

Bahrain taste defeat but advance

● Bahrain defeated by China but advance to the second round in FIVB U21 Worlds

TDI | Manama

Bahrain lost to China 1-3 (19-25, 25-23, 18-25, 15-25) yesterday night as the first round of the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship 2019 wrapped up at Shaikh Isa Sports City in Riffa.

The result put Bahrain in second place in Pool A behind the top-ranked Chinese, as both teams advanced to the tournament's second stage.

Joining them marching forward were Argentina and Korea from Pool B, Russia and Iran from Pool C, and Italy and Brazil from Pool D.

Argentina claimed their berth after defeating previously unbeaten Korea in both teams' final group match of the first stage. The result propelled the Argentinians to the top of their pool ahead of the Koreans.

The Russians and Italians stayed undefeated after three games to lead their respective pools. Both won their matches yesterday in three sets, with the Russians taking care of Tunisia

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

POOL A
Puerto Rico bt Morocco 3-1 (25-22, 25-21, 34-36, 25-20)
China bt Bahrain 3-1 (25-19, 23-25, 25-18, 25-15)

POOL B
Argentina bt Korea 3-1 (20-25, 29-27, 25-22, 25-22)
Cuba bt Egypt 3-2 (26-24, 25-20, 21-25, 20-25, 15-9)

POOL C
Russia bt Tunisia 3-0 (25-23, 25-17, 25-15)
Iran bt Czech Republic 3-0 (29-27, 25-18, 26-24)

POOL D
Italy bt Brazil 3-0 (25-22, 25-15, 25-18)
Poland bt Canada 3-1 (20-25, 25-20, 25-18, 26-24)

and Italy surprising Brazil.

Iran joined Russia from their group after winning a tightly contested three-setter against the Czech Republic in a match that decided who qualified for the second round.

In other fixtures that had no bearing on the advancing teams, Cuba needed five sets to dispose of Egypt, Puerto Rico beat Morocco in four, and Poland defeated Canada also in four sets.

In the ensuing second round, the eight teams are divided into two other Pools of four nations each (Pool E and Pool F). China are in Pool E with Korea, Russia and Brazil; while Bahrain are in Pool F with Argentina, Iran and Italy.

The remaining teams are in the classification groups G and H. Group G includes Puerto Rico, Egypt, the Czech Republic and Canada. Group H is composed of Morocco, Cuba, Tunisia and Poland.

Today is a rest day. Second round action begins tomorrow. In Bahrain's loss against China, the home side had a slow start and gave up the first set to their rivals. A strong second set levelled the proceedings, but the Chinese were too good on the day and they took care of business in the third and fourth sets.

Hasan Mohamed led Bahrain with 19 points while Chengcheng Xiu was the top scorer for the triumphant Chinese with 23.



Bahrain's Hasan Mohamed meets China's Dongzheng Zhang at the net

Bahrain head coach Yousuf Khalifa said after the loss: "This result does not change anything for us. It will be the same for us moving forward. More important for our group now is recovery time. We will use today and tomorrow. Tomorrow we will only do some light training.

In Argentina's Pool B contest, the victors claimed maximum points with their 3-1 (20-25, 29-27, 25-22, 25-22) decision. Cuba won against Egypt 3-2 (26-24, 25-20, 21-25, 20-25, 15-9) in the division's other game.

In Iran's win, they managed to eke out the first set by two points, and the after cruising in the second, won by two once again in the third to seal the 3-0 (29-27, 25-18, 26-24) result.

Italy and Brazil were both unbeaten as they headed into yesterday's clash. By the end of the contest, it was the Italians who maintained a pristine record, stunning their rivals in three sets (25-22, 25-15, 25-18).

Final preliminary round standings

(Win in 3 or 4 sets = 3pts for winner; Win in 5 sets = 2pts for winner, 1pt for loser)

*Team advances to Second Round

	P	W	L	Pts
POOL A				
*China	3	3	0	9
*Bahrain	3	2	1	5
Puerto Rico	3	1	2	3
Morocco	3	0	3	1
POOL B				
*Argentina	3	2	1	7
*Korea	3	2	1	6
Cuba	3	2	1	4
Egypt	3	0	3	1
POOL C				
*Russia	3	3	0	8
*Iran	3	2	1	7
Czech Republic	3	1	2	3
Tunisia	3	0	3	0
POOL D				
*Italy	3	3	0	9
*Brazil	3	2	1	6
Poland	3	1	2	3
Canada	3	0	3	0

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Pinot conquers Tourmalet as Thomas loses time to Alaphilippe

AFP | Paris

France celebrated yesterday as Thibaut Pinot conquered the Pyrenean summit of la Col du Tourmalet with Julian Alaphilippe following him across the line to extend his overall Tour de France lead.

Defending champion Geraint Thomas lost 35 seconds after being dropped by Pinot at the death, while his Ineos co-captain Egan Bernal finished a few seconds behind the winner at the first of seven summit finishes over 2000 metres.

Pinot had vowed to attack this stage after losing time to an Ineos-led attack in a crosswind on the narrow road to Albi on Monday had angered him and his team.

Thomas is now over two minutes behind Alaphilippe in the general classification after he started to suffer with 500 metres to go.

While this was far from disastrous, Thomas losing time to Alaphilippe on two consecutive stages where he himself had predicted the reverse is something of an upset.



France's Thibaut Pinot celebrates as he crosses the finish line

French president Emmanuel Macron followed the whole stage from the lead car in the vast caravan and appeared animated as he was flanked on the podium by his two compatriots.

"This man has heart," he said looking at Alaphilippe. "France is proud of them both."

As the 117km stage 14 climbed above the tree-line and above the mist where the oxygen levels were lower and fans at fever pitch lent a hint of insanity to

proceedings, contenders for the overall victory gradually fell by the wayside.

Adam Yates, Dan Martin, Nairo Quintana and Jakob Fuglsang, wilted one after the other as the Pinot and his FDJ climb partner kept up the pace.

Few expected the yellow jersey wearer Alaphilippe to thrive on Friday's time-trial, which he won, and fewer still expected him to survive here on the Tourmalet.