

Bahrain step up preparations for Gulf basketball

● 13 players are preparing for the competition under Russo

● Scheduled to leave for Kuwait City on Thursday

● Bahrain will be opening their campaign against the Emiratis on November 23

TDT | Manama

Bahrain have stepped up preparations for the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) Men's National Team Championship 2019 scheduled to take place from November 23 to December 1 in Kuwait City. The nationals are currently training for the competition at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hassam. They have just returned from an overseas camp in Serbia,



Bahrain players listen to instructions during their practices at Zain Arena. Inset, Ahmed Salman is guarded by Hesham Sarhan during scrimmages

supervised by Bahrain's recently signed Serbian head coach Darko Russo.

Russo is in the early weeks of his stint at the helm of the squad after taking over for Spanish coach Josep "Pep" Claros,

who had suddenly resigned from his post.

Russo is a highly regarded veteran tactician who has been coaching for over 20 years. He had led the then-Yugoslavia national team to the bronze



medals of the 1999 Fiba European Championship with a team that included popular former NBA players Vlade Divac and Peja Stojakovic.

There is currently a roster of 13 players preparing for the competition under Russo. They include Bader Abdulla Malabes, Mohammed Buallay and Ali Shukrallah from national champions Muharraq; Ahmed Aziz, Ahmed Najaf, Ahmed Salman, Mustafa Hussain, Muzamil Ameer and Mohammed Ameer from Manama; Subah Hussain from Riffa; Hesham Sarhan and Mohammed Qurban from Ahli; and naturalised big man C.J. Giles.

Bahrain Basketball Association president Talal Kanoo visited the team's practice session and followed up on their preparations. He expressed his confidence in the players and their abilities and wished them the very best for the tournament. The squad is scheduled to

leave for Kuwait City on Thursday.

Five teams are competing in the event, including Bahrain, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and hosts Kuwait.

Bahrain will be opening their campaign against the Emiratis on November 23. It is scheduled for a 5 pm tip-off. Saudi then face Kuwait in the evening's other game at 7 pm.

Following this, Bahrain face-off with Qatar on November 24 before having a rest the next two days. They then get back on the hardwood against Saudi on November 27 before facing the host Kuwaitis on November 28 in their final preliminary round assignment.

After the single round-robin, one team will be eliminated while the top four move on to the knockout semi-finals. In the final four, scheduled for November 30, the top-ranked squad take on the fourth seeds, while team number two battle team number three.

Kingdom's national team gear up for stern Iraq test



Coach Sousa kicks the ball during the national team's training

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's senior men's national football team continued their training yesterday for their upcoming joint-qualifier against Iraq tomorrow for the FIFA World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

The sessions were conducted at a local stadium, supervised by head coach Helio Sousa.

They are scheduled to move their practices today to the match venue at Amman International Stadium, where they will be holding two sessions.

Also today, the match commissioner's meeting will be held, after which coach Sousa's pre-match Press conference will take place. Tomorrow's qualifier



Bahrain players during scrimmages

is scheduled for a 5 pm kick-off, Bahrain time.

It will be the national team's fifth match. Iraq are currently

in solo first place in the Group C standings where they now have 10 points from their four games, two points ahead of Bahrain.

Iran are third with six points, followed by Hong Kong with two and Cambodia with one point.

The Bahrainis are in the Jordanian capital with a 23-player squad that includes Jassim Al-Shaikh, Mahdi Humaidan, Hamad Aldossari, Ahmed Bugammar, Mohammed Abdulwahab, Abdulwahab Almalood, Rashed Alhooti, Sayed Mohammed Jaffar, Waleed Alhayam, Mohammed Al Hardan, Ismael Abdullatif, Ali Madan, Sayed Shubbar Alawi, Sayed Redha Isa, Sayed Mahdi Baqer, Ali Haran, Komail Alaswad, Abdulla Alhazza, Mohammed Alromaihi, Ahmed Nabeel, Mohammed Adel, Sayed Dhiya Saeed and Abdulla Yusuf.

Afghanistan clinch T20 series win over Windies

Lucknow | India

Teenage opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz hit an attacking half-century to set up Afghanistan's 29-run series-clinching win over West Indies in the third Twenty20 international yesterday.

Gurbaz hit 79 off 52 balls as Afghanistan posted 156 for eight, a total their bowlers defended by restricting the West Indies to 127-7 in Lucknow.

They won the series 2-1 after losing the opening game and being swept in the preceding ODIs 3-0.

BAS bringing 'Girl Power' to the racetrack

TDT | Manama

The all-female squad of the Bahrain Airport Services (BAS) racing team is bringing "Girl Power" in a big way to the motorsport-loving community of Bahrain.

The diverse quintet is made up of BAS staff and students from the BAS Aircraft Engineering Training Centre (BAETC), all of whom have only been racing for a couple of months.

However, they are already making waves at the highest level of local competition and are showing vast improvement every time they take to the track.

The team recently proved they can "hang with the boys" during a highly competitive second round in the 2019/2020 Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship at Bahrain International Karting Circuit in Sakhir.

They took on the gruelling six-hour challenge head-on and finished just 22 laps behind the overall winners.

"I am proud of myself that I am here and doing this for the first time in my life," said Fatima Zainudeen.

"We got all the support from BAS experienced drivers. They taught us the rules, how to drive

and everything we need to know.

"It was great to do this and we cannot wait to take part again."

Aircraft Engineer Marwa Mandeel shared Fatima's sentiments. "We are an all-female team. There are not a lot of girls in my field of work, which is the same as in karting. It is nice to have female competitors," she said.

"I am looking forward to doing it again and I want to race for even more laps."

Thanks to their time in the kart, the team members say they have built a high level of self-confidence which they can take with them in everything they do both on and off the racetrack.

"We have to encourage women to come and do this; it is nice," said Fatima. "It will give you confidence; you will believe in yourself. You don't have to go and race right away, but at least you have to come and try it and see what it is like."

Young BAETC

students, Jeiel Macaraan, Christina Anieliesia and Alanoud Allawi, are now enjoying the karting experience after dealing with some early nerves.

"This is my second endurance race now and when I first started I felt it was really scary," said Jeiel.

"One of the things I least like to do is drive, but BAS allowed us to try and I'm so glad we did it."

"To race in an environment like this and learn new things is enjoyable."

Christina added: "This is my first race and in my opening two laps and I felt a bit scared. But, I got to relax after that and began to enjoy it. This is something anybody can do and it makes us proud to be here. It is a

big privilege BAS gave us."

No matter how they place on the final classification or regardless of their lap times, it is certain that the impact this team is making is of great significance. It is not only good for the company culture but it has also boosted the staff confidence. They are pioneers in Bahraini motorsport and are paving the way for others to follow in their footsteps.

"As a woman, it is great to be a part of this kind of sport," said Maryam Qassimi, who was not a part of the all-female team, but raced as part of the BAS B squad with four other male drivers.

"It is great for BAS to support an initiative such as this for us women. It takes confidence to race. I am sure that we can improve even more in the future and maybe even beat the guys one day!"

Jeiel added: "At first I didn't know it was such a huge thing. I was here just for fun. Now I realise it is a significant thing we are doing and I hope to be able to enjoy it for a long time."



Ladies team In action