

# Bahraini duo target knockout spots on final matchday

Muharraq host Esteghlal, Al Khaldiya face Arkadag in AFC Champions League 2

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain’s representatives Muharraq and Al Khaldiya will be in action tomorrow as the AFC Champions League Two group stage reaches its decisive final round, with both matches kicking off at 7 PM.

In Group A, Muharraq host Esteghlal FC (IRN) at Shaikh Ali Bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Stadium in Arad, knowing that a positive result will secure their place in the Round of 16. Nandinho’s side sit second on seven points, two ahead of Esteghlal, and will look to build on their resilience shown in their previous outing.

The Bahrain champions drew 2-2 away to Al Wasl FC on November 5, twice taking the lead before being pegged back late by the UAE side. That result kept Al Wasl top of the group but underlined Muharraq’s attacking threat and ability to compete



Elliot Simoes celebrates a goal for Muharraq in their last match



Al Khaldiya captain Sayed Dhiya Saeed during training session

under pressure — qualities they will hope to carry into this decisive home fixture.

In Group B, Al Khaldiya travel to face FK Arkadag (TKM) at Arkadag Stadium, with qualification still very much in their own hands. Al Khaldiya are second on six points in a tightly packed group and know that victory will guarantee progression to the knockout stage.

Al Khaldiya’s most recent match ended in a 0-0 home draw against PFC Andijon on November 5. Despite creating several scoring opportunities, they were kept at bay by solid defending and impressive goalkeeping. The stalemate, however, ensured the team remained firmly in contention heading into the final matchday. Their preparations were further shaped by a coaching change: on November 15, head coach Ali Ashoor stepped down, with Tunisian Lassaad Chabbi taking over shortly afterward.

## Morocco coach ‘taking no risks’ with Hakimi fitness

AFP | Rabat

Morocco coach Walid Regragui said Sunday he would continue to be “very careful” with star man Achraf Hakimi at the Africa Cup of Nations as the Paris Saint-Germain full-back recovers from an ankle injury.

Regragui suggested on the eve of the tournament’s opening game against Comoros that Hakimi was fit, but in the end the Morocco captain played no part in Sunday’s 2-0 win in Rabat.

Hakimi has not played since suffering an ankle injury in action for PSG against Bayern Munich in the Champions League on November 4, and Manchester United’s Noussair Mazraoui started instead at right-back for Morocco against Comoros.

“We need Hakimi because he is the best player in Africa and one of the best in the world and no team can afford to be without their best player, but Mazraoui is a fantastic player,” Regragui said.

“He has different qualities to Achraf, although I think



Morocco’s defender #02 Achraf Hakimi warms up before the match

Achraf would have helped us today.

“We didn’t want to take a risk with Achraf. We are being very careful with him so we will see how he is in the next 48 hours to see if he can start against Mali.

“We are convinced he will play during the AFCON and we are waiting patiently for him.”

Morocco beat Comoros in the tournament’s opening match thanks to second-half goals by Brahim Diaz -- set up by Mazraoui -- and Ayoub El Kaabi after Soufiane Rahimi had an early penalty saved.

## Bapco Energies renews as title partner of 2026 Bahrain Championship



Angel Ayora in action

Manama

Bapco Energies, the integrated company leading the energy transition in the Kingdom of Bahrain, has signed a new agreement to remain as the Title Partner of the 2026 Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship on the DP World Tour.

The Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship will take place from 29 January to 1 February 2026 at the Royal Golf Club in Bahrain, under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa. Featuring a prize fund of \$2.75 million, the tournament follows the Dubai Invitational and the Hero Dubai Desert Classic - the first Rolex Series event of the season - as one of seven events on the DP World Tour’s International Swing.

The 2026 edition of the Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship will showcase the DP World Tour’s leading rookies, with newly-crowned Sir Henry Cotton Rookie of the Year Mar-



Elvis Smylie in action

tin Couvra confirmed to tee it up alongside fellow breakthrough talents Ángel Ayora and Elvis Smylie.

Couvra, the second Frenchman in history to win the prestigious Rookie of the Year award, enjoyed a standout 2025 campaign that included victory at the Turkish Airlines Open and a further six top-ten finishes, culminating in a 19th-place finish on the Race to Dubai Rankings Delivered by DP World.

Joining him in Bahrain is 21-year-old Spaniard Ayora, who pushed Couvra all the way in the rookie standings. Meanwhile Australian Elvis Smylie will also feature after securing his maiden DP World Tour title earlier in the season and firmly establishing himself as another exciting young star on Tour. Together, the trio represent the next wave of global talent set to compete at this year’s event.

Bapco Energies became Title Partner of the tournament for the first time in 2025, moving up from presenting partner in

2024. The partnership focuses on elevating the tournament experience for players, stakeholders, and spectators alike, establishing Bahrain’s premier international golf tournament as a world-class attraction. The tournament is also pioneering environmental initiatives focused on energy provision, including powering hospitality units and structures with solar energy and batteries.

Speaking about the announcement Mark Thomas, Group Chief Executive Officer of Bapco Energies, said: “We are pleased to renew our partnership with the DP World Tour for the 2026 Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship. This collaboration reflects our confidence in the tournament’s continued success and its ability to elevate Bahrain on the global sporting stage. We look forward to building on the momentum of 2025 and delivering another exceptional experience that brings our community together and reinforces Bapco Energies’

commitment to supporting national pride and international visibility.”

His Excellency Faris Mustafa Al Kooheji, Secretary General of Bahrain Olympic Committee, said: “Thanks to the drive of our visionary leaders and the support of Bapco Energies and the DP World Tour, the Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship is putting the Kingdom of Bahrain on the map as a world-class golfing destination. With leading professionals from more than 25 countries competing next month, the tournament will provide international exposure and support our drive to continue growing the game in the region.”

Tom Phillips, Director of Middle East at the DP World Tour, added: “The Bapco Energies Bahrain Championship is going from strength to strength, with a strong year-on-year increase in spectator numbers, a field that boasts several legends of the game, and a desire to bring environmentally sustainable best practice to event delivery.”

### CLASSIFIEDS

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, **MOHAMED AFZAL MOHAMED HUSSAIN**, S/O MOHAMED HUSSAIN ALI MOHAMED holding an **Indian Passport No V6416990** Dated 02/02/2022 issued at **MANAMA** (place of issue) having permanent residence at 703, HILL PARK TOWER B-1, CO-OP HOUSING SOC. LTD JOHESHWARI WEST, MUMBAI PIN:400102, MAHARASHTRA, INDIA.... (full address in India as in the passport) Presently residing at FLAT 22, BUILDING 665, ROAD 321, BLOCK 103, HIDD, BAHRAIN (full address in Bahrain) will henceforth be known as (Given name) **MOHAMED AFZAL** (Surname) **MOHD HUSSAIN** Objection(s), if any, may be forwarded to **Embassy of India**, P.O. Box 26106, Al Seef, **Kingdom of Bahrain**.