



Final round of 16

The South Korean national soccer team, led by head coach Klinsmann, will face coach Kim Pan-gon's Malaysia in the third Group E match of the 2023 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Qatar Asian Cup at Alwakra Al-Zanub Stadium in Qatar at 8:30 p.m. on the 25th. Currently, Korea ranks second in the group with four points (one win, one draw and two gains and losses +2). On the other hand, Malaysia, the lowest in the group, was eliminated with zero points (two losses and -5 gains and losses). Jordan ranks first in the group with four points (1 win and one draw, and Bahrain is third in the group with three points (1 win and one loss and one loss).

For now, Korea has confirmed its advance to the round of 16. Indonesia, the third-ranked team in Group D, ended the group league with three points after losing 1-3 to Japan on Wednesday.

Now, no matter how big the loss is against Malaysia, South Korea will beat China (2 points) and Indonesia, the third-ranked team in Group A, and qualify as a wild card given to the top four of the six teams ranked third in each group.

If the team ties with Malaysia, it will rank No. 2 in the group regardless of the outcome of the Jordan-Brain match. Even if Korea loses, it will be able to secure at least No. 2 in the group.

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With the Klinsmann team, the team can play without much pressure. Moreover, as it is the last game before entering the tournament, the possibility of rotation naturally arises. Captain Son Heung-min, Jung Seung-hyun, Hwang In-beom, Lee Kang-in, and Seol Young-woo, who played 180 minutes in both of the previous two matches, can be given a break.

The management of credit cards must also be remembered. Son Heung-min, Kim Min-jae, Hwang In-beom, Park Yong-woo, Cho Kyu-sung and Oh Hyun-kyu, who already have one card warning, cannot play in the round of 16 match if they receive another warning in the match against Malaysia. This is the last chance to give new players a chance, while paying attention to physical fitness arrangement of key players and card management.

Japan also activated a large rotation in the match against Indonesia on the 24th. Coach Hajime Moriyasu placed eight of the 11 players who started against Iraq on the bench. Only

goalkeeper Zaion Suzuki, captain Endo Wataru and takefusa Kubo started the match. Klinsmann also deserves to change some of his positions, if not eight.

Still, there is a good chance that Klinsmann will bring up the same list as in the first and second games. He displayed the same "copy lineups" in the matches against Bahrain and Jordan. Except that Cho Hyun-woo replaced Kim Seung-gyu, the goalie who failed to pass due to ruptured cruciate ligament, 10 field players remained the same.

In fact, Klinsmann predicted an all-out war against Malaysia. In an interview on the eve of the match, Klinsmann said, "Tomorrow will be a tough game as well. I expect a tricky and difficult game, but I will bring good results," adding, "We will show that we are a team that deserves to win and that we can rise to the top of the group."

In other words, he does not let down his guard. "I'm looking forward to tomorrow's game and I want to win so badly. It's a must-win game, and my goal is to win and advance to the round of 16 as No. 1 in my group," Klinsmann said. "I will do my best to win the match against Malaysia while respecting my opponent."

However, a change is inevitable for Lee as a left-back. Lee Ki-je, who had been a starting pitcher, cannot play due to his hamstring injury. "I am sure he will bring up a different option. We will be able to see which option he will play in the stadium," Clinton said,