

Play-offs kick off tonight

TDT | Manama

The fight for places in next season's Nasser bin Hamad Premier League begins tonight, as four teams enter the promotion and relegation play-offs with two top-flight spots on the line.

Premier League sides Al Najma and Budaiya are aiming to retain their status after narrowly avoiding relegation, finishing level on 22 points, with Budaiya ahead on head-to-head following a 1-1 draw in the first meeting and a 2-1 victory in the return fixture. From the First Division, Al Ittihad (46 points) and Manama (44 points) come into the play-offs after falling just short of automatic promotion despite strong campaigns.

The opening round gets underway tonight, with Budaiya facing Manama at Bahrain National Stadium, while Al Najma take on Al Ittihad at Al Ahli Club Stadium. Both matches kick off at 7pm, with early momentum expected to be crucial in the short round-robin format.

The second round follows on Monday, May 25, when Budaiya meet Al Najma at Bahrain National Stadium and Manama face Al Ittihad at Al Ahli Club Stadium. With only a limited number of matches to determine outcomes, every point carries significant weight.

The play-offs conclude on



Manama Club celebrate following their final Bahrain First Division match

May 30, when Al Ittihad meet Budaiya at Al Ahli Club Stadium and Al Najma face Manama at Bahrain National Stadium; both fixtures are again scheduled for 7pm.

At the end of the mini-league, the top two teams will secure places in next season's Nasser bin Hamad Premier League, while the remaining two will compete in the First Division.

2025-26 Promotion & Relegation Play-Offs (All Matches 7PM)

Date	Fixture	Venue
Tonight	Budaiya vs Manama	Bahrain National Stadium
Tonight	Al Najma vs Al Ittihad	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 25	Budaiya vs Al Najma	Bahrain National Stadium
May 25	Manama vs Al Ittihad	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 30	Al Ittihad vs Budaiya	Al Ahli Club Stadium
May 30	Al Najma vs Manama	Bahrain National Stadium

Bahrain confirm Gulf Cup schedule

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain national football team have been drawn into Group B at the 27th Arabian Gulf Cup following Tuesday's official draw in Jeddah, which placed them alongside Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

The draw, conducted under the supervision of the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation, brought together representatives from all eight participating nations, as well as several former Gulf football stars. The tournament will be hosted in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, running from September 23 to October 6.

Bahrain's group stage schedule is now confirmed, with all matches set to be played at the Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium. They begin their campaign against Qatar on September 24 at 9 PM, before facing the UAE on September 27 at 9 PM. Their final group match comes against Yemen on September 30 at 8:30 PM.

Across the competition, teams will compete in a single round-robin group stage, with the top two from each group advancing to the semi-finals. Group A consists of hosts Saudi Arabia, along with Kuwait, Oman, and Iraq. The semi-finals will see the Group A winner face the Group B runner-up, while the Group B winner meets the Group A runner-up, with the victors progressing to the final.



Bahrain Fixture List

(All matches at Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium)

Match	Date	Time	Opponent
1	Sep 24	9pm	Qatar
2	Sep 27	9pm	UAE
3	Sep 30	8:30pm	Yemen

Bahrain enter the tournament as defending champions, having beaten Oman 2-1 in the previous final in Kuwait to claim their second Gulf Cup title, following their maiden triumph in 2019.

This year's edition, also known as "Khalleeji 27", marks the fifth time Saudi Arabia has hosted the competition, having previously staged it in 1972, 1988, 2002, and 2014, and the fifth edition organised under the Arab Gulf Cup Football Federation.

First held in 1970, when Bahrain hosted the inaugural tournament, the Arabian Gulf Cup remains one of the region's most prestigious football competitions. Kuwait lead the all-time honours with 10 titles, followed by Iraq with four.

Arsenal players in dawn celebrations after winning Premier League

AFP | London

Arsenal players were pictured celebrating with fans at 5:00 am at Emirates Stadium yesterday after they clinched the Premier League title for the first time in 22 years.

Declan Rice, Bukayo Saka and Jurrien Timber were pictured in the early hours in an Instagram post by their teammate Eberechi Eze.

Thousands of fans had gathered outside the stadium while Manchester City, needing a win to keep the title race alive, played at Bournemouth.

The crowd grew as Bournemouth took the lead and although City equalised in injury time, the draw meant the title was heading to North London.

Some supporters marked the occasion by lighting fireworks and flares.

The players held a party at their London Colney training ground with coach Mikel Arteta and then took the celebrations to the Emirates Stadium.

Many of the players said the title win was especially sweet as they had finished runners-up for the past three seasons.

Saka said Arsenal's critics were "not laughing at us anymore".

"Let me tell you something. Twenty-two years, 22 years. there was laughing, there was joking, they're not laughing anymore," the England international added.

In another video posted by Saka, 19-year-old defender Myles Lewis-Skelly is brandishing a champagne bottle.

"They called us bottlers," said Lewis-Skelly, who has come



Arsenal fans celebrate their team winning the English Premier League, outside the Emirates Stadium in London



Arteta once compared rebuilding Arsenal to navigating north London traffic, constantly changing routes to eventually reach the destination

through the club's academy. "And now we're holding the bottle."

Arsenal fans thronged around the stadium, hanging out of car windows and waving flags.

George Owusu-Afriyie, a 32-year-old supporter, said: "It doesn't feel real. It feels like I'm going to wake up tomorrow and be like, yeah, it was a dream, but we did it. We actually did it. Wow. It's going to be the best summer ever."

Julia Szumilas, 20, described how people had streamed towards the stadium after Manchester City fell short.

"Everyone was running from all the pubs. We started running down to here. (Taking) bikes, running, driving their cars down... It was insane."

Arsene Wenger, the French coach who was in charge when Arsenal won their last title in 2004, addressed the players in a video on the club's social media channels.

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English titles have been won by Arsenal throughout their history following this long-awaited championship success

"You did it! Champions go on when others stop. This is your time. Now, go on and enjoy every moment," Wenger said.

Ian Wright, the striker who scored 185 times for Arsenal and was a member of the side that clinched the domestic double in 1998, was mobbed by fans as he celebrated outside the

Maddison 'embarrassed' by Spurs' survival struggles



Tottenham midfielder James Maddison reacts during a match (file photo)

AFP | London

James Maddison accepts it is "a little bit embarrassing" for Tottenham Hotspur to be involved in a final-day battle to avoid relegation from the Premier League.

Spurs, one of English football's traditional 'Big Six' clubs, missed the chance to make sure of their top-flight status in a 2-1 defeat at London rivals Chelsea on Tuesday.

A point would have almost certainly sent West Ham down given Tottenham's superior goal difference, but the fight to stay up will now continue on to Sunday's final day of the season, when a win, or most likely even a draw, at home to Everton would guarantee Spurs' safety.

Maddison, who played the final 21 minutes at Stamford Bridge in only his second appearance since a return from

a knee injury, is well aware of what is at stake for Spurs in their quest to remain a Premier League club.

"It's non-negotiable," the Tottenham midfielder told Sky Sports. "We have to (get over the line) for this club.

"We've got to give everything for this club, for the badge and for our fans. It is unacceptable and a little bit embarrassing that we're in this position as Tottenham Hotspur but it's the reality, unfortunately, and it's up to us to get out of it."

- 'Big day' -
The 29-year-old England international added: "Sunday is going to be a big day. We're going to need everyone, we're going to need our fans, who were absolutely unbelievable (against Chelsea) by the way... We need to repay them with a good performance and some points on Sunday to secure Premier League survival."