

Bahrain boxing's 'Cinderella Story'

Sami Al Adsani on Boxing's Rise in the Kingdom

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Sami Nabeel Al Adsani's call-up to the Bahrain Boxing National Team comes at a moment of growing ambition for the sport in the kingdom. The 25-year-old boxer, with an amateur record of 6-3 (4 KOs), is part of a generation hoping to carry the nation onto the international stage.

In an exclusive sit-down with TDT, Al Adsani reflected on his role in the national setup, the impact of new leadership, and the opportunities emerging for Bahraini fighters.

National Team Breakthrough

"It's fantastic to be part of this team right now," Sami said. "It's full of talented and enthusiastic boxers and will continue to grow in the long term." Though still developing, the national team's direction is clear. With increased structure and investment, Bahrain aims to test itself against stronger competition in the coming years.

"We hope to make a shot at Olympic and world qualification bouts," the boxer said. "There are many obstacles, but the reception so far has been positive, and it will only get better over time."

For Al Adsani, the opportunity is about more than competing internationally. He is focused on building a strong foundation for boxing at home, efforts that now



Boxer Sami Al Adsani at The Daily Tribune headquarters

align with the broader changes taking place at the national level.

Leadership Shift

A major step forward came with the appointment of Irish coach John Conlon at the end of last year, replacing Tony Davis. Conlon brings experience coaching Olympic, World, European, and Commonwealth medalists.

"He's been fantastic to train under, and Bahrain is very lucky to have him," Sami said. "Coach-

es benefit, gyms benefit, and the culture benefits from his mentality and experience."

Al Adsani also credited Bahrain Boxing Federation president Rashid Isa Fleifel for bringing Conlon on board. "It's a huge credit to Mr. Rashid. It shows Bahrain is serious and getting better equipped to rise to that international level and be on par with everybody else."

Earlier this year, Conlon and federation representatives toured gyms across the kingdom to understand local talent and the sport's culture, including the boxer's home gym, Killa Boxing Club. The visits revealed the enthusiasm and potential already present in Bahrain's boxing community.

Athlete Development

Conlon has introduced a 10-year plan focused on developing Bahraini boxers through international exposure and stronger coaching systems.

"It centers on developing Bahraini boxers, and that takes time," Al Adsani explained. "That means bringing them to international camps and hosting international teams here."

The plan also prioritizes



Bahrain Boxing National Team after a training session at Spartan Fitness

strengthening coaching standards across the country. "He's going to have to grind it out," the boxer said. "Develop boxers, get them experience, and build a boxing infrastructure with the coaches in Bahrain."

Sami sees the opportunity as open to anyone willing to commit. "It doesn't really matter your level. If you're enthusiastic and hardworking, you can be part of this journey because boxing is really just kicking off in this part of the world."

He also hopes to mentor younger athletes as the program grows. "The youth team is actually much bigger than the adult team," Al Adsani said. "There's a lot of talent and enthusiasm, and I want to support them to bridge the gap so they can eventually represent Bahrain at a competitive level."

Looking ahead, the boxer believes the current progress could define the sport in Bahrain for years to come. "This is a chance for Bahrain-born boxers to be developed from scratch and reach the international level," he said. "This is just a Cinderella story," Al Adsani reflected. By all accounts, the most exciting chapters are yet to unfold.



Coach Conlon congratulates Al Adsani after Sports Day victory



Bahrain Boxing Federation tours Killa Boxing Club facilities

Chelsea fined £10.75 mn and hit with suspended one-year transfer ban

AFP | London

Chelsea have been fined £10.75 million (\$14.27 million) and received a suspended one-year transfer ban in relation to historical breaches of Premier League rules, it was announced yesterday.

The London club have also been hit with an immediate nine-month academy transfer ban, the Premier League said.

The sanctions relate to information shared with the league by the consortium led by American businessman Todd Boehly following their takeover of Chelsea from Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich in 2022.

The Premier League found that between 2011 and 2018, undisclosed payments by third parties associated with Chelsea were made to players, unregistered agents and others.

However, the league determined that even if the payments had been properly included in historical financial submissions, the club would not have been in breach of the profitability and sustainability rules (PSR).

Officials said that Chelsea's "proactive self-reporting, admissions of breach and exceptional co-operation" were also mitigating circumstances when it came to deciding the severity of the punishments.



Muharraaq take on Al Ahli in a recent clash

Bahrain Basketball League Playoffs Confirmed

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Basketball Association has confirmed the schedule for the 2025-2026 Zain Basketball League (First Division) semi-finals and finals, with all matches to be played at Khalifa Sports City Hall in Isa Town in a best-of-five format.

Top seeded Muharraaq faces fourth placed Al Ahli, while second-placed Manama meets third-placed Al Najma.

The semi-finals begin on Thursday, 26 March, with Manama vs Al Najma at 6 PM, followed by Muharraaq vs Al Ahli at 8 PM. If any series goes the full five games, the semi-finals

could run until 7 April.

All eyes will be on Muharraaq and Manama, who meet just days earlier in the Khalifa bin Salman Cup final on 23 March, also at Khalifa Sports City.

Both teams have proven their league credentials, and the cup final could offer a glimpse of the rivalry that may carry into the league finals. Meanwhile, Al Najma will aim to challenge Manama and stake their claim as title contenders.

The league finals are set to begin on 5 April if a semi-final series is decided in three games, or 8 April if extended to four.

Chairman & Managing Director **P Unnikrishnan** | Editor-in-Chief **Mahmood Al Mahmood**

Advertisement: Update Media W.L.L | Tel: 38444692, Email: sales@newsfobahrain.com | Newsroom: Tel: 36458345, Email: mail@newsfobahrain.com
Subscription & circulation: Tel: 36458394 | Email: subscribe@newsfobahrain.com | Website: www.newsfobahrain.com | Printed and published by Al Ayam Publishing