

Bahrain women seal third in 3x3 league

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's under-23 women's 3x3 team finished third overall in the FIBA 3x3 Youth Nations League 2026 Asia West/Pacific conference after the sixth and final stop concluded in Singapore yesterday.

The Bahrainis ended the six-stop series with 440 tour points, just 10 behind hosts Singapore in second, while Australia completed a perfect women's campaign with 600 after winning all six stops.

Bahrain's under-23 men finished fifth overall on 320 points, with Australia topping the standings on 570, ahead of Saudi Arabia on 450 and Singapore on 440.

Australia's men and women topped their respective conference standings to secure qualification for the Fiba 3x3 U23 World Cup, to be held in Hubei, China, from September 15 to 19.

The Kingdom's women, who had reached the final in three of the previous five stops, opened their final day with a dominant 22-3 victory over Qatar in Pool B before losing 21-3 to the Gangurru.

Bayan Salman led the way against Qatar with nine points, while Polina Sviatskaya added six, Amina Saleem four, and Noor Malek three.

Australia proved a much



Bayan Salman takes aim from long range against champions Australia

tougher proposition in their second outing, racing into an 8-0 lead before Sviatskaya opened Bahrain's account. The Aussies remained in control and reached the 21-point winning mark with more than three minutes remaining.

Sviatskaya scored two of Bahrain's three points, with Salman adding the other.

The result left the Bahrainis fourth in Stop Six with 60 tour points. Across the six events, they finished runners-up three times (in Stops One, Two, and Five) and third in Stops Three

and Four before taking fourth in the finale.

Australia later defeated Singapore 21-10 in the women's final to complete a clean sweep of all six stops.

Bahrain's men, represented by Naser Alanzor, Mohammed Alanzi, Mishal Buhamood, and Hamad Faisal, lost both their Pool A contests on the final day.

They went down 21-8 to hosts Singapore in their opener, with Alanzor accounting for five of the Kingdom's eight points.

The Bahrainis responded with a much stronger showing

against Australia, recovering from 11-5 down to pull within two at 16-14 before eventually losing 21-15.

Alanzor again led Bahrain with six points, while Faisal scored five and Alanzi four.

The two defeats left the Kingdom's representatives sixth in Stop Six with 45 tour points, completing their conference campaign fifth overall.

Australia went on to beat Saudi Arabia 21-15 in the men's final, sealing their fifth stop victory and bringing the week-long Singapore series to a close.

Title chase kicks off today



The coveted Nasser bin Hamad Premier League trophy

Hussain Almaskati
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The 2026-27 Nasser bin Hamad Premier League kicks off today, with another closely fought battle for the Bahrain football crown expected after just one point separated the top two last season.

Sitra and Al Malkiya open the campaign at the Bahrain National Stadium, while runners-up Al Khaldiya take on Al Najma at Al Ahli Club Stadium. All opening-round matches kick off at 7pm.

Defending champions Muharraq enter the fray tomorrow against Al Ahli at the Bahrain National Stadium, setting out in pursuit of a third successive league title.

The Red Wolves completed a memorable domestic double last season under Portuguese coach Fernando Manuel de Jesus Santos, retaining the league crown and lifting the King's Cup.

Their championship triumph followed a dramatic late swing in the title race. Al Khaldiya appeared to have the advantage until the two sides met on Matchday 21, when Muharraq claimed a crucial victory to take control.

They eventually finished with 55 points, one ahead of Al Khaldiya, after winning 17 of their 22 matches and conceding just seven goals. Riffa were third on 49 points, with Al Malkiya fourth on 33.

Both of last season's top two have since changed managers. Former Bahrain

international Isa Al Saadoun has returned to Muharraq, five years after guiding them to the AFC Cup title in 2021, while Croatian Goran Tomic has replaced Tunisian Lassad Al Chabbi at Al Khaldiya.

Riffa will again look to challenge the leading pair under Kuwaiti coach Mohammed Mashaan after lifting the Khalid bin Hamad Cup last season, while Al Khaldiya also enjoyed silverware with their Super Cup triumph.

Al Malkiya will hope to build on their fourth-place finish with Portuguese Alvaro José Rodrigues at the helm, while Brazilian Jorvan Vieira leads Al Ahli and compatriot Vinicius Eutrópico is in charge of A'ali.

Sitra are coached by Bahraini Hassan Sayed Isa, while Al Najma, under Tunisian Fethi Laabidi, retained their top-flight place through the promotion/relegation play-offs.

The league also welcomes promoted sides Manama, Al Ittifaq and East Riffa. Manama return under Bahraini coach Ismael Karami, while former Bahrain international Fawzi Ayyash leads Al Ittifaq and Hisham Al Mahoozi takes charge of East Riffa.

Tunisian Shukri Al Bajawi, meanwhile, is at the helm of Al Hidd, who face East Riffa at Al Ahli Club Stadium tomorrow.

Matchweek One concludes on Saturday, with Riffa taking on Al Ittifaq at the Bahrain National Stadium and A'ali facing Manama at Al Ahli Club Stadium.

Warriors top Group A with fourth straight win



Ahmed Ayad celebrates after finding the net against South Korea

Mohammed Darwish
TDT | Manama

A hard-edged 35-27 win over previously unbeaten South Korea sealed top spot in Group A for Bahrain yesterday and completed a four-from-four preliminary round in Amman.

The result gave Mohamed Soliman's under-19 side eight points from eight at the 11th Asian Men's Youth Handball Championship, with barely a

disturbance in their winning run as South Korea suffered their first defeat.

Bahrain had already built a 15-11 lead by half-time before pressing on after the break to win by eight.

Ahmed Ayad was named Man of the Match after playing a key role in the eight-goal win.

Bahrain had already secured a quarter-final place before the match, but victory over Korea ensured they finished first in the



Ahmed Ayad receives Man of the Match award

group without dropping a point. Their run began with a 51-20 win over India, followed by a 41-19 victory against hosts Jordan and a 36-28 win over Uzbekistan.

South Korea had also won their first three matches, beating Uzbekistan and India before coming from behind to defeat Jordan 25-24.

Bahrain will now face Saudi Arabia, who finished fourth in Group B, in Friday's quarter-fi-

nal. A win would send Bahrain into the semi-finals and secure a place at the 2027 IHF Men's Youth World Championship, with the four Asian semi-finalists qualifying for the event.

Bahrain are chasing a third Asian title under Soliman after winning the championship in 2016 and 2018.

Friday now brings Saudi Arabia, a semi-final place, and World Championship qualification.

Flick says Barca may go without striker as Atletico resist Alvarez sale

AFP | Barcelona

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick indicated yesterday the club may end the summer transfer window without signing a new striker if they fail in their bid to lure Argentinian star Julian Alvarez from rivals Atletico Madrid.

The Spanish champions are still pursuing 2022 World Cup winner Alvarez but Atletico have thus far refused to sell the 26-year-old forward, who missed training yesterday due to illness.

Spanish media reported Barca president Joan Laporta wants "Alvarez or nobody" and Flick said the club also had to think about the future and he is happy with his squad.

"I don't want to speak about Julian. I only want to (speak) about the situation of the club. We made some really good, good transfers now in this market," the German coach told reporters.

"Our goal is clear, but in the end also the club has to think about the future. Not only the present now.