

# Georgia hand Bahrain defeat in Tbilisi friendly

● **First-ever meeting between the two national teams**

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national team suffered a 2-0 defeat to Georgia last night in the first of their two international friendlies during their European training camp.

The match, played at Tbilisi's Mikheil Meskhi Stadium, forms part of Bahrain's preparations for two major upcoming competitions – the 27th Gulf Cup later this year, where they will defend their title, and the AFC Asian Cup 2027.

The hosts entered the contest as favourites and largely controlled proceedings against Dragan Talajic's side, who were looking to gain valuable experience against a strong European opponent.

The opening half was relatively subdued, although Georgia



Bahrain skipper Sayed Dhiya Saeed (R) and Georgia captain Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (L)

consistently appeared the more threatening team. Bahrain largely relied on counter-attacks

while trying to contain a Georgian side featuring several players from top European leagues,

including Paris Saint-Germain winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. Saba Lobjanidze proved par-



ticularly dangerous for the hosts, who enjoyed the better of the chances before the interval but were unable to find a breakthrough.

Georgia eventually opened the scoring six minutes after the restart through defender Luka Lochoshvili. Kvaratskhelia delivered a cross from the left flank, and Lochoshvili's run went untracked as he finished with a low volley to put the home side ahead.

The Georgians nearly doubled their advantage shortly afterwards when Kvaratskhelia rose

highest to meet a cross, only to see his header strike the crossbar in the 58th minute.

Bahrain struggled to create openings throughout the evening and did not earn their first corner kick until the 65th minute, reflecting the overall balance of the match.

The hosts then secured victory from the penalty spot after Ahmad Rabeea was adjudged to have fouled Giorgi Kvernadze inside the area. Several Bahrain players were shown yellow cards for protesting the decision before Georgia captain Kvaratskhelia stepped up and calmly converted the resulting penalty, sending goalkeeper Mohammed Al Gharably the wrong way to make it 2-0.

Bahrain were unable to mount a response and finished the contest without registering a shot on target.

The nationals will now travel to Antalya, Türkiye, where they are scheduled to take on Syria in their second and final friendly on Tuesday. Kick-off is scheduled for 5pm Bahrain time at the Gloria Sports Arena.

## Serena Williams' comeback to continue in Berlin



Serena Williams in action (file photo)

AFP | Berlin

Serena Williams will take part in the women's doubles at June's WTA event in Berlin, organisers announced yesterday, the next stop in her comeback after a near four-year absence.

"Every tournament I add to my schedule right now is special, and Berlin is no exception," Williams, 44, said in a statement.

"I look forward to playing in front of the German crowd and continuing to build momentum for the grass-court season."

Her doubles partner will be announced at a later date.

On Monday, the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion confirmed her return to

the sport to play at London's Queen's Club tournament starting June 8.

The Berlin Tennis Open begins in the German capital on June 15 and is a traditional warm-up event for Wimbledon, which starts on June 29.

Nine of the WTA's top 10 players are set to take part at the tournament in Berlin's west.

Williams' third-round exit at the US Open in September 2022 was her final match on the tour.

The American's final opportunities to fine-tune her comeback will be in tournaments at Bad Homburg, in Germany, and Eastbourne, in England, before Wimbledon begins.

Williams has won Wimbledon seven times in singles and six times in doubles.

## Spurs sign former Liverpool defender Robertson

● **Transfer completed on free**

● **Leaves Liverpool after nine years**

AFP | London

Tottenham signed former Liverpool defender Andy Robertson on a free transfer yesterday, ending the Scotland captain's nine-year spell at Anfield.

Robertson will officially join Tottenham on a free transfer on July 1 after his Liverpool contract expires.

The 32-year-old nearly left Anfield for Tottenham in January, but Liverpool eventually halted the deal after they were unable to bring back Kostas Tsimikas from the defender's loan at Roma.

Tottenham boss Roberto De Zerbi was appointed after that aborted attempt to sign Robertson, but he has given the green light to the left-back's move to north London.

"Andy is someone I've admired for a number of years and he will bring outstanding technical qualities, experience, leadership and mentality to our team," De Zerbi said.

"He is a proven winner at the highest level over a long period and is someone who can be a big player for us, both on and off the pitch."

Robertson's immediate focus will be on captaining Scotland at



Liverpool defender Andrew Robertson in action (file photo)

“Andy is someone I've admired for a number of years and he will bring outstanding technical qualities, experience, leadership and mentality to our team”

TOTTENHAM BOSS ROBERTO DE ZERBI

the World Cup, before he links up with Tottenham ahead of the start of the domestic season

in August.

"I'm in America just now preparing for the World Cup, but I just wanted to send you a quick message to say I cannot wait to play for you guys," Robertson said in a video message from Scotland's camp.

"I cannot wait to meet you guys, I cannot wait to play in the stadium for the first time in front of you and I'm already looking forward to next season."

Robertson will compete with Destiny Udogie for the left-back role in De Zerbi's starting line-up.



"First and foremost he is an outstanding left-back -- one of the best of all time in the Premier League, and someone who will improve our squad," Tottenham sporting director Johan Lange said.

"In addition, his quality, character and leadership have been evident throughout a career in which he has regularly competed for -- and won -- major honours.

"Andy's professionalism and commitment will also be invaluable to the development of our squad, and he shares our ambition and determination to bring success back to the club."

Robertson won the Premier League twice, the League Cup twice and the FA Cup once during his successful spell at Liverpool.

He was part of the Reds' 2019 Champions League-winning team.