

Bahrain hold Australia

Nationals crash out of AFC U23 championship despite draw

TDT | Manama

A fighting Bahrain held Australia to a 1-1 draw last night but it was not enough to prevent their elimination from the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand.

The Bahrainis needed nothing less than a victory to have any chance of advancing past the group stage of the continental competition.

They had their opportunities to claim the full three points and battled hard until the final whistle, but they were unlucky not to score and the Aussies did well to preserve the deadlock.

Following the result, Australia went through to the quarter-finals along with hosts Thailand, who drew 1-1 with Iraq in yesterday's other Group A clash.

The Aussies topped the table with five points from three matches, followed by the Thais



Bahrain's Marhoon leaps into the air as he vies for the ball

with four points. Iraq finished with three while Bahrain had just two points as they finished with no wins, two draws and a loss.

Bahrain's elimination also means that they are no longer in play for a spot in the men's football tournament at this year's Tokyo Olympic Games. Only the top three finishers from the field of 16 book their tickets to Japan.

Star midfielder Mohammed Marhoon gave Bahrain a glimmer of hope in their match yesterday after equalising at the stroke of half.

Australia had gone ahead in the 34th minute through Ramy Najjarine, but Marhoon was able to put the Bahrainis back in contention in the third minute of first-half stoppage time.

Marhoon fired in a brilliant free-kick from a few yards outside the penalty area. His fantastic curling effort flew around

the Australian wall and into the bottom-right corner of goal.

Just moments before, teammate Abdulrahman Ahmedi had a chance to open Bahrain's account with a header right in the face of goal off a short cross from Sanad Saleh, but it was punched away by Australia goalkeeper Tom Glover.

Bahrain had several other chances to score, but could not find the finishing touches.

Australia and Thailand must now wait to learn of their opponents in the knockout quarter-finals. The Aussies will be facing the Group B runners-up while the Thais will play the Group B winners. Group B is currently topped by Syria who are followed by Saudi Arabia, both on four points, while Qatar are third with two points and Japan fourth with zero.

Bahrain were the only team making their debut in the AFC U23 Championship.

Foreign fighters praise global reach of Bahrain's BRAVE CF ahead of Slovenia debut

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BRAVE Combat Federation will visit Slovenia for the first time, this Sunday (19), as the fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world and the biggest-ever Bahraini-born brand kicks off 2020 in partnership with leading local organization WFC for BRAVE CF 34/WFC 24. Two of the stars of the show can't wait to visit yet another country representing BRAVE CF and have praised the company's global reach. Russia's Velimurad Alkhasov and American Phil Hawes represent two of the more than sixty nationalities that have been represented under Bahrain's own BRAVE CF.

Flyweight contender Velimurad Alkhasov, who meets Zach Makovsky in the first bout of the main card, has spoken of his admiration for BRAVE CF's strategy as the promotion will make Slovenia the 19th country to host a show in just over three years of operations.

"BRAVE CF holds shows all around the world and signs first-class fighters. That's why the development is so fast and that's why BRAVE CF is the fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world", says Velimurad, who has fought for BRAVE CF in Morocco and Bahrain before



Russia's Velimurad Alkhasov in action during a bout

Slovenia.

Middleweight Phil Hawes has been a long admirer of BRAVE Combat Federation and says he's honored to be traveling the world with the promotion. Hawes will take on Yuri Fraga at BRAVE CF 34, and has fought in India before.

"I think a year or two ago, I looked back at my DMS, and it looks like I actually tried to get into BRAVE CF way before. So it's awesome to be here. I've finally manifested this and now I get to travel the world with BRAVE CF. Slovenia's the 19th country in 34 events which to me is unheard of and that's really awesome. I'm really happy to be a part of this team", says "Megatron".

BRAVE CF 34/WFC 24 will



Phil Hawes during a weigh-in

be headlined by a WFC Heavyweight title fight as Luka Podkrajsek and Viktor Vasic look to take home the vacant belt,

with several stars taking on the Balkans' best fighters in a fight night to never be forgotten for the region.

Huge rewards for strong men

● HH Shaikh Khalid approves prizes of 'GCC Strongest Man Championship'

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HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa has recently approved the awards of the GCC Strongest Man "Heavyweight" Championship, which is scheduled to be held next April at Bahrain International Circuit.

First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and President of Bahrain Olympic Committee has specified the awards to be USD 130,000 in total; USD100,000 for the first place winner, USD20,000 for the second place winner and USD10,000 for the third place winner.

Commenting on the occasion, HH Shaikh Khalid stated, "The GCC Strongest Man Championship comes as a continuation of the successes achieved in the previous editions of the championship. The championship was the focus of attention of the media and enthusiasts of strength and endurance sports. This success came after we adopted the integration of traditional games in the championship, with the aim of continuing

efforts to preserve the heritage of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the countries of the region."

His Highness called upon the youth in the GCC region to register and participate in the championship. At the same time HH Shaikh Khalid said he is looking forward for achieving the goals the championship was launched for and are set by His Highness, such as harnessing sport in support of relationships and strengthening the bonds of love, brotherhood and cooperation between the people of the GCC States.

For its part, the organising committee of the championship, represented by the Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, announced that it will pay visits to the brotherly GCC countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman, to meet the youth who are interested in taking part in the championship.

The Media Office of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa also announced that a website has been allocated for the registration for the championship on www.gccstrongestman.com, in addition to launching an official page for the championship on Instagram (@gccstrongestman), in which inquiries will be received through direct messages.

Warner, Finch tons help Australia pummel India by 10 wickets

AFP | Mumbai

Openers David Warner and Aaron Finch struck dominant centuries in a record partnership to power Australia to a crushing 10-wicket win over India in the first one-day international Wednesday.

Warner blasted 128 while captain Finch made 110 as Australia chased down their target of 256 in just 37.4

overs in Mumbai to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Paceman Mitchell Starc also played a key part with three wickets that helped bowl out India for 255 in 49.1 overs after the tourists elected to field first in their first 50-over outing since last year's World Cup.

But it was the left-right batting pair of Warner and Finch that put together the highest partnership of 258 for any

wicket in ODIs against India.

Warner raised his 18th ODI hundred in 88 balls with a boundary off Indian quick Jasprit Bumrah as he jumped with joy and kissed his helmet to celebrate the knock.

Finch completed his hundred in 108 balls but it was Warner who remained in total control as he finished off with two of 17 boundaries. He also hit three sixes.

For India, KL Rahul, who made 47 in the Indian innings, kept wickets after regular stumper Rishabh Pant suffered a concussion following a hit on the helmet while batting.

It was the second-wicket 121-run stand between Rahul and Dhawan that put India on course for a big score but they slipped from 134-1 to 164-5 in the space of 35 deliveries.

The left-handed Dhawan smashed

nine fours and one six in his 91-ball knock and was well supported by Rahul who made 47 before falling to Ashton Agar's left-arm spin.

Pat Cummins was brought back from the other end to send Dhawan back to the pavilion after flicking the ball to cover where Agar took the catch.

Skipper Virat Kohli did not stay long, hitting Zampa for a six but was caught and bowled with the next ball for 16.