

Young Bahrain Reds march into quarter-finals

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's junior national handball team secured their place in the quarter-finals of the 19th Asian Men's Junior Handball Championship after defeating hosts China 35-27 yesterday to finish second in Group A.

The young Bahrain side produced a strong performance from the opening whistle, taking control of the match through a disciplined defensive display and effective attacking play. Bahrain built a six-goal advantage by half-time, leading 18-12, before continuing their strong performance after the break. The team maintained their intensity in the second half, outscoring China 17-15 to complete a convincing eight-goal victory.

Abuthar Yateem led Bahrain's scoring charts with five goals, while Sayed Ahmed Alfalahi



Sayed Majeed Al Muhafda goes for goal against hosts China

and Mahmood Yousuf each contributed four. Sayed Majeed Al Muhafda, Abbas Ali and Ahmed Eid also played important roles with three goals apiece.

Goalkeepers Ali Almahroos and Haidar Salman combined for 13 saves, helping Bahrain maintain control during key stages of the contest. Yateem was later named the match's Most Valuable Player for his

influential performance in attack and his contribution in creating opportunities for his teammates.

The victory was Bahrain's fourth in the preliminary round, following wins over Chinese Taipei, Oman and Hong Kong. Their only defeat came against group winners Saudi Arabia, who finished top of the standings with a perfect record, while

Bahrain collected eight points to secure second place in Group A.

Head coach Husam Madan's side will now face Iran in the quarter-finals tomorrow as they continue their pursuit of a place among Asia's leading junior handball nations.

The semi-finals will take place on Saturday, setting up the gold and bronze medal matches on Monday, the tournament's concluding day. Classification matches will also be held during the final two days of the knock-out stages.

The Asian championship also serves as the continental qualifier for the 26th IHF Men's U21 Handball World Championship, scheduled to be held in North Macedonia from June 23 to July 4 next year. The four semi-finalists will earn qualification for the global tournament, meaning Bahrain are one victory away from securing their place on the world stage.

Bahrain basketball set for new era with revamped league and cup formats



Muharraq captain Bader Malabes lifts the Zain Bahrain Basketball League trophy

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Bahrain basketball is set for a new era after the Bahrain Basketball Association introduced major changes to the formats of the Zain Basketball League and Khalifa bin Salman Cup for the 2026-2027 season.

The new regulations bring changes to playoff structures, professional player usage and the route to the championship, with the aim of creating more competitive contests and raising the overall standard of domestic basketball.

The Zain Basketball League will continue under a single-division format featuring all participating clubs, with the preliminary stage consisting of two rounds. During this phase, teams will be allowed to use three professional players under a system of one professional player on the court and two on the bench.

The top eight teams in the standings will advance to the quarter-finals, where the league leaders will face eighth place, second will meet seventh, third will take on sixth, and fourth will play fifth.

These ties will be contested in a best-of-three format, with the first team to secure two victories progressing to the next stage. From the quarter-finals onwards, clubs will be permitted to use three professionals under a two-on-court, one-on-bench system.

The semi-finals will be played in a best-of-five format, with the winner of the first-versus-eighth-place tie facing the winner of the fourth-versus-fifth matchup. Meanwhile, the winner of the second-versus-seventh tie will meet the winner of the third-versus-sixth clash.

The league champion will then be crowned through a best-of-five final series, with the title going to the first team

to record three victories.

The new season arrives with Muharraq aiming to maintain their recent dominance after securing back-to-back Zain Bahrain Basketball League titles last April. Their triumph completed a historic domestic treble during the 2025-2026 season, highlighting their strength across Bahrain's major competitions.

However, Manama remain the most decorated club in the Kingdom's basketball history. The capital side lead the all-time honours list with a record 25 Premier League championships, followed by Al Ahli with 20 titles and Muharraq with five.

The association has also confirmed the format for the Khalifa bin Salman Cup, with teams finishing from first to seventh place in the league standings earning direct qualification to the quarter-finals.

The remaining quarter-final place will be decided through a preliminary playoff, with eighth place facing 11th and ninth meeting 10th before the winners compete for the final qualification spot.

The cup competition will follow the same professional-player regulations, with clubs allowed to register three professionals and use two on the court while one remains on the bench from the preliminary stage through to the final.

In the quarter-finals, the first-placed team will lead Group A and the second-placed team will lead Group B, while the remaining qualified teams will be determined through a draw. Matches at this stage will be played as single-elimination fixtures.

The semi-finals will then be contested in a best-of-three format, with the winners advancing to a one-match final to determine the 2026-2027 Khalifa bin Salman Cup champions.

Danylo Voievodkin gets new opponent as Janos Csukas steps up for BRAVE CF 107

Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation™ (BRAVE CF), the world's fastest-growing and most global mixed martial arts organization, has announced an important update to the BRAVE CF 107 lineup, confirming a new heavyweight contest for its return to Bulgaria on Saturday, August 1, at the Burgas Arena in partnership with Bulgarian Fight Agency (BFA).

Ukrainian powerhouse Danylo Voievodkin will now face Hungary's Janos Csukas after former BRAVE CF Heavyweight World Title contender Grégory "Robson" Robinet was forced to withdraw from the event because of an injury.

Danylo Voievodkin, BRAVE CF Heavyweight Athlete, stated: "I am thankful that I still have the chance to compete at BRAVE CF 107. I appreciate Janos for accepting this challenge and making sure the fight stays on the card. I am focused, prepared, and ready



to give the fans a memorable performance."

Janos Csukas, BRAVE CF Heavyweight Athlete, stated: "It is an honor to compete on a stage like BRAVE CF once again. I appreciate everyone who made this possible. I have stayed ready for opportunities like this, and I am excited to prove myself against a strong opponent."

The matchup presents an opportunity for both heavyweights to change the course of their BRAVE CF journeys.

Voievodkin enters the contest with a 7-1 professional record,

having finished every victory inside the distance through five knockouts and two submissions.

He first caught the attention of the global MMA community with a dominant 73-second submission victory on Dana White's Contender Series in 2024 after building an impressive résumé on the regional circuit.

His promotional debut came at BRAVE CF 104 this past February, where Genadi "Svani Man" Jorjoliani handed him the first defeat of his professional career.

Now, the Ukrainian standout is determined to bounce back

and remind fans why he was regarded as one of the heavyweight division's brightest prospects. Standing opposite him will be a seasoned Hungarian veteran eager to capitalize on his return to the promotion.

A professional mixed martial artist since 2019, Csukas has earned seven victories in 10 career appearances while consistently competing against experienced opposition across Europe.

Csukas is already familiar with the BRAVE CF spotlight, having made his maiden assignment against future BRAVE CF Heavyweight World Champion Pavel "The Experiment" Dailidko at BRAVE CF 79 in December 2023.

Now back under the BRAVE CF banner, Csukas will look to claim his first victory with the organization, while Voievodkin aims to return to winning ways in what promises to be an explosive addition to the BRAVE CF 107 lineup.

Riffa stay top despite Um Al Hassam defeat

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Riffa stayed top of the Bahrain Bowling League despite a 6-2 loss to Um Al Hassam in the tenth round, with six points now separating the leading three sides.

Riffa have 70 points, four ahead of Bahrain, while Um Al Hassam sit third on 64 after posting the highest team pinfall of the round.

Um Al Hassam knocked down 2,435 pins against Riffa's 2,342. Talal Yaqoub Al Abdullah led their scoring with 641, followed by Isa Khalid Isa with 611 and Ziad Al Awadhi with 593.

Abdulaziz Al Shaikh scored 627 for Riffa, while Fawaz Majdami added 601. Bahrain and Busaiteen drew 4-4 after sharing the games. Bahrain finished with 2,366 pins, compared with Busaiteen's 2,327.

Ahmed Fareed was Bahrain's top scorer



with 614, while Mohammed Al Shawash led Busaiteen with 635.

Al Hala beat Isa Town 6-2, recording 2,180 pins against 2,011. Waleed Al Darraj scored 593 for Al Hala, while Abdullah Al Merbati posted 595 for Isa Town. Al Ettifaq also won 6-2 against Sanad after finishing with 2,150 pins to their rivals' 2,099.

Hussain Abdulkarim recorded the best individual score of the round with 661. Sayed Moosa Al Alawi was Sanad's leading player with 570.

Al Hala are fourth with 34 points. Busaiteen and Sanad each have 32, with Busaiteen placed fifth on total pinfall. Al Ettifaq are seventh with 12 points, while Isa Town remain last on 10.

The eleventh round will be held at Funland Bowling Centre on Sunday from 6.30pm. Bahrain will play Riffa, Busaiteen will face Um Al Hassam, Sanad will meet Isa Town and Al Ettifaq will take on Al Hala.