

# Bahrain’s U-19 handballers face Japan tonight to kick off world championship campaign

- Bahrain’s juniors kick off vs Japan tonight
- Tournament runs until August 17
- Egypt, Korea up next for Bahrain

TDT | Manama

The 11th IHF Men’s U-19 World Championship begins in Egypt, and Bahrain are in the thick of it from the start. The kingdom’s youth handballers open their campaign today at 5:15 PM Bahrain time against Japan. Bahrain’s other group-stage matches come thick and fast: the host nation Egypt await on Thursday at 7:30 PM, followed by a match against South Korea on Friday, also at 5:15 PM. All games will be played in Cairo.

Bahrain named their final 19-player squad on Monday, just hours before flying out.

Notably missing is goalkeeper Ahmed Shamloh, sidelined with a shoulder injury. Coach Raed Al Mrazouq leads the



**Bahrain's squad for the tournament**  
technical bench, supported by assistant coach Ahmed Tarada, goalkeeper coach Makram Al Misawi, technical analyst Qasim Mohammed, and physio Karim Hassan.

### Tough Group, Familiar Faces

Bahrain’s Group G draw is arguably the tournament’s toughest bracket. Hosts Egypt are African champions, Japan topped

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Bahrain reached the main round once in 2007, and they’ve been chasing a return for 18 years

Asia last year, and South Korea are never to be underestimated. Only the top two teams from each group advance to the main round, while the bottom two fall into the President’s Cup, which determines places 17 to 32.

The 32 teams are split across eight groups. Each group sends two teams

### Bahrain lineup

- Haider Mohammed Salman
- Ali Fayed
- Ahmed Hussain Eid
- Salman Hameed Al Showaikh
- Abu Dhar Jaafar
- Sayed Ahmed Al Falahi
- Fadhel Abbas
- Mohammed Jaafar Abdulla
- Qasim Mohammed Sabt
- Ahmed Abdulamir Shamloh
- Abbas Hussain Ali
- Mahmoud Jalil Youssef
- Mohammed Haitham Adam
- Mohammed Ahmed Tarada
- Ali Sami
- Mahdi Ali Fateel
- Sayed Majeed Al Muhafaza
- Mohammed Zuhair Abdul Hassan
- Ali Abdulla Khalifa

forward. The remaining teams fight for placement in the second tier.

# Djokovic withdraws from ATP Cincinnati Masters



Novak Djokovic in action (file photo)

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic withdrew on Monday from this week’s start of the ATP Cincinnati Masters, with the pullout coming a year to the day from his Paris Olympic gold medal victory.

Tournament officials confirmed the news to The Athletic, meaning the 38-year-old Serb will have played no matches between his Wimbledon semi-final loss to Jannik

Sinner and the US Open start in three weeks.

World number one Sinner, who like Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz skipped the current ATP Toronto Masters in order to rest and recover from Wimbledon, has been in Cincinnati since the weekend.

Sinner and his team posted a golf course selfie to social media on Monday, one day after an opening practice session at the pre-US Open event.

# Man Utd, Newcastle make bids for Leipzig striker Sesko: reports

AFP | London

Premier League sides Manchester United and Newcastle have both placed competing bids for in-demand RB Leipzig striker Benjamin Sesko, German tabloid Bild reported yesterday.

The German tabloid said

the Red Devils made an initial bid of 85 million euros (£73.9 million) yesterday for the 22-year-old centre forward.

Newcastle had offered a reported 80 million euros for the striker on Saturday, upping that to 85 million with bonuses on Monday.

# Wirtz unfazed by huge Liverpool price tag

£100M signing focused on football as Liverpool prepare for title defense

- Wirtz joins Liverpool for £100M+
- Could become British record transfer
- Slot praises Wirtz’s creativity in attack
- Liverpool pay tribute to late Jota

AFP | London

Florian Wirtz says his huge price tag “doesn’t matter” as he prepares for his first season in the Premier League after a switch to champions Liverpool from Bayer Leverkusen. The attacking midfielder arrived at Anfield for an initial £100 million (\$132 million) that could rise to £116 million with add-ons, making his move a potential British record.

However, speaking after impressing in a 3-2 friendly win over Athletic Bilbao on Monday, the 22-year-old brushed off the size of his transfer fee.

“I don’t think about it. I just

want to play football and how much money the clubs pay between each other, it doesn’t matter,” he said. “Of course the big challenge is to win the title again and it is the most difficult thing so (I will) try and just create chances and also work against the ball. “I can also run a lot so (I will) bring this to the team and then with the ball I can make the team better and bring my teammates into better situations.” Liverpool face FA Cup winners Crystal Palace in the season-opening Community Shield on Sunday and kick off their Premier League title defence at home to Bournemouth on August 15.

Germany international Wirtz

said he was relishing the challenge. “There are some differences to Germany but I think there is also something I can learn and make me better so I am really looking

forward to it,” he said. “It’s more intense and more physical, every player is really strong, really fast. That is what everybody is telling me.”

### Big spenders

Liverpool have spent more than £250 million so far in the summer transfer window on a clutch of new players including Wirtz, Hugo Ekitike, Milos Kerkez, Jeremie Frimpong, who also came from Leverkusen, and Giorgi Mamardashvili.

The club are understood to have made a bid of around £110 million plus potential add-ons for unsettled Newcastle striker Alexander Isak last week, which was rejected.

Manager Arne Slot said after two friendlies against Athletic Bilbao at Anfield on Monday that there was “always room for improvement” despite the club’s march to a record-equalling 20th league title last season.

“We’ve added a

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FLORIAN WIRTZ

few, in my opinion, extra weapons,” said the Dutchman. “So, Florian has a lot of creativity in the final third. We’ve lost with Trent (Alexander-Arnold, who has signed for Real Madrid) a lot of creativity from the back.

“Trent’s crosses and picking out runners was so special -- I think Flo has this quality as well in a totally different position.”

Liverpool paid tribute to late forward Diogo Jota in their first matches at Anfield since the forward and his brother Andre

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Wirtz’s transfer could surpass Enzo Fernandez’s £106.8M Chelsea move as the Premier League’s most expensive signing if all add-ons are met

Silva died in a car crash in Spain last month.

Slot said in his programme notes that it had been a “tough time for everyone connected with the club, but especially for Diogo’s family, his wife, his children and friends”.

“We cannot imagine the pain that they have been going through, and the club will continue to give them all the support they can going forward,” he wrote.

“We will always carry him with us in our hearts, in our thoughts, wherever we go.”