

# Bahrain hit a wall in Chinese Taipei

Hosts hand Bahrain first loss with a 93-50 blowout at Xinzhuang Gymnasium

● Chinese Taipei end Bahrain's unbeaten run

● Devon Chism led Bahrain with 13 points and 9 rebounds

● Bahrain face defending champions today

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

For six games, Bahrain rode a wave of momentum, dispatching every opponent in their path with an ease that belied their 47-year absence from the William Jones Cup. But yesterday night in New Taipei City, the home team had other plans.

Chinese Taipei delivered a masterclass in execution, ending Bahrain's unbeaten run with a resounding 93-50 win — a statement performance that showed exactly why they were considered Bahrain's toughest challenge heading into the tournament.

## Early Blitz Breaks the Game Open

From the opening tip, Taipei were locked in. They raced out to a 31-18 first-quarter lead, then tightened the screws with a 29-12 second quarter. By halftime, it was 60-30, and Bahrain never



Mustafa Rashed frustrated after the loss

got close again. Where Chinese Taipei moved the ball crisply and shot with confidence, Bahrain were static, hesitant, and out of sync.

## Shooting Slump Sinks Bahrain

Chinese Taipei shot a red-hot 45.9% from three (17 made), while Bahrain managed just 31.3% from the field and 9-of-38 from deep. The usually reliable outside shooting that had powered Bahrain's earlier wins



Mohamed Hamoda eyes the basket

disappeared under pressure.

Turnovers (17 in total) and poor ball movement limited scoring chances. Only Devon Chism found any real rhythm, finishing with 13 points and 9 rebounds on 5-of-9 shooting.

Ali Rashed added 9 points and 6 boards, and Mohamed Buallay chipped in 7. But Bahrain's offense never truly fired.

## Chinese Depth Stands Out

Taipei, meanwhile, showed

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Up until this game, Bahrain were undefeated with a 6-0 record

their full offensive arsenal. He Dan led all scorers with 19 points, knocking down five threes on six attempts, while Chen Ying-Chun added 14 points and 5 assists in a brilliant performance.

Taipei dominated on the boards, outrebounding Bahrain 52-35, including 15 offensive rebounds, and finished with 22 assists as they ran Bahrain's defense ragged.

## Defending Champions Await

The loss drops Bahrain to 6-1, but there's no time to dwell. They return to the court at 10 AM today against Philippines' Strong Group Athletics, the defending champions and another powerhouse in this year's field. This will be Bahrain's final match of the tournament. Strong Group are coming off an amazing 106-98 win over Malaysia, which is the highest-scoring game of the tournament so far.

It's a tough turnaround, both mentally and physically, but also a chance to show they can bounce back.

## Henry, Conway take New Zealand to easy T20 win over Zimbabwe

AFP | Harare

Matt Henry took three wickets and Devon Conway hit an unbeaten half-century as New Zealand outclassed hosts Zimbabwe by eight wickets in their tri-series match at Harare Sports Club yesterday.

Zimbabwe made a promising start but could only score 120-7 after being sent in. Fast bowler Henry took 3-26.

New Zealand needed only 13.5 overs to secure the win, with left-handed opening batsman Conway making 59 not out off 40 balls.

New Zealand's fast bowlers, led by Henry, made good use of



New Zealand's Devon Conway and Rachin Ravindra run between the wickets

short-pitched deliveries while left-arm spinners Mitchell Santner and Rachin Ravindra gained bounce and turn from a dry pitch.

Wessly Madhevere and Brian Bennett put on 37 for the first wicket before Bennett (21) top-edged a short ball from Henry to square leg in the sixth over.

Madhevere took 11 runs off Henry's first over but struggled for fluency in making 36 runs off 32 balls, while none of the batsmen were able to master New Zealand's spin bowlers.

"They came out quite aggressive in the power play but we adapted well with the ball," said New Zealand captain Santner.

## Pogacar extends Tour de France lead with uphill time-trial win



XRG team's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey cycles to the finish line

AFP | Peyragudes

Tadej Pogacar won a time trial on stage 13 of the Tour de France yesterday to extend his lead at the top of the overall standings to four minutes and seven seconds.

Jonas Vingegaard and Remco Evenepoel kept their places in the overall top three, but this 10.9km time-trial triumph was defending champion Pogacar's second crushing win in two days.

Pogacar was last down the start ramp of the 171 riders setting off from the bottom of the Peyragudes mountain.

Decked out in his over-

all leader's yellow kit, the 26-year-old Team UAE rider was faster from the off despite his exertions from the previous day, when he finished over two minutes ahead of main rival Vingegaard.

By the time he finished at the Peyragudes Altiport where the opening scene of the James Bond movie "Tomorrow Never Dies" was shot, Pogacar was 36sec faster than Vingegaard, while Primož Roglič was third at 1min 20sec.

Riders warmed up for the time trial wearing ice jackets to combat the sizzling 30C temperature at the foot of the climb.

## Liverpool line up swoop for Frankfurt striker Ekitike: reports

AFP | London

Liverpool are preparing to launch a bid for Eintracht Frankfurt striker Hugo Ekitike after missing out on Newcastle's Alexander Isak, according to reports yesterday.

The Premier League champions have switched their focus to Ekitike following Newcastle's refusal to sell Sweden striker Isak, who is valued at around £150 million (\$201 million) by the Magpies.

The Reds are trying to complete a deal for France interna-

tional Ekitike by this weekend after he reportedly indicated he was willing to move to Anfield.

Liverpool are set to offer over £70 million (\$94 million) for Ekitike, who has also attracted interest from Newcastle and Manchester United.

The 23-year-old scored 22 goals in all competitions for Frankfurt last season after joining the Bundesliga club from Paris Saint-Germain.

Liverpool have an opening in their forward line after Diogo Jota's recent death in a car crash in Spain.



Hugo Ekitike in action during a match (file photo)

The Reds are also believed to be willing to sell Uruguay striker Darwin Nunez, while

Colombia forward Luis Diaz has been the target of a rejected bid from Bayern Munich.

Liverpool have already splashed out £116 million on Germany playmaker Florian Wirtz, as well as signing defenders Jeremie Frimpong and Milos Kerkez from Bayer Leverkusen and Bournemouth respectively.

Georgia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili has also linked up with Arne Slot's side since the end of last season after agreeing his move from Valencia in 2024.