

# Bahrain win bronze in GBA event

Saudi Arabia crowned champions in GBA basketball championship

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Bahrain captured the bronze medals in the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) Men's National Teams Championship 2019 last night following a well-deserved 76-67 victory over the UAE in the game for third place.

The result ended a three-game losing streak in Kuwait City for the Bahrainis, who began the tournament with back-to-back wins before losing their next two games and then dropping out of title contention in the semi-finals.

Claiming the gold medals last night were Saudi Arabia, who disappointed the home fans after defeating hosts Kuwait 92-83 in the final.

Following both games, the top three squads were presented their respective medals in an awarding ceremony attended by GBA officials.

Bahrain claimed their first major accolade under recently signed head coach Darko Russo.

The nationals had a strong start against the Emiratis yesterday. They led 28-18 at the end of the first quarter but the Emiratis were able to narrow their deficit to 40-45 at the half.



Bahrain team members with officials after receiving their bronze medals



Bahrain's Malabes takes a jump shot in their game against the UAE last night

The Bahrainis turned things up once again in the third quarter to build a 63-53 lead heading into the final can-to, where they did enough to keep a good gap ahead of their rivals.

The Bahrainis led by as many as 14 in the fourth, which was also their biggest of the game, as the Emiratis struggled to mount a serious comeback in the final minutes.

Naturalised big man CJ Giles came up big for Bahrain. He scored 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds but was ejected late in the contest for a second technical foul.

Mohammed Buallay was the only other player to score in double figures, finishing with 12 and eight rebounds. Ahmed Aziz and Bader Abdulla Malabes both chipped in with eight points in the win, while Ahmed Ramadan had seven, skipper Mohammed Qurban finished with six, Subah Hussain four and Hesham Sarhan two

points.

Mohamed Albreiki paced the UAE with 21 points, while captain Jassim Abdalla had 13 and Talal Alnuaimi 12.

In the gold medal contest, Mathna Al Marwani led the Saudis with 25 points and seven rebounds, while Khalid Abdel Gabar nearly had a triple-double with 23 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Seven-footer Mohammed Al Suwailem contributed 16 points and 12 rebounds.

Abdullah Alshammari paced Kuwait with 18 points and 11 boards. Rashed Alrabah added 16 and Saleh Albrahim 15 in the loss.

## Stage set for King Hamad Trophy golf championship



Thomas with last year's KHT (File photo)

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The 12th edition of the King Hamad Trophy (KHT) tees off today at The Royal Golf Club with 99 players taking part.

This year's field includes a number of Mena Tour regulars, headed by the winner of the 2019 Order of Merit MG Keyser.

Also in the field are holder of most wins on the Tour Zane Scotland, and former KHT champions Luke Joy and Jamie Elson.

In addition to the Mena Tour players, there are a number of British and Moroccan professionals who play the PGA Europro Tour and Pro Golf Tour, along with some of Bahrain's best golfers.

Amateur golfer Rayhan Thomas from India won the 11th KHT by five strokes.

This year's championship further features a number of young amateurs representing around 15 countries.

It will be played over three days and spectators are welcome to attend. Entry is free.

# Bahrain to fight for place in Gulf Cup semis: Sousa

Bahrainis play Kuwait in the last Group B fixture today evening

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Head coach Helio Sousa admitted yesterday that Bahrain are in a tough position in their hopes to qualify for the semi-finals of the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup in Doha.

After losing to Saudi Arabia 0-2 in their previous match on Saturday, the Bahrainis must win in their last Group B fixture against Kuwait this evening in order to have any shot at advancing to the final four.

But their qualification is not completely in their hands. They must wait to see what happens in the other match between Oman and Saudi to learn of their fate, and Sousa acknowledges the difficult situation they are in.

"We are not in the position we wish and fight for," Sousa said in his pre-match Press conference yesterday. "We are not in the best condition. We are the last one in the group and we had our chances to pass through, but now this does not depend only on us. We must wait to see what the other teams can do."

"We must do all we can to win against Kuwait and must expect the best situation from the other game in order to be in the semi-finals."

Bahrain take on Kuwait at Khalifa International Stadium while defending champions and current group leaders Oman play Saudi at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium. Both contests are scheduled for an 8pm kick-off.

Bahrain must beat the Kuwaitis and hope that Oman defeat Saudi in order to qualify for the semis. If Bahrain and Saudi



Sousa, second from left, alongside Jaffar, second from right, and Abdulghaffar, left, at his conference yesterday

win, there will be a two-team tie between Bahrain and Oman, with the tie-break being determined by superior goal-difference. A win for Bahrain and a draw between Oman and Saudi would force a tie-break between the Bahrainis and Saudis.

Anything less than a victory for Bahrain would confirm their Gulf Cup exit.

"Our group is very balanced," said Sousa. "No one can say yet that they are there. Oman is the only one that can say if they win they are there. All the others, even in winning, they are depending on what the other teams can do. This is very balanced."



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HELIO SOUSA

Only the top two teams from each of the two groups at the end of this preliminary stage march on to the semi-finals. Iraq have already qualified from Group A while the other spot is up for grabs between the UAE and hosts Qatar. Yemen are out of contention.

Sousa noted that whatever happens in their semis bid, he is proud of the effort of the national team and their continued progress towards building a bright future for Bahrain football.

"We are building an identity of playing," explained the Portuguese tactician. "It was officially our 11th game that we played against Saudi; it is our first defeat. We are not unbeatable, we never were. We will lose for sure and it happened this last game against one great team."

"But we will keep building and this is what we are preparing on – to build a team for now and for the future. With all the players available and who have the fire and will to play for national team and who have the quality to do it, we are building a strong team for tomorrow."

Sousa was joined in his pre-match conference yesterday by veteran goalkeeper Sayed Mohammed Jaffar and national team official Mohammed Abdulghaffar.