

# Bahrain concede late goal in loss to Kiwis

Substitute Niko Kirwan scores with two minutes remaining in regular time to lift Oceania giants New Zealand to hard-earned 1-0 victory in international friendly match

● **Bahrain and New Zealand play highly competitive affair that was decided only in the game's final minutes**

● **Friendly match marked end of senior men's national team's latest training gathering supervised by head coach Helio Sousa**

TDT | Manama

Bahrain conceded a goal with two minutes left in regular time in a 0-1 loss to Oceania giants New Zealand last night in an international friendly match at the National Stadium in Riffa.

Both sides had quality chances to score in either half, but neither could break the deadlock until substitute Niko Kirwan headed home from close range



Bahrain's Ali Madan vies for possession of the ball between New Zealand players Liberato Cacace, left, and Michael Boxall

in the 88th minute.

It was a highly competitive affair for both national teams, who were meeting for the first time since their infamous play-off for a spot at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, which the Kiwis won 1-0 on aggregate after home-and-away matches.

The friendly was the second

for both teams in a week. The Bahrainis had previously played Caribbean side Curacao in a match they won 4-0, while the Kiwis won their match against the Curacaoans 2-1.

Bahrain have used the exhibition games as part of their preparations for their upcoming competitions, including the FIFA



Arab Cup 2021 this November and December as well as the start of qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup 2023 early next year.

New Zealand had the majority of chances to open the scoring in the first half, with Elijah Just and Callum McCowatt coming closest. Abdulla Yusuf, Sayed Redha Issa and skipper Sayed

Dhiya Saeed had the best opportunities for the hosts, but could not convert.

After a goalless first 45, Chris Wood had a free kick that beat the wall but was saved by Bahrain goalkeeper Ebrahim Lutfallah early in the second half.

Ali Madan then had a long effort on target that was coolly collected by opposing goalkeeper Michael Woud.

Mohammed Jassim Marhoon came on after the hour-mark for Bahrain and immediately made an impact, creating two quality chances but was unable to finish.

The Bahrainis stepped up their attack over the game's closing stages and should have come away with a draw, but a momentary lapse in defending was enough for the Kiwis to take advantage.

Liberato Cacace supplied a precision cross from the left of the pitch to a waiting Kirwan deep in the box, and he made no mistake with his header which was enough to separate the two sides.

Bahrain head coach Helio Sousa started the match with a first 11 that included Lutfallah; Ahmed Bughammar, Abdulla Al Hazza, Hazza Ali and Issa in defence; Ali Madan, Mohammed Abdulwahab, Ali Haram, Komail Alaswad and Saeed in a five-man midfield; and Abdulla Yusuf as the lone striker.

Last night's match marked the end of Bahrain's latest training gathering under Sousa, which was held over the past two weeks.

The FIFA Arab Cup 2021 will be held in Doha, with the participation of 16 national teams. It will kick off on November 30 and continue until December 18. Bahrain are in Group A, which also features hosts Qatar, Iraq and Oman.

Bahrain will then be one of 24 teams from across Asia that will be competing in the AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers, which will be in its third round. These matches will be held starting January/February next year.

## Bahrain skipper Saeed joins exclusive FIFA Century Club



Bahrain's Sayed Dhiya Saeed, right, is presented with his commemorative shirt by Abdulla Al Buainain prior to last night's kick-off

● **Influential midfielder makes 100th international appearance for Bahrain against New Zealand last night**

● **Saees becomes 11th Bahraini player to be listed in exclusive FIFA Century Club**

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Bahrain national team skipper Sayed Dhiya Saeed, who started last night's friendly match against New Zealand, has joined the exclusive FIFA

Century Club for men's players who have played 100 or more A internationals for their country.

Saeed was presented with a special shirt commemorating the occasion by national team manager Abdulla Al Buainain prior to kick-off.

According to the official list of the FIFA Century Club available online, Saeed became the 11th Bahraini player on the list.

The others are Salman Issa, Mohammed Hussain, Sayed Mohammed Adnan, Mohammed Salmeen, Abdulla Al Marzooqi, Hussain Baba, Fawzi Aaish and Hussain Ahmed, along with Sayed Mohammed Jaafar and Ismaeel Abdullatif, both of whom are still regular call ups to the national team.

## Spectacular entry list announced for 2021 Bahrain International Trophy

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An outstanding list of 78 entries was announced last night for the 2021 £500,000 Group Three Bahrain International Trophy.

Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) revealed that the total number was up from 61 in 2020, and they come from 10 different nations.

From the total of 78 horses nominated, there are a total of 25 individual Group winners. Collectively, they have amassed a total of 58 Group wins, with 14 of those being Group One races.

REHC executive director Shaikh Salman bin Rashed Al Khalifa commented: "We are incredibly proud of the progress in quality from year to year in the Bahrain International Trophy.

"To have gone from 46 entries in 2019, to 61 in 2020 and now 78 in 2021 proves the confidence that connections have in racing in Bahrain.

"More importantly, the cal-



ibre of horses entered from 10 different countries is also very high. To have some high class and progressive horses who have won multiple Group races in 2021 entered is very exciting."

The 2021 Bahrain International Trophy takes place November 19 at REHC.

### The 2021 Bahrain International Trophy list of entries:

Akho Mobaary (KSA), Algiers (IRE), Alwahsh (IRE), Amhran Na Bhfiann (IRE), Avalina (USA), Barney Roy (GB), Bedouins Story (GB), Bopedro (FR), Cadillac (IRE), Caprice Des Dieux (FR), Chiefdom (USA), Classical Wave (GB), Coolagh Forest (IRE), Dawn Intello (FR), Deacon (GB), Desert Encounter (IRE), Desert Lion (IRE), Dubai Future (GB), Dubai Honour (IRE), Euchen Glen (GB), Eudaimonia (FR), Faisal (GB), Felix (GB), Fev Rover (IRE), Finest Sound (IRE), Fooraat (IRE), Fox Tal (GB), Foxes Tales (IRE), Galova (FR), Gronkowski (USA), Harrovian (GB), Horoscope (IRE), Insinundo (IRE), Kenway (FR), Khartoum (USA), Kick On (GB), King Leonidas (GB), King Vega (GB), Lauderdale (IRE), Litigator (IRE), Living Legend (IRE), Lord Glitters (FR), Lough Derg (IRE), Magny Cours (USA), Matthew Flinders (GB), Maydanny (IRE), Military Style (USA), Monty (FR), Mostahdaf (IRE), Motakay'yef (KSA), Mr De Pourcaugnac (FR), Naamoos (FR), Nao Da Mais (BRZ), New Show (IRE), Ocean Rod (IRE), Palavecino (FR), Penja (FR), Persian Moon (IRE), Pogo (IRE), Qaader (IRE), Real World (IRE), Royal Marine (IRE), Saltonstall (GB), Sir Busker (IRE), Soft Whisper (IRE), Square De Luynes (FR), Step By Step (FR), Suspicious Mind (DEN), The Mediterranean (IRE), Thundering Nights (IRE), Tokyo Gold (FR), Tyson Fury (GB), Victory Chime (IRE), West End Charmer (IRE), What A Welcome (GB), Zakouski (GB), Zorion (GB).

## COVID-19 stance could rule F1 medical car driver out of races

Reuters | London

Formula One medical car driver Alan van der Merwe risks missing more races, after his absence from Sunday's Turkish Grand Prix, due to his decision not to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

Van der Merwe, 41, and F1 doctor Ian Roberts tested positive independently for the coronavirus ahead of the race and did not travel to Istanbul, with the FIA's Formula E crew standing in.

Both had been in the medical car at the previous Russian Grand Prix in Sochi.

The South African said on Twitter it was the second time he had contracted COVID-19 and he had not been vaccinated for personal reasons.

"From what we understand, there are a couple of countries that you probably won't be allowed to enter ... unless you're vaccinated," Formula One's race director Michael Masi told reporters on Sunday.



Alan van der Merwe in action

"You need to comply with those requirements to enter the country and from that perspective the FIA obviously has to respect the country's require-

ments to get in, as will all the teams and everyone else."

Van der Merwe explained his position before the weekend, indicating he had received abuse on social media for his stance and would block those making personal attacks or wishing him fired.

"I am fully aware that I will potentially be less employable or that my freedom of movement will be restricted based on my choices," he said on Twitter.