

# Rayyan, Arabi set up thrilling Emir Cup semis

A thrilling volleyball feast is on the cards as defending champions Al Rayyan Club set up the Emir Cup semi-final showdown with 21-time winners Al Arabi Club on Monday.

At the Qatar Volleyball Association Indoor Hall, nine-time winners Al Rayyan Club blew away the challenge of Al Wakrah Club in 66 minutes, with French star Earvin N'Gapeth leading them to a 25-19, 25-14, 25-12 triumph.

In a similar whirlwind fashion, Al Arabi Club made it to the last stage with a 25-16, 25-13, 25-16 triumph in one hour over Al Khor Club.

Both Al Rayyan Club and Al Arabi Club had played the last year's final and will clash over a best-of-three-match format. The other semi-final, which is also expected to be a hot affair, pits Qatar Sports Club against Al Ahli Club.

Al Arabi Club did not field their new Dutch pro Nimir Abdel-Aziz and instead continued with Artur Udris. The Belarusian collected a game-high 15 points and spearheaded the winners to an easy victory.

In all the three sets, Al Arabi were head and shoulder above than the rivals, leading 21-13 in the opening set, 21-11 in the second and 21-14 in the third before wrapping up the match in 60 minutes.

Middle player Bassam added 12 points, Renan Rebeiro got 10 and Jorge nette nine for Al Arabi, who have played 29 finals so far.

For Al Khor, Renato was the leading contributor with 13.

Al Rayyan Club, who were back to full strength after both William Bermudez and Mubarak Dahi Waleed served eight-match bans, faced some spirited resistance from Al Wakrah Club in the first set as they were 21-17 ahead. But they allowed only two more points and clinched the set to go 1-0 up.

After that, Al Rayyan Club clicked into higher gears and quickly disposed of the rivals to complete the win. N'Gapeth was among three players who secured points in double digits for the winners.

N'Gapeth, twice Most Valuable Player in the World League, had two aces and three blocks in 16 points. Marcus earned 13, while Bilal notched up 10.

For Al Wakrah, no player could enter double digits. Nikola was the best scorer with nine, while Vetkovic and Soka followed him with eight and seven points, respectively.

The semi-finals are scheduled on May 3 and 5 and in case, the winners are not decided, it will continue on May 8.