

Muharraq open Arab volleyball championship quest in Tunisia

Red Wolves set to hit the ground running against Omani challengers

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's volleyball champions Muharraq take center stage today as they begin their 44th Arab Club Men's Volleyball Championship campaign against Majees SC of Oman at 2 PM (BRN time) in Tunisia. The tournament, which runs through January 18 at El Menzah Sports Palace, brings together 12 of the Arab world's top clubs, promising intense competition from the outset.

The Red Wolves arrive in Tunisia with added firepower, having strengthened their squad with Polish spiker Mateusz Jozwik. The 29-year-old former Zamalek SC standout, who helped the Egyptian club claim last year's Arab Club Championship, joins Swedish professional Jacob Link and a core of Bahraini stars including: Naser Anan, Mahmood Alafyah, Sayed Hashem Issa, Mohammed Abdulla, Mohammed Omar, and Abbas Al Khabbaz. Local talents Majeed Mohammed, Hussain Ehsan, Abbas Ehsan, and Ali Alsairafi complete a balanced and experienced roster ready



Muharraq's players huddle during their unbeaten league run

to test themselves against the region's elite.

The Bahrainis are in Group B alongside Libya's Al Ittihad SCSC Tripoli, Palestine's Military Club, Qatar's Al Shorta SC, Majees of Oman, and hosts Etoile Sportive du Sahel. After today's opener against Majees, Muharraq will play four more matches in as many days: Al Ittihad SCSC Tripoli (Libya) on Friday at 5 PM, hosts Etoile Sportive du Sahel (Tunisia) on Saturday at 1 PM, Al Shorta SC (Qatar) on Sunday at 3 PM, and the Palestinian Military Club on Monday at 3 PM.

The Bahrainis come into the tournament in excellent form, having won all six of their matches in the Isa Bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League this season. Coach Yaseen Al Meel has overseen a rigorous preparation program, blending domestic success with the need to adapt to the challenges of continental competition. With last year's finalists Zamalek and Al Ahly absent, Muharraq have a prime opportunity to assert themselves and aim for a deep run, all while representing Bahrain on the regional stage.

Giro d'Italia champion Yates announces shock retirement



Simon Yates
AFP | Paris

Two-time Grand Tour winner Simon Yates announced yesterday that he was retiring from professional cycling, just seven months after winning the Giro d'Italia.

The news comes after Yates enjoyed probably the best season of his career, following up his stunning Giro success with a stage victory at July's Tour de France.

"This may come as a surprise to many, but it is not a decision I have made lightly," Yates said in a statement released by his team, Visma-Lease a Bike.

"I have been thinking about it for a long time, and it now feels like the right moment to step away from the sport."

Yates, 33, shared more than a decade in the peloton with his twin brother Adam, initially together at the Jayco-AlUla team.

Arsenal boss Arteta 'sad' to see Amorim sacked by Man Utd

AFP | London

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said yesterday that he was "sad" to see rival boss Ruben Amorim sacked by Manchester United as he reflected on the brutal nature of their trade.

Amorim was dismissed by the Premier League giants on Monday after just 14 months in charge.

The Portuguese coach's exit followed growing tensions with senior Old Trafford officials, including director of football Jason Wilcox, over recent days.

United co-owner Jim Ratcliffe had previously suggested that Amorim would be given at least three years in charge, comparing his position with that of Arteta.

The Spaniard, appointed in 2019, endured a rocky start to his time in charge of Arsenal, but they now head into Thursday's match at home to reigning champions Liverpool six points clear at the top of the Premier League table as they chase a first English title



Ruben Amorim (L) and Mikel Arteta react after a match (file photo)

in over 20 years.

United, by contrast, are sixth -- a huge 17 points adrift of the Gunners.

Amorim won just 25 of his 63 games at United in all competitions during the shortest reign for a permanent manager since David Moyes was sacked just eight months into his tenure in 2014.

"I can only talk about what I have experienced and it's always sad to see a colleague losing his job, obviously," Arteta told reporters in a pre-match press conference.

Bethell slams maiden century to give England glimmer in final Ashes Test

AFP | Sydney

Jacob Bethell fulfilled his rich potential with a chanceless maiden Test century yesterday as England built a fragile 119-run second-innings lead with two wickets remaining to give themselves a glimmer of hope in the final Ashes Test.

At the end of day four at the Sydney Cricket Ground, England had reached 302-8 with Bethell imperious on 142 not out and number 10 Matthew Potts yet to score.

England are desperate for another morale-boosting win after victory in the previous Test at Melbourne. Australia lead 3-1 and have already retained the Ashes.

It was the 22-year-old Bethell who kept their faint hopes alive after Zak Crawley fell early and first-innings centurion Joe Root departed cheaply.

He powered to his hundred off 162 balls by smashing a lofted drive over midwicket for four.

"It's pretty special, it's not really sunk in yet. I haven't really had time to kind of reflect on it," Bethell told reporters.

Bethell had his parents in the stands and raised his bat towards them as he passed the milestone.

"To do that and have the family there was very special," said the left-hander.

"My dad was a cricketer so he knows how it feels to be out there batting, but I don't think that stops him from getting any less nervous."

It was not just Bethell's maiden Test ton but the only one he



England's Jacob Bethell (L) hits a shot to reach his century

Scorecard

England 384 and 302 for 8 (Bethell 142*, Duckett 42, Brook 42, Webster 3-51, Boland 2-34) lead Australia 567 (Head 163, Smith 138, Tongue 3-97, Carse 3-130, Stokes 2-95) by 119 runs

has scored in red-ball cricket, with his previous best 96 against New Zealand.

Bethell was recalled for Melbourne to replace the under-performing Ollie Pope, scoring a gritty 40 in difficult batting conditions.

He proved to be England's rock, but soon saw wickets tum-

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JACOB BETHELL

bling at the other end as Harry Brook was trapped lbw for 42 and Will Jacks caught without scoring in the space of three

balls from part-time off-spinner Beau Webster.

"I certainly didn't think I would (impact) with spin this game," said Webster, who is more usually employed as a seamer, but returned figures of 3-51.

Webster believed the pitch had begun to take turn. "There was a bit of wear and tear there from Starcy's footmarks," he said. "And we managed to make the most of it in that session."

A mix-up saw Jamie Smith run out for 24 just as he and Bethell were threatening to take the game away from Australia with a sixth-wicket partnership that had reached 45.



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