

Bahrain Run Japan to the Wire

Bahrain Suffer Opening Defeat to Continental Champions in Youth Worlds Opener

- **Furusawa key to Japan's second half**
 - **Bahrain stole possession 21 separate times**
 - **Bahrain face Egypt tonight**
- Hussain Almaskati**
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-19 team began their IHF Men's Youth World Championship campaign in Group G with a frustrating 32-30 defeat to Japan, in a match that remained tight from start to finish. Tied 15-15 at half-time, Bahrain matched the continental champions stride for stride. The result leaves Bahrain needing wins from their remaining group fixtures against Egypt and South Korea to advance to the main round. The match, held at Cairo Stadium in Egypt, drew an at-



Mahmood Yousif passes the ball under pressure

tendance of 600.
Al Falahi Leads Offensively
Line player Sayed Ahmed Al Falahi led Bahrain's scoring with eight goals from 12 attempts, consistently converting from close range against Japan's 6-0 defensive shape. His presence in the middle gave Bahrain a reliable scoring outlet throughout the match.

Ali Abbas added five goals and six assists, while Salman Al Showaikh scored four from five. Bahrain's central attacking unit performed well under pressure, creating chances and drawing

Bahrain's Al Falahi scored eight goals from just 12 attempts

fouls in key phases.

Japan's Key Players Step Up

While Bahrain were competitive, Japan's depth and efficiency made the difference. Sora Furusawa led their attack with seven goals from eight shots, often exploiting gaps from the back-court. Kaisei Akiyoshi contributed five goals, and goalkeeper Toshiya Obata finished with 11 saves, several of them decisive in the final stretch.
Japan's 18 goals from 9 metres (58%) underlined their shooting range, an area where Bahrain managed just two conversions

from nine attempts.
Defensive Work Stands Out
Bahrain recorded 21 steals, doubling Japan's total, and applied consistent pressure on passing lanes. Mohamed Aadam played a key role with five steals, four assists, and two goals, while also earning two penalties. His all-round effort anchored Bahrain's transitions.
However, five technical errors and missed opportunities from distance left Bahrain chasing the game late on, despite strong defensive numbers.
Next Test: The Hosts
Bahrain now face the Egyptians tonight at 7:30PM (Bahrain time). Egypt, reigning African champions and hosts, were also in action yesterday against South Korea. Bahrain will complete the group stage on Friday against South Korea.
To progress, Bahrain must finish in the top two. Head coach Raed Al Marzooq will look to sharpen the attack and manage player rotation as the tournament intensifies.

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