

Bahrain Strike Double Gold in Handball and Volleyball

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Bahrain enjoyed a sensational seventh day at the GCC Games in Doha yesterday, with gold medal victories in handball and volleyball leading the way, as the Kingdom continued to strengthen its position in the overall standings. There were also further podium finishes in shooting, where Bahrain added two silver medals and three bronze medals at the Lusail Shooting Range, alongside participation in padel at the Aspire Dome.

The standout performance came in the men's handball competition, where Bahrain defeated hosts and long-time rivals Qatar 24-19 at the Aspire Women's Sports Hall to secure gold. Coached by Sweden's Robert Hedin, Bahrain produced a disciplined performance to claim their second GCC Games handball gold, following their previous title on home soil in 2011. They have also earned silver medals in 2015 and 2022.

Qatar made the brighter start and opened the scoring, but Bahrain quickly responded when Jassim Khamis levelled from the wing. Ahmed Khadem then gave Bahrain a 4-3 lead on the break, before captain Hussain Al Sayyad took increasing control of the contest. His long-range strike made it 6-4, and he added another from the left



Bahrain national volleyball team display gold medals

Medal Standings					
Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Qatar	43	44	32	119
2	Saudi Arabia	26	20	19	65
3	Bahrain	24	22	15	61
4	Kuwait	11	16	24	51
5	Oman	10	4	15	29
6	United Arab Emirates	8	13	25	46

wing as Bahrain moved 11-8 ahead, eventually taking a 13-10 lead into half-time.

After the restart, Bahrain maintained their intensity. Al Sayyad continued to dictate play, extending the lead to 15-11 despite Bahrain being reduced to a

Captain Hussain Al Sayyad flexes confidently during Bahrain-Qatar match

man down. He struck again to make it 20-15, and Bahrain stayed firmly in control to close out a 24-19 victory. The result added to Bahrain's recent success after defeating the same opponents to win the Asian championship earlier this year, and it also strengthens their momentum ahead of next year's World Championship campaign. In the dressing room after the

match, Bahrain Handball Federation President Ali Mohamed Isa Eshaqi told the players: "You have delivered a performance worthy of gold, and nothing less reflects the standard of this team." Captain Hussain Al Sayyad said: "I am proud to play with you guys." Goalkeeper Mohammed Abulhussain added: "It is not easy to win gold in consecutive tournaments, but we have done it."

Bahrain national football team goalkeeper Ebrahim Lutfalla was also present in support as the national side prepares to face the UAE in their final match tomorrow, having already secured their tournament objectives.

In volleyball, Bahrain's men's national team secured gold with a straight-sets victory over Qatar at Duhail Sports Hall, winning 25-21, 27-25, 25-23. The result marked a strong start for Mon-

tenegrin head coach Ivan Joksimovic in his first tournament in charge, continuing the momentum established under former coach Arnaud Josseland.

In shooting at the Lusail Shooting Range, Bahrain finished with five medals in total, comprising two silver and three bronze. Mohamed Zaman won silver in the men's 10m air pistol final with a score of 229.7, while the Bahrain women's 10m air pistol team also secured silver. The bronze medals were claimed by Marwa Buarki in the women's trap final with 102, the women's trap team with a score of 298 in the 75 targets event, and Aysha Albraiki in the women's 10m air pistol final with 209.2.

The Kingdom's representatives will now look to build on its impressive medal haul as the Games continue in Doha until May 22.

Bahrain targets handball world championship breakthrough

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The Bahraini national handball team has been placed in Pot 3 for the draw of the 2027 IHF Men's Handball World Championship, with the official ceremony scheduled for June 10 in Munich, Germany, where the team will learn its preliminary round opponents.

Bahrain joins Greece, Poland, Brazil, Tunisia, Cape Verde, Chile, and the United States in Pot 3, meaning it cannot be drawn against any of these nations in the opening group stage.

The team secured its place at the World Championship after winning the 22nd Asian Men's Handball Championship in Kuwait in January, defeating Qatar 29-25 in the final after extra time.

The victory marked a historic continental breakthrough, as it was Bahrain's first-ever Asian title, highlighting the



Bahrain's national men's handball team celebrates its landmark Asian title triumph

nation's rising status in Asian handball.

Under International Handball Federation regulations, the draw will feature four seeding pots, with the preliminary round consisting of eight groups of four teams each.

The top three teams from each group will advance to the main round, ensuring continued contention beyond the opening phase.

The teams that do not reach the knockout stage (quarter-finals) will enter the President's Cup, a classification competition used to determine final rankings.

The tournament will run from January 13 to January 31, 2027, with a format designed to protect player welfare, guaranteeing each team at least one rest day between matches in the preliminary stage so no side plays on consecutive days.

After the preliminary phase, the main

round and President's Cup will begin immediately.

Cologne will host the closing stages, including the semi-finals, placement matches from fifth to eighth, the third-place play-off, and the final.

Preliminary round matches will be staged in Munich, Magdeburg, Kiel, and Stuttgart, while the main round will take place in Cologne and Hanover. Magdeburg will host the President's Cup fixtures, and the knockout phase from the quarter-finals onward will be played at the Lanxess Arena in Cologne.

The draw in Munich on June 10 will therefore play a decisive role in shaping Bahrain's path at the global tournament.

The squad, coached by Swedish coach Robert Hedin, will aim to build on its recent continental success as it prepares for the challenge on the world stage.