



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2018

TECHNICAL REPORT & STATISTICS



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2018

GROUP A



AL AHLI
(KSA)



AL JAZIRA
(UAE)



**TRACTORSAZI
TABRIZ**
(IRN)



AL GHARAF
(QAT)

GROUP B



AL DUHAIL
(QAT)



AL WAHDA
(UAE)



PFC LOKOMOTIV
(UZB)



ZOBAHAN
(IRN)

GROUP C



PERSEPOLIS
(IRN)



AL SADD
(QAT)



AL WASL
(UAE)



NASAF
(UZB)

GROUP D



AL HILAL
(KSA)



AL RAYYAN
(QAT)



ESTEGLHAL
(IRN)



AL AIN
(UAE)

GROUP E



**JEONBUK
HYUNDAI
MOTORS**
(KOR)



KITCHEE SC
(HKG)



**TIANJIN
QUANJIAN**
(CHN)



**KASHIWA
REYSOL**
(JPN)

GROUP F



**KAWASAKI
FRONTALE**
(JPN)



**ULSAN
HYUNDAI**
(KOR)



**MELBOURNE
VICTORY**
(AUS)



**SHANGHAI
SIPG**
(CHN)

GROUP G



**GUANGZHOU
EVERGRANDE**
(CHN)



**CEREZO
OSAKA**
(JPN)



**JEJU
UNITED**
(JPN)



**BURIRAM
UNITED**
(THA)

GROUP H



SYDNEY FC
(AUS)



**SHANGHAI
SHENHUA**
(CHN)



**KASHIMA
ANTLERS**
(JPN)



**SUWON
SAMSUNG
BLUEWINGS**
(KOR)



**CHAMPIONS
LEAGUE**

**AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2018
TECHNICAL REPORT AND STATISTICS**

CONTENTS

COMPETITION OVERVIEW

08

TECHNICAL TOPICS

30

TALKING POINTS

42

COMPETITION RESULTS

112

STAR SELECTION

124

PREVIOUS WINNERS

134

WINNING COACH

26

GOALSCORING ANALYSIS

38

TEAM PROFILES

46

REFEREES

120

BEST GOALS

130

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

143





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Foreword by the **AFC PRESIDENT**



Dear friends

I am delighted to be presenting the AFC Technical Report for the AFC Champions League 2018 – a tournament which continues to break records as it becomes firmly established as one of the world’s leading continental club competitions.

Those who were privileged to be in the Azadi Stadium in Tehran in November were part of the biggest ever crowd for an AFC Champions League watching on as Japan’s Kashima Antlers held off the strong challenge of Persepolis from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It was a memorable occasion for Asian football and the two-legged final – won 2-0 on aggregate by Kashima Antlers – shattered the record crowd for the final of 116,800 set the previous year when Urawa Red Diamonds overcame Al Hilal.

In 2018 the two-legged final was watched not only by the 135,022 fans in the two stadiums but also the many millions on television and social media. The AFC also honoured its commitment to developing its competitions by increasing prize money for the tournament to USD\$4m for the winners and USD\$2m for the runners-up.

We must also thank our competing teams and Member Associations because without their commitment to excellence the club game in Asia would not be developing so rapidly and this report will reflect some of the technical innovations in the competition.

This report will not only record the performances of the sides who brought colour, passion and skill to the tournament but also the latest technical trends and highlight areas in which football in Asia continues to improve.

I am grateful to AFC Technical Committee, AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh, his Technical Department and the Technical Study Group for the hours they have spent watching games, analysing videos and identifying trends. This is a valuable record of another memorable season.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President





COMPETITION OVERVIEW

PRELIMINARY AND PLAY-OFF STAGES



The AFC Champions League's qualifying phase featured 22 clubs from 19 Member Associations competing to secure the final eight places in the competition's group stage where they would join the 24 sides that had qualified automatically. In the first Preliminary Round, Philippines powerhouse Ceres Negros FC held their nerve to beat Myanmar's Shan United FC on penalties, while Indonesia's Bali United FC also progressed thanks to a 3-1 win over Tampines Rovers from Singapore.

Ceres' fine form continued in the second Preliminary Round as Bienvenido Marañón's brace helped them secure a sensational 3-2 win away at Australia's Brisbane Roar, while Bali lost 2-1 to Chiangrai United in Thailand where all three goals came in 30 pulsating minutes of extra-time.

Elsewhere, Thai club Muangthong United and Thanh Hoa from Vietnam proved too strong for Malaysia's Johor Darul Ta'zim and Hong Kong's Eastern FC respectively as their comfortable wins ensured they both joined Ceres and Chiangrai in the next phase.

January's Play-offs saw all eight home teams - four each from the West and East Zones - seal their places in the

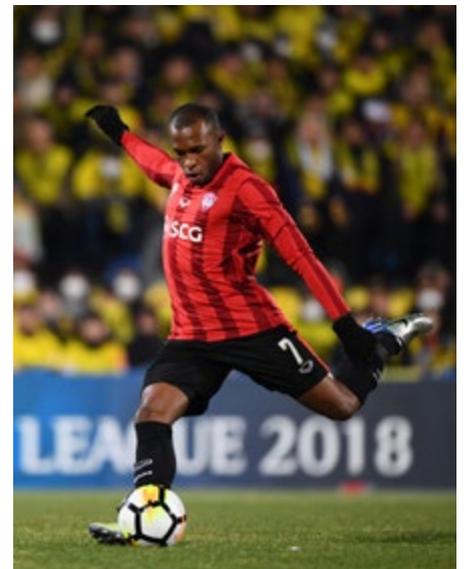


group stage. French import Anthony Modeste scored twice as competition debutants Tianjin Quanjian FC from China beat Ceres 2-0, while three second half goals ensured a 3-0 victory for 2013 semi-finalists Kashiwa Reysol over Muangthong in Japan.

Elsewhere, Korea Republic's Suwon Samsung Bluewings powered past Thanh Hoa thanks to a 5-1 win, and Shanghai SIPG FC ensured themselves of a third successive group stage appearance thanks to Yu Hai's 48th minute strike in a 1-0 defeat of Chiangrai.

They were joined from West Asia by FC Nasaf from Uzbekistan who beat Jordan's Al Faisaly 5-1, as well as Zobahan FC after two late Morteza Tabrizi goals ensured a 3-1 win over India's Aizawl FC for the side from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Also successful were 2003 title winners Al Ain, the Emiratis beating Bahrain's Malkiya Club 2-0 to go through, and Al Gharafa from Qatar who edged Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor 2-1 to guarantee themselves an eighth group stage outing.



GROUP STAGE - WEST



GROUP A

Al Ahli Saudi FC proved to be the dominant force in Group A as they, along with second-placed Al Jazira FSC from the United Arab Emirates, booked their place in the knockout phase at the expense of Qatar's Al Gharafa and Tractorsazi Tabriz from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Runners-up in 2012 and quarter-finalists just 12 months earlier, Al Ahli finished some six points clear of the Emiratis following a series of impressive displays that saw them remain unbeaten – home and away – throughout the group stage. Much of that success was based on a resolute defence that only conceded four times in the club's six matches, an undeniably steely backline that helped the Jeddah-based club rack up four wins and two draws en route to what would be a sixth appearance in the AFC Champions League's Round of 16.

Al Ahli opened their account in February courtesy of a 1-0 defeat of Tractorsazi before, with then head coach Sergei Rebrov watching on from the sidelines, eventually securing their progress on Matchday Five with a second win over their Iranian opponents thanks to goals from Mohannad Aseri and Moamen Zakaria in a 2-0 victory.

Despite eventually trailing Al Ahli by some distance, Al Jazira also went through on Matchday Five when striker Ali Mabkhout struck in the 94th minute to not only seal a crucial 3-2 win at Al

Gharafa, but also ensure Henk ten Cate's charges of second spot in the group ahead of the Qatari side by virtue of a superior head-to-head record.

In contrast to what was going on at the top of the table, rock-bottom Tractorsazi entertained Al Gharafa at their Yadegar-e-Emam Stadium home on Matchday Six with only pride at stake for both teams who had already been eliminated.

In the end, a trio of second half goals saw Al Gharafa come from behind to bag all three points in a 3-1 victory that added a degree of gloss to a campaign that saw the club from Doha fail to reach the Round of 16 for the sixth time in eight attempts.

The defeat also marked Tractorsazi's fourth loss in six matches, with the Iranians failing to register a single victory during the group stage, a poor run of form that saw them only score twice – against Al Jazira and Al Gharafa – in their fourth AFC Champions League outing.

GROUP B

A record-equalling six wins out of six helped Qatar side Al Duhail SC emerge as the comprehensive winners of Group B and seal a place in the competition's next phase alongside Zobahan FC from the Islamic Republic of Iran after they edged out Uzbekistan's PFC Lokomotiv on a tense final day of action to finish second.



Al Duhail's impressive run of results saw them score 13 times – the most goals netted by any of the eight West Zone teams who made it through to the Round of 16 – as they maintained an impressive 100 per cent record to ensure they entered the knockout rounds as one of only four teams to have ever won all six of their group stage games.

GROUP STAGE - WEST



Despite having to come from behind to claim a 3-1 win in their opening match against Zobahan, Al Duhail proved to be an irresistible force both home and away and their early progress was duly sealed when key forward Youssef El Arabi notched two late goals at Lokomotiv on Matchday Four.

Prolific in the final third and just as resolute in defence, Al Duhail's fine form helped establish the club from Doha as genuine title contenders ahead of what would be a third successive appearance in the AFC Champions League's knockout phase.

With Al Duhail sweeping all before them under the wily guidance of then head coach Djamel Belmadi, the race for second place became a decidedly tense affair as Lokomotiv and Zobahan locked horns in Tashkent on Matchday Six to decide who would join the table-topping Qataris in the Round of 16.

Runners-up to Korea Republic's Seongnam Ilhwa Chunma in 2010, Zobahan entered the game in Tashkent level on points with Lokomotiv but crucially ahead of their Uzbek opponents in the standings thanks to the 2-0 home win they had notched up

on Matchday Two.

Needing only to avoid defeat in order to go through, dynamic midfielder Morteza Tabrizi struck in the first half for Zobahan as, despite Islom Tukhtakhujae's 90th minute equaliser, the Iranians earned a 1-1 draw that confirmed the club's place in the Round of 16 for a fourth time since making their debut in 2004.

The ensuing scenes of Zobahan jubilation were in stark contrast to the sombre mood which resonated throughout the Lokomotiv camp after the 2016 quarter-finalists failed to progress from the group stage for a second successive season.



GROUP C

Semi-finalists in 2017, Islamic Republic of Iran giants Persepolis FC shone brightly once again in the 2018 edition, as the team from Tehran beat Qatar's Al Sadd SC to top spot in Group C by one point, while FC Nasaf from Uzbekistan and United Arab Emirates outfit Al Wasl FC were both eliminated.

A convincing 3-0 win at home against Nasaf on Matchday One provided an ideal start for the Iranians who, despite losing at Al Sadd seven days later, won three of their four remaining games to finish in pole position and assure themselves of a fifth appearance in the Round of 16.

Although far from prolific upfront – Persepolis only scored eight times during the group phase – Branko Ivankovic's side proved exceptionally difficult to break down, with their impressive defence keeping five clean sheets and conceding a meagre three goals – all of which came in the Matchday Two defeat in Doha to Al Sadd.

In what proved to be a tight tussle at the summit, Al Sadd were ultimately left to rue Morteza Pouraliganji's own goal in

GROUP STAGE - WEST



their narrow 1-0 loss away at Persepolis on Matchday Six, a result which condemned the 2011 title winners to second place in the group when even a draw would have guaranteed them pole position.

Nevertheless, Al Sadd's perfect home record provided a definite bright spot for the Qataris, as indeed did the form of striker Baghdad Boundejah who found the net seven times in the six games he featured in, with the Algerian frontman scoring two goals in a match on no less than three occasions.

Alongside Boundejah, rising star Qatar international Akram Afif and one-time Barcelona favourite Xavi also excelled as Al Sadd booked a place in the knockout phase for the first time 2015.

Elsewhere, Nasaf's 2-1 success at Al Wasl on the final day of group stage action, provided the Uzbeks with a positive end to a campaign which saw them finish third after racking up three wins and, crucially, two defeats.



That win over Al Wasl was Nasaf's first on the road in 2018 and it also ensured that their Emirati opponents finished without a point to their name to become the fifth side after Neftchi (2004), Hoang Anh Gia Lai (2005), Da Nang City FC (2006), G. D. T. Long An FC (2007) and Al Arabi (2012) to suffer six consecutive group stage defeats.

Group D

Livewire forward Mame Thiam starred as Esteghlal FC from the Islamic Republic of Iran remained unbeaten to claim Group D's top spot and a place in the Round of 16 for the fifth time in the club's history.

The Senegalese striker scored four goals and impressed throughout to help his side finish two points ahead of the United Arab Emirates' Al Ain FC who edged out Qatar's Al Rayyan SC to claim the all-important second place, while there was disappointment for Saudi Arabian giants Al Hilal SFC after they finished bottom of the group with only two points to their name.

Esteghlal made a solid start to their latest continental outing, picking up six points in their first four games – a run of results which included a 2-2 draw at Al Ain on Matchday Three when Ahmed Khalil's 89th minute penalty ensured a share of the spoils for the Emiratis.

The two sides shared the spoils yet again just six days later, before Esteghlal secured their ticket through to the knockout phase with a game to

spare courtesy of Server Djeparov's deflected early opener and a second-half Vouria Ghafouri penalty in a 2-0 defeat of Al Rayyan at Tehran's imposing Azadi Stadium.

The Iranians duly followed that success up with a 1-0 victory over two-time runners-up Al Hilal, a defeat which rounded off a poor campaign for the Saudi Arabians who failed to progress from the group stage for the first time since 2006.

Elsewhere on Matchday Six, Al Rayyan entered a crucial winner-takes-all clash with Al Ain one point behind their regional rivals, and knowing that a win at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium would take them through to the Round of 16 – something they had not achieved since making their AFC Champions League debut in the competition's 2005 edition.

However, despite the size of the task that awaited them, Zoran Mamic's Al Ain side arrived in Doha encouraged by the fact that they had yet to be beaten away from the United Arab Emirates thanks to the 0-0 and 1-1 draws they picked up at Al Hilal and Esteghlal respectively.

That Emirati optimism proved to decidedly well-founded as goals from Hussein El Shahat and Omar Abdulrahman, as well as a brace from Swedish import Marcus Berg, earned Al Ain their place in the Round of 16 thanks to a convincing 4-1 win.



GROUP STAGE - EAST

GROUP E

A 3-0 win at home to Kitchee SC on Matchday Six saw free-scoring Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC claim pole position in Group E, as they finished two points ahead of competition debutants Tianjin Quanjian FC from China PR who also progressed to the knockout phase.

Having secured their place in the Round of 16 two weeks earlier thanks to a 2-0 defeat of Japan's Kashiwa Reysol, late goals from Lee Seung-gi, Kim Shin-wook and Lim Seon-yeong ensured the victory which rounded off a fine campaign for the side from Korea Republic, one which saw both themselves and Tianjin dominate proceedings.

AFC Champions League winners in 2006 and 2016, Jeonbuk lost just once in the group stage, when they were beaten 4-2 by Tianjin on Matchday Four having thrashed the Chinese Super League side 6-3, thanks in part to a Kim Shin-wook hat-trick, in the previous round of fixtures.

The eight goals Jeonbuk registered in those two games were further testimony to their undoubted prowess in the final third, with Choi Kang-hee's



side finding the net 22 times in six matches - more than any other team competing in the group stage.

Like Jeonbuk, Tianjin booked their ticket through to the knockout phase with a game to spare, Anthony Modeste's strike in a narrow 1-0 win at Kitchee on Matchday Five adding yet more shine to the club's first-ever AFC Champions League appearance.

That success in Hong Kong was one of four victories racked up by then head coach Paulo Sousa's side, with their defeat to table-topping Jeonbuk and February's 1-1 draw at Kashiwa the only time Tianjin dropped points.

Indeed, Tianjin's qualification for the Round of 16 only served to underline the incredible progress made by a

club who won China League One, the country's second division, in 2016 before going on to claim third place in the 2017 Chinese Super League.

Despite showing a degree of early promise in a narrow 3-2 loss away at Jeonbuk on Matchday One, Kashiwa subsequently failed to find the form that had taken them to the 2015 quarter-finals as they finished third - one point ahead of rock-bottom Kitchee who they surprisingly lost to in March.

Kashiwa's exit, with only one win and a draw to show for their efforts, marked the first time in four participations in the AFC Champions League that the Japanese team had not reached the knockout rounds.



GROUP STAGE - EAST



GROUP F

The fine form of Brazilian imports Oscar and Elkeson proved decisive as China PR's Shanghai SIPG held off the combined challenge of Ulsan Hyundai FC and Melbourne Victory to finish as winners of Group F and, in the process, confirm a third successive appearance in the Round of 16 since making their continental debut in 2016.

Despite rounding off their campaign with a 2-1 loss to Melbourne in Australia, SIPG assured themselves of pole position on Matchday Five when Elkeson, after seeing Hulk miss a 22nd minute penalty, scored his third goal of the competition in a 1-1 draw with Japanese champions Kawasaki Frontale at Shanghai Stadium.

Whilst the result represented the second time SIPG had dropped points at home in the 2018 AFC Champions League, it was enough to ensure second-placed Ulsan could not replace the Chinese Super League side at the top of the standings with one round of matches to go.

Former Chelsea favourite Oscar also played a major role in SIPG's success. The dynamic midfielder scored four goals in five group stage appearances, a respectable tally which included a brace when SIPG shared the spoils with Ulsan following a 2-2 thriller on Matchday Three.

Ulsan went on to lose at home to their Chinese rivals just six days later, before sealing their place in the knockout rounds with an emphatic thumping of Melbourne on Matchday Five.

Both sides had gone into the game at the Munsu Football Stadium in Ulsan knowing a win was vital, with Melbourne needing all three points to keep their Round of 16 hopes alive and the hosts requiring one more victory to confirm their progress.

It was, however, to be Ulsan who reigned supreme on home soil as Junior Negrao and Mislav Orsic notched two goals apiece in a comprehensive 6-2 win that fired Kim Do-hoon's side into the next phase in some style.

That defeat was, nevertheless, only Melbourne's second in the group stage, and, under the wily guidance of head coach Kevin Muscat, they duly concluded their sixth AFC Champions League outing with a notable win over SIPG that helped them finish third.

Fourth-placed Kawasaki also finished on a relative high, with goals from Yuto Suzuki and Tatsuya Hasegawa securing the Japanese outfit's third point of what was ultimately though a disappointing campaign in a 2-2 home draw with Ulsan.



GROUP STAGE - EAST

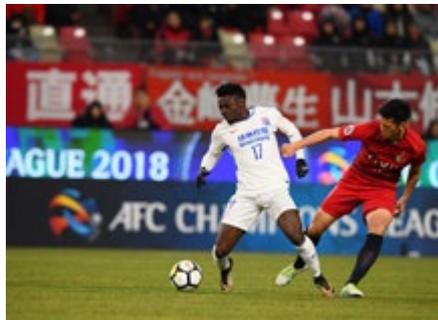


GROUP G

A titanic struggle at Group G's summit saw three teams enter the final round of fixtures still in contention for a place in the Round of 16, before China PR's Guangzhou Evergrande FC and Buriram United from Thailand sealed their progress with crucial wins.

Having squandered the chance to advance on Matchday Five when an injury time goal from Yoo Jun-soo saw them draw 1-1 at Buriram, Fabio Cannavaro's Guangzhou side headed into their showdown with Japan's Cerezo Osaka two weeks later knowing that a point would be enough to ensure a place in the knockout rounds.

Despite early resistance from the 2011 quarter-finalists which saw Takaki Fukumitsu level matters shortly after Huang Bowen's sixth minute opener,



Guangzhou rallied superbly after the break with Brazilian star Alan scoring twice to seal a 3-1 win as well as a ticket through to the next phase for the two-time AFC Champions League winners.

That result at a packed and wonderfully atmospheric Tianhe Stadium was one of three victories Guangzhou picked up during an unbeaten group stage campaign which, along with three draws, propelled the club into an impressive sixth Round of 16 appearance in seven seasons.

Elsewhere on Matchday Six, Buriram made the most of Guangzhou's success by winning 1-0 away at an already-eliminated Jeju United FC to finish second behind the Chinese powerhouse but, crucially, one point ahead of Cerezo.

The Thais had travelled to Korea Republic intent on avenging their 2-0 loss at home to the K League club on Matchday Two, and knowing that nothing but all three points would suffice if they were to retain any hope of progressing.

In the end, Korrakot Wiriyaudomsiri's neat finish from close range in the 55th minute proved the difference on a night of high drama, as Bozidar Bandovic's charges grabbed all three points to round off an exceptional campaign that saw Buriram remain unbeaten away from home to qualify for the Round of 16 for only the second time since their AFC Champions League debut in 2012.

By way of contrast in a group where there was little margin for error, Cerezo were left to rue what turned



GROUP STAGE - EAST

out to be a vital 2-0 loss at Buriram on Matchday Three as they failed to repeat their run to the quarter-finals in 2014, while Jeju finished rock-bottom to complete what was a far from memorable third AFC Champions League appearance.

GROUP H

Dejan Damjanovic's fine form on the continental stage showed no sign of abating as the prolific Montenegrin netted five times to help Korea Republic's Suwon Samsung Bluewings finish first in Group H, one point ahead of second-placed Kashima Antlers.

In a group where no team was able to register a home win, Suwon's exemplary form on the road proved key as, following wins at Sydney FC and Shanghai Shenhua FC, Damjanovic's 31st minute goal on Matchday Six helped his side beat the already qualified Kashima 1-0 in Japan to seal top spot and their place in the Round of 16.

Achieved under the watchful eye of head coach Seo Jung-won, Suwon's success represented the first time they had reached the knockout

phase in three seasons, while for Damjanovic, who had previously featured in the competition for FC Seoul and Beijing Guoan, his exploits took him to within four strikes of Lee Dong-gook's all-time AFC Champions League goalscoring record of 36.

Despite their narrow defeat on the final round of fixtures, Kashima's results throughout the campaign – most notably wins at Suwon and Sydney – had proved enough for Go Oiwa's side to progress with a game to spare as an impressive second-half revival earned them a 2-2 draw against Shanghai on Matchday Five and a berth in the knockout rounds.

Shanghai had impressed in the opening 45 minutes at the Hongkou Football Stadium, with goals from Giovanni Moreno and Mao Jianqing giving the home side a two-goal lead in the club's most dominant half of football in the 2018 group stage.

However, a determined fightback in the second period thanks to Yuma Suzuki's neat finish and a fine Leandro volley gave Kashima the one point they needed to seal their place in the next phase and, in the process, eliminate Shanghai.

The Chinese Super League side's inability to pick up a win – they recorded five draws and a defeat in their six matches – ultimately proved to be the undoing of Wu Jingui and his team who had been hoping to reach the Round of 16 for the first time since qualifying for the quarter-finals in 2006.

Sydney, competing in their fourth AFC Champions League group stage, finished last, although there were several bright moments for the Australians, not least when they put four past Suwon in a stunning 4-1 win away from home on Matchday Five.



ROUND OF 16 - WEST



Al Duhail stretched their winning streak to an impressive eight matches with a 4-1 second leg thumping of Al Ain, a victory which saw them book their place in quarter-finals thanks to an 8-3 aggregate success.

Having been beaten comprehensively at home just a week earlier, the 2003 champions once again proved no match for Djamel Belmadi's rampant side in Doha.

Al Ain defender Mohamed Ahmad put through his own as early as the 12th minute, before Al Duhail hotshot Youssef Al Arabi scored twice to take his tally for the season to nine and Ismail Mohammad notched his third goal of the campaign.



Al Sadd ensured there would be two Qatari teams in the final eight after securing a 2-2 draw away from home in the second leg of their meeting with Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli.

Leading 2-1 from the first leg, the irrepressible Baghdad Boundejah scored twice – his first a superb run and curling shot – to register his ninth goal in eight appearances and seal a narrow 4-3 win on aggregate for the 2011 title winners.

Elsewhere, Persepolis had Jalal Hosseini to thank as his late goal helped the Iranians qualify for the quarter-finals on away goals after they had drawn 4-4 on aggregate with Al Jazira.

Trailing 3-2 from a thrilling first leg encounter in Abu Dhabi, Persepolis

went ahead through Ahmad Nourollahi's 63rd minute effort, only to see Romarinho equalise seven minutes later and swing the tie back towards Al Jazira.

Persepolis pressed forward in search of a winner, and it was to be captain Hosseini who delivered, pouncing on a poor defensive clearance to volley home with a minute remaining.

With one Tehran giant through, Esteghlal duly followed suit by seeing off domestic rivals Zobahan courtesy of a 3-2 aggregate success.

Esteghlal had lost the opening tie 1-0, but Mame Thiam's hat-trick in the second leg bagged Winfried Schäfer's charges a 3-1 win and their ticket through to the quarter-finals where the club last appeared in 2013.



ROUND OF 16 - EAST



Tianjin Quanjian added yet more gloss to an already noteworthy debut campaign by eliminating fellow Chinese side Guangzhou Evergrande on away goals following a dramatic 2-2 second leg draw.

After a goalless opening encounter in Tianjin, Ricardo Goulart gave two-time winners Guangzhou the lead on 17 minutes, before Alexandre Pato connected with an Axel Witsel cross to score just two minutes later.

The livewire Goulart re-established Guangzhou's lead three minutes after half-time, only for Wang Jie to level matters shortly before the hour mark with a strike which would ultimately send Tianjin through in the most dramatic of circumstances.

Shanghai SIPG became the second team from China to be ousted in the

Round of 16, as Shoma Doi's superb effort in the second leg earned Kashima Antlers a 4-3 aggregate success.

Yuma Suzuki and Daigo Nishi had both been on target in Kashima's 3-1 first leg win, although the Japanese outfit's advantage appeared to be under threat when Hulk scored for Shanghai only seven minutes into the return tie. However, Doi's flicked effort at the near post on 42 minutes would prove crucial as, notwithstanding Hulk's late penalty, Kashima progressed to the last eight for the first time since 2008.

Meanwhile, a goal in each leg from Ricardo Lopes helped Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors overcome Thailand's Buriram United 4-3 on aggregate.

Jeonbuk had gone into the first leg meeting as overwhelming favourites, but despite second-half strikes from Lopes and Son Jun-ho, Edgar Silva's



brace and a curling Diogo frvee-kick duly helped the Thai Premier League giants seal a 3-2 win.

With all still to play for in Jeonju, Lopes' magnificent volley set Jeonbuk on their way, before Lee Jae-sung converted an 84th minute free-kick to rubberstamp his side's passage through to the quarter-finals for an eighth time.

Suwon Samsung Bluewings confirmed there would be two clubs from Korea Republic in the next phase as they ended the hopes of domestic rivals Ulsan Hyundai with a 3-0 win in the second leg which saw them register a 3-1 aggregate victory.

QUARTER-FINALS



ESTEGHLAL vs AL SADD

Dynamic frontman Baghdad Bounedjah and midfielder Akram Afif both played starring roles as Al Sadd overcame Esteghlal to reach the semi-finals for the first time since they were crowned champions in 2011.

Bounedjah's brace - which included a second-half penalty - along with an Akram Afif strike saw Al Sadd seal a 3-1 first leg win at the Azadi Stadium. The victory was achieved even though they went behind in Tehran when goalkeeper Meshaal Aissa inexplicably allowed

Boualem Khoukhi's header to slip past him to gift the hosts an opener within the first quarter of an hour.

With one foot in the last four, Afif opened the scoring in the return encounter following a fine run and finish past Esteghlal goalkeeper Mehdi Rahmati midway through the first half.

Winfried Schäfer's side rallied impressively after the early setback though, as goals from Rouhollah Bagheri and Morteza Tabrizi either side of the

break gave Esteghlal a glimmer of hope.

However, Persepolis defender Rouzbeh Cheshmi was then dismissed for a second bookable offence, and with Al Sadd controlling the remainder of the game, the Qataris were awarded a penalty deep into added time after Rahmati hauled down Afif inside the box.

Tournament top scorer Bounedjah duly converted his 12th goal of the campaign to confirm his side's place in the semi-finals.



AL DUHAIL vs PERSEPOLIS

Persepolis qualified for the last four after becoming the first side to beat Al Duhail in this season's competition, success which saw them edge past their rivals from Qatar 3-2 on aggregate.

Godwin Mensha's late goal in the Azadi Stadium's white-hot atmosphere ultimately proved the difference as Persepolis reach the semi-finals for a second successive campaign.

The Iranians did not, however, have things all their way, as Almoez Ali's first-

leg header helped Al Duhail secure a 1-0 win in Doha and match Ulsan Hyundai Motors' record of nine consecutive AFC Champions League victories.

Worse was to come for Persepolis shortly after the half-hour mark of the second leg, defender Shojae Khalilzadeh's attempted clearance of Murad Naji's free-kick bouncing off Karim Boudiaf and over the line to give Al Duhail a crucial away goal.

Not to be outdone, Persepolis responded through captain Jalal Hossein who scored

with a fine half-volley on 57 minutes, before Al Duhail's Sultan Al Brake - under pressure from Bashar Resan following Ali Alipour's cross - steered the ball into his own net.

With momentum clearly on their side, Persepolis added a crucial third in the 78th minute when Mensha latched onto a long ball from Alireza Beiranvand, shrugged off his marker and rounded goalkeeper Amine Lecomte to settle the tie.



KASHIMA ANTLERS vs TIANJIN QUANJIAN

Japan's Kashima Antlers secured their first-ever semi-final appearance as successive wins helped them breeze past Tianjin Quanjian courtesy of a 5-0 aggregate success.

Playing hosts in the first leg, Kashima's early profligacy was quickly forgotten when Leo Silva's sweetly struck effort on 60 minutes gave his side the lead, before Serginho's thunderbolt from distance handed Go Oiwa's charges a welcome cushion to take into the return tie.

Clearly aware of the size of the task that lay ahead, Tianjin began the second leg brightly, with Alexandre Pato directing a close-range attempt straight at a relieved Kwoun Sun-Tae after only three minutes at the Macau Olympic Stadium.

However, within 10 minutes it was to be Kashima who opened the scoring instead, Serginho - a summer signing from Brazilian outfit Santos - nodding home a Yasushi Endo corner from in front of Tianjin goalkeeper Zhang Lu.

Atsuto Uchida then cleared a Pato volley off the line, before, just two minutes later, racing down the right wing and expertly finding Hiroki Abe who converted Antlers' second via a hefty deflection off Kwon Kyung-won.

Substitute Shoma Doi made it three in the 66th minute as Kashima, who qualified for the semi-finals of the Asian Cup Winners' Cup back in 1999, advanced with relative ease.



JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS vs SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS

Suwon Samsung Bluewings reached their first semi-final since 2011 after defeating Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors 4-2 on penalties following a 3-3 aggregate draw.

Goalkeeper Shin Hwa-yong was Suwon's hero as he saved three penalties - the first in second half stoppage time - and two in the resultant shootout.

Playing the first leg only 24 hours after the shock resignation of head coach Seo Jung-won, Suwon sensationally claimed a 3-0 win away from home. Dejan

Damjanovic scored twice and Han Eui-gwon headed home at the tail end of a match that did little, however, to hint at the drama that was still to come.

In need of goals, Jeonbuk took an 11th minute lead in the return fixture courtesy of Adriano's finish past Shin.

The visitors then reduced the aggregate deficit to a single goal through Choi Bok-kyung's header, before substitute Kim Shin-wook brought the teams level on 71 minutes.

In stoppage time, Adriano was hauled down inside the box. However, from the resulting spot-kick, and with the game there for Jeonbuk's taking, Shin denied the Brazilian to bring the 90 minutes to a stunning conclusion.

With no further goals materialising in extra time, the tie went to a penalty shootout. Shin duly saved from Kim Shin-wook and Lee Dong-gook, leaving Elvis Saric to convert his attempt and send Suwon through.

SEMI-FINALS



AL SADD SC vs PERSEPOLIS FC

1-2 on aggregate

Persepolis created history by reaching their first-ever AFC Champions League final following a 1-1 draw with Al Sadd in the second leg of their semi-final clash.

Siamac Nemati's second-half goal secured a 2-1 aggregate win for the hosts and a place in the continental showpiece – the first by an Iranian side since Zobahan appeared in 2010.

A 1-0 first leg triumph undoubtedly laid the foundations for the success, with Ali Alipour's late penalty proving crucial to the eventual outcome of what proved to be an intriguing last four tie.

The opening encounter at Al Sadd's Jassim bin Hamad Stadium home began with an air of caution, although Persepolis could, and probably should, have gone ahead on 18 minutes when Godwin Mensha skied Bashar Resan's cross over the bar.

Al Sadd came close to taking the lead themselves just two minutes before the break, Akram Afif's drive forcing a fine stop from goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand.

Little changed in the second half, with tournament top scorer Baghdad Bounedjah kept quiet by a resolute Persepolis backline marshalled superbly by captain Jalal Hosseini.

The stalemate remained until the 86th minute, when Persepolis finally broke the deadlock against the run of play. After a quick counter-attack, Al Sadd custodian Saad Al Sheeb brought down Alipour in the box. The striker



took the penalty himself and made no mistake to hand the Iranians a crucial advantage ahead of the return fixture. Now needing to score, it was Al Sadd who pressed from the start of the second leg, as a capacity crowd at Tehran's Azadi Stadium watched on.

After seeing an early Abdelkarim Hassan smartly saved by Beiranvand, Al Sadd went ahead – and levelled the aggregate score – on 17 minutes. Once again it was Bounedjah who was on target, this time the Algerian striker seizing on hesitant Persepolis defending to find the net with aplomb. Trailing at half-time, Persepolis drew level in the 49th minute when Nemati volleyed in Godwin Mensha's cross to make it 1-1 and put his side back in front on aggregate.

Al Sadd struggled to make inroads after Nemati's strike, and they could have gone further behind had custodian Meshaal Aissa not denied Alipour with a point-blank save shortly after the hour mark.

In the last genuine chance of a pulsating match, Beiranvand produced a stunning reflex save from Xavi's late header to ensure Persepolis' progress much to the delight of the home fans.



KASHIMA ANTLERS vs SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS

6-5 on aggregate

Kashima Antlers produced two stunning comebacks to book their place in the final thanks to a 6-5 aggregate win over Suwon Samsung Bluewings.

The Japanese side twice dug deep to overcome their Korea Republic opponents as heroic performances in both legs ensured a debut appearance in the title showdown.

In a sign of the drama to come, there was a sensational start to the first leg in Kashima, as Suwon took the lead in the second minute through Atsuto Uchida's own goal.

Incredibly, it was 2-0 to the visitors just four minutes later. A poor defensive clearance saw the ball fall to Dejan Damjanovic who beat Kashima goalkeeper Kwoun Sun-tae from a narrow angle.

Not to be outdone, the hosts hit back in the 21st minute with another own goal, this time Jang Ho-ik heading into his own net under pressure from Yuma Suzuki.

After a scrappy start to the second period, Suwon almost regained their

two-goal lead in the 65th minute, but Kwoun scrambled to push out Im Sang-hyeob's overhead kick.

However, with six minutes remaining, Kashima restored parity when substitute Daigo Nishi sent in a low cross from the right which Serginho stroked home at the far post.

Koki Anzai then rattled the bar with a fierce drive on 87 minutes, before Uchida reacted quickest to score with a deflected effort following a free-kick and secure a remarkable 3-2 victory for Kashima.

The second leg was to prove no less enthralling as, once again, Go Oiwa's charges came back from the brink to emerge victorious.

Shuto Yamamoto opened the scoring for Kashima at the Suwon World Cup Stadium, the defender heading home Serginho's 25th minute free-kick from wide on the right.

Up against it, Suwon started the second half brightly and they pulled level in the 52nd minute when Im converted a rebound after Kwoun had saved Yeom Ki-hun's initial header.



Sensing another, Suwon duly seized the initiative as first Jo Sung-jin powered home a header and then Damjanovic found the net to make it 3-1 to Suwon on the hour mark.

Elvis Saric missed by inches two minutes later, and he was made to pay for that error on 64 minutes when Nishi's strike went in off an upright to reduce the deficit even further.

That set the stage for Serginho to make it four goals from four AFC Champions League appearances with eight minutes to play, as he lashed home a loose ball in the area to seal a 3-3 draw and maintain Kashima's continental aspirations.

FINAL

KASHIMA ANTLERS TRIUMPH ON HISTORIC NIGHT AT AZADI STADIUM



The Azadi Stadium was dressed up as never before as Persepolis FC, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran left no stone unturned to ensure the return leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League final against Kashima Antlers was one to remember.

A record-breaking crowd of 100,000, including more than 1,000 Iranian female fans and 250 Kashima supporters who had made the long trip from Japan, filled the Azadi Stadium to the brim, adding more lustre to an already iconic venue.

Such was the demand to see the game, the online ticketing site crashed after just minutes as more than 1.2 million Persepolis fans tried to assure their attendance for what they hoped would be a part of history - their beloved club had never won the AFC Champions League and they undoubtedly wanted to live up to their reputation as being the Iranian club's 12th man.

In reaching the final, that incredible home support had helped Persepolis throughout the competition as they won their three group stages matches, overcame first leg deficits in both the Round of 16 and the quarter-finals, and recovered from being 1-0 down to hold Al Sadd 1-1 in the second leg of the semi-finals to advance 2-1 on aggregate.

Kashima, though, were also chasing a momentous achievement, as they too had never lifted the coveted trophy and doing it in Tehran would have guaranteed a 20th major trophy for the Japanese outfit.

The fact that Persepolis had lost the first leg only a week before appeared not to faze the fans, especially as their club had - for large parts - held their own against Kashima Antlers and had been unlucky not to score, at the very least, one away goal.

Despite the Kashima Soccer Stadium being packed with 35,022, of which only about 100 were Persepolis supporters,

it was the Iranian club who started the brighter and had two big chances to take the lead.

The first genuine opportunity fell to the visitors when a cross from the right was nodded into the path of Ali Alipour in the fourth minute. Just eight yards from goal, the striker looked certain to score but Jung Seung-hyun threw himself into the path of the shot and blocked it with his head.

Two minutes later, Ahmad Noorollahi's free-kick from the left was tipped over by Kwoun Sun-tae as Persepolis applied early pressure.

A pep talk at half-time, during which Kashima head coach Go Oiwa stressed to his players that they had played without their usual intensity during the first period, had the desired result. Kashima were a different side when they emerged for the second 45 minutes.

Oiwa's charges created the first chance of the second half when Hiroki Abe

instigated a move that ended with Serginho laying the ball back for fellow Brazilian Leo Silva, who tried to curl a shot into the top corner, but his attempt drifted wide.

Silva, however, soon had reason to celebrate as he gave Kashima the lead in the 58th minute. The midfielder man played a neat one-two with Shoma on the edge of the Persepolis penalty area and cut inside before curling a low left-footed shot into the corner from 18 yards.

Kashima then added their second in the 70th minute. The ball broke to Kento Misao 20 yards out and he played a deft pass into the path of Serginho on the right and the Brazilian placed his shot into the far corner from the edge of the six-yard box as the Japanese side ensured themselves a healthy position going into the return leg.

Kashima, however, made the trip to Tehran fully aware that nothing had been decided, with head coach Aiwa emphasising to his players that as far as they were concerned, the score was 0-0.

His Persepolis counterpart Branko Ivankovic was confident that his team would rebound, and it was against this backdrop that both teams entered the Azadi Stadium for the warm-up.

Even Persepolis could have been excused for being overawed by the support in the stands and the cheers became deafening when more than 1,000 female fans took their places – the first time in 40 years that female fans had been allowed into the Azadi Stadium for an official match, adding even more gloss a distinctly historic night.

The opening ceremony consisted of a performance by one of IR Iran's most popular singers and there was a firework display to further warm the players and fans on a chilly night ahead of kick-off.

Having been in the stadium since noon, there was a roar from the fans and flashes from a multitude of mobile phones as both teams trooped onto the pitch and when referee Ahmed Abu Bakar Al Kaf from Oman blew for the kick-off, Persepolis were ready for their shot at glory. Kashima, however, as they would go on to prove, had done their homework.

Oiwa had praised his team's second half performance in the first leg, one he described as the ideal display, where solidity in defence was complemented by excellence in the final third. It was, though, a different Kashima in the return leg.

Persepolis dominated, and the match stats would ultimately show they had 62 percent of the possession, with six

the visitors' solid backline.

With Persepolis needing a goal to reduce the deficit and to have any chance of becoming continental champions, Alipour saw his volleyed effort shortly after the hour fly wide, before Ivankovic made two changes, bringing on Mohsen Rabiekhah and Ehsan Alvanzadeh in the hope of a breakthrough.



shots on target to Kashima's none. The Iranians, who began the match with the only change of either team from the first leg in Kashima – replacing suspended midfielder Siamak Nemati with Adam Hemati – had the first sight on goal in the opening minutes when Alipour fired wide from just inside the right side of the box, before Shoma Doi drilled wide at the other end of the field on 13 minutes.

Alipour had another attempt on goal just before the half-hour mark but his header lacked the power to trouble Kashima goalkeeper Kwoun Sun-tae, who had previously won the AFC Champions League twice with former club Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors.

There were few clear-cut opportunities in the remainder of the half, but Bashar Resan could have opened the scoring for the hosts in dramatic fashion seven minutes before the break, when he muscled his way past two challenges to get into the Kashima penalty area, but Kwoun was alert to the attempt to beat him at his near post.

The sides came out to a wall of noise after the interval, but Persepolis continued to struggle to break down

The home fans raised the already deafening noise even louder in an effort to will their players forward, but it was to no avail, as Kashima's defence stood strong to secure a 0-0 draw and win 2-0 on aggregate.

After seeing their club become the third side from Japan, after Gamba Osaka and Urawa Red Diamonds, to lift the AFC Champions League title, the handful of Kashima Antlers fans cheered but so did the Persepolis supporters, who showed great sportsmanship as they applauded both teams as they made their way up to collect their medals and, for Kashima, the coveted trophy.

It may have been Kashima who claimed the title, but both teams, and the 100,000 fans, were all winners on a historic night for Asian football.



CHAMPIONS



CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL 2018

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AMOUNT: **USD**

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CHAMP



CHAMPIONS (JPN)

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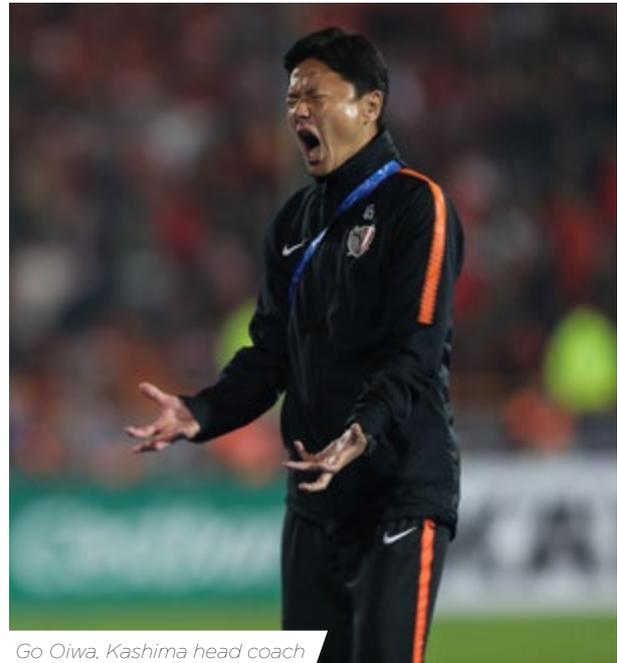


All Systems Go

He lost his voice but won the title. Go Oiwa was happy with that. After the goalless draw at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran that earned a historic first AFC Champions League win for Kashima Antlers, he was quick to heap praise on his Iranian opponents. "Persepolis were the strongest team we played in the Champions League this year," he said. "Not just the team and their tactics but also their fans, who were magnificent. It was a very tough game but my players were very mobile; they battled well; and I am delighted with the result. I lost my voice, but it was worth it."

Data can be deceptive. The record book states that, when he stretched his black tracksuit to its limits by jubilantly lifting the trophy into the night sky of Tehran, Go Oiwa had reached the summit of Asian club football after barely 18 months in charge at Kashima Antlers. But, although it was true that he took the helm from Masatada Ishii as recently as May 2017, he had been assistant coach before that and a member of the club's coaching staff since 2011, almost immediately after hanging up his playing boots and completing his coach education. The playing boots, by the way, had been well used. He accumulated just over 500 appearances in all competitions – the last 231 of them for Kashima Antlers – and the illustrious career at centre-back inevitably encouraged him, when he turned to coaching, to value the art of defending. "My ideal football," he maintains, "is about solid defending and being efficient in offensive play."

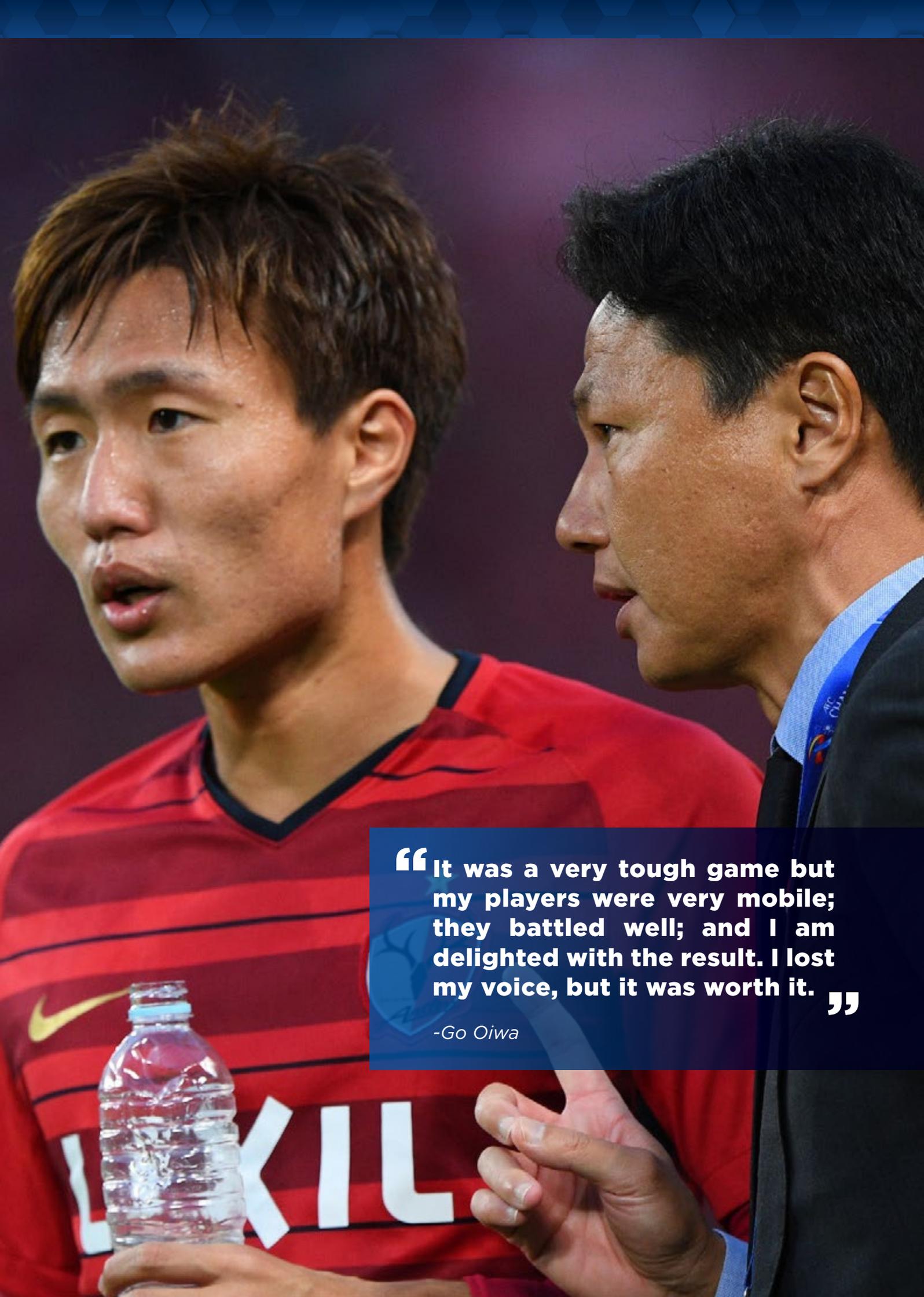
During the run to the title, he teamed up with a man almost equally steeped in the club's history. Zico, player and director at Kashima during a period embracing the turn of the century, had returned as technical director to give an extra Brazilian touch to a team rich in collective virtues. The AFC Champions League triumph provided both men with a happy recompense for a gruelling campaign of over 50 matches which had challenged the players to, as he put it, "overcome their physical and mental fatigue". To his credit, he had imbued his team with discipline, spirit, composure and a rebound mentality that stood them in good stead for moments of adversity – such as coming back to beat Suwon Bluewings in the home leg of the semi-final after falling 0-2 behind in the opening six minutes. Or bouncing back from 3-1 down to draw the return match 3-3. Or surviving (albeit without conceding) an equally rocky first half in the home leg of the final against Persepolis.



Go Oiwa, Kashima head coach

"I stressed to the players during the break," he admitted after that game, "that we had not played to our normal standard. Persepolis were very positive and aggressive, while we were slightly negative in our play. We were too defensive and that allowed them to come at us. We changed that in the second half. We pushed forward more; we used the flanks more freely to stretch their defence; and this allowed us to play more easily through the middle and create chances." The half-time talk laid the foundations for the two goals which, in the final reckoning, clinched the title.

Even so, he defended resolutely against euphoria as the team headed for the showdown in Tehran. "All away matches in the Champions League are tough," he conceded. "But we have the experience to deal with this. The key is to play the match the way we normally play – by controlling it from start to finish. If we manage to control the game in the way we want to, victory will be ours." On the touchline at the Azadi Stadium, Go Oiwa shouted himself hoarse as he urged his players to do just that. At the age of 46, he wrote history at the club he had joined 15 years earlier, savouring the satisfaction that "the name of Kashima Antlers will now echo throughout Asia."



“ It was a very tough game but my players were very mobile; they battled well; and I am delighted with the result. I lost my voice, but it was worth it. ”

-Go Oiwa





TECHNICAL TOPICS





“This edition of the AFC Champions League, with the games at the top end of the competition coming so soon after the World Cup, provoked a lot of reflections about the qualities teams need to compete at elite level,” mused AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh. “And, among other things, the top teams in the Champions League illustrated the value of being streetwise.”

The dictionary definition of the word ‘streetwise’ is “having the experience and knowledge necessary to deal with the potential difficulties or dangers of life”. As Andy Roxburgh elaborates, the translation into footballing parlance touches on various aspects of the ‘experience and knowledge’ which, allied with talent and technical ability, can make the difference at the peak of the football pyramid.

The debating point for coaches is to what extent players can be educated in street wisdom, if at all. And, if responses

are positive, how best to do it. If the dictionary definition is correct in pointing to ‘experience and knowledge’, it immediately leads into one of the AFC Champions League’s perennial talking points about extending contacts between clubs in the East and West Zones. In terms of international experience, it may be significant that, at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, only 11% of the squad members in Russia were playing their football in AFC leagues, with 30 of them – more than one-third of the total of 82 – at clubs in the Saudi League.

Understanding the difference

In the opinion of Sydney FC coach Steve Corica, in the development of the streetwise elite player “game understanding is the key. That is what we have to work the most on. And, the better the player, the smaller the amount of information you need to give him.” Paulo Sousa, the coach at Tianjin Quanjian during the Chinese

club’s campaign, added “it’s about players who have a well-developed understanding of spaces and timing along with the ability to make quick decisions. I would say that the biggest difference between the elite teams in Asia and Europe, or even South America, is not so much technique as this sort of understanding and game appreciation. We see that in the Asian competition it is so often the foreign players’ know-how that makes the difference.” He cites Pato as an example. After the away leg of the quarter-final against the eventual champions Kashima Antlers, the AFC technical observer praised his “great skills with pace and vision, not only with penetrating solo runs but also delivering the ball to team-mates at exactly the right moment.” “Maybe more importantly,” Paulo Sousa adds, “he gels the team together tactically.” This dovetails with observations made in reports on previous seasons, when tactical compactness and the ability to sustain high-intensity football were

highlighted as issues to be addressed within the Asian game.

Kashima Antlers owed much of their success to streetwise players in each department. Serginho, like Pato, gelled the team's middle-to-front play. Léo Silva played the role so adeptly performed by Ngolo Kanté for France at the World Cup: all-action displays, ubiquitous presence; and a key figure in the team's transition play as the triggerman for collective moment. When he won the ball, he would immediately initiate an attack and support it with a forward run. The three examples, of course, are Brazilian - which illustrates once again that, as in previous seasons, decisive roles (and goalscoring) are dominated by players who have brought their footballing wisdom from the street football played in Brazil.

At the back, it was a slightly different story. Or maybe not. "Was it coincidence that, in the final, both team sheets featured centre-backs from the Korea Republic? The champions' Kim Young Gwon and Al-Ahli's Kwon Kyung Won were the pillars of their teams' defensive play. Those responsible for educating centre-backs at youth development levels might well regard them as benchmarks in terms of power, strength, uncompromising tackling, aerial power and reliability." The comment is culled from the first technical report on the AFC Champions League in 2015 - and Kashima Antlers centre-back Jung Seung-Hyun demonstrated that the

words were still valid in 2018 as, in addition to his repertoire of defensive skills, he displayed streetwise qualities of awareness, anticipation and ability to stay within the limits.

Transition period

The final was disputed by two teams who illustrated the general norm by pressurising the ball-carrier but dropping quickly into a defensive block that concentrated ball-winning efforts into the midfield or defensive-third areas. Suwong Bluewings were among the few who adopted sustained high counter-pressing techniques to pre-empt opposition counterattacks with regains in advanced areas. High pressing was occasionally used as an emergency response to an adverse scoreline, but the general scarcity emerged as one of the debating points of the season. The issue is evidently linked with the mechanisms of teams' attacking play. Persepolis, for example, rarely committed more than four players to advanced areas and were therefore short of manpower when it came to the feasibility of high collective pressing. Conditioning factors could also include climatic factors or the fact that some teams went into the crucial knockout games very early in their domestic seasons and arguably felt that there was not enough fuel in the tank to cope with a high-energy strategy.

Persepolis also exemplified the tendency towards direct counterattacking based on immediate back-to-front passing

after regains at the back. They provided a classic example during the home leg of the quarter-final against Al Duhail, when goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand was credited with the assist for the goal which clinched a 3-1 win. Striker Godwin Mensha latched on to his long ball and ran through to score.

During the 2018 season, 35 goals could clearly be attributed to fast counterattacking - a figure that represents 13% of the goals scored in open play. Just over half of the successes (18) could be described as collective counters with players swarming quickly forward. A prime example was provided in the closing minutes of the Group G game between Guangzhou Evergrande and Jeju United, when Ricardo Goulart's strike clinched a 5-3 victory. Most of the remainder (13) fell into the classic counterattacking category, an outstanding illustration being the 78th-minute break culminated by Al-Ain's Swedish striker Markus Berg that sealed a 1-4 away victory over Al-Rayyan in Group D. Only four goals could be attributed to lightning-fast responses to ball-winning in advanced areas.

Back to front

Beiranvand and his accomplices in the Persepolis defensive unit kept seven (of the total of 63) clean sheets during the competition. Iran's World Cup goalkeeper was one of many who warranted credit for their shot-stopping abilities, among them the Suwon Bluewings keeper Shin Hwa-



Yong who, apart from crucial penalty saves during the quarter-final against Jeonbuk Motors, received praise from the AFC technical observers for his leadership qualities in organising the defence. In general, however, the AFC Champions League reflected a feature also prevalent in age-limit competitions: the keeper operated as a keeper rather than a sweeper-keeper, with outfielders seldom bringing him into play during the construction of attacking moves from the back. An overview of the competition revealed considerable diversity in goalkeeping standards and techniques, illustrated by a number of situations which generated problems or uncertainties among the last line of defence.

Although the influential contributions by South American players (Brazilians in particular) promoted some fluent combination play, the season demonstrated that the teams who focused on a passing game through the thirds often went unrewarded. During the Round of 16, eight of the 13 games which produced a victory were won by the team with a lesser

share of possession. And two of three draws corresponded to the tie where Guangzhou Evergrande had 62% and 70% of possession yet lost to Tianjin Quanjian on away goals. In this round, Saudi club Al Ahli became the only team to dominate the ball against semi-finalists Al Sadd, albeit narrowly. During the first leg of the semi-final against Persepolis, Jesualdo Ferreira's team had 68% of the ball but were beaten by a late trademark counter. Despite 65% in the return, the match was drawn. However, only three of the 10 games that yielded a victory as the competition neared its climax were won by the team with less of the ball.

Home and away

Possession statistics reflect the strategic adjustments made by many coaches when travelling to away games. Kashima Antlers among them. At home, Go OIwa's team had 68% of possession against Tianjin Quanjian; 60% against Suwon Bluewings; and 55% in the final against Persepolis. On the road, those figures dropped to 39%, 37% and 38% respectively.

Team shapes varied accordingly. Guangzhou Evergrande dropped into a 1-4-2-3-1 formation in Tianjin but reverted to 1-4-4-2 at home. Al Jazira added an extra defender for their away leg against Persepolis. The bottom line, however, was that the Round of 16 produced 12 home wins and only one victory for visitors. Even though the quarter-finals performed some plastic surgery on the figures with four away wins, the final balance from 30 knockout fixtures was 17 home wins; seven draws; and six away victories. Nine of the top 16 teams, at some stage, opted for a 1-4-2-3-1 structure; six generally preferred variations on 1-4-4-2 (including the two finalists); and Buriram United were lone implementers of the 1-5-3-2 set-up.

Scheming minds

Although the 1-4-3-3 formation was used (Al Duhail, SIPG Shanghai, Jeonbuk, Suwon...) it was often sporadic rather than the default setting. The notable exception was provided by semi-finalists Al Sadd, whose midfielder Xavi Hernández made more passes than any other player in the AFC Champions League. His contribution





to the Qatari team's combination play raised questions about the scarcity of midfield schemers in the competition. Xavi was fielded in a relatively advanced position behind the front three and was protected by two more conservative midfielders. Although he was the key distributor in his team's middle-to-front play, his brand of 'playmaking' differed substantially from the role adopted by, say, Luka Modrić during Croatia's run to the World Cup final, when he dictated the tempo from a deeper position. For champions Kashima Antlers, Léo Silva was the nearest approximation to the playmaking role with Misao collaborating in the tasks of controlling the tempo and switching play. In general, the AFC Champions League mirrored other competitions in that the traditional playmaker was conspicuous by his absence.

High and wide

The 2018 competition also extended the tendency so extensively employed at the World Cup for full-backs to be

key components in attacking play along the flanks. An increasing number of coaches, such as Seo Jung-won at Suwon Bluewings, were prepared to commit both full-backs simultaneously to attack, whereas silver medallists Persepolis adopted a more pragmatic approach based primarily on defensive priorities imposed by the opposition's wing play. Their semi-final opponents, Al Sadd, offered a prime example of effective relationships between the full-backs and the wingers or wide midfielders, with Hamid Ismaeil pushing forward to combine with Hasan Al Haydos on the right while, on the left, Abdelkarim Hassan formed a dangerous partnership with the pacy Akram Afif. Other full-backs who caught the eye of AFC technical observers with their attacking qualities included the Esteghlal right-back Khosro Heydari; Tianjin Quanjian's left-back Wang Xiaolong or the champions' right-back Atsuto Uchida. All were praised not only for the athleticism of their overlapping runs but also for the

quality of their crossing and their ability to find a balance between attack and defensive priorities. As Carlos Alberto Parreira remarked at the World Cup, "I still subscribe to the idea that full-backs are, first and foremost, defenders."

Rebound mentalities

Among the qualities of streetwise players and teams is the ability to find positive responses to adverse situations. The season provided various examples, among them the champions' mental strength during the semi-final against Suwon Bluewings when they recovered from going 0-2 behind within the first six minutes of their home leg to win 3-2; and then to rebound from a 1-3 deficit during the last half-hour of the return leg to draw 3-3. Jeonbuk Motors, in the quarter-final, bounced back from a 0-3 home defeat to record a 0-3 win in the away leg against Suwon Bluewings - and would probably have won the tie had the Suwon keeper not saved a late penalty. Al Sadd showed similar fortitude when they visited Esteghlal in the quarter-finals. The Qatari team were in possession when a midfielder opted to loft the ball back into his penalty area, where the centre-back's header eluded the goalkeeper and, amid jubilation among a 78,116 crowd in Tehran, put the home team ahead. Despite this example of the unexpected cruelties of football, Jesualdo Ferreira's side recovered from the psychological blow of the untimely own goal and went on to record a 1-3 away win.

Strengthening the links

At the recent Club Coaches Forum, Choi Kang-hee commented "the quality of our Champions League is still a bit lower than in Europe. The clubs, at least the ones in East Asia, realise the importance of competing in the Champions League and are highly motivated when they take part. Some clubs are definitely developing and I see a slight improvement in the level every year." Takeshi Ono, one of the AFC team of technical observers, added "the standard is certainly improving but there are still one or two weak links." The debating point is whether one of the links to strengthen is the education of more streetwise players...

KEY FEATURES

AL DUHAIL SC

- 1-4-3-3 with single screening midfielder or 1-4-2-3-1 with two
- Emphasis on building through thirds with neat combination play
- Tactical flexibility; rotations in midfield; interchanging wingers
- No 12 Karim Boudiaf linking attacks from central midfield
- Fast attack-to-defence transitions into deep 1-4-4-1-1 block
- Intense pressure on ball-carrier as from midfield
- Attacking philosophy with Brazilian accents in each department



AL SADD SC

- 1-4-3-3 usually with two screening midfielders + No 6 Xavi at apex
- Possession game; patient attacking with skilful combination football
- Xavi the midfield catalyst; control under pressure, vision, experience
- Disciplined defending; adventurous full-backs; pressing from midfield
- No 11 Bounedjah a fast, agile, mobile striker with excellent ball control
- Good transitions in both directions; variation in build-up, switches of play
- Tactically well-organised; good positional play, changes of tempo



ESTEGHLAL FC

- Variations on 1-4-1-4-1 with single deep-lying screening midfielder
- Mix of short-passing moves and direct supply from back to front
- Fast counterattacking after ball-winning in defensive third
- Defence led by No 4 Cheshmi; strong in air, on ground; building from back
- Emphasis on wing play; attacking full-backs, especially No 2 Heydari on right
- No 91 R. Bagheri the key attacker behind main striker No 78 Tabrizi
- Tactical flexibility; pressure generally deep or from midfield



JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS

- 1-4-2-3-1 with switches to 1-4-4-2; 1-4-1-4-1 or 1-5-4-1 deep defending
- Effective attacking via wide areas; crosses and diagonals into box
- No 9 Shin Wook the target; good movement, excellent aerial ability
- Strong, compact defending; centre-back No 3 Min Jae the leader
- Effective use of back-to-front passing, winning of second ball
- Aggressive pressing in midfield; No 10 Leonardo surging attacking runs
- Tactical flexibility with substitutions to modify team structure



KASHIMA ANTLERS

- 1-4-4-2 with skilful No 18 Serginho playing off main striker No 9 Suzuki
- Combination game with changes of tempo via diagonal or forward passes
- Full-backs, notably No 22 Nishi on right, in good wing play; quality crossing
- No20 Misao the midfield controller in attack and defence; movement, vision
- Disciplined, compact defending led by centre-back No 35 Seung Hyun
- Intense collective pressing in midfield and, sometimes, advanced areas
- Strong collective unit; talent, work ethic, composure, team spirit



PERSEPOLIS FC

- 1-4-4-2 with occasional use of midfield diamond or 1-3-4-3
- Extensive use of direct passing by keeper, defenders to strikers
- Attacks exploiting pace and skills of No70 Alipour, No90 Mensha
- Rational attacking with two midfielders up; two staying back
- Aggressive pressure on ball-carrier; occasional high pressing
- Well-organised defending organised by No4 Hosseini
- Tactically disciplined; strong team and work ethics, commitment to cause



SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS

- Variations on 1-4-3-3 with occasional switches to 1-4-4-2
- 1-4-1-4-1 defence led by strong skilful centre-back No5 Jo Sung-Jin
- Immediate aggressive high collective pressing in opponents' half
- No 19 Sarić controlling tempo; short, long passes; intense midfield pressing
- Fast penetration by full-backs + wingers, notably No 11 Im Sang-Hyeob on right
- No 10 Dejan the target; skills, finishing, moves to create space for team-mates
- Dynamic team with attacking vocation and strong work ethic



TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC

- 1-3-5-2 or 1-4-2-3-1 with two screening midfielders
- Fast transitions to compact 1-4-4-1-1 defensive block
- Emphasis on fast attacking with penetrating runs in wide areas
- Overlapping full-backs; quality crosses by No19 Wang Xiaolong on left
- No 10 Pato the key tactically; solo skills, finishing, dangerous free-kicks
- Defence led by No 21 Kwon Kyung-Won; 1 v 1 ability, good passes from back
- Disciplined, well-organised, hard-working unit with strong team spirit







GOALSCORING ANALYSIS



Striking facts



What goes up usually comes down. The 2017 AFC Champions League had registered a 27.5% increase in the number of goals scored and this was, unsurprisingly, a prelude to a downturn in 2018. But the decrease was restricted to 7.61% and the total of 364 goals at an average of 2.89 per match represented a middle-of-the-road figure in comparison with the much lower tallies of 309 and 334 which had been posted in 2016 and 2015 respectively. The final balance was also in a midfield position between the average of 2.64 at the FIFA World Cup in Russia and the UEFA Champions League record of 3.21 during the 2017/18 season.

Interestingly, the knockout rounds, where the average was 3.1 goals per fixture, were more prolific than the AFC Champions League group stage, in which the 96 matches yielded 271 goals at 2.82 per game. During the KO phase of the competition leading up to the final, 44 goals were scored in the East zone and 47 in the West. Jeonbuk Motors emerged as the highest scorers, thanks largely to the 22 goals which made the team from the Korea Republic by far and away the highest scorers in the group stage. Their final balance of 2.9 goals per game contrasted sharply with silver medallists Persepolis who scored 17 times in 14 games at an average of 1.2

and, at the other end, kept seven clean sheets. The champions, Kashima Antlers, averaged 1.8 goals per match.

The pattern of individual scoring registered an evolution in that only four of the 15 players who scored five or more hailed from Brazil – compared with five of the top eight in the previous season. Eight of the top scorers, however, were from non-AFC countries, with two African and two European players joining the four Brazilians.

The 2018 competition produced one goal per 8.75 goal attempts although, once again, it has to be added that no more than 35% were on target (36% in the previous season). It means that one in three of the on-target attempts found its way into the net. The goalscoring charts logs the technical and tactical actions which led to the season's 364 goals.

Open Play

Goals scored in open play accounted for 73% of the season's total – just a single per cent higher than in 2017 and identical to the figure registered in 2015. Numerically, the total faded from 284 to 266 with the losses spread pretty much across the board. Goals derived from

combination play continued along their downward path – as they have done in AFC's age-limit competitions. Less than one in ten of open-play goals (9.4% to be precise) stemmed from elaborated attacking moves. This represents a stark contrast with Europe's equivalent competition where, in 2017/18 three times the number of goals were down to passing moves – 24% of the open-play total. There were a number of outstanding combination moves, including two among the season's Top Ten: the 77th-minute move finished by Oscar during Shanghai SIPG's 4-1 home win against Melbourne Victory; and the goal scored by Léo Silva which allowed Kashima Antlers to break the deadlock in the first leg of the final. Both goals had Brazilian accents. Al Sadd, inspired by Xavi Hernández who, with a total of 715, executed more passes than anyone else in the competition, were the top team in terms of combination-play successes, followed by the champions, who capitalised on the skills of Léo Silva and Serginho. The debating point is whether more needs to be done at player-development levels to encourage creative passing interchanges in the final third.

Still focusing on the debit column, the number of goals resulting from through

passes fell by 14 yet still accounted for 19% of the open-play total. In this category, Al Duhail drew the greatest dividends with six goals originating from a defence-splitting pass. Long-range shooting accounted for nine goals fewer than in the previous season but was still fertile terrain, considering that, in 2016, only 20 goals had been struck from long distance. In 2018, 13% of the open-play goals were derived from long-range efforts, many of them spectacular – to the extent that seven of them made the Top Ten of the season. Although none of them featured on that particular ranking, Ulsan Hyundai made substantial profits on their long-range finishing, scoring five of their 16 goals from outside the box.

However, among the generalised downturn, wing play proved to be an exception, with crosses establishing themselves as the competition’s major supplier of goals. The total of 75 was six higher than in 2017 and accounted for 28% of the open-play goals (compared with 20% in Europe’s equivalent). This illustrated a notable upward trend bearing in mind that in 2016 the number of goals from crosses stood at 54. In this department, Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors stood out, with nine of their goals originating in deliveries from the wide areas. The combined totals for crosses, cut-backs and diagonals account for a few decimal points under 40% of the open-play successes while the profits from through passes and solo runs declined.

One of the other thought-provoking statistic to emerge from the 2018 season was that the number of defensive errors and own goals both registered notable increases – to the extent that their combined total made them the second most fertile source of goals after crosses.

Set Plays

Once again, set plays accounted for than one-quarter of the goals scored in the AFC Champions League. The total of 98 goals from dead-ball situations signified 27%, a whisker short of the 28% in 2017. Debate on how much training-ground time should be dedicated to dead-ball rehearsals can be fuelled by contrasting data from two other major competitions. At the FIFA World Cup in Russia, marked by the introduction of VAR technology, set plays accounted for a huge 35% share



of the goal tally. On the other hand, in the 2017/18 UEFA Champions League, the figure fell sharply to 19.5%. One of the factors to inject into the equation is the extent of opportunities to scout future opponents and cater for dead-ball eventualities.

Pole position in the race to dominate set-play charts has fluctuated between penalties and corner kicks with, in the 2018 AFC Champions League, the former taking top spot. Spot kicks accounted for 38% of the competition’s dead-ball goals. The total of 37, incidentally, may not tally exactly with other statistics, as it includes one goal scored from a rebound after the penalty: for Al Sadd in the 70th minute of the away leg against Al-Ahli in the Round of 16, when the competition’s top scorer Baghdad Bounedjah slotted home. The leading beneficiary among the participants was Al-Ain, who scored five of 13 goals from the penalty spot.

In the meantime, the number of successfully-converted corners was dropping from 37 in 2017 to 30 in 2018 – but still represented 31% of the season’s set-play goals. This department again revealed a contrast between club and national team football. The final balance in the AFC Champions League told a story of one success per 41 corners. This was not too dissimilar to the European counterpart, where the ratio was 1:45. At the FIFA World Cup, on the other hand, corners had produced more handsome rewards: one goal per 29 corners. The champions underlined the potential value of corners, with

Kashima Antlers converting five during the run to the title.

Corners provided three of the season’s top ten set-play goals but could do little to rival spectacular conversions of direct free kicks which earned the top four places in the ranking. They were, however, four of only six successes from this type of dead-ball situation – four fewer than in the previous season. Goals resulting from indirect free kicks registered a consistency with 22 successes compared with 23 in 2017. Goals attributable to throw-ins declined from nine to three but one of them – Persepolis’ 36th-minute opener scored by Farshad Ahmadzadeh in the Group C game against Al-Wasl – was selected among the season’s best set-play goals.







TALKING POINTS



The best in two worlds?



Prior to the second leg of the final in Tehran, Kashima Antlers head coach Go Oiwa was reminded by the media that this was his team's fourth game in 11 days and that the total number of fixtures during the season that was nearing its end had already surpassed the 50-mark. He was asked whether physical and mental fatigue could be a conditioning factor in the Japanese club's bid to win the AFC Champions League for the first time. To his credit, the response transmitted all the right messages. "We have been dealing with a tight schedule since the beginning of the season," he said, "and I don't think we should start using this as an excuse now that we are 90 minutes away from winning the title. The players may be physically and mentally tired but, after a couple of days of rest, they are looking forward to the return leg."

Reporters also reminded him that the team could not afford to take an eye off the domestic ball, given that Kashima were fighting for a placing in the J-League which would offer an opportunity to extend the AFC Champions League adventure into the following season.

Once the trophy had been presented, the fireworks had faded into the Tehran sky and the confetti had been cleared from the Azadi Stadium, the scenario provoked a reflection or two. Among the top eight in the AFC Champions League, Kashima were not alone in struggling for domestic success. Jeonbuk Motors and Al Duhail, both eliminated in the quarter-finals, were the only clubs to top their league tables. Semi-finalists Al Sadd were not far behind them in Qatar. Silver medallists Persepolis, serial title-winners in Iran, were still handily placed

but had drawn as many games as they had won and were struggling to score goals. Esteghlal were way below them, having won less than 30% of their league games. Suwon Bluewings told a similarly disappointing story with 13 wins in their 36 K League matches. Ditto Tianjin Quanjian, stranded in the middle of the Chinese Super League with nine victories to show from 30 fixtures. Hence the talking point: why do teams find it so difficult to combine domestic and international successes?



Travelling broadens the mind?

The fatigue factor is evidently among the more plausible explanations. Jeonbuk coach Choi Kang-Hee, at the recent AFC Elite Club Coaches Forum, commented “when you play two games per week, rest and recovery become major issues. When you add on injuries and the number of your key players regularly away on national team duty, it’s obvious that this is the aspect you have to focus on.” Paulo Sousa, in charge at Tianjin Quanjian during their AFC Champions League campaign, added “it’s difficult to design training programmes when your prime concern is rest and recovery. You don’t find time to repeat the tactical exercises that you want to work on.” The Champions League evidently entails considerable air miles – and one of the anecdotes of the season was provided by Tianjin when, due to a clash of dates with another event, the home leg of their quarter-final was transferred to Macau which, as the crow flies, is just short of 2,000km away. As the plane flies, it means almost four hours in the air. Sousa’s side lost the ‘home’ leg 0-3.

The issue has greater relevance because it interlocks with some of the competition’s perennial debating points. At the Coaches Forum, Esteghlal boss Winfried Schäfer reiterated the view that the competition should permit greater contact between



East and West – an opinion strongly voiced in the West on the back of 12 wins in the last 13 seasons for clubs from the East. “We are trying to develop a different style of play,” Schäfer stated, “and it would definitely help teams from the West to play against teams from the East.” In terms of playing styles and exchange of knowledge is it positive? Or would this just add extra numbers to the travelling = fatigue equation? Is it a good idea? If so, how could it be implemented? By opening up the draw earlier in the competition?

Dating games?

“Neither team was at a high level due to the fact that they were starting their domestic championship.” The comment was culled from a report by one of AFC’s technical observers on a quarter-final match played in the West zone at the end of August. It has to be conceded that, every four years, fixture lists need to be adjusted to dovetail with the requirements attached to the FIFA World Cup. But, if the AFC Champions League sets out to offer spectators the highest possible levels of football and entertainment, is there a case for re-designing the fixture list within each of the East and West zones? Should they be separated to interlock more neatly with domestic competitions? Or should clubs and coaches design their preparation schedules with a view to performing at top level when the AFC Champions League ball starts rolling?

Grassroots football?

At the Club Coaches Forum, reservations were expressed about the quality of playing surfaces. Admittedly, matches are staged in a wide variety of venues and climatic conditions. But there was a feeling that the quality of pitches could often do with improvement. Not only to promote better entertainment value during the match itself but, in the longer term, to promote greater quality in terms of the players’ technical skills. Debate could be initiated by Al Sadd midfielder Xavi Hernández – an eloquent spokesman for the meticulous attention to details of grass height and pitch watering which, literally and figuratively, laid the foundations for the golden age at FC Barcelona. What can be done to ensure optimum pitch quality in Asian football’s prime club competition?



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL 2018





TEAM PROFILES



Group A

AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	YASSER ABDULLAH AL MOSAILEM	27-Feb-84	KSA
33	GK	MOHAMMED ALOWAIS	10-Oct-91	KSA
36	GK	RAGHID ALAA NAJJAR	20-09-1996	KSA
66	GK	BASIM SALEH ALBAQI	07-11-1989	KSA
5	DF	MARK MILLIGAN	04-08-1985	AUS
6	DF	MOHAMMED AL FATIL	04-01-1992	KSA
21	DF	AQEEL BAALGHAYTH ALSAHABI	15-03-1987	KSA
23	DF	SAEED FAWAZ ALMUWALLAD	09-03-1991	KSA
25	DF	MOTAZ HAWSAWI	17-02-1992	KSA
27	DF	HAMDAN ALSHAMRANI	14-12-1996	KSA
31	DF	MANSOUR ATEEQ ALHARBI	19-10-1987	KSA
32	DF	FAISAL MOHAMMED DARISI	11-02-1997	KSA
37	DF	ABDULLAH TARMIN	19-03-1997	KSA
77	DF	AMIR FAHAD KURDY	11-09-1991	KSA
4	MF	WALEED RASHED BAKSHWN	12-11-1989	KSA
8	MF	TAISEER JABIR AL JASSAM	25-07-1984	KSA
10	MF	IOANNIS FETFATZIDIS	20-12-1990	GRE
11	MF	HUSSAIN ALMOQAHWI	24-03-1988	KSA
18	MF	ALI HASSAN ALASMARI	12-01-1997	KSA
19	MF	CLAUDEMIR DE SOUZA	27-03-1988	BRA
35	MF	YOUSEF SAAD ALHARBI	16-03-1997	KSA
50	MF	ABDULLAH YAHYA MAGRSHI	24-08-1997	KSA
7	FW	SALMAN MOHAMMED MUWASHAR	05-10-1988	KSA
14	FW	MUHANNAD AHMED ABU RADIYAH	14-10-1986	KSA
15	FW	SALEH MOHAMMED ALJAMAN	14-10-1993	KSA
24	FW	ALI MOHAMMED AWAJI	02-08-1989	KSA
29	FW	ABDULRAHMAN GHAREEB	31-03-1997	KSA
45	FW	ABDULFATTAH TAWFIQ ASIRI	26-02-1994	KSA
88	FW	MOAMEN ZAKARIA ELDAWY	12-04-1988	EGY



CLUB PROFILE

Jeddah-based Al Ahli returned to the AFC Champions League after finishing second in the Saudi Pro League and were looking to improve on their admirable performance in 2012 when they reached the final only to lose 3-0 to Korea Republic's Ulsan Hyundai FC.

In 2017, Al Ahli made it through to the quarter-finals – the third time they had progressed to the last eight of the competition – before narrowly losing over two legs to Persepolis from the Islamic Republic of Iran following an away draw and a defeat at home.

HEAD COACH

Fathi Al Jabal

With previous incumbent Sergei Rebrov leaving his post at the end of the Saudi Pro League season in April, Fathi Al Jabal was appointed to oversee the rest of Al Ahli's AFC Champions League campaign. Prior to joining Al Ahli, Al Jabal was in his second spell with Saudi Arabian top-flight side Al Fateh where the Tunisian tactician famously won the title in 2013.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Sergei Rebrov

(left the club ahead of the Round of 16)

The former Ukraine international striker retired as a player in 2009 after spells at clubs in Ukraine, England, Turkey and Russia. He began his coaching career by working with the reserves at his former club Dynamo Kiev. Rebrov took charge of the Ukrainian giants in 2014 and went on to win two league titles and two Ukrainian Cups before joining Al Ahli in June 2017.



Group A

AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	ALI KHASEIF HUMAID	09-Jun-87	UAE
36	GK	KHALED AL SENANI	04-Oct-89	UAE
56	GK	ABDULLRAHMAN ALAMERI	30-Apr-98	UAE
90	GK	SALEM KHAIRI MUFTAH	22-Jul-99	UAE
2	DF	MOHAMED FAWZI	22-Feb-90	UAE
3	DF	SALEM RASHID ALEEDI	24-Jun-94	UAE
4	DF	MOHAMMED ALI AYED AL SHIMMARI	13-Oct-90	UAE
5	DF	MUSALLEM FAYEZ	26-Mar-87	UAE
13	DF	MOHAMMED AL MUSALLAMI	27-Apr-90	OMA
34	DF	SAEED HAZIM AL OBAIDI	20-Mar-98	UAE
40	DF	MOHAMAD OMAR ALATTAS	05-Aug-97	UAE
42	DF	BADER ADEL ALSHABEEBI	28-Oct-96	UAE
44	DF	FARES JUMA AL SAADI	30-Dec-88	UAE
51	DF	KHALIFA MUBARAK ALHAMMADI	07-Nov-98	UAE
10	MF	MBARK BOUSSOUFA	15-Aug-84	NED
12	MF	SALIM RASHID OBAID	21-Dec-93	UAE
15	MF	KHALFAN MUBARAK ALSHAMSI	09-May-95	UAE
21	MF	YAQOUB YOUSIF AL HOSANI	01-Jun-87	UAE
22	MF	HUMAID AHMED ALHAMMADI	07-Feb-88	UAE
23	MF	HARIB AL SAADI	01-Feb-90	OMA
31	MF	ROMARIO RICARDO DA SILVA	12-Dec-90	BRA
49	MF	BADER MOHAMED ALATTAS	08-Mar-97	UAE
50	MF	MOHAMED JAMAL	11-May-94	UAE
77	MF	SULTAN BARGHASH	18-Jan-89	UAE
80	MF	SALIM ALI ALHAMMADI	27-Sep-93	UAE
7	FW	ALI AHMED MABKHOUT	05-Oct-90	UAE
16	FW	AHMAD FAWZI ABDALLA	26-Nov-01	UAE
29	FW	ZAYED ABDULLA ALAMERI	14-Jan-97	UAE
70	FW	AHMED MOHAMED AL HASHMI	28-Sep-95	UAE



CLUB PROFILE

Al Jazira qualified for the AFC Champions League after adding a second United Arab Emirates top-flight title success to the one they won in 2011.

2018 marked the club's 10th appearance since their competition debut in 2009, although the side from Abu Dhabi failed to make it out of the group stage in the 2017 edition, finishing bottom of Group B behind Al Duhail, Esteghlal Khuzestan and Al Fateh. They did, however, reach the Round of 16 as recently as 2014, and also finished fourth at the 2017 FIFA Club World Cup.

HEAD COACH

Henk ten Cate

Dutchman Henk ten Cate is no stranger to Asia having overseen United Arab Emirates side Al Ahli, Qatar's Umm Salal and China's Shandong Luneng between 2010 and 2013. He began his coaching career in his native Holland with Go Ahead Eagles, before managing Vitesse Arnhem and Ajax and serving as an assistant at both Barcelona and Chelsea. He joined Al Jazira in 2016.



Group A

TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	FARZIN KAROUSIAN	19-Jul-92	IRN
33	GK	MAHDI MOHAMMADIAN SHAHRAK	05-Mar-97	IRN
44	GK	JORDI MARTINS ALMEIDA	03-Sep-93	BRA
55	GK	REZA SEIFAHMADI	28-Mar-99	IRN
2	DF	MOHAMMAD IRANPOURIAN	21-Sep-85	IRN
3	DF	REZA SHARBATI	16-Feb-95	IRN
5	DF	SIME GREGOV	08-Jul-89	CRO
16	DF	MOHAMMAD REZA KASANI	19-Feb-94	IRN
23	DF	AREF AGHASI	02-Jan-97	IRN
28	DF	MOHAMMAD NADERI	05-Oct-96	IRN
38	DF	AMIR MAHDI JANMALEKI	01-Feb-99	IRN
40	DF	ALI ESMAEILI	19-Dec-96	IRN
77	DF	MOHAMMAD ZANJANAB	25-May-97	IRN
6	MF	MEHDI KIANI	10-Jan-87	IRN
8	MF	DANIAL ESMAEILIFAR	18-Mar-93	IRN
9	MF	MAHDIPOUR MAHDI	18-Feb-94	IRN
10	MF	MOHAMMAD EBRAHIMI	01-Nov-84	IRN
15	MF	EHSAN PAHLAVAN	25-Jul-93	IRN
27	MF	SEYYEDFAKHER TAHAMI	17-Aug-96	IRN
30	MF	AMIR ASADZADEH	13-Nov-96	IRN
66	MF	SINA ASHOORI	16-Sep-88	IRN
88	MF	ALI TAHERAN	07-Aug-97	IRN
7	FW	OMID ALISHAH	10-Jan-92	IRN
17	FW	ARSALAN MOTAHHARI	10-Mar-93	IRN
18	FW	SULEJMAN KRPIC	01-Jan-91	BIH
19	FW	MOHAMMADREZA AZADI ANDIZEH	07-Sep-99	IRN
24	FW	FARZAD HATAMI	04-Jan-86	IRN



CLUB PROFILE

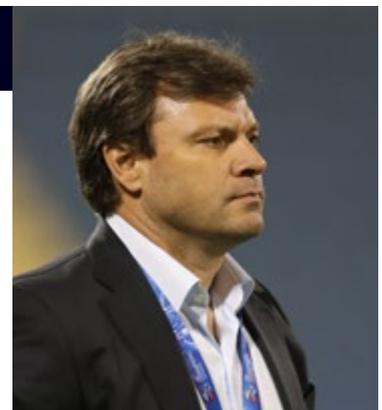
Tractorsazi Tabriz returned to the competition for a fifth time after sealing third place in the Iran Pro League and finishing as runners-up to Naft Tehran in the Hazfi Cup.

The Tabriz-based outfit's best AFC Champions League performance thus far came in 2016 when they were narrowly beaten 5-4 on aggregate in the Round of 16 by Al Nasr from the United Arab Emirates. Tractorsazi received a bye through to this year's group stage given the absence of a third team from Saudi Arabia and any from Iraq.

HEAD COACH

Ertuğrul Sağlam

A former Turkey international, Ertuğrul Sağlam joined Tractorsazi in 2018 following the departure of previous incumbent Yahya Golmohammadi. He enjoyed a successful playing career with both Samsunspor and Besiktas, before going on to coach Kayserispor to the UEFA Intertoto Cup title in 2006 and Bursaspor to the Turkish top-flight crown in 2010.



Group A

AL GHARAF (QAT)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	QASEM ABDULLHAMED BURHAN	15-Dec-85	QAT
13	GK	YOUSOF HASSAN ALI	24-May-96	QAT
22	GK	ABDULAZIZ ALI ABDULLA	05-Jun-80	QAT
94	GK	MOHAMMED EZALDEEN AL-SADA	14-Apr-94	QAT
5	DF	ALMAHDI ALI MUKHTAR	02-Mar-92	QAT
38	DF	HASSAN WALEED AL-ALI	06-Nov-97	QAT
80	DF	ILYAS MUHAMMAD	12-Dec-97	QAT
7	DF	FAHID SATAM S A ALSHAMMARI	01-Jan-82	QAT
6	DF	RUBERT FASCIANA	10-Feb-89	VEN
2	DF	SAEED ALHAG ESSA	02-Feb-92	QAT
3	DF	TAMEEM MOHAMMED ALMUHAZA	21-Jul-96	QAT
16	DF	TAMIR GAMAL M O ELZIBER	01-Jan-90	QAT
20	DF	MONKEZ ADI	22-Jan-97	QAT
4	MF	ASSIM OMER MADIBO	22-Oct-96	QAT
8	MF	YOUSUF MUFTAH	16-May-88	QAT
11	MF	OTHMAN AL YAHRI	24-Jun-93	QAT
14	MF	ABDULGHANAI MUNEER	13-Sep-92	QAT
19	MF	ABDULMAJID ALDIRI	07-Jan-94	QAT
21	MF	MUATH YAHYA ALSALEMI	15-Aug-96	QAT
23	MF	KHALED AL ZRIGI	14-Nov-90	QAT
25	MF	DIOGO CARLOS AMADO	21-Jan-90	POR
26	MF	ABDEL AZIZ HATIM	01-Jan-90	QAT
97	MF	MOHAMMED ALBERAIK	23-Oct-97	QAT
9	FW	MEHDI TAREMI	18-Jul-92	IRN
10	FW	WESLEY SNEIJDER	09-Jun-84	NED
17	FW	AHMED ALAAELDIN ABDELMOTAAL	31-Jan-93	QAT
24	FW	MUAYED HASSAN HASSAN	28-Jan-92	QAT
98	FW	MOHAMMAD ISMAIL H ABUSHANAB	28-May-98	QAT



CLUB PROFILE

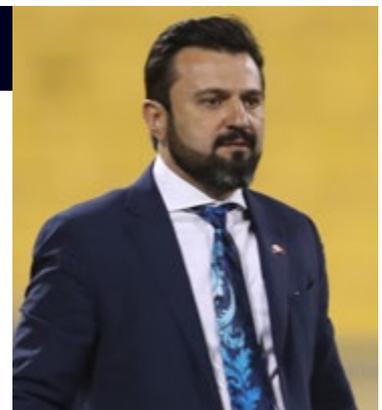
Having finished fifth in the Qatar Stars League, Al Gharafa were awarded a place in the 2018 play-off phase after El Jaish, who finished fourth, merged with Lekhwiya to form Al Duhail SC.

A 2-1 win over Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor duly secured a spot in the group stage and their return to the competition represented the club's eighth appearance in total. Al Gharfa's best performance in the competition to date came when they reached the quarter-finals in 2010, only to suffer an agonising extra-time defeat to Saudi Arabian powerhouse Al Hilal SFC.

HEAD COACH

Bülent Uygun

Hired to replace Frenchman Jean Fernandez, Bülent Uygun took charge of Al Gharafa in January 2018. The former Turkey international was no stranger to Qatar however, having been with Umm Salal between 2010 and 2013. The former attacking midfielder also earned plaudits galore during his time as head coach of Turkish side Sivasspor who he helped qualify for the UEFA Champions League.



Group B

AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	MOHAMMED AHMED ALBAKRI	28-Mar-97	QAT
33	GK	AHMAD ALI HATAMI	25-Aug-80	QAT
40	GK	AMINE LECOMTE	26-Apr-90	QAT
2	DF	MOHAMED MUSA	01-Jan-86	QAT
3	DF	KHALED MUFTAH	02-Jul-92	QAT
4	DF	LUCAS MENDES	03-Jul-90	BRA
5	DF	MOHAMMED KHALID	25-Mar-00	QAT
6	DF	DAME TRAORE	15-May-86	QAT
7	DF	ISMAIL MOHAMAD	05-Apr-90	QAT
22	DF	MURAD NAJI HUSSEIN	12-Jun-91	QAT
25	DF	SALEH SAEED	29-Feb-00	QAT
67	DF	SALMIN ATIQ ALRUMAIHI	11-Jan-97	QAT
8	MF	LUIZ JUNIOR	13-Jan-89	QAT
10	MF	NAM TAEHEE	03-Jul-91	KOR
12	MF	KARIM BOUDIAF	16-Sep-90	QAT
13	MF	HAZEM AHMED SHEHATA	02-Feb-98	QAT
15	MF	BASSAM ALRAWI	16-Dec-97	QAT
26	MF	NOOR NOORHASHIM REHMAN	28-Mar-97	QAT
28	MF	YOUSSEF MSAKNI	28-Oct-90	TUN
50	MF	NASSER ALYAZIDI	02-Feb-00	QAT
9	FW	EL ARABI YOUSSEF	03-Feb-87	FRA
14	FW	ABDULLAH ALAHRAK	10-May-97	QAT
17	FW	A.RAHMAN MOHAMED MOUSTAFA	05-Apr-97	QAT
18	FW	SULTAN AL-BRAKE	07-Apr-96	QAT
19	FW	ALMOEZ ALI	19-Aug-96	QAT
20	FW	ALI HASSAN AFIF	20-Jan-88	QAT
32	FW	FAHD AHMED S ALSORI	12-Jan-98	QAT
36	FW	ADEL BADER AL-AHMAD	17-Jan-97	QAT



CLUB PROFILE

A product of the merger between Lekhwiya and El Jaish, Al Duhail entered the fray as reigning Qatar Stars League champions. While still known as Lekhwiya, the Doha-based club reached the AFC Champions League quarter-finals in both 2013 and 2015, before losing to eventual winners Guangzhou Evergrande from China PR and Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC respectively.

In 2017, they remained unbeaten during an impressive group stage campaign, but eventually came unstuck in the Round of 16, succumbing 1-0 on aggregate over two legs to Persepolis FC.

HEAD COACH

Nabil Maâloul

A former Tunisia international, Nabil Maâloul has experience playing and coaching in West Asia, having played for Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli in 1994 and managing El Jaish in 2014, where he claimed the Qatar Cup that season. Maâloul has also coached Tunisia, successfully leading the North Africans to Russia 2018 where they finished third in Group G behind Belgium and England.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Djamel Belmadi

(left the club ahead of the quarter-finals)

A former Algeria international midfielder, Djamel Belmadi was in his second spell with Al Duhail after leading the club to consecutive Qatar Stars League titles in 2011 and 2012. He continued his success with Qatar's national team, winning the WAFF Championship and Gulf Cup of Nations in 2014 but left his position after a disappointing performance at the 2015 AFC Asian Cup.



Group B

AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)



نادي الوحدة الرياضي
Al Wahda Sports Club

NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	MOHAMED HASAN ALSHAMSI	04-Jan-97	UAE
50	GK	RASHED ALI ALSUWAIDI	02-Dec-89	UAE
88	GK	SAEED KHAMEIS ALMESMARI	24-Apr-96	UAE
2	DF	MOHAMED SALEH ALMENHALI	27-Oct-90	UAE
4	DF	SALEM SULTAN ALSHARJI	09-May-93	UAE
8	DF	HAMDAN AL KAMALI	02-May-89	UAE
12	DF	MOHAMMED SALEM	16-Jan-91	UAE
19	DF	KHALED EBRAHEIM ALDHANHANI	17-Jan-97	UAE
21	DF	ABDULLA FAISAL ALKARBI	26-Aug-98	UAE
23	DF	RIM CHANG WOO	13-Feb-92	KOR
33	DF	MAJED ABDULLA ALJNEIBI	22-Jul-00	UAE
37	DF	AHMED RASHID ALMEHRZI	19-Jan-97	UAE
5	MF	MOHAMMAD ABDULBASIT	19-Oct-95	UAE
6	MF	SULTAN ALI ALGHAFRI	18-Sep-86	UAE
7	MF	MOHAMED AL SHEHHI	28-Mar-88	UAE
14	MF	KHALID ABDULRAHEEM BAWAZIR	08-May-95	UAE
15	MF	NASIR ABDELHADI ALMAAZM	16-Dec-89	UAE
16	MF	SALEM ABDULLA ALBLOOSHI	06-Aug-98	UAE
22	MF	BALAZS DZSUDZSAK	23-Dec-86	UAE
32	MF	MOHAMMED HELAL ALNUAIMI	11-Feb-97	UAE
36	MF	AHMED SALMAN ALAKBERI	15-Jul-97	UAE
43	MF	RASHED ABDULLA	27-May-01	UAE
77	MF	KHALIL IBRAHIM ALHAMMADI	04-May-93	UAE
9	FW	MOURAD BATNA	27-Jun-90	MAR
10	FW	ISMAEIL MATAR ALJNEIBI	07-Apr-83	UAE
11	FW	SEBASTIAN TAGLIABUE	22-Feb-85	ARG
30	FW	TAREQ AHMED ALANTALI	19-May-90	UAE
42	FW	MOHAMED SALMAN ALAKBERI	15-Mar-96	UAE
70	FW	MOHAMED RASHID ALHAMMADI	11-May-97	UAE



CLUB PROFILE

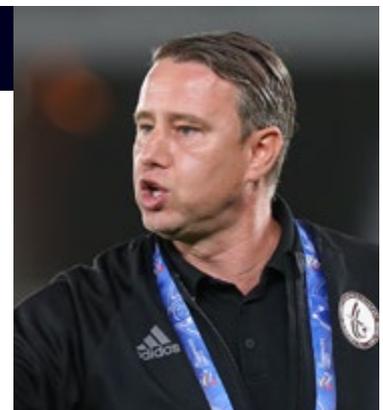
Al Wahda finished fifth in the UAE Pro League but ensured an eighth time appearance in the AFC Champions League group stage thanks to their 3-1 UAE President's Cup win over Al Nasr.

The club's best AFC Champions League performance by far came in 2007 when they reached the last four before bowing out 2-1 on aggregate over two legs to Sepahan from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since reaching the semi-finals 11 years ago, Al Wahda, who hail from Abu Dhabi, have yet to progress through to the competition's knockout phase.

HEAD COACH

Laurențiu Reghecampf

The highly respected Laurențiu Reghecampf took Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC to the final of the 2014 AFC Champions League before seeing his side lose to Western Sydney Wanderers. Following his stint with Al Hilal, he returned to his native Romania to coach Litex Lovech and Steaua Bucharest but returned to Asia to join Al Wahda in July 2017.



Group B

PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	IGNATIY NESTEROV	20-Jun-83	UZB
12	GK	MAMUR IKRAMOV	12-Jun-82	UZB
25	GK	KARIMOV SARVAR	25-Dec-96	UZB
96	GK	NARTADJIEV RUSTAM	11-May-96	UZB
4	DF	YULDASHOV BOBURBEK	08-Apr-93	UZB
5	DF	KAKHI MAKHARADZE	20-Oct-87	GEO
17	DF	SALIM MUSTAFAEV	07-Mar-91	UZB
20	DF	ISLOM TUKHTAKHUJAEV	30-Oct-89	UZB
28	DF	SHUKHRAT MUKHAMMADIEV	24-Jun-89	UZB
33	DF	OLEG ZOTEEV	05-Jul-89	UZB
44	DF	PROKHOROV SERGEY	16-Oct-96	UZB
80	DF	FARRUKHJON IBROKHIMOV	15-May-96	UZB
6	MF	NIVALDO RODRIGUES FERREIRA	22-Jun-88	BRA
7	MF	SADRIDDIN ABDULLAEV	11-Jun-86	UZB
8	MF	SHERZODBEK KARIMOV	26-Jan-89	UZB
9	MF	IKROMJON ALIBAEV	09-Jan-94	UZB
14	MF	AMONOV AZIZBEK	30-Oct-97	UZB
19	MF	HUSNIDDIN GAFUROV	29-Jul-94	UZB
22	MF	SHAAKHMEDOV SANJAR	23-Sep-90	UZB
77	MF	DIYORJON TURAPOV	09-Jul-94	UZB
88	MF	IGOR JELIC	28-Dec-89	SRB
99	MF	CHO SUK JAE	24-Mar-93	KOR
10	FW	MARAT BIKMAEV	01-Jan-86	UZB
11	FW	MURODBEK BOBOJONOV	16-Jul-94	UZB
15	FW	SARDOR MIRZAYEV	21-Mar-91	UZB
23	FW	BIKMAYKIN IDRIS	27-May-96	UZB
27	FW	SARDOR RASHIDOV	14-Jun-91	UZB



CLUB PROFILE

Tashkent-based Lokomotiv secured a second successive Uzbekistan league and cup double to ensure a fourth appearance in the group stage of the AFC Champions League.

Despite failing to progress to the competition's knockout phase in both 2013 and 2014, Lokomotiv rebounded superbly in 2016 by winning four of their six group stage games to qualify for the Round of 16 as Group A winners. They subsequently knocked out Saudi Arabi's Al Hilal SFC before narrowly losing 1-0 on aggregate to Al Ain from the United Arab Emirates in a tense last eight encounter.

HEAD COACH

Andrey Miklyaev

A former Uzbekistan international defender, Andrey Miklyaev retired as a player in 2001. He went on to work for Uzbek clubs NBU-Asia, Qizilqum, Almalyk and Lokomotiv, where he became an assistant coach in 2014. The Tashkent native was subsequently named head coach for the 2016 season and duly guided Lokomotiv to successive league and cup doubles.



Group B

ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	MOHAMMADBAGHER SADEGHI	01-Apr-89	IRN
12	GK	MOHAMMADRASHID MAZAHERI	18-May-89	IRN
44	GK	MERAJ ESMAEILI	13-Jan-00	IRN
2	DF	MOHAMMAD NEJAD MEHDI	20-Oct-92	IRN
3	DF	VAHID MOHAMMADZADEH	16-May-89	IRN
5	DF	GIORGI GVELESIANI	05-May-91	GEO
6	DF	KHALED SHAFIEI	29-Mar-87	IRN
24	DF	MEHRAN DERAKHSHANMEHR	10-Aug-98	IRN
31	DF	MOHAMMAD AMINI	03-May-95	IRN
35	DF	HOSSEIN SANGARGIR	11-May-98	IRN
4	MF	AKBAR IMANI	21-Mar-92	IRN
7	MF	SEYED MOHAMMADREZA H	15-Sep-89	IRN
8	MF	GHASEM HADADIFAR	12-Jul-83	IRN
9	MF	RABIH ATAYA	16-Jul-89	LIB
10	MF	BAKHTIAR RAHMANI	23-Sep-91	IRN
17	MF	MOHAMMAD REZA ABBASI	27-Jul-96	IRN
25	MF	MOHAMMADREZA ROSTAMI	13-Jan-97	IRN
30	MF	MAHDI RAJABZADEH	22-Jun-78	IRN
33	MF	MOHAMMAD SATARI	30-Oct-93	IRN
34	MF	MILAD FAKHRODDINI	26-May-90	IRN
45	MF	ALIREZA GHADERI ZEFREH	16-Feb-00	IRN
88	MF	HAMID BOUHAMDAN	23-Jul-89	IRN
11	FW	MORTEZA TABRIZI	06-Jan-91	IRN
28	FW	ALI KHODADADI	19-Jan-98	IRN
99	FW	KIROS STANLLEY FERRAZ	21-Aug-88	BRA



CLUB PROFILE

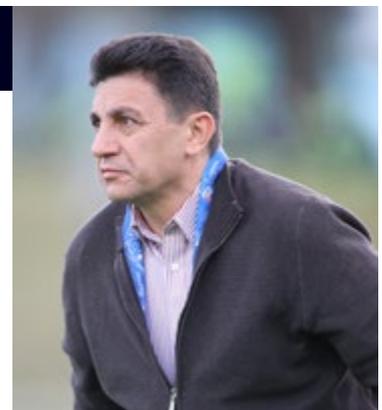
Zobahan appeared in the group stage for a fifth time after the Esfahan club finished fourth in the Iran Pro League, and then beat Indian champions Aizawl FC 3-1 in the play-offs.

After making their AFC Champions League debut in 2004, Zobahan found their continental feet in 2010 when they reached the final before losing to Korea Republic's Seongnam Ilhwa. Since that appearance, Zobahan's best display came in 2016 when, following an impressive group stage campaign, they were knocked out in the last 16 by Al Ain from the United Arab Emirates.

HEAD COACH

Amir Ghalenoei

Former Islamic Republic of Iran coach Ghalenoei joined Zobahan from Tractorsazi Tabriz in June 2017, bringing to the club a wealth of experience in Asian football. A former player for Esteghlal and Al Sadd, Ghaleonoei famously won the Asian Club Championship in 1991 as a player and coached the Iranian national team at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.



Group C

PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	ALI REZA SAFARBEIRANVAND	21-Sep-92	IRN
12	GK	ABOLFAZL DARVISHVAND	13-Jan-97	IRN
44	GK	BOZIDAR RADOSEVIC	04-Apr-89	CRO
2	DF	SADEGH MOHARRAMI GETGASARI	01-Mar-96	IRN
3	DF	SHOJAE KHALILZADEH	14-May-89	IRN
4	DF	SEYED JALAL HOSSEINI	03-Feb-82	IRN
13	DF	HOSSEIN MAHINI	16-Sep-86	IRN
15	DF	MOHAMMAD ANSARI	23-Sep-91	IRN
69	DF	ALI MOSLEH TAKLIMI	25-Jun-93	IRN
5	MF	BASHAR RESAN BONYAN	22-Dec-96	IRQ
8	MF	AHMAD NOOROLLAHI	01-Feb-93	IRN
10	MF	FARSHAD AHMADZADEH	23-Sep-92	IRN
11	MF	KAMALEDDIN KAMYABINIA	18-Jan-89	IRN
18	MF	MOHSEN NODEHI	24-Dec-87	IRN
19	MF	VAHID AMIRI	02-Apr-88	IRN
21	MF	ADAM HEMATI	22-Jan-95	IRN
25	MF	EHSAN KHANIFERI	17-Apr-94	IRN
26	MF	SAEED HASSEINPOUR	12-Oct-98	IRN
35	MF	SHAHIN ABBASIAN	16-Jun-97	IRN
37	MF	HAMID TAHERKHANI	25-Mar-99	IRN
38	MF	SEYED MOHAMMAD HOSSEINI	03-Oct-98	IRN
77	MF	MOHSEN MOSALMAN	27-Jan-91	IRN
88	MF	SIAMAK NEMATI	17-Apr-94	IRN
23	FW	MOHAMMAD AMIN TODAR	24-Dec-98	IRN
39	FW	AHMAD BAHARVANDI	21-Mar-98	IRN
70	FW	ALI ALIPOURGHARA	11-Nov-95	IRN
90	FW	GODWIN MENSHA	02-Sep-89	NGA



CLUB PROFILE

Persepolis, who famously won the Asian Cup Winners' Cup in 1991, claimed the 2017 Iran Pro League title to secure a seventh AFC Champions League group stage appearance.

Since making their debut in 2003, the Tehran-based side have qualified for the Round of 16 on no less than three previous occasions, although their best display to date came in the last edition of Asia's premier club competition, when a fine run of results helped them reach the semi-finals before they were beaten by Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC.

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 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.



Group C

AL SADD SC (QAT)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	SAAD AL SHEEB	19-Feb-90	QAT
21	GK	SOUAD ABDULLA ALHAJRI	19-Jul-86	QAT
22	GK	MESHAAL AISSA BARSHAM	14-Feb-98	QAT
30	GK	JEHAD MOHAMMAD HUDIB	14-Oct-00	QAT
2	DF	PEDRO CORREIA	06-Aug-90	QAT
3	DF	YASIR ISA	10-Jan-92	QAT
7	DF	MUSAAB KHIDIR MOHAMED	01-Jan-93	QAT
12	DF	HAMID ISMAEIL KHALEEFA	16-Jun-86	QAT
13	DF	IBRAHIM MAJED	12-May-90	QAT
14	DF	ABDELKARIM HASSAN	28-Aug-93	QAT
24	DF	MORTEZA POURALIGANJI	19-Apr-92	IRN
34	DF	HATIM KAMAL H HASSANIN	09-May-97	QAT
37	DF	AHMED SUHAIL ALHAMAWENDE	08-Feb-99	QAT
65	DF	BAHAA MAMDOUH ELLETHY	18-Apr-99	QAT
4	MF	AHMED BADER SAYYAR	06-Oct-93	QAT
6	MF	XAVIER HERNANDEZ	25-Jan-80	ESP
8	MF	ALI ASADALLA THAIMN	19-Jan-93	QAT
16	MF	BOUALEM KHOUKHI	09-Jul-90	QAT
18	MF	ABDULAZIZ AL-JALABI	11-Jun-97	QAT
20	MF	SALEM AL HAJRI	10-Apr-96	QAT
5	FW	JUGURTHA HAMROUN	27-Jan-89	FRA
10	FW	HASAN AL HAYDOS	11-Dec-90	QAT
11	FW	BAGHDAD BOUNEDJAH	24-Nov-91	ALG
17	FW	HASSAN AHMAD PALANG	02-Apr-98	QAT
25	FW	JASSIM ALI ALSHAMMARI	15-Oct-96	QAT
73	FW	MOHAMMED WAAD ALBAYATI	18-Sep-99	QAT
87	FW	SAOUD IBRAHIM S W AL-NASR	01-Feb-98	QAT
96	FW	AKRAM HASSAN AFIF	18-Nov-96	QAT
99	FW	ALI FERAYDOUN SHAHOSSEINI	10-Oct-92	QAT



CLUB PROFILE

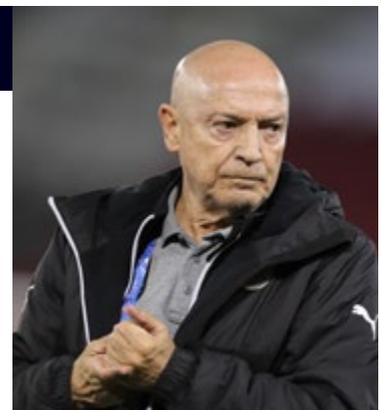
After failing to progress beyond the play-offs in the previous two editions of the AFC Champions League, Al Sadd qualified for the 2018 group stage thanks to their Emir of Qatar Cup success.

After making their debut in 2003, Al Sadd have become competition regulars and were crowned champions in 2011 when, following a 2-2 draw, they dramatically edged out Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors on penalties in the final. They have also been quarter-finalists on two occasions, in 2005 and again in 2014, before being beaten by Busan I'Park and Al Hilal SFC respectively..

HEAD COACH

Jesualdo Ferreira

A vastly experienced coach, Ferreira is enjoying his first stint in Asia following a glittering career in his native Portugal. As well as a spell with Portugal's U-21 side, the wily tactician 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 C

AL WASL FC (UAE)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	SULTAN ABDULLA ALMENTHERI	05-Jan-95	UAE
12	GK	YOUSIF ABDULLA ALZAABI	15-Jan-86	UAE
50	GK	SUHAIL ABDULLA ALMUTAWA	26-Aug-99	UAE
81	GK	SALEM ABDULLA ALHAMMADI	18-Jan-84	UAE
2	DF	ABDULRAHMAN ALI ALSEQETRI	02-Jan-93	UAE
3	DF	ABDALLA SALEH ALJNEIBI	14-Jun-88	UAE
4	DF	ABDULLA JASSIM KHAMIS	22-Feb-97	UAE
6	DF	WAHEED ISMAIL LENGAWI	01-Jul-83	UAE
16	DF	SAIF SAEED ALSUWAIDI	19-May-99	UAE
44	DF	SALEM JUMA ALAZEEZI	25-Feb-93	UAE
48	DF	ALI ABDULLA ALANSAARI	04-Sep-98	UAE
55	DF	AHMAD ESSA ALBLOOSHI	03-Apr-97	UAE
5	MF	ALI HASSAN ALI SALMIN	04-Feb-95	UAE
8	MF	ANTHONY CACERES	29-Sep-92	AUS
13	MF	KHALID HASSAN ALSHAIBANI	31-Jul-97	UAE
15	MF	ABDALLA ALI ALNAQBI	28-Apr-93	UAE
18	MF	MOHAMED SUROUR ALYASSI	31-Oct-93	UAE
24	MF	HAMAD MOHAMMAD ALBALOOSHI	15-Jul-95	UAE
26	MF	RASHID GHANEM ALHAJRI	25-Apr-95	UAE
36	MF	HAMAD MOHAMED IBRAHIM	23-Sep-00	UAE
70	MF	IBRAHIM ALI SUWAIDAN	28-Jul-98	UAE
78	MF	KHALEIL KHAMEIS ALMAZROUEI	15-Jul-92	UAE
88	MF	HUMAID ABDULLA	16-Apr-88	UAE
7	FW	CAIO CANEDO CORREA	09-Aug-90	BRA
10	FW	FABIO VIRGINIO DE LIMA	30-Jun-93	BRA
17	FW	RONALDO CESAR DE MEDEIROS	16-Aug-92	BRA
20	FW	FARIS KHALIL ALMARZOOQI	08-Oct-00	UAE
22	FW	HASSAN MOHAMMED TAHER	10-Sep-89	UAE
77	FW	HAZZA SALEM	19-Dec-89	UAE
99	FW	ALI SALEH AMRO	22-Jan-00	UAE



CLUB PROFILE

Al Wasl secured their spot in the 2018 edition of the AFC Champions League after finishing second behind table-topping Al Jazira in the UAE Pro League.

The Emiratis were featuring in the competition for only the second time following a debut outing in 2008. That campaign saw Al Wasl record victories over Kuwait SC and Iraq's Air Force Club, as well as a 1-1 home draw with Saipa from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite racking up seven points, they finished third in Group B and failed to progress to the knockout stage.

HEAD COACH

Rodolfo Arruabarrena

After a playing career which saw him appear for the likes of Boca Juniors and Rosario Central in his native Argentina, Arruabarrena's first coaching stint was with Argentinean side Tigre in 2011, before guiding Boca Juniors to the 2015 Argentine Primera Division and Copa Argentina titles. He replaced compatriot Gabriel Calderon at Al Wasl in June 2016.



Group C

FC NASAF (UZB)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	UMIDJON ERGASHEV	20-Mar-99	UZB
35	GK	SANJAR KUVVATOV	08-Jan-90	UZB
65	GK	MUKHAMMADJONOV MASHKURJON	21-Feb-99	UZB
5	DF	GAYBULLAEV GOLIB	22-Jan-96	UZB
7	DF	ODILJON XAMROBEKOV	13-Feb-96	UZB
22	DF	IGOR GOLBAN	31-Jul-90	RUS
31	DF	RAKHMATOV SAYDULLO	17-May-92	UZB
33	DF	ALIJANOV ILKHOMJON	05-Mar-98	UZB
42	DF	NORMURODOV NAJMIDDIN	06-Jun-95	UZB
55	DF	SLAVKO LUKIC	14-Mar-89	SRB
92	DF	ESHMURODOV UMARBEBEK	30-Nov-92	UZB
6	MF	GANIEV AZIZJON	22-Feb-98	UZB
8	MF	RASHIDOV SANJAR	14-Jul-93	UZB
14	MF	SHAROF MUKHITDINOV	14-Jul-97	UZB
15	MF	SAITOV DILSHOD	02-Feb-99	UZB
17	MF	NARZULLAEV DONIYORJON	11-Apr-95	UZB
20	MF	KENJABAEV ISLOM	01-Sep-99	UZB
21	MF	ALIEV JAHONGIR	14-Jul-96	TJK
27	MF	RASHIDKHANOV ISLOM	22-Oct-97	UZB
29	MF	ISROILOV ABDUJAMOL	24-Dec-96	UZB
38	MF	MOZGOVOY AKMAL	02-Apr-00	UZB
69	MF	DRAGAN CERAN	06-Oct-87	SRB
77	MF	JASUR KHASANOV	02-Aug-83	UZB
4	FW	MAKSUD KARIMOV	02-Mar-85	UZB
10	FW	BOBIR ABDIXOLIKOV	23-Apr-97	UZB
30	FW	SAGDULLAEV KHUDOYORKHON	12-Jan-00	UZB



CLUB PROFILE

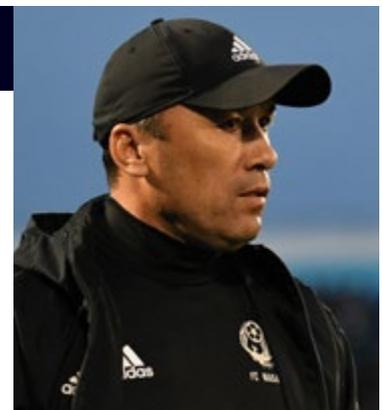
Nasaf finished second in the 2017 Uzbekistan League to earn a place in the AFC Champions League group stage for a fourth time since making their competition debut in 2012.

Their spot among Asia's elite was guaranteed thanks to a convincing 5-1 home win over Jordan's Al Faisaly in the play-offs. They famously became the first club from Uzbekistan to win an Asian club title in 2011 when they beat Kuwait SC to lift the AFC Cup. The Qarshi-based side have, however, yet to reach the AFC Champions League's knockout phase.

HEAD COACH

Ruziql Berdiev

After making his professional debut at FK Yangiyer, Ruziql spent much of his career with Nasaf where he played over 300 games for the club. Following his retirement as a player in 2008, Berdiev became an assistant coach with the club and was elevated to the head coaching job in 2012. He was named Uzbekistan's Coach of the Year in 2013.



Group D

AL HILAL SFC (KSA)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	ABDULLAH ALMUAIOUF	23-Jan-87	KSA
23	GK	MARWAN ABDULAZIZ ALHAIDARI	12-Apr-96	KSA
26	GK	ALI AL HABSI	30-Dec-81	OMA
30	GK	MOHAMMED AHMED ALWAKID	25-Mar-92	KSA
2	DF	MOHAMMED ALBURAYK	15-Sep-92	KSA
4	DF	ABDULLA ALDOSSARY	13-Aug-87	KSA
5	DF	ALI HADI ALBULAYHI	21-Nov-89	KSA
12	DF	YASSER ALSHAHRANI	25-May-92	KSA
17	DF	ABDULLAH FAREED ALHAFITH	25-Dec-92	KSA
33	DF	OSAMA ABDULRZAG HAWSAWI	31-Mar-84	KSA
70	DF	MOHAMMED YAHYA JAHFALI	24-Oct-90	KSA
6	MF	ABDULMALEK AL KHAIBRI	13-Mar-86	KSA
7	MF	SALMAN ALFARAJ	01-Aug-89	KSA
8	MF	ABDULLAH OTAYF	03-Aug-92	KSA
10	MF	MOHAMMED AL SHALHOUB	08-Dec-80	KSA
14	MF	MUHANNAD ABDULHALIM FALLATAH	02-Feb-96	KSA
16	MF	NICOLAS LOMMEL	10-Nov-92	URU
18	MF	NASSER ESSA ALDAWSARI	19-Dec-98	KSA
21	MF	MAJED ABDULLAH ALNAJRANI	25-Jan-93	KSA
24	MF	NAWAF SHAKER ALABID	26-Jan-90	KSA
25	MF	FAISAL DARWISH FARAJ	23-Apr-90	KSA
28	MF	MOHAMED KANNO	22-Sep-94	KSA
15	FW	MUJAHID MUBARAK ALMANIA	15-Jan-96	KSA
20	FW	YASSER SAEED ALQAHTANI	10-Oct-82	KSA
22	FW	EZEQUIEL OSVALDO CERUTTI	17-Jan-92	ARG
27	FW	ACHRAF BENCHARKI	24-Sep-94	MAR
44	FW	MUKHTAR OMAR FALLATAH	15-Oct-87	KSA
59	FW	FAHAD AYIDH ALRASHIDI	16-May-97	KSA



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time Asian Club Championship winners Al Hilal qualified for the AFC Champions League for a 10th consecutive season following their Saudi Pro League title win.

Prior to 2018 edition, the side from Riyadh were losing finalists in 2014 and 2017, and have been semi-finalists on two other occasions. Al Hilal are undoubtedly one of Asia's most successful clubs with victories in the Asian Club Championship in 1991 and 2000, plus a brace of triumphs in both the Asian Cup Winners' Cup and the Asian Super Cup.

HEAD COACH

Juan Brown

Stepping up from his role with the club's U-21 side, Argentine Juan Brown took charge of Al Hilal following the departure of Diaz in the wake of the Matchday Two defeat to Esteghlal. Under Diaz, Al Hilal claimed the Saudi Pro League and King's Cup titles last season.



FORMER HEAD COACH

Ramon Diaz

(left the club after two games of the group stage)

A former Argentina international, Ramon Diaz is in his first coaching stint in Asia after spending much of his managerial career in South America. He guided River Plate several titles, including the Copa Libertadores. Prior to his appointment by Al Hilal in October 2016, he coached Paraguay's national team to the semi-finals of the 2015 Copa America.



Group D

AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
28	GK	ABDULAZIZ SHAHADA	24-Feb-99	QAT
30	GK	OUMAR BARRY	18-Jul-86	QAT
33	GK	SAOUD MUBARAK AL-KHATER	09-Apr-91	QAT
2	DF	MOHAMED ALAAELDIN	24-Jan-94	QAT
3	DF	AHMED YASSER ABDELRHMAN	17-May-94	QAT
4	DF	MUSA HAROON JAMA	13-Sep-85	QAT
13	DF	GONZALO VIERA	08-Feb-87	ITA
20	DF	ALI SANAD AL-NUAIMI	31-Oct-85	QAT
21	DF	MOHAMMED JUMA ALALAWI	24-Mar-86	QAT
26	DF	ABDULHAMID ANAD ALDIRI	20-Feb-95	QAT
66	DF	KASOLA MOHAMMED	13-Aug-86	QAT
6	MF	ABDULRAHMAN MOHAMMED ALKORBI	18-Aug-94	QAT
22	MF	KOH MYONGJIN	09-Jan-88	KOR
29	MF	YOUNES DORZADEH	14-Mar-86	QAT
31	MF	DANIEL GOUMOU	04-Oct-90	QAT
32	MF	AHMED MOHAMED ELSAYED	23-Mar-90	QAT
5	FW	HUSAM KAMAL HASSANIN	25-Jan-96	QAT
7	FW	ABDULRAHMAN ALHARAZI	01-Jan-94	QAT
9	FW	HAMED-ALLAH ABDERRAZZAQ	17-Dec-90	MAR
10	FW	RODRIGO BARBOSA TABATA	19-Nov-80	QAT
11	FW	MOHSINE MOUTAOUALI	03-Mar-86	MAR
14	FW	SULTAN BAKHIT ALKUWARI	03-Aug-95	QAT
16	FW	SAOUD FARHAN	11-Feb-95	QAT
17	FW	ALDOUKALI SIDE	20-Dec-93	QAT
23	FW	ANDRES SEBASTIAN QUINTANA	08-Nov-83	QAT
77	FW	BARRO BABOUSIDIK	10-Jun-90	QAT



CLUB PROFILE

Al Rayyan are no strangers to Asia's premier club competition having appeared in the AFC Champions League on seven previous occasions.

After finishing third in the Qatar Stars League, they appeared in the 2018 group stage given the absence of a third side from Saudi Arabia and any participants from Iraq. Doha-based Al Rayyan have yet to make it through to the knockout phase of the competition, however, with their 2017 campaign seeing them miss out again after finishing third in Group D.

HEAD COACH

Michael Laudrup

After retiring as a player in 1998, the former Denmark international became his country's assistant coach with Denmark for two years and was in charge of clubs in the Spanish, Russian and English leagues before moving to QAT in 2014 to join Lekhwiya (now Al Duhail). He duly steered them to the Qatari league title in 2014-15 ahead of his move to rivals Al Rayyan.



Group D

ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	MAHDI RAHMATI	03-Feb-83	IRN
19	GK	ARSHIA AGHABABAZADEH	05-Nov-95	IRN
22	GK	SEYED HOSSEIN HOSSEINI	30-Jun-92	IRN
4	DF	ROOZBEH CHESMI	24-Jul-93	IRN
5	DF	SEYEDMAJID HOSSEINI	20-Jun-96	IRN
13	DF	ARMIN SOHRABIAN	26-Jul-95	IRN
18	DF	MILAD ZAKIPOURKINJI	29-Apr-95	IRN
21	DF	VORYA GHAFOURI	20-Sep-87	IRN
33	DF	PEJMAN MONTAZERI	06-Sep-83	IRN
90	DF	LEANDRO PADOVANI	21-Dec-83	BRA
2	MF	KHOSRO HEIDARI	14-Sep-83	IRN
6	MF	OMID EBRAHIMI ZARANDINI	16-Sep-87	IRN
8	MF	FARSHID ESMAEILI	23-Feb-94	IRN
14	MF	FARSHID BAGHERI	05-Jun-92	IRN
20	MF	SERVER DJEPAROV	03-Oct-82	UZB
23	MF	DARIUSH SHOJAEIAN	07-Apr-92	IRN
24	MF	OMID NOR AFKAN	09-Apr-97	IRN
7	FW	MAME BABA THIAM	09-Oct-92	SEN
9	FW	GHOORBANI ALI	18-Sep-90	IRN
10	FW	BOYAN NAYDENOV	27-Aug-91	BUL
11	FW	JABER ANSARI	10-Jan-87	IRN
16	FW	MEHDI GHAYEDI	05-Dec-98	IRN
28	FW	SEYED MOHSEN KARIMI	20-Sep-94	IRN
77	FW	BEHNAM BARZAY	11-Feb-93	IRN



CLUB PROFILE

Esteghlal qualified for the AFC Champions League's latest edition following their second-place finish in the 2017 Iran Pro League.

The two-time Asian Club Championship winners reached the Round of 16 in 2017 after initially entering in the play-offs phase. Their best campaign to date came in 2013 when they won four of their six group stage games, before beating the UAE's Al Shabab in the last 16 and Thailand's Buriram United in the quarter-finals. Their run was, however, ended in the semi-finals by FC Seoul.

HEAD COACH

Winfried Schäfer

The experienced German joined Esteghlal in October 2017 succeeding previous incumbent Alireza Mansourian. Schäfer is a familiar figure in 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. He won the 2002 Africa Cup of Nations with Cameroon.



Group D

AL AIN FC (UAE)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
17	GK	KHALID EISA BILAL	15-Sep-89	UAE
36	GK	DAWOUD SULAIMAN	21-Mar-90	UAE
40	GK	MOHAMMED BUSANDA	20-Jun-95	UAE
75	GK	HAMAD ALMANSOORI	28-Mar-96	UAE
4	DF	SAEED MUSABBEH	04-Feb-94	UAE
5	DF	ISMAIL AHMED MOHAMED	07-Jul-83	UAE
14	DF	MOHAMMED FAYEZ ALALAWI	06-Oct-89	UAE
15	DF	KHALED ABDULRAHMAN	10-Sep-88	UAE
19	DF	MOHNAD SALEM	01-Mar-85	UAE
21	DF	FAWZI FAYEZ ALALAWI	14-Jul-87	UAE
23	DF	MOHAMED AHMAD GHARIB	16-Apr-89	UAE
37	DF	RASHED MUHAYER	20-Feb-94	UAE
44	DF	SAEED JUMA ALSAADI	08-Jul-98	UAE
6	MF	AMER ABDULRAHMAN ABDULLA	03-Jul-89	UAE
10	MF	OMAR ABDULRAHMAN	20-Sep-91	UAE
11	MF	BANDAR MOHAMED AL AHBABI	09-Jul-90	UAE
13	MF	AHMED BARMAN	05-Feb-94	UAE
16	MF	MOHAMED ABDULRAHMAN ALRAQI	04-Feb-89	UAE
18	MF	DIAKY IBRAHIM AMUAH	24-May-82	UAE
26	MF	KHALED KHALFAN	23-Jan-96	UAE
27	MF	MUHCEN BA ABDULLA	13-Apr-95	UAE
28	MF	SULAIMAN HMOUD ALAMERI	23-Jun-97	UAE
30	MF	MOHAMMED KHALFAN	28-Aug-98	UAE
33	MF	TSUKASA SHIOTANI	05-Dec-88	JAP
43	MF	RAYAN YASLAM AL JABERI	23-Nov-94	UAE
74	MF	HUSSEIN ALI HASSAN	21-Jun-92	EGY
7	FW	LUCAS FERNANDES CAIO	19-Apr-94	BRA
9	FW	MARKUS BERG	17-Aug-86	SWE
20	FW	AHMED KHALIL ALJUNAIBI	08-Jun-91	UAE
35	FW	YOUSEF AHMED	27-Apr-94	UAE



CLUB PROFILE

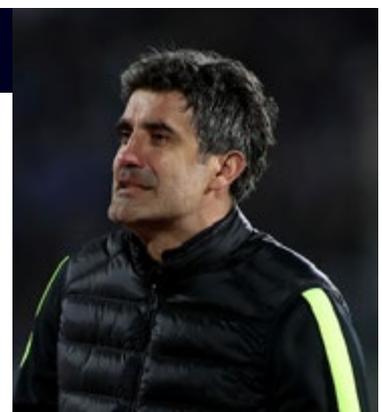
Al Ain returned to the competition once again after finishing fourth in the UAE Pro League and beating Bahrain's Malkiya Club 2-0 in the play-offs.

In 2017, the Emiratis made it out of the group stage before beating Esteghlal in the Round of 16 and then losing to Al Hilal in the quarter-finals. Runners-up in 2005 and 2016 – and semi-finalists in 2014 – Al Ain's finest performance to date came in 2003 when they were crowned champions of the AFC Champions League's inaugural edition after a 2-1 aggregate win over Thailand's BEC Tero Sasana.

HEAD COACH

Zoran Mamic

Zoran Mamic is a former Croatia international, who spent several years of his playing career in Germany, enjoyed much coaching success in his homeland, winning three consecutive Croatian league titles with Dinamo Zagreb. The 46-year-old arrived in the Middle East in 2016 to take charge of Saudi side Al Nassr before his appointment by Al Ain.



Group E

JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	HONG JUNGNAM	21-May-88	KOR
21	GK	HWANG BYEONGGEUN	14-Jun-94	KOR
31	GK	SONG BUMKEUN	15-Oct-97	KOR
2	DF	LEE YONG	24-Dec-86	KOR
3	DF	KIM MINJAE	15-Nov-96	KOR
15	DF	LEE JAESUNG	05-Jul-88	KOR
16	DF	CHO SUNGHWAN	09-Apr-82	KOR
19	DF	PARK WONJAE	28-May-84	KOR
22	DF	KIM JINSU	13-Jun-92	KOR
23	DF	YUN JIHYEOK	07-Feb-98	KOR
25	DF	CHOI CHUL SOON	08-Feb-87	KOR
26	DF	HONG JEONGHO	12-Aug-89	KOR
33	DF	PARK WONJAE	07-May-94	KOR
38	DF	PARK JEONGHO	18-Feb-97	KOR
4	MF	SHIN HYUNGMIN	18-Jul-86	KOR
5	MF	LIM SUNYOUNG	21-Mar-88	KOR
6	MF	CHOI BOKYUNG	12-Apr-88	KOR
8	MF	JUNG HYUK	21-May-86	KOR
14	MF	LEE SEUNGGI	02-Jun-88	KOR
17	MF	LEE JAESUNG	10-Aug-92	KOR
28	MF	SON JUNHO	12-May-92	KOR
34	MF	JANG YUNHO	25-Aug-96	KOR
7	FW	HAN KYO WON	15-Jun-90	KOR
9	FW	KIM SHINWOOK	14-Apr-88	KOR
10	FW	RICARDO LOPES	28-Oct-90	BRA
11	FW	TIAGO SALES DE LIMA	12-Jan-93	BRA
18	FW	NA SUNGEUN	06-Apr-96	KOR
20	FW	LEE DONG GOOK	29-Apr-79	KOR
27	FW	YU SEUNGMIN	24-Sep-98	KOR
32	FW	CARLOS ADRIANO	28-Sep-87	BRA



CLUB PROFILE

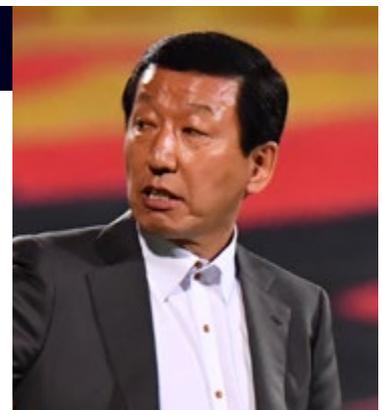
Two-time AFC Champions League winners Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors from Korea Republic returned to the competition having sealed a fifth K League Classic success in 2017.

Jeonbuk claimed their first continental win in 2006 with victory over two legs against Al Karamah from Syria before securing a second a decade later against Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates in 2016 when they beat their Emirati opponents 3-2 on aggregate following a home win and an away draw. They, however, missed out on the opportunity to defend their title in 2017.

HEAD COACH

Choi Kang-hee

Choi Kang-hee took his Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors side back into the AFC Champions League once again, with the former Korea Republic head coach looking for a record third continental title as a coach. Choi led the club to success in both 2006 and 2016, while he has also now won six K League titles as well as successfully guiding his country to the finals of the 2014 FIFA World Cup.



Group E

KITCHEE SC (HKG)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	WANG ZHENPENG	05-May-84	HKG
23	GK	GUO JIANQIAO	20-Jul-86	HKG
30	GK	WONG TSZ HO	09-Feb-00	HKG
2	DF	FERNANDO RECIO COMI	17-Dec-82	HKG
3	DF	DANIEL CANCELA RODRIGUEZ	23-Sep-81	HKG
5	DF	HELIO JOSE GONCALVES	31-Jan-86	HKG
12	DF	LO KWAN YEE	09-Oct-84	HKG
13	DF	LI NGAI HOI	15-Oct-94	HKG
21	DF	TONG KIN MAN	10-Jan-85	HKG
90	DF	KIM BONGJIN	18-Jul-90	KOR
7	MF	AZEVEDO PEDREIRA	14-Nov-86	BRA
10	MF	LAM KA WAI	05-Jun-85	HKG
19	MF	HUANG YANG	19-Oct-83	HKG
32	MF	KRISZTIAN VADOCZ	30-May-85	HUN
8	FW	ALEXANDER OLUWATAYO	09-Feb-89	HKG
11	FW	ALESSANDRO FERREIRA LEONARDO	10-Mar-87	HKG
14	FW	JORGE TARRES PARAMO	16-Mar-81	HKG
15	FW	CHRISTIAN KWESI	03-May-78	HKG
17	FW	PAULO ROBSPIERRY CARREIRO	16-Jan-83	HKG
18	FW	DIEGO FORLAN	19-May-79	URU
28	FW	CHENG CHIN LUNG	07-Jan-98	HKG



CLUB PROFILE

Hong Kong's Kitchee made their first-ever appearance in the AFC Champions League group stage having only previously only featured in the competition's preliminary rounds.

In 2016, they lost to Vietnam's Hanoi T&T in the play-off phase, before missing out on a surprise win over Ulsan Hyundai a year later, losing in a penalty shoot-out to the club from Korea Republic having defeated Hanoi FC in the previous round. The club won the Hong Kong Premier League title in the 2016-17 season, finishing ahead of 2017 AFC Champions League representatives Eastern.

HEAD COACH

Chu Chi Kwong

Chu Chi Kwong served a lengthy apprenticeship as assistant coach at Kitchee SC, holding the role for some 10 years before taking over as head coach ahead of the 2016-17 season. His deep knowledge of the club paid off wonderfully well as he duly steered Kitchee to the Hong Kong Premier League, the Hong Kong FA Cup and the Senior Shield in his first year in charge.



Group E

TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	ZHANG LU	06-Sep-87	CHN
22	GK	YANG JUN	10-Jun-80	CHN
32	GK	SUN QIBIN	06-Nov-91	CHN
2	DF	LIU SHENG	08-Sep-89	CHN
4	DF	LIU YIMING	28-Feb-95	CHN
6	DF	PEI SHUAI	14-Jan-93	CHN
18	DF	ZHANG CHENG	28-Jun-89	CHN
21	DF	KWON KYUNGWON	31-Jan-92	KOR
25	DF	MI HAOLUN	10-Jan-93	CHN
26	DF	LIU YI	26-Jan-97	CHN
33	DF	CHU JINZHAO	11-Jan-93	CHN
3	MF	WANG JIE	14-Jan-89	CHN
7	MF	ZHAO XURI	03-Dec-85	CHN
15	MF	LIU YUE	14-Sep-97	CHN
16	MF	ZHENG DALUN	11-Feb-94	CHN
19	MF	WANG XIAOLONG	11-Mar-86	CHN
20	MF	ZHANG YUAN	28-Jan-97	CHN
28	MF	AXEL LAURENT WITSEL	12-Jan-89	BEL
31	MF	WEN JUNJIE	16-Apr-97	CHN
38	MF	SUN KE	26-Aug-89	CHN
9	FW	YANG XU	12-Feb-88	CHN
10	FW	PATO	02-Sep-89	BRA
17	FW	SU YUANJIE	14-Apr-95	CHN
27	FW	ANTHONY STEPHANE MODESTE	14-Apr-88	FRA
39	FW	WANG YONGPO	19-Jan-87	CHN



CLUB PROFILE

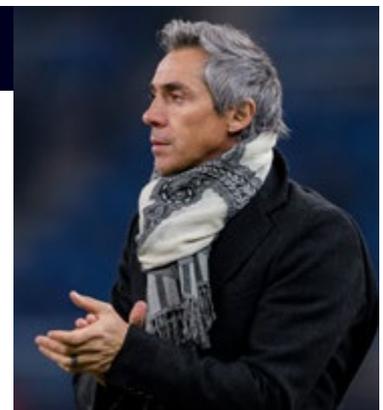
Tianjin Quanjian booked their first-ever appearance in the group stage of the AFC Champions League as the club continued its remarkable progress.

Tianjin Quanjian won China League One, the country's second division, in 2016 before claiming third place in the Chinese Super League in 2017 thanks to an impressive late season surge to qualify for the 2018 AFC Champions League play-offs. There, they saw off Ceres Negros of the Philippines thanks to a pair of goals from Anthony Modeste to book their place in Group E.

HEAD COACH

Paulo Sousa

Portuguese coach Paulo Sousa was appointed in November 2017 as the club's replacement for Fabio Cannavaro, who led Tianjin to third place in the Chinese Super League just one year after promotion from China League One. Sousa, who played for Juventus and represented his country 52 times, took over after coaching stints in England, Hungary, Switzerland, Israel and Italy.



Group E

KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	KAZUSHIGE KIRIHATA	30-Jun-87	JPN
16	GK	HARUHIKO TAKIMOTO	20-May-97	JPN
21	GK	HARUKI SARUTA	23-Apr-99	JPN
23	GK	KOSUKE NAKAMURA	27-Feb-95	JPN
2	DF	JIRO KAMATA	28-Jul-85	JPN
4	DF	SHINNOBUKE NAKATANI	24-Mar-96	JPN
5	DF	YUTA NAKAYAMA	16-Feb-97	JPN
13	DF	RYUTA KOIKE	29-Aug-95	JPN
22	DF	PARK JEONGSU	12-Apr-94	KOR
24	DF	TOSHIKI MIYAMOTO	04-Jun-99	JPN
26	DF	TAIYO KOGA	28-Oct-98	JPN
27	DF	TOMOKI IMAI	29-Nov-90	JPN
29	DF	SO NAKAGAWA	01-Jun-99	JPN
39	DF	MASASHI KAMEKAWA	28-May-93	JPN
7	MF	HIDEKAZU OTANI	06-Nov-84	JPN
8	MF	KEI KOIZUMI	19-Apr-95	JPN
10	MF	ATARU ESAKA	31-May-92	JPN
15	MF	KIM BOKYUNG	06-Oct-89	KOR
17	MF	KOHEI TEZUKA	06-Apr-96	JPN
19	MF	HIROTO NAKAGAWA	03-Nov-94	JPN
25	MF	RIKU TANAKA	04-May-99	JPN
28	MF	RYOICHI KURISAWA	05-Sep-82	JPN
30	MF	SAWA MASAKATSU	12-Jan-83	JPN
37	MF	HAJIME HOSOGAI	10-Jun-86	JPN
9	FW	CRISTIANO DA SILVA	12-Jan-87	BRA
11	FW	YAMAZAKI RYOHEI	14-Mar-89	JPN
14	FW	ITO JUNYA	09-Mar-93	JPN
18	FW	YUSUKE SEGAWA	07-Feb-94	JPN
20	FW	RAMON DE FREITAS	07-Aug-89	BRA



CLUB PROFILE

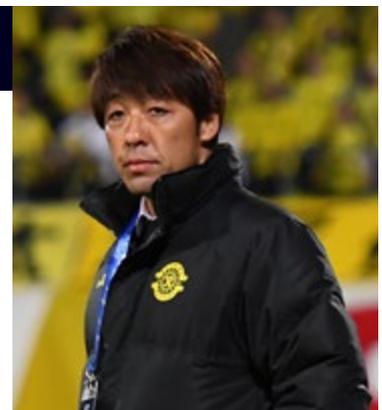
After finishing fourth in the 2017 J.League, Kashiwa Reysol qualified for the AFC Champions League group stage for the fourth time in the club's history with a win over Thailand's Muangthong United.

Reysol were, however, made to wait until the outcome of the Emperor's Cup final was decided in Cerezo Osaka's favour having their place in the AFC Champions League's 2018 edition confirmed. Reysol have a perfect record of advancing to the knockout phase, reaching the semi-finals in 2013 and progressing to the last eight two years later.

HEAD COACH

Takahiro Shimotaira

Takahiro Shimotaira was appointed Kashiwa Reysol head coach ahead of the 2016 domestic season and duly helped secure back-to-back top 10 J.League finishes. A fourth-place finish in 2017 was enough to see Shimotaira return the club he played for – he had two stints with Kashiwa either side of a spell with FC Tokyo – to the AFC Champions League.



Group F

KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	JUNG SUNGRYONG	04-Jan-85	KOR
24	GK	SHUNSUKE ANDO	10-Aug-90	JPN
30	GK	SHOTA ARAI	01-Nov-88	JPN
31	GK	WILLIAM POPP	21-Oct-94	JPN
2	DF	KYOHEI NOBORIZATO	13-Nov-90	JPN
3	DF	TATSUKI NARA	19-Sep-93	JPN
7	DF	SHINTARO KURUMAYA	05-Apr-92	JPN
17	DF	YUTO TAKEOKA	24-Jun-86	JPN
18	DF	ELSON DE SOUZA	30-Nov-89	BRA
23	DF	CARLOS EDUARDO GIUSTI	27-Apr-93	BRA
29	DF	MICHAEL FITZGERALD	17-Sep-98	JPN
5	MF	SHOGO TANIGUCHI	15-Jul-91	JPN
6	MF	YUSUKE TASAKA	08-Jul-85	JPN
8	MF	HIROYUKI ABE	05-Jul-89	JPN
10	MF	RYOTA OHSHIMA	23-Jan-93	JPN
14	MF	KENGO NAKAMURA	31-Oct-80	JPN
16	MF	TATSUYA HASEGAWA	07-Mar-94	JPN
19	MF	KENTARO MORIYA	21-Sep-88	JPN
21	MF	EDUARDO DA SILVA NETO	24-Oct-88	BRA
22	MF	HOKUTO SHIMODA	07-Nov-91	JPN
25	MF	MORITA HIDEMASA	10-May-95	JPN
27	MF	YUTO SUZUKI	07-Dec-93	JPN
28	MF	YASUTO WAKIZAKA	11-Jun-95	JPN
32	MF	AO TANAKA	10-Sep-98	JPN
37	MF	MANABU SAITO	04-Apr-90	JPN
41	MF	AKIHIRO IENAGA	13-Jun-86	JPN
4	FW	YOSHITO OKUBO	09-Jun-82	JPN
9	FW	AKASAKI SHUHEI	01-Sep-91	JPN
11	FW	YU KOBAYASHI	23-Sep-87	JPN
20	FW	KEI CHINEN	17-Mar-95	JPN



CLUB PROFILE

Kawasaki Frontale entered their sixth AFC Champions League as champions of Japan after they claimed their first-ever league title in a dramatic conclusion to the 2017 season.

That domestic success marked Kawasaki's first major trophy after three runners-up finishes. Their record in the AFC Champions League features no less than three quarter-final appearances, with the most recent coming in 2017 when they were eliminated by compatriots and eventual winners Urawa Red Diamonds following a narrow 5-4 aggregate defeat over two legs.

HEAD COACH

Toru Oniki

Toru Oniki led Kawasaki Frontale to their first-ever domestic title in 2017, ending a run of near-misses for the club based on the banks of the Tama River. The league win capped a successful first year in charge for Oniki as he also steered Frontale to the quarter-finals of the AFC Champions League, where they were narrowly defeated by eventual winners Urawa Red Diamonds.



Group F

ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	KIM YONGDAE	11-Oct-79	KOR
18	GK	JO SUHUK	18-Mar-87	KOR
21	GK	OH SEUNGHOON	30-Jun-88	KOR
2	DF	LEE JI HUN	24-Mar-94	KOR
3	DF	KIM KIYOUNG	14-Aug-96	KOR
4	DF	KANG MINSOO	14-Feb-86	KOR
5	DF	LIM JONG EUN	18-Jun-90	KOR
13	DF	LEE MYUNG JAE	04-Nov-93	KOR
22	DF	JEONG DONGHO	07-Mar-90	KOR
26	DF	LEE SANG MIN	01-Jan-98	KOR
27	DF	KIM CHANGSOO	12-Sep-85	KOR
40	DF	RICHARD WINDBICHLER	02-Apr-91	AUT
6	MF	JEONG JAE YONG	14-Sep-90	KOR
7	MF	KIM INSUNG	09-Sep-89	KOR
8	MF	CHO YOUNGCHEOL	31-May-89	KOR
14	MF	LEE SANGHEON	26-Feb-98	KOR
16	MF	KIM GEON-UNG	29-Aug-97	KOR
17	MF	JANG SEONGJAI	12-Sep-95	KOR
20	MF	KIM SUNGJU	15-Nov-90	KOR
24	MF	HAN SEUNGGYU	28-Sep-96	KOR
32	MF	LEE YEONGJAE	13-Sep-94	KOR
33	MF	PARK JOO HO	16-Jan-87	KOR
34	MF	PARK YONGWOO	10-Sep-93	KOR
9	FW	MISLAV ORSIC	29-Dec-92	CRO
11	FW	HWANG ILSU	08-Aug-87	KOR
19	FW	KIM SEUNGJUN	11-Sep-94	KOR
29	FW	KIM SUAN	10-Jun-93	KOR
30	FW	GLEIDIONOR FIGUEIREDO PINTO	30-Dec-86	BRA
39	FW	OH SEHUN	15-Jan-99	KOR
55	FW	YOHEI TOYODA	11-Apr-85	JPN



CLUB PROFILE

Despite finishing fifth in the K League standings, Ulsan Hyundai sealed their place in the group stage of the 2018 AFC Champions League after they claimed their first-ever Korean FA Cup title by beating Busan I'Park over two legs in the final.

The 2012 champions, who saw off Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli in the final to claim the continental crown, featured in the 2017 edition but exited at the end of the group stage having only narrowly qualified via a penalty shoot-out win in the play-offs against Hong Kong's Kitchee SC.

HEAD COACH

Kim Do-hoon

A prolific goal scorer during his playing days, Kim Do-hoon steered Ulsan Hyundai FC into the AFC Champions League at the end of his first season in charge of the club. 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.



Group F

MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	MATTHEW ACTON	03-Jun-92	AUS
20	GK	LAWRENCE THOMAS	09-May-92	AUS
30	GK	MATTHEW SUTTON	07-Mar-00	AUS
2	DF	JASON GERIA	10-May-93	AUS
4	DF	RHYS WILLIAMS	14-Jul-88	AUS
14	DF	THOMAS DENG	27-Mar-97	AUS
17	DF	JAMES DONACHIE	14-May-93	AUS
6	MF	LEIGH BROXHAM	13-Jan-88	AUS
15	MF	CAMERON MCGILP	08-Feb-98	AUS
16	MF	JOSH HOPE	07-Jan-98	AUS
21	MF	CARL VALERI	14-Aug-84	AUS
22	MF	STEFAN NIGRO	10-Aug-96	AUS
24	MF	TERRY ANTONIS	26-Nov-93	AUS
25	MF	BIRKAN KIRDAR	07-Feb-02	AUS
7	FW	KENJOK ATHIU	05-Aug-92	AUS
8	FW	BESART BERISHA	29-Jul-85	ALB
9	FW	KOSTA BARBAROUSES	19-Feb-90	NZL
10	FW	JAMES TROISI	03-Jul-88	AUS
11	FW	MITCHELL AUSTIN	03-Apr-91	AUS
19	FW	PIERCE WARING	18-Nov-98	AUS
23	FW	JAI INGHAM	14-Aug-93	AUS
26	FW	NICHOLAS SETTE	24-May-00	AUS
31	FW	CHRISTIAN THEOHAROUS	06-Dec-99	AUS
41	FW	LEROY MARTEN GEORGE	21-Apr-87	NED



CLUB PROFILE

Melbourne Victory qualified for the AFC Champions League for a sixth time in the club's history after reaching the Round of 16 in the 2016 edition – the first time the Australian side had advanced beyond the group stage.

Melbourne, three-time winners of the A-League's Grand Final, booked their place in the 2018 edition after finishing as runners-up in the A-League behind Sydney FC, who then went on to defeat Melbourne via a penalty shootout in the 2017 A-League Grand Final.

HEAD COACH

Kevin Muscat

Kevin Muscat took over as Melbourne Victory coach in 2013 after Ange Postecoglou was appointed head coach of the Australia national team, and the former defender has established 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

SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	YAN JUNLING	28-Jan-91	CHN
22	GK	SUN LE	17-Sep-89	CHN
34	GK	CHEN WEI	14-Feb-98	CHN
35	GK	SHI XIAODONG	26-Feb-97	CHN
2	DF	ZHANG WEI	28-Mar-93	CHN
4	DF	WANG SHENCHAO	08-Feb-89	CHN
5	DF	SHI KE	08-Jan-93	CHN
13	DF	WEI ZHEN	12-Feb-97	CHN
21	DF	YU HAI	04-Jun-87	CHN
23	DF	FU HUAN	12-Jul-93	CHN
28	DF	HE GUAN	25-Jan-93	CHN
36	DF	YU HAO	05-Sep-97	CHN
38	DF	WEI LAI	02-Jan-97	CHN
6	MF	CAI HUIKANG	10-Oct-89	CHN
8	MF	OSCAR EMBOABA JUNIOR	09-Sep-91	BRA
15	MF	LIN CHUANGYI	28-Jan-93	CHN
17	MF	ZHANG HUACHEN	16-Mar-98	CHN
18	MF	ZHANG YI	17-Aug-93	CHN
25	MF	ODIL AKHMEDOV	25-Nov-87	UZB
26	MF	GAO HAISHENG	06-Jan-97	CHN
39	MF	SUN JUNGANG	05-Aug-95	CHN
9	FW	ELKESON DE OLIVEIRA CARDOSO	13-Jul-89	BRA
10	FW	GIVANILDO VIEIRA DE SOUSA	25-Jul-86	BRA
11	FW	LYU WENJUN	11-Mar-89	CHN
14	FW	LI SHENGLONG	30-Jul-92	CHN
19	FW	HU JINGHANG	23-Mar-97	CHN
24	FW	LEI WENJIE	10-Jan-97	CHN
37	FW	CHEN BINBIN	10-Jun-98	CHN



CLUB PROFILE

Shanghai SIPG finished as runners-up in both the Chinese Super League and the Chinese FA Cup in 2017, while also reaching the semi-finals of the AFC Champions League.

Second place in the league sealed a place in the play-off phase of the 2018 AFC Champions League, with a 1-0 win over Chiangrai United from Thailand enough to book Shanghai SIPG's place in the group stage for the third season in a row. SIPG also reached the quarter-finals in their debut appearance in the competition in 2016.

HEAD COACH

Vitor Pereira

Vitor Pereira took over as head coach of Shanghai SIPG FC following the resignation of Andre Villas Boas, who had guided the club into the semi-finals of the 2017 AFC Champions League. Pereira previously worked at Porto in his native Portugal – where he also succeeded Villas Boas – and won the league in 2012 and 2013.



Group G

GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
19	GK	ZENG CHENG	08-Jan-87	CHN
32	GK	LIU DIANZUO	26-Jun-90	CHN
40	GK	LIU SHIBO	20-May-97	CHN
5	DF	ZHANG LINPENG	09-May-89	CHN
6	DF	FENG XIAOTING	22-Oct-85	CHN
14	DF	RONG HAO	07-Apr-87	CHN
25	DF	ZOU ZHENG	07-Feb-88	CHN
28	DF	KIM YOUNGGWON	27-Feb-90	KOR
35	DF	LI XUEPENG	18-Sep-88	CHN
2	MF	LIAO LISHENG	29-Apr-93	CHN
4	MF	XU XIN	19-Apr-94	CHN
8	MF	NEMANJA GUDELJ	16-Nov-91	NED
10	MF	ZHENG ZHI	20-Aug-80	CHN
12	MF	WANG SHANGYUAN	02-Jun-93	CHN
16	MF	HUANG BOWEN	13-Jul-87	CHN
26	MF	WANG JUNHUI	18-May-95	CHN
27	MF	ZHENG LONG	15-Apr-88	CHN
7	FW	ALAN DOUGLAS DE CARVALHO	10-Jul-89	BRA
11	FW	RICARDO GOULART	05-Jun-91	BRA
15	FW	ZHANG WENZHAO	28-May-87	CHN
17	FW	YANG LIYU	13-Feb-97	CHN
18	FW	GUO JING	24-Feb-97	CHN
20	FW	YU HANCHAO	25-Feb-87	CHN
21	FW	ZHANG CHENGLIN	20-Jan-87	CHN
22	FW	TANG SHI	24-Jan-95	CHN
23	FW	DENG HANWEN	08-Jan-95	CHN
29	FW	GAO LIN	14-Feb-86	CHN
30	FW	HU RUIBAO	17-Oct-96	CHN
34	FW	FENG BOXUAN	18-Mar-97	CHN
36	FW	DENG YUBIAO	08-Jun-97	CHN



CLUB PROFILE

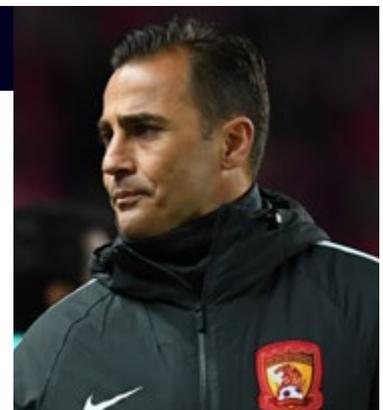
China PR powerhouse and two-time title winners Guangzhou Evergrande made their seventh consecutive AFC Champions League appearance in the competition's 2018 edition.

The 2017 Chinese Super League winners entered the group stage looking to seal a history-making third success after claiming their first crown in 2013 when, with Italian Marcello Lippi at the helm, they defeated FC Seoul on the away goals rule. Luiz Felipe Scolari then led Guangzhou to a second title just two years later as they defeated Al Ahli of the United Arab Emirates.

HEAD COACH

Fabio Cannavaro

Fabio Cannavaro, who captained Italy to victory at the 2006 FIFA World Cup, was in 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 take charge of Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr and Chinese domestic rivals Tianjin Quanjian.



Group G

CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	TAKUMI NAGAISHI	16-Feb-96	JPN
21	GK	KIM JINHYEON	06-Jul-87	KOR
27	GK	KENTA TANNO	30-Aug-86	JPN
2	DF	RIKU MATSUDA	24-Jul-91	JPN
3	DF	TERUYUKI MONIWA	08-Sep-81	JPN
5	DF	YUSUKE TANAKA	03-Feb-86	JPN
14	DF	YUSUKE MARUHASHI	02-Sep-90	JPN
16	DF	EIICHI KATAYAMA	30-Nov-91	JPN
20	DF	NORIYUKI SAKEMOTO	08-Sep-84	JPN
22	DF	MATEJ JONJIC	29-Jan-91	CRO
23	DF	TATSUYA YAMASHITA	07-Nov-87	JPN
29	DF	KAKERU FUNAKI	13-Apr-98	JPN
6	MF	HOTARU YAMAGUCHI	06-Oct-90	JPN
7	MF	KOTA MIZUNUMA	22-Feb-90	JPN
10	MF	HIROSHI KIYOTAKE	12-Nov-89	JPN
11	MF	ELIERCE BARBOZA DE SOUZA	08-Mar-88	BRA
15	MF	YASUKI KIMOTO	06-Aug-93	JPN
17	MF	TAKAKI FUKUMITSU	22-Feb-92	JPN
24	MF	YAMAMURA KAZUYA	02-Dec-89	JPN
25	MF	HIROFUMI YAMAUCHI	09-Feb-95	JPN
26	MF	DAICHI AKIYAMA	28-Jul-94	JPN
32	MF	ATOMU TANAKA	04-Oct-87	JPN
38	MF	MASATAKA NISHIMOTO	11-Jun-96	JPN
8	FW	YOICHIRO KAKITANI	03-Jan-90	JPN
9	FW	KENYU SUGIMOTO	18-Nov-92	JPN
13	FW	TAKAGI TOSHIYUKI	25-May-91	JPN
18	FW	YANG DONGHYEN	28-Mar-86	KOR
33	FW	REI YONEZAWA	20-Jul-96	JPN
34	FW	HIROTO YAMADA	07-Mar-00	JPN
40	FW	MIZUKI ANDO	19-Jul-99	JPN



CLUB PROFILE

Cerezo Osaka returned to Asia's premier club competition for the first time since featuring in 2014, with the 2017 Emperor's Cup winners looking to maintain their impressive 100 percent record of qualifying for the knockout phase.

Cerezo reached the quarter-finals in 2011 and the Round of 16 three years later. In addition to their Emperor's Cup success, Cerezo also won the J.League Cup and finished third in the domestic standings in 2017 to cap a spectacular return to the upper tier of the Japanese game.

HEAD COACH

Yoon Jong-hwan

Named Japan's Manager of the Year in 2017, Yoon Jong-hwan played for Cerezo during a glittering career that also saw him earn 40 Korea Republic caps. Yoon began coaching Sagan Tosu before moving to K League side Ulsan Hyundai FC in 2015. He replaced Kiyoshi Okuma at Cerezo in 2017, before guiding his new charges to the Emperor's Cup and J.League Cup titles.



Group G

JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	KIM KYEONGMIN	01-Nov-91	KOR
21	GK	LEE CHANG GEUN	30-Aug-93	KOR
41	GK	PARK HANKEUN	07-May-96	KOR
2	DF	JUNG DAHWON	22-Dec-87	KOR
3	DF	KIM SANGWON	20-Feb-92	KOR
4	DF	OH BANSUK	20-May-88	KOR
5	DF	KWEON HANJIN	19-May-88	KOR
6	DF	PARK JINPO	13-Aug-87	KOR
13	DF	CHUNG WOON	30-Jun-89	KOR
15	DF	ALEKSANDAR JOVANOVIC	04-Aug-89	AUS
20	DF	CHO YONGHYUNG	03-Nov-83	KOR
22	DF	KIM SOOBEOM	02-Oct-90	KOR
32	DF	KIM SEUNG WOO	06-Nov-95	KOR
37	DF	KIM WONIL	18-Oct-86	KOR
45	DF	JEONG TAEWOOK	16-May-97	KOR
7	MF	KWON SOONHYUNG	16-Jun-86	KOR
14	MF	LEE CHANGMIN	20-Jan-94	KOR
16	MF	LEE DONGSU	03-Jun-94	KOR
40	MF	LEE CHANDONG	10-Jan-93	KOR
42	MF	LEE DONGHEE	03-Jul-96	KOR
44	MF	JWA JOONHYUB	07-May-91	KOR
8	FW	KIM DOYUP	26-Nov-88	KOR
9	FW	JIN SEONGUK	16-Dec-93	KOR
18	FW	BAE JAEWOO	17-May-93	KOR
30	FW	KIM HYEONUG	22-Jun-95	KOR



CLUB PROFILE

Jeju United sealed back-to-back qualifications for the AFC Champions League thanks to their runners-up finish in the 2017 K League Classic.

In 2017, the team from Korea Republic's southern island narrowly missed out on a quarter-final berth when they lost a thrilling two-legged Round of 16 encounter against eventual champions Urawa Red Diamonds that saw them win the first encounter 2-0 in front of their own fans before the Japanese side claimed a 3-0 victory in extra-time to seal a 3-2 aggregate win.

HEAD COACH

Jo Sung-hwan

Jo Sung-hwan has had a long association with Jeju United FC, serving as a player during their days as Yukong Elephants and Bucheon SK in the 1990s and 2000s. He began his coaching career with Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors, before a return to his original club in 2013, working initially as an assistant coach and then taking over as head coach in 2015.



Group G

BURIRAM UNITED (THA)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	SIWARAK TEDSUNGNOEN	20-Apr-84	THA
29	GK	YOTSAPON TEANGDAR	06-Apr-92	THA
59	GK	NOPPHON LAKHONPHON	19-Jul-00	THA
99	GK	KEVIN SANGSAMANAN	20-May-97	THA
3	DF	PANSA HEMVIBOON	08-Jul-90	THA
4	DF	BOONYONG PRAWEENWAT	13-Feb-90	THA
5	DF	ANDRES JOSE	15-Mar-87	ESP
11	DF	KORRAKOT WIRIYA-UDOMSIRI	19-Jan-88	THA
13	DF	NARUBADIN WEERAWATNODOM	12-Jul-94	THA
17	DF	EKKALUCK THONGKRIT	27-Aug-83	THA
33	DF	SRAYUT SOMPIM	23-Mar-97	THA
50	DF	KRITSANA DAOKRAJAI	13-Mar-01	THA
60	DF	KEERON ORNCHAIPHUM	21-Nov-99	THA
7	MF	ANON AMORNLERSTAK	06-Nov-97	THA
8	MF	SUCHAO NUTNUM	17-May-83	THA
10	MF	JAKKAPHAN KAEWPROM	24-May-88	THA
16	MF	YOO JUNSOO	08-May-88	KOR
19	MF	SUPACHOK SARACHAT	22-May-98	THA
26	MF	RATTHANAKORN MAIKAMI	07-Jan-98	THA
51	MF	PANYAWAT NISANGRAM	23-Feb-99	THA
52	MF	YUTHAPICHAI LERTLUM	21-Apr-99	THA
77	MF	MATEE SARAUM	21-May-99	THA
6	FW	SASALAK HAIPRAKHON	08-Jan-95	THA
9	FW	SUPACHAI CHAIDED	01-Dec-98	THA
14	FW	CHITIPAT THANKLANG	11-Aug-91	THA
23	FW	EDGAR BRUNO DA SILVA	03-Jan-87	BRA
40	FW	DIOGO LUIS SANTO	26-May-87	BRA
54	FW	SUPHANAT MUEANTA	02-Aug-02	THA



CLUB PROFILE

Having missed out on a place in the 2017 AFC Champions League for the first time in seven seasons, a fourth Thai Premier League title win in five years ensured a return to the competition for the club that reached the quarter-finalists in 2013.

Regarded as the powerhouse of Thai football throughout much of the last decade, Buriram re-established themselves in 2017 as the country's preeminent force, winning the league title by 14 points from Muangthong United to claim Thailand's only automatic berth in the group stage.

HEAD COACH

Bozidar Bandovic

Montenegrin Bozidar Bandovic assumed the role of Buriram head coach after being the club's technical director prior to his appointment. He was also in charge of the Thai side during the 2014 season, going on to coach both BEC Tero Sasana and Sisaket before moving back to Buriram who he helped guide to the top-flight title in 2017.



Group H

SYDNEY FC (AUS)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	ANDREW REDMAYNE	13-Jan-89	AUS
20	GK	ALEKSANDER CISAK	19-May-89	AUS
30	GK	THOMAS HEWARD-BELLE	11-Mar-97	AUS
2	DF	AARON CALVER	12-Jan-96	AUS
3	DF	BENJAMIN WARLAND	04-Sep-96	AUS
4	DF	ALEX WILKINSON	13-Aug-84	AUS
7	DF	MICHAEL ZULLO	11-Sep-88	AUS
23	DF	RHYAN BERT GRANT	26-Feb-91	AUS
26	DF	LUKE WILKSHIRE	02-Oct-81	AUS
32	DF	WILLIAM MUTCH	27-Feb-98	AUS
33	DF	PATRICK FLOTTMANN	19-Apr-97	AUS
35	DF	JACKSON BANDIERA	16-Apr-98	AUS
6	MF	JOSHUA BRILLANTE	25-Mar-93	AUS
8	MF	PAULO RETRE	04-Mar-93	AUS
10	MF	MILOS NINKOVIC	25-Dec-84	SRB
11	MF	ADRIAN MIERZEJEWSKI	06-Nov-86	POL
13	MF	BRANDON O'NEILL	12-Apr-94	AUS
16	MF	KALIK ANTHONY	05-Nov-97	AUS
17	MF	DAVID CARNEY	30-Nov-83	AUS
19	MF	CHRISTOPHER ZUVELA	21-Jan-97	AUS
31	MF	MARCO TILIO	23-Aug-01	AUS
37	MF	JEREMY COX	20-Jun-97	AUS
9	FW	DEYVISON ROGERIO DA SILVA	09-Jan-85	BRA
14	FW	ALEX BROSQUE	12-Oct-83	AUS
18	FW	MATTHEW SIMON	22-Jan-86	AUS
21	FW	CHARLES NGOY	02-Mar-97	AUS



CLUB PROFILE

Sydney returned to AFC Champions League for a fourth time after finishing their highly successful 2017 domestic season as A-League Premiers before defeating Melbourne Victory in the Grand Final to be crowned champions.

The Australian outfit made their debut in the AFC Champions League in 2007 when they were narrowly denied a place in the knockout rounds by eventual champions Urawa Red Diamonds. They reached the Round of 16 for the first time in 2016, before being knocked out by Shandong Luneng.

HEAD COACH

Graham Arnold

A former Australia international striker, Graham Arnold is one of his country's most experienced coaches, taking charge of the national team at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and guiding Central Coast Mariners to the A-League title and the last 16 of the AFC Champions League in 2013. After a short spell at Japan's Vegalta Sendai, Arnold was appointed Sydney head coach in May 2014.

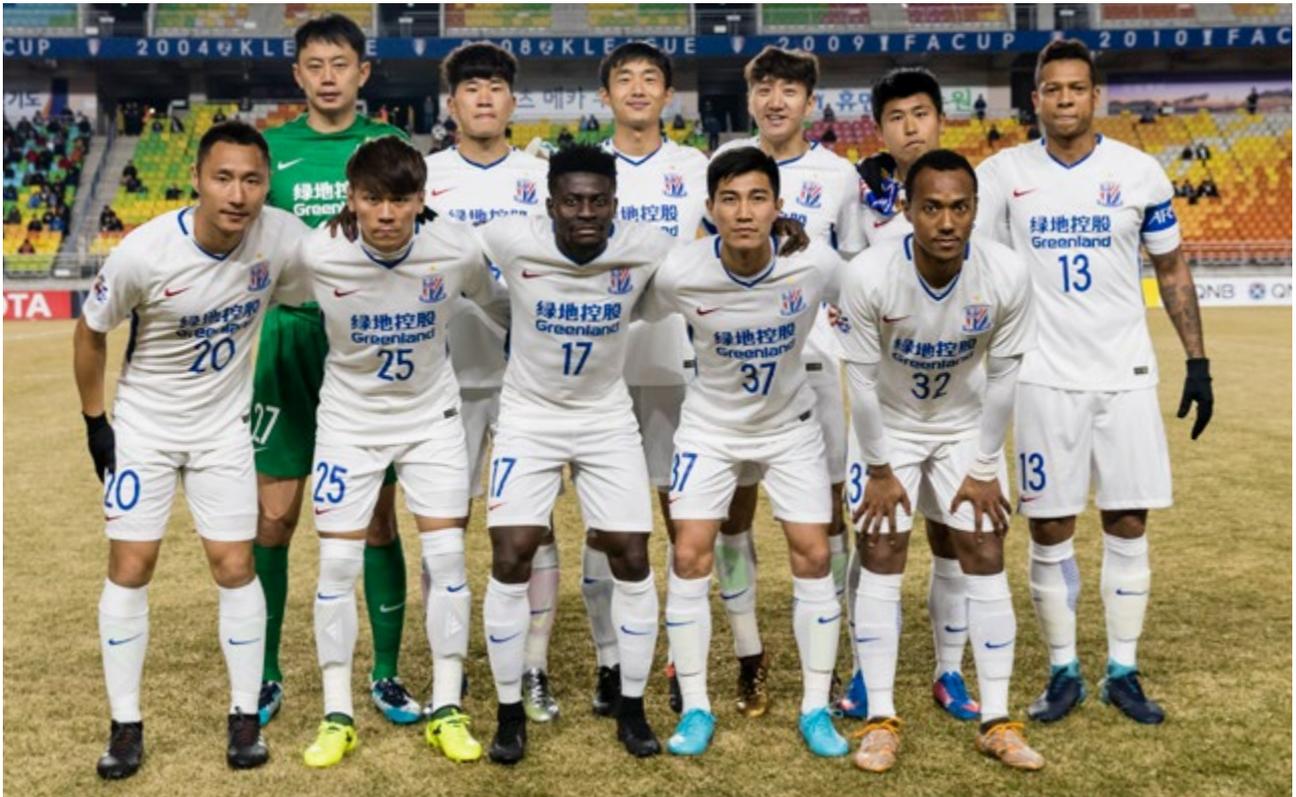


Group H

SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
12	GK	CHEN ZHAO	26-Oct-96	CHN
22	GK	QIU SHENGJIONG	01-Sep-85	CHN
27	GK	LI SHUAI	18-Aug-82	CHN
3	DF	LI JIANBIN	19-Apr-89	CHN
16	DF	LI YUNQIU	03-Oct-90	CHN
23	DF	BAI JIAJUN	20-Mar-91	CHN
25	DF	WANG LIN	19-Sep-87	CHN
30	DF	TAO JIN	02-Jun-85	CHN
32	DF	EDDY	17-Dec-90	CHN
34	DF	BI JINHAO	05-Jan-91	CHN
5	MF	WANG SHOUTING	03-Sep-85	CHN
6	MF	LI PENG	29-Aug-90	CHN
8	MF	ZHANG LU	23-Aug-87	CHN
10	MF	GIOVANNI ANDRES MORENO CARDONA	01-Jul-86	COL
13	MF	FREDY ALEJANDRO VASQUEZ	30-Jun-86	COL
15	MF	ZHU JIANRONG	12-Jul-91	CHN
20	MF	WANG YUN	28-Mar-83	CHN
26	MF	QIN SHENG	02-Nov-86	CHN
28	MF	CAO YUNDING	22-Nov-89	CHN
37	MF	SUN SHILIN	24-Oct-88	CHN
2	FW	XU YOUANG	09-Feb-96	CHN
7	FW	MAO JIANQING	08-Aug-86	CHN
14	FW	SUN KAI	26-Mar-91	CHN
17	FW	OBAFEMI MARTINS	28-Oct-84	NGA
18	FW	GAO DI	06-Jan-90	CHN
19	FW	LI XIAOMING	19-Jan-96	CHN
31	FW	WANG WEI	22-Jun-89	CHN
35	FW	LYU PIN	03-May-95	CHN
36	FW	LIU RUOFAN	28-Jan-99	CHN
39	FW	CONG ZHEN	09-Feb-97	CHN



CLUB PROFILE

Shanghai Shenhua brought their seven-year absence from the AFC Champions League group stage to an end after securing their berth in the competition with victory over cross-city rivals Shanghai SIPG in the final of the 2017 Chinese FA Cup.

The club's best performance to date came in 2006 when they advanced to the quarter-finals before losing to eventual winners Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors. Shenhua qualified for the play-offs in 2017, but failed to advance after being beaten by Australia's Brisbane Roar.

HEAD COACH

Wu Jingui

Wu Jingui took over as caretaker coach following Gustavo Poyet's dismissal in 2017, and duly did enough to steer the club into the final of the Chinese FA Cup. Once there, he masterminded a two-legged win over city rivals Shanghai SIPG to secure a spot in the AFC Champions League. The win was also enough to secure Wu the role of head coach on a full-time basis.



Group H

KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	KWOUN SUNTAE	11-Sep-84	KOR
21	GK	SOGAHATA HITOSHI	02-Aug-79	JPN
29	GK	KAWAMATA SHINICHIRO	23-Jul-89	JPN
31	GK	YUYA OKI	22-Aug-99	JPN
2	DF	ATSUTO UCHIDA	27-Mar-88	JPN
3	DF	SHOJI GEN	11-Dec-92	JPN
5	DF	NAOMICHI UEDA	24-Oct-94	JPN
15	DF	YUTO MISAO	16-Apr-91	JPN
16	DF	SHUTO YAMAMOTO	01-Jun-85	JPN
22	DF	NISHI DAIGO	28-Aug-87	JPN
23	DF	ITSUKI ODA	16-Jul-98	JPN
24	DF	YUKITOSHI ITO	03-Sep-93	JPN
28	DF	KOKI MACHIDA	25-Aug-97	JPN
32	DF	KOKI ANZAI	31-May-95	JPN
39	DF	TOMOYA INUKAI	12-May-93	JPN
4	MF	HUGO LEONARDO SEREJO	24-Dec-85	BRA
6	MF	RYOTA NAGAKI	04-Jun-88	JPN
8	MF	DOI SHOMA	21-May-92	JPN
11	MF	WEVERSON LEANDRO MOURA	12-May-93	BRA
13	MF	ATSUTAKA NAKAMURA	13-Sep-90	JPN
20	MF	KENTO MISAO	16-Apr-96	JPN
25	MF	ENDO YASUSHI	07-Apr-88	JPN
26	MF	KAZUNE KUBOTA	01-Jan-97	JPN
40	MF	OGASAWARA MITSUO	05-Apr-79	JPN
10	FW	MU KANAZAKI	16-Feb-89	JPN
14	FW	TAKESHI KANAMORI	04-Apr-94	JPN
30	FW	HIROKI ABE	28-Jan-99	JPN



CLUB PROFILE

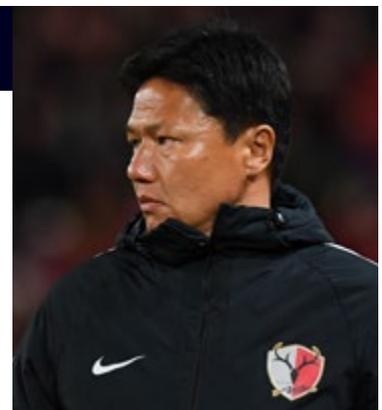
Kashima Antlers, Japan's most successful club, entered the competition looking to improve their record in the AFC Champions League and build on last year's run to the Round of 16.

Kashima have never advanced beyond the quarter-finals, despite winning a record eight top-flight titles and finishing as runners-up in the 2016 FIFA Club World Cup. They qualified for the 2018 tournament after finishing second domestically, only missing out on the title to Kawasaki Frontale after a dramatic final day of the season.

HEAD COACH

Go Oiwa

Former Japan international defender Go Oiwa was named head coach after Masatada Ishii was axed following the club's failure to advance beyond the Round of 16 in the 2017 AFC Champions League. Oiwa, who played for Antlers as well as Nagoya Grampus Eight and Jubilo Iwata, duly steered Kashima to the verge of yet another league title before their stumble on the final day.



Group H

SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)



NO.	POSITION	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
1	GK	SHIN HWAYONG	13-Apr-83	KOR
21	GK	NO DONGGEON	04-Oct-91	KOR
31	GK	KIM SUNWOO	22-Apr-93	KOR
3	DF	YANG SANGMIN	24-Feb-84	KOR
5	DF	JO SUNGJIN	14-Dec-90	KOR
6	DF	MATTHEW JURMAN	08-Dec-89	AUS
8	DF	CHO WON HEE	17-Apr-83	KOR
15	DF	KU JARYONG	06-Apr-92	KOR
20	DF	KWAK KWANGSUN	28-Mar-86	KOR
23	DF	LEE KIJE	09-Jul-91	KOR
35	DF	JANG HOIK	04-Dec-93	KOR
4	MF	KIM EUNSUN	30-Mar-88	KOR
11	MF	LIM SANGHYUB	08-Jul-88	KOR
12	MF	CRISTOVAM ROBERTO DA SILVA	25-Jul-90	BRA
13	MF	PARK HYUNGJIN	24-Jun-90	KOR
16	MF	LEE JONG SUNG	05-Aug-92	KOR
17	MF	KIM JONGWOO	01-Oct-93	KOR
24	MF	LEE SANGMIN	02-May-95	KOR
25	MF	CHOI SUNGGUEN	28-Jul-91	KOR
26	MF	YEOM KIHUN	30-Mar-83	KOR
27	MF	JANG HYUNSOO	01-Jan-93	KOR
28	MF	YOU JUAN	01-Oct-98	KOR
30	MF	YOON YONGHO	06-Mar-96	KOR
77	MF	CHO JI HUN	29-May-90	KOR
99	MF	JEON SEJIN	09-Sep-99	KOR
7	FW	WAGNER DA SILVA SOUZA	30-Jan-90	BRA
9	FW	PARK GIDONG	01-Nov-88	KOR
10	FW	DEJAN DAMJANOVIC	27-Jul-81	SRB
14	FW	KIM GUNHEE	22-Feb-95	KOR
70	FW	JOO HYUNHO	01-Mar-96	KOR



CLUB PROFILE

Two-time Asian Club Championship winners Suwon Samsung Bluewings booked their place in the group stage of the AFC Champions League for the ninth time in 14 seasons by seeing off Vietnam's Thanh Hoa courtesy of a comfortable 5-1 win in the play-off phase.

Prior to their latest continental campaign, Suwon's best performance had come in 2011 when they made it through to the semi-finals. However, the following years saw them suffer group stage exits in both 2016 and 2017 and they last reached the Round of 16 in 2015.

HEAD COACH

Lee Byung-keun

Following Seo Jung-won's departure ahead of the quarter-finals, assistant coach Lee Byung-keun stepped in to take charge of first team affairs at the two-time Asian Club Championship winners. Like Seo, Lee was a member of the playing staff when Suwon won the Asian title in both 2001 and 2002 before moving into coaching, first with Gyeongnam FC before returning to Suwon in 2013.



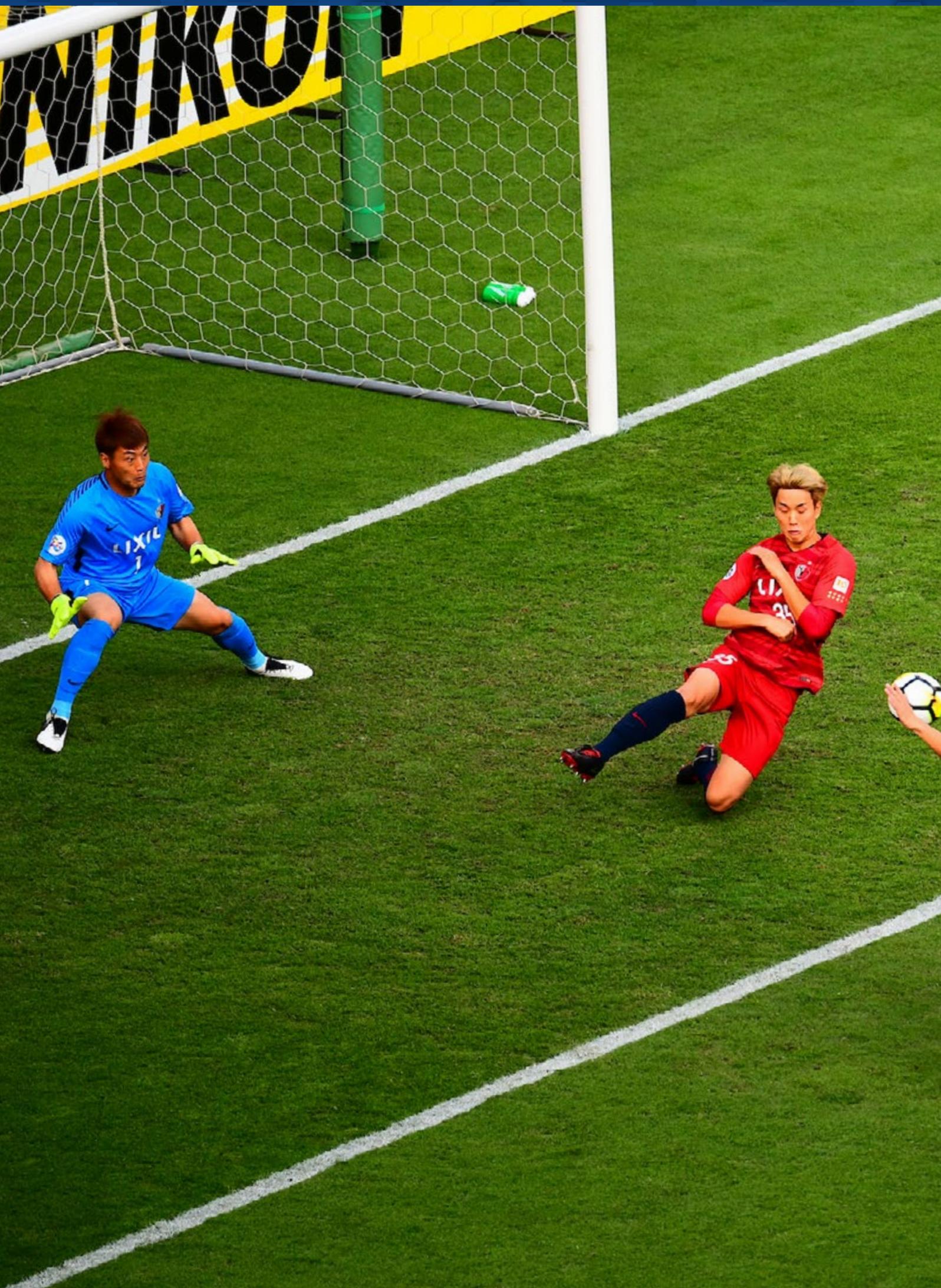
FORMER HEAD COACH

Seo Jung-won

(stepped down ahead of the quarter-finals)

Having lifted the Asian Club Championship as captain of Suwon Samsung Bluewings in 2002, Seo Jung-won returned to the club as an assistant coach in 2012 after fulfilling a similar role with the Korea Republic U23 and senior international sides before He was duly elevated to his current position following the resignation of Yoon Sung-hyo after the 2012 K League season.







COMPETITION RESULTS



COMPETITION RESULTS

PRELIMINARY ROUND

Date	Zone	Team A	Score	Team B
16 Jan, 2018	EAST	SHAN UNITED FC (MYA)	1-1 a.e.t. (0-0,0-0) 3-4 PSO	CERES NEGROS FC (PHI)
16 Jan, 2018	EAST	BALI UNITED FC (IDN)	3-1 (1-1)	TAMPINES ROVERS FC (SIN)
23 Jan, 2018	EAST	CHIANGRAI UNITED (THA)	2-1 a.e.t. (0-0,0-0)	BALI UNITED FC (IDN)
23 Jan, 2018	EAST	BRISBANE ROAR (AUS)	2-3 (1-1)	CERES NEGROS FC (PHI)
23 Jan, 2018	EAST	MUANGTHONG UNITED (THA)	5-2 (3-0)	JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM (MAS)
23 Jan, 2018	EAST	EASTERN SC (HKG)	2-4 (1-1)	THANH HOA (VIE)



PLAY-OFFS (EAST)

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
30 Jan, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	2-0 (1-0)	CERES NEGROS FC (PHI)
30 Jan, 2018	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)	3-0 (0-0)	MUANGTHONG UNITED (THA)
30 Jan, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	5-1 (2-0)	THANH HOA (VIE)
30 Jan, 2018	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	1-0 (0-0)	CHIANGRAI UNITED (THA)

PLAYOFFS (WEST)

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
30 Jan, 2018	FC NASAF (UZB)	5-1 (1-0)	AL FAISALY (JOR)
30 Jan, 2018	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	3-1 (1-1)	AIZAWL FC (IND)
30 Jan, 2018	AL AIN FC (UAE)	2-0 (0-0)	MALKIYA CLUB (BHR)
30 Jan, 2018	AL GHARAFI (QAT)	2-1 (2-0)	PAKHTAKOR (UZB)

GROUP STAGE

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)	6	4	2	0	9	4	5	14
AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)	6	2	2	2	9	9	0	8
AL GHARAF A (QAT)	6	2	2	2	12	9	3	8
TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)	6	0	2	4	2	10	-8	2

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
12 Feb, 2018	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)	3-2 (2-1)	AL GHARAF A (QAT)
12 Feb, 2018	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)	0-1 (0-0)	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)
19 Feb, 2018	AL GHARAF A (QAT)	3-0 (2-0)	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)
19 Feb, 2018	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)	2-1 (1-0)	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)
05 Mar, 2018	AL GHARAF A (QAT)	1-1 (0-0)	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)
05 Mar, 2018	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)	0-0 (0-0)	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)
13 Mar, 2018	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)	1-1 (0-1)	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)
13 Mar, 2018	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)	1-1 (0-0)	AL GHARAF A (QAT)
03 Apr, 2018	AL GHARAF A (QAT)	2-3 (2-1)	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)
03 Apr, 2018	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)	2-0 (0-0)	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)
17 Apr, 2018	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)	1-2 (0-2)	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)
17 Apr, 2018	TRACTORSAZI TABRIZ (IRN)	1-3 (1-0)	AL GHARAF A (QAT)

* 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 DUHAIL SC (QAT)	6	6	0	0	13	6	7	18
ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	6	2	1	3	6	8	-2	7
PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)	6	2	1	3	13	9	4	7
AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)	6	1	0	5	6	15	-9	3

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
12 Feb, 2018	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)	5-0 (1-0)	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)
12 Feb, 2018	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)	3-1 (0-1)	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)
19 Feb, 2018	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	2-0 (0-0)	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)
19 Feb, 2018	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)	2-3 (1-0)	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)
06 Mar, 2018	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	2-0 (1-0)	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)
06 Mar, 2018	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)	3-2 (3-0)	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)
12 Mar, 2018	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)	1-2 (1-0)	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)
12 Mar, 2018	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)	3-0 (1-0)	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)
03 Apr, 2018	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	0-1 (0-0)	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)
03 Apr, 2018	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)	1-4 (0-2)	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)
17 Apr, 2018	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)	1-0 (0-0)	AL WAHDA FSCC (UAE)
17 Apr, 2018	PFC LOKOMOTIV (UZB)	1-1 (0-1)	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)

GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	6	4	1	1	8	3	5	13
AL SADD SC (QAT)	6	4	0	2	11	5	6	12
FC NASAF (UZB)	6	3	1	2	4	8	-4	10
AL WASL FC (UAE)	6	0	0	6	3	10	-7	0

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
13 Feb, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	3-0 (1-0)	FC NASAF (UZB)
13 Feb, 2018	AL WASL FC (UAE)	1-2 (1-0)	AL SADD SC (QAT)
20 Feb, 2018	FC NASAF (UZB)	1-0 (0-0)	AL WASL FC (UAE)
20 Feb, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	3-1 (1-0)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
05 Mar, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	2-0 (2-0)	AL WASL FC (UAE)
05 Mar, 2018	FC NASAF (UZB)	1-0 (0-0)	AL SADD SC (QAT)
13 Mar, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	4-0 (3-0)	FC NASAF (UZB)
13 Mar, 2018	AL WASL FC (UAE)	0-1 (0-1)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
02 Apr, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	2-1 (1-0)	AL WASL FC (UAE)
02 Apr, 2018	FC NASAF (UZB)	0-0 (0-0)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
16 Apr, 2018	AL WASL FC (UAE)	1-2 (1-1)	FC NASAF (UZB)
16 Apr, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	1-0 (1-0)	AL SADD SC (QAT)

GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	6	3	3	0	9	5	4	12
AL AIN FC (UAE)	6	2	4	0	10	6	4	10
AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)	6	1	3	2	7	11	-4	6
AL HILAL SFC (KSA)	6	0	2	4	3	7	-4	2

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
13 Feb, 2018	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)	2-2 (2-1)	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)
13 Feb, 2018	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)	0-0 (0-0)	AL AIN FC (UAE)
20 Feb, 2018	AL AIN FC (UAE)	1-1 (1-1)	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)
20 Feb, 2018	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	1-0 (0-0)	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)
06 Mar, 2018	AL AIN FC (UAE)	2-2 (0-0)	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)
06 Mar, 2018	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)	1-1 (0-1)	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)
12 Mar, 2018	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)	2-1 (1-0)	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)
12 Mar, 2018	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	1-1 (1-0)	AL AIN FC (UAE)
02 Apr, 2018	AL AIN FC (UAE)	2-1 (2-1)	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)
02 Apr, 2018	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	2-0 (1-0)	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)
16 Apr, 2018	AL HILAL SFC (KSA)	0-1 (0-1)	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)
16 Apr, 2018	AL RAYYAN SC (QAT)	1-4 (0-1)	AL AIN FC (UAE)

GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)	6	5	0	1	22	9	13	15
TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	6	4	1	1	15	11	4	13
KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)	6	1	1	4	6	10	-4	4
KITCHEE SC (HKG)	6	1	0	5	1	14	-13	3

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
13 Feb, 2018	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)	3-2 (0-2)	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)
13 Feb, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	3-0 (3-0)	KITCHEE SC (HKG)
20 Feb, 2018	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)	1-1 (0-0)	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)
20 Feb, 2018	KITCHEE SC (HKG)	0-6 (0-5)	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)
06 Mar, 2018	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)	6-3 (2-1)	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)
06 Mar, 2018	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)	1-0 (0-0)	KITCHEE SC (HKG)
14 Mar, 2018	KITCHEE SC (HKG)	1-0 (0-0)	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)
14 Mar, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	4-2 (1-1)	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)
04 Apr, 2018	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)	0-2 (0-1)	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)
04 Apr, 2018	KITCHEE SC (HKG)	0-1 (0-0)	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)
18 Apr, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	3-2 (2-1)	KASHIWA REYSOL (JPN)
18 Apr, 2018	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS (KOR)	3-0 (0-0)	KITCHEE SC (HKG)

GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	6	3	2	1	10	6	4	11
ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)	6	2	3	1	15	11	4	9
MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)	6	2	2	2	11	16	-5	8
KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)	6	0	3	3	6	9	-3	3

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
13 Feb, 2018	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)	0-1 (0-1)	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)
13 Feb, 2018	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)	3-3 (2-2)	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)
20 Feb, 2018	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)	2-1 (1-0)	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)
20 Feb, 2018	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	4-1 (2-0)	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)
07 Mar, 2018	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)	2-2 (1-1)	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)
07 Mar, 2018	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	2-2 (1-1)	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)
13 Mar, 2018	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)	0-1 (0-0)	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)
13 Mar, 2018	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)	1-0 (0-0)	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)
04 Apr, 2018	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)	6-2 (3-0)	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)
04 Apr, 2018	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	1-1 (0-0)	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)
18 Apr, 2018	KAWASAKI FRONTALE (JPN)	2-2 (2-0)	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)
18 Apr, 2018	MELBOURNE VICTORY (AUS)	2-1 (1-1)	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)

GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)	6	3	3	0	12	6	6	12
BURIRAM UNITED (THA)	6	2	3	1	7	6	1	9
CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)	6	2	2	2	6	8	-2	8
JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)	6	1	0	5	6	11	-5	3

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
14 Feb, 2018	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)	1-1 (1-0)	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)
14 Feb, 2018	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)	0-1 (0-0)	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)
21 Feb, 2018	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)	0-2 (0-2)	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)
21 Feb, 2018	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)	0-0 (0-0)	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)
06 Mar, 2018	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)	2-0 (1-0)	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)
06 Mar, 2018	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)	5-3 (1-2)	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)
14 Mar, 2018	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)	2-2 (0-1)	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)
14 Mar, 2018	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)	0-2 (0-2)	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)
03 Apr, 2018	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)	1-1 (0-1)	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)
03 Apr, 2018	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)	2-1 (2-0)	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)
17 Apr, 2018	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)	3-1 (1-1)	CEREZO OSAKA (JPN)
17 Apr, 2018	JEJU UNITED FC (KOR)	0-1 (0-0)	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)

GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS
SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	6	3	1	2	8	7	1	10
KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	6	2	3	1	8	6	2	9
SYDNEY FC (AUS)	6	1	3	2	7	8	-1	6
SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)	6	0	5	1	6	8	-2	5

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
14 Feb, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	1-1 (0-1)	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)
14 Feb, 2018	SYDNEY FC (AUS)	0-2 (0-0)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
21 Feb, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	1-2 (0-1)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)
21 Feb, 2018	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)	2-2 (2-2)	SYDNEY FC (AUS)
07 Mar, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	1-1 (0-0)	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)
07 Mar, 2018	SYDNEY FC (AUS)	0-2 (0-1)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)
13 Mar, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	1-1 (1-0)	SYDNEY FC (AUS)
13 Mar, 2018	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)	0-2 (0-0)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
03 Apr, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	1-4 (1-2)	SYDNEY FC (AUS)
03 Apr, 2018	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)	2-2 (2-0)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)
17 Apr, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	0-1 (0-1)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
17 Apr, 2018	SYDNEY FC (AUS)	0-0 (0-0)	SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC (CHN)

KNOCK-OUT STAGE

ROUND OF 16

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
07 May, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	2-1 (2-0)	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)
07 May, 2018	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)	3-2 (0-1)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
08 May, 2018	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)	3-2 (1-0)	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)
08 May, 2018	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)	1-0 (0-0)	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)
08 May, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	0-0 (0-0)	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)
08 May, 2018	AL AIN FC (UAE)	2-4 (0-2)	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)
09 May, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	3-1 (1-0)	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)
09 May, 2018	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)	1-0 (0-0)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
14 May, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	2-1 (0-0)	AL JAZIRA FSC (UAE)
14 May, 2018	AL AHLI SAUDI FC (KSA)	2-2 (2-1)	AL SADD SC (QAT)
15 May, 2018	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)	4-1 (2-0)	AL AIN FC (UAE)
15 May, 2018	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)	2-0 (1-0)	BURIRAM UNITED (THA)
15 May, 2018	GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE FC (CHN)	2-2 (1-1)	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)
15 May, 2018	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	3-1 (2-0)	ZOBAHAN FC (IRN)
16 May, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	3-0 (2-0)	ULSAN HYUNDAI FC (KOR)
16 May, 2018	SHANGHAI SIPG FC (CHN)	2-1 (1-1)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)

QUARTER-FINALS

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
27 Aug, 2018	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)	1-3 (1-0)	AL SADD SC (QAT)
28 Aug, 2018	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)	1-0 (1-0)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
28 Aug, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	2-0 (0-0)	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)
29 Aug, 2018	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)	0-3 (0-0)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
17 Sep, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	3-1 (0-1)	AL DUHAIL SC (QAT)
17 Sep, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	2-2 (1-1)	ESTEGHLAL FC (IRN)
18 Sep, 2018	TIANJIN QUANJIAN FC (CHN)	0-3 (0-2)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)
19 Sep, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	0-3 a.e.t. (0-3,0-1) 4-2 PSO	JEONBUK HYUNDAI MOTORS FC (KOR)

SEMI-FINALS

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
02 Oct, 2018	AL SADD SC (QAT)	0-1 (0-0)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
03 Oct, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	3-2 (1-2)	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)
23 Oct, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	1-1 (0-1)	AL SADD SC (QAT)
24 Oct, 2018	SUWON SAMSUNG BLUEWINGS (KOR)	3-3 (0-1)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)

FINAL

Date	Team A	Score	Team B
03 Nov, 2018	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)	2-0 (0-0)	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)
10 Nov, 2018	PERSEPOLIS FC (IRN)	0-0 (0-0)	KASHIMA ANTLERS (JPN)

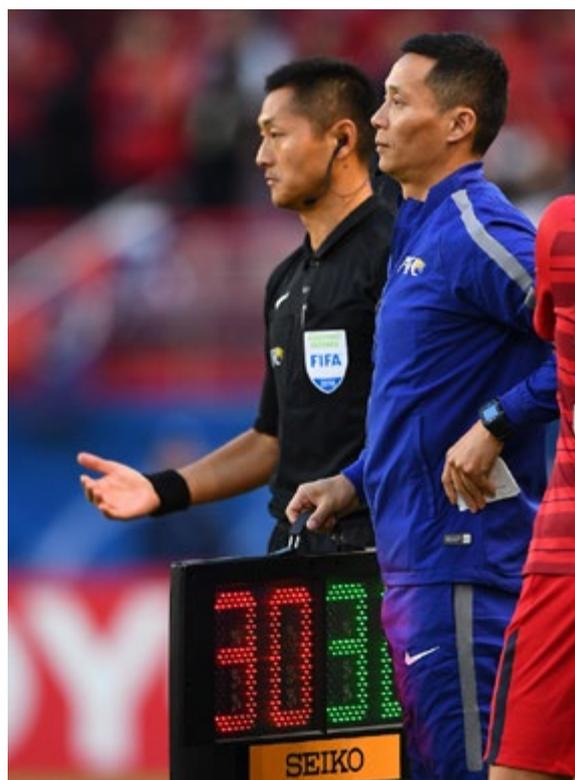




REFEREES

AFC Champions League 2018 Referees

NO.	NAME	MA
1	Anton Shchetinin	AUS
2	Ashley Warwick Beecham	AUS
3	David Edward Walsh	AUS
4	Lakrindis George	AUS
5	Matthew James Cream	AUS
6	Ryan Mark Gallagher	AUS
7	Abdulla Saleh Abdulla Mohsen Alrowaimi	BHR
8	Ebrahim Mubarak Sabt Moosa Saleh	BHR
9	Mohamed Jaafar Mohamed Salman	BHR
10	Nawaf Shaheen Khalifa Theyab Moosa	BHR
11	Yaser Khalil Ebrahim Abdulla Tulefat	BHR
12	Cao Yi	CHN
13	Huo Weiming	CHN
14	Ma Ji	CHN
15	Shi Xiang	CHN
16	Zhang Cheng	CHN
17	Chow Chun Kit	HKG
18	Fok Pong Shing	HKG
19	Law Ming Leong	HKG
20	Pillai Arun Sasidharan	IND
21	Sapam Kennedy	IND
22	Mohammad Reza Mansouri	IRN
23	Reza Sokhandan	IRN
24	Ameer Dawood Hussein Al-Windawi	IRQ
25	Hayder Abdulhasan Ali Ubaydee	IRQ
26	Muayad Mohammed Ali	IRQ
27	Watheq Mdallal Obaid Al-Swaiedi	IRQ
28	Ahmad Moannes Nadi Alroalle	JOR
29	Issa Mahmoud Ahmad Alamawi	JOR
30	Mahmoud Thaher Mohammad Abu-Thaher	JOR
31	Mohammad Mustafa Hassan Alkalaf	JOR
32	Hirama Ryo	JPN
33	Karakami Satoshi	JPN
34	Mihara Jun	JPN
35	Nishihashi Isao	JPN
36	Ochi Shinji	JPN
37	Sagara Toru	JPN
38	Takagi Takumi	JPN
39	Yagi Akane	JPN
40	Yamauchi Hiroshi	JPN
41	Kochkarov Bakhadyr	KGZ
43	Bang Giyeol	KOR



NO.	NAME	MA
44	Kim Youngha	KOR
45	Kwak Seungsoon	KOR
46	Park Sangjun	KOR
47	Song Bongkeun	KOR
48	Yoon Kwangyeol	KOR
49	Alabakry, Mohammed Maki A	KSA
50	Alshalwai Abdulah Mutlaq A	KSA
51	Alshammari Khalaf Zaid M	KSA
52	Fahad Awaiedh F Alumri	KSA
53	Azman Bin Ismail	MAS
54	Mohamad Mu Azi Bin Zainal Abidin	MAS
55	Mohd Yusri Bin Muhamad	MAS
56	Abdullah Ali Abdullah Al Jardani	OMA
57	Al Ghafri Hamed Talib Saif	OMA
58	Al-Amri Abu Bakar Salim Mahad	OMA
59	Rashid Hamed Ali Al Ghaithi	OMA
60	Juma Mohammed K H Al-Burshaid	QAT
61	Mohammad Jaber A H Dharman	QAT
62	Ramzan Saeed M A Al-Naemi	QAT
63	Saoud Ahmed S A Almaqaleh	QAT
64	Taleb Salem H A Al-Marri	QAT
65	Yousuf Aref M A Al-Shamari	QAT
66	Lee Tzu Liang	SIN
67	Ronnie Koh Min Kiat (Ronnie Gu Minjie)	SIN
68	Deniye Gedara Palitha Parakkrama Hemathunga	SRI
69	Loku Kasthotage Iran Udayakantha	SRI
70	Palliya Guruge Priyanga Namal	SRI
71	Wellabada Hewage Don Sanjeeva Premalal	SRI
72	Husam Alhamad Alfrih	SYR
73	Zakariya Kanat	SYR
74	Ahmed Saeed Ahmed Alasal Alrashdi	UAE
75	Hasan Mohamed Hasan Abdulla Almahri	UAE
76	Mohamed Ahmed Yousef Abdulla Alhammadi	UAE
77	Zayed Dawood Salman Kamal	UAE
78	Gaynullin Timur	UZB
79	Abdukhamidullo Rasulov	UZB
80	Jakhongir Saidov	UZB
81	Serazitdinov Ruslan	UZB
82	Khusniddin Shodmonov	UZB
83	Andrey Tsapenko	UZB
84	Alisher Usmanov	UZB







STAR SELECTION



THE ALL STAR SQUAD

Goalkeepers



Kwoun Suntae (1)
Kashima Antlers



Ali Reza Beiranvand (1)
Persepolis



Shin Hwa-Yong (1)
Suwon Samsung Bluewings

Defenders



Shoji (3)
Kashima Antlers



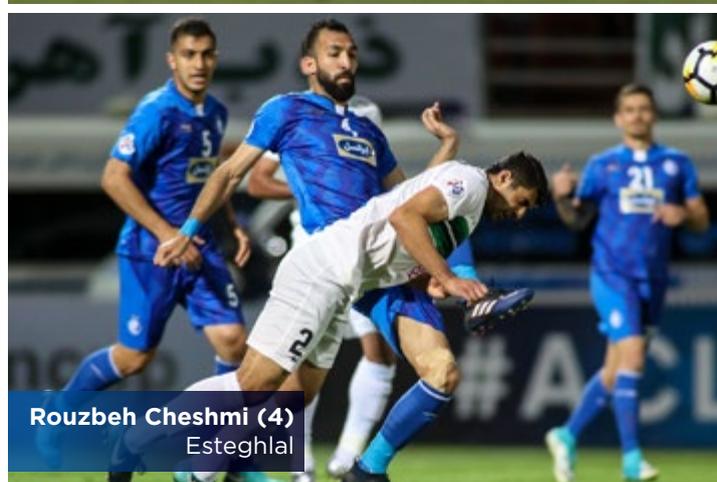
Jalal Hosseini (4)
Persepolis



Jung Seung-hyun (35)
Kashima Antlers



Abdel Hassan (14)
Al Sadd



Rouzbeh Cheshmi (4)
Esteghlal

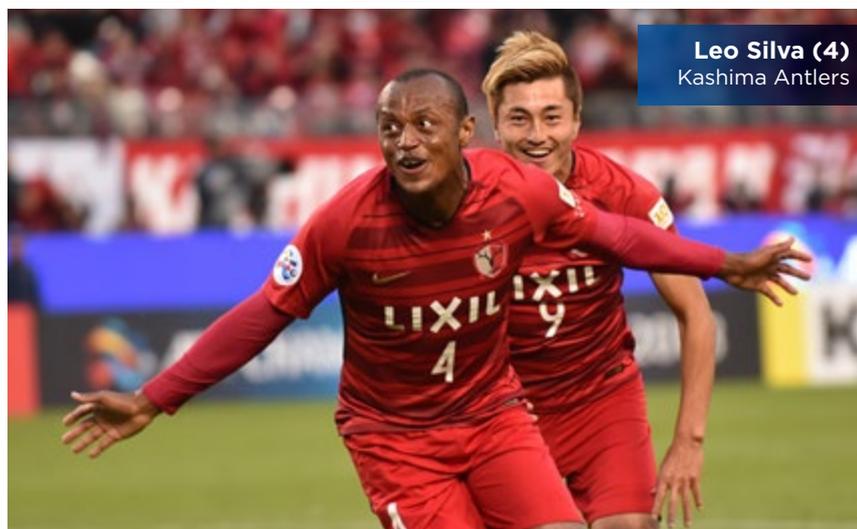
Midfielders



Nam-Taehee (10)
Al-Duhail



Xavi (6)
Al-Sadd



Leo Silva (4)
Kashima Antlers



Kamal (11)
Persepolis



Kento Misao (20)
Kashima Antlers



Bashar Resan (5)
Persepolis



Park Jong-woo (24)
Suwon Samsung Bluewings



Elvis Saric (19)
Suwon Samsung Bluewings

Attackers



Serginho (18)
Kashima Antlers



Yuma Suzuki (9)
Kashima Antlers



Shin-wook (9)
Jeonbuk Hyundai



Godwin Mensha (90)
Persepolis



Ali Alipour (70)
Persepolis



Pato (10)
Tianjin Quanjian



Dejan (10)
Suwon Samsung Bluewings



Baghdad Bounedjah (11)
Al-Sadd





BEST GOALS



BEST GOALS

Set Plays

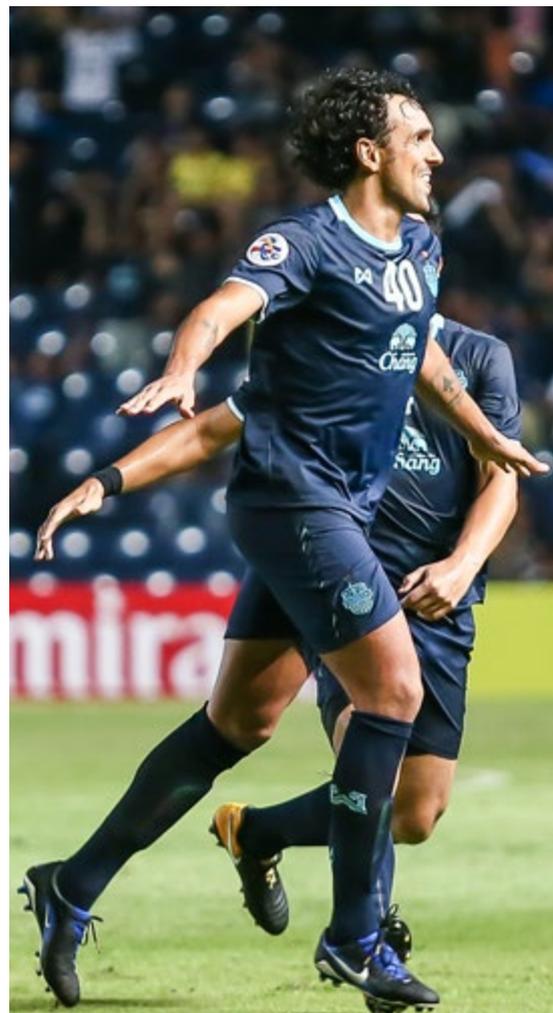
- 1 Orsic Melbourne v **ULSAN** - 24' Direct Free Kick
- 2 Abdulrahman Al-Rayyan v **AL AIN** - 55' Direct Free Kick
- 3 Lee Jae-Sung **JEONBUK** v Buriram Utd - 84' Direct Free Kick
- 4 Diogo **BURIRAM UTD** v Jeonbuk - 60' Direct Free Kick
- 5 Al Hammandi **AL JAZIRA** v Persepolis - 96' Indirect Free Kick
- 6 Jo Sung-Jin **SUWON** v Kashima - 53' Corner
- 7 Wang Jie Guangzhou v **TIANJIN** - 52' Indirect Free Kick
- 8 Ahmadzadeh **PERSEPOLIS** v Al Wasl - 36' Throw-in
- 9 Balghaith Al-Gharafa v **AL AHLI** - 62' Corner
- 10 Windbichler Shanghai SIPG v **ULSAN** - 37' Corner

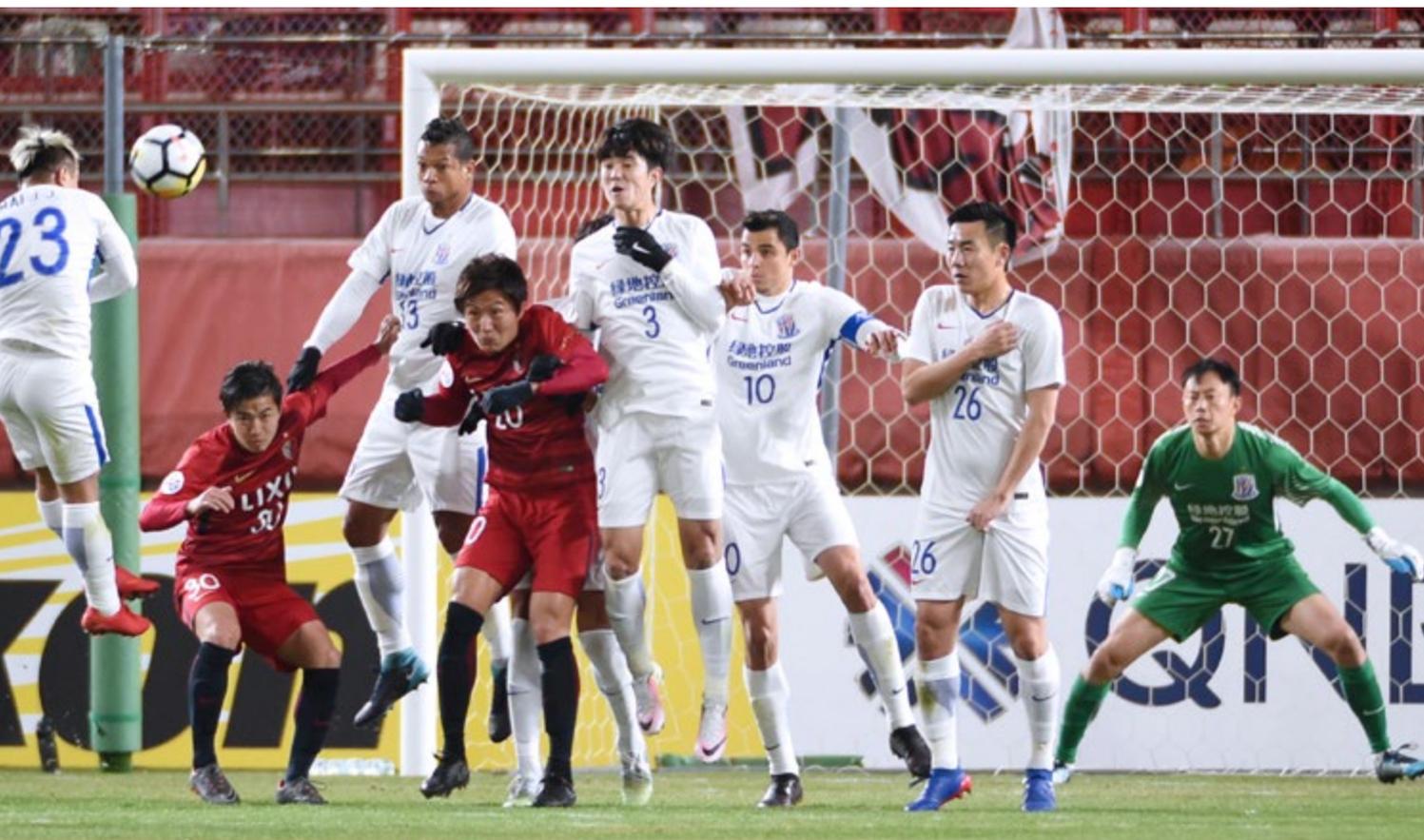
Video highlights

Open Play

- 1 Oscar **SHANGHAI SIPG** v Ulsan - 38' Long Range Shot
- 2 Nourollahi **PERSEPOLIS** v Al Jazira - 63' Long Range Shot
- 3 Alibaev **LOKOMOTIV** v Al Wahda - 53' Long Range Shot
- 4 Thiam **ESTEGHLAL** v Zob Ahan - 41' Long Range Shot
- 5 Oscar **SHANGHAI SIPG** v Melbourne - 77' Combination Play
- 6 Cheng Chin Lung **KITCHEE** v Kashima - 92' Solo Play
- 7 Serginho **KASHIMA** v Tianjin - 72' Long Range Shot
- 8 Shiotani Esteghlal v **AL AIN** - 78' Long Range Shot
- 9 Leo Silva **KASHIMA** v Persepolis - 58' Combination Play
- 10 Oscar **SHANGHAI SIPG** v Ulsan - 70' Long Range Shot

Video highlights







2017



AFC CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
FINAL 2017



39

5

1

16

46

9

22

5



PREVIOUS WINNERS

Previous Winners

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)
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King Fahd International Stadium, Riyadh

Second Leg

25/11/17	Urawa Red Diamonds (JPN) (Rafael Silva 88)	1-0	Al-Hilal (KSA)
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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)
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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	AI Ahli (UAE)	0-0	Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN)
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Al Rashid Stadium, Dubai

Second Leg

21/11/15	Guangzhou Evergrande (CHN) (Elkeson 64)	1-0	AI Ahli (UAE)
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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)
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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)
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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)
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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 Ognenovski 29, Cho Byung-kuk 53, Kim Cheol-ho 83)	3-1	Zobahan (IRN) (Mohammadreza Khalatbari 67)
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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)
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Expo '70 Commemorative Stadium, Osaka

Second Leg

12/11/08	Adelaide United (AUS)	0-2	Gamba Osaka (JPN) (Lucas 4, 14)
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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)
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Foolad Shahr Stadium, Esfahan

Second Leg

14/11/07	Urawa Reds (JPN) (Yuichiro Nagai 22, Yuki Abe 71)	2-0	Sepahan (IRN)
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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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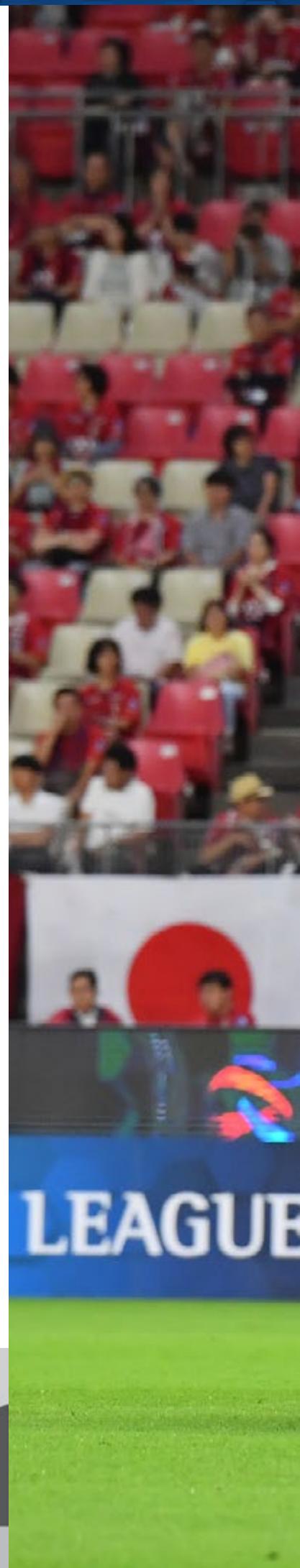
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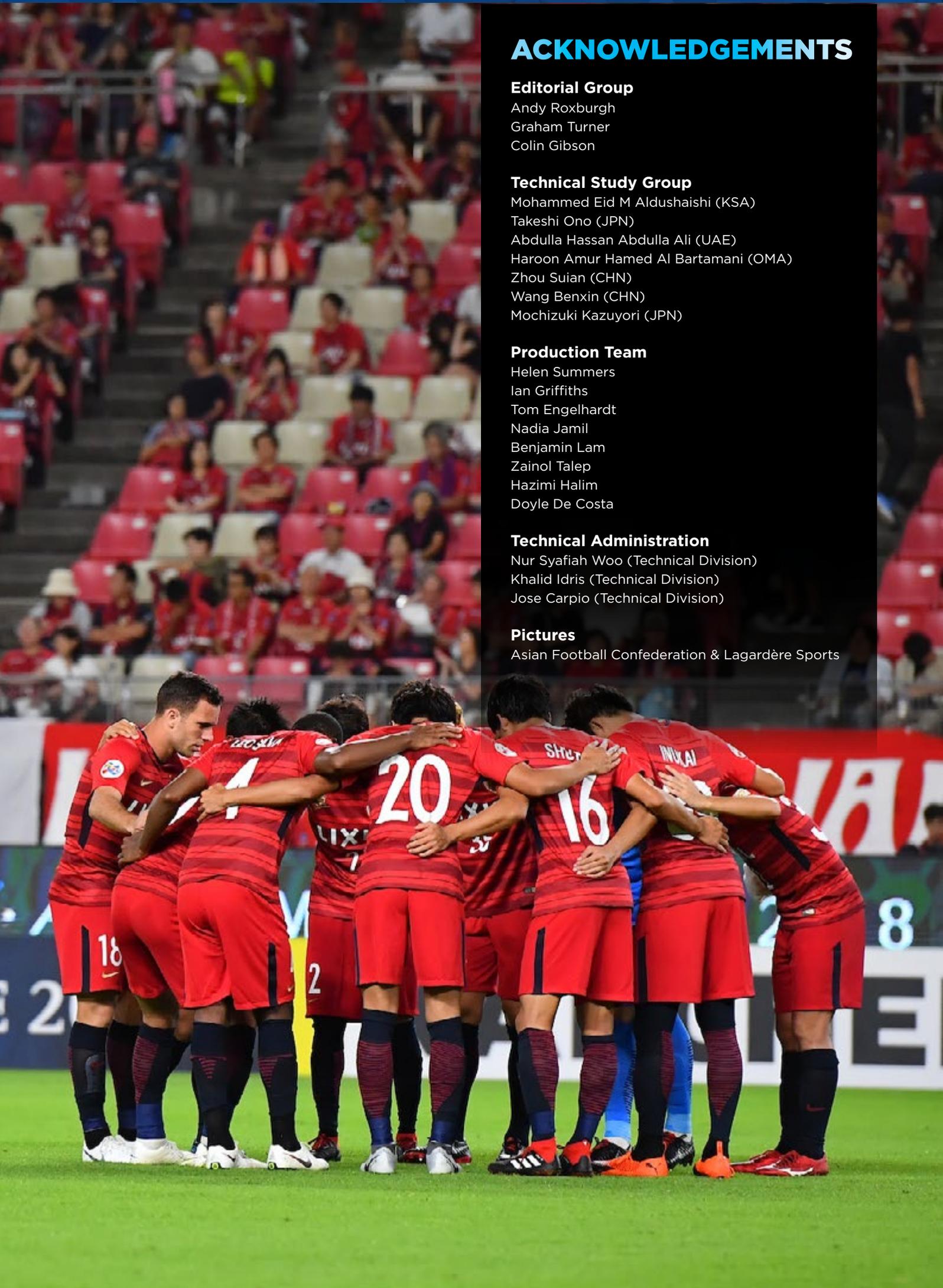
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