

Bahrain set for William Jones Cup return



National team to face eight opponents in Chinese Taipei

● Bahrain return after 47 years

● Eight games in nine days

● Vovoras leads new-look squad

● Focus on Arab Championship prep

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Bahrain’s men’s basketball team will compete in the 44th William Jones Cup from July 12 to 20, taking on a demanding schedule against some of Asia’s top sides. The tournament, hosted in Chinese Taipei, is the team’s second appearance in the competition and comes as part of their wider preparation for the Arab Na-

tions Championship later this summer.

Vovoras Takes Charge

Newly appointed head coach Georgios Vovoras will make his Bahrain debut in the tournament. The 48-year-old Greek

brings top-level experience from across Europe and the NBA Summer League, with previous stints at the Milwaukee Bucks

and Minnesota Timberwolves.

Vovoras is currently working with an 18-player squad, which includes a mix of local talent and international professionals such as Wayne Chism, Elijah Thomas, and Jakarr Sampson.

Bahrain open their campaign against Japan on July 12. They’ll then face Chinese Taipei’s national development team and Malaysia, followed by back-to-back games against teams from Australia, the UAE, Qatar, Chinese Taipei’s senior national team, and the Philippines.

The full match schedule is as follows:

- July 12, 8AM – Bahrain vs Japan
- July 13, 12PM – Bahrain vs Chinese Taipei B
- July 14, 8AM – Bahrain vs Malaysia
- July 15, 8AM – Bahrain vs Australia
- July 16, 8AM – Bahrain vs UAE
- July 17, 10AM – Bahrain

vs Qatar

- July 18, 2PM – Bahrain vs Chinese Taipei A
- July 19, 10AM – Bahrain vs Philippines

The field features national teams, university sides, and clubs from Bahrain, Japan, Malaysia, Australia, the UAE, Qatar, the Philippines, and hosts Chinese Taipei.

Building Toward Tunisia

The Bahrain Basketball Association sees the tournament as a key part of its strategy to elevate the national team through top level exposure. The experience is expected to help with their preparations ahead of the Arab Nations Championship in Tunisia, which kicks off July 25.

Bahrain’s return to the William Jones Cup, nearly half a century since their last appearance, reflects the federation’s serious intent to raise their game across Asia.

Road to Asian Cup begins

Bahrain women kick off historic Asian Cup qualifying bid today

● Bahrain face Bangladesh today at 3:30PM

● Only group winners advance

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Bahrain’s women’s national football team begin their bid to reach the AFC Women’s Asian Cup for the first time today at 3:30PM as they face Bangladesh in Yangon, Myanmar. The match is the opening fixture of Group C in the qualifiers, with Bahrain also drawn alongside Turkmenistan and the hosts Myanmar.

It’s a short but important campaign, with only the group winner advancing to next year’s tournament in Australia, which is Asia’s premier women’s football competition.

Tough Build-Up

Bahrain’s preparations have been constrained by time, but head coach Mohammed Adnan remains optimistic about the team’s readiness.

“We hope to put in a strong performance,” said Adnan. “The preparation period went well overall. We played friendlies against the UAE and were later invited for another match against Saudi, which was also a helpful experience for the team. The group we’re in offers a real opportunity for qualification,



and we’re going in with that goal in mind.”

“Our preparation was good considering the time,” said forward Hessa Al Isa. “We had two training camps and some trial matches. The results were positive, and we’ve seen real progress. The period was short, but we tried not to rush, we just want to get the most out of it.”

“There’s nothing impossible,” added Al Isa. “We’ve had small matches to build momentum. Now it’s about showing what we can do.”

Experience and Youth

Rawan Al Ali believes the team’s strength lies in its mix of

senior players and up-and-coming talents, despite the challenge of competing against better-prepared sides.

“First of all, we’re grateful we even had some time to prepare, even if it wasn’t much,” she said. “Our group isn’t easy. Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, and Myanmar all have more preparation than us. But with the experience we have, and the training we’ve done, we believe qualification is within reach.”

Al Ali pointed to the balance of experience and youthful energy as a defining feature of this team.

“Some teams are just coming back after years away. For us, it’s about the older players sharing



their knowledge, and the younger ones using their energy and speed. Together, they complete each other.”

She concluded with measured confidence: “Maybe we lack experience. But as a squad, and with the support of the whole team behind us, inshAllah , we can do something good.”

One Spot, One Dream

The AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualifiers feature 34 teams split into eight groups, with only the group winners progressing. Bahrain’s group, hosted in Yangon, sees all matches played at Thuwunna Stadium. The team will

face Turkmenistan on Wednesday before concluding their

campaign next Saturday against Myanmar.

Elsewhere in the qualifiers, teams such as Jordan, Thailand, Vietnam, and North Korea are battling across other groups, but only one winner from each pool will join pre-qualified sides Australia, Japan, South Korea, and China at the main event next March.

This is the 21st edition of the AFC Women’s Asian Cup, and Bahrain are determined to make it their first.

Bahrain has never qualified for the AFC Women’s Asian Cup despite participating in qualifiers since 2007.

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