

The background of the entire slide is a dark, atmospheric photograph of a football stadium at night. In the center, a large, ornate trophy stands on the pitch. The stadium lights are visible in the background, creating a bokeh effect. The text is overlaid on this image.

# FIFA Arab Cup 2025

## "Beyond the Pitch"

### A Strategic, Financial & Cultural Reading

### of a Regional Tournament

By Reda LARAICHI



# Beyond the Scoreline

## The FIFA Arab Cup as a Strategic Platform

The FIFA Arab Cup 2025 has just concluded, but its true significance goes far beyond the final scoreline. This tournament has confirmed the **Arab world as an emerging unified sports ecosystem**, combining performance, emotion, media innovation, security excellence, and economic scale.

This deck gathers **key insights** across:

→ Squad values & performance for the Semi finalists

→ Prize money & financial positioning

→ Fans & stadium experience

→ Media & broadcasting innovation

→ Regional integration (GCC & beyond)

→ Morocco's transversal impact



# 1. Squad Value Comparison (€)

## Arab Cup Semi-Finalists (2025)

### Market Value, Key Player & Average Age

Countries	Team value (€)	MVP	MVP value (€)	Team age average
 Jordan	7 250 000	Ahmed Ersan	500 000	28.45
 Saudi Arabia	22 950 000	Feras Al-Buraikan	4 500 000	26.95
 UAE	37 200 000	Nicolás Giménez	4 200 000	26.8
 Morocco	27 250 000	Walid Azzaro	3 200 000	30.0

### Key Reading

- Morocco wins the tournament without being the most valuable squad
- UAE entered with the highest market value, Jordan with the lowest
- Competitive success was driven by:
  - collective organization
  - experience (Morocco, being the most experienced team with a 30 years old avg)
  - tactical efficiency
  - coaching quality
- Market value does not guarantee trophies – structure, identity, and execution matter.

## 2. A Strong Moroccan footprint among Semi-Finalists

Out of the 4 **semi-finalist teams**, the Moroccan influence was unmistakable:

 **Morocco**

Champion

 **Jordan**

Entire technical staff is Moroccan

 **Saudi Arabia**

Hervé Renard (former Morocco NT coach), Nasser Larguet (technical director), Hicham El Amrani (Saudi FA Counselor)

 **UAE**

Presence of the bi-national Issam Faiz, former OCK player.

→ This highlights Morocco's growing role as a **net exporter of coaching expertise, methodology, and football intelligence** across the Arab world.



### 3. Arab Cup vs AFCON Prize Money (USD)

Cup	Winner	Runner-up	Semi-final	¼ final	Group (min.)
AFCON	7.0M	4.0M	2.5M	1.3M	500K
Arab Cup	7.15M	4.29M	2.86M	1.07M	715K

→ **Key fact:** Financial compensation is now **extremely close** between AFCON and the FIFA Arab Cup.

📌 While AFCON remains Africa's flagship competition, the Arab Cup offers a **high financial return relative to format size and duration.**

## 4. Strategic Implications for African Arab Federations

Similar prize money, **different competitive density**

### Arab Cup Features

- Shorter format
- Fewer teams
- Lower logistics

➡ For African Arab federations, the Arab Cup may represent a **high-efficiency competitive opportunity**, without challenging AFCON's historical status.

# 5. Calendar Logic

## Complementary, Not Competitive

Recommended sequencing:



FIFA Arab Cup

December



AFCON

Summer

Benefits:

Reduced player overload

Better alignment with European club calendars in order to secure also the best possible players.

Ability to maximize revenues from both tournaments

## 6. Fans & Stadium Experience

### Football as a Show

#### Ticket Price Accessibility – A Deliberate Inclusion Strategy

One of the most important (and often underestimated) success factors of the FIFA Arab Cup 2025 was its **highly accessible ticket pricing policy**.

- **Entry-level tickets:** from **QAR 25** (≈ USD 7)
- **Most group-stage tickets:** between **QAR 25–60** (USD 7–16)
- **Final & premium categories:** capped around **QAR 200** (≈ USD 55)

➔ This pricing strategy was intentionally designed to:

- Maximize stadium attendance
- Encourage families, youth, and casual fans to attend
- Create dense, vocal atmospheres critical for broadcast quality
- Convert spectators into long-term followers

➔ In contrast to many global tournaments, affordability was treated as a **value driver**, not a revenue risk.



# Attendance & Atmosphere

## 1.2M

Spectators across the tournament

Sold-out or near-capacity stadiums for key fixtures

Innovation: Light wristbands for all fans

LED wristbands distributed to all supporters

Synchronized light shows

Stadiums transformed into immersive entertainment venues

→ Football positioned as a **spectacle economy**, not only a sport.



## 7. Media & Broadcasting

### Al Majlis: A Premium Content Platform

#### A Cultural Long-Form TV Format

- Flagship daily show on Al Kass TV, inspired by the traditional Al Majlis (Arab salon)
- Guests sit on the floor, in a warm, informal, home-like setting
- Coffee, tea, and food sometimes shared on set

→ Viewers don't watch a studio show — they feel invited into a collective discussion

Long-format program, regularly spanning several hours per match day, often late into the night

→ Time is treated as an engagement asset, not a limitation

#### A Unique Editorial & Speaker Ecosystem

- Main studio hosts: leading Qatari TV journalists ensuring editorial structure
- Stadium-side reporters: embedded with fans, cheering, joking, reacting live
- Top Arab coaches & ex-players: immediate high-level tactical analysis
- Journalists from participating countries: post-match interventions, rivalries, humor, cultural teasing

→ Differences of opinion are embraced as entertainment and authenticity



# Al Majlis – Sponsorship & Commercial Success

## Sponsorship & Advertising Model

**QNB Group** – Main Sponsor of Al Majlis during the FIFA Arab Cup

Strong brand exposure across one of the most-watched football talk shows in the Arab world

Beyond title sponsorship, the show integrates:

- Regular advertising breaks
- On-air brand visibility during the program
- Fan engagement activations (predictions, interaction)

→ Long-form emotional content + ad breaks = high advertising value per viewer minute

## Why It Works

Blends expertise, emotion, culture, and humor

Creates a cosy, inclusive, and authentic viewing experience

Delivers exceptional sponsor visibility without breaking audience immersion

→ Al Majlis proves that in the Arab world, football media performs best when it feels lived, shared, and culturally rooted.



## 8. Security & Operations

### Morocco's Silent Contribution

Morocco played a key role in **security and operational planning**, echoing its contribution during the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar and Paris 2024.

**Morocco is increasingly recognized as a trusted mega-event partner**

Morocco's credibility now extends to:

**Sport**

**Logistics**

**Safety**

**Institutional reliability**

→ Soft power through security expertise is now part of Morocco's global sports footprint.



# 9. Viral Moments

## When Football Becomes Culture

### Moroccan Fans – The 12th Man as a Media Asset

Continuous singing and chants

Iconic "Sir Sir" chant

Charismatic fans becoming viral figures

→ Fan culture as **front-row media value**, not background noise.

### Oussama Tanane's Goal – A Global Highlight Asset

- [video link](#)

- Designed for virality
- Strong replay value across platforms
- Audience peaks for FIFA and broadcasters

→ Iconic moments extend a tournament's **digital and commercial lifespan**.

# 10. The GCC as One Sports Economy



Fan mobility: Riyadh → Doha → Dubai



Event-driven regional travel



~60M connected, high-spending consumers

*"The Arab Cup confirmed that the GCC is now a single sports economy."*

– Alwaleed Alkeaid (Saudi Sports expert)

➡ For brands: investing in a **regional ecosystem**, not a single market.



# 11. Strategic Takeaways



Arab Cup is now financially credible at continental level



Media, fans, and emotion are core economic drivers



**Morocco emerges as:**

- **A sports-winning nation**, delivering consistent results across senior, youth, men's and women's competitions
- **A talent exporter**, developing and supplying players, coaches, and technical expertise
- **A trusted operational partner**, recognized for its security, logistics, and event-delivery know-how
- **A strategic bridge between Africa, the Arab world, and Europe**, leveraging its diaspora, cultural proximity, and institutional credibility

# Conclusion

The FIFA Arab Cup 2025 confirmed a new reality: Football in the Arab world is no longer just a competition. It is a **strategic platform** – economic, cultural, emotional, and geopolitical.

It now influences:

Federation strategies

Brand investments

Media models

Regional cooperation

The future will not belong to the biggest tournaments, but to those who connect sport, culture, capital, and audiences.

➡ Those who understand football as an ecosystem, not a tournament, will shape the next cycle.







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If you would like to exchange on Sports Business in Africa – notably Morocco – I would be glad to connect.

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## About Me – Quick Background

-  20+ years of experience in the African sports business industry
  -  Vice President of an American multi-club ownership group – Rainbow World Group
  -  Former FIFA Licensed Agent
  -  Consultant for prestigious institutions and stakeholders including: OECD, PwC, UNESCO, African Football Federations, African Sports Ministries, Sponsors & Private Investors
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