

Bahrain's Ahli bow to Kuwait SC in Gulf handball



Action from Ahli's loss to Kuwait SC last night

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Ahli Club were dealt a tough start to their campaign in the 39th Gulf Clubs Men's Handball Championship, being hosted by the Kingdom.

The Bahraini representatives lost to their rivals from Kuwait SC of Kuwait 20-27 in their opening fixture in Group B of the preliminary round.

Ahli trailed 10-13 at the half and could not close the gap over the final 30 minutes.

In yesterday's other Group B game, Sharjah of the UAE and Al Safa of Saudi Arabia played to a 24-all stalemate.

Bahrain's Ahli are now at the bottom of their division table, with Kuwait on top followed by Sharjah and Safa.

Ahli will be looking to bounce back when they return to the playing court at the Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town tomorrow against Safa at 7pm, while Sharjah and

Kuwait lock horns at 5pm.

Group A is comprised of defending champions Al Najma Club, who are Bahrain's other representatives in the tournament, along with Al Salmiya of Kuwait, Al Arabi of Qatar and Al Ahli Sidab of Oman.

In today's fixtures, Salmiya and Arabi face off in the early game at 5pm, followed by Najma looking for their second straight win when they play against Ahli Sidab.

The preliminaries continue until Monday next week, after which the semi-finals will take place with the top two clubs from each of the two groups advancing.

Najma won last year's Gulf handball title after defeating Saudi outfit Mudhar in the tournament final in Kuwait City. It was the sixth time the Bahraini side claimed the coveted championship. Their triumph also ended a two-decade title drought, as their previous victories came in 2001, 1998, 1990, 1985 and 1984.

Dar Kulaib dominant in West Asian volleyball

Bahraini giants register three-set sweep of Shabab Nabi Ilyas from Palestine in opener

● Nasser Anan, signed from Al Ahli, top scores for Dar Kulaib with 14 points

● Bahrainis set to return to playing court today against Al Rayyan of Qatar

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Bahrain volleyball giants Dar Kulaib yesterday made a dominant start to their title bid in the first West Asia Men's Club Championship, currently being played in Amman, Jordan.

The Kingdom's representatives posted a clean 3-0 (25-5, 25-14, 25-8) sweep of Shabab Nabi Ilyas from Palestine in their opening fixture in Group B of the tournament's preliminary round.

The competition is being organised and run by the West Asia Volleyball Association and it is scheduled to take place until March 18.

Dar Kulaib are the lone Bahraini side competing.

Nasser Anan was their top scorer in the contest with 14 points. Anan was signed specifically for this event from fellow-Bahraini volleyball juggernauts Al Ahli.

Also playing key roles for their team were Mohammed Yaqoob, Ali Habib, Mahmoud Abdulwahed, Ayman Isa, Hasan Alaiwi, libero Hussain Sultan, and Argentinian professional Juan Barrera.

Dar Kulaib are coached by Brazilian Leandro Kakaroto.

They and Shabab Nabi Ilyas are in the same pool as Al



Dar Kulaib's Juan Barrera attacks the opposition's double block

Rayyan of Qatar, South Gas SC of Iraq and Shabab Al Hussein of Jordan.

Dar Kulaib return to the playing court today in a crucial contest against Rayyan. The game is scheduled to get underway at 5pm, Bahrain time. They are then set to play South Gas on

Sunday before facing Shabab Al Hussein in their final group fixture on Monday.

Meanwhile, Group A in the tournament features Kuwait SC of Kuwait, Police SC of Qatar, Almeena VC of Yemen, Oman SC of Oman and home team Al Wehdat.



Dar Kulaib players and team officials prior to yesterday's game



Dar Kulaib are in Group B of the tournament's preliminary round along with Shabab Nabi Ilyas of Palestine, Al Rayyan of Qatar, South Gas SC of Iraq and Shabab Al Hussein of Jordan. They need to finish in the top four to advance to the quarter-finals

Following a single round-robin, the top four teams in each group march through to the tournament's quarter-finals, which will be held in the knockout system.

Aside from the West Asia men's tournament, Dar Kulaib are also set to compete in the Golden Square semi-finals of the 2022/2023 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Khawaja's 'very special' ton stamps Australia's day one dominance

AFP | Ahmedabad

Australia opener Usman Khawaja yesterday said emotions took over after he struck his first Test century in India as the tourists dominated the opening day of the fourth match.

Australia reached 255-4 at stumps after they won the toss and elected to bat in their bid to square the four-match series at the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad.

After a long grind, Khawaja was batting on 104 alongside Cameron Green, on 49, at close of play as the pair put together an attacking stand of 85.

The left-handed Khawaja put on key stands including a 79-run third-wicket partnership with skipper Steve Smith, who made 38, to hand Australia a strong start.

The Pakistan-born Khawaja jumped up in joy after he raised the second hundred of



Australia's Usman Khawaja plays a shot

Throughout the middle of my career I got told I couldn't play spin and that's why I never got an opportunity to play in India

USMAN KHAWAJA

a low-scoring series with a boundary in the final over of the day.

"A lot of emotion in that. I have been to India two tours before this and carried the drinks for eight Test matches, so it was a long journey to finally hit a hundred in India," Khawaja told broadcaster Star Sports.

Najma power into volleyball league finals

TDT | Manama

Al Najma last night barged into the championship series of the 2022/2023 Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League.

Najma secured their berth after sweeping past Muharraq 3-0 (25-21, 25-20, 25-18) in their Golden Square semi-final match, played at the Isa bin Rashid Arena at Isa Sports City in Riffa.

The victors had a twice-to-beat advantage in the contest, and with the result, earned their direct place in the finals, which will be played in best-of-three format for the title.

With their two-set lead last night, Najma headed into the third determined to close things out. They were up 20-15 and then went in for the kill.

Najma were spearheaded by their key players including Estonian professional Kevin Saar and Bahraini stars Ali Ebrahim, Fadhel Abbas, Hassan Dhahi and Mohammed Habib, to



Al Najma's Ali Ebrahim looks to attack Muharraq's double block

name a few.

For Muharraq, putting in a valiant effort were Nigerian Samuel Anthony Ogwuche, Abbas Ehsan, Hussain Khalifa, Hassan Al Haddad and Sayed Ali Mohammed, among others.

Najma are now set to take on

the winners of the other final four match-up between Dar Kulaib and Al Ahli. They play a best-of-three series following Dar Kulaib's participation in the ongoing first West Asia Men's Club Championship in Amman.