

SPORTS

sports

Bahrain held by Hong Kong

Bahrain was held to a goalless stalemate in the Fifa World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifier

TDT | Manama

Bahrain were held to a disappointing goalless draw by Hong Kong yesterday in an away joint-qualifying match for the Fifa World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

The Bahrainis were heavily favoured heading into the contest after previously being co-leaders of qualification Group C. But they could not find the net despite having several chances to score.

Meanwhile, Alaa Abbas headed in the winning goal in the second minute of second-half stoppage time to lift Iraq to a 2-1 victory over 10-man Iran in last night's other divisional fixture, played in Amman.

Mohanad Ali opened the scoring for the Iraqis in the 11th minute, but Ahmad Nourollahi equalised for the Iranians in the 25th. Iran skipper Masoud Shojaei was then shown the red card in the 81st minute following a second bookable offence.

That set the stage for Abbas's late decider, which came off a corner. Iran goalkeeper Alireza



Bahrain's Abdullatif has his shirt tugged by Hong Kong player Leung Nok Hang as he tries to look for a shot at goal

Beiranvand was able to get his hand on the ball, but he couldn't stop it from bouncing into the net.

Following both matches, Iraq moved to solo first place in the Group C standings where they

now have 10 points from four matches, two ahead of Bahrain. Iran are third with six points, followed by Hong Kong with two and Cambodia with one.

In Bahrain's stalemate, the nationals had the better scoring

opportunities but they could not find the finishing touch. Hong Kong goalkeeper Yapp Hung Fai was also in top form, denying the Bahrainis multiple times in the game.

Bahrain's star striker Ismaeel

Group C Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Bahrain	4	2	2	0	3	1	8
Iran	4	2	0	2	17	3	6
Hong Kong	4	0	2	2	1	5	2
Cambodia	4	0	1	3	1	20	1

Abdullatif had a shot right in the face of goal parried by Yapp in the 41st minute. Then, at the stroke of halftime, influential midfielder Mohammed Abdulwahab had a free-kick on target collected by Yapp.

In the second half, Bahrain continued their fierce attack but the Hong Kong back-line remained defiant. In the 62nd minute, Abdulwahab Al Malood had a close shot go just over the crossbar from an acute angle, and then Komail Alaswad had successive long-distance attempts, both go straight to Yapp.

With time nearly running out, the Bahrainis grew increasingly desperate to find a winner. Abdullatif squandered a brilliant chance in the 85th minute with a close-range shot right into the

outside-right wall of the net.

Bahrain head coach Helio Sousa had started the match with an 11 that included Sayed Mohammed Jaffar between the posts, Sayed Baqer, Abdulla Al Haza'a, Waleed Al Hayam, Ahmed Bughammar, Mahdi Al Humaidan, Mohammed Al Hardan, and Abdulwahab, Alaswad, Al Malood and Abdullatif.

Abdulla Yusuf came on for Abdulwahab, Sayed Redha Isa for Bughammar, and Madan substituted Alaswad, all in the second half.

Bahrain now have little time to rest as they next have to prepare for their joint-qualifier against the Iraqis on Tuesday next week. The game will also be played in Amman. Hong Kong hosts Cambodia that same night.

Nuwaidrat semi-final birth BBA Cup



Sitra's Mahdi Abdulameer looks to drive to the basket against Nuwaidr

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Nuwaidrat punched their tickets to the semi-finals of the Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) Cup last night following a 96-85 victory over Sitra in their final preliminary round game played at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam.

Nuwaidrat shrugged off a poor start and turned a 20-23 deficit after the first period to a narrow 46-44 advantage at the half. They maintained their fine play in the last two quarters and led by as many as 14 points en route to the all-important victory.

The result gave them their fourth win in five outings and it secured their spot in the last four. They are now in first place in Group A with nine points overall. Si-

tra suffered their third loss to go with two wins and have seven points, tied with Al Ettihad.

Hasan Madan was on fire for Nuwaidr, scoring 36 points in the game including a red-hot seven-of-nine from beyond the three-point line.

Five other players were in double-figures for the winners, with Hassan Abbas scoring 17 off the bench and Ahmed Hassan 14. Jawad Abdulla added 13 and Mohammed Batti had 11 in the win.

Serbian Milos Macura paced Sitra in the loss with 25 points.

Cup action continues tonight with a mammoth Group B clash between Manama and Riffa at 5.30pm. Manama have already qualified for the last four, while Riffa are trying to book the other berth from their division.

Impressive LMP2 field for Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain

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The Bapco 8 Hours of Bahrain will see an increased LMP2 field for round four of the 2019/2020 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) as G-Drive Racing makes a welcome return to the series.

A total of 31 cars across four categories will compete at Bahrain International Circuit next month, racing into the night for eight hours instead of the usual six in Bahrain.

Multiple-European Le Mans Series (ELMS) Champions, G-Drive Racing, will field an Aurus 01-Gibson car – the same machine that the Russian-based team used to finish runner-up in this year's ELMS. Driving the No. 26 car will be ex-Formula 1 driver Jean-Eric Vergne, who completed a full WEC campaign back in 2017. Joining Vergne at the wheel will be Russia's Roman Rusinov and Dutch driver Job Van Uitert.

G-Drive's entry increases the highly-competitive LMP2 field to nine in Bah-



LMP2 competitors in action at BIC during a previous WEC race

rain – the biggest of WEC Season Eight so far and includes two tyre manufacturers (Michelin and Goodyear) and four different chassis providers – ORECA, Alpine, Dallara and Aurus.

The LMP1 entry list will comprise of five entries: the No. 7 and No. 8 Toyota Gazoo Racing TS050 HYBRID cars, two Team LNT Ginettas plus the No. 1 Rebellion Racing R13 - Gibson. After Rebellion's win in China, the LMP Success Handicap will be

altered ahead of Bahrain and will no doubt provide even more close on-track race action.

LMGTE Pro has seen Aston Martin and Porsche both take victories so far this season, with Ferrari winning Shanghai only to be disqualified following post-race scrutineering. With two wins under Porsche's belt, the German manufacturer will be looking to score a hat-trick in Bahrain to cement its position at the top of the leaderboard. However, Bahrain has fared well for Ferrari in recent years with the Italian manufacturer having taken four out of six wins in LMGTE Pro.

A total of 11 teams will battle it out in LMGTE Am as category leaders TF Sport will be eager to continue its recent success after winning the two previous rounds with the Aston Martin Vantage AMR. Only three points behind TF Sport, however, is AF Corse as the Ferrari 488 GTE Evo took the round one victory at Silverstone followed by a second place at Fuji.

Arabian Gulf Cup draw lands Bahrain in tough group

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Bahrain were drawn in a tough Group B last night for the 24th Arabian Gulf Cup, taking place later this month in Doha.

The other teams in their division are defending champions Oman, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Group A includes hosts Qatar, Iraq, Yemen and the UAE.

The draw was held yesterday in the Qatari capital by the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation.

The tournament dates have been reset and it is now sched-

uled to take place from November 26 to December 8. Matches are expected to be played at Khalifa International Stadium in Doha.

Bahrain are competing in the event after originally pulling out last July. The Saudis and Emiratis had also previously withdrawn, but they too are now taking part.

The tournament schedule had already been set before the return to participation of Bahrain, Saudi and the UAE. This forced the draw to be held once again yesterday, in the presence of officials from

all participating countries. A new schedule of matches will also be issued in the coming days.

Bahrain have taken part in all but the 1972 edition of the previous Gulf Cup competitions. The Bahrainis have never won the title, but finished as runners-up four times while claiming the bronze medal thrice.

The last tournament was held in Kuwait in 2018. Oman defeated the UAE in a tight penalty shootout in the final. Bahrain finished fourth overall after losing in the semi-finals.

Fixtures for 33rd GPIC Open Tennis Championship released

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Bahrain Tennis Club published the Draws and Order of Play for the 33rd GPIC Open Tennis Tournament in the club website www.bahraintennisclub.com and Facebook page. The event is organized by Bahrain Tennis Club from 17th to 28th November 2019.