

Spikers miss quarters despite Oman sweep



Sayed Hashem Ali attacks against the Oman block

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain missed out on the quarter-finals of the AVC Volleyball Men's Continental Championship 2026 despite completing their preliminary-round campaign with a straight-sets victory over Oman yesterday.

The kingdom's senior men's volleyball team won 3-0 (25-16, 25-19, 25-23) at Kitakyushu City General Gymnasium in Fukuoka, Japan, securing their first victory of the tournament and finishing third in Pool A behind Japan and Australia.

The nationals, coached by Montenegrin Ivan Joksimovic, took the opening two sets with authority before holding off a stronger Omani challenge in the third to wrap up the contest in one hour and 34 minutes.

Sayed Hashem Ali led Bahrain's scoring with 12 points, including 11 in attack and one block, while Hassan Haider also played an important role at the net.

The result provided a positive end to a difficult opening stage following successive 3-0 defeats against Australia and defending champions Japan.

However, only the two best



Bahrain's squad celebrate their first victory of the tournament

third-placed teams advanced alongside the top two from each of the three groups. Chinese Taipei secured one of those places, while India claimed the other ahead of Bahrain on points ratio.

Hosts Japan, Australia, Iran, China, Thailand and South Korea qualified automatically, completing the eight-team quarter-final line-up.

Despite falling short of the last eight, Joksimovic said the victory provided an important boost to the team's morale and world ranking.

"The win was extremely important for us, not only from a morale standpoint but also for

the world rankings," he said.

"It earned us nine ranking points and moved us up five places in the FIVB standings. Although we did not achieve our goal of reaching the quarter-finals, we leave with an important gain and must continue building on it."

The continental championship offers two further rewards beyond the Asian title. The winners will secure the tournament's sole direct qualification place for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, while the top three finishers will earn berths at the 2027 FIVB Men's Volleyball World Cup.

Bahrain await expanded Gulf draw

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Bahrain's under-17 football team will discover their group-stage opponents today when the draw for the expanded 2026 GFF U17 Gulf Cup is held.

Scheduled for October 16 to November 4 in Qatar, the tournament will feature a record 10 nations in its largest field to date.

Egypt and China will join the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation's eight member nations as invited participants. Their inclusion is intended to provide young Gulf players with stronger and more varied opposition ahead of future international assignments.

Today's proceedings will be conducted virtually from the governing body's headquarters in Doha at 12pm.

Five seeding pots have been formed, with Bahrain placed alongside Yemen in Pot Four.



Youth footballers line up ahead of a recent match

Qatar and Saudi Arabia occupy Pot One, followed by the UAE and Iraq in Pot Two.

Kuwait and Oman make up Pot Three, while the two guest teams complete the seedings in Pot Five.

The sides will be split into two groups of five. Hosts Qatar will head Group A, while holders Saudi Arabia take their place at the top of Group B.

The leading two from each section will advance to the semi-finals. The Group A winners face the Group B runners-up, while the Group B winners meet the second-placed side from Group A.

This will be the second edition since the youth tournament was relaunched under the federation last year. However, its roots stretch back to the former

GCC U17 Championship, first staged in 2001.

Bahrain endured a difficult campaign in 2025, losing 4-0 to Saudi Arabia and 2-0 to Iraq. A narrow 3-2 defeat against Kuwait then ended their involvement in the group stage.

The eventual champions went on to beat the UAE 2-0 in the final at Grand Hamad Stadium in Doha, securing their sixth title overall. Abdulaziz Al Fawaz and Abdulrahman Sufyani scored the goals, with the latter also named the tournament's best player.

The Gulf event will provide Bahrain with their final competitive preparation for the 2027 AFC U17 Asian Cup qualifiers, which begin four days later in Salalah. The kingdom will face Kuwait, Brunei Darussalam, hosts Oman and Lebanon in Group G, with only the top side advancing to the continental finals.

Racing season set for October

Bahrain's 2026-27 horse racing season will get underway on October 30, launching a busy calendar of domestic and international meetings organised by the Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club.

The Bahrain International Trophy will provide the first



Action from a previous King's Cup meeting at the Bahrain Turf Club

major highlight on November 13, bringing leading horses, jockeys and trainers to the kingdom for one of its most prestigious races.

Attention will then turn to the His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup on December 18, the final headline event of the year.

Racing resumes in 2027 with the His Royal Highness the Crown Prince's Cup on January 29, followed by the His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup on February 18.

The His Majesty the King's Cup will take centre stage on March 5 before the campaign concludes on April 16.

Shaikh Isa arrives for Asiad



Abdulghaffar welcomes HH Shaikh Isa to Japan

Hussain Almaskati
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His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali Al Khalifa, Vice-President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, has arrived in Japan for the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, which run from September 19 to October 4.

He was welcomed by Shaikh Khalid bin Ahmed bin Atiyatallah Al Khalifa, First Secretary at the Bahrain Embassy in Japan, and delegation head Ahmed Mohammed Abdulghaffar.

The Vice-President described the Games as an important stage for Bahraini sport and an opportunity for the kingdom to strengthen its continental standing.

"We hope, through Team Bahrain's participation, to maintain an honourable

presence and achieve results that reflect the development of Bahraini sport and the strong competitive capabilities of our athletes," he said.

"We are confident that our champions can perform at their best and raise the kingdom's flag high. The preparation and readiness we have seen give us reason to be optimistic about a positive campaign."

He added that competing in Aichi-Nagoya is not solely about winning medals, but also gaining valuable experience against Asia's leading athletes.

The BOC official also praised the administrative and technical staff, along with the participating federations, for providing the competitors with the best possible conditions.

'Play Tennis' Coaching Course Set for October

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The Bahrain Tennis Federation will organise a foundational "Play Tennis" course for aspiring coaches from October 28 to 31, 2026, at its Isa Town headquarters under the supervision of national coach Hamad Al Ferdan.

The 35-hour programme will combine online learning, theory and practical court sessions, covering tennis fundamentals, beginner coaching, scoring, competitions and training session management.

The course is open to aspiring coaches, physical education teachers, assistant coaches, volunteers and parents aged 16 and above. Participants who successfully complete the required examinations and practical assessments will receive an International Tennis Federation-accredited certificate.

The participation fee is BD25, with places limited to 24 participants. Registration closes on October 21, 2026, with priority given to tennis coaches and physical educa-



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The course will equip participants with the essential skills to introduce tennis to beginners and deliver effective, enjoyable training sessions

HAMAD AL FARDAN, DIRECTOR OF COACH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

tion teachers.

Applicants must also create an account on the World Tennis Academy platform and complete the required online prerequisites before the course begins.