

Keritchenko **dominates** Freediving showdown

Bahraini season sees record 4:44 underwater feat



Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Russian-born Bahraini resident Andrei Keritchenko claimed first place in the Freediving – HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa Round, part of the 8th Nasser Bin Hamad Season for Maritime Heritage Sports. The competition was held in the waters adjacent to the Yacht Marina on Amwaj Islands.

Keritchenko, who won the title in last year's edition, posted a remarkable 4 minutes and 44 seconds underwater, setting the benchmark for the event and outlasting his rivals. Mahmood Mohammed Al Jaser finished second with 4 minutes and 14 seconds, while Fahad Ahmed Al Boustah took third place in 3 minutes and 29 seconds.

The contest attracted around 50 participants, featuring amateur enthusiasts and maritime

sports fans alike, all competing in a highly organized setting with strict safety measures in place. Spectators enjoyed the action-packed event along the coastline.

The freediving competition forms part of the broader Nasser Bin Hamad Season for Maritime Heritage Sports, which began in July and runs through mid-November. The season includes open-water swimming races, pearl diving, traditional rowing competitions, fish-catching contests, and the

newly introduced "Al Niham" event, featuring participants from Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

The season is organized under the directives of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs, and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, aiming to celebrate Bahrain's maritime heritage and instill national pride in younger generations.



Bassam Al Dhaif with his Grand Slam gold medal in China

Bassam Al Dhaif strikes grand slam **gold**

Teen taekwondo talent wins world title in China

● **Bassam Al Dhaif wins Grand Slam gold**

● **Victory achieved at age just 17**

● **Trains in Oman but stays tied to Bahrain**

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Bahraini taekwondo prodigy Bassam Hassan Al Dhaif won gold at the World Taekwondo Grand Slam. The annual event, hosted in China, attracts competitors from dozens of nations worldwide. Al Dhaif competed as part of a squad alongside players from Oman.

At just 17 years old, Bassam's success highlights the ambition and talent of Bahrain's rising generation. He dedicated the achievement to His Majesty the King, the government and people of Bahrain, as well as to HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of HM the King for Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, President of the General Sports Authority, and President of the Bahrain Olympic Committee.

Path to Victory

Bassam revealed the victory was the result of long-term physical and mental preparations, including participation in both local and international competitions. He credited his coaches, Master Adel Al Wuhaibi and Mohammed Al Mahrouti from Oman, as well as his parents, for their unwavering support.

"I focused on applying my coaches' tactical advice in every bout, using my strikes with precision and skill against each opponent until I reached the gold," Bassam said.

To continue developing his abilities, Bassam joined a world-renowned taekwondo academy in Oman, competing with their team in high-level tournaments that refined his technique and boosted his experience. Despite his move, he maintains close ties to Bahrain, training with local academies during his visits to further strengthen his skills and address areas for improvement.



The World Taekwondo Grand Slam, staged annually in China, is one of the sport's most prestigious events, drawing elite athletes from across the globe.

Smiling Gauff romps into US Open last 16

New York, United States

Coco Gauff shrugged off her early round struggles to move into the last 16 of the US Open on Saturday with a straight-sets victory over Poland's Magdalena Frech.

Gauff, who had been reduced to tears during a laboured win over Donna Vekic on Thursday, produced her best performance of the tournament to down 28th seed Frech 6-3, 6-1 in one hour 13 minutes.

The American third seed's preparations for the US Open were thrown into turmoil when she took the decision to shake up her coaching team in an effort to improve her service game, just days before competition got under way.

While her serve remained a problem in the opening rounds, Gauff got it working smoothly in Saturday's match on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court.



Alcaraz, Djokovic into US Open last 16 as Sabalenka avenges defeat

AFP | New York, United States

Carlos Alcaraz and Novak Djokovic moved closer to a potential semi-final clash at the US Open on Friday, while Aryna Sabalenka avenged a painful defeat to power into the women's last 16.

Spanish second seed Alcaraz swept aside Italian 32nd seed Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-4, 6-0 in just one hour 44 minutes on Arthur Ashe Stadium. The 2022 champion will face France's Arthur Rinderknech next, who beat compatriot Benjamin Bonzi in four sets. Alcaraz required a medical timeout for treatment on his right knee but said afterwards he had no injury concerns.

Djokovic, chasing a record 25th Grand Slam singles crown, battled past Britain's Cam Norrie 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-3 in the evening session. The 38-year-old Serb became the oldest man to reach the US Open last 16 since Jimmy Connors in 1991. He next meets German veteran Jan-Lennard Struff, who ended American hopes with a straight-sets win over Frances Tiafoe.

Tiafoe admitted the loss left him "very, very down," while fellow American Ben Shelton

was also forced out, retiring in tears against Frenchman Adrian Mannarino with a left shoulder injury. That left Taylor Fritz, last year's runner-up, to carry home hopes. The fourth seed overcame Swiss qualifier Jerome Kym 7-6 (7/3), 6-7 (9/11), 6-4, 6-4.

In the women's draw, world number one Sabalenka banished the memory of her 2021 semi-final defeat to Leylah Fernandez, beating the Canadian 6-3, 7-6 (7/2). "I wanted this revenge badly," said Sabalenka, who extended her remarkable tie-break record to 18 straight wins. She now faces Spain's Cristina Bucsa, who upset Elise Mertens.

Elsewhere, American Taylor Townsend stunned fifth seed Mirra Andrejeva 7-5, 6-2, while ninth seed Elena Rybakina

also progressed, defeating Victoria Azarenka 6-1, 7-5 to set up an all-American clash with Ann Li in the fourth round.

US fourth seed Jessica Pegula also progressed, defeating Victoria Azarenka 6-1, 7-5 to set up an all-American clash with Ann Li in the fourth round.



Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka

Djokovic