

Bahrain’s handball team sets Asian target

Reds ready to impress at prestigious Yellow Cup

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TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s men’s handball team arrived in Switzerland yesterday to compete in the 52nd Yellow Cup, one of Europe’s most prestigious handball tournaments. The three-day event begins today and continues through Saturday at Winterthur Central Sports Hall. As part of a focused preparation program ahead of the 22nd Asian Men’s Handball Championship in Kuwait later this month, the Kingdom’s representatives will face North Macedonia, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

The team comes into the Yellow Cup following two tough friendly matches against Portugal, who finished fourth in last year’s IHF Men’s Handball World Championship. In the first encounter, Portugal won 39-29, while the second match ended 40-28 in Portugal’s favor, with Bahrain taking the first set 14-13 before Portugal responded with 14-7 and 13-7 in the following sets.

Despite the losses, the games provided a valuable opportunity for Bahrain’s coaching staff to evaluate the squad’s form, build cohesion, and identify areas for improvement ahead of the Yellow Cup in Switzerland.

Bahrain will open their campaign tonight against North Macedonia at 10:30 PM. They then meet hosts Switzerland



Passionate Bahrain celebrations at 2025 Islamic Solidarity Games

tomorrow at 10:15 PM before concluding the tournament against Ukraine on Saturday at 5:30 PM.

Head coach Robert Hedin has named a 19-player squad led by captain Hussain Al Sayyad.

The roster includes key national-team regulars alongside Bahrain’s top emerging talent, such as Mohammed Abdullhussain, Mohammed Habib Ahmed, Mohammed Habib Nasser, Hassan Al Samaheejji, Hussain Mahfoudh, Jaffar Abdulshaheed, Mohammed Hameed, Hesham Ahmed, Sal-

man Al Showaikh, Qassim Qamber, Ahmed Redha, Sayed Ali Basem, Hassan Madan, Ahmed Almaqabi, Ali Mahmood, Jassim Khamis, Ali Redha, and Ali Alasheeri.

Looking beyond Europe, Bahrain will soon compete in the Asian Men’s Handball Championship, running from January 15 to 29 in Kuwait.

This tournament also doubles as the qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men’s Handball World Championship in Germany. Drawn into Group B alongside Iraq, China, and Jordan, the Red Wolves will

need to finish among the top two in their group to advance to the main round, with semi-finalists from that stage earning automatic berths at the World Championship.

Last year’s gold medals at the Islamic Solidarity Games demonstrated the team’s potential, but the Yellow Cup provides a final opportunity to test their strategies and build cohesion before the continental stage. With tough opponents and high stakes ahead, all eyes will be on Hedin’s men to challenge Asia’s best.

Gauff drags US into United Cup semis as Swiatek also wins



Coco Gauff and Christian Harrison celebrate defeating Greece’s Maria Sakkari and Stefanos Tsitsipas

AFP | Perth

Coco Gauff pulled off double duty to drag defending champions the United States into the United Cup semi-finals yesterday while world number two Iga Swiatek did her bit for Poland.

Fourth-ranked Gauff, who suffered a surprise defeat last time out, put the United States on their way in their quarter-final against Greece with a 6-3, 6-2 win over former world number three Maria Sakkari in Perth.

Stefanos Tsitsipas brought Greece level by defeating struggling Taylor Fritz 6-4, 7-5.

In the deciding mixed doubles, Gauff teamed up with Christian Harrison to battle past Tsitsipas and Sakkari 4-6, 6-4, 10-8.

The 21-year-old Gauff struggled with her serve as she suffered her first-ever defeat at the United Cup on Monday when she was stunned by Spain’s Jessica Bouzas Maneiro.

“Definitely a much better match today,” Gauff said after making light work of Sakkari. “Last match, I just tried to

erase it. That’s the beauty of this tournament.

“So definitely happy to give my team the lead today.”

Six-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek beat 97th-ranked Suzan Lamens 6-3, 6-2 in the tie against the Netherlands in Sydney.

Hubert Hurkacz, on his way back after being out for seven months following knee surgery, defeated Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) as Poland sealed their last-eight spot.

Poland will play hosts Australia, with the winner facing the United States for a place in Sunday’s final.

In Perth, Switzerland’s Belinda Bencic beat Solana Sierra 6-2, 6-2 but a 7-5, 6-4 loss by Stan Wawrinka to Sebastian Baez sent the tie into a mixed doubles decider.

The Swiss finished off the win with Bencic and Jakub Paul clinching the winning point over Maria Lourdes Carle and Guido Andreozzi 6-3, 6-3.

The mixed-team United Cup features 18 teams and serves as a build-up towards the Australian Open, which starts on January 18.

Batelco Fitness on Track offers runners and cyclists unique fitness activity this Friday at BIC

Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), ‘The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East’, welcomes the public this Friday (Editor’s note: 9 January) for another chance to get in a unique workout with the latest edition of the widely popular Batelco Fitness on Track.

Friday’s activity is scheduled to take place from 6am to 10am, offering participants a fresh and early start to the day while getting the weekend off on a positive note.

Those taking part will be able to enjoy the activity either individually or with family and friends, and it will be the perfect occasion to break in a sweat while savouring the cool, early morning temperatures – all within the safe and secure environment of a world-renowned Formula 1 venue.

Batelco Fitness on Track can be done on foot or on a bicycle, giving participants the chance to select their preferred workout programme.

Runners and walkers will be utilising BIC’s 2.550-kilometre



Inner Circuit, while cyclists will get to ride their bikes along the 3.543-kilometre Outer Circuit, with another dedicated area for children’s cycling.

The cost to take part is BD2 for cyclists and BD1 for run-

ners. Payment must be made upon booking. Children under the age of 12 can participate for free if accompanied by a paying adult.

BIC’s Batelco Fitness on Track Season Pass is still also availa-

ble – ideal for regular participants as it grants access to all Batelco Fitness on Track events throughout the season.

At the affordable price of just BD15, the pass is a great way to save money over the course of



the year, with Batelco Fitness on Track being held multiple times each month, all the way through to April. Season Passes can be purchased by contacting the BIC Hotline.

For more information on Fri-

day’s Batelco Fitness on Track or other events and experiences at BIC, visit bahraingp.com, call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000, or follow the circuit’s official social media channels.