

## Bahrain U20s prepare for Asian qualifiers



**Mohammed Darwish**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-20 football team will hold training camps in Muscat and Doha and play eight friendly matches as it readies itself for the Asian Cup qualifiers due to be held in Bahrain from August 30 to September 6.

The young Reds are preparing for Group D of the qualifying round for the AFC Under-20 Asian Cup China 2027, with national coach Ali Amer seeking to lead the side to the finals.

As part of the build-up, Bahrain will face Palestine, Oman, Bangladesh and Qatar in a run of warm-up matches aimed at sharpening the squad before the home qualifiers.

The team has been car-

rying out intensive training under the coaching staff, with the programme built around match practice, fitness work and tactical drills.

The Bahrain Football Association had also been working on plans for an overseas camp as part of the wider preparations, with the aim of giving the players stronger match rhythm before the qualifying campaign begins.

The coaching team hopes the camps and friendlies will give the squad the needed balance of physical readiness, match sharpness and tactical discipline ahead of the decisive stage.

Bahrain will host the Group D matches as it seeks a place at the continental finals in China in 2027.

## Endrick says versatility could help Brazil against Norway



Brazil's forwards #19 Endrick, #10 Neymar and midfielder #20 Lucas Paqueta take their jackets off before a match (file photo)

**AFP | Basking Ridge**

Brazil forward Endrick highlighted his versatility on Thursday as a potential asset against Norway should Carlo Ancelotti turn to him in their World Cup last-16 encounter.

The Real Madrid attacker is one of the leading candidates to replace the injured Lucas Paqueta, who had started alongside Casemiro and Bruno Guimaraes in midfield before suffering a hamstring injury.

Including Endrick in the line-up on Sunday would likely require a change to the three-man midfield system Brazil have used throughout the tournament, although Ancelotti has indicated he is open to change.

"At Lyon, I helped the team a lot playing as a number nine. I could play on the right wing and I could also play as a false nine," said the 19-year-old, who spent the second half of last season on loan in France.

"The coach knows my qualities and characteristics very well because we spent a year together at Real Madrid. He was always watching me and

understanding how I could help the team."

"It's no different here -- they know how I can contribute," he added.

Endrick replaced Paqueta at half-time of Brazil's hard-fought 2-1 victory over Japan in the previous round in Houston.

The five-time world champions finished that match with four attackers and two midfielders, a shape that could be used again against Erling Haaland's Norway if Ancelotti opts for a more aggressive approach.

"He (Ancelotti) isn't afraid, he does what he thinks and things happen. It's like God is watching over him, he's enlightened. Everything the guy does ends up happening," said Endrick.

"All of us players are following the coach's plan, I think it's about keeping on like this."

Norway hold the rare distinction of never having lost to Brazil, with two wins and two draws from their four previous meetings, including a memorable 2-1 victory over the Selecao in the group stage of the 1998 World Cup.

# Historic NBA G League Call for Bahrain

First Bahraini and GCC player chosen in the NBA G League International Player Draft

**TDT Manama**

Bahraini basketball player Muzamil Amir has made history by becoming the first Bahraini and the first player from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) selected in the 2026 NBA G League International Player Draft, marking a major milestone for Bahraini and Gulf basketball.

Amir was selected eighth overall by the San Diego Clippers before being immediately traded to the Texas Legends, the NBA G League affiliate of the Dallas Mavericks. The move represents a landmark achievement for Bahrain, opening new opportunities for the Kingdom's basketball talent on the international stage.

The historic selection reflects Bahrain's continued commitment to investing in and developing national talent. It also



highlights the vision led by His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, whose initiatives focus on supporting Bahraini youth, nurturing sporting talent, and creating pathways for athletes to compete professionally at the

highest levels.

Amir described the achievement as the result of years of support, guidance, and encouragement from Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad. He expressed his sincere gratitude for the confidence placed in him throughout his sporting journey, saying the milestone would not have been possible without that backing.

He pledged to continue working hard to justify the trust placed in him and to proudly represent Bahrain on the world stage.

The achievement carries added significance because the NBA G League serves as the primary pathway to the NBA, with league players closely monitored by NBA scouts. Amir's selection is widely regarded as a historic moment that places Bahraini and Gulf basketball firmly on the global basketball map.

## Roba Al Amri Wins Silver in Discus Throw

**TDT | Manama**

Roba Al Amri of Bahrain's national team secured the silver medal in the women's F55 discus throw at the Olo-mouc World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2026, continuing her strong performances in the competition.

Competing on the second day



of the event, Al Amri achieved a best throw of 22.98 meters, finishing second among a strong field of international athletes. The result adds another achievement to Bahrain's para athletics record, highlighting her consistent form and competitive presence on the global stage.

## France's Barcola expecting physical Paraguay clash at World Cup

**AFP | Waltham**

France forward Bradley Barcola warned on Thursday that Paraguay would bring a physical approach when the sides meet in the World Cup last 16 in Philadelphia.

Didier Deschamps' free-scoring side have won all four games at the tournament so far and will start as overwhelming favourites against Paraguay on Saturday.

Barcola, though, said Paraguay's shock win over Germany on penalties in the last 32 showed France have to be ready to grind it out, with scorching temperatures expected for the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

"It's a team that defends a lot. They're going to dish out a lot of knocks," Barcola told reporters.

"But they are also a footballing team. We saw that against Germany."

Asked about the defensive tactics Paraguay are likely to employ, Barcola said he was not concerned, pointing to similar experiences in Ligue 1 with Paris Saint-Germain.

"We know it's going to be difficult, but personally I'm start-



France's forward #12 Bradley Barcola

### World Cup Schedule (Round of 16)

Today		
Time	Match	Venue
08:00 PM	Canada vs Morocco	Houston Stadium
Tomorrow		
12:00 AM	Paraguay vs France	Philadelphia Stadium
11:00 PM	Brazil vs Norway	New York New Jersey Stadium

(All games in Bahrain time)

ing to get used to it in Ligue 1. We'll have to find alternatives," he said. Defender Jules Kounde also

cautioned against underestimating Paraguay, describing them as a difficult opponent capable of hurting teams on the counter-attack.

"They are a tenacious team," Kounde said. "They also have the qualities to play, build from the back and take advantage of counter-attacks. They have players who can do that."

"We're expecting a difficult match and we'll have to be strong and impose our game."

France head into the knockout clash as one of the tournament's most prolific teams, having scored 13 goals. Kylian Mbappe has six of those, while Ousmane Dembele has netted four. Barcola bagged his second of the World Cup in Tuesday's 3-0 win over Sweden.

Barcola said the team's attacking players were thriving on their freedom and understanding on the pitch.

"We play like we're back in the neighbourhood. We take the ball, we pretty much do what we want, we don't overthink it, and that's how it works," he said.

Kounde said the bond between France's attacking players had been a key factor behind their impressive form.