Forward | MUHAMMAD SAFAWI RASID | 5/03/1997 | MAS |
| 33 | Forward | MAURICIO NASCIMENTO | 20/09/1988 | BRA |



CLUB PROFILE

Undoubtedly the dominant force in Malaysian club football in recent seasons, Johor Darul Ta'zim were making their first-ever appearance in the Group Stage of the AFC Champions League, having featured regularly in the competition's preliminary rounds since 2015.

Johor, who hail from the south of Malaysia, became the first side from that country to win a continental club title in 2015 when they claimed the AFC Cup, defeating FC Istiklol from Tajikistan 1-0 in the final thanks to a goal from Leandro Velázquez.

HEAD COACH

Benjamin Mora

Mexican coach Benjamin Mora originally joined the Johor Darul Ta'zim coaching staff in 2016 when he took charge of the club's reserve team. That posting gave him an in-depth knowledge of JDT's playing resources and allowed him to impress in a caretaker capacity in mid-2017. He was appointed full-time head coach in 2018 following the arrival of Luciano Figueroa as team manager.



Group E

KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | KWOUN SUNTAE | 11/09/1984 | KOR |
| 21 | Goalkeeper | HITOSHI SOGAHATA | 2/08/1979 | JPN |
| 29 | Goalkeeper | SHINICHIRO KAWAMATA | 23/07/1989 | JPN |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | YUYA OKI | 22/08/1999 | JPN |
| 2 | Defender | ATSUTO UCHIDA | 27/03/1988 | JPN |
| 5 | Defender | JUNG SEUNGHYUN | 3/04/1994 | KOR |
| 16 | Defender | SHUTO YAMAMOTO | 1/06/1985 | JPN |
| 17 | Defender | TAIKI HIRATO | 18/04/1997 | JPN |
| 22 | Defender | KOKI ANZAI | 31/05/1995 | JPN |
| 23 | Defender | ODA ITSUKI | 16/07/1998 | JPN |
| 24 | Defender | YUKITOSHI ITO | 3/09/1993 | JPN |
| 28 | Defender | KOKI MACHIDA | 25/08/1997 | JPN |
| 33 | Defender | IKUMA SEKIGAWA | 13/09/2000 | JPN |
| 35 | Defender | SHOGO SASAKI | 25/07/2000 | JPN |
| 39 | Defender | TOMOYA INUKAI | 12/05/1993 | JPN |
| 4 | Midfielder | HUGO LEONARDO SEREJO | 24/12/1985 | BRA |
| 6 | Midfielder | RYOTA NAGAKI | 4/06/1988 | JPN |
| 8 | Midfielder | SHOMA DOI | 21/05/1992 | JPN |
| 13 | Midfielder | ATSUTAKA NAKAMURA | 13/09/1990 | JPN |
| 18 | Midfielder | SERGIO ANTONIO JUNIOR | 15/03/1995 | BRA |
| 20 | Midfielder | KENTO MISAO | 16/04/1996 | JPN |
| 25 | Midfielder | ENDO YASUSHI | 7/04/1988 | JPN |
| 30 | Midfielder | SHINTARO NAGO | 17/04/1996 | JPN |
| 41 | Midfielder | RYOHEI SHIRASAKI | 18/05/1993 | JPN |
| 9 | Forward | YUMA SUZUKI | 26/04/1996 | JPN |
| 10 | Forward | HIROKI ABE | 28/01/1999 | JPN |
| 14 | Forward | TAKESHI KANAMORI | 4/04/1994 | JPN |
| 15 | Forward | SHO ITO | 24/07/1988 | JPN |
| 19 | Forward | KAZUMA YAMAGUCHI | 17/01/1996 | JPN |
| 34 | Forward | KOTARO ARIMA | 3/09/2000 | JPN |



CLUB PROFILE

Kashima Antlers finally claimed the AFC Champions League title in 2018 as the J.League side beat Persepolis from Islamic Republic of Iran to secure the continental title.

After becoming the second Japanese side in a row to win the title after Urawa Red Diamonds' success 12 months earlier, Kashima duly guaranteed their involvement in the 2019 edition with a third-place finish in the J.League that saw them progress to the Play-offs. A 4-1 win over Australia's Newcastle Jets ensured their defence of the title started on a decidedly positive note.

HEAD COACH

Go Oiwa

Former Japan international defender Go Oiwa became head coach of the J.League side after Masatada Ishii was axed following the club's failure to advance beyond the Round of 16 in the 2017 AFC Champions League. The move proved to be an inspired one, as, less than 18 months later, Oiwa was leading Kashima to their first-ever AFC Champions League title with victory over Persepolis in the Final.



Group E

SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | LIU ZHENLI | 26/06/1985 | CHN |
| 14 | Goalkeeper | WANG DALEI | 10/01/1989 | CHN |
| 20 | Goalkeeper | HAN RONGZE | 15/01/1993 | CHN |
| 3 | Defender | LIU JUNSHUAI | 10/01/1995 | CHN |
| 4 | Defender | CARLOS GILBERTO SILVA | 12/06/1987 | BRA |
| 5 | Defender | ZHENG ZHENG | 11/07/1989 | CHN |
| 6 | Defender | WANG TONG | 12/02/1993 | CHN |
| 13 | Defender | ZHANG CHI | 8/07/1987 | CHN |
| 24 | Defender | QI TIANYU | 22/01/1993 | CHN |
| 31 | Defender | ZHAO JIANFEI | 21/01/1999 | CHN |
| 34 | Defender | LI HAILONG | 2/08/1996 | CHN |
| 35 | Defender | DAI LIN | 28/11/1987 | CHN |
| 38 | Defender | LIU CHAOYANG | 9/06/1999 | CHN |
| 39 | Defender | SONG LONG | 20/08/1989 | CHN |
| 7 | Midfielder | CUI PENG | 31/05/1987 | CHN |
| 11 | Midfielder | LIU YANG | 17/06/1995 | CHN |
| 17 | Midfielder | WU XINGHAN | 24/02/1993 | CHN |
| 18 | Midfielder | ZHOU HAIBIN | 19/07/1985 | CHN |
| 19 | Midfielder | SONG WENJIE | 25/12/1990 | CHN |
| 22 | Midfielder | HAO JUNMIN | 24/03/1987 | CHN |
| 25 | Midfielder | MAROUANE FELLAINI | 22/11/1987 | BEL |
| 27 | Midfielder | CAO SHENG | 26/02/1995 | CHN |
| 28 | Midfielder | CHEN KERUI | 9/03/1996 | CHN |
| 33 | Midfielder | JIN JINGDAO | 18/11/1992 | CHN |
| 36 | Midfielder | DUAN LIUYU | 24/07/1998 | CHN |
| 37 | Midfielder | HUANG CONG | 6/01/1997 | CHN |
| 9 | Forward | GRAZIANO PELLE' | 15/07/1985 | ITA |
| 21 | Forward | LIU BINBIN | 16/06/1993 | CHN |
| 29 | Forward | CHENG YUAN | 8/10/1993 | CHN |
| 32 | Forward | TIAN XIN | 29/03/1998 | CHN |



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time quarter-finalists Shandong Luneng returned to Asia's premier club competition for the first time since reaching the last eight in 2016, thanks to a third-place finish in the 2018 Chinese Super League standings.

That performance – their best domestic outing since a similarly lofty finish in 2015 – duly earned the side from eastern China a spot in the 2019 Play-offs, where, after an inspired second-half display, they overcame Vietnamese outfit Hanoi FC 4-1 to claim a place in the 2019 AFC Champions League Group Stage.

HEAD COACH

Li Xiaopeng

Li Xiaopeng took over at the helm of Shandong Luneng following the departure of German coach Felix Magath, under whom the former China international had served as an assistant. Li had an immediate impact, steering Shandong to third place in the 2018 Chinese Super League standings and into the AFC Champions League for the first time since 2016. Li previously played for Shandong, and represented the club when they reached the Quarter-finals in 2005.



Group F

GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | LIU SHIBO | 20/05/1997 | CHN |
| 19 | Goalkeeper | ZENG CHENG | 8/01/1987 | CHN |
| 32 | Goalkeeper | LIU DIANZUO | 26/06/1990 | CHN |
| 2 | Defender | LIU YIMING | 28/02/1995 | CHN |
| 3 | Defender | MEI FANG | 14/11/1989 | CHN |
| 4 | Defender | TYIAS BROWNING | 27/05/1994 | ENG |
| 5 | Defender | ZHANG LINPENG | 9/05/1989 | CHN |
| 6 | Defender | FENG XIAOTING | 22/10/1985 | CHN |
| 21 | Defender | GAO ZHUNYI | 21/08/1995 | CHN |
| 23 | Defender | PARK JISU | 13/06/1994 | KOR |
| 25 | Defender | DENG HANWEN | 8/01/1995 | CHN |
| 26 | Defender | HU RUIBAO | 17/10/1996 | CHN |
| 31 | Defender | LUO HANBOWEN | 26/08/2000 | CHN |
| 34 | Defender | FENG BOXUAN | 18/03/1997 | CHN |
| 35 | Defender | LI XUEPENG | 18/09/1988 | CHN |
| 37 | Defender | CAI MINGMIN | 30/10/2000 | CHN |
| 8 | Midfielder | BEZERRA MACIEL JUNIOR | 25/07/1988 | BRA |
| 9 | Midfielder | ANDERSON SOUZA CONCEICAO | 1/02/1994 | BRA |
| 10 | Midfielder | ZHENG ZHI | 20/08/1980 | CHN |
| 11 | Midfielder | ZHANG XIUWEI | 13/03/1996 | CHN |
| 13 | Midfielder | HE CHAO | 19/04/1995 | CHN |
| 16 | Midfielder | HUANG BOWEN | 13/07/1987 | CHN |
| 22 | Midfielder | TANG SHI | 24/01/1995 | CHN |
| 7 | Forward | WEI SHIHAO | 8/04/1995 | CHN |
| 15 | Forward | YAN DINGHAO | 6/04/1998 | CHN |
| 17 | Forward | YANG LIYU | 13/02/1997 | CHN |
| 20 | Forward | YU HANCHAO | 25/02/1987 | CHN |
| 29 | Forward | GAO LIN | 14/02/1986 | CHN |
| 30 | Forward | BUGELAHAN-SIKANDANER | 11/08/2000 | CHN |
| 33 | Forward | ZHONG YIHAO | 23/03/1996 | CHN |



CLUB PROFILE

AFC Champions League heavyweights Guangzhou Evergrande were making their eighth consecutive appearance in the continental extravaganza after losing on the away goals rule to domestic rivals Tianjin Quanjian in the 2018 edition's Round of 16.

Guangzhou – who claimed the title in 2013 and 2015 – entered this season's competition after having their record Chinese Super League-winning run broken by Shanghai SIPG, although a second-place finish would ultimately prove enough for them to guarantee yet another return to the AFC Champions League.

HEAD COACH

Fabio Cannavaro

Fabio Cannavaro, who famously captained Italy to victory at the 2006 FIFA World Cup, was in the midst of his second spell with Guangzhou Evergrande after originally leaving the club in 2015. He replaced previous incumbent Luiz Felipe Scolari at the end of 2017 to continue a coaching stint in Asia that has also seen him oversee the fortunes of Al Nassr from Saudi Arabia and Chinese domestic rivals Tianjin Quanjian.



Group F

DAEGU FC (KOR)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | CHOI YOUNGEUN | 26/09/1995 | KOR |
| 21 | Goalkeeper | JO HYEONWOO | 25/09/1991 | KOR |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | LEE JUNHEE | 10/12/1993 | KOR |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | LEE HYUNWOO | 20/03/1994 | KOR |
| 2 | Defender | KO TAEGYU | 2/08/1996 | KOR |
| 3 | Defender | KIM WOOSEOK | 4/08/1996 | KOR |
| 4 | Defender | JEONG TAEWOOK | 16/05/1997 | KOR |
| 5 | Defender | HONG JEONGUN | 29/11/1994 | KOR |
| 6 | Defender | HAN HEEHOON | 10/08/1990 | KOR |
| 13 | Defender | SONG GIUNG | 28/10/1995 | KOR |
| 16 | Defender | KANG YUN KOO | 8/02/1993 | KOR |
| 17 | Defender | KIM JUNYUB | 10/05/1988 | KOR |
| 30 | Defender | KIM JINHYUK | 3/06/1993 | KOR |
| 34 | Defender | SONG JOONHO | 16/12/1997 | KOR |
| 38 | Defender | JANG SUNG WON | 17/06/1997 | KOR |
| 66 | Defender | PARK BYUNG HYUN | 28/03/1993 | KOR |
| 8 | Midfielder | JUNG SEONHO | 25/03/1989 | KOR |
| 19 | Midfielder | JUNG YEONGUNG | 23/04/1997 | KOR |
| 20 | Midfielder | HWANG SOONMIN | 14/09/1990 | KOR |
| 26 | Midfielder | GO JAEHYEON | 5/03/1999 | KOR |
| 29 | Midfielder | RYU JAEMOON | 8/11/1993 | KOR |
| 37 | Midfielder | OH HUSEONG | 25/08/1999 | KOR |
| 36 | Midfielder | PARK HANBIN | 21/09/1997 | KOR |
| 44 | Midfielder | TSUBASA NISHI | 8/04/1990 | JPN |
| 7 | Forward | DARIO JUNIOR | 11/09/1991 | BRA |
| 9 | Forward | EDGAR BRUNO DA SILVA | 3/01/1987 | BRA |
| 11 | Forward | CESAR FERNANDO MELO | 29/11/1989 | BRA |
| 14 | Forward | KIM DAEWON | 10/02/1997 | KOR |
| 15 | Forward | LIM JAEHYUK | 6/02/1999 | KOR |
| 18 | Forward | JEONG SEUNGWON | 27/02/1997 | KOR |



CLUB PROFILE

Daegu made their debut appearance in the AFC Champions League after a 5-1 aggregate victory over Ulsan Hyundai in the final of the 2018 Korean FA Cup secured them a place in the competition's 2019 edition.

Daegu spent the 2017 and 2018 seasons in the top-flight of Korean football, having earned promotion from the second division at the end of their 2016 campaign.

HEAD COACH

Andre Santos

Brazilian coach Andre Santos joined Daegu in 2015 as an assistant coach before eventually being appointed to the head coach's position at the start of the 2018 season. In his first full season in charge, he led the club to their first-ever trophy when they won the Korean FA Cup. The one-time midfielder spent part of his playing career in Korea Republic, having been on the books of Anyang Cheetahs (now FC Seoul).



Group F

MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | MATTHEW ACTON | 3/06/1992 | AUS |
| 20 | Goalkeeper | LAWRENCE THOMAS | 9/05/1992 | AUS |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | MATTHEW SUTTON | 7/03/2000 | AUS |
| 2 | Defender | STORM ROUX | 13/01/1993 | AUS |
| 3 | Defender | COREY BROWN | 7/01/1994 | AUS |
| 14 | Defender | THOMAS DENG | 27/03/1997 | AUS |
| 17 | Defender | JAMES DONACHIE | 14/05/1993 | AUS |
| 27 | Defender | AARON ANDERSON | 25/09/2000 | AUS |
| 28 | Defender | BENJAMIN CARRIGAN | 25/07/1998 | AUS |
| 6 | Midfielder | LEIGH BROXHAM | 13/01/1988 | AUS |
| 8 | Midfielder | TERRY ANTONIS | 26/11/1993 | AUS |
| 13 | Midfielder | BIRKAN KIRDAR | 7/02/2002 | AUS |
| 15 | Midfielder | JOSE RAUL URDIALES | 2/03/1989 | ESP |
| 16 | Midfielder | JOSH HOPE | 7/01/1998 | AUS |
| 19 | Midfielder | RAHMAT AKBARI | 20/06/2000 | AUS |
| 21 | Midfielder | CARL VALERI | 14/08/1984 | AUS |
| 25 | Midfielder | ANTHONY LESIOTIS | 24/04/2000 | AUS |
| 29 | Midfielder | THIEL IRADUKUNDA | 12/07/1999 | AUS |
| 31 | Midfielder | BRANDON LAUTON | 3/03/2000 | AUS |
| 4 | Forward | KEISUKE HONDA | 13/06/1986 | JPN |
| 7 | Forward | KENJOK ATHIU | 5/08/1992 | AUS |
| 9 | Forward | KOSTA BARBAROUSES | 19/02/1990 | NZL |
| 10 | Forward | JAMES TROISI | 3/07/1988 | AUS |
| 11 | Forward | NILS OLA TOIVONEN | 3/07/1986 | SUI |
| 23 | Forward | JAI INGHAM | 14/08/1993 | AUS |
| 24 | Forward | ELVIS KAMSOBA | 27/06/1996 | AUS |
| 32 | Forward | JACK PALAZZOLO | 29/04/2000 | AUS |
| 33 | Forward | YAZID MUKTAR SAID | 1/11/1999 | AUS |
| 13 | Defender | SONG GIUNG | 28/10/1995 | AUS |
| 34 | Defender | SONG JOONHO | 16/12/1997 | AUS |



CLUB PROFILE

The 2019 edition of the AFC Champions League marked Melbourne Victory's seventh appearance in the competition, and the club's second in succession after they secured a 1-0 victory over Newcastle Jets to win the A-League Grand Final in 2018.

Prior to their latest continental outing, Melbourne had only advanced to the Knockout phase of the AFC Champions League on one previous occasion, in 2016 when they were eventually beaten 3-2 on aggregate in the Round of 16 by Korea Republic's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors.

HEAD COACH

Kevin Muscat

Kevin Muscat took over as Melbourne Victory coach in 2013 after previous incumbent Ange Postecoglou was appointed head coach of the Australia national team, with the former defender going on to establish himself as one of the leading coaches in the A-League. He guided Melbourne to the league and cup double in 2015, having previously won the A-League title with the club as a player in 2007 and 2009.



Group F

SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | TAKUTO HAYASHI | 9/08/1982 | JPN |
| 21 | Goalkeeper | RYOTARO HIRONAGA | 9/01/1990 | JPN |
| 34 | Goalkeeper | HIROTSUGU NAKABAYASHI | 28/04/1986 | JPN |
| 38 | Goalkeeper | KEISUKE OSAKO | 28/07/1999 | JPN |
| 2 | Defender | YUUKI NOGAMI | 20/04/1991 | JPN |
| 3 | Defender | KARL SALOMONSSON | 28/04/1989 | SWE |
| 4 | Defender | MIZUMOTO HIROKI | 12/09/1985 | JPN |
| 13 | Defender | AKIRA IBAYASHI | 5/09/1990 | JPN |
| 19 | Defender | SHO SASAKI | 2/10/1989 | JPN |
| 23 | Defender | HAYATO ARAKI | 7/08/1996 | JPN |
| 50 | Defender | SOYA TAKAHASHI | 29/02/1996 | JPN |
| 5 | Midfielder | KYOHEI YOSHINO | 8/11/1994 | JPN |
| 6 | Midfielder | TOSHIHIRO AOYAMA | 22/02/1986 | JPN |
| 7 | Midfielder | GAKUTO NOTSUDA | 6/06/1994 | JPN |
| 14 | Midfielder | TSUKASA MORISHIMA | 25/04/1997 | JPN |
| 15 | Midfielder | SHO INAGAKI | 25/12/1991 | JPN |
| 17 | Midfielder | TAISHI MATSUMOTO | 22/08/1998 | JPN |
| 18 | Midfielder | YOSHIFUMI KASHIWA | 28/07/1987 | JPN |
| 24 | Midfielder | HIGASHI SHUNKI | 28/07/2000 | JPN |
| 25 | Midfielder | HIROYA MATSUMOTO | 10/08/2000 | JPN |
| 27 | Midfielder | KOHEI SHIMIZU | 30/04/1989 | JPN |
| 30 | Midfielder | KOSEI SHIBASAKI | 28/08/1984 | JPN |
| 40 | Midfielder | HAYAO KAWABE | 8/09/1995 | JPN |
| 42 | Midfielder | KODAI DOHI | 13/04/2001 | JPN |
| 10 | Forward | ANDERSON PATRIC OLIVEIRA | 26/10/1987 | BRA |
| 16 | Forward | DAIKI WATARI | 25/06/1993 | JPN |
| 20 | Forward | DOUGLAS VIEIRA | 12/11/1987 | BRA |
| 22 | Forward | YUSUKE MINAGAWA | 9/10/1991 | JPN |



CLUB PROFILE

Three-time J.League champions Sanfrecce Hiroshima were making a fifth appearance in the AFC Champions League after a dramatic penalty shootout victory over Thailand's Chiangrai United in the Play-offs secured them a place in the Group Stage of the 2019 edition.

In their previous four appearances in the competition, Hiroshima had progressed to the knockout rounds just once, reaching the Round of 16 in 2014 before being beaten by eventual winners Western Sydney Wanderers from Australia.

HEAD COACH

Hiroshi Jofuku

Hiroshi Jofuku took charge of Sanfrecce Hiroshima ahead of the start of the 2018 season and duly led the club to a second-place finish in the J.League, having earlier replaced Swedish coach Jan Jonsson. Jofuku previously spent two stints with FC Tokyo and also coached Japan's Under 17 national team, leading them to the finals of the 2007 FIFA Under-17 World Cup in Korea Republic.



Group G

URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | NISHIKAWA SHUSAKU | 18/06/1986 | JPN |
| 23 | Goalkeeper | NAO IWADATE | 17/08/1988 | JPN |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | FUKUSHIMA HARUKI | 8/04/1993 | JPN |
| 32 | Goalkeeper | ISHII RYO | 11/07/2000 | JPN |
| 2 | Defender | MAURICIO ANTONIO | 6/02/1992 | BRA |
| 3 | Defender | TOMOYA UGAJIN | 23/03/1988 | JPN |
| 4 | Defender | DAISUKE SUZUKI | 29/01/1990 | JPN |
| 5 | Defender | TOMOAKI MAKINO | 11/05/1987 | JPN |
| 6 | Defender | RYOSUKE YAMANAKA | 20/04/1993 | JPN |
| 17 | Defender | RIKIYA MOTEGI | 27/09/1996 | JPN |
| 26 | Defender | TAKUYA OGIWARA | 23/11/1999 | JPN |
| 27 | Defender | DAIKI HASHIOKA | 17/05/1999 | JPN |
| 28 | Defender | KATSUYA IWATAKE | 4/06/1996 | JPN |
| 31 | Defender | TAKUYA IWANAMI | 18/06/1994 | JPN |
| 34 | Defender | KEI OSHIRO | 16/09/2000 | JPN |
| 46 | Defender | RYOTA MORIWAKI | 6/04/1986 | JPN |
| 7 | Midfielder | KAZUKI NAGASAWA | 16/12/1991 | JPN |
| 8 | Midfielder | EWERTON DA SILVA PEREIRA | 1/12/1992 | BRA |
| 10 | Midfielder | YOSUKE KASHIWAGI | 15/12/1987 | JPN |
| 16 | Midfielder | AOKI TAKUYA | 16/09/1989 | JPN |
| 18 | Midfielder | NAOKI YAMADA | 4/07/1990 | JPN |
| 22 | Midfielder | ABE YUKI | 6/09/1981 | JPN |
| 24 | Midfielder | KOYA YURUKI | 3/07/1995 | JPN |
| 29 | Midfielder | KAI SHIBATO | 24/11/1995 | JPN |
| 33 | Midfielder | NOBUKI IKETAKA | 5/04/2000 | JPN |
| 9 | Forward | YUKI MUTO | 7/11/1988 | JPN |
| 12 | Forward | FABRICIO DOS SANTOS MESSIAS | 28/03/1990 | BRA |
| 14 | Forward | KENYU SUGIMOTO | 18/11/1992 | JPN |
| 19 | Forward | ANDREW NABBOUT | 17/12/1992 | AUS |
| 30 | Forward | SHINZOH KOHROGI | 31/07/1986 | JPN |



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time champions Urawa Red Diamonds returned to the AFC Champions League's 2019 edition after a narrow yet crucial 1-0 victory over Vegalta Sendai in the final of the 2018 Emperor's Cup sealed a seventh appearance in the competition's Group Stage.

Having missed out 12 months earlier due to a disappointing performance in the 2017 J.League season, Urawa were attempting to join the select band of clubs to have claimed three continental crowns following their previous successes in 2007 and 2017.

HEAD COACH

Tsuyoshi Otsuki

Tsuyoshi Otsuki was promoted to the role of head coach in May 2019 following the removal of former helmsman Oswaldo Oliveira after a poor run of form in the J.League that saw Urawa slip down the standings. Otsuki had previously served as caretaker coach when Takafumi Hori - who guided Urawa to the 2017 AFC Champions League title - was fired by the club, before reverting to his role as assistant.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Oswaldo Oliveira (left the club after the Group Stage)

Three-time J.League Manager of the Year Oswaldo Oliveira was no stranger to the AFC Champions League, having regularly led former club Kashima Antlers into the continental championship. Appointed to lead Urawa Red Diamonds midway through the 2018 season, he subsequently took the club to victory in the Emperor's Cup final, success which secured Urawa's return to the competition after 2017's title-winning run.



Group G

BEIJING FC (CHN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | HOU SEN | 30/06/1989 | CHN |
| 14 | Goalkeeper | ZOU DEHAI | 27/02/1993 | CHN |
| 22 | Goalkeeper | YANG ZHI | 15/01/1983 | CHN |
| 25 | Goalkeeper | GUO QUANBO | 31/08/1997 | CHN |
| 2 | Defender | KIM MINJAE | 15/11/1996 | KOR |
| 3 | Defender | YU YANG | 6/08/1989 | CHN |
| 4 | Defender | LI LEI | 30/05/1992 | CHN |
| 15 | Defender | LIU HUAN | 14/02/1989 | CHN |
| 16 | Defender | ZHENG YIMING | 12/01/1997 | CHN |
| 18 | Defender | JIN TAIYAN | 21/08/1989 | CHN |
| 24 | Defender | ZHANGYU | 7/05/1994 | CHN |
| 26 | Defender | LYU PENG | 28/10/1989 | CHN |
| 28 | Defender | JIANG TAO | 28/06/1989 | CHN |
| 30 | Defender | LEI TENGLONG | 17/01/1991 | CHN |
| 35 | Defender | XUE MENGTAO | 4/05/1997 | CHN |
| 38 | Defender | WANG GANG | 17/02/1989 | CHN |
| 5 | Midfielder | RENATO AUGUSTO | 8/02/1988 | BRA |
| 6 | Midfielder | CHI ZHONGGUO | 26/10/1989 | CHN |
| 8 | Midfielder | PIAO CHENG | 21/08/1989 | CHN |
| 10 | Midfielder | ZHANG XIZHE | 23/01/1991 | CHN |
| 11 | Midfielder | HU YANQIANG | 20/03/1993 | CHN |
| 21 | Midfielder | JONATAN VIERA RAMOS | 21/10/1989 | ESP |
| 27 | Midfielder | LIAN DONGWEI | 21/07/2000 | CHN |
| 29 | Midfielder | BA DUN | 16/09/1995 | CHN |
| 32 | Midfielder | LIU GUOBO | 27/11/1999 | CHN |
| 36 | Midfielder | WANG XIAOLE | 8/01/1997 | CHN |
| 9 | Forward | ZHANG YUNING | 5/01/1997 | CHN |
| 17 | Forward | CEDRIC BAKAMBU | 11/04/1991 | FRA |
| 19 | Forward | YU DABAO | 18/04/1988 | CHN |
| 20 | Forward | WANG ZIMING | 5/08/1996 | CHN |



CLUB PROFILE

Beijing's victory over Shandong Luneng in the final of the 2018 Chinese FA Cup guaranteed the side from China's capital a place in the group stage of the AFC Champions League for the first time since 2015.

Prior to the latest continental outing, Beijing had appeared in Asia's premier club competition on eight previous occasions, reaching the knockout rounds three times. Those particular campaigns – in 2010, 2013 and 2015 – all ended, however, in the Round of 16.

HEAD COACH

Roger Schmidt

Roger Schmidt took over at Beijing midway through the 2017 season, and, by the end of his first full campaign he had famously delivered the club's first trophy in nine years when he steered them to victory over Shandong Luneng in the Chinese FA Cup. A midfielder in his playing days, Schmidt had previously overseen the fortunes of Austria's Red Bull Salzburg and Bayer Leverkusen in his native Germany.



Group G

JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 21 | Goalkeeper | HWANG BYEONGGEUN | 14/06/1994 | KOR |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | SONG BUMKEUN | 15/10/1997 | KOR |
| 88 | Goalkeeper | HONG JUNGNAM | 21/05/1988 | KOR |
| 2 | Defender | LEE YONG | 24/12/1986 | KOR |
| 6 | Defender | CHOI BOKYUNG | 12/04/1988 | KOR |
| 13 | Defender | LEE JU YONG | 26/09/1992 | KOR |
| 19 | Defender | PARK WONJAE | 28/05/1984 | KOR |
| 22 | Defender | KIM JINSU | 13/06/1992 | KOR |
| 25 | Defender | CHOI CHUL SOON | 8/02/1987 | KOR |
| 26 | Defender | HONG JEONGHO | 12/08/1989 | KOR |
| 92 | Defender | KIM MINHYEOK | 27/02/1992 | KOR |
| 4 | Midfielder | SHIN HYUNGMIN | 18/07/1986 | KOR |
| 5 | Midfielder | LIM SUNYOUNG | 21/03/1988 | KOR |
| 7 | Midfielder | HAN KYO WON | 15/06/1990 | KOR |
| 8 | Midfielder | JUNG HYUK | 21/05/1986 | KOR |
| 10 | Midfielder | RICARDO LOPES | 28/10/1990 | BRA |
| 11 | Midfielder | TIAGO SALES DE LIMA | 12/01/1993 | BRA |
| 14 | Midfielder | LEE SEUNGGI | 2/06/1988 | KOR |
| 17 | Midfielder | BERNIE IBINI-ISEI | 12/09/1992 | AUS |
| 23 | Defender | YUN JIHYEOK | 7/02/1998 | KOR |
| 27 | Midfielder | MOON SEON MIN | 9/06/1992 | KOR |
| 28 | Midfielder | SON JUNHO | 12/05/1992 | KOR |
| 34 | Midfielder | JANG YUNHO | 25/08/1996 | KOR |
| 35 | Midfielder | MYUNG JUN JAE | 2/07/1994 | KOR |
| 42 | Midfielder | HAN SEUNGGYU | 28/09/1996 | KOR |
| 9 | Forward | KIM SHINWOOK | 14/04/1988 | KOR |
| 16 | Forward | CHOI YOUNG JUN | 15/12/1991 | KOR |
| 20 | Forward | LEE DONG GOOK | 29/04/1979 | KOR |
| 32 | Forward | CARLOS ADRIANO | 28/09/1987 | BRA |
| 81 | Forward | LEE KEUN HO | 21/05/1996 | KOR |



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time AFC Champions League winners Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC returned to the competition having sealed their sixth K League success in 2018 in another dominant season-long display to complete their fourth title win in five seasons.

Jeonbuk claimed their first continental win in 2006 and secured a second against Al Ain FC of the United Arab Emirates in 2016. They returned to the competition in 2018 after missing the 2017 edition, but were eliminated in the Quarter-finals by Suwon Samsung Bluewings.

HEAD COACH

Jose Morais

Portuguese tactician Jose Morais was hired to fill the sizeable void left following the departure of Choi Kang-hee when the hugely successful former Korea Republic boss moved to work in the Chinese Super League at the end of the 2018 season. Morais is well travelled, and worked under Jose Mourinho at both Inter Milan and Chelsea before striking out on his own in Turkey, Greece, England and Ukraine.



Group G

BURIRAM UNITED (THA)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | SIWARAK TEDSUNGNOEN | 20/04/1984 | THA |
| 29 | Goalkeeper | YOTSAPON TEANGDAR | 6/04/1992 | THA |
| 69 | Goalkeeper | RATCHAPHON NAMTHONG | 28/04/2001 | THA |
| 3 | Defender | PANSA HEMVIBOON | 8/07/1990 | THA |
| 5 | Defender | ANDRES JOSE | 15/03/1987 | ESP |
| 11 | Defender | KORRAKOT WIRIYA-UDOMSIRI | 19/01/1988 | THA |
| 14 | Defender | CHITIPAT THANKLANG | 11/08/1991 | THA |
| 15 | Defender | NARUBADIN WEERAWATNODOM | 12/07/1994 | THA |
| 18 | Defender | APIWAT NGUALAMHIN | 1/06/1986 | THA |
| 50 | Defender | KRITSANA DAOKRAJAI | 13/03/2001 | THA |
| 56 | Defender | POSSAWEE MUANMART | 8/10/1998 | THA |
| 6 | Midfielder | SASALAK HAIPRAKHON | 8/01/1996 | THA |
| 8 | Midfielder | SUCHAO NUTNUM | 17/05/1983 | THA |
| 10 | Midfielder | JAKKAPHAN KAEWPROM | 24/05/1988 | THA |
| 19 | Midfielder | SUPACHOK SARACHAT | 22/05/1998 | THA |
| 21 | Midfielder | LUONG XUAN TRUONG | 28/04/1995 | VIE |
| 26 | Midfielder | RATTHANAKORN MAIKAMI | 7/01/1998 | THA |
| 31 | Midfielder | ANUWAT NOICHUENPHAN | 21/09/1988 | THA |
| 62 | Midfielder | AIRFAN DOLOH | 26/01/2001 | THA |
| 64 | Midfielder | THIRAPAK PRUEANGNA | 15/08/2001 | THA |
| 88 | Midfielder | WATCHARAKORN MANOWORN | 17/06/1996 | THA |
| 9 | Forward | SUPACHAI CHAIDED | 1/12/1998 | THA |
| 25 | Forward | MODIBO MAIGA | 3/09/1987 | MLI |
| 54 | Forward | SUPHANAT MUEANTA | 2/08/2002 | THA |
| 55 | Forward | PHONGCHANA KONGKIRIT | 10/08/1998 | THA |
| 77 | Forward | PEDRO BISPO JUNIOR | 29/01/1987 | BRA |



CLUB PROFILE

Buriram United advanced to the Knockout rounds of the 2018 AFC Champions League having missed out on the 2017 edition, with the Thai champions qualifying ahead of Japan's Cerezo Osaka and Jeju United from Korea Republic before slipping to two-time champions Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors in a 4-3 aggregate loss in the Round of 16.

Another domestic title win – their fifth in six seasons – saw them return once more as they attempted to surpass their best performance in the tournament back in 2013, when they reached the Quarter-finals.

HEAD COACH

Bozidar Bandovic

Bozidar Bandovic was hoping to lead the Thai champions into the knockout rounds of the AFC Champions League once again after steering them through to the competition's Round of 16 in 2018. The former defender, who played much of his career in Greece, took over at the club in June 2017 having previously worked as the club's technical director. He subsequently led Buriram to the title in 2017 and 2018.



Group H

SYDNEY FC (AUS)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | ANDREW REDMAYNE | 13/01/1989 | AUS |
| 20 | Goalkeeper | ALEKSANDER CISAK | 19/05/1989 | AUS |
| 30 | Goalkeeper | THOMAS HEWARD-BELLE | 11/03/1997 | AUS |
| 2 | Defender | AARON CALVER | 12/01/1996 | AUS |
| 3 | Defender | BENJAMIN WARLAND | 4/09/1996 | AUS |
| 4 | Defender | ALEX WILKINSON | 13/08/1984 | AUS |
| 7 | Defender | MICHAEL ZULLO | 11/09/1988 | AUS |
| 18 | Defender | JACOB TRATT | 14/09/1994 | AUS |
| 23 | Defender | RHYAN GRANT | 26/02/1991 | AUS |
| 25 | Defender | JOEL KING | 30/10/2000 | AUS |
| 33 | Defender | LIAM JOHN MCGING | 11/12/1998 | AUS |
| 34 | Defender | PATRICK SCIBILIO | 22/02/2000 | AUS |
| 6 | Midfielder | JOSHUA BRILLANTE | 25/03/1993 | AUS |
| 8 | Midfielder | PAULO RETRE | 4/03/1993 | AUS |
| 10 | Midfielder | MILOS NINKOVIC | 25/12/1984 | SRB |
| 11 | Midfielder | DANIEL DESILVA | 6/03/1997 | AUS |
| 13 | Midfielder | BRANDON O'NEILL | 12/04/1994 | AUS |
| 17 | Midfielder | ANTHONY CACERES | 29/09/1992 | AUS |
| 22 | Midfielder | SIEM STEFAN DE JONG | 28/01/1989 | NED |
| 24 | Midfielder | CAMERON DEVLIN | 7/06/1998 | AUS |
| 27 | Midfielder | JERRY SKOTADIS | 7/03/2000 | AUS |
| 28 | Midfielder | MARCO TILIO | 23/08/2001 | AUS |
| 9 | Forward | GLENVILLE ADAM LE FONDRE | 2/12/1986 | ENG |
| 14 | Forward | ALEX BROSQUE | 12/10/1983 | AUS |
| 16 | Forward | REZA GHOOCHANNEJHAD | 20/09/1987 | IRN |
| 21 | Forward | MITCHELL AUSTIN | 3/04/1991 | AUS |
| 31 | Forward | LUKE IVANOVIC | 6/06/2000 | AUS |
| 32 | Forward | JORDAN SWIBEL | 13/04/1999 | AUS |
| 37 | Forward | HAMISH LAMBERTON | 4/11/1999 | AUS |



CLUB PROFILE

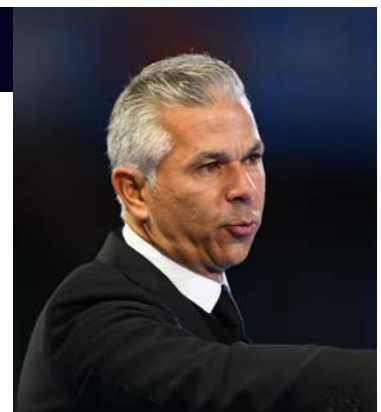
Sydney's position of pre-eminence in the game in Australia saw them finish in first place in the standings at the end of the A-League's regular 2017-18 season to once again guarantee themselves a place in the AFC Champions League.

Eliminated after the Group Stage in 2018, Sydney were looking to advance to the knockout phase of the competition for only the second time in the club's history, having previously appeared in the 2016 edition's Round of 16.

HEAD COACH

Steve Corica

Steve Corica stepped up to replace Graham Arnold at the helm of Sydney FC after the former head coach departed to take control of the Australia national team. Corica had previously worked as Arnold's assistant and was a key figure in the club's title wins in 2017 and 2018. The former midfielder previously played in England and Japan (for Sanfrecce Hiroshima) before finishing his career with Sydney FC.



Group H

KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | JUNG SUNGRYONG | 4/01/1985 | KOR |
| 21 | Goalkeeper | SHOTA ARAI | 1/11/1988 | JPN |
| 23 | Goalkeeper | EISUKE FUJISHIMA | 31/01/1992 | JPN |
| 24 | Goalkeeper | SHUNSUKE ANDO | 10/08/1990 | JPN |
| 2 | Defender | KYOHEI NOBORIZATO | 13/11/1990 | JPN |
| 3 | Defender | TATSUKI NARA | 19/09/1993 | JPN |
| 5 | Defender | SHOGO TANIGUCHI | 15/07/1991 | JPN |
| 7 | Defender | SHINTARO KURUMAYA | 5/04/1992 | JPN |
| 17 | Defender | KAZUAKI MAWATARI | 23/06/1991 | JPN |
| 26 | Defender | MAGNO JOSE DA SILVA | 6/01/1992 | BRA |
| 29 | Defender | MICHAEL FITZGERALD | 17/09/1998 | JPN |
| 6 | Midfielder | HIDEMASA MORITA | 10/05/1995 | JPN |
| 8 | Midfielder | HIROYUKI ABE | 5/07/1989 | JPN |
| 10 | Midfielder | RYOTA OHSHIMA | 23/01/1993 | JPN |
| 14 | Midfielder | KENGO NAKAMURA | 31/10/1980 | JPN |
| 16 | Midfielder | TATSUYA HASEGAWA | 7/03/1994 | JPN |
| 19 | Midfielder | MANABU SAITO | 4/04/1990 | JPN |
| 22 | Midfielder | HOKUTO SHIMODA | 7/11/1991 | JPN |
| 25 | Midfielder | AO TANAKA | 10/09/1998 | JPN |
| 27 | Midfielder | YUTO SUZUKI | 7/12/1993 | JPN |
| 28 | Midfielder | YASUTO WAKIZAKA | 11/06/1995 | JPN |
| 34 | Midfielder | KAZUYA YAMAMURA | 2/12/1989 | JPN |
| 41 | Midfielder | AKIHIRO IENAGA | 13/06/1986 | JPN |
| 44 | Midfielder | CAIO CESAR SILVEIRA | 27/07/1995 | BRA |
| 9 | Forward | LEANDRO DAMIAO SANTOS | 22/07/1989 | BRA |
| 11 | Forward | YU KOBAYASHI | 23/09/1987 | JPN |
| 20 | Forward | KEI CHINEN | 17/03/1995 | JPN |
| 30 | Forward | TAISEI MIYASHIRO | 26/05/2000 | JPN |
| 31 | Forward | KOHKI HARADA | 6/08/2000 | JPN |



CLUB PROFILE

Kawasaki Frontale successfully defended their J.League title in 2018 to qualify once again for the AFC Champions League, having exited at the end of the competition's Group Stage a year earlier.

In 2017, Kawasaki equalled their best-ever performance when they advanced to the Quarter-finals - just as they had done in 2007 and 2009 - only to lose 5-4 on aggregate to eventual champions and fellow J.League side Urawa Red Diamonds.

HEAD COACH

Toru Oniki

Toru Oniki led Kawasaki Frontale to their first-ever J.League title in 2017, ending a run of near-misses for the club based on the banks of the Tama River, and 12 months later he famously repeated the feat as Frontale claimed back-to-back championships. The successes represented a remarkable start to the coaching career of Oniki, who was a highly respected midfielder during his playing days.



Group H

SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | YAN JUNLING | 28/01/1991 | CHN |
| 22 | Goalkeeper | SUN LE | 17/09/1989 | CHN |
| 34 | Goalkeeper | CHEN WEI | 14/02/1998 | CHN |
| 35 | Goalkeeper | SHI XIAODONG | 26/02/1997 | CHN |
| 2 | Defender | ZHANG WEI | 28/03/1993 | CHN |
| 4 | Defender | WANG SHENCHAO | 8/02/1989 | CHN |
| 5 | Defender | SHI KE | 8/01/1993 | CHN |
| 13 | Defender | WEI ZHEN | 12/02/1997 | CHN |
| 21 | Defender | YU HAI | 4/06/1987 | CHN |
| 23 | Defender | FU HUAN | 12/07/1993 | CHN |
| 28 | Defender | HE GUAN | 25/01/1993 | CHN |
| 29 | Defender | NIE MENG | 7/02/1998 | CHN |
| 36 | Defender | YU HAO | 5/09/1997 | CHN |
| 40 | Defender | LI SHENYUAN | 2/10/1997 | CHN |
| 6 | Midfielder | CAI HUIKANG | 10/10/1989 | CHN |
| 8 | Midfielder | OSCAR EMBOABA JUNIOR | 9/09/1991 | BRA |
| 15 | Midfielder | LIN CHUANGYI | 28/01/1993 | CHN |
| 17 | Midfielder | ZHANG HUACHEN | 16/03/1998 | CHN |
| 18 | Midfielder | ZHANG YI | 17/08/1993 | CHN |
| 20 | Midfielder | YANG SHIYUAN | 11/03/1994 | CHN |
| 25 | Midfielder | ODIL AKHMEDOV | 25/11/1987 | UZB |
| 33 | Midfielder | HUANG ZHENFEI | 10/02/1999 | CHN |
| 9 | Forward | AI KESEN | 13/07/1989 | CHN |
| 10 | Forward | GIVANILDO DE SOUSA | 25/07/1986 | BRA |
| 11 | Forward | LYU WENJUN | 11/03/1989 | CHN |
| 12 | Forward | LI HAOWEN | 29/11/1993 | CHN |
| 14 | Forward | LI SHENGLONG | 30/07/1992 | CHN |
| 19 | Forward | HU JINGHANG | 23/03/1997 | CHN |
| 24 | Forward | LEI WENJIE | 10/01/1997 | CHN |
| 37 | Forward | CHEN BINBIN | 10/06/1998 | CHN |



CLUB PROFILE

Shanghai SIPG booked their place in the 2019 Group Stage by claiming the club's first-ever Chinese Super League title after they finished five points ahead of seven-time champions Guangzhou Evergrande to secure the 2018 championship.

Having advanced to the knockout rounds on each of their three previous appearances in the AFC Champions League, SIPG were looking to surpass their performance in the 2018 edition when they qualified for the Round of 16 before being beaten by eventual winners Kashima Antlers.

HEAD COACH

Vitor Pereira

Vitor Pereira took over as head coach of Shanghai SIPG following the resignation of André Villas-Boas at the end of 2017 and steered the club to their first-ever trophy by the end of last season as SIPG broke Guangzhou Evergrande's dominance to win the Chinese Super League title. Pereira previously worked at Porto in his native Portugal - where he also succeeded Villas-Boas - and won the league in 2012 and 2013.



Group H

ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)



| NO. | POSITION | NAME | DATE OF BIRTH | NATIONALITY |
|-----|------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Goalkeeper | JO SUHUK | 18/03/1987 | KOR |
| 21 | Goalkeeper | OH SEUNGHOON | 30/06/1988 | KOR |
| 31 | Goalkeeper | MOON JUNGIN | 16/03/1998 | KOR |
| 2 | Defender | LEE JI HUN | 24/03/1994 | KOR |
| 4 | Defender | KANG MINSOO | 14/02/1986 | KOR |
| 13 | Defender | LEE MYUNG JAE | 4/11/1993 | KOR |
| 20 | Defender | YUN YOUNGSUN | 4/10/1988 | KOR |
| 22 | Defender | JEONG DONGHO | 7/03/1990 | KOR |
| 27 | Defender | KIM CHANGSOO | 12/09/1985 | KOR |
| 35 | Defender | KIM TAEHYEON | 17/09/2000 | KOR |
| 38 | Defender | DAVY BULTHUIS | 28/06/1990 | NED |
| 3 | Midfielder | KIM MINDUK | 8/07/1996 | KOR |
| 6 | Midfielder | JEONG JAE YONG | 14/09/1990 | KOR |
| 7 | Midfielder | KIM INSUNG | 9/09/1989 | KOR |
| 10 | Midfielder | SIN JIN HO | 7/09/1988 | KOR |
| 14 | Midfielder | KIM BOKYUNG | 6/10/1989 | KOR |
| 15 | Midfielder | LEE DONGGYEONG | 20/09/1997 | KOR |
| 17 | Midfielder | KIM SUNG JOON | 8/04/1988 | KOR |
| 19 | Midfielder | PARK YONGWOO | 10/09/1993 | KOR |
| 23 | Midfielder | KIM TAE HWAN | 24/07/1989 | KOR |
| 24 | Midfielder | PARK HABEAN | 23/04/1997 | KOR |
| 33 | Midfielder | PARK JOO HO | 16/01/1987 | KOR |
| 42 | Midfielder | MIKKEL MORGENSTAR DISKERUD | 2/10/1990 | NOR |
| 8 | Forward | HWANG ILSU | 8/08/1987 | KOR |
| 9 | Forward | GLEIDIONOR FIGUEIREDO PINTO | 30/12/1986 | BRA |
| 11 | Forward | LEE KEUNHO | 11/04/1985 | KOR |
| 18 | Forward | JOO MINKYU | 13/03/1990 | KOR |
| 29 | Forward | KIM SUAN | 10/06/1993 | KOR |
| 45 | Forward | LEE DONGWON | 5/03/1996 | KOR |
| 99 | Forward | PARK JEONGIN | 7/10/2000 | KOR |



CLUB PROFILE

Ulsan Hyundai reached the knockout phase of the AFC Champions League for only the third time in the club's history in the 2018 edition of the continental championship, and they returned once again for a crack at the competition they won in 2012.

Ulsan secured their place in the Group Stage of the competition thanks to a comprehensive 5-1 victory over Malaysian side Perak in the play-off rounds.

HEAD COACH

Kim Do-hoon

A prolific goal-scorer during his playing days, Kim Do-hoon steered Ulsan Hyundai into the AFC Champions League at the end of his first season in charge of the club and repeated the feat 12 months later. Kim represented Korea Republic at the 1998 FIFA World Cup finals in France and played for Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors and Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma before moving into coaching.







TOURNAMENT RESULTS



TOURNAMENT RESULTS

PRELIMINARY ROUND

| Date | Zone | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 05 Feb, 2019 | EAST | CERES NEGROS FC (PHI) | 1-2 (1-1) | YANGON UNITED FC (MYA) |
| 05 Feb, 2019 | EAST | HOME UNITED FC (SIN) | 1-3 (1-1) | PERSIJA JAKARTA (IDN) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | EAST | BANGKOK UNITED (THA) | 0-1 (0-0) | HANOI FC (VIE) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | EAST | CHIANGRAI UNITED (THA) | 3-1 (2-1) | YANGON UNITED FC (MYA) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | EAST | NEWCASTLE JETS (AUS) | 3-1 a.e.t. (1-1,0-0) | PERSIJA JAKARTA (IDN) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | EAST | PERAK (MAS) | 1-1 a.e.t. (1-1,1-0) 6-5 PSO | KITCHEE SC (HKG) |
| 05 Feb, 2019 | WEST | AL WEHDAT (JOR) | 2-3 (2-2) | KUWAIT SC (KUW) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | WEST | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) | 2-1 (0-0) | AIR FORCE CLUB (IRQ) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | WEST | AGMK FC (UZB) | 4-2 (1-1) | FC ISTIKLOL (TJK) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | WEST | SAIPA (IRN) | 4-0 (2-0) | MINERVA PUNJAB (IND) |
| 12 Feb, 2019 | WEST | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 1-0 a.e.t. (0-0,0-0) | KUWAIT SC (KUW) |



PLAY-OFFS (EAST)

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 19 Feb, 2019 | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 4-1 (0-1) | HANOI FC (VIE) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | SANFRECCIE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 0-0 a.e.t. (0-0,0-0) 4-3 PSO | CHIANGRAI UNITED (THA) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 4-1 (2-1) | NEWCASTLE JETS (AUS) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 5-1 (1-0) | PERAK (MAS) |

PLAYOFFS (WEST)

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 19 Feb, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 4-0 (0-0) | AGMK FC (UZB) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) | 3-1 (1-1) | SAIPA (IRN) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | AL GHARAF (QAT) | 2-3 (2-0) | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) |
| 19 Feb, 2019 | AL NASR (UAE) | 1-2 (0-1) | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) |

GROUP STAGE

GROUP A

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 12 |
| AL NASSR (KSA) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 10 |
| AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 14 | 9 | 5 | 8 |
| AL WASL FC (UAE) | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 18 | -14 | 3 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| 04 Mar, 2019 | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 0-0 (0-0) | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) |
| 04 Mar, 2019 | AL WASL FC (UAE) | 1-0 (0-0) | AL NASSR (KSA) |
| 11 Mar, 2019 | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) | 5-0 (2-0) | AL WASL FC (UAE) |
| 11 Mar, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 2-3 (1-2) | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) |
| 08 Apr, 2019 | AL WASL FC (UAE) | 1-3 (1-2) | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) |
| 08 Apr, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 4-1 (2-1) | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) | 1-2 (1-0) | AL NASSR (KSA) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 2-0 (2-0) | AL WASL FC (UAE) |
| 07 May, 2019 | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) | 2-2 (1-1) | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) |
| 07 May, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 3-1 (2-0) | AL WASL FC (UAE) |
| 21 May, 2019 | AL WASL FC (UAE) | 1-5 (1-3) | AL ZAWRAA CLUB (IRQ) |
| 29 May, 2019 | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 0-0 (0-0) | AL NASSR (KSA) |

* The standing table is base on points, goal-difference and number of goals of the teams tied

GROUP B

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 9 | 5 | 13 |
| AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 9 | 4 | 11 |
| PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 11 | -1 | 7 |
| AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 9 | 17 | -8 | 3 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 04 Mar, 2019 | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) | 2-0 (1-0) | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) |
| 04 Mar, 2019 | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 5-1 (2-1) | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) |
| 11 Mar, 2019 | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) | 2-1 (1-1) | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) |
| 11 Mar, 2019 | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) | 4-1 (1-0) | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) | 1-2 (0-0) | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 3-2 (0-0) | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) |
| 22 Apr, 2019 | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) | 1-1 (1-1) | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) |
| 22 Apr, 2019 | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) | 4-3 (1-3) | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) |
| 07 May, 2019 | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) | 0-2 (0-0) | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) |
| 07 May, 2019 | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) | 3-1 (0-0) | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) |
| 21 May, 2019 | PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB) | 3-2 (1-2) | AL RAYYAN SC (QAT) |
| 21 May, 2019 | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 1-1 (0-0) | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) |

GROUP C

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 13 |
| AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 9 |
| ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 8 | -2 | 8 |
| AL AIN FC (UAE) | 6 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 10 | -6 | 2 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 05 Mar, 2019 | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) | 3-0 (0-0) | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) |
| 05 Mar, 2019 | AL AIN FC (UAE) | 0-1 (0-0) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 3-1 (1-0) | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) | 1-1 (0-0) | AL AIN FC (UAE) |
| 08 Apr, 2019 | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) | 2-2 (2-1) | AL AIN FC (UAE) |
| 08 Apr, 2019 | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) | 2-1 (2-0) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 1-0 (0-0) | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | AL AIN FC (UAE) | 0-2 (0-1) | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) |
| 06 May, 2019 | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) | 1-1 (0-0) | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) |
| 06 May, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 2-0 (1-0) | AL AIN FC (UAE) |
| 20 May, 2019 | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) | 2-2 (1-1) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 20 May, 2019 | AL AIN FC (UAE) | 1-2 (1-2) | ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN) |

GROUP D

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----|
| AL SADD SC (QAT) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 8 | -1 | 10 |
| AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 9 |
| PAKHTAKOR (UZB) | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 8 |
| PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 7 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| 05 Mar, 2019 | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) | 1-1 (1-1) | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) |
| 05 Mar, 2019 | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) | 2-0 (1-0) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) | 1-0 (0-0) | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 1-0 (0-0) | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) | 2-2 (2-2) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) | 2-0 (1-0) | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) |
| 22 Apr, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 2-1 (1-1) | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) |
| 22 Apr, 2019 | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) | 2-1 (1-0) | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) |
| 06 May, 2019 | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) | 1-0 (0-0) | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) |
| 06 May, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 2-1 (2-0) | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) |
| 20 May, 2019 | PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN) | 2-0 (1-0) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 20 May, 2019 | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) | 2-1 (0-0) | PAKHTAKOR (UZB) |

GROUP E

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|----|-----|
| SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 11 |
| KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 10 |
| GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 8 |
| JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) | 6 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 8 | -4 | 4 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 05 Mar, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 2-1 (1-0) | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) |
| 05 Mar, 2019 | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) | 2-2 (0-1) | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 2-2 (2-2) | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) | 1-1 (0-0) | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) | 2-3 (0-0) | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 2-1 (2-0) | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) |
| 24 Apr, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 0-1 (0-0) | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) |
| 24 Apr, 2019 | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) | 0-1 (0-1) | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) |
| 08 May, 2019 | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 2-1 (0-1) | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) |
| 08 May, 2019 | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) | 1-0 (0-0) | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) |
| 22 May, 2019 | GYEONGNAM FC (KOR) | 2-0 (0-0) | JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS) |
| 22 May, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 2-1 (0-1) | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) |

GROUP F

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 6 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 15 |
| GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 10 |
| DAEGU FC (KOR) | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 9 |
| MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) | 6 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 17 | -13 | 1 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 05 Mar, 2019 | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) | 1-3 (1-1) | DAEGU FC (KOR) |
| 05 Mar, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 2-0 (2-0) | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 2-1 (1-0) | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) |
| 12 Mar, 2019 | DAEGU FC (KOR) | 3-1 (2-0) | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |
| 10 Apr, 2019 | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 2-0 (2-0) | DAEGU FC (KOR) |
| 10 Apr, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 4-0 (3-0) | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) | 1-1 (1-1) | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | DAEGU FC (KOR) | 0-1 (0-1) | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) |
| 08 May, 2019 | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 1-0 (1-0) | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |
| 08 May, 2019 | DAEGU FC (KOR) | 4-0 (1-0) | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) |
| 22 May, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 1-0 (0-0) | DAEGU FC (KOR) |
| 22 May, 2019 | MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS) | 1-3 (0-1) | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) |

GROUP G

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 13 |
| URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 6 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 5 | 10 |
| BEIJING FC (CHN) | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 8 | -2 | 7 |
| BURIRAM UNITED (THA) | 6 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 10 | -7 | 4 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 06 Mar, 2019 | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) | 3-1 (1-1) | BEIJING FC (CHN) |
| 06 Mar, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 3-0 (0-0) | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) |
| 13 Mar, 2019 | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) | 1-0 (0-0) | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) |
| 13 Mar, 2019 | BEIJING FC (CHN) | 0-0 (0-0) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) | 1-3 (0-2) | BEIJING FC (CHN) |
| 09 Apr, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 0-1 (0-0) | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) |
| 24 Apr, 2019 | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) | 2-1 (1-0) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |
| 24 Apr, 2019 | BEIJING FC (CHN) | 2-0 (0-0) | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) |
| 07 May, 2019 | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) | 1-2 (1-2) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |
| 07 May, 2019 | BEIJING FC (CHN) | 0-1 (0-1) | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) |
| 21 May, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 3-0 (2-0) | BEIJING FC (CHN) |
| 21 May, 2019 | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) | 0-0 (0-0) | BURIRAM UNITED (THA) |

GROUP H

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|-----|
| ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 | -2 | 11 |
| SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 13 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| SYDNEY FC (AUS) | 6 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 11 | -6 | 3 |

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| 06 Mar, 2019 | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 1-0 (0-0) | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) |
| 06 Mar, 2019 | SYDNEY FC (AUS) | 0-0 (0-0) | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) |
| 13 Mar, 2019 | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 1-0 (0-0) | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) |
| 13 Mar, 2019 | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) | 1-0 (0-0) | SYDNEY FC (AUS) |
| 10 Apr, 2019 | SYDNEY FC (AUS) | 3-3 (2-2) | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) |
| 10 Apr, 2019 | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 1-0 (0-0) | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) | 2-2 (1-2) | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) |
| 23 Apr, 2019 | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 2-2 (0-1) | SYDNEY FC (AUS) |
| 07 May, 2019 | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 1-0 (0-0) | SYDNEY FC (AUS) |
| 07 May, 2019 | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) | 2-2 (1-1) | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) |
| 21 May, 2019 | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 5-0 (2-0) | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) |
| 21 May, 2019 | SYDNEY FC (AUS) | 0-4 (0-3) | KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN) |

KNOCK-OUT STAGE

ROUND OF 16

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 5 Aug, 2019 | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 2-1 (1-1) | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) |
| 5 Aug, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 1-1 (1-0) | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) |
| 6 Aug, 2019 | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) | 1-1 (1-1) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 6 Aug, 2019 | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) | 2-4 (2-1) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 12 Aug, 2019 | AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE) | 2-3 (1-2) | AL NASSR (KSA) |
| 12 Aug, 2019 | ZOBAHAN FC (IRN) | 3-4 (0-1) | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) |
| 13 Aug, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 3-1 (2-0) | AL DUHAIL SC (QAT) |
| 13 Aug, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 0-1 (0-1) | AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA) |
| 18 Jun, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 1-0 (1-0) | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) |
| 18 Jun, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 2-1 (1-0) | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) |
| 19 Jun, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 1-2 (1-1) | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) |
| 19 Jun, 2019 | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 1-1 (1-1) | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) |
| 25 Jun, 2019 | SANFRECCE HIROSHIMA (JPN) | 3-2 (0-1) | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) |
| 25 Jun, 2019 | SHANDONG LUNENG FC (CHN) | 3-2 a.e.t. (2-1,0-1)5-6 PSO | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |
| 26 Jun, 2019 | JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR) | 1-1 a.e.t. (1-1,1-0)3-5 PSO | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) |
| 26 Jun, 2019 | ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR) | 0-3 (0-1) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |

QUARTER-FINALS

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 26 Aug, 2019 | AL NASSR (KSA) | 2-1 (1-1) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 27 Aug, 2019 | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) | 2-2 (0-2) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |
| 27 Aug, 2019 | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) | 0-0 (0-0) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 28 Aug, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 0-0 (0-0) | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) |
| 16 Sep, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 3-1 (1-1) | AL NASSR (KSA) |
| 17 Sep, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 1-1 (1-0) | SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN) |
| 17 Sep, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 3-1 (1-1) | AL ITTIHAD (KSA) |
| 18 Sep, 2019 | KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN) | 1-1 (0-1) | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |

SEMI-FINALS

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 01 Oct, 2019 | AL SADD SC (QAT) | 1-4 (1-2) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |
| 02 Oct, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 2-0 (1-0) | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) |
| 22 Oct, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 2-4 (2-3) | AL SADD SC (QAT) |
| 23 Oct, 2019 | GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN) | 0-1 (0-0) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |

FINAL

| Date | Team A | Score | Team B |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| 09 Nov, 2019 | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) | 1-0 (0-0) | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) |
| 24 Nov, 2019 | URAWA RED DIAMONDS (JPN) | 0-2 (0-0) | AL HILAL SFC (KSA) |



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CHAMPIONS TROPHY

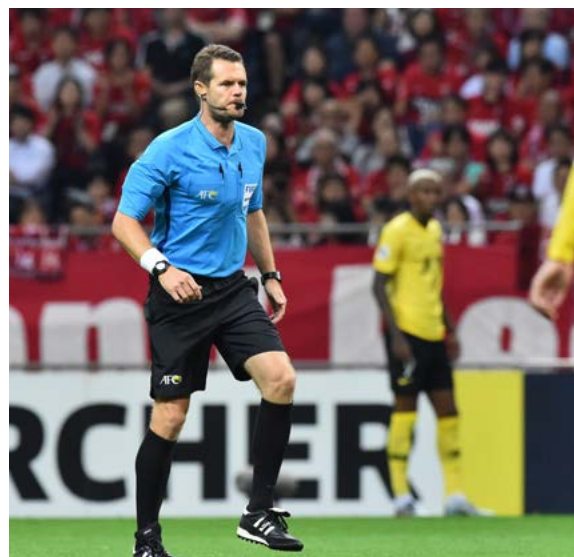
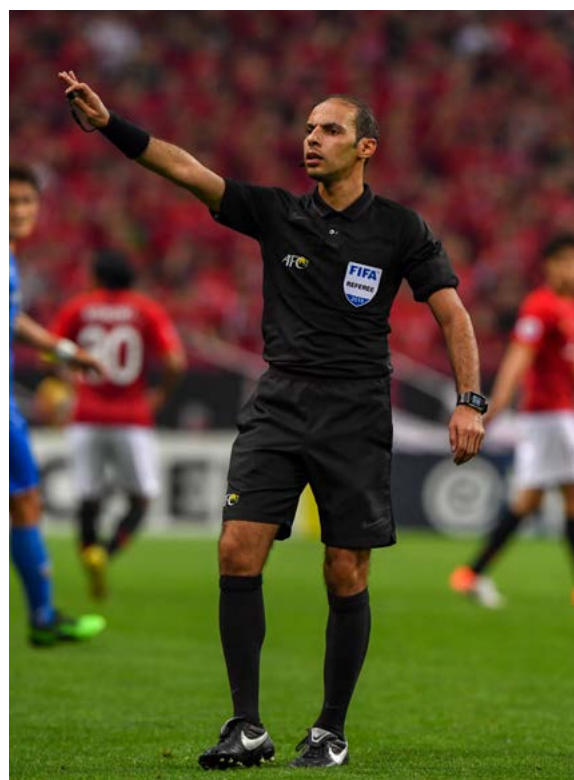
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FINAL 2019



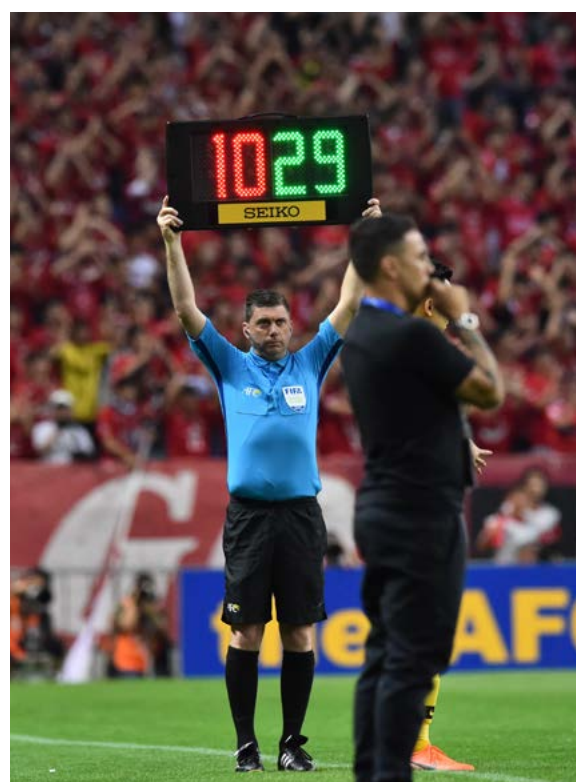
REFEREES

AFC Champions League 2019 Referees

| REFEREES | MA |
|---|-----|
| Beath Christopher James | AUS |
| Peter Daniel Green | AUS |
| Nawaf Abdulla Ghayyath Shukralla | BHR |
| Fu Ming | CHN |
| Ma Ning | CHN |
| Liu Kwok Man | HKG |
| Faghani Alireza | IRN |
| Bonyadifard Mooud | IRN |
| Ali Sabah Adday Al-Qaysi | IRQ |
| Mohanad Qasim Eesee Sarray | IRQ |
| Adham Mohammad Tumah Makhadmeh | JOR |
| Ahmed Faisal Mohammad Alali | JOR |
| Ahmad Yacoub Ibrahim Ibrahim | JOR |
| Iida Jumpei | JPN |
| Kimura Hiroyuki | JPN |
| Sato Ryuji | JPN |
| Tojo Minoru | JPN |
| Yamamoto Yudai | JPN |
| Kim Dong Jin | KOR |
| Kim Hee Gon | KOR |
| Ko Hyung Jin | KOR |
| Kim Daeyong | KOR |
| Turki Mohammed A Alkudhayr | KSA |
| Mohd Amirul Izwan Bin Yaacob | MAS |
| Abdul Baqi Yaqoob Said Abdullah | OMA |
| Ahmed Abu Bakar Said Al Kaf | OMA |
| Abdulrahman Ibrahim Y J Al-Jassim | QAT |
| Khamis Mohamed K A Al-Kuwari | QAT |
| Khamis Mohammed S A Al-Marri | QAT |
| Foo Chuan Hui | SIN |
| Muhammad Taqi Aljaafari Bin Jahari | SIN |
| Hettikankanamge Crishantha Dilan Perera | SRI |
| Hanna Hattab | SYR |
| Masoud Tufayelieh | SYR |
| Sivakorn Pu-Udom | THA |
| Ammar Ali Abdulla Jumaa Aljneibi | UAE |
| Mohammed Abdulla Hassan Mohamed | UAE |
| Asimov Aziz | UZB |
| Irmatov Ravshan | UZB |
| Kovalenko Valentin | UZB |
| Tantashev Ilgiz | UZB |

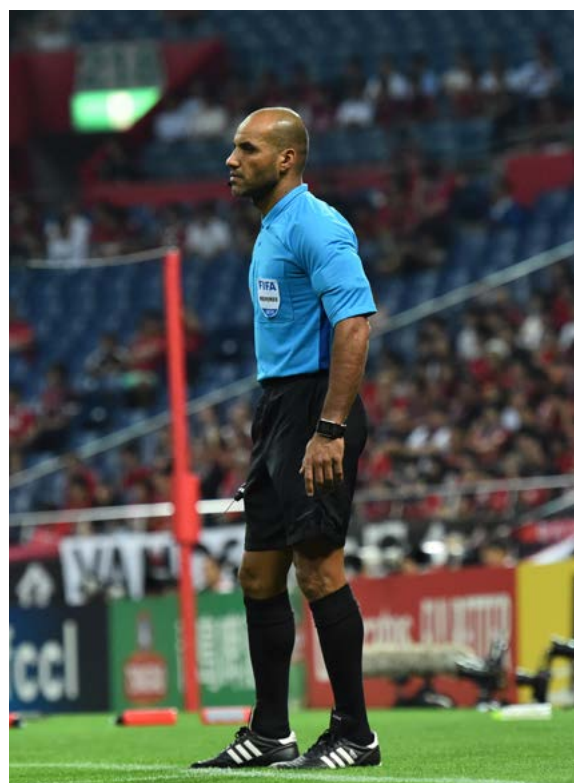


| ASSISTANT REFEREES | MA |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Nathan Alexander Macdonald | AUS |
| Ryan Mark Gallagher | AUS |
| Lakrindis George | AUS |
| Matthew James Cream | AUS |
| Anton Shchetinin | AUS |
| Ashley Warwick Beecham | AUS |
| Mohamed Jaafar Mohamed Salman | BHR |
| Yaser Khalil Ebrahim Abdulla Tulefat | BHR |
| Huo Weiming | CHN |
| Wang Dexin | CHN |
| Cao Yi | CHN |
| Shi Xiang | CHN |
| Chow Chun Kit | HKG |
| Law Ming Leong | HKG |
| Lo Yuk Ming | HKG |
| Alinezhadian Saeid | IRN |
| Sokhandan Reza | IRN |
| Abolfazli Mohammadreza | IRN |
| Mohammad Reza Mansouri | IRN |
| Maytham Khammat Abdulzahra Algburi | IRQ |
| Watheq Mdallal Obaid Al-Swaiedi | IRQ |
| Ameer Dawood Hussein Al-Windawi | IRQ |
| Hayder Abdulhasan Ali Ubaydee | IRQ |
| Abed Al-Rohman Naji Mohamd Aqel | JOR |
| Ayman Faisal Hamzeh Obeidat | JOR |
| Mahmoud Thaher Mohammad Abu-Thaher | JOR |
| Ahmad Moannes Nadi Alroalle | JOR |
| Mohammad Mustafa Hassan Alkalaf | JOR |
| Nishihashi Isao | JPN |
| Osamu Nomura | JPN |
| Hirama Ryo | JPN |
| Karakami Satoshi | JPN |
| Yagi Akane | JPN |
| Ochi Shinji | JPN |
| Takagi Takumi | JPN |
| Mihara Jun | JPN |
| Yamauchi Hiroshi | JPN |
| Kang Dongho | KOR |
| Park Kyunyong | KOR |
| Bang Giyeol | KOR |



Referees

| ASSISTANT REFEREES | MA |
|---|-----|
| Yoon Kwangyeol | KOR |
| Park Sangjun | KOR |
| Fahad Awaiedh F Alumri | KSA |
| Alabakry, Mohammed Maki A | KSA |
| Alshammari Khalaf Zaid M | KSA |
| Mohd Yusri Bin Muhamad | MAS |
| Mohamad Mu Azi Bin Zainal Abidin | MAS |
| Al Ghafri Hamed Talib Saif | OMA |
| Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al Jardani | OMA |
| Abdullah Mubarak Mohamed Al Shammakhi | OMA |
| Al-Amri Abu Bakar Salim Mahad | OMA |
| Rashid Hamed Ali Al Ghaithi | OMA |
| Ramzan Saeed M A Al-Naemi | QAT |
| Mohammad Jaber A H Dharman | QAT |
| Zahy Snaid S A Alshammari | QAT |
| Yousuf Aref M A Al-Shamari | QAT |
| Saoud Ahmed S A Almaqaleh | QAT |
| Taleb Salem H A Al-Marri | QAT |
| Lim Kok Heng | SIN |
| Ong Chai Lee | SIN |
| Lee Tzu Liang | SIN |
| Abdul Hannan Bin Abdul Hasim | SIN |
| Ronnie Koh Min Kiat (Ronnie Gu Minjie) | SIN |
| Palliya Guruge Priyanga Namal | SRI |
| Wellabada Hewage Don Sanjeewa Premalal | SRI |
| Deniye Gedara Palitha Parakkrama Hemathunga | SRI |
| Ali Ahmad | SYR |
| Mazen Zazfoun | SYR |
| Nakarit Rawut | THA |
| Tanate Chuchuen | THA |
| Ahmed Saeed Ahmed Alasal Alrashdi | UAE |
| Jasem Abdulla Yousef Abdulla Al-Ali | UAE |
| Hasan Mohamed Hasan Abdulla Almahri | UAE |
| Mohamed Ahmed Yousef Abdulla Alhammadi | UAE |
| Shodmonov Khusniddin | UZB |
| Rasulov Abdukhamidullo | UZB |
| Saidov Jakhongir | UZB |
| Usmanov Alisher | UZB |
| Serazitdinov Ruslan | UZB |
| Gaynullin Timur | UZB |
| Tsapenko Andrey | UZB |



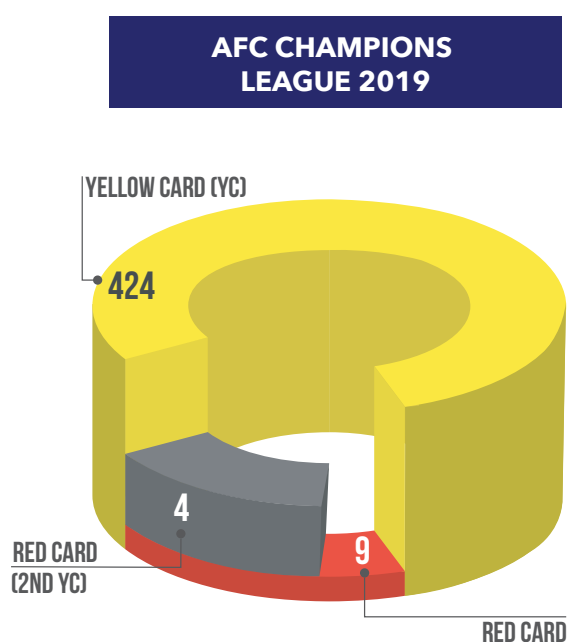


The referee assessors, through their match reports and close monitoring, rated the match officials' performance as good (between 8.0 and 8.4) in 83% of cases. The referees benefitted from post-match briefings and remote online coaching with AFC's top assessors and instructors, where they discussed strengths and areas for improvement based on the review of specific match incidents.

General Management

A total of 437 disciplinary sanctions were issued at the AFC Champions League 2019 from the Group Stage - of which 424 were cautions (yellow cards). Four sending-offs took place after a second caution and nine direct red cards were shown. There was a match average of 3.37 yellow cards and 0.10 red cards.

The administration of disciplinary sanctions was consistent with the previous editions on number of yellow cards (2018: 428; 2017: 427). Meanwhile, for the second consecutive season, the number of red cards was maintained at 13 (2018) and reduced by 50% from the 26 shown in 2017.







STAR SELECTION



THE ALL STAR SQUAD

Goalkeepers

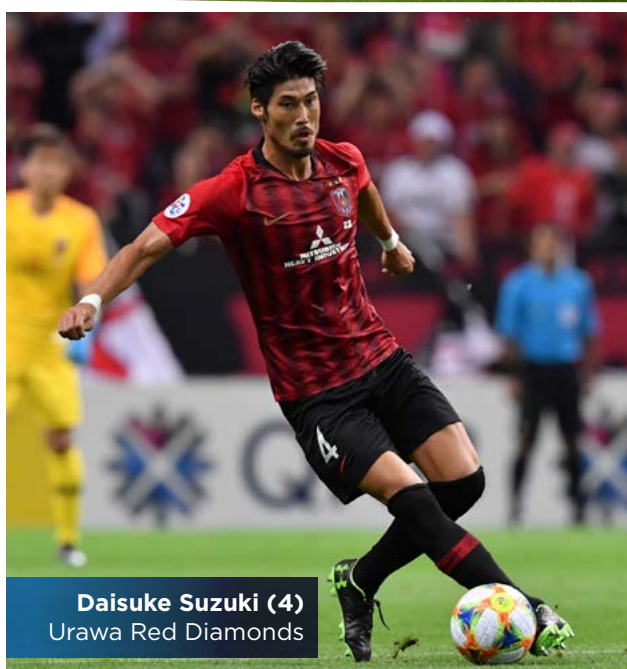


Shusaku Nishikawa (1)
Urawa Red Diamonds

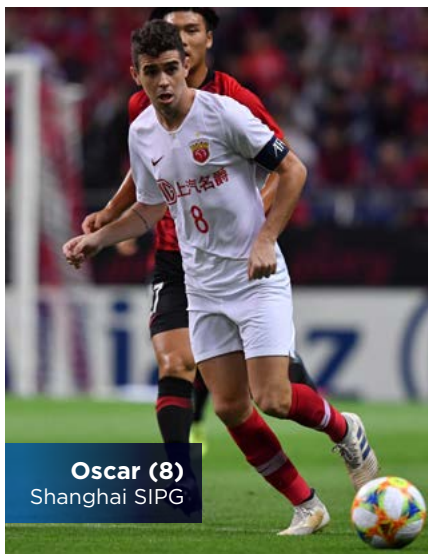


Abdullah Al-Mayouf (1)
Al Hilal

Defenders



Midfielders



Oscar (8)
Shanghai SIPG



Anderson Talisca (9)
Guangzhou Evergrande



Akram Afif (78)
Al Sadd



Nam Tae He (19)
Al Sadd



Leo Silva (4)
Kashima Antlers



Salman Al Faraj (7)
Al Hilal



Sebastian Giovinco (9)
Al Hilal

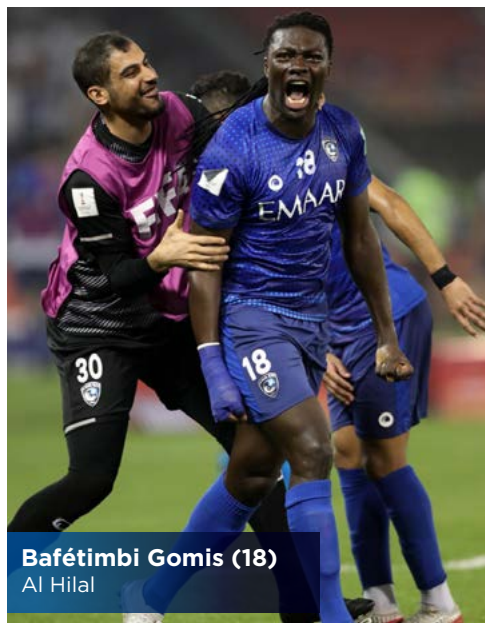


Gabi (14)
Al Sadd



Paulinho (8)
Guangzhou Evergrande

Attackers







BEST GOALS



BEST GOALS

Set Plays

- 1 Paulinho Shandong Luneng v **GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE** - 103' Direct Free Kick
- 2 Xavi Hernández **AL SADD** v FC Pakhtakor - 9' Direct Free Kick
- 3 Marat Bikmaev **FC PAKHTAKOR** v Al Ahli - 62' Indirect Free Kick
- 4 Abdelkarim Hassan **AL SADD** v Al Duhail - 34' Direct Free Kick
- 5 Abdullah Al Salim **AL NASSR** v Al Wasl - 56' Indirect Free Kick
- 6 Boualem Khoukhi Al Hilal v **AL SADD** - 93' Corner
- 7 Ghasem Hadadifar **AL ITTIHAD** v Zobahan FC - 7' Direct Free Kick
- 8 Hao Junmin **SHANDONG LUNENG** v Gyeongnam - 64' Direct Free Kick
- 9 Omar Al Somar **AL AHLI** v Persepolis - 83' Direct Free Kick
- 10 Shoja Khalilzadeh **PERSEPOLIS** v Al Ahli - 18' Throw-in

Video highlights

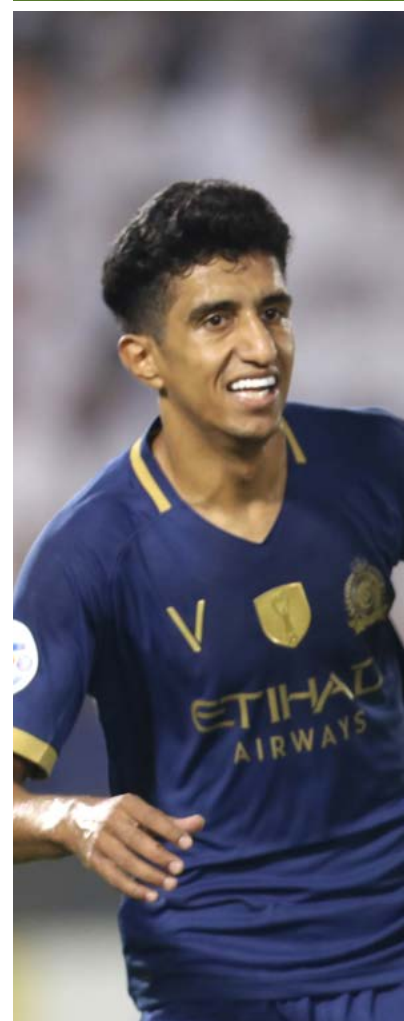
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALIBJbCntgY>

Open Play

- 1 Fabricio **URAWA RED DIAMONDS** v Guangzhou Evergrande - 19' Long Range
- 2 Salem Al Dawsari Urawa Red Diamonds v **AL HILAL** - 74' Combination Play
- 3 Oscar **SHANGHAI SIPG** v Ulsan Hyundai - 42' Long Range Shot
- 4 Safawi Rasid Shandong Luneng v **JOHOR** - 59' Solo Play
- 5 Anderson Talisca **GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE** v Melbourne Victory - 10' Solo Play
- 6 Khojiakbar Alijonov **FC PAKHTAKOR** v Al Sadd - 9' Long Range
- 7 Anderson Talisca **GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE** v Sanfrecce Hiroshima - 19' Cross
- 8 Medhi Torabi **PERSEPOLIS** v Al Sadd - 16' Long Range
- 9 Takahiro Sekine **URAWA RED DIAMONDS** v Guangzhou Evergrande - 75' Long Range
- 10 Ali Asad **AL SADD** v Al Ahli - 9' Diagonal

Video highlights

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obWLPoueik4>









PREVIOUS WINNERS



Previous Winners

2018 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Kashima Antlers (JPN)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|---------|--|-----|------------------|
| 3/11/18 | Kashima Antlers (JPN) (Léo Silva 58, Serginho 70) | 2-0 | Persepolis (IRN) |
|---------|--|-----|------------------|

Kashima Soccer Stadium, Kashima

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 10/11/18 | Persepolis (IRN) | 0-0 | Kashima Antlers (JPN) |
|----------|------------------|-----|-----------------------|

Azadi Stadium, Tehran

Kashima Antlers won 2-0 on aggregate.

2017 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Urawa Red Diamonds (JPN)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----|--|
| 18/11/17 | Al Hilal (KSA) (Khribin 37) | 1-1 | Urawa Red Diamonds (JPN) (Rafael Silva 7) |
|----------|--------------------------------|-----|--|

King Fahd International Stadium, Riyadh

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|---|-----|----------------|
| 25/11/17 | Urawa Red Diamonds (JPN) (Rafael Silva 88) | 1-0 | Al Hilal (KSA) |
|----------|---|-----|----------------|

Saitama Stadium 2002, Saitama

Urawa Red Diamonds win 2-1 on aggregate

2016 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|----------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 19/11/16 | Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) (Leonardo 70, 77) | 2-1 | Al Ain (UAE) (Asprilla 63) |
|----------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|

Jeonju World Cup Stadium, Jeonju

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|---|------------|---|
| 26/11/16 | Al Ain (UAE) (Lee Myung-joo 34) | 1-1 | Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) (Han Kyo-won 30) |
|----------|---|------------|---|

Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium, Al Ain

Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors win 3-2 on aggregate

2015 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|
| 07/11/15 | Al Ahli (UAE) | 0-0 | Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) |
|----------|----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|

Al Rashid Stadium, Dubai

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|---|------------|----------------------|
| 21/11/15 | Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) (Elkeson 64) | 1-0 | Al Ahli (UAE) |
|----------|---|------------|----------------------|

Tianhe Stadium, Guangzhou

Guangzhou Evergrande win 1-0 on aggregate

2014 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Western Sydney Wanderers (AUS)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|----------|--|------------|-----------------------|
| 25/10/14 | Western Sydney Wanderers (AUS) (Tomi Juric 64) | 1-0 | Al Hilal (KSA) |
|----------|--|------------|-----------------------|

Parramatta Stadium, Sydney

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 01/11/14 | Al Hilal (KSA) | 0-0 | Western Sydney Wanderers (AUS) |
|----------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|

King Fahad International Stadium, Riyadh

Western Sydney Wanderers win 1-0 on aggregate

2013 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN)



Final

First Leg

| | | | |
|----------|--|------------|---|
| 26/10/13 | FC Seoul (KOR) (Sergio Escudero 11, Dejan Damjanovic 83) | 2-2 | Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) (Elkeson 30, Gao Lin 58) |
|----------|--|------------|---|

Seoul World Cup Stadium, Seoul

Second Leg

| | | | |
|----------|---|------------|--|
| 09/11/13 | Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) (Elkeson 58) | 1-1 | FC Seoul (KOR) (Dejan Damjanovic 63) |
|----------|---|------------|--|

Guangzhou Tianhe Stadium, Guangzhou

Aggregate score 3-3. Guangzhou Evergrande win on away goals

2012 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Ulsan Hyundai (KOR)



Final

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------|----------------------|
| 10/11/12 | Ulsan Hyundai (KOR) (Kwak Tae-hwi 13, Rafinha 68, Kim Seung-yong 75) | 3-0 | Al Ahli (KSA) |
| Ulsan Munsu Football Stadium, Ulsan | | | |

2011 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Al Sadd (QAT)



Final

| | | | |
|----------|--|------------|--|
| 04/11/11 | Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) (Eninho 19, Lee Sung-hyun 90+2) | 2-2 | Al Sadd (QAT) (Sim Woo-yeon 30-og, Abdul Kader Keita 61) |
|----------|--|------------|--|

Jeonju World Cup Stadium, Jeonju

After extra-time. Al Sadd win 4-2 on penalties

2010 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (KOR)



| Final | | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------|--|
| 13/11/10 | Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (KOR) (Sasa Ognjenovski 29, Cho Byung-kuk 53, Kim Cheol-ho 83) | 3-1 | Zobahan (IRN) (Mohammadreza Khalatbari 67) |
| National Stadium, Tokyo | | | |

2009 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Pohang Steelers (KOR)



| Final | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------|--|
| 07/11/09 | Al Ittihad (KSA) (Mohammed Noor 74) | 1-2 | Pohang Steelers (KOR) (No Byung-jun 57, Kim Hyung-il 66) |
| National Stadium, Tokyo | | | |

2008 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Gamba Osaka (JPN)



| Final | | | |
|---|---|------------|---|
| First Leg | | | |
| 05/11/08 | Gamba Osaka (JPN) (Lucas 37, Yasuhito Endo 43, Michihiro Yasuda 68) | 3-0 | Adelaide United (AUS) |
| Expo '70 Commemorative Stadium, Osaka | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 12/11/08 | Adelaide United (AUS) | 0-2 | Gamba Osaka (JPN) (Lucas 4, 14) |
| Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide | | | |
| Gamba Osaka win 5-0 on aggregate | | | |

2007 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Urawa Reds (JPN)



| Final | | | |
|--|---|------------|--|
| First Leg | | | |
| 07/11/07 | Sepahan (IRN) (Mahmoud Karimi 47) | 1-1 | Urawa Reds (JPN) (Robson Ponte 45) |
| Foolad Shahr Stadium, Esfahan | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 14/11/07 | Urawa Reds (JPN) (Yuichiro Nagai 22, Yuki Abe 71) | 2-0 | Sepahan (IRN) |
| Saitama World Cup Stadium, Saitama | | | |
| Urawa Reds win 3-1 on aggregate | | | |

2006 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR)



| Final | | | |
|--|---|------------|--|
| First Leg | | | |
| 01/11/06 | Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) (Yeom Ki-hun 59, Botti 90+1) | 2-0 | Al Karama (SYR) |
| Jeonju World Cup Stadium, Jeonju | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 08/11/06 | Al Karama (SYR) (Iyad Mando 54, Mohanad Ibrahim 60) | 2-1 | Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors (KOR) (Ze Carlo 88) |
| Khaled bin Al Walid Stadium, Homs | | | |
| Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors win 3-2 on aggregate | | | |

2005 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Al Ittihad (KSA)



| Final | | | |
|---|---|------------|--|
| First Leg | | | |
| 26/10/05 | Al Ain (UAE) (Ali Msarri 50) | 1-1 | Al Ittihad (KSA) (Mohamed Kallon 85) |
| Tahnnon Bin Mohammed Stadium, Al Ain | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 05/11/05 | Al Ittihad (KSA) (Mohamed Kallon 2, Mohammed Noor 33, Joseph-Desire Job 57, Ahmed Dokhi 69) | 4-2 | Al Ain (UAE) (Shehab Ahmed 55-pen, Luis Tejada 90) |
| Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium, Jeddah | | | |
| Al Ittihad win 5-3 on aggregate | | | |

2004 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Al Ittihad (KSA)



| Final | | | |
|---|---|------------|--|
| First Leg | | | |
| 24/11/04 | Al Ittihad (KSA) (Redha Tukar 28) | 1-3 | Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (KOR) (Denis Laktionov 27, Kim Do-hoon 81, Jang Hak-young 90) |
| Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Stadium, Jeddah | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 01/12/04 | Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma (KOR) | 0-5 | Al Ittihad (KSA) (Redha Tukar 27, Hamzah Idris 45, Mohammed Noor 55, 78, Manaf Abushgeer 90) |
| Seongnam Sports Complex, Seongnam | | | |
| Al Ittihad win 6-3 on aggregate | | | |

2003 AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Al Ain (UAE)



| Final | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------|------------------------------|
| First Leg | | | |
| 03/10/03 | Al Ain (UAE) (Salam Jawhar 40, Mohammed Omar 75) | 2-0 | BEC Tero Sasana (THA) |
| Tahnnon bin Mohammed Stadium, Al Ain | | | |
| Second Leg | | | |
| 11/10/03 | BEC Tero Sasana (THA) (Thersak Chaiman 60-pen) | 1-0 | Al Ain (UAE) |
| Rajamangala Stadium, Bangkok | | | |
| Al Ain win 2-1 on aggregate | | | |

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