

Bahrain handed tough defeat to Qatar

Nationals unable to maintain strong start as Gulf rivals rally in second half in clash between Gulf rivals

● Bahrainis take narrow lead at the interval but lose control of the contest after conceding six straight goals early in second half

● Mohamed Ahmed scores five goals to pace Bahrain, while three others contribute three apiece

TDT | Manama

Bahrain missed out on a golden opportunity to claim their first win in the main round of the 27th IHF World Men's Handball Championship in Egypt last night following a 23-28 defeat to Qatar at Cairo Stadium Indoor Halls Complex.

It was a match-up between Asian powerhouses and the Bahrainis had a good start and they took a single-goal lead, 14-13, at the break.

But they then conceded six successive goals to start the second half, which helped the



Bahrain's Hussain Al Sayyad attacks the Qatari defence as he goes for goal during their match last night

Qataris blow a close game wide open. The nationals never recovered from there and Qatar led by as many as seven the rest of the way.

Bahrain had one final push in the game's final minutes, but they could only get back to within four goals.

The result was the second suc-

cessive loss for the national team in the competition's main stage, having previously bowed to European giants Croatia. They remained on zero points in the group table from four fixtures, as their losses from the preliminaries to defending world champions Denmark and Argentina have been carried over.



Bahrain's last match in the main round is tomorrow against Japan. The last time both teams met at the world championship was in 2019, when the Bahrainis earned their first preliminary round win in history, beating the Japanese in a thrilling game 23-22

Qatar won their first game in the current stage and they improved to four points.

Bahrain have one final match to play in this phase. It will be tomorrow against Japan, scheduled for a 5.30pm start, Bahrain time.

Bahrain faced a 5-8 deficit to begin yesterday's match, but

Group II standings (after Bahrain's match yesterday)

	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
Denmark	3	3	0	0	+34	6
Croatia	3	2	1	0	+12	5
Qatar	4	2	0	2	-4	4
Argentina	3	2	0	1	-4	4
Japan	3	0	1	2	-6	1
Bahrain	4	0	0	4	-32	0

gradually fought their way back and a fastbreak goal from Mahdi Saad tied the proceedings at 11-all.

Skipper Hussain Al Sayyad then scored with a penalty shot to give the Bahrainis their first lead of the contest at 13-12, before goals from Qatar's Yassine Sami and Bahrain's Mohamed Ahmed closed out the opening 30-minute period.

Starting the second half, Ko-mail Mahfoodh gave Bahrain a 15-13 advantage, but after Mohammed Mirza put Bahrain up 16-15, the Qataris made their game-changing rally as they powered ahead 21-16.

Qatar continued their strong play and goalkeeper Danijel Saric made a number of fine saves.

Hasan Alfardan was able to cut the deficit for Bahrain to 22-

26 with just under three minutes to go, but that was as close as they could get.

Ahmed finished with five goals as Bahrain's top scorer, while Al Sayyad, Mahfoodh, and Jas-sim Al Salatna each contributed three. Saad, Ahmed Fadhul and Ali Mirza all scored twice, while also making it onto the score-sheet with a goal apiece were Alfardan, Mohammed Mirza, and Mohamed Abdulredha.

Cuban-born players Rafael Capote and Frankis Marzo paced the Qataris with nine and eight goals, respectively. Capote was named the man of the match.

Having already been eliminated from quarter-final contention, the Bahrainis are now playing to gain their best placing on the 32-team competition's final classification.

Ahli, Bani Jamra victorious in volleyball league

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Al Ahli and Bani Jamra were both winners last night in the 2020/2021 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain First Division Volleyball League, being played at the Bahrain Volleyball Association arena at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

Ahli battled back twice from behind to overcame a tough challenge against Al Najma in a five-set thriller, while Bani Jamra defeated A'ali in four.

In Ahli's win, after falling behind 1-2, Ahli were able to scrape through and extend the contest to a decisive fifth set.

There, they rode their momentum all the way to the end and finally closed out the match with a hard-earned 3-2 (22-25, 25-21, 21-25, 26-24, 15-10) score.

Ahli claimed their 12th win in 13 matches while a battling Najma suffered their seventh loss to go with six wins.

In yesterday's other match, Bani Jamra claimed a rare league victory. They had a good



Action from Bani Jamra's win over A'ali

start to take a 2-0 lead, but A'ali fought back and were determined to extend the contest. Later, after conceding the third set, Bani Jamra were able to close things out in the fourth and come away with the 3-1 (25-22, 25-20, 17-25, 25-19) result.

It was only their fourth vic-

tory in 13 matches, while A'ali were handed their 11th defeat to go with just two wins.

League action continues tonight with another two matches on schedule. At 6pm, Busaiteen take on Al Nasser followed at 7.30pm by Muharraq facing Dar Kulaib.

Holdes Arsenal crash out of FA Cup as West Ham cruise

Reuters | London

Southampton dumped holders Arsenal out of the FA Cup on Saturday as West Ham cruised into the fifth round with a comfortable 4-0 win against third-tier Doncaster.

The Gunners, who have won the competition a record 14 times, went down 1-0 on England's south coast courtesy of a Gabriel own goal.

Brighton edged past Blackpool and Sheffield United beat Plymouth as the other Premier League teams in action avoided embarrassment against lower-league opposition.

In the early kick-off at St Mary's Stadium, Arsenal paid the price for a sluggish start



Southampton players celebrate their FA Cup fourth-round win against Arsenal

against fellow top-flight side Southampton.

Arteta made seven changes from his team's 3-0 league win against Newcastle on Monday, with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and midfielder

Emile Smith Rowe both absent.

Southampton's James Ward-Prowse rattled the crossbar from a swerving corner and Che Adams forced a fine save from Arsenal goalkeeper Bernd Leno.

The 1976 FA Cup winners reaped the reward their positive approach deserved in the 24th minute.

Mohamed Elneny gave away possession on the edge of his own box and the ball was worked to Kyle Walker-Peters on the right.

The defender drilled the ball across the six-yard area and it was turned in by Gabriel -- the first time rejuvenated Arsenal had conceded for 508 minutes.

BRAVE CF's Murtaza Talha: a superstar in the making

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's own Murtaza Talha is the prototype of the new generation of Mixed Martial Artists. While many of his predecessors had to migrate from different disciplines at adult age and learn new skills to be competitive inside the cages, Murtaza has been trained and shaped to MMA for the longest time, slowly but surely evolving in all disciplines throughout his young and formative years. Two bouts into his professional MMA career, Talha is already seen as the next big thing coming out of BRAVE CF. Like many before him, Murtaza will lead a generation of top young fighters who are sure to leave their mark in



Murtaza Talha in action during a bout

the sport.

Such a comprehensive background is clear when you look at Murtaza Talha's accomplishments even before making his professional MMA debut. A stellar member of the IMMAF ranks, Murtaza was ranked number one in the world in the Light Heavyweight Division, number six pound-for-pound, and won back-to-back World Championship titles as an amateur - the 2017 and 2019 titles could have easily been accompanied by a 2018 gold medal, but Talha suffered a serious hand injury which kept him out of competition for that year.

Making his professional debut, after wrapping up his amateur career with a perfect 12-0 record, he submitted Vadim Litvin in the second round back in November of 2020. But the best was still yet to come, and

Talha delivered it in his second professional bout.

At BRAVE CF 46, in Sochi, Russia, Murtaza Talha completely obliterated Dmitriy Krivulets, winning via TKO in less than two minutes, quickly putting on notice the entire BRAVE Combat Federation Light Heavyweight and Middleweight divisions, the latter being the one he's already working on towards moving down to.

After delivering some of the most exciting prospects in the international scene and becoming the choice of the most coveted up-and-comers in Mixed Martial Arts, BRAVE Combat Federation once again delivers in the grassroot development department of the sport and reinforces its position as the hotbed for new talent in the international MMA scene.



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