

# Bahrain go down fighting against Japan

Kingdom's national volleyball team suffer first defeat in Pool A of 21st Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship

● **Bahrain win first set but Japanese battle back to stay unbeaten after two matches**

● **Bahrainis now face must-win scenario against Qatar today in order to advance to next stage**

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Bahrain were dealt a tough 1-3 (25-23, 17-25, 23-25, 16-25) defeat to hosts Japan yesterday in the 21st Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship.



Bahrain's Ali Alsairafi hits a smash against Japan during their match yesterday

The result followed the Bahrainis' straight-sets victory over India in their first Pool A game and they now have a 1-1 win-loss record. They now must take their final fixture of the preliminary round against Qatar today in order to

move on to the next stage. The game is scheduled for a 6am start, Bahrain time, and it will be played at Chiba Port Arena.

The Japanese are already assured a spot in the ensuing phase following their second win. Bahrain and Qatar are tied on three points apiece on the Pool A standings and both teams have all to play for in today's clash.

The Qataris won against their Indian counterparts 3-0 (25-22, 25-14, 25-20) in yesterday's other group fixture. India have been eliminated from title contention and will play in the ninth to 16th classification bracket following their last assignment against the Japanese, also set for today.

In Bahrain's game yesterday, the nationals had a promising start as they were able to eke out

## 10

times Bahrain have participated in Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship

a tightly contested first set with three straight stuff blocks.

Japan bounced back and convincingly took the second, but the Bahrainis fought hard in the third in their attempt to take the match advantage, but a series of errors proved costly and the Japanese took the 2-1 lead by just two points.

In the fourth set, the home side pulled away as Ran Takahashi proved too strong, powering Japan forward with a game-high 26 points.

Defending champions Iran, Pakistan, Thailand and Hong Kong are in Pool B, while Pool C consists of reigning silver-medallists Australia, China, Sri Lanka and Kuwait. South Korea, Chinese Taipei, Kazakhstan and Saudi Arabia make up Pool D. The top two teams from each group make it to the round of eight.

The semi-finals are scheduled for September 18, while the bronze and gold medal games are set for September 19.

This year's championship is Bahrain's 10th participation in the continent's leading event.

## Champions Al Ahli in action as basketball league tips off new campaign

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Back-to-back defending champions Al Ahli begin their quest today for an historic "three-peat" in the 2021/2022 Zain Bahrain Basketball League when they take on Nuwaidrat in their opening fixture of the new season.

The game is scheduled for a 7.30pm tip-off and it will be played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Ahli are fresh off winning the Zain Super Cup last week, and will be looking to ride their momentum into today's clash.

In this evening's opening fixture, Al Hala are set to face off with Samaheej starting at 5.30pm at the same venue.

The first week of league action continues tomorrow and Thursday.

Manama, who were beaten by Ahli in last week's Super Cup, are set to face off with Sitra in the first game followed by Bahrain Club taking on Al Najma.



Al Ahli's star guard Maitham Jameel will be looking to start the new league strong with his teammates tonight

Then, Muharraq and Al Ettihad go head to head in the lone fixture on Thursday night, starting at 7pm.

## Bahrain duo impress in MENA Digital Cup



Al Mubarak (R) and Khalil show off their awards at the end of the competition

● **Ebrahim Abbas Al Mubarak finishes ninth, Hassan Khalil 10th on overall final ranking in first-of-its-kind regional Esport event**

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Bahrain Esport racing standouts Ebrahim Abbas Al Mubarak and Hassan Khalil had impressive results in the Toyota Gazoo Racing MENA Digital Cup 2021, which was held in Amman, Jordan, last weekend.

The pair achieved ninth and 10th place, respectively, on the final overall ranking of competitors from across the region.

There were a total of 22 racers battling it out in three challenges, and both Al Mubarak and Khalil displayed a high level of competitiveness.

They each excelled in the Country Challenge and Elimination Challenge on day one, which set the stage for the main event the following day, the MENA Cup Showdown.

The racers were divided into two groups for the Showdown's semi-final stage. Al Mubarak was in Group B, where he qualified second and finished third in the race, while Khalil was in Group A where he qualified third and finished fifth.

Their semi-final classifications earned them a place in the Showdown's final, which comprised only the top six drivers from each group for a field of 12.



**The Toyota Gazoo Racing MENA Digital Cup 2021 featured contestants from 11 countries, including Lebanon, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Cyprus, Oman, Mauritania, Jordan and Bahrain, with two drivers from each country taking part**

Al Mubarak put himself in a potential podium position by qualifying third for the race, and he crossed the finish line in sixth place but was later demoted to ninth following a penalty issued to him by the race stewards. As for Khalil, he finished 10th in the finale, which is the same position he started from.

Speaking after the event, Al Mubarak and Khalil described their participation in this first-of-its-kind championship as distinct and successful, where they were able to gain a great deal of experience especially amongst an elite-level field of Esport racers from across the Middle East and North Africa.

The Bahraini pair also enjoyed experiencing a number of modern simulators and ad-

vanced technologies, and said that they are looking forward to future similar competitions where they hope to raise the flag of the Kingdom of Bahrain high, especially since Bahrain sparked the meteoric rise of motorsport in the Middle East and North Africa and as it is considered to be the home of motor racing in the region.

Al Mubarak and Khalil expressed their deep thanks and gratitude to the Bahrain Motor Federation (BMF), headed by BMF President His Excellency Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, the board of directors, management, and all of the BMF team.

They added that their participation was an opportunity to further develop their skills and capabilities in Esport racing, and are confident of giving their best in upcoming competitions in honour of the Kingdom.

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The event was held under the FIA Sport Grant Programme and Jordan Motorsport, with the support of Toyota Motorsport, represented by Toyota Gazoo Racing.

Lebanese Sami Jo Abi Nakhle won the title, while Izz Bustami from Jordan was the runner-up and Khalid Al Maraghi from Qatar third.

## KHK eSports Team wins PUBG MOBILE African title, earns spot in world championship

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KHK eSports Team Africa earned a monumental victory in the PUBG MOBILE continental championship, which has taken the team to one of the most coveted spots in the game: the Pro League EMEA Championship.

The team, comprised of KHK JAiRB0T12sz, KHK LUÍS, KHK P3nnyWise, KHK 304izu2044, and KHK Snurrá earned a great result, putting KHK eSports Team among the best in the world of esports at PUBG MOBILE.

It is another relevant result for esports and sports in the Kingdom of Bahrain, with another initiative of His Highness Shaikh Khaled bin Hamad Al Khalifa making Bahrainis proud around the world.



KHK eSports Team Africa beat the likes of SLIME 4KT, G3 Temper, and YUNG THUNDER, to claim the continental title. In total, 33 teams participated in the tournament.

The victory now will put the team at the upcoming Pro League EMEA Championship. Teams from 27 regions are expected to be in action at the tournament.