

# Volleyball stars for Emir Cup

Al Rayyan Club, who have already landed four major titles this season, made intentions of the season clean sweep clear when they roped in Earvin N'Gapeth for the premier event Emir Cup Volleyball Championship.

The quarter-finals of the Emir Cup begin at the QVA Hall on Sunday with Qatar Sports Club taking on Al Shamal Club at 4.30 pm and QVA League runners-up Police clashing with Al Ahli Club at 6.30 pm.

On Monday, runners-up and 21-time winners Al Arabi Club are pitted against Al Khor Club at 4.30 pm and defending champions and 12-time champions Al Rayyan Club will meet Al Wakrah at 6.30 pm.

Al Rayyan Club have had a phenomenal season so far. They began with the victory in the Super Cup against Police. They added the prestigious Arab Clubs Championship to their cupboard and followed it up with the QVA League and the Qatar Cup. Also they won the Qatar National Cup, which was held at Katara along with the four-star Katara Cup Beach Volleyball Championship. They have dropped just one match this season - to Qatar Sports Club in the Qatar Cup.

Outside spiker N'Gapeth is one of the top players in the world, having assisted the French national team bag the European championship (2015) and World League crown (2015 and 2017). On both the occasions, he was adjudged the Best Outside Spiker and Most Valuable Player.

Capable of smashing the ball at 358 cms and blocking the rivals at 327 cms, N'Gapeth plays for Modena Club in Italy. He has already won the 2014-15 Italian Cup and the 2015-16 Italian Championship, Italian Cup and Italian Supercup. In the season 2015-16 he won his second Italian Supercup.

His Italian Modena Club teammate Tine Urnaut is also playing in the Emir Cup. On his return to Doha, the ex-Al Rayyan Club player from Slovenia played for Al Ahli Club and contributed 18 points in the team's win in the qualification match against Al Gharafa on Thursday.

Urnaut is also a specialist and reputed outside hitter, who played for Al Rayyan two years ago. With the ability to spike the ball at 360 cms and pulling off blocks at 343 cms, he would definitely team up with Geraldo to make Al Ahli Club a team to reckon with this season.

Urnaut's exploits include the 2015 European League title and 2015 CEV European Championship silver medal for Slovenia. He has played for Trentino Diatec was part of the team that won the FIVB World Clubs Championship bronze medal in 2016 and the silver medal in the CEV Champions League in the 2015-16 season.

Al Arabi Club used two professionals this season and removed both of them. Now they have landed Dutch national team player Nimir Abdel-Aziz, who can play at two positions with ease - setter and opposite.

Set to make his debut in Doha against Al Khor Club on Monday, Abdel-Aziz is expected to have a classic battle against N'Gapeth when their teams clash in the semi-finals best of three semi-finals

series.

The 26-year-old Abdel-Aziz smashes the ball at an amazing height of 365 cms and blocks at 350 cms. His major achievements are the Europe League gold medal in 2012 for the Netherlands and the CEV Champions League silver medal for Bre Banca Lannutti Cuneo in the 2012-13 season.

Police are reported to be continuing with Mads Ditlevson, while Qatar Sports Club are also keeping Sofian Hussein from Algeria.

### **Emir Cup fixtures**

April 29 (quarter-finals):

3.Qatar Sports Club vs Al Shamal Club 4:30 pm

4.Police vs winner of 1 match 6:30 pm

April 30 (quarter-finals):

5.Al Arabi Club vs Al Khor Club 4:30 pm

6.Al Rayyan Club vs winner of 2 match 6:30 pm

May 3 (semi-finals):

7.Winner of 3 vs winner of 4 4:30 pm

8.Winner of 5 vs winner of 6 6:30 pm

May 5 (semi-finals):

9.Winner of 5 vs winner of 6 4:30 pm

10.Winner of 3 vs winner of 4 6:30 pm

May 8 (semi-finals in case of tie):

11.Winner of 3 vs winner of 4 4:30 pm

12.Winner of 5 vs winner of 6 6:30 pm

May 12:

The final 6:30 pm