

Youth handball team gear up for Asian challenge

Hussain Almaskati
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Bahrain are set to depart for Amman, Jordan, this evening ahead of the 11th AHF Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship, which gets underway on Thursday.

The kingdom's U19 men are one of 10 teams competing in the continental tournament, which runs until August 31 and also serves as a qualifier for the 12th IHF Men's Youth Handball World Championship.

The top four finishers in Amman will book their places at the worlds, scheduled to take place from July 29 to August 9 next year.

Bahrain have been drawn in a challenging Group A alongside South Korea, hosts Jordan, India and Uzbekistan, while Group B features Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Syria.

The Bahrainis open their campaign against India on Thursday before facing Jordan the following day.

They then take on Uzbekistan on August 23 before concluding their preliminary-round programme against South Korea on August 26.

Bahrain will travel with a final



Action from training

16-player squad under Egyptian head coach Mohamed Abdulrahman, who is assisted by Akbar Al Marzooq.

The squad comprises Ali Mahdi Mahroos, Ali Abdulilah Ali, Wadee Ali Hilal, Ahmed Abdulla Isa, Mahdi Jaffar Ali, Sayed Majeed Al Muhafdha, Hassan Saif, Hussain Qasim Abadi, Sayed Omran Al Muhaf-

dha, Ali Adel, Sayed Mahmood Shubber, Jaffar Al Zain, Mohammed Fathi Al Marzooq, Sayed Ali Bashar, Mahmood Ali and Isa Al Baboor.

National teams director Ismail Baqer will also be part of the delegation, along with technical analyst Ali Hameed, goal-keeping coach Makram Al Misawi, physiotherapist Kareem

Hassan and team administrator Mohammed Al Showaikh.

Bahrain have stepped up their preparations in recent weeks, with their build-up including local training and an overseas camp in Kuwait.

The squad also recently played a local friendly at the Bahrain Handball Association arena in Umm Al Hassam as the coaching staff assessed the players' technical and physical readiness ahead of the trip to Jordan.

This year's championship was initially due to feature 12 teams, but the withdrawals of defending champions Japan and Chinese Taipei prompted the Asian Handball Federation to conduct a new draw last week.

Bahrain will be making their 10th appearance in the continental youth championship and boast an impressive record in the competition.

They were crowned Asian champions in successive editions in 2016 and 2018, while also claiming bronze in 2010.

The Bahrainis have finished inside the top five in each of their other six appearances and will be aiming to maintain that record while securing another appearance on the world stage.

Bahrain women compete in Saudi tennis event



The Women's Committee representatives in Al Khobar

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Bahrain Tennis Federation's Women's Committee continued its push to provide players with greater competitive exposure by taking part in the Strategy Academy Women's Doubles Tournament in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia.

The event, played under the Universal Tennis Rating (UTR) system, featured 22 players of various nationalities and competitive levels, with matches held in a round-robin format.

Representing Bahrain were Jameela Al Nashaba and Gharam Isa, Madina Malallah and Alaa Al Aradi, Dina Al Refaei and Rudaina Al Alawi, as well as Samar Khalid and Doaa Al Dehaim.

Al Nashaba, a Bahrain Tennis Federation board member and chairwoman of the Women's Committee, partnered Isa in one of the Bahraini contingent's strongest performances.

enjoyed success of their own, defeating Saudi pair Noura Al Dosari and Noor Al Bas-sam 6-3.

Al Nashaba said competing in tournaments of this nature formed part of the committee's efforts to complement its training programmes with more competitive match experience.

She added that facing players from different countries and playing backgrounds would help the Bahrainis develop technically and tactically while becoming better equipped to deal with different match situations.

Al Nashaba also highlighted the support provided by Bahrain Tennis Federation president Shaikh Abdulaziz bin Mubarak Al Khalifa towards increasing opportunities for the kingdom's female players to compete abroad.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Al Nashaba joined organisers from Strategy Academy in presenting medals to the leading players.

The participation follows the Women's Committee's recent training camp in Istanbul, Turkey, which formed part of its programme to raise playing standards and provide greater international exposure.

The committee plans to continue entering UTR-based competitions, with the rating system allowing players to face opponents of comparable ability and gain further competitive experience.

The initiative forms part of wider efforts to develop women's tennis in Bahrain and increase participation in the sport.

U13 Boys crowned West Asian champions



Bahrain's U13 boys were crowned West Asian team champions after edging Iraq 3-2 in a thrilling final. They had topped their preliminary group with wins over Saudi Arabia (3-1) and the UAE (3-0) before beating Qatar 3-1 in the semi-finals. Bahrain's U19 girls also claimed bronze, adding to a strong medal haul that has already included golds for the senior team, U11 boys and U13 girls, as well as silver for the U15 boys

Muharraq, Khaldiya await Asian draw

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Bahrain clubs Muharraq and Al Khaldiya will learn their opponents in the AFC Champions League Two 2026-27 when the draw takes place today in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The draw is scheduled for 2pm at the Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, with the two clubs set to carry the kingdom's challenge in Asia's second-tier continental competition.

Reigning Nasser bin Hamad Premier League champions Muharraq qualified after retaining the domestic title last season, while runners-up Al Khaldiya will also compete in the tournament.

Muharraq have been placed in Pot Three for the draw, with Al Khaldiya in Pot Four.

Both clubs will head into the new campaign under new management. Croatian coach Goran Tomic has succeeded Tunisian



Muharraq in action during their pre-season camp

tactician Lassaad Chabbi at Al Khaldiya, while Bahraini coach Isa Al Saadoun has replaced Portuguese manager Fernando Manuel de Jesus Santos at Muharraq.

The two sides have also spent part of their pre-season preparations in Turkey, playing a se-

ries of friendlies ahead of their domestic and continental commitments.

Muharraq began their friendly programme with a 2-1 defeat to UAE side Fujairah before suffering successive 1-0 losses to Egypt's ZED FC and Algerian outfit ES Sétif.



Al Khaldiya players put through their paces in training

They concluded their Turkey camp with a 1-1 draw against Qatar's Muaither Sports Club.

The Red Wolves also suffered an injury setback during their preparations, with Elliot Simões picking up a knock in pre-season.

Al Khaldiya, meanwhile,

opened their friendly programme with a 1-1 draw against Fujairah before losing 2-1 to Kuwait's Kazma.

Tomic's side then played out a 2-2 draw with another Kuwaiti club, Al Salmiya, before taking on Qadsia in their final friendly yesterday.

Both clubs will be hoping for improved continental campaigns after failing to progress beyond the group stage last season.

Al Khaldiya finished third in Group B with six points from one win, three draws and two defeats, while Muharraq also placed third in their group, collecting seven points from two victories, one draw and three losses.

Muharraq nevertheless boast a proud record in Asian competition, having twice lifted the continental trophy, in 2008 and 2021.

The group stage of this season's AFC Champions League Two is scheduled to run from September 15 to December 9.

The competition will resume with the round of 16 from February 9 to 18 next year, followed by the quarter-finals from March 2 to 18 and the semi-finals from April 6 to 14.

The final is scheduled for May 15, 2027.