

Kooheji marks PFL debut with statement win for Bahrain



Action from Kooheji's bout against Bendaoud

Hamza Kooheji now holds a professional MMA record of 15-4-0

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Bahrain's Hamza Kooheji emerged as one of the standout performers at PFL MENA: Dubai - Pride of Arabia at the Coca-Cola Arena, earning a unanimous decision victory over Morocco's Taha Bendaoud on Sunday night. All three judges scored it 29-28 as he advanced to the featherweight semi-finals.

The win marked a strong re-

sponse from Kooheji following his last outing, where he suffered a fourth-round TKO defeat on home soil in Bahrain last November against Serbia's Borislav Nikolić. This time, he appeared far more composed over three rounds, showing improved distance control, sharper decision-making, and a disciplined approach under pressure.

After the win, Kooheji was emotional in his post-fight remarks, dedicating the victory to Bahrain and its leadership.

"First and foremost, this hard-earned victory belongs to the Kingdom of Bahrain and to His Highness Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa."

He also acknowledged Shaikh Khalid's absence from cageside,



Hamza Kooheji during his post-fight interview

emphasizing that his support remains deeply felt.

"I truly wished His Highness could have been here with us tonight, but we completely understand that his demanding schedule and official responsibilities kept him away. He is always with us in spirit, and his unwavering support remains our greatest motivation."

Looking ahead, Kooheji made it clear that his focus remains firmly on the title.

"Our focus is now entirely on

the finals. We will keep pushing forward, and with the right preparation, we look forward to having His Highness by our side to witness the culmination of this journey. The goal remains unchanged: to bring the championship home to Bahrain."

Elsewhere on the card, Bahrain's Hamad Marhoon came up just short in a split-decision loss to Jordan's Saher Qasmieh (3-0), with scorecards of 29-28, 28-29, 29-28 in a flyweight bout that went the distance.



Hamza Kooheji reacts during his cage announcement



Kooheji performs sujud in gratitude after his victory

Omar Solomanov sets sights on undisputed Featherweight Crown at BRAVE CF 105



Manama

Omar Solomanov enters the main event of BRAVE CF 105 on Sunday, May 31, with the kind of clarity only hard-earned experience can bring.

The BRAVE CF Interim Featherweight World Champion now stands at the edge of something far more permanent, a chance to remove all prefixes and finally be recognized as the division's undisputed ruler.

The Baluan Sholak Sports Palace in Almaty, Kazakhstan will host a pivotal clash as Solomanov meets former bantamweight titleholder Nicholas Hwende for the vacant undisputed featherweight crown.

For Solomanov, the occasion represents more than another World Championship appearance. It is a moment of validation, a chance to solidify a standing that has been forged through consistency and dominance rather than temporary distinction.

His defining breakthrough arrived at BRAVE CF 98 in September 2025, where he delivered a commanding five-round performance against Kazakh rival Rauan "Shymyr" Bekbolat in their anticipated rematch.

That night ended in a unanimous decision victory, earning Solomanov the BRAVE CF Interim Featherweight World Title and confirming his ascent as a force at 145 pounds.

"Every fight at this level strips away illusion. I have carried the interim designation long enough. On May 31, I intend to leave no ambiguity and take my place as the true champion of this division," he said.

Now armed with a professional record of 14-3, including eight knockouts and three submission victories, the Ukraini-

an standout has developed into one of the most feared competitors in his weight class.

With five wins from his last six outings, his approach has been defined by calculated aggression, surgical precision, and composure in volatile exchanges.

"This is not a stepping stone or a transitional label for me. I have proven myself repeatedly against elite opposition. I am here to erase any perception that I am anything less than the man who rules this division," he added.

Standing across the cage is a tested and dangerous adversary. Hwende carries a 10-2 standing and has already made six appearances under the BRAVE CF banner, securing four victories along the way.

His featherweight introduction came at BRAVE CF 98 against "The Stalker" Xie Bin, where he neutralized the Chinese spitfire's momentum with disciplined striking and strategic control en route to a unanimous decision win.

In fact, Hwende is no stranger to World Championship pressure.

The Zimbabwean has previously held the BRAVE Bantamweight World Title and has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to perform under the bright lights.

At BRAVE CF 105, Hwende stands on the verge of joining a rare echelon by potentially becoming a two-division World Champion.

Yet Solomanov remains intent on denying that narrative its conclusion.

"I respect what he has achieved, but this moment belongs to me. I am not traveling to Almaty to share history or witness someone else's legacy being written. I am going there to seize it," Solomanov stated.

Guidetech-Indian Club Open Badminton Tournament 2026 concludes after week of elite competition



Pradeep Puravankara
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The local sports scene witnessed a spectacular showcase of athleticism as the week-long Guidetech-Indian Club Open Badminton Tournament 2026 successfully wrapped up at the Indian Club premises.

The prestigious tournament drew around 300 elite players from across the Kingdom of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. The high-profile event generated over 400 entries across 15

distinct categories—including Men's Doubles, Women's Doubles, Mixed Doubles, and Masters Doubles—culminating in more than 250 action-packed matches. The entire week of intense competition was smoothly coordinated under the leadership of Tournament Director Mr. Anil Koliyadan.

Following the final matches, a formal prize distribution ceremony was hosted by the Indian Club Executive Committee and the organizing team to honor the athletes. The closing cer-

emony began with a welcome speech by the Club's General Secretary, Mr. Anil Kumar R., followed by an official presidential address from Club President Mr. Joseph Joy.

The evening concluded with the presentation of trophies to the winners and runners-up of each respective category. Mr. Binu Pappachen, the Club's Badminton Secretary, delivered the official vote of thanks to close out the tournament.

Reflecting on the event's success, the Indian Club Executive

Committee extended its deepest gratitude to all participating players, the organizing team, and the community supporters who made the large-scale tournament possible.

The 2026 open tournament was powered by Title Sponsor Guidetech Trading W.L.L. and Main Sponsor Valueline Trading W.L.L. The event also received significant corporate backing from supporting sponsors, including Silver Star Logistics, Eram Floors W.L.L., Indian Delights, and Al Hilal Hospital.

