

Mohammed Mirza Retires from Handball



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Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

Mohammed Mirza has retired from handball, ending a big-stage career that took the Bahrain great to six World Championships, the Tokyo Olympics and two Asian club crowns with Al Najma.

The former international, one of the best-known line players in Bahraini handball, called time on his playing career after years with the national side and leading clubs at home, along with spells abroad.

Mirza said wearing the Bahrain shirt had been a source of pride and responsibility throughout his career, and that the years he spent representing his country would remain among his strongest memories from the game.

He was part of the Bahrain side that reached the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, the kingdom's first appearance in an Olympic team sport. Bahrain went on to make the quarter-finals and finish eighth.

Mirza also played at six World Championships, with his final appearance coming in 2025, after years as a key figure

in the national team.

His club career began with Al Tadhamun, formerly Karzakan, before he joined Al Ahli in 2008. He later spent much of his playing life with Al Najma before returning to Al Ahli in 2025.

At Al Najma, Mirza won the Asian Club Championship twice, in 2017 and 2023. He captained the side to the 2023 crown in Isfahan.

He also picked up personal honours, including the Asian Handball Federation's best line player award in 2019 and the same award at the Gulf Clubs Championship in 2023.

Mirza had a spell with Saudi side Al Khaleej during the 2022 IHF Super Globe.

His career was tested by a bad injury in October 2023, when he suffered three broken ribs in Bahrain's Asian Olympic qualifier against Qatar. He later received treatment in Germany before returning to the court.

His retirement brings down the curtain on one of the most decorated Bahraini handball careers of the modern era, built on six World Championships, an Olympic quarter-final and major club titles across Asia.

Palestinian club football to restart in September after Gaza war stoppage

AFP | Ramallah

The Palestinian football association announced on Monday that it would resume activity in September after a nearly three-year pause due to the Gaza war.

"We announce the resumption of sports activities and the football association's league beginning September 4," association president Jibril Rajoub said at a Ramallah press conference on Monday.

Palestinian sports leagues, including professional football, came to a halt with the war, which was sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

The association has named the first tournament back the "Thousand Martyrs' Cup", to honour the 1,014 Palestinian athletes killed by Israel during

the war according to the association's data.

More than 200 clubs will compete in the tournament, including 146 from the Israeli-occupied West Bank, 44 from Gaza, and 36 from Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

The tournament will kick off simultaneously in the three locations.

Rajoub said the war "created difficult conditions for all Palestinians that led to the suspension of our competitions and activities".

"But we have not lost our Palestinian national will, nor have we lost our belief that sport will remain a symbol of hope and life."

Rajoub said the association and Palestinian clubs faced tough financial circumstances.

Bahrain Beat Algeria for Second Straight Win

Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain's under-17 volleyball team made it two wins from two at the Arab U17 Men's Volleyball Championship after beating Algeria 3-0 on Monday.

The hosts took the match in straight sets, 25-13, 25-14 and 25-19, to collect two points and move to four from their opening two games.

Bahrain had started the tournament with a 3-0 win over Jordan, giving them six sets won and none lost across the first two rounds.

Bahrain player Ammar Ibrahim said the scoreline belied a demanding match and credited the win to the team's reading of their opponents.

"The match wasn't easy, but we read our opponents correctly and, thankfully, we got the win," he said. "We will take every match as it comes and prepare as well as we possibly can. I hope the Bahraini fans will support us in the next match. God willing, we will live up to the responsibility."

Team-mate Mustafa Fadhel said Bahrain had studied Algeria's weaknesses and made good use of them, adding that



The Young Reds celebrate after scoring



Mustafa Fadhel

a second straight victory had given the squad a lift before a tougher run of matches.

"Hard luck to Algeria. We analysed the team correctly, played on their weaknesses and, thankfully, it worked," he said. "This second win certainly



Ammar Ibrahim

gives us a morale boost for the coming matches.

"These are like cup matches, so you have to make the most of every game and give your opponents no chance. We have very important matches ahead against teams expected to com-

pete for the title. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt will all be important games, and we will give each one the respect it deserves."

Egypt also kept their perfect start intact on Monday, beating Jordan 3-0 to reach four points from two victories after opening their campaign with a win over Kuwait.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, began their tournament with a five-set victory over Kuwait, winning 3-2.

Tuesday will be a rest day before play resumes on Wednesday with three matches. Jordan will face Algeria, Saudi Arabia will meet Egypt, while Bahrain take on Kuwait as they chase a third straight win.

KHK Bodybuilding Open wins IFBB status

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Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa Open has been elevated to full international status by bodybuilding's world governing body, putting the September show on the IFBB's annual calendar and opening the door to a stronger field of overseas competitors.

The third edition will be held on September 19 at the Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Hall at the University of Bahrain, with leading professionals and amateurs expected to compete.

The International Federation of Fitness and Bodybuilding



gave the championship its international ranking after two successful editions and the reputation it has built within the sport.

Sami Al Haddad, chairman

of the Bahrain Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation and head of the higher organising committee, said the ruling gave the event greater weight and showed the trust placed in Bahrain as a host of top-level competitions.

Athletes will also be able to earn recognised international rankings under IFBB rules, adding further weight to the contest and giving overseas competitors another reason to enter.

"We are proud that the third Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa Open Bodybuilding Championship has received official recognition from the International Federation of

Fitness and Bodybuilding,' Al Haddad said.

"It shows the confidence Bahrain enjoys at international level and the quality of work carried out by the Bahrain federation in staging championships to world-class standards."

Al Haddad said the new status was expected to bring more leading bodybuilders from around the world and lift the standard of competition when the event returns next month.

He said the federation would press ahead with plans to bring more international championships to Bahrain, with sports tourism among the aims of its long-term work.

Riffa Hold Lead as Bahrain Sweep Umm Al Hassam

Mohammed Darwish

Riffa refused to give ground in the Bahrain Bowling League title race, beating Busaiteen 6-2 to hold a six-point lead at the top as Bahrain swept aside Umm Al Hassam 8-0.

With one round left in the second section, Riffa have 90 points and a pinfall of 32,061. Bahrain remain their closest challengers on 84 points and 31,700 pins, while Umm Al Hassam are third on 78.

Bahrain dealt the heaviest blow of the 13th round, taking all three games against Umm Al Hassam and piling up 2,621 pins against 2,480.

Aqeel Ahmed Al Awadhi led Bahrain with 702 pins, Emerson Bistano hit 675 and Khalid Sameer Hassan added 656.



A bowler in action during the league competition

Umm Al Hassam's Rashid Abdulatif Al Dalhan still posted the best individual tally of the match with 719.

Riffa then made sure Bahrain gained no ground. They beat

Busaiteen 6-2 with a 2,504-2,284 pinfall, keeping the gap at six points.

Ali Nabeel Al Mass was Riffa's top scorer with 711 pins, while Jan Meden Villanueva chipped

in with 619.

Al Hala strengthened their hold on fourth place after a 6-2 win over Sanad. They scored 2,275 pins against 2,155, with Abdullah Jassim Bahar leading the side on 657.

Isa Town also came away with a 6-2 victory, beating Al Ettifaq after recording 2,027 pins to 1,955.

Al Hala are fourth on 44 points, Busaiteen fifth on 36 and Sanad sixth on 34. Al Ettifaq sit seventh with 26, two ahead of Isa Town.

The 14th and last round of the second section will be played on Sunday at 6.30pm at Funland Bowling Centre. Busaiteen face Isa Town, Al Ettifaq meet Riffa, Al Hala play Bahrain and Umm Al Hassam take on Sanad.