

Bahrain Beat Thailand to Launch Nations Cup Bid

Hosts make strong start with 3-1 win in Riffa opener, Indonesia Next

Bahrain's men's national volleyball team opened their 2025 AVC Men's Volleyball Nations Cup campaign with a comfortable 3-1 win over Thailand last night at Isa Bin Rashid Arena in Riffa. Backed by a vocal home crowd, the hosts now take early control of Group A.

Key Performers Step Up

Ali Ebrahim led the scoring for Bahrain with composed attacking displays and strong serves, while Anan and Mohammed Yaqoob added vital experience and consistency in key phases. Mahmood Alafyah and Ayman Harwana also made significant contributions, both in defence and transition, helping Bahrain regain momentum after drop-

Set scores:

25-21 Bahrain
21-25 Thailand
25-19 Bahrain
25-22 Bahrain



Bahraini players celebrating the win at full time

ping the second set. The result gives Bahrain a major boost heading into their next group fixture against Indonesia, who they face at 7pm tomorrow night.

Home Crowd Makes a Difference

With fans filling the stands and generating a lively atmosphere,

Bahrain's players fed off the energy throughout the match. The support mirrored scenes from last year's Arab Championship and proved crucial during tight moments, particularly in the fourth set.

The top two teams from each group will advance to the knockout rounds. Victory over

Thailand, a former Nations Cup champion, puts Bahrain in a strong position to qualify—especially with only Indonesia left to face in pool play.

The eventual tournament winner will also earn a place in the 2026 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship, the next step on the road to the 2028 Olympics.

Bahrain face Spaniards in Junior Handball World Championship opener

TD | Manama

The 25th IHF Men's Junior World Championship begins today in Poland, and for Bahrain, the stakes couldn't be higher. Placed in Group H alongside tournament heavyweights Spain and Egypt, as well as Gulf rivals Saudi Arabia, the national U21 side are aiming to reach the main round of the tournament for the first time in their history.

It's a tall order. Only the top two teams from each group will advance, and Bahrain's path starts with a daunting opener against Spain in Kielce, followed by Egypt on June 19 and Saudi Arabia on June 21. Every point matters, and there's little margin for error.

The Competition

Bahrain begin their campaign against one of the most consistent junior teams in handball. Spain are past champions (2017) and five-time silver medallists. The Spaniards hold a highly structured system with quick ball circulation, and they enter the group as clear favourites.

For Bahrain, slowing the tempo and staying composed will be critical if they're to stay competitive.

The second test vs Egypt on Thursday is also a tough task. The reigning African champions bring a direct, physical style of play that has caused problems for European sides in recent years. Winners in 1993 and



Bahrain's handball team making the final preparations in Poland ahead of today's opener

bronze medallists in 1999 and 2019, Egypt often overwhelms teams who fail to match their intensity.

Their 13th continental title in 2022, showed they're still a force at junior level, and they'll be eyeing a top-two finish in the group just as much as Spain.

If Bahrain are to break new ground, their final group game against Saudi Arabia may

well be the key. While not as decorated as their other opponents, Saudi Arabia qualified through the 2024 Asian Championship and have a long history of close matches with Bahrain.

One such encounter came in the 2018 Asian Junior Championship, where Bahrain won 29-28. Another close match is expected in Kielce — and this



Team during a discussion

Bahrain's squad:

Elyas Mohamed (Al Ittihad)	Mahmood Jaleel
Ahmed Al Fardan	Sayed Hussain Fadhel (Barbar)
Ali Redha (Al Tadhamun)	Sayed Mahmood Al-Falahi
Hussain Shouqi (Al Dair)	Sayed Mohammed Al-Falahi
Abdullah Sameer	Mohammed Shamlouh (Tubli)
Maitham Ahmed	Mohammed Maitham, Ali Al Madani (Al Ittifaq)
Mohammed Ayad	Abbas Hussain (Samahij)
Salman Al Shoyoukh	

time, a main round berth may hang in the balance.

Backing the Next Generation

Coach Ali Al Falahi has brought a focus on organisation and patience in attack, building a squad that doesn't shy away

from physical contests. Players like Ali Redha, Abbas Hussain and Mohammed Ayyad will be key in Group H.

The federation, under president Ali Issa, has backed this development with visible support, including domestic train-

ing camps and more preparation leading into Poland.

A Chance at History

Realistically, Bahrain are underdogs in this group. Both Spain and Egypt have proven quality at this level, and Saudi Arabia's familiarity adds more pressure. But there is a belief that if they can remain composed and clinical, especially in the final third, this could be the year Bahrain makes it to the main round.

No team can afford to slip up in Group H. For Bahrain, it's a chance to rewrite their place on the world stage, but it will take three disciplined performances to make that happen.