

# Hosts thrash Qatar

TDT | Manama

Bahrain capped their Preliminary Round campaign this evening with a dazzling victory while Korea followed suit with their first win to highlight an action-packed second day in the 19th Asian Men's U20 Volleyball Championship.

The host Bahrainis were once again fuelled by a massive home crowd that packed Isa Sports City in Riffa as they easily disposed of Gulf rivals Qatar 3-0 (25-15, 25-16, 25-10) in a match that lasted just a little over an hour.

Meanwhile, after not being in action on opening night, Korea made their presence felt with a hard-earned five-set (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 22-25, 15-12) triumph over China.

Also yesterday, Taipei, India and Sri Lanka all joined Bahrain in claiming their second victories of this preliminary stage. Taipei beat Pakistan, India outplayed New Zealand and Sri Lanka battled past Australia.

Elsewhere, Thailand enjoyed their first win after beating Turkmenistan in a thrilling five-setter. They had to come back from a set down before securing the result. Macau were also winners for the first time after overpowering the Maldives, while Jordan bounced back from an opening day defeat with a win over the UAE.

The Preliminary Round continues on Monday at the same venue from 11.30am onwards. Games are being played simultaneously in two arenas. Entrance for spectators is free and all are welcome to watch.

At the end of this stage, all the participating nations will be ranked from one to 23, depending on where they finish in their respective Pools. From this ranking, the match-ups will be determined for the knockout stage, with teams ranked ninth to 23rd vying for eight places to join the overall top eight in a Round of 16.

The 23-nation Asian U20



Bahrain's players celebrate after scoring against Qatar

## Today's matches

(in order of Time, Court 1 game, Court 2 game)  
11.30am: Japan vs Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan vs New Zealand

2pm: Iran vs Korea, Hong Kong vs UAE

4.30pm: Iraq vs Qatar, Malaysia vs Macau

7pm: Saudi Arabia vs Pakistan, Kazakhstan vs Australia



**“We are very happy about this game, although I was a little surprised by how it turned out. We have reached our target of winning both games in this round, and things are just going to get more difficult from now**

**BAHRAIN HEAD COACH YUSUF KHALIFA**

## YESTERDAY'S SCORES

Taipei beat Pakistan 3-1 (25-17, 25-15, 14-25, 25-18)

Macau beat Maldives 3-0 (25-9, 25-8, 25-11)

Korea beat China 3-2 (25-23, 25-22, 20-25, 22-25, 15-12)

India beat New Zealand 3-0 (25-22, 25-22, 25-16)

Thailand beat Turkmenistan 3-2 (25-20, 26-28, 22-25, 25-21, 15-10)

Sri Lanka beat Australia 3-1 (24-26, 25-13, 26-24, 25-21)

Bahrain beat Qatar 3-0 (25-15, 25-16, 25-10)

Jordan beat UAE 3-0 (29-27, 25-18, 25-23)

Championship is following this complicated competition format for the first time. The tournament has been organised by the Asian Volleyball Confederation in cooperation with the Bahrain Volleyball Association. It is being held under the patronage of His Majesty the King's Charity Works and Youth Affairs Representative, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman



Bahrain's Husain Thamer looks to score against Qatar



Gajasinage Silva of Sri Lanka tries to score against a pair of Australia's blockers

and Bahrain Olympic Committee President Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

Bahrain notched their second successive Pool D1 win with another dominant showing. They started off strong and never looked back.

Husain Thamer was their best scorer, posting 13 points overall including nine on attack. Sayed Alabbar had seven on attack while Hasan Haider had five. Mohamed Ahmed led Qatar with 13 points in the loss.

“We are very happy about this game, although I was a little surprised by how it turned out,” said Bahrain head coach Yusuf Khalifa. “We have reached our target of winning both games in this round, and things are just going to get more difficult from now.

“We will play stronger teams in the next stage, but our guys are growing in confidence now

and I hope they can reach a higher level than what they have already showed.”

With the result, the Bahrainis have secured the 10th ranking for the Knockout Round, where they will face the 23rd-ranked team in a match scheduled for Tuesday. Qatar will be either 11th or 12th, depending on the result of their game with Iraq on Monday.

In Pool A1, Korea started their match against China on a high, and appeared to be headed to a straight-sets win after going up 2-0. But the Chinese turned the tables in the third and fourth sets, only for the Koreans to recover in the fifth behind the stellar play of Donghyeok Im, who scored an impressive 35 points overall, including 33 attacking points.

“We did not play our best, especially in the third set,” said Korea captain Ikje Choi. “After

the fourth set, we encouraged ourselves to get into the mood of the game and get the win in the fifth.

“Whatever we did to overcome this game's challenges, we will do better as we move forward.”

Of their next game against Asian powerhouses Iran on Monday at 2pm, Choi commented: “We will do or best in the next game. We will follow what we have trained, and we will give everything we have.”

Sunho Kim and Sungjin Lim added 12 attacking points apiece for the Koreans, while Dejun Zhai had 24 points overall to pace China, who suffered their second straight loss.

With China's loss, they are now assured of the third ranking for the knockout stage. The top seeding will be taken by the winner of the Iran-Japan clash.