



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Al Kass Stars Warned of Social Media Stranger Danger

As social media usage has rapidly expanded in recent years, it forms an increasingly colourful addition to the excited chatter around the Al Kass International Cup.

For the young, web-savvy players, platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram present fantastic opportunities to share their experiences in Doha with fans, followers and friends alike.

This year a record level of 'selfies' are predicted as more and more participants utilise social media to publicise their footballing feats, perhaps with the long-term aim of building up personal online 'brands'. With the tournament just a couple of days in, the photography phenomenon has already been embraced by the AC Milan team who celebrated their 4-3 victory over River Plate with a joyful victory selfie at the side of the pitch

However, while such activity is generally nothing more than harmless fun, some experts are warning of the growing dangers that social media can present to young footballers.

According to the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), many criminals and match-fixers are now utilising sites like Twitter and Instagram to approach and groom young footballers.

In an effort to encourage greater awareness of these risks, Al Kass and the ICSS hosted a joint event on Friday to highlight these hazards to the tournament's young players.

The lessons form part of a wider legacy initiative by the Al Kass International Organising Committee to ensure that players leave Qatar with more than just a footballing education.

Commenting on the social media classes, Essa Al-Hitmi, Chairman of the tournament's Organising Committee said: "We hope that players who compete in the Al Kass International Cup will leave Qatar with positive memories of this country and its relationship with the beautiful game. This is a tournament that seeks to open minds and



inspire the next generation of football stars. Furthermore, we believe these practical lessons on such a contemporary topic can help protect the players and ensure they reach their full potential.”

Amongst those addressing the teams on Friday were legendary football coach Bora Milutinovic, Dutch legend Edgar Davids, and ICSS Head of Anti-Corruption & International Development Partnerships, Werner Schuller.

During the 45-minute workshop the footballers were also offered pearls of wisdom from legendary football coach Bora Milutinovic and former Netherlands captain Edgar Davids who are both in Doha to support this year’s tournament.

Advising the players as to how they can fulfil their dreams, Davids said, “Each day you need to look at yourself and ask whether you have done everything to succeed. If you can yes, you should have no trouble sleeping. If you say no then you are obviously not making enough of yourself. Talents are everywhere in football – success requires more than skill alone.”

Meanwhile Milutinovic, who has coached 5 teams at the World Cup during his career, offered his own thoughts, “You have to pay a very high price to succeed in football. I was an average player but I was also known for my positive behaviour and this made me easy to coach and improve. When a player is truly focused and knows that he wants to achieve he will become an excellent asset to any team.”

Delivering the opening address of the event, Schuller said: “Criminals are very clever about the way they infiltrate and corrupt players and it is important that young athletes are educated about the dangers of social media and the amount of personal information they make public.

“Through our investigations at the ICSS, we have come across numerous cases where criminals have contacted young players at clubs through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram with a view to compromising them.

“As part of our commitment to safeguarding and educating young athletes, we would encourage any young player to recognise, resist and report any approaches by suspicious individuals immediately to their club or governing body.”

END



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

About the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS)

The ICSS is an international, independent and not-for-profit organisation. With an aim to improve security, safety and integrity throughout the world of sport; the ICSS works with governments, federations, clubs, leagues and event organisers.

The ICSS provides expertise, services and global knowledge - advising on event and venue safety, strategic security and investigations into corruption in sport.

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