

Winning start for Bahrain at Arab Youth Basketball Championship

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's youth national basketball team opened their 23rd Arab Youth Men's Basketball Championship 2026 campaign with a 60-51 win over Algeria on Saturday in Sfax, Tunisia.

The result gave the Kingdom a strong start to the tournament, which runs until July 6 and features six teams: Bahrain, Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt and hosts Tunisia.

Led by veteran coach Salman Ramadhan, Bahrain edged a fluctuating contest in their opening fixture before pulling away in the final quarter to secure victory.

The game began with a fast start from the Gulf side, who raced into an 11-1 lead in the first quarter through the sharp shooting of Mujtaba Rayyan, including two three-pointers and driving finishes that forced an early Algerian timeout. The North African side responded by tightening up inside and



Onondueni powers in a dunk against Algeria yesterday

capitalising on missed opportunities to cut the gap, though Bahrain still held a 15-12 lead after the opening period.

The second quarter developed into a more physical battle in the paint, with both teams struggling for consistency from range. Algeria gradually took control through turnovers and fast breaks, overturning the deficit to lead 34-27 at half-time.

Ramadhan's side responded strongly after the break, producing a much-improved defensive display in the third quarter. The Bahrainis restricted Algeria's scoring and improved their offensive execution to edge the period 44-43 and regain control heading into the final frame.

In the fourth quarter, Bahrain pulled away decisively, stretching the lead to 11 points behind improved three-point shooting from Hassan Abdulkadir and Mujtaba Rayyan. The Algerians called another timeout, but the Bahraini side held firm to close out a nine-point victory.

Mujtaba Rayyan led all scorers with

16 points, while Somto Patrick added 15 and Hassan Abdulkadir contributed nine in a balanced team performance.

Bahrain's participation in Sfax forms part of their wider development programme ahead of the Gulf Basketball Association (GBA) U18 Championship 2026 in Doha, Qatar from July 17 to 22. The competition will serve as a qualifier for the FIBA U18 Asia Cup 2026 in Ahmedabad, India from August 13 to 23, with the top three teams securing qualification.

The national team now faces a quick turnaround, taking on hosts Tunisia today at 5:30pm (Bahrain time), before meeting Libya on Monday at 1pm. They then have a rest day on Tuesday.

Bahrain resumes action against Morocco on Wednesday at 1pm before concluding the preliminary round against Egypt on Thursday at 3:15pm.

The tournament follows a round-robin format, with the top two teams advancing to the gold medal match and the third- and fourth-placed sides competing for bronze.

Djokovic inspired by Serena as he targets history at Wimbledon



Serbia's Novak Djokovic practices at Wimbledon

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic is taking inspiration from Serena Williams' sensational comeback as he sets his sights on a record-breaking triumph at Wimbledon.

Williams has returned to tennis at the age of 44 and will play her first singles match in four years when she faces Maya Joint in the Wimbledon first round next week.

The American legend has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles in her remarkable career, just behind Djokovic's men's record tally of 24.

Djokovic, 39, is chasing an all-time record of 25 Grand Slam singles titles and Williams' astonishing return -- motivated by a desire to play in front of her two young daughters -- prompted him to seek out the American to discuss her comeback.

"Look, first and foremost, what she's doing is inspirational and it's epic. That's what I told her. I always admired her career, her journey, her

For her to come back after years of being absent from the tour, two children later, and to give so much effort to, not just for her own satisfaction is remarkable

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

story," Djokovic told reporters yesterday.

"For her to come back after years of being absent from the tour, two children later, and to give so much effort to, not just for her own satisfaction is remarkable.

"I told her that whatever happens, what she's doing is truly inspirational for me personally, I'm sure for millions around the world."

Djokovic set the Open Era record for the oldest men's Grand Slam singles finalist when he was beaten by Carlos Alcaraz in the Australian Open showpiece in January.

South Korea edge Bahrain to end reign as AVC champions

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Defending champions Bahrain fell just short of a second successive AVC Men's Cup final yesterday, losing 3-1 to South Korea in the semi-finals in Ahmedabad, India.

After pushing the Koreans all the way in a tightly contested encounter, the Kingdom's national men's volleyball team went down 25-23, 25-22, 23-25, 25-20 at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex, ending their title defence but keeping alive hopes of a podium finish.

Opposite hitter Abdulla Ebrahim led Bahrain's scoring with 15 points, while outside hitter Mahmood Abdulwahed added 14, including two service aces. Sayed Hashem Ali contributed 11 points, and middle blocker Hasan Al Warqaa finished with eight points, including four blocks.



Action from the match

South Korea were led by opposite Hojin Shin, who produced a match-high 26 points, while outside hitter Hanyong Jeong added 20 and Jaeyoung Lim chipped in with 12 as the Koreans reached the AVC Men's Cup final for the first time.

Under head coach Ivan Joksimovic, Bahrain battled throughout the contest, narrowly losing

the opening two sets before responding to take the third 25-23. South Korea, however, regained control in the fourth set, pulling away late to seal victory and a place in the final.

The defeat brought an end to another strong campaign for Bahrain, who reached the semi-finals after winning four of their five group-stage matches,

defeating Chinese Taipei, New Zealand, Kazakhstan and Australia to finish second in Pool A behind hosts India.

Joksimovic's side will now face India in today's bronze medal match at the same venue, with first serve scheduled for 1pm (Bahrain time). The national team will be looking to respond after a straight-sets defeat to India in the preliminary round.

Indonesia and South Korea will contest the final later today at 4:30pm (Bahrain time), with Indonesia advancing after a 3-2 semi-final victory over the hosts.

Bahrain remain the reigning AVC Men's Cup champions after lifting their maiden continental title on home soil last year. That historic triumph also secured qualification for the AVC Men's Continental Championship, which will be held in Fukuoka, Japan, from September 4 to 13.

Junior handball team held by UAE in friendly opener

Bahrain's junior men's national handball team began their preparations for the 19th Asian Men's Junior Championship with a 35-35 draw against the hosts United Arab Emirates in a five-nation friendly tournament on Saturday.

The competition, which also features Qatar, Oman and Morocco alongside the hosts, is Bahrain's final build-up ahead of next month's continental championship in Chuzhou, China. A single round-robin format will

see the top two teams advance to the final.

Bahrain trailed 21-17 at half-time after the UAE made the stronger start, capitalising on early attacking opportunities. Coach Hussam Madan's side responded after the break, tightening their defence and improving their finishing to gradually close the gap and secure a draw in a

tense finish.

The team, which travelled to the UAE on Friday, is using the tournament to fine-tune a 20-player squad that includes several members with senior national team experience.

They next face Oman before meeting Qatar in their final group-stage match.

The Asian Cham-

ampionship, scheduled for July 15 to 26, features 13 teams and doubles as a qualifier for the 2027 IHF Men's U21 World Championship in North Macedonia. Bahrain has been drawn in Group A alongside China, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Chinese Taipei and Hong Kong.

Bahrain enter the tournament with a strong recent record, reaching the podium in each of the last three editions, including silver in 2022 and bronze in 2018 and 2024.



Action from the match

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