



Karters in action at BKIC

Karters set for intense endurance test

● 12-hour Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship begins tonight at BIKC

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The competition intensifies this weekend in the 2019/2020 Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship (BKEC) with a gruelling 12-hour challenge at Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC) in Sakhir.

The meeting marks the BKEC season's third and penultimate round and it will be held over two days.

The race is set to kick off at 11pm tonight, with the chequered flag scheduled to come down at 11am tomorrow morning. Prior to the main event, a 60-minute Qualifying Practice will be held from 9.30pm today.

All the action will take place along BIKC's 1.414-kilometre Commission Internationale de

Karting track.

A total of 14 teams are scheduled to compete. They include Racing BH, Racing BH Junior, Go Bahrain, Bahrain Airport Services (BAS) A, BAS B, BAS C and BAS F, Manama Drift, Redline Racing, 3MDG Racing Team, Cool Runnings-Bahrain and three teams from Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco).

They will be battling it out in the Pro, Corporate and Nations classes. Each team will be behind the wheel of a 390cc RT8 kart.

Racing BH were the overall winners in the BKEC's first and second rounds and they will be looking to continue their winning run this weekend.

All are welcome to attend and enjoy the very best of local grassroots motorsport. Entrance to BIKC is free of charge.

Following this weekend's meeting, Round Four will be the championship-finale and the ultimate challenge of the season. This 24-hour race is scheduled for February 14 and 15.

Basketball chief receives newly signed national team coach Vincent



From left, Kanoo, Vincent and Khudair during their meeting

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Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) president Talal Kanoo received yesterday Bahrain's newly signed national team head coach Sam Vincent, who arrived in the Kingdom to begin his tenure.

Also on hand was BBA national teams director Jalil Khudair.

Vincent fills in the role last held by Serbian coach Darko Russo, who briefly took charge of Bahrain's men's team as they participated in the Gulf Basketball Association Men's National Teams Championship 2019 last November and December.

Vincent, a 56-year-old for-

mer point guard, is not a newcomer to Bahrain basketball. In past years, he coached local clubs Manama and Al Ahli as well as most recently Riffa, whom he helped guide to the prestigious Khalifa bin Salman Cup for the first time last season.

Vincent's first task with the national team is to get them ready for their upcoming qualifiers for the 2021 Fiba Asia Cup. Those games are scheduled to begin next month and Bahrain are in Group D of the qualifiers along with India, Lebanon and Iraq.

Kanoo discussed the national team's preparations for the qualifiers with Vincent and said that he hopes Bahrain can fight for good results.

Bahrain make easy work of New Zealand

Bahrain thump New Zealand 45-16 in Asian Men's Handball Championship

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Bahrain made an emphatic start to their campaign in the 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship yesterday with a 45-16 hammering of New Zealand at Shaikh Saad Al Abdullah Sports Hall Complex in Kuwait City.

Both teams are in Group A of the tournament's preliminary round along with Iran. The Bahrainis' fine start put them on top of the division table.

Bahrain were in control of the contest from the very start, and they enjoyed a commanding 21-8 advantage at the half. They kept their foot on the gas the rest of the way and never allowed their rivals into the fight en route to the lopsided 29-goal victory.

All but two of Bahrain's players made it onto the scoresheet. Ali Eid finished as Bahrain's top scorer with eight goals, while Mahdi Saad added seven. Ahmed Jalal had six and Bilal Basham Askani chipped in with four goals.

Hassan Al Fardan had three while Abdulla Ali, Mohammed Mirza, Ahmed Almaqabi,



Bahrain's Almqabi looks to shoot at the New Zealand goal

Mahmood Hussain, Mohammed Habib and captain Hussein Al Sayyad all had two goals

apiece.

Mohammed Abdulredha and Jassim Al Salata rounded out Bahrain's scorers with a goal apiece.

Luke Ireland led New Zealand with four goals, while Paul Ireland had three.

Bahrain are gunning for their first-ever title in the Asian championship. They have finished as silver-medallists four times in the past, including the last three editions of the tournament.

The Bahrainis are scheduled to return to the playing court tomorrow when they take on Iran to complete their preliminary round campaign.

Thirteen teams are competing in the Asian championship in Kuwait City. They have been divided into four groups for the preliminaries. Group B features Qatar, Japan and China; Group C includes South Ko-

rea, Saudi Arabia and Australia; and Group D consists of the UAE, Hong Kong, Iraq and hosts Kuwait.

The top two teams from each group at the end of a single round-robin move on to the next phase. This ensuing main round will feature eight teams in all, to be divided into another two groups and another single round-robin. The top two then march on to the semi-finals, scheduled for January 25. The final match will then be held on January 27 along with the bronze medal game.

The Asian championship also acts as the continental qualifying tournament for the 2021 World Men's Handball Championship. Each of the competition's four semi-finalists will book their tickets to the worlds, set to take place in Egypt in January of 2021.



Bahrain's Hussain on the attack against the Kiwis

Barty advances in Adelaide after re-run of French Open

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Ashleigh Barty won a rematch of last year's French Open final Thursday as the Australian reached the semi-finals of the ATP-WTA Adelaide International.

The top seed dominated Czech tournament number eight Marketa Vondrousova 6-3, 6-3, to thrill home fans at Memorial Drive in the inaugural edition of the event.

Vondrousova was playing her first tournament in six months after injuring her left wrist.

Barty advanced to a Friday semi against American Danielle Collins, a 6-3, 6-1 winner over Swiss fourth seed Belinda Bencic.

She won the opening set with just one break, but was made to work in the second, saving four



Ashleigh Barty of Australia hits a return against Marketa Vondrousova of the Czech Republic

break points to hold on for 5-3 before putting away the win.

"I feel my game is getting better and better," Barty said.

"I could have been a bit more clinical in my game, but it was good to generate opportunities for myself.

Barty, who also beat Collins

on the way to her Paris trophy is expecting a battle in the semi-final.

"Danielle is an exceptional ball-striker, she can take the match right out of your hands," she said.

"She plays extremely aggressive. I'll need to put on my run-

ning shoes tomorrow."

There was a quarter-final shock for two-time Grand Slam winner Simona Halep, who heads into the Australian Open with room for improvement after being upset 6-4, 6-2 by Aryna Sabalenka.

The reigning Wimbledon champion and former world number one dropped serve five times and was flattened in the second set by her opponent from Belarus.

The 71-minute rout leaves Halep standing 1-1 for the season with the first Grand Slam of the year starting on Monday in Melbourne.

Sabalenka will battle Dayana Yastremska on Friday for a place in the final after the Ukrainian 19-year-old beat a second top 20 opponent this week when she put out Croat Donna Vekic 6-4, 6-3.