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GROUP A

GROUP PROFILE

Group A of the AFC Asian Cup finals brings together the champions of west and east Asia, the tournament hosts and a nation often seen as the dark horse of the continental championship.

Kuwait's win in the West Asian Championship in Jordan in October heralded a return to the top level of Asian football for the 1980 Asian Cup winners and 10-time Gulf Cup champions.

China's victory in February at the East Asian Championship, meanwhile, gave Gao Hongbo's team a reason to be confident after a tough spell for football in the world's most populous nation.

Add into the mix a Qatar team that will now be playing every game with one eye on the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals – which Qatar will host – and an Uzbekistan side that is running out of time to prove themselves capable of surpassing the continent's best, and Group A has the potential to be a combustible combination.

Hosts Qatar have a tricky start to the tournament on January 7 when they take on the Uzbeks while eastern and western champions China and Kuwait go head-to-head in the same round, meeting at Al Gharafa Stadium the following day.

From there, China and Qatar face off at Khalifa International Stadium on January 12 as Kuwait and Uzbekistan do battle and the group is concluded with China meeting the Uzbeks and Kuwait playing Qatar in an all-Gulf clash.

GROUP A

QATAR



KUWAIT



CHINA PR



UZBAKISTAN





QATAR

Name	Qatar National Team
Full Association name	Qatar Football Association
Foundation	1960
FIFA Affiliation	1970
AFC Affiliation	1972



Qatar hosts the AFC Asian Cup for the second time aiming to make a more significant impact on the competition than in the past.

The Gulf state's record at the continental championship is disappointing, the nation having only progressed beyond the group stages of the tournament on one occasion – when they were knocked out in the quarter-finals by China in Lebanon in 2000 - in seven previous appearances.

A significant amount of development work, however, is likely to change that in the long run as the nation begins to prepare for the hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup finals.

That process will start in earnest at the 2011 AFC Asian Cup and Bruno Metsu and his team will have to show the kind of form that saw the country win the Gulf Cup title back in 2004 before claiming the gold medal at the Asian Games two years later.

Qatar's preparations for the hosting of the tournament were relatively inauspicious as they exited the 2010 edition of the Gulf Cup in Yemen – held just over a month before the start of the AFC Asian Cup TM – at the group stage, winning just once.

But with a squad featuring the talents of attacking midfielder Hussein Yasser, former AFC Player of the Year Khalfan Ibrahim and Brazil-born midfielder Fabio Cesar, Qatar will no doubt put up a stern challenge.

Hosting the tournament will no doubt be a major fillip for the team – the host nation has reached the final of the AFC Asian Cup at eight of the previous 14 finals – and Qatar should be buoyed by the benefit of home support.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Saad Al Sheeb - 19/02/1990 (GOALKEEPER)

Young goalkeeper Saad Al Sheeb made his way into the national team after impressive performances with his club Al Sadd in the Qatari league this season. Al Sheeb started his career with Al Sadd's youth team in 2002 before he was promoted to the first squad two years ago.

Qasem Burhan - 15/12/1985 (GOALKEEPER)

After being second-choice goalkeeper behind Mohamad Saqr, Qasem Burhan became the number 1 between the posts for the Qatar national team. He started in last two matches of the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers against Australia and Japan. He currently plays with Qatar champions Al Gharafa after moving in 2008 from Al Rayyan.

Mohammed Mubarak - 11/08/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Mohammed Mubarak is considered as the third choice goalkeeper in Qatar national team. He was called up for the national team after his impressive displays for Qatar SC last season for the squad that faced Estonia in a friendly match in February 2010.

Ibrahim Majed - 12/05/1990 (DEFENDER)

Ibrahim Majed started his career at Al Wakra before joining Al Sadd in 2006. He was chosen as the most promising Qatari player of the year in 2006. Despite being a defender, Majed is known for his attacking endeavours as he scored three goals for Al Sadd in the league last season.

Ibrahim Al Ghanim - 27/06/1983 (DEFENDER)

Ibrahim Al Ghanim started his career with Al Arabi's youth team in 1994. He was a member of the Qatar squad which won the gold medal at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha before breaking into the full national team. He was a member of the squad that featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Bilal Mohammed - 02/06/1986 (DEFENDER)

A solid defender with Qatar champions Al Gharafa, Bilal Mohammed has been a steady performer in the recent years, leading his club to the Qatar league title in the last three seasons. He was part of Qatar squads at the AFC Asian Cup in 2004 and 2007.

Mesaad Ali - 11/02/1986 (DEFENDER)

A 24-year-old defender, Mesaad Ali became an essential player for Qatari champions Al Sadd and his impressive displays earned him a call up for the national team. He won the gold medal with Qatar in the 2006 Asian Games and he was part of the team that featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Hamid Ismaeil - 16/06/1986 (DEFENDER)

Despite being a defender, Hamid Ismaeil made his name in the 2008 Olympic Gulf Cup when he scored three goals to become joint top scorer of the tournament. He featured recently in the Asian Games in Guangzhou and in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Mohammed Kasola - 13/08/1986 (DEFENDER)

Mohammed Kasola started his career with Mesaimmer before joining Al Khor in 2009. He then moved to Al Sadd in January 2010, just two months before making his first appearance for the senior Qatar national football team in a friendly match against Slovenia.

Abdulaziz Al Sulaiti - 11/06/1988 (DEFENDER)

Abdulaziz Al Sulaiti made his debut for the Qatar national football team during the 2009 International Friendship Tournament. He was also a member of the U17 squad which played in the 2005 FIFA U17 World Cup in Peru where he featured in Qatar's three matches in the group stage.

Wesam Rizik - 05/02/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Wesam Rizik joined Al Sadd from Qatar SC on June 2004 just one month before playing for the Qatar national team at the 2004 Asian Cup. He also featured in the 2007 Asian Cup. After playing one season with Al Khor, he returned to Al Sadd and featured recently in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Talal Al Bloushi - 22/05/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Kuwait-born midfielder Talal Al Bloushi started his football career in Kuwait with Al Nasr club in 1999. After playing two years with Al Nasr he moved to Qatar where he joined Al Sadd in 2001. He featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup with Qatar and was part of the squad that played in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Hasan Al Haydos - 20/01/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Young talent Hasan Al Haydos made his mark with Al Sadd at the age of 17 and he was called to the national team one year later. He featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, playing against Bahrain, Australia and Japan.

Lawrence – 22/08/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Ghana-born central midfielder Lawrence Quaye will be representing Qatar for the first time after spending four years with Al Gharafa. Quaye started his career with Liberty Professionals in 2001 just one year before moving to French outfit AS Saint Etienne. He returned to his home club in 2004 before playing one year in Syria with Al Ittihad and in July 2007 he joined his current club Al Gharafa.

Fabio Cesar - 24/02/1979 (MIDFIELDER)

Brazil-born Fabio Cesar enjoyed a successful career in Italy, where he played for Udinese and Napoli, before joining Al Arabi in 2005 and then Umm Salal. He became eligible to play for Qatar in 2008 and has been a regular feature for Qatar ever since.

Khalfan Ibrahim - 18/02/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the finest talents in Qatar and the region, Khalfan Ibrahim was named the AFC Player of the Year in 2006 when he was only 18 years old. His debut with the national team was in 2007 in an AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Bangladesh where he scored two goals. However, he missed the finals due to injury.

Khaled Muttah - 02/07/1992 (MIDFIELDER)

The youngest player in the Qatar squad for the 2011 AFC Asian Cup, Khaled Muttah hit the headlines in 2009 with his first club Al Wakra before moving to his current club Lekhwiya at the start of this season. He previously played with Qatar's U16 and U19 national teams while he is currently a member of the Qatar Olympic team as well.

Hussain Yaser - 09/01/1984 (FORWARD)

One of the most famous Qatari players, Hussain Yaser played outside Qatar when he was loaned by Manchester United to Belgium's Royal Antwerp in 2002. After having spells with AEL Limassol FC in Cyprus and the reserve team of Manchester City, he returned to Qatar before he moved to Egypt where he played for Al Ahly before joining Zamalek.

Sebastian Suria - 08/11/1983 (FORWARD)

After playing for Liverpool Montevideo in 2002, Uruguay-born forward Sebastian Suria moved to Qatar in 2004 where he joined Al Gharafa and led them to win the 2005 Qatar league by scoring 14 goals. He then moved to Qatar SC and in 2006 he was given Qatar nationality and featured at the 2007 Asian Cup.

Ali Afif - 20/01/1988 (FORWARD)

Ali Afif was one of three Qataris to score at the 2005 FIFA U17 World Championship in Peru and the 22-year-old's performances with Al Sadd since then have seen him graduate to the full national side. He featured for Qatar in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup squad.

Jaralla Al Marri - 03/04/1988 (FORWARD)

The 22-year-old forward Jaralla Al Marri was a member of the Qatar team that played in the 2005 FIFA U17 World Cup in Peru. His recent form in the league earned him a place in Qatar squad that played in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Mohamed El Sayed - 01/01/1987 (FORWARD)

Mohamad El Sayed was a member of the Umm Salal squad that featured in the semi-finals of the 2009 AFC Champions League. He took part with Qatar Olympic team in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers before he was called to the full national team in 2008.

Yusef Ahmed - 14/10/1988 (FORWARD)

The 22-year-old forward Yusef Ahmed was a member of the Qatar U17 team that took part in the 2004 AFC U17 Championship. Ahmed started his career with Al Sadd in 2005 before joining Qatar SC on loan in September 2009. He was a member of the Qatar Olympic team that took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers before he featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.



BRUNO METSU

Frenchman Bruno Metsu took over as head coach of the Qatar national team after spending the previous six years working all over the Middle East.

After making a name for himself leading Senegal to the quarter-finals of the FIFA World Cup in 2002, Metsu took over at Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates, picking up the AFC Champions League title in that competition's inaugural year in 2003.

From there he has worked in Saudi Arabia with Al Ittihad and led the United Arab Emirates' national team to the Gulf Cup title in 2006 before being appointed Qatar national coach in 2008.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
06 January Thursday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
07 January Friday	19:15	Qatar vs. Uzbekistan	Khalifa Stadium
11 January Tuesday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
12 January Wednesday	19:15	China PR vs. Qatar	Khalifa Stadium
15 January Saturday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
16 January Saturday	19:15	Qatar vs. Kuwait	Khalifa Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Ali Al Salat





KUWAIT

Name	Kuwait National Team
Full Association name	Kuwait Football Association
Foundation	1952
FIFA Affiliation	1962
AFC Affiliation	1962



Kuwait's victory at the Gulf Cup in Yemen in December saw the country make their return to the top of the regional game just months after also capturing the West Asian Championship in Jordan.

Those wins were a welcome return to form for a country that has long been one of the leaders of the continental scene having won the AFC Asian Cup back in 1980 as well as qualifying for the 1982 FIFA World Cup finals and the finals of the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

The Gulf Cup win was a record 10th for Kuwait and the country's first since 1998 and football fans in the state will be hoping it signals the beginning of a new era of prosperity for the Kuwaitis.

Kuwait's success at international level has coincided with the appointment of Serbian coach Goran Tufegdzcic, who took over from Mohammed Ibrahim in early 2009 and he has since seen an upswing in the team's fortunes.

Tufegdzcic was at the helm to oversee his team's qualification for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup, finishing as runners-up in a group that also featured Australia, Indonesia and 2008 Gulf Cup winners Oman.

Kuwait's qualification for the AFC Asian Cup and the country's return to the top table of the continental game coincides with a strong showing being made internationally by the country's leading clubs.

Both Al Qadsia and Al Kuwait have excelled in the AFC Cup in recent seasons, with Al Kuwait winning the title in 2009 and Al Qadsia – inspired by the striking talents of two-time AFC Player of the Year nominee Bader Al Mutwa – finishing as runners-up in 2010.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Nawaf Al Khaldi - 25/05/1981 (GOALKEEPER)

Nawaf Al Khaldi began his football career in 1995 at Kheitan and played there for six years before moving to Kuwaiti giants Al Qadisiya in 2001. The 29-year-old, who is known for his bravery between the posts, played a major role in Kuwait's recent triumph in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Khaled Al Rashidi - 20/04/1987 (GOALKEEPER)

Despite his relatively young age, Khaled Al Rashidi has already established himself as one of the best young goalkeepers in Kuwaiti football. He made his professional debut for Al Tadamon at the age of 18 in 2005, having joined the club as an 11-year-old. He moved to Slovakia to play for Tatra Presov in 2008 but returning to Kuwait two years later, where he initially signed for Al Sulaibikhat before moving to Al Arabi.

Hameed Al Qallaf - 10/08/1987 (GOALKEEPER)

Having joined Al Yarmouk at the age of 10, Hameed Al Qallaf graduated to the senior side by the time he was 15 and joined Al Salmiya in 2007 when he turned 20. He played for Kuwait's U23 side in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and also played for the senior national team in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Mesad Nada - 08/07/1983 (DEFENDER)

One of the most dependable defenders in Kuwait, Mesad Nada has been a mainstay of the national team since he made his international debut at the age of 19. He began his professional career in 2001 with Al Qadisiya and joined Qatari club Al Wakra in 2004 on a one-year loan. He has remained on the books of Al Qadisiya although he spent two seasons on loan in Saudi Arabia, first with Al Nasr in 2008 before moving to their Riyadh city rival Al Shabab a year later.

Hussain Fadhel - 09/10/1984 (DEFENDER)

Hussain Fadhel started his career with Al Qadisiya in 2003 and earned his first call-up to the Kuwait national team five years later.

The 26-year-old defender played in the qualifying competitions for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the 2011 AFC Asian Cup.

Fahad Awad - 26/02/1985 (DEFENDER)

Fahad Awad started his career with Al Kuwait in 2004 and helped them to win the league title for three consecutive seasons. He was called up to the national team in 2005 and took part in the qualifiers for the 2006 FIFA World Cup and the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Yaqoub Al Taher - 27/10/1983 (DEFENDER)

Yaqoub Al Taher began playing football at Al Yurmok but his career really took off in 2003 when he joined Al Kuwait and earned his first cap with the Kuwait national team. He played for his country at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and he had a short spell in Saudi Arabia when he went to Al Ittifaq on loan in 2009.

Ahmad Al Rashidi - 16/08/1983 (DEFENDER)

Ahmad Al Rashidi started his career with Al Shabab before going out on loan to Al Tadamon in 2007. After a short spell there, he joined Al Arabi in a permanent move in 2007. The 26-year-old centre-back was called up to the national team in 2010 and was a member of the squad that won the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Amer Matoug - 21/04/1988 (DEFENDER)

The 22-year-old midfielder graduated to Kuwait's national side after playing at various youth levels for his country. He played in the AFC U17 Championship in 2004 and was part of the U23 side during the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. He also played a major role in Al Qadisiya's run to the final of the AFC Cup in 2010.

Ali Maqseed -11/12/1986 (DEFENDER)

Ali Maqseed started his youth career with Al Arabi in 1996 at the age of 10 and spent a decade rising through the ranks before finally making it to the senior team. He was called up by Kuwait for the first time in 2006 and played in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. He

was also a member of the squad that won the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Saleh Al Sheikh - 29/05/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

Saleh Al Sheikh is an influential midfielder for both his club, Al Qadisiya, and the Kuwait national team. He played in the qualifiers for the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and the 2010 FIFA World Cup and was a member of the squad which recently won the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Fahed Al Ebrahim - 25/02/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Fahed Al Ebrahim started his career with Al Qadisiya and became a fixture in the first team in 2006. He won the Kuwait League twice with his club and was a member of Kuwait's U23 team in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers before he received his first senior call-up in 2008.

Talal Al Amer - 22/02/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Talal Al Amer began his career with Al Qadisiya and became a key player in the team in 2007. He was called up by the Kuwait national team for the first time the following year and also took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. He recently won the 2010 Gulf Cup with the national team.

Walied Ali - 03/11/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

Walied Ali is regarded as one of the best midfielders in Kuwait. He started his career with Kheitan in 2001 and played there for three years before moving to his current club, Al Kuwait. He has played for the national team since 2002 and he played an important role in Kuwait's success in the 2010 Gulf Cup, scoring the winning goal in the final.

Ahmad Ajab – 13/05/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Ahmad Ajab started his career with Al Sahel in 2004 before moving to Al Qadisiya in 2007, where he became the top scorer in the Kuwait league. The 26-year-old forward was loaned out to Al Shabab of Saudi Arabia in 2009 but he returned to Al Qadisiya after a short spell.

Jarah Al Ateeqi - 15/10/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Jarah Al Ateeqi has spent his entire football career with Al Kuwait, breaking into the senior squad in 2002 and helping them to win three domestic league titles and the 2009 AFC Cup. He was called up by Kuwait's national team for the first time in 2003 and he was a member of the team that played in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals.

Abdullah Al Shamali - 19/01/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdullah Al Shamali was a key member of the Kuwait side that played in the AFC U17 Championship, appearing in all four matches for his side. He started his career with Al Arabi in 1999 but only broke into the senior team in 2007 at the age of 19.

Fahad Al Enezi - 01/09/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

After some impressive performances for Kazma in the AFC Cup in 2010, Fahad al Enezi earned a place in the Kuwait national team. The 22-year-old midfielder played an important role in Kuwait's 2010 WAFF Championship victory and he also won the Gulf Cup that same year, when he was chosen as the best player of the tournament.

Abdulaziz Mashan - 19/10/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdulaziz Mashan was a member of Kuwait's U17 team which played in the 2004 AFC U17 Championship. He started his football career with Al Qadisiya before making it to the first team in 2007. He scored four goals for his club during their run to the AFC Cup final in 2010.

Yusef Naser - 09/10/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

Yusef Naser is one of the most promising forwards in Kuwait after impressing with some superb performances in 2010, particularly with his club Kazma in the AFC Cup, in which he scored four goals. He got his first call-up to the senior national team in 2010,

having already represented his country at U16 and U19 level.

Bader Al Mutwa - 10/01/1985 (FORWARD)

One of the best forwards in Kuwait in recent years, Bader Al Mutwa joined Al Qadisiya at the age of 17 in 2002 and he was called up to the national team for the first time a year later. He was a nominee for the AFC Player of the Year award in 2006 and played for Kuwait in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals, scoring against the UAE during the group stage match.

Hamad Nayef - 05/10/1986 (FORWARD)

Hamad Nayef has spent his entire football career at Al Qadisiya and made his debut in 2004 at the age of 20. The striker was chosen to play for Kuwait's U23 side in the 2006 Asian Games and also played in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers where he finished as the second highest scorer. He received his first senior call-up in 2007 for an international friendly against Turkmenistan.

Khaled Khalaf - 15/08/1983 (FORWARD)

The son of coach Ahmed Khalaf, Khaled Khalaf began his career with Al Arabi in 2004 and emerged as the top scorer in Kuwait's Emir Cup a year later. His performances with Al Arabi earned him a place in the Kuwait national team and he appeared for his country in the qualifiers for the 2006 and 2010 FIFA World Cups.



GORAN TUFEGDZIC

The appointment of Serbian coach Goran Tufegdzcic as Kuwait national team coach in early 2009 saw a rekindling of the country's love affair with coaches from Eastern Europe.

The 39-year-old took over from Mohammed Ibrahim after previously working as his assistant and Tufegdzcic has garnered much of his experience as a coach while working in the Middle East, having previously also worked with Kuwaiti club Al Shabab.

Tufegdzcic has had a successful tenure since taking charge of the Kuwait team, leading the country to victory at the West Asian Championship and the Gulf Cup.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
07 January Friday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
08 January Saturday	16:15	Kuwait vs. China PR	Al-Gharafa Stadium
11 January Tuesday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
12 January Wednesday	16:15	Uzbekistan vs. Kuwait	Al-Gharafa Stadium
15 January Saturday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
16 January Saturday	19:15	Qatar vs. Kuwait	Khalifa Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Marzouq Al Ajmi





CHINA PR

Name	China PR National Team
Full Association name	China PR Football Association
Foundation	1924
FIFA Affiliation	1931
AFC Affiliation	1974



Despite being home to the world's largest population, China continues to fall short of turning the potential of their huge populous into success on the football pitch at international level.

The country has yet to be crowned champions at the AFC Asian Cup, although the national team has gone close on two occasions – in 1984 and on home soil 20 years later.

China lost out to Saudi Arabia in the final in 1984 in Singapore while in Beijing Arie Haan's side lost 3-1 to Japan in the 2004 final, the last time the Chinese have made a significant impact at continental level.

The run to the final on home soil came just two years after China qualified for the 2002 FIFA World Cup and represents the last hurrah for a side that was widely seen as the most accomplished generation in the country's history.

Since then, the fortunes of the national team have been on the slide with China failing to qualify for the final phase of Asia's qualifying tournament for both the 2006 and 2010 FIFA World Cups. However, there have been signs of a renaissance under current coach Gao Hongbo, who oversaw his side's win at the East Asian Championship in Japan in February 2010.

That success featured a first-ever win over Korea Republic as well as a draw with Japan and the tournament saw Gao enhance his reputation and that of his team.

China still have many obstacles to overcome, including a disappointing record at the AFC Asian Cup and Gao and his team will be determined not to repeat the failings of 2007, when China were eliminated at the group stage.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Yang Zhi – 15/01/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

Firmly established as China's number one between the posts, Yang Zhi has been in fine form for both club and country in recent seasons. He was instrumental in Beijing Guo'an winning the Chinese Super League title for the first time in 2009 and also helped his club to the knockout rounds of the 2010 AFC Champions League.

Zeng Cheng – 08/01/1987 (GOALKEEPER)

Zeng Cheng gained valuable experience playing overseas when he was a teenager when he spent a season on loan from Wuhan Guanggu at Indonesian side Persebaya. He returned after one season and joined Henan Construction at the start of the 2009, where his form earned him his first cap for the national team.

Guan Zheng – 06/02/1985 (GOALKEEPER)

Another young goalkeeper making his mark for Gao Hongbo's China team – all three keepers in the AFC Asian Cup squad are in their 20s – Guan Zheng's form helped steer Jiangsy Sainty to the Chinese second division title in 2008 and his performances in the top flight has been solid enough to earn a spot on the squad for Qatar 2011.

Rong Hao – 07/04/1987 (DEFENDER)

Left-back Rong Hao was a member of the team that won the East Asian Championship in Japan in 2010 – he started all three games - and he has also established himself as one of the Chinese Super League's leading defenders since joining Hangzhou Greentown at the start of 2010.

Li Xuepeng – 18/09/1988 (DEFENDER)

Versatile Li Xuepeng has played in both defence and midfield for his club side, Dalian Shide, but it is in the backline that the 22-year-old has appeared on his handful of appearances for the national team. Made his debut as a substitute for China in the surprise 1-0 win over France in June 2010.

Du Wei – 09/02/1982 (DEFENDER)

Du Wei was the youngest member of Bora Milutinovic's squad for the 2002 FIFA World Cup and he is one of only two players – the other is Qu Bo – to remain in the national squad from that team. The former Celtic and Shanghai Shenhua central defender captains the team and led China to the East Asian Championship in February 2010.

Zhao Peng – 20/06/1983 (DEFENDER)

One of the more experienced members of Gao Hongbo's squad, the Henan Jianye defender can play in most positions along the back line but is expected to partner Du Wei in the heart of defence in the absence of the injured Feng Xiaoting. He was a member of the China team that won the East Asian Championship in Japan in February 2010.

Wang Qiang – 23/07/1982 (DEFENDER)

Called up for national team duty for the first time against Palestine in mid-2009, Wang Qiang is a regular squad member but has only made a limited number of appearances for the China team. He was a member of the 2010 East Asian Championship winning squad but did not play in any of the three matches.

Li Jianbin – 19/04/1989 (DEFENDER)

Li Jianbin was a member of China's under-23 squad for the 2010 Asian Games held in Guangzhou in November and is the only player from that line-up to graduate to the AFC Asian Cup squad. An inexperienced defender, the 21-year-old has been included with one eye on the future.

Zhang Linpeng – 09/05/1989 (DEFENDER)

Highly-rated central defender Zhang Linpeng captained China at the Asian Games in Guangzhou in November and is seen as a future captain of the full national side. Scored on his debut against Jordan in December 2009 and was a member of the successful East Asian

Championship squad.

Liu Jianye – 17/06/1987 (DEFENDER)

Liu Jianye brings versatility to the China squad as he can play in both defence and midfield and over the last three seasons he has been a regular for his club side Changsha Ginde. Gao Hongbo included the 23-year-old in his squad for the East Asian Championship, although Liu did not play a part in any of tournament's three matches.

Hao Junmin – 24/03/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

A two-time winner of Chinese football's young player of the year award, right-sided midfielder Hao Junmin joined Bundesliga side Schalke 04 in March 2010 from Chinese Super League side Tianjin Teda. Hao has appeared at all levels for China, including at the 2008 Olympic Games, when the Chinese hosted the tournament in Beijing.

Yu Hai – 04/06/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Left-sided midfielder Yu Hai spent a season with Vitesse Arnhem in the Dutch league, but his time there was cut short due to a knee injury and he returned to China in July 2008, rejoining the Shaanxi Chanba club where he had played before moving to Europe. Since his return to the Chinese Super League, Yu has become a regular for both Shaanxi and the national team.

Yang Hao – 19/08/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

A regular in central midfield under Gao Hongbo, Yang Hao was a member of the Chinese squad that won the East Asian Championship in Japan in February 2010. Yang, who can also play as a striker, also collected a Chinese Super League winners medal with Beijing Guo'an in 2009.

Zhao Xuri – 03/12/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Zhao Xuri made his debut for China just days after his 18th birthday at the 2003 East Asian Championship and he was a member of

China's Olympic team for the Beijing Games in 2008. The arrival of Gao Hongbo has seen Zhao become a regular in the squad and he was a member of the 2010 East Asian Championship winning side.

Huang Bowen – 13/07/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

A Chinese Super League winner with Beijing Guo'an in 2008, Huang Bowen has experience of continental competition in the AFC Champions League while he was also a member of the squad that won the 2010 East Asian Championship. The central midfielder holds the record as the youngest goal scorer in the Chinese Super League.

Zhou Haibin – 19/07/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Shandong Luneng midfielder Zhou Haibin spent 10 months during 2009 contracted to Dutch giants PSV Eindhoven but failed to impress at the Eredivise side and made a rapid return to the Chinese Super League, where he helped Shandong reclaim the domestic title and qualify for the 2010 AFC Champions League.

Yu Tao – 15/10/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the oldest players in the squad, the Shanghai Shenhua veteran brings much-needed experience to the center of China's midfield. Won the league title with Shanghai in 2003, the same year he made his debut for the national team. However, this will be his first appearance at the AFC Asian Cup, having missed out in 2004 and 2007.

Qu Bo – 15/07/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Once linked with a move to English Premier League side Tottenham Hotspur, Qu Bo is – along with captain Du Wei – the only surviving member of China's 2002 FIFA World Cup squad currently selected for national team duty. A versatile player, Qu can play either in midfield or attack.

Deng Zhuoxiang – 24/10/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Deng Zhuoxiang came to prominence when he scored a fine individual goal in China's 3-0 victory over Korea Republic at the East Asian Championship in February 2010 and followed that up by claiming the only goal in China's win over France prior to the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa. Won the Chinese Super League title with Shandong Luneng.

Wang Song – 12/10/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Wang Song can play either on the left side of midfield or in attack, with his goal scoring exploits helping Chengdu Blades gain promotion to the Chinese Super League in 2007. Joined Hangzhou Greentown at the start of 2010 following Chengdu's relegation.

Gao Lin – 14/02/1986 (FORWARD)

Tall and physically strong, Gao Lin has emerged as the key striker for the Chinese national team since Gao Hongbo took charge, even though the former Shanghai Shenhua striker has been playing in his country's second division throughout 2010. Gao's goals – he scored 20 times last season – helped seal the second-tier title for Guangzhou Evergrande, earning the club promotion to China's top flight.

Yang Xu – 12/02/1988 (FORWARD)

Yang Xu scored his first goal for China in the AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2011™ qualifying match against Vietnam – when he was playing in the country's second division for Liaoning FC - and since then he has established himself as a regular in the squad, featuring in the team that won the East Asian Championship in Japan in 2010.



GAO HONGBO

Former national team striker Gao Hongbo was named China coach in May 2009 when he became the youngest man ever to coach the national team and since then he has embarked on a process of improving the stature of a team that had struggled over the preceding five years.

Gao came to prominence as a coach when he led Changchun Yatai to the Chinese Super League title in 2007, his first stint as a head coach after previously working as an assistant to Dutchman Arie Haan during his time as national team coach.

Gao's biggest achievement since taking over as China coach was to lead the country to the East Asian Championship title in February 2010.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
07 January Friday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
08 January Saturday	16:15	Kuwait vs. China PR	Al-Gharafa Stadium
11 January Tuesday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
12 January Wednesday	19:15	China PR vs. Qatar	Khalifa Stadium
15 January Saturday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
16 January Saturday	19:15	China PR vs. Uzbekistan	Al-Gharafa Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Mike Zhang





UZBEKISTAN

Name	Uzbekistan National Team
Full Association name	Uzbekistan Football Association
Foundation	1946
FIFA Affiliation	1994
AFC Affiliation	1994



Since arriving on the scene in 1994, Uzbekistan have gone close to establishing themselves as one of the true powers of Asian football but have always fallen just short of making serious inroads into the continental game.

The country's high point remains the Asian Games gold medal-winning performance during the nation's inaugural appearance at the multi-sports event in the Japanese city of Hiroshima in 1994.

Since then, the former Soviet republic have shown themselves to be tough opponents but ultimately they have yet to truly harness the country's passion for the sport and turn it into tangible results. Uzbekistan's record at the AFC Asian Cup underlines those shortcomings with the country yet to progress as far as the semifinals.

In both 1996 and 2000, Uzbekistan finished bottom of their group at the finals while in 2004 they were eliminated by Bahrain in the quarter-finals. Three years later they fell at the same stage, this time to eventual finalists Saudi Arabia.

Those finishes, however, do represent steady progress and the chances of Uzbekistan moving deeper into the competition remain strong at AFC Asian Cup finals that promise to be one of the finest ever.

With a squad featuring players boasting the experience of playing across Europe, including in the Russian Premier League and the Ukrainian top flight, the Uzbeks do not lack for quality and coach Vadim Abramov will be keen to showcase the talents of his nation's finest.

Much of the weight of expectation continues to rest on the shoulders of veterans such as Maksim Shatskikh – now playing at Arsenal Kyiv after a lengthy stint at Ukrainian giants Dynamo Kyiv – and former AFC Player of the Year Server Djeparov as the Uzbeks look to finally banish their reputation as underachievers.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Temur Juraev - 12/05/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Having played in the shadow of Ignatij Nesterov for much of his career at club and international level, Temur Juraev has taken full advantage of Nesterov's departure for Bunyodkor in 2009. The 26-year-old is now the first choice goalkeeper at Pakhtakor and he has gained much experience from playing regularly for his club in the AFC Champions League

Ignatij Nesterov - 20/06/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

Ignatij Nesterov is Uzbekistan's most capped goalkeeper and started in three of his country's four matches at the AFC Asian Cup in 2007. He made his first major international appearance at the AFC Youth Championship in Qatar in 2002 when Uzbekistan beat the hosts en route to the semifinals to qualify for the FIFA World Youth Championship. Four years later, he was one of the key elements of the U23 team who beat eventual winners Qatar 1-0 in the group stage of the 2006 Asian Games.

Murotjon Zukhurov - 23/02/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

While he is a good shot-stopper, Murotjon Zukhorov has found his opportunities to play at international level restricted by the presence of Ignatij Nesterov and Timur Juraev. Zukhurov was the first-choice goalkeeper at Bunyodkor until the Tashkent club signed Nesterov in 2009. He joined Nasaf on loan last summer before recently making the move a permanent one.

Shavkatjon Mulladjanov - 19/01/1986 (DEFENDER)

A versatile defender, who can play either as a right-back or centre-back, Shavkatjon Mulladjanov has graduated to the senior side after being part of Uzbekistan's U23 side under current national team coach Vadim Abramov. The 24-year-old Almalyk player made his full international debut in a friendly against Albania in August 2010.

Ulugbek Bakaev - 28/11/1978 (DEFENDER)

A powerful striker with excellent aerial ability, Ulugbek Bakaev has played for several foreign clubs during his career including a spell at

Russian giants CSKA Moscow. The 32-year-old made his international debut against Turkmenistan in 2001 and played in three matches in the AFC Asian Cup 2007, scoring one goal although he missed the quarter-final defeat by Saudi Arabia because of suspension.

Anzur Ismailov - 21/04/1985 (DEFENDER)

A member of Uzbekistan's U23 team under Vadim Abramov, Anzur Ismailov made his international debut in a friendly against Iraq in 2007 and played his first Asian Cup match in a 5-0 win over Malaysia that same year. The 25-year-old Bunyodkor player can play either as a central defender or defensive midfielder.

Sakhob Juraev - 19/01/1987 (DEFENDER)

Another graduate of Vadim Abramov's Olympic team, Sakhob Juraev made his international debut against Saudi Arabia in 2008 and was a regular member of the side during the final round of the 2010 World Cup qualifiers. Much will be expected of the fast and creative 23-year-old left-back with Vitaly Denisov sidelined by injury.

Farrukh Nurlibaev - 06/01/1991 (DEFENDER)

Farrukh Nurlibaev was the captain of Uzbekistan's U20 team, which reached the quarter-finals at the AFC Youth Championship in China in 2010, and has been called up to the senior squad for cover in central defence. The Almalyk player, who played in only four matches for his club last season, turns 20 on the eve of his country's opening match of the tournament against Qatar.

Viktor Karpenko - 07/09/1997 (MIDFIELDER)

At the age of 33, Viktor Karpenko is the oldest player in the Uzbekistan squad although he is appearing in only his second AFC Asian Cup after being denied permission by his Russian clubs to play at two previous tournaments. The versatile player, who began his career as a striker and also played in midfield before assuming his current role as a right-back, appeared in three matches at the AFC

Asian Cup in 2007 and played a key role in his side's crucial 3-0 win over China, when he came on a substitute and set up two goals.

Aziz Ibragimov - 21/07/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Aziz Ibragimov made an eventful international debut in a friendly against Iraq in 2007 when he scored and was sent off. He went on to play in all four of Uzbekistan's matches at the AFC Asian Cup that year and scored in the 5-0 win over Malaysia. He later lost his position on the right of midfield for the national team but the 24-year-old, who now plays for Czech side Bohemians, recently earned his first national call-up since 2009.

Azizbek Haydarov - 08/07/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

One of Uzbekistan's best defensive midfielders, Azizbek Haydarov has gained much experience from playing for his country at U20 and U23 level. A strong tackler and a solid defender, he appeared in three matches for Uzbekistan at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and helped his club Bunyodkor to win three Uzbekistan league titles and reach the 2008 AFC Champions League semi-finals.

Server Djeparov - 03/10/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

The AFC Player of Year in 2008, Server Djeparov is Uzbekistan's most creative player who possesses intelligent passing ability and is excellent in his delivery of a dead ball. The 28-year-old playmaker was a key player in the Uzbekistan sides that reached the AFC Asian Cup quarter-finals in 2004 and 2007, and he was also a member of two league championship-winning sides in 2010 – Bunyodkor in Uzbekistan and FC Seoul in Korea Republic.

Odil Akhmedov - 25/11/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

The Uzbekistan Player of the Year 2009, Odil Akhmedov is primarily a central midfielder who can be deployed in either a defensive or attacking role although coach Vadim Abramov also utilised him as a central defender during the team's recent warm-up friendlies. He made his debut for the national team during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers

and has scored four international goals, three of which have come against Lebanon.

Marat Bikmaev - 01/01/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

A member of the U20 side that played at the FIFA World Youth Championship in 2003, Marat Bikmaev appeared in three of Uzbekistan's matches at the AFC Asian Cup the following year but missed a penalty in the quarter-final shoot-out loss against Bahrain. The 24-year-old, who has spent the last seven years at a variety of Russian clubs, played in only one match in the AFC Asian Cup in 2007 and did not receive a national call-up from June 2009 until recently.

Stanislav Andreev - 06/05/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Stanislav Andreev did not appear for any of Uzbekistan's youth squads before making his international debut for the senior squad as a 20-year-old for the 4-0 victory over Qatar in a FIFA World Cup qualifier in March 2009. The left midfielder has become a key player at Pakhtakor since the Tashkent side signed him from Tupalang.

Timur Kapadze - 05/09/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Timur Kapadze is Uzbekistan's most-capped player with over 70 appearances for the national team and is a veteran of his country's last two AFC Asian Cup campaigns, during which he scored two goals. The 29-year-old, who began his career as a forward, but has since moved into central midfield, has won a total of 10 Uzbek league titles with Neftchi, Pakhtakor and Bunyodkor.

Jasur Khasanov - 02/08/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

A speedy left winger with excellent technical skills, Jasur Khasanov made his debut for Uzbekistan's senior side just after the AFC Asian Cup in 2007, after missing the tournament because of his wedding. He is now playing for Qatari side Lekhwiya, where he is on loan from Bunyodkor.

Vagiz Galiulin - 10/10/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Another member of the Uzbekistan Olympic team under current na-

tional coach Vadim Abramov, Vagiz Galiulin is a pacy right winger who possesses excellent technical skills. He signed for Russian club Rubin Kazan in 2007 but did not establish himself as a first team player there before joining another Russian side, Sibir Novosibirsk

Shavkat Salomov - 13/11/1985 (FORWARD)

The youngest member of Uzbekistan's U20 team which reached the semi-finals of the AFC Youth Championship in Qatar in 2002, Shavkat Salomov played as a striker at the start of his career but has since switched to left midfield. He made his international debut in a FIFA World Cup qualifier against Chinese Taipei in 2007 when he also scored. He spent six months on loan at Nasaf in 2010 and is likely to play there again in the upcoming season.

Olim Novkarov - 03/03/1983 (FORWARD)

Olim Novkarov played under current national coach Vadim Abramov at Uzbek league side Tractor and Locomotive but did not make his international debut until August 2007 at the age of 27. A controversial selection who has been criticised in some quarters as a favourite of the coach, he proved his ability by scoring in a recent friendly against Bahrain.

Sanjar Tursunov - 29/12/1986 (FORWARD)

A former Uzbekistan U16 international player, Sanjar Tursunov has yet to make his debut for the senior international side. The right midfielder, who has never played in the Uzbekistan league, has made an impression at Russian second division club Volga.

Alexander Geynrikh - 06/10/1984 (FORWARD)

Uzbekistan's Player of Year in 2002, Alexander Geynrikh is one of his country's most talented strikers who helped the U20s to reach the AFC Youth Championship 2002 semi-finals and has appeared in two AFC Asian Cup quarter-finals. In the absence of Maksim Shatskikh, he scored twice in the run to the last eight in 2004 and also found the net during the crucial group stage victory against China four years ago.

Maksim Shatskikh - 30/08/1978 (FORWARD)

A four-time Uzbekistan Player of Year, Maksim Shatskikh scored the goal against the United Arab Emirates which sent his country through to the AFC Asian Cup in 2000. He missed the AFC Asian Cup in 2004 due to injury but scored three times on their run to the quarter-finals four years ago. The 32-year-old did not appear for his national side for over a year but has scored three times in three matches since his return.



VADIM ABRAMOV

Vadim Abramov was given a tough act to follow by the Uzbekistan Football Federation when he was named as the replacement for local legend Mirdjalal Kasimov at the helm of the national team.

The 47-year-old former Traktor and Lokomotiv coach was appointed to his position in May following Kasimov's departure but has an intimate knowledge of the squad after working alongside the former midfielder throughout the qualifiers.

Abramov's tenure started slowly, including a 4-0 loss at the hands of Saudi Arabia, but a win over Bahrain in October gave the coach a major boost in the build-up to the finals in Qatar.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
06 January Thursday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
07 January Friday	19:15	Qatar vs. Uzbekistan	Khalifa Stadium
11 January Tuesday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
12 January Wednesday	16:15	Uzbekistan vs. Kuwait	Al-Gharafa Stadium
15 January Saturday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
16 January Saturday	19:15	China PR vs. Uzbekistan	Al-Gharafa Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Bakhtyar Mametov





GROUP B

GROUP PROFILE

With six AFC Asian Cup titles shared evenly between them, Japan and Saudi Arabia will no doubt be favoured to take the two places in the knockout phase available from Group B of the 2010 finals.

But dismissing the challenges of Jordan and Syria would be a mistake given the manner in which both nations have shown significant improvements in recent years.

Jordan have a limited track record at the AFC Asian Cup, but in their one previous appearance at the tournament the country reached the quarterfinals where – coincidentally – they lost in a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Japan.

The Syrians, too, were drawn to play Japan in their last appearance at the AFC Asian Cup finals, back in 1996.

Japan, then coached by Shu Kamo, were the defending champions and they emerged from a tricky encounter as 2-1 winners, with two goals in the last five minutes denying the Syrians the three points.

The Japanese and the Saudis have met on a number of occasions at the AFC Asian Cup finals, including in two finals.

Both of Japan's first two AFC Asian Cup titles came with victory over the Saudis, in Hiroshima in 1992 and eight years later in 2000 in the Lebanese capital Beirut. Japan also defeated the Saudis 4-1 in the group stages of the 2000 tournament.

Saudi Arabia kick off their campaign against Syria while the Japanese rekindle their rivalry with Jordan before meeting the Syrians and Jordan meet Saudi Arabia. Japan and Saudi Arabia then go head-to-head in the final round of matches as Syria and Jordan face off.

GROUP B

SAUDI ARABI



JAPAN



JORDAN



SYRIA





SAUDI ARABIA

Name	Saudi Arabia National Team
Full Association name	Saudi Arabia Football Association
Foundation	1959
FIFA Affiliation	1959
AFC Affiliation	1959



With three AFC Asian Cup titles and three runners-up finishes, Saudi Arabia stand tall as the most successful nation in the 55-year history of the continental championship.

The nation's record is all the most astonishing when it is taken into consideration that the Saudis made their first appearance at the tournament finals in 1984, the year of their first title win.

That was followed up by victory in 1988 – when they defeated Korea Republic – and until 2000 the Saudis contested every AFC Asian Cup™ final.

Their run of success was only halted in China in 2004 when an injury-ravaged squad failed to progress beyond the group phase, but normal service was resumed in 2007 when they played in the final, losing 1-0 to Iraq.

Saudi Arabia's record, therefore, marks them out not only as the most successful team in the competition's history, but also the most consistent, and that is a record that is also reflected in the nation's qualifying record for the FIFA World Cup.

Their absence from South Africa 2010 was the first time the Saudis had not qualified for the World Cup finals since 1990 but the 2011 AFC Asian Cup finals in Qatar will present Jose Peseiro and his team with the perfect opportunity to prove that failure was just a blip.

Such is the strength in depth within the Saudi set up that Peseiro was able to take a second-string squad to Yemen for the Gulf Cup late in 2010 and finish as runners-up, and there can be little doubt that the Green Falcons will be a contender once again at the AFC Asian Cup.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Waleed Abdullah - 19/04/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

Imposing goalkeeper Waleed Abdullah started his career in 1996 with Al Shabab youth team and has since graduated all the way to be the country's first choice goalkeeper. He featured for Saudi Arabia in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and was part of the Saudi Arabia team which reached the final of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Mabrouk Zaid - 11/02/1979 (GOALKEEPER)

Experienced goalkeeper Mabrouk Zaid was a key part of the Al Ittihad side that won the AFC Champions League in 2004 and 2005 and he was also integral to his club's three domestic league titles. He was a member of the Saudi squad that won the Gulf Cup in 2003 and he also played at the FIFA World Cup in 2002 and 2006.

Hussain Shaian - 23/05/1989 (GOALKEEPER)

Inexperienced Hussain Shaian will fill the role of third choice goalkeeper as the 21-year-old lacks experience of major tournaments. He started his career with Al Shabab before he was loaned out to Al Ittifaq in January 2009. He returned to his home club four months later.

Mishal Al Saeed - 18/07/1983 (DEFENDER)

Mishal Al Saeed started his football career with lowly outfit Hajar before moving in July 2004 to Al Ittihad. He was a member of the club's AFC Champions League winning squads in 2004 and 2005 but since then he has failed to hold down a regular position at the club, joining both Al Ittifaq and Al Nassr on loan.

Osama Hawsawi - 31/03/1984 (DEFENDER)

Osama Hawsawi was first called for the first national team in August 2006 before taking part in the 2007 Gulf Cup. He started his career with Al Wahda where he spent three years before moving to Riyadh giants Al Hilal in 2008. He was a member of the Saudi Arabia squad which reached the final of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Hamad Al Montashari - 22/06/1982 (DEFENDER)

The 2005 AFC Player of the Year, Hamad Al Montashari made his debut for Saudi Arabia back in 2002. The Al Ittihad defender also claimed the Arab Player of the Year title in 2006 and he featured for Saudi Arabia in the 2004 and 2007 AFC Asian Cup. He was also a member of the squad which took part in the 2006 FIFA World Cup finals.

Abdullah Shuhail - 22/01/1985 (DEFENDER)

Pacy left back Abdullah Shuhail was a key member for Saudi Arabia Olympic squad which reached the final round of the 2008 Asian Olympic qualifiers after starting in four of six matches. He was a member of the Saudi Arabia squad which fell short of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa.

Kamil Al Mousa - 29/08/1982 (DEFENDER)

A member of the squad that reached the final of the AFC Asian Cup in 2007, 28-year-old defender Kamil Al Mousa currently plays for the Jeddah-based Al Ahli club after previously being attached to Al Wahda and also playing for Al Hilal on loan.

Osama Al Harbi - 16/05/1984 (DEFENDER)

Osama Al Harbi is considered one of the most reliable defenders in Saudi football due to his strong performances whether with Al Ittihad or the national team. He won the 2004 and 2005 AFC Champions League with his club before playing in the 2005 FIFA Club World Cup. He took part in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals but missed the 2007 edition.

Mohammed Massad - 17/02/1983 (DEFENDER)

Defender Mohammed Massad is the younger brother of former Saudi Arabia national team midfielder Khaled Massad. The 27-year-old started his career with Al Ahli in 2001 just one year before he was called to the national team where he featured in the 2006 FIFA World Cup finals.

Taiseer Al Jassam - 25/07/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Taisir Al Jassam started his football career with Al Ahli when he was 18 years old. Since then he has become one of the few Saudi players to join a club outside his homeland, signing for Al Gharafa in neighbouring Qatar. Currently with Al Ahli in Jeddah, he was a member of the Saudi Arabia squad which reached the final of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Saud Kariri - 08/07/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

After joining Al Ittihad from Al Qadisiya in November 2003, Saud Kariri played an instrumental role in leading the Jeddah giants to two AFC Champions League titles. His international debut was in 2002 and he played in the 2004 and 2007 AFC Asian Cup finals. He was also a member of the Saudi Arabia squad at the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany.

Abdoh Atef - 02/04/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdoh, the younger brother of fellow Saudi Arabia international midfielder Ahmed Ateef, played a major role in leading Al Shabab to the domestic league title in 2006. He was in Saudi Arabia's 2004 Asian Cup squad and he was a member of the squad which reached the final of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Ahmed Ateef - 14/04/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Ahmed Ateef is the elder brother of Abdoh Atef and he plays for Al Shabab. Despite playing in the qualifiers for the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, Ateef failed to make it into the squad which reached the final of the competition. He also featured in the 2006 and 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Mohammed Al Shalhoub - 8/12/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

Al Hilal's Mohammed Al Shalhoub made his international debut against Qatar in the 2000 AFC Asian Cup finals at the tender age of just 19. He played only 22 minutes in the 2002 FIFA World Cup while the death of his mother in the summer of 2006 prevented him

from being fully involved in the World Cup finals.

Motaz Al Mosa - 6/08/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

The young brother of Al Ahli and Al Wahda players Motaz and Kamil, Motaz Al Mosa played in the finals of the 2006 AFC Youth Championship before featuring in the final rounds of the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. He was also present in the 2008 and 2010 AFC Champions League campaigns with Al Ahli.

Manaf Aboshgair - 5/02/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the veterans in the Saudi Arabia squad, Manaf Aboshgair played an important role in Al Ittihad's back-to-back AFC Champions League title victories in 2004 and 2005. He also featured in the 2006 and 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Nawaf Al Abid - 26/01/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

The youngest player in Saudi Arabia squad, Nawaf Al Abid is considered as one of the most promising midfielders in the country. He hit the headlines with the U19 national team in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship, where he scored two goals and his impressive performance with Al Hilal in the 2010 AFC Champions League earned him a place in the national team for the first time.

Abdulaziz Al Dawsari - 11/10/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Midfielder Abdulaziz Al Dawsari broke into Al Hilal first team squad in 2007 and he featured during their run to the semi-finals of the 2010 AFC Champions League. He played with Saudi Arabia's U19 team in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship before playing for the Olympic team in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers.

Nassir Al Shamrani - 23/11/1983 (FORWARD)

Nassir Al Shamrani was a member of the squad that reached the final of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup although he was not selected to start any of his nation's seven games. He started his career with

Al Wahda before he was loaned to Al Shabab where he helped them to win the 2006 Saudi League by scoring in the final of the league against Al Hilal.

Yasser Al Qahtani - 10/10/1982 (FORWARD)

Known as the “Sniper”, former AFC Asian Player of the Year Yasser Al Qahtani made his international debut for Saudi Arabia in December 2002. He featured for Saudi Arabia at the 2004 and 2007 AFC Asian Cup finals. He also was a key player in the 2006 FIFA World Cup and scored in the 2-2 draw with Tunisia.

Naif Hazazi - 27/07/1988 (FORWARD)

Naif Hazazi grabbed the headlines in 2009 as he led Al Ittihad to the Saudi league title, scoring nine goals in 19 matches. He made his international debut in 2008, and featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers with Saudi Arabia, scoring two goals.

Muhannad Abu Radiyah - 14/10/1986 (FORWARD)

Muhannad Abu Radiyah old joined the national team after a fine performance in the league last season, when he score nine times. He was a member of the team that reached the final of the 2010 Gulf Cup and he scored in his side’s opening match against hosts Yemen.



JOSE PESEIRO

Jose Peseiro has retained his position at the helm of the Saudi Arabia national team despite overseeing the country’s failure to qualify for the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa, the first time the Saudis have not been present at a World Cup since Italy 1990. The Portuguese coach took over in 2009 from Nasser Al Johar after previously working in Saudi Arabia with the Al Hilal club as well as spending time working at club level in Greece, Romania and his native Portugal, where he coached Sporting Lisbon. The 50-year-old also worked as an assistant to Carlos Queiroz during his one-year stint at Spanish giants Real Madrid, and the post at the helm of the Saudi team is his first as a national squad manager.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
08 January Saturday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
09 January Sunday	19:15	Saudi Arabia vs. Jordan	Al-Rayyan Stadium
12 January Wednesday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
13 January Thursday	16:15	Jordan vs. Saudi Arabia	Al-Rayyan Stadium
16 January Saturday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
17 January Monday	16:15	Saudi Arabia vs. Japan	Al-Rayyan Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Mohammed Al Tuaijri





JAPAN

Name	Japan National Team
Full Association name	Japan Football Association
Foundation	1921
FIFA Affiliation	1929
AFC Affiliation	1954



Japan's climb to prominence within Asian football can be traced back to 1992 and the country's hosting of the AFC Asian Cup in the city of Hiroshima, when the nation prevailed against the odds to capture their first-ever continental title.

Since then, with the advent of professionalism through the J.League, the Japan national team has been one of the driving forces of the Asian game, winning the continental title on two more

occasions and playing at every FIFA World Cup since 1998. Back-to-back continental title triumphs in 2000 and 2004 marked the Japanese out as the team of the early part of the millennium but, as the era of players such as Hidetoshi Nakata and Shinji Ono has come to an end, so a new generation is taking up the mantle for the Blue Samurai.

CSKA Moscow midfielder Keisuke Honda was the standard bearer for the country during their impressive performance at the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa as the former Nagoya Grampus man scored twice in Japan's advance to the second round.

Japan's World Cup run was ended in a defeat in a penalty shoot-out at the hands of Paraguay but it still represented the best result the nation has achieved at a World Cup not played on home soil. That team was feted at home but there have been a number of changes since, with 2010 AFC Coach of the Year Takeshi Okada standing down to be replaced by Italian Alberto Zaccheroni. The former AC Milan manager has made a number of changes to his selection but the essence of the team remains similar to the one that excelled in South Africa and the Japanese will be among the favourites to lift a record fourth AFC Asian Cup title.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Eiji Kawashima - 20/03/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

Eiji Kawashima took over as Japan's number one goalkeeper in the build-up to the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa, cementing his place in the starting line-up with a series of accomplished performances. His showing in South Africa earned him a transfer from Kawasaki Frontale to Belgian side Lierse SK.

Shusaku Nishikawa - 18/06/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

Former Oita Trinita goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa is a graduate of Japan's under 20 and Olympic teams, having kept goal for the nation at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Made his debut against Hong Kong in qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup and was an ever-present for Sanfrecce Hiroshima in last season's J.League campaign.

Shuichi Gonda - 03/03/1989 (GOALKEEPER)

Shuichi Gonda broke into the starting line-up of J.League side FC Tokyo at the start of the 2009 season and he impressed enough during his first season to make his debut for Japan in an AFC Asian Cup qualifier against Yemen in January 2010 while still just 20 years old.

Daiki Iwamasa - 30/01/1982 (DEFENDER)

Solidly built central defender Daiki Iwamasa is likely to become a key component of Japan's back line in the injury-enforced absence of regular starting defenders Marcus Tulio Tanaka and Yuji Nakazawa. Iwamasa has been central to a lengthy period of domestic success for his club side Kashima Antlers.

Yasuyuki Konno - 25/01/1983 (DEFENDER)

Versatile Yasuyuki Konno is equally as adept in midfield as he is in defence with his energetic performances and adaptability making him a useful squad player for Alberto Zaccheroni. Made a brief appearance as a substitute during the FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Masahiko Inoha - 28/08/1985 (DEFENDER)

A former Japan youth and university international, Masahiko Inoha

is a two-time J.League winner with Kashima Antlers, the club he joined from FC Tokyo in 2008 and where he forms a highly successful central defensive partnership with Daiki Iwamasa.

Yuto Nagatomo - 12/09/1986 (DEFENDER)

Yuto Nagatomo was one of the stand-out performers for Japan at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa, where his showing at left back prompted Italian club Cesena to take him to Serie A from FC Tokyo. His versatility has seen him play across the back line, including in the centre of defence despite his lack of height.

Mitsuru Nagata – 06/04/1983 (DEFENDER)

Called up as a replacement for the injured Tomoaki Makino, Mitsuru Nagata has signed for Urawa Reds for the coming J.League season after spending the past four years with Albirex Niigata. The tall defender previously represented Japan at youth level but was uncapped going into the tournament.

Ryota Moriwaki – 06/04/1986 (DEFENDER)

A product of Sanfrecce Hiroshima's highly rated youth development system, Ryota Moriwaki is a versatile defender who was called up as a late replacement for Gotoku Sakai. A regular for the Hiroshima club over the last two seasons – including a stint in the AFC Champions League in 2010 – Moriwaki previously spent several seasons on loan at second division Ehime FC.

Atsuto Uchida - 27/03/1988 (DEFENDER)

An early bloomer, right back Atsuto Uchida made his debut for Kashima Antlers at the age of 17 and was a full Japan international before his 20th birthday. He lost out on a place in the starting line-up for Japan in the lead-up to the FIFA World Cup finals to Yuichi Komano. Joined Schalke 04 in the Bundesliga in the summer.

Maya Yoshida - 24/08/1988 (DEFENDER)

Central defender Maya Yoshida followed the same path taken by ex-Nagoya Grampus team mate Keisuke Honda when he joined Dutch side VVV Venlo at the start of 2010 but he has yet to make a significant impact. A member of the Japan squad that played at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, he made his debut for the full national team against Yemen in January 2010.

Yasuhito Endo - 28/01/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the most gifted passers of the ball in Japanese football, Yasuhito Endo was named AFC Player of the Year for 2009 after impressing over the course of several seasons for both club and country. Endo was instrumental in Gamba Osaka's AFC Champions League win in 2008 and an ever-present during last year's FIFA World Cup.

Daisuke Matsui - 11/05/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Daisuke Matsui once threatened to be the forgotten man of Japanese football as his move away from J.League side Kyoto Sanga to France's Le Mans saw him overlooked by successive Japan coaches. But former coach Takeshi Okada brought the midfielder back into the fold and he has excelled since and played in all four games in South Africa. Currently playing for Russian side FC Tom Tomsk.

Makoto Hasebe - 18/01/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Made captain by former coach Takeshi Okada, Makoto Hasebe has blossomed for Japan with the added responsibility and he was an ever-present during Japan's run to the second round of the FIFA World Cup. A fine passer of the ball, Hasebe won the AFC Champions League with Urawa Reds before joining Bundesliga side Wolfsburg, where he won the German title in 2009.

Jungo Fujimoto - 24/03/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

A former winner of the J.League's Rookie of the Year Award, creative midfielder Jungo Fujimoto has rarely transferred that early

promise into caps for Japan with the 26-year-old featuring mainly as a squad member in the past. He was a member of the successful team at the 2005 Universiade, when Japan won the gold medal.

Takuya Honda - 17/04/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Holding midfielder Takuya Honda was called up for Japan's friendly matches against Argentina and Korea Republic in October but missed both due to injury. The 25-year-old is highly rated within the J.League after impressing for Shimizu S-Pulse, although he was called up for the AFC Asian Cup without having previously played for Japan.

Hajime Hosogai - 10/06/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Hajime Hosogai made his debut for Japan in the post-FIFA World Cup win over Paraguay and has remained in the squad following the arrival of coach Alberto Zaccheroni. The midfielder – who won the AFC Champions League with Urawa Reds in 2007 – recently signed for German side Bayer Leverkusen, who will send him on loan to FC Augsburg.

Keisuke Honda - 13/06/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Keisuke Honda's rise to prominence with the Japan national team was swift after he was finally given the chance to shine by former coach Takeshi Okada, who had previously seemed reluctant to utilize the former Nagoya Grampus man's talents. Two goals at the FIFA World Cup – including the winner against Cameroon – marked him out as one of his country's top performers in South Africa.

Yosuke Kashiwagi - 15/12/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Former Sanfrecce Hiroshima midfielder Yosuke Kashiwagi made his debut for Japan against Yemen in an AFC Asian Cup qualifier in January 2010 and since then has remained peripheral to the national squad. The left-sided midfielder has also represented

Japan at under 20 level.

Shinji Kagawa - 17/03/1989 (FORWARD)

Overlooked by Takeshi Okada for Japan's FIFA World Cup squad, Shinji Kagawa set about establishing himself as one of the country's leading lights following his move to Borussia Dortmund from Cerezo Osaka. The attacking threat he presents has seen him score regularly in Germany, ensuring his presence in Alberto Zaccheroni's squad.

Ryoichi Maeda - 09/10/1981 (FORWARD)

A former winner of the AFC Young Player of the Year, Ryoichi Maeda has taken time to develop into one of Japan's leading forwards. During the 2010 J.League season, though, he impressed, finishing the year as joint-top scorer for a Jubilo Iwata side that only managed to finish in mid-table.

Tadanari Lee - 19/12/1985 (FORWARD)

Called up in the injury-enforced absence of Takayuki Morimoto, Tadanari Lee makes his first appearance in a Japan squad at the AFC Asian Cup finals in Qatar. Former Kashiwa Reysol striker Lee, who previously featured for Japan at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, has been in solid form for club side Sanfrecce Hiroshima.

Shinji Okazaki - 16/04/1986 (FORWARD)

Used off the bench throughout the FIFA World Cup finals, Shinji Okazaki put his name on the score sheet in South Africa when he scored in the 3-1 win over Denmark that earned Japan a place in the knockout phase. A penalty box predator, the Shimizu S-Pulse man has recently attracted attention from clubs in Europe.



ALBERTO ZACCHERONI

The former AC Milan, Internazionale and Juventus coach took over the Japan national team in the aftermath of the country's performance at the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa. Despite never having worked outside of his native Italy or having worked as a national team coach, Zaccheroni had a fine start to his tenure in Japan, winning 1-0 against Argentina. Zaccheroni, who embarked on his coaching career at the age of 30 after his playing career was cut short due to injury, won the Serie A title with Milan in 1999.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
08 January Saturday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
09 January Sunday	16:15	Japan vs. Jordan	Qatar Sports Club
12 January Wednesday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
13 January Thursday	19:15	Syria vs. Japan	Qatar Sports Club
16 January Saturday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
17 January Monday	16:15	Saudi Arabia vs. Japan	Al-Rayyan Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Hideki Kato





JORDAN

Name	Jordan National Team
Full Association name	Jordan Football Association
Foundation	1949
FIFA Affiliation	1958
AFC Affiliation	1974



Jordan return to the finals of the AFC Asian Cup after making their debut at the tournament in China in 2004, when they went close to causing one of the greatest upsets in the history of the competition.

The Jordanians were a penalty shoot-out away from eliminating Japan in the quarterfinals of the competition only for Mahmoud El Gohary's side to cruelly see an early advantage eroded by the resilient Japanese, who went on to successfully retain the title.

In the six years since, however, much has changed within the Jordanian football scene, with the nation's club sides establishing themselves among the finest in the continent with successive wins in the AFC Cup competition for the likes of Shabab Al Ordun and Al Faisaly.

El Gohary stood down after the nation failed to qualify for the finals of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup but his long-term replacement, Nelo Vingada – a winner of the Asian Cup with Saudi Arabia back in 1996 – was incapable to restoring the team's fortunes.

However, the appointment of coach Adnan Hamed ensured the country qualified for the finals, the Iraqi inspiring his players on a run of form that sealed their place from a group that featured Iran, Singapore and Thailand.

With a squad culled predominantly from clubs in the Jordanian league – and augmented by the influential Odai Al Saify who plays in Cyprus – a strong sense of camaraderie exists within the national side and that spirit could see them cause a surprise.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Amer Shafi – 14/02/1982 (GOALKEEPER)

Shafi was the key goalkeeper that featured with Jordan in their inaugural campaign in the AFC Asian Cup in 2004. The tall custodian started his career with Al Yurmok before moving to Al Faisaly on loan in 2004. He had a short spell in Egypt with Al Ismaily in 2006 before returning to Jordan and in August 2007 he joined his current club Al Wehdat.

Lo'ai El Amaireh 02/10/1978 (GOALKEEPER)

El Amaireh started his career with Al Faisaly in 2002 and in the same year he was called to join Jordan national team. He played a major role in leading Al Faisaly to win the 2005 and 2006 AFC Cup and he was the first choice goalkeeper in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Mutaz Yasin – 03/11/1982 (GOALKEEPER)

Yasin is considered to be the third choice goalkeeper in Jordan. He was a member of Shabab Al Ordon team which won the 2007 AFC Cup and he became the key goalkeeper for his club in 2010 as he started in all their matches in the AFC Cup.

Bashar Bani Yaseen – 01/11/1977 (DEFENDER)

One of the experienced defenders in Jordan in the recent years, Bani Yaseen was a member of the Jordanian team which qualified to the Asian Cup for the first time in their history in 2004. After starting his career with Al Hussain, he had different spells in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia before joining his current club Al Jazira in August 2010.

Basem Fathi – 01/08/1982 (DEFENDER)

Fathi started his career with Al Wehdat before he joined Saudi Arabia's Al Watani on loan in January 2009. He spent only one month with Al Watani before returning to Al Wehdat. He featured with Jordan national team in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and was a member of the team that qualified to the 2011 AFC Asian Cup.

Mohamad Monir – 17/04/1982 (DEFENDER)

Monir started his career with Al Faisaly before he joined Tishreen in Syria in October 2010. Monir helped Al Faisaly in their 2005 and 2006 AFC Cup title success and he featured with Jordan in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers.

Mohammad Al Dmeiri – 30/08/1987 (DEFENDER)

The 23-year-old defender was a member of Jordan national team that took part in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship and qualified to the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup. He took part with Al Wehdat in four consecutive AFC Cup campaigns.

Hatem Aqel – 20/06/1978 (DEFENDER)

The tall defender was a key member of the squad that qualified to the AFC Asian Cup for the first time in 2004 and he started in all four matches of his side in the competition. He won the 2005 and 2006 AFC Cup titles with Al Faisaly before he moved to Al Raed of Saudi Arabia in July 2009.

Anas Bani-Yaseen – 29/11/1988 (DEFENDER)

Bani-Yaseen featured with the U19 squad which qualified to the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup. He was a key member of the squad which qualified to the 2011 AFC Asian Cup finals. The 22-year-old defender started his career with Al Arabi before joining Saudi Arabia's Najran in July 2009.

Ala' Al Shaqran – 21/04/1987 (DEFENDER)

Al Shagran was one of the key players for Jordan U19 team which qualified to the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup. He started his career with Al Ramtha before joining in September 2008 Syria's Al Wahda where he played for two months only. After returning to Al Ramtha, he joined Shabab Al Ordon in August 2009.

Suliman Al Salman – 16/07/1986 (DEFENDER)

The 24-year-old defender was recently called to the national team after his impressive performances with lowly side Al Ramtha in the league towards the end of last season. He started his career with Al Ramtha before he was loaned out to in December 2008 to Ittihad Al Ramtha where he spent one year before returned to his home club.

Baha' Abdelrahman – 05/01/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdulrahman is one of the best defensive midfielders in Jordan as he started his career when he was only 19 years old with Al Faisaly and featured with the U20 squad which took part in the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup. He made a move in January 2009 from Al Faisaly to Jeddah giants Al Ahli before returning five months later to his home team.

Saeed Murjan – 10/02/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

The 20-year-old defender played in all of Jordan's matches in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship. He played an important role in Al Arabi's run to the final of last year's Jordan Cup as he scored two goals in the competitions.

Ahmad Abdelhalim – 04/09/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

The 24-year-old midfielder took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers with Jordan before making his way into the first national team and took part in the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. He featured with his club Al Wehdat in four editions of the AFC Cup.

Raed Al Nawateer – 05/05/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Al Nawatir was a key member of the U19 team which qualified to the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup as he started in five of Jordan matches in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship. He started his career with Al Jazira before moving to Al Ahli in July 2007 but his transfer lasted for only six months as he returned to his home club at the start of 2008.

Amer Deeb – 04/02/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the experienced players in Jordan national team, Deeb is considered to be the favourite player for Al Wehdat fans. He featured with Jordan in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals before taking part in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and helping the team to qualify to the 2011 AFC Asian Cup finals.

Hasan Abdel-Fattah – 17/08/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdel-Fattah is considered to be the most talented midfielder in Jordan as he is known for his solid performances whether with his club or the national team. He was a member of the team that played in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals and he featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers where he was best remembered for his brace against Korea Republic in Seoul.

Moayad Abukeshek – 27/04/1982 (FORWARD)

Abukeshek started his career with lowly Al Baqaa before moving in May 2006 to Al Faisaly where he won the 2006 AFC Cup. He featured with Jordan national team in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers and the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Abdallah Deeb – 10/03/1987 (FORWARD)

The attacking midfielder grabbed the headlines by helping Jordan U19 team qualify to the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup where he scored two goals. After starting his career with Al Wehdat, he moved to Bahrain's Al Riffa before playing for Shabab Al Ordon. He had a short spell in Belgium with KV Mechelen but he returned to Shabab Al Ordon in July 2010.

Odai Al Saify – 26/05/1986 (FORWARD)

Al Saify is the only player in the Jordanian squad who plys his trade in Europe. He started his career with Shabab Al Ordon before he was loaned out to Al Dhafra of UAE for six months in February 2009. He then moved to Greece to play for Xanthi in August 2009 but he was loaned to his current club Alki in Cyprus in July 2010.

Shadi Abu-Hashhash – 20/01/1981 (FORWARD)

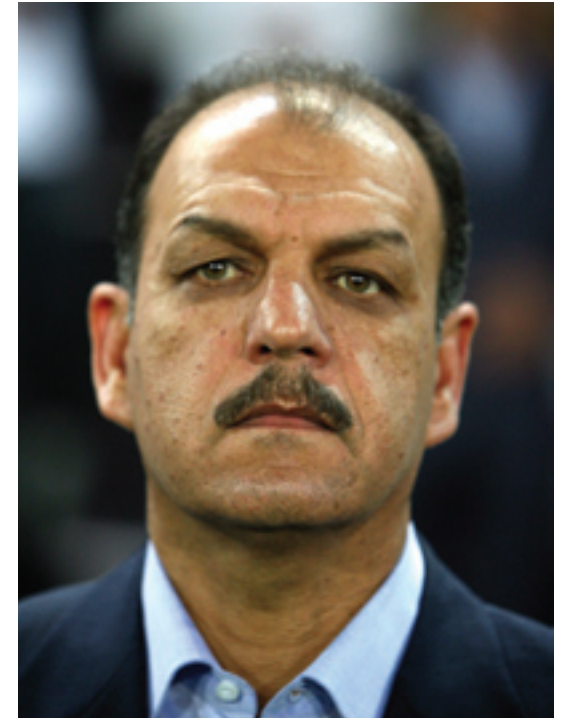
The 29-year-old forward is considered to be one of the physically built players in Jordan. He started his career with Shabab Al Ordon before he was loaned out to Muharraq in Bahrain and then he moved in August 2010 to Saudi Arabia's Al Taawon.

Anas Hijah – 23/06/1987 (FORWARD)

Hijah made good performances with Al Faisaly where he won the 2006 AFC Cup before playing an important role in his side's run to the final of the 2007 AFC Cup as he scored two goals. The 23-year-old striker was a member of the U20 squad which took part in the 2007 FIFA U20 World Cup.

Hamza Al Daradour – 12/05/1991 (FORWARD)

The 19-year-old striker started his career with lowly Al Ramtha but he was recently called to the national team after his remarkable performances in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship in Saudi Arabia before he also had a good performance in the same competition two years later.



ADNAN HAMED

The winner of the AFC Coach of the Year Award in 2004, Adnan Hamad is undoubtedly one of the most recognized and successful Asian coaches currently working in the game.

The 49-year-old's most famous achievement was leading his native Iraq to the semifinals of the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 and he has also been in charge of the Iraqi national team on several occasions.

Hamed took over as head coach of Jordan in mid-2009 after working with the Al Faisaly club, who he led to the AFC Cup title in 2006.

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17 January Monday	16:15	Jordan vs. Syria	Qatar Sports Club

MEDIA OFFICER

Mohammad Hussein





SYRIA

Name	Syria National Team
Full Association name	Syria Football Association
Foundation	1936
FIFA Affiliation	1937
AFC Affiliation	1969



After being absent from the AFC Asian Cup finals since 1996, Syria return to the continent's leading competition with the country's footballing stock on the rise after significant improvements made by the Arab nation's clubs in recent years.

Damascus club Al Ittihad won the 2010 edition of the AFC Cup, following close on the heels of a run to the final of the 2009 edition of the competition by rivals Al Karamah, who had previously also

reached the final of the AFC Champions League.

The growing wealth of talent that the Syrians have been producing over the last five years means national team coach Tita Valeriu has the pick of a large number of players who are more than capable of matching the continent's best.

Valeriu's squad is selected mainly from the domestic league but is supplemented by the likes of Firas Al Khatib and Jihad Al Hussein, who both play their club football in nearby Kuwait.

But while the national team has been able to benefit from a base provided by the developing status of the club scene in Syria, there has been less stability within the international side of the sport. Fajr Ibrahim – the man who qualified the Syrians for the finals – departing from the role as national team boss, to be replaced by his assistant, Ayman Hakeem, on a temporary basis.

Hakeem oversaw the team's participation at the West Asian Championship in September, when the Syrians took a second string squad to Jordan for the regional competition before reverting to his role as assistant following the appointment of Serbian coach Ratomir Djukovic.

Djukovic, however, was then given his marching orders in mid-December after his late arrival from holiday, leaving Valeriu with just weeks to prepare his team for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Mosab Balhous - 05/10/1982 (GOALKEEPER)

Mosab Balhous was an integral part of the Al Karama side that won four straight Syrian league titles and also helped the team to reach the final of the 2006 AFC Champions League. He became the first choice for Syria national team in 2006 and featured in 10 matches in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Radowan Al Azhar 01-01-1979 (GOALKEEPER)

Radowan Al Azhar was previously the first choice goalkeeper in Syria as he was called up for the national team in 2005 and he took part in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. He started his career with Al Jaish where he won the 2004 AFC Cup before moving to Al Wahda four years later and in 2010 he joined Al Majd.

Adnan Al Hafez - 23/04/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Adnan Al Hafez was a member of the Syria team that featured in the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup. The 26-year-old started his career in 2002 with Al Karama where he spent seven years before joining Al Talia in 2009 and in the summer of 2010 he moved to Al Wahda.

Ali Dyab - 23/05/1982 (DEFENDER)

Ali Dyab was called up for the national team for the first time in 2004 and he featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers before making 10 appearances in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. He started his career with Al Majd before he was loaned out to Al Jaish and then to Shanghai Shenhua of China. He moved to Al Shorta in 2010.

Belal Abduldaim - 01/06/1983 (DEFENDER)

Belal Abduldaim made his debut with the Syria national team in December 2008 in a friendly against Saudi Arabia and he featured in three matches of the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. He started his career with Al Karama in 2002 and was a member of the team that won the league four times and reached the final of the 2006 AFC Champions League.

Bwrhan Sahiwne - 07/04/1986 (DEFENDER)

Twenty-four-year-old defender Bwrhan Sahiwne started his career with Ommaya before joining Al Jaish in 2006, where he helped the team to win the league in 2010. He was called up for the Syria national team in 2007 just two years after featuring in the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup and he took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Abdulkader Deka - 10/01/1985 (DEFENDER)

Despite being only 25-years-old, Abdulkader Deka boasts experience as he previously took part in all Syria matches in the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup. He started his career with Teshrine in 2003 before a short spell in Lebanon with Al Ansar. In 2008 he moved to Al Ittihad and he was a key member to the team that won the 2010 AFC Cup.

Nadim Sabag - 04/08/1985 (DEFENDER)

Nadim Sabag started his career with Teshrine before joining Al Jaish in August 2007. He played an influential role in Al Jaish's success in the league in 2010 and he featured with his club in the 2010 AFC Cup.

Jehad Al Baour - 27/06/1987 (DEFENDER)

Well-built defender Jehad Al Baour started his career with Damascus giants Al Jaish in 2004. He was a key member of the team that won the league in 2010 and he started in five matches of his side's 2010 AFC Cup campaign.

Ahmad Al Salih - 20/05/1990 (DEFENDER)

Twenty-year-old defender Ahmad Al Salih was called to the national team after his impressive performances with his club Al Jaish. He was a member of the U19 team that featured in the AFC U19 Championship in 2008 and he also featured in the 2010 AFC Cup with his club.

Jehad Al Hussien - 30/07/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the best creative midfielders in Syria, Jehad Al Hussien started his career with Al Karama in 2001 and after spending seven years with the Homs-based club, he moved to Kuwait where he played for Al Kuwait for one season before joining Al Qadisiya in 2009. He played in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers and the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Feras Ismail - 03/01/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Feras Ismail started his career in 2004 with Al Jaish where he won the 2004 AFC Cup. He moved in 2005 to Al Qrdaha before signing for Al Karama a year later and helping the team win three consecutive league titles. He returned to Al Jaish in 2009.

Adel Abdullah - 10/01/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Adel Abdullah is one of a handful of Syrian players to have experience playing overseas, having spent a short spell in China with Nanchang Bayi in 2010 before returning home to play for Al Karama. Abdullah won the AFC Cup with Al Jaish in 2004 and has also played for Al Ittihad.

Abdulrazak Al Husein - 15/09/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Midfielder Abdulrazak Al Husein helped Syria qualify for the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup, scoring in the finals against Italy. He started his career with Al Horriya before joining Al Jaish in 2006 and four years later he joined Al Karama.

Taha Dyab - 23/07/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

Taha Dyab was part of the Al Ittihad side that won the 2010 AFC Cup and the 20-year-old played a key role in that victory, scoring in the final against Al Qadisiya. He was a member of the U19 squad that took part in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship and he was called up to the full national team in 2010.

Samer Aouad - 09/02/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

Samer Aouad was a member of the Syria national team that took part in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers and he also played in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. He started his career with Al Jaish before joining Al Majd.

Wael Ayan - 13/06/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Wael Ayan started his career with Al Ittihad in 2003 and he joined his current club Al Faisaly in Saudi Arabia in July 2010. The 25-year-old midfielder featured for Syria in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers before taking part in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Louay Chanko - 29/11/1979 (MIDFIELDER)

Sweden-born central midfielder Louay Chanko was first called up for the Syria national team in 2008 having previously played in a friendly match for the Sweden. He started his career with Syrian-ska in 1998 before playing for Djurgarden and Malmo. In 2005 he had a short spell in Greece with AEK Athens before playing for Danish side Hammarby and AaB. In June 2009 he joined his current club Aalborg.

Qussai Habib - 15/04/1987 (FORWARD)

Qussai Habib started his career with Al Jihad in 2005 and he spent three years with the team before moving to Damascus giants Al Wahda where he spent two years prior to signing for Al Shorta. He was a member of the squad that took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and he was called to the national team in 2010.

Firas Al Khatib - 09/06/1983 (FORWARD)

Considered as one of the most creative forwards in Syria, fan favourite Firas Al Khatib started his career with Al Karama in 2000 just two years before moving to Kuwait where he joined Al Nasr. In 2003, he made a big move to Al Arabi where he won five titles

prompting a move to Al Qadisiya in 2009.

Mohamad Al Zino - 05/02/1983 (FORWARD)

Well-travelled Mohamad Al Zino featured for clubs throughout Syria before moving to Iran in 2009 to play for Rah Ahan. In 2010, he joined Al Arabi in Kuwait before returning to Syria where he signed for Al Karama. He was first called up for the national team in 2004.

Abdulfatah Al Agha - 01/08/1984 (FORWARD)

Despite helping Syria U19 team qualify for the 2005 FIFA U20 World Cup finals, Abdulfatah Al Agha missed the finals through injury. He started his career with Al Ittihad in 2002, spending eight years with the club before moving to Egypt in 2010 to join Wadi Degla.

Sanharib Malki - 01/03/1984 (FORWARD)

Striker Sanharib Malki turned down the opportunity to play for the Belgium – where he has played professionally since 2002 – to feature for the land of his birth, committing himself to Syria by playing in a FIFA World Cup qualifier against Kuwait in June 2008. Currently playing for Lokeren after spells with Union Saint-Gilloise, KSV Roeselare and Germinal Beerschot.



TITA VALERIU

Romanian coach Tita Valeriu rode to the rescue of the Syrian Football Association after the decision was taken to dispense with the services of Serbian coach Ratimir Dujkovic just weeks before the AFC Asian Cup finals.

Valeriu has an intimate knowledge of the game in Syria having worked in the nation for much of the last three years, with the 44-year-old's greatest achievement steering the Al Ittihad club from Aleppo to the AFC Cup title in November 2010, beating Kuwait's Al Qadsia in the final.

Valeriu is the fourth coach to take charge of the team since the Syrians qualified for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup.

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09 January Sunday	19:15	Saudi Arabia vs. Syria	Al-Rayyan Stadium
12 January Wednesday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
13 January Thursday	19:15	Syria vs. Japan	Qatar Sports Club
16 January Saturday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
17 January Monday	16:15	Jordan vs. Syria	Qatar Sports Club

MEDIA OFFICER

Mohamad Abbas





AFC
Asian Cup
QATAR 2011

GROUP C

GROUP PROFILE

When the draw for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup was made in Doha in April, Group C saw three of the current heavyweights of Asian football selected to face off against one another.

Korea Republic and Australia both represented the continent at the finals of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa while Bahrain were a missed penalty away from doing likewise. India, as a result, were to be sympathised.

The Bob Houghton-coached team will be making India's first appearance at the finals of the continental championship since 1984 and the learning curve for the South Asian champions could not be any steeper given the standard of opposition facing them.

The Indians meet their perennial sporting rivals Australia in their opening game in a match that will no doubt spark talk of the countries' rivalry on the cricket and hockey pitches as well the impending encounter at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium on January 10.

The Koreans, meanwhile, will renew their battle with Bahrain on the continental scene, with the Taegu Warriors aiming to avenge a 2-1 defeat at the hands of the Gulf nation in their last meeting at the finals of the championship in Jakarta in 2007.

Cho Kwang-rae's side are hoping to end a drought that extends back more than half a century at the AFC Asian Cup while the Australians and Bahrainis are both seeking their first-ever continental title.

Australia and Korea Republic will meet for the first time in a competition fixture since the Socceroos joined the Asian Football Confederation in 2006 in round two as Bahrain take on India.

Bahrain and Australia then play each other in the final round of matches with the Gulf side hoping to extract a level of revenge for a pair of defeats in World Cup qualifying in 2009 as India face the daunting task of taking on the Koreans.

GROUP C

KOREA REPUBLIC



INDIA



AUSTRALIA



BAHRAIN





KOREA REPUBLIC

Name	Korea Republic National Team
Full Association name	Korea Republic Football Association
Foundation	1928
FIFA Affiliation	1948
AFC Affiliation	1954



Two-time AFC Asian Cup winners Korea Republic continue to be one of the most successful nations in the continental game even if the country is seeking to end a 51-year drought at this year's tournament.

The Koreans won the first two editions of the AFC Asian Cup – in Hong Kong in 1956 and on home soil four years later – but since then the Land of Morning Calm has not welcomed the famous tro-

phy back upon its shores.

That record stands in stark contrast to Korea Republic's phenomenal record in the continent's qualifying tournament for the FIFA World Cup, which stands at an Asian record of eight appearances at the tournament.

Seven of those have been consecutive, with the Koreans participating in every World Cup since 1986 and twice reaching the knockout phase of the competition. That happened most famously in 2002 when the country reached the semi-finals as they co-hosted the tournament with Japan.

The most recent edition saw Korea Republic progress to the second round for the first time on foreign soil and although the man who led the team to that landmark achievement – 2009 AFC Coach of the Year Huh Jung-moo – is no longer at the helm of the team, an impressive array of talent remains in place.

Cho Kwang-rae was the man to replace Huh but he still relies on a squad that boasts some of Asia's best players, including Manchester United midfielder Park Ji-sung, Lee Chung-yong of Bolton Wanderers and goal scorer Park Chu-young, who plays his club football with AS Monaco.

With Korea's position of dominance within the region also extending to the success enjoyed by the country's club sides – Korean club Pohang Steelers and Seongnam Ilhwa have won the last two editions of the AFC Champions League – the time is ripe for the national team to return to the summit.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Jung Sung Ryong – 04/01/1985 (GOALKEEPER)

Jung Sung Ryong proved himself the long-term successor to veteran goalkeeper Lee Woon Jae by starting all four of Korea Republic's matches at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa. He completed a successful year by also winning the AFC Champions League with Seongnam Ilhwa.

Kim Yong Dae – 11/10/1979 (GOALKEEPER)

A member of Korea Republic's squad for the 2006 FIFA World Cup finals and the 2007 AFC Asian Cup finals, Kim Yong Dae was overlooked by former coach Huh Jung Moo for South Africa. He has returned to the squad under Cho Kwang Rae and is second choice behind Jung Sung Ryong.

Kim Jin Hyeon – 06/07/1987 (GOALKEEPER)

Youngster Kim Jin Hyeon starred for Korea Republic at the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Canada in 2007 and since then has racked up significant time between the posts at J.League side Cerezo Osaka, who he joined directly from university and who he helped to third place in the league standings in 2010.

Cha Du Ri – 25/07/1980 (DEFENDER)

Cha Du Ri's switch to defence from attack over the last couple of seasons has seen him prolong his involvement with the Korea Republic national team and he was another of Cho Kwang Rae's squad to feature in South Africa last year. Signed for Scotland's Celtic from Freiberg in Germany following the FIFA World Cup.

Kwak Tae Hwi – 08/07/1981 (DEFENDER)

Kwak Tae Hwi became one of a growing number of Korean players in the J.League when he signed for Kyoto Sanga from Chunnam Dragons in January 2010 and in addition to his presence at the back, he is also a threat at the other end of the pitch, scoring regularly at international level.

Cho Yong Hyung – 03/11/1983 (DEFENDER)

Cho Yong Hyung became a regular under Huh Jung Moo and played in all four of the nation's games at the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa. Currently plays his club football for Jeju United after a one-year spell with Seongnam Ilhwa.

Lee Jung Soo – 08/01/1980 (DEFENDER)

One of the stars of Korea Republic's performance at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa, Lee Jung Soo scored twice in the group stages – against Greece and Nigeria - as the country progressed to the knockout phase of the tournament for the first time outside of Asia. A winner of the K-League title with Suwon Bluewings who has also played for J.League sides Kyoto Sanga and Kashima Antlers prior to joining Qatar's Al Sadd.

Lee Young Pyo – 23/04/1977 (DEFENDER)

Veteran defender Lee Young Pyo continues to hold down a place in the Korea Republic squad thanks to his assured performances at left back. The former Tottenham Hotspur and Borussia Dortmund defender featured in all four of his nation's matches at the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Hwang Jae Won – 13/04/1981 (DEFENDER)

A winner of the AFC Champions League title in 2009 with Pohang Steelers and a nominee for the AFC Player of the Year Award during the same season, Hwang Jae Won is a relative latecomer to the Korea Republic national team. He joined Suwon Bluewings at the start of 2010.

Choi Hyo Jin – 18/08/1983 (DEFENDER)

Another member of Pohang Steelers' AFC Champions League winning side from 2009, Choi Hyo Jin has since moved on, playing for FC Seoul in 2010 before joining the Army's Sangmoo team for the 2011 season. Plays at right back and is the under-study for Cha Du Ri.

Hong Jeong Ho – 12/08/1989 (DEFENDER)

Called up as a late replacement following the injury-enforced withdrawal of Park Chu Young, central defender Hong Jung Ho is another of Korea Republic's up-and-coming youngsters and his inclusion in the squad caps a fine first season in professional football with Jeju United.

Lee Yong Rae – 17/04/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Lee Yong Rae is a player well known to head coach Cho Kwang Rae, who coached the 24-year-old during his time at the helm of the Gyeongnam FC side. Lee can play in either defence or midfield and is a viable option to veteran left-back Lee Young Pyo.

Lee Chung Yong – 02/07/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Another member of the 2010 FIFA World Cup squad, Lee Chung Yong has impressed at English Premier League side Bolton Wanderers, who he joined from FC Seoul. His pace and crossing – as well as his ability from dead ball situations – make him a potent threat.

Park Ji Sung – 25/02/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

Manchester United's Park Ji Sung has become one of the most recognizable faces in Asian football and the energetic midfielder was the first Korean to play in the final of the UEFA Champions League when he was in his club's starting line-up that lost to Barcelona in Rome in 2009. Now a veteran of three FIFA World Cup finals, he has retained his position as the Korea Republic captain under Cho Kwang Rae.

Ki Sung Yueng – 24/01/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Celtic midfielder Ki Sung Yueng was an ever-present at the heart of the Korea Republic team during the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, marking a rapid rise for a player who was named AFC Young Player of the Year in 2009. The former FC Seoul player spent part of his early career in Australia and is also known as David Ki.

Yoon Bit Ga Ram – 07/05/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

Youngster Yoon Bit Ga Ram is another player well known to coach Cho Kwang Rae, who worked with the 20-year-old during his time at Gyeongnam FC, bringing the midfielder through the ranks after signing him from Chungang University. Highly rated in Korea and he scored on his debut against Nigeria in August.

Koo Ja Cheol – 27/02/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Known for the accuracy of his passing, Koo Ja Cheol is another up-and-coming midfielder included in Cho Kwang Rae's squad. The 21-year-old has already attracted interest from clubs overseas and he was instrumental in Jeju United's fine season in the K-League in 2010, when they finished as runners-up.

Kim Bo Kyung – 06/10/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Japan-based Kim Bo Kyung is one of several members of the Korea Republic squad slated for inclusion in his nation's squad for Asia's Olympic qualifying tournament. He is currently contracted to J.League side Cerezo Osaka, but spent the 2010 season on loan to second division side Oita Trinita.

Yeom Ki Hun – 30/03/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the stars of Jeonbuk Motors' title-winning run during the 2006 AFC Champions League, Yeom Ki Hun has found favour with national team boss Cho Kwang Rae after impressing domestically with current club Suwon Bluewings. A tricky left-winger, Yeom has a knack of scoring goals as well as creating them.

Son Heung Min – 08/07/1992 (FORWARD)

At 18 years of age, Son Heung Min is the youngest member of the Korea Republic squad but his youth belies the talent and experience of a player much older. He joined Bundesliga club SV Hamburg direct from high school when he was only 16 and he is the youngest player ever to score for the club. He has already been compared favourably to Korean legend Cha Bum Kun.

Ji Dong Won – 28/05/1991 (FORWARD)

An impressive season with Chunnam Dragons has seen Ji Dong Won earn a place in the squad for the AFC Asian Cup, despite being just 19 years old. The striker – who spent a year with English club Reading – represented his country at the AFC U19 Championship in China in 2010.

Yoo Byung Soo – 26/03/1988 (FORWARD)

A stellar season in 2009 for Incheon United thrust Yoo Byung Soo into the limelight, with the 22-year-old linked with a move to English side Bolton Wanderers and a place in the country's FIFA World Cup squad. Neither materialized but he has continued to impress and Cho Kwang Rae aims to take advantage of his penalty box prowess.

Kim Shin Wook – 14/04/1988 (FORWARD)

Towering centre forward Kim Shin Wook brings a physical presence to the Korea Republic attack and his height and aerial ability allow him to also be deployed in defence. Kim has regularly found the back of the net for Ulsan Horang-i but remains relatively untried at international level.


CHO KWANG-RAE

Cho Kwang-rae took over as head coach of the Korea Republic national team after Huh Jung-moo stood down following a successful campaign at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. The 56-year-old brings a wealth of experience to the role, having worked throughout the K-League and winning the domestic title with Anyang Cheetahs (now FC Seoul) in 2000, a club he also led to the final of the Asian Club Championship two years later. A former international midfielder who played 80 times for Korea Republic, Cho has forged a reputation for playing attacking football and prides himself on putting his faith in youth, a trait that is sure to continue during his tenure with the Taeguk Warriors.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
09 January Sunday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
10 January Monday	19:15	Korea Republic vs. Bahrain	Al-Gharafa Stadium
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14 January Friday	16:15	Australia vs. Korea Republic	Al-Gharafa Stadium
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MEDIA OFFICER

Park Il-Ki





INDIA

Name	India National Team
Full Association name	India Football Association
Foundation	1937
FIFA Affiliation	1948
AFC Affiliation	1954



India returns to the finals of the AFC Asian Cup for the first time since 1984 with the cricket-mad nation securing their place in Qatar 2011 thanks to their victory in the 2008 edition of the AFC Challenge Cup.

The country's appearance at the finals is long overdue for a nation that holds a special place in the history of Asian football. India was one of the 12 founder members of the Asian Football Confederation back in 1954 and at that stage the country had

already won the gold medal at the Asian Games in Dehli, claiming the title in 1951 with victory over Iran in the final.

A second Asian Games gold medal came in 1962 while in 1956 the country finished fourth at the Olympic Games, one of the finest performances ever by an Asian team at an Olympiad.

India's standing within the continental game has slipped since, however, with cricket establishing itself as the country's number one sport and the standing of football in India slipping.

That, though, has not stopped the Indians from dominating at regional level and they are the reigning South Asian champions, lifting that title in Bangladesh in 2009 for the fifth time since 1993.

Under coach Bob Houghton, the Indians have made significant gains over the last four years with the Englishman playing a key role in prolonging the career of the country's leading scorer – and captain – Bhaichung Bhutia while professionalising the approach taken towards the game.

Qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup has seen the All India Football Federation grant Houghton and his team the opportunity to prepare with lengthy training camps in Portugal and Dubai in a bid to be as ready as possible for the task at hand.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Subrata Paul - 24/12/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

First choice goalkeeper Subrata Pal has played for India at all levels and was a member of the squad that won the AFC Challenge Cup, enabling India to qualify for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup for the first time since 1984. Currently plays for Pune after stints at East Bengal and Mohun Bagan.

Subhasish Roy Chowdhury - 27/09/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

Previously with Mahindra United, Subhasish Roy Chowdhury joined Indian champions Dempo SC at the start of the 2010 season, where he was immediately installed as first choice goalkeeper as the club went on to win the I-League crown. Chowdhury acts as back-up to Subrata Pal.

Gurpreet Singh Sandhu - 03/02/1992 (GOALKEEPER)

The youngest member of the Indian squad at just 18 years of age, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu has been selected for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup with one eye on giving the goalkeeper added experience. Plays for the AIFF XI in the I-League.

Surkumar Singh - 21/03/1983 (DEFENDER)

Defender Surkumar Singh is an attack-minded right back who likes to push forward when he has the opportunity. A graduate of the Tata Football Academy, he presently plays for Mohun Bagan after a stint with East Bengal.

Anwar - 24/09/1984 (DEFENDER)

Anwar Ali forms the first-choice central defensive partnership alongside Gouramangi Singh and is noted for his strength in the air. The 26-year-old Dempo SC defender was a member of the victorious AFC Challenge Cup side in 2008 and, at 1.89m, is the tallest player in the team.

Mahesh Gawli - 23/01/1980 (DEFENDER)

One of the few players in the team aged 30 or over, left back

Mahesh Gawli is another player to have featured in India's AFC Challenge Cup winning squad during the 2008 tournament. Currently plays for Dempo SC, with whom he reached the semifinals of the AFC Cup in 2008.

Syed Rahim Nabi - 14/12/1985 (FORWARD)

Versatile right-sided player Syed Rahim Nabi can play either in midfield or in defence. A mainstay of the East Bengal club since 2004, he was previously on the books of Mohammedan SC after graduating from the Tata Academy. Another member of the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup squad.

Deepak Kumar Mandal - 13/10/1979 (DEFENDER)

One of the more senior members of the squad, Deepak Kumar Mandal has been part of the India national team set-up since 2001. Known for his high work rate, the 31-year-old was the winner of India's Player of the Year award in 2002.

N S Manju - 09/05/1987 (DEFENDER)

NS Manju missed India's successful hosting of the AFC Challenge Cup in 2008 through injury, but the 23-year-old defender remains an integral part of Bob Houghton's squad. Currently plays for Mohun Bagan.

Rakesh Masih - 18/03/1987 (DEFENDER)

One of only a handful of players in the India squad not to have been involved in their AFC Challenge Cup win in 2008, 23-year-old Rakesh Masih plays his club football for Mohun Bagan. Among the taller members of the team, he made his debut against Hong Kong.

Govin Singh - 03/01/1988 (DEFENDER)

Govin Singh was the youngest player in the India squad when the national side won the AFC Challenge Cup in 2008 and the 23-year-old is now a firmly established member of Bob Houghton's

squad. Plays his club football for East Bengal.

Gouramangi Singh - 25/01/1986 (MIDFIELDER)

Central defender Gouramangi Singh is one of the lynchpins of the India team, marshalling the defence from his position at the back. A key player for coach Bob Houghton, the 24-year-old is currently contracted to the Churchill Brothers club.

Steven Dias - 25/12/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

A regular presence on the right side of midfield, Steven Dias has become one of the mainstays of the Indian starting line-up. Dias likes to join the attack whenever possible and is capable of pitching in with the occasional goal both in open play and from set pieces.

N P Pradeep - 28/04/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

A former captain of India's under 23 team, central midfielder NP Pradeep has also played for his nation at under 19 level and was part of the squad that qualified for the AFC Asian Cup by winning the AFC Challenge Cup. Known for his scoring prowess from long range.

Climax Lawrence - 16/01/1979 (MIDFIELDER)

Veteran Climax Lawrence plays at the heart of the team, anchoring the midfield from his position in the centre. A winner of the I-League in 2008 and 2010 with Dempo SC, he was also an integral part of the Dempo team that reached the semifinals of the AFC Cup in 2008.

Clifford Miranda - 11/07/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

Left-sided midfielder Clifford Miranda has tasted a significant amount of success with club side Dempo SC since he joined in 2005, winning the I-League in 2008 and 2010 and reaching the semifinals of the AFC Cup in 2008. With regular left winger Anthony Pereira missing through injury, Miranda is likely to start at the AFC Asian Cup.

Renedy Singh - 20/06/1979 (MIDFIELDER)

Renedy Singh is another of the more experienced players in Bob Houghton's India squad and, like so many others within the 23-man selection, he was a member of the squad that won the AFC Challenge Cup in 2008. The 31-year-old is a hard working, energetic midfielder.

Mehrajuddin Wadoo - 13/09/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Mehrajuddin Wadoo scored the winning goal against Bangladesh as India claimed the 2005 edition of the SAFF Cup and he remains an integral part of the national squad. Known as 'The Tank' due to his imposing physical presence in midfield.

Baldeep Singh - 06/02/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Right-sided Baldeep Singh currently plays his club football for JCT and can perform in either midfield or defence. He made his international debut against Tajikistan in the group stages of the 2008 AFC Challenge Cup, which India won to qualify for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup.

Bhaichung Bhutia - 15/06/1976 (FORWARD)

India's most famous player, Bhaichung Bhutia remains an icon of the game in his homeland. Now in the latter stages of his career, the 34-year-old East Bengal striker is one of the few players from his country to have played overseas, having enjoyed stints with Malaysian side Perak as well as Bury in England.

Sunil Chhetri - 03/08/1984 (FORWARD)

Currently contracted to Major League Soccer side Sporting Kansas City, Sunil Chhetri is on the verge of assuming Bhaichung Bhutia's mantle as the pin-up of Indian football. Hard working and creative, the diminutive forward is India's main attacking threat.

Abhishek Yadav - 10/06/1980 (FORWARD)

Abhishek Yadav brings some height and much needed physical presence to the Indian attack and his goals have been key to the team's performances in the past, including claiming the winner in the final of the SAFF Cup in 2003 against Pakistan. Away from football, Yadav is a political science graduate.

Mohammed Rafi – 24/03/1982 (FORWARD)

A late replacement in the India squad, Mohammed Rafi impressed during his time at Mahindra United as he regularly found the back of the net for his club. He was named the I-League Player of the Year for 2009, prompting a move to Churchill Brothers early in 2010.



BOB HOUGHTON

Since taking over as India coach in 2006, Bob Houghton has managed to oversee a significant turnaround in the fortunes of the India national team, culminating in qualifying the country for their first AFC Asian Cup finals since 1984.

Despite possessing a vast wealth of experience in the Asian game, though, Houghton will be appearing at an AFC Asian Cup for the first time.

During his time in Asia, Houghton has worked extensively in China, including with the national team, with whom he won the 1998 Dynasty Cup. He also took Uzbekistan to the verge of qualifying for the 2006 FIFA World Cup finals.

Houghton's most famous achievement, however, came in European football more than three decades ago when he guided Malmö to the final of the European Cup in 1979.

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MEDIA OFFICER

Sanjay Kumar





AUSTRALIA

Name	Australia National Team
Full Association name	Australia Football Association
Foundation	1961
FIFA Affiliation	1963
AFC Affiliation	2006



Australia's initial foray into the AFC Asian Cup at the 2007 tournament fell short of expectations with the Graham Arnold-coached side exiting the competition at the quarter-final stage following a penalty shoot-out loss at the hands of Japan.

Defeat against eventual champions Iraq in the group stages as well as a draw with Oman underlined the move into the Asian Football Confederation would be far from easy for a nation that had previ-

ously been the dominant force in Oceania.

Since then, though, the Australians have come to terms with the Asian scene, comfortably qualifying for the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa to garner their first success against regional opposition since joining the confederation at the start of 2006.

With a squad featuring a host of players who have established themselves as household names in Europe as well as at home – the likes of Tim Cahill and Mark Schwarzer continue to feature in the English Premier League – Australia will no doubt go into the 2011 AFC Asian Cup™ among the favourites.

There have been changes, however, since the nation's appearance in South Africa, when the country narrowly missed out on a place in the second round by virtue of goal difference.

Dutch coach Pim Verbeek, who steered the country to the finals, stepped down upon the completion of the country's World Cup campaign and he has been replaced by Germany's Holger Osieck, who has brought in a more attacking style of football in his short time in charge.

Despite suggestions that the World Cup in South Africa may serve as the swansong for many of the country's more established stars, the Asian Cup will welcome a strong Australian squad as the Socceroos aim to capture the continental crown.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Mark Schwarzer – 06/10/1972 (GOALKEEPER)

Mark Schwarzer has long been the first name on the team sheet for any Australia coach and it remains the case with the Socceroos under the control of Holger Osieck. The Fulham goalkeeper retains a reliable and authoritative presence between the posts and he will be appearing at his second consecutive AFC Asian Cup finals.

Brad Jones – 19/03/1982 (GOALKEEPER)

Previously Mark Schwarzer's understudy when the pair played for English Premier League club Middlesbrough, Brad Jones joined Liverpool in the summer of 2010 but has yet to feature regularly for the Merseyside club. Was originally included in his nation's squad for the FIFA World Cup finals but withdrew due to family reasons.

Nathan Coe – 01/06/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Nathan Coe was an unexpected selection for third choice goalkeeper in place of Adam Federici and the 26-year-old had yet to receive his first cap prior to his inclusion in the AFC Asian Cup squad. Coe currently plays in Denmark having previously been attached to Dutch side PSV Eindhoven and Italian giants Internazionale but did not make a first team appearance for either club.

Mathew Spiranovic – 26/06/1988 (DEFENDER)

Central defender Mathew Spiranovic was courted by Croatia before committing himself to the Australian cause ahead of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and the 22-year-old was included in Graham Arnold's squad for the last edition of the continental championship. Previously played in Germany for FC Nuremburg before signing for Japan's Urawa Reds at the start of 2010.

Luke Wilkshire – 02/10/1981 (DEFENDER)

A two-time veteran of the FIFA World Cup – he played in both Germany 2006 and South Africa 2010 – right full back Luke Wilkshire has developed into one of the key players in the Australia squad. A winner of the Eredivise title in the Netherlands in 2008 before join-

ing current club Dynamo Moscow.

Lucas Neill – 09/03/1978 (DEFENDER)

Another member of the Socceroos squad who has played at two FIFA World Cups and who will be making his second AFC Asian Cup appearance, captain Lucas Neill brings versatility to the back line as he can play either in the centre or at right back. Currently featuring for Turkish side Galatasaray after a 15-year stint in England that saw him play for Millwall, Blackburn Rovers, West Ham United and Everton.

Sasa Ognenovski – 03/04/1979 (DEFENDER)

The reigning AFC Player of the Year following his exploits with K-League side Seongnam Ilhwa in the AFC Champions League, Sasa Ognenovski has belatedly received recognition at international level. The 31-year-old earned his first cap for Australia in November against Egypt after being repeatedly overlooked by previous coach Pim Verbeek.

David Carney – 30/11/1983 (DEFENDER)

Blackpool's David Carney can play either as a left back or on the left side of midfield and the well-travelled 27-year-old is currently in his third stint in English football after also featuring in Scotland and the Netherlands as well as in the A-League with Sydney FC. Played in both the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Jonathan McKain – 21/09/1982 (DEFENDER)

Saudi Arabia-based Jon McKain can play either in defence or in midfield and has been an irregular member of the Socceroos squad since 2004. He represented Australia at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 and was part of the country's squad at the 2005 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Jade North – 07/01/1982 (DEFENDER)

Jade North has been capped by Australia at all levels and played

at the Olympic Games in both Athens and Beijing, the second as one of the three overage players permitted. North currently plays in the A-League with Wellington Phoenix and has also had short stints in Korea Republic with Incheon United and with Norway's Tromsø.

Jason Culina – 05/08/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

Former Ajax Amsterdam, FC Twente and PSV Eindhoven midfielder Jason Culina remains one of the stalwarts of the Socceroos squad, having featured for Australia at two FIFA World Cup tournaments and the last edition of the AFC Asian Cup. He returned to play in Australia in 2009 and was one of only two A-League-based players to feature in the squad for South Africa.

Mile Jedinak – 03/08/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Turkey-based central midfielder Mile Jedinak was a regular member of the Socceroos squad under former coach Pim Verbeek, featuring for Australia during the FIFA World Cup finals in the nation's opening game against Germany. Holger Osieck has retained his predecessor's faith in the 26-year-old and he should feature regularly in Qatar 2011.

Brett Emerton – 22/02/1979 (MIDFIELDER)

Blackburn Rovers' right-sided midfielder Brett Emerton has played at all levels for Australia, including captaining the side that featured at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Another highly experienced member of the squad who played at the FIFA World Cup in Germany and South Africa as well as the 2007 edition of the AFC Asian Cup.

Tom Oar - 10/12/1991 (MIDFIELDER)

Tommy Oar made his breakthrough into the national team against Indonesia in an AFC Asian Cup qualifier and was touted for possible inclusion in the Socceroos' squad for the FIFA World Cup. He did not make it to South Africa but is included for the AFC Asian Cup after a knee injury led to Richard Garcia's late withdrawal.

Neil Kilkenny – 19/12/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

England-born midfielder Neil Kilkenny played for the under 18 and under 20 teams of the land of his birth before choosing to play for Australia in 2006. He was included in the country's Olympic team for Beijing 2008. Raised in Brisbane from the age of four, he has established himself as a regular at Leeds United after spending his early years at Arsenal.

Matt McKay – 11/01/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Although first capped for Australia during the qualifying rounds for the AFC Asian Cup 2007, Matt McKay has only amassed a handful of caps for the Socceroos in the four years since his first appearance. The former under 20 and under 23 international has had stints playing in Korea Republic and China, with Incheon United and Changchun Yatai respectively.

Carl Valeri – 14/08/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Defensive midfielder Carl Valeri made his mark with the Socceroos by starting all three games in his country's appearance at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa after previously being an unused substitute during the 2007 AFC Asian Cup campaign. Started his career at Internazionale but moved on after failing to make the grade at San Siro.

Harry Kewell – 22/09/1978 (MIDFIELDER)

Harry Kewell remains one of the superstars of Australian football even though injuries have meant the 31-year-old no longer hits the heights he attained in the early part of his career with Leeds United. A UEFA Champions League winner during his time at Liverpool, Kewell is in his third season with Turkey's Galatasaray.

Brett Holman – 27/03/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the revelations of Australia's showing at the FIFA World Cup finals, Brett Holman scored twice – against Ghana and Serbia - in his country's three group games in South Africa. A Dutch

league winner with AZ Alkmaar in 2009, Holman can play as a striker or as an attacking midfielder.

Tim Cahill – 06/12/1979 (FORWARD)

Everton's goal-scoring midfielder Tim Cahill claimed Australia's first ever goal at the FIFA World Cup finals – in a 3-1 win over Japan in Germany 2006 – and the country's first-ever AFC Asian Cup goal when he netted in the 1-1 draw with Oman in 2007. One of the most potent players in Asian football, he is equally adept playing as a striker as he is in attacking midfield.

Scott McDonald – 21/08/1983 (FORWARD)

Scott McDonald's prolific goal scoring form for Scottish clubs Motherwell and Celtic earned him a call-up for the Socceroos but the Melbourne-born forward had struggled to find the back of the net for the national team. McDonald has represented Australia at all levels, including at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

Nathan Burns – 07/05/1988 (FORWARD)

Selection for the Socceroos squad for the finals of the AFC Asian Cup ends a series of near-misses by Nathan Burns, who made his debut for Australia in the build-up to the 2007 edition but was not included in the squad for the tournament. He was also part of the Olyroos squad that qualified for the Beijing Olympics in 2008 but was not selected to travel to the Games in China.

Robbie Kruse – 05/10/1988 (FORWARD)

Melbourne Victory striker Robbie Kruse is one of only two players in the Socceroos squad who were uncapped prior to being named in the selection by coach Holger Osieck but the 22-year-old is highly rated within the domestic A-League. He was his club's Young Player of the Year in 2009 and has played for Australia at under 17 and under 20 level.



HOLGER OSIECK

Within Asian football, Holger Osieck's name will forever be linked with his success at J.League side Urawa Reds, who he led to the AFC Champions League crown in 2007.

The German-born coach, who worked as an assistant to Franz Beckenbauer when West Germany won the World Cup in 1990, is one of the game's most accomplished tacticians, having worked regularly for FIFA's technical study group at successive World Cups. He has tasted continental glory outside of Asia, having led Canada to the CONCACAF Gold Cup in 2000 and he took over at the helm of the Australia national team following Pim Verbeek's post-South Africa World Cup resignation.

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18 January Tuesday	16:15	Australia vs. Bahrain	Al-Sadd Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Adam Mark





BAHRAIN

Name	Bahrain National Team
Full Association name	Bahrain Football Association
Foundation	1957
FIFA Affiliation	1966
AFC Affiliation	1969



Over the last decade, Bahrain has become one of Asian football's leading lights, a remarkable achievement for a nation that was once seen as one of the weaker countries in the Gulf region.

Just as they did in 2007, Bahrain go into the latest edition of the AFC Asian Cup hoping to alleviate some of the disappointment caused by missing out on qualifying for the finals of the FIFA World Cup for the first time.

The Bahrainis lost out to Trinidad and Tobago in a final eliminator for Germany 2006 and, four years later, they succumbed to New Zealand at the same stage, breaking the nation's heart once again.

Bahrain's performance at the most recent edition of the AFC Asian Cup was underwhelming, with the Milan Macala-coached team exiting at the group stages and falling short of their impressive performance in 2004.

Then, in China, the Bahrainis made it as far as the semifinals, where they lost to eventual champions Japan in a thrilling contest that was decided in golden goal extra time.

New coach Salman Sharida has had very little time to work with his team, the locally-born coach taking over in the weeks leading up to the finals following the resignation of Josef Hickersberger after the team's disappointing showing at the West Asian Championship in Jordan in September.

Success, too, has had a disruptive effect on the squad as the country's players have become highly sought after across the Gulf region while two – Abdulla Baba Faatadi and Abdullah Omar – are currently playing in the Swiss league with Neuchatel Xamax.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Abbas Ahmed - 13/06/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

After being the third choice three years ago, Abbas Ahmed has now established himself as first choice goalkeeper after his impressive performances with Al Ahli. He started his career with Setra before making a move to Al Ahli in October 2007 and took part in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Mahmood Mansoor - 01/06/1980 (GOALKEEPER)

Mahmood Mansour was a key member of Al Riffa team that reached the semi-finals of last year's AFC Cup as he featured in all his side's matches in the competition. The 30-year-old goalkeeper was also a member of the Al Riffa team which played in the 2004 AFC Champions League.

Ahmed Mushaima - 13/12/1982 (GOALKEEPER)

The 28-year-old goalkeeper Ahmed Mushaima was only called to the national team after taking part in Bahrain's friendly matches prior to the 2011 AFC Asian Cup finals. Mushaima started his career with Bahrain giants Al Ahli before he decided to move to his current club Al Manama in September 2006.

Husain Baba - 11/02/1982 (DEFENDER)

Husain Baba is solid defender who has gained a lot of experience thanks to his club adventures in Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait. After the 2007 Asian Cup, Baba moved to Qatar's Al Rayyan and one year later he joined Umm Salal. He then played in Kuwait, UAE and Saudi Arabia, where he is currently attached to Al Wahda.

Ebrahim Meshkhas - 07/07/1980 (DEFENDER)

After starting his football career with Muharraq, tall bald defender Ebrahim Al Meshkhas moved in November 2006 to Al Arabi. He featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup and after the continental tournament he played with Qatar's Al Khor for eight months before returning to Muharraq in February 2008.

Abdulla Marzooqi - 12/12/1980 (DEFENDER)

A 30-year-old defender, Abdulla Marzooqi started his football career with Riffa before moving to neighbouring Qatar in 2004 where he spent two years with Al Rayyan before joining Saudi Arabia's Al Taii. Marzooqi then joined Al Kuwait after the 2007 AFC Asian Cup before returning to Qatar where he is playing at the moment with Al Siliya.

Abbas Ayyad - 11/05/1987 (DEFENDER)

Twenty-three-year-old defender Abbas Ayyad was a key member of Bahrain Olympic team which featured in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers, reaching the final round of qualifying for Beijing. He also featured in Bahrain's matches during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and took part in the 2010 Gulf Cup.

Rashed Al Hooti - 24/12/1989 (DEFENDER)

Despite playing for lowly outfits East Riffa, Al Hooti was called to join Bahrain's Olympic team in the Gulf Olympic tournament in June 2010 just months before he was called for the full national team to feature in the Gulf Cup in Yemen.

Dawood Saad - 09/07/1986 (DEFENDER)

The 24-year-old defender Dawood Saad earned his call up to the national team after his solid performances with Al Riffa. He featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers as a substitute before he impressed in the 2010 AFC Cup where he featured in most of his team's matches before losing in the semi-finals against Al Qadisiya of Kuwait.

Waleed Al Hayam - 03/02/1991 (DEFENDER)

Young defender Waleed Al Hayam is considered one of the key players for the Bahrain U19 team after helping the team qualify for the AFC U19 Championship. The 19-year-old defender, who replaced injured midfielder Mohamed Salmeen in the squad, also featured with Muharraq in the 2009 AFC Cup.

Saleh Abdulhameed - 04/08/1982 (DEFENDER)

Experienced defender Saleh Abdulhameed started his career with Busaiteen before moving in April 2007 to his current club Al Najmah, although he has played elsewhere on loan. He spent several months with Kuwait's Al Nasr and in early 2009 he spent five months with Saudi Arabia's Al Raed.

Abdulwahab Ali - 04/06/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

After starting his career with lowly Al Ittihad in Bahrain, Abdulwahab Ali signed a contract with Busaiteen in 2006. He spent nearly four years with Busaiteen before joining Bahrain league champions Al Ahli at the start of the 2010-2011 season.

Salman Isa - 11/07/1977 (MIDFIELDER)

After a strong start to his career with Issa Town, Salman Isa joined Riffa club before being called up to play for the Bahrain national team in 2002. He joined Qatar's Al Arabi in September of 2004 but returned to Riffa after spending one season in Qatar. He rejoined Al Arabi in October 2005, where he has become one of the key players for the Qatari club.

Abdulla Omar - 01/01/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Abdulla Omar became well known after his impressive display at the 2006 World Beach Soccer qualifiers where he scored seven goals. He was called for Bahrain national team for the first time in later that year and was a member of the team which played in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Faouzi Aaish - 27/02/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Faouzi Aaish was first called to the Bahrain national team in December 2004 when he made his debut in the 17th Gulf Cup. After performing well for Muharraq, where he won the 2008 AFC Cup, he joined Qatar's Al Siliya at the start of 2009 where he continues to ply his trade.

Hamad Rakea - 22/04/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

A defensive midfielder who moved from Riffa to Qatar's Al Arabi in 2007 for a short spell, Hamad Rakea was called for the national squad for the first time in 2005. However, he did not make his debut until the 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers.

Mahmood Abdulrahman - 22/11/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Mahmood Abdulrahman is one of the most influential midfielders in Bahrain and he has impressed with his club Muharraq and the national team. He is well known for his decisive goals from free kicks, scoring several during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Abdulla Fatadi - 02/11/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Nigerian-born midfielder Abdullah Fatadi was called up to join the Bahrain national team for the first time at the 2007 Gulf Cup. He started his career with Al Ahli before moving to Muharraq where he spent two years before joining Al Khraitiat in 2008. He then moved to Neuchâtel Xamax in Switzerland. However, his European spell lasted for only one year, when he joined UAE's Ittihad Kalba'a.

Mahmood Al Ajmi - 08/05/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

Mahmood Al Ajmi was a member of Bahrain Olympic team which featured in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. He was called up when he was only 19 years old to feature in Bahrain's 2007 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers where he was a substitute against Australia. He was also a key member of Al Riffa team which reached the semi-finals of the 2010 AFC Cup.

Abdulwahab Al Malood - 07/06/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

Young striker Abdulwahab Al Malood is considered as one of the most promising forwards in Bahrain after he helped his club side Al Hadd gain promotion from Bahrain's second division to the top flight last season, scoring seven goals during the campaign.

Ismaeel Abdullatif - 11/09/1986 (FORWARD)

Ismaeel Abdullatif featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, scoring the winner against Korea Republic in the group stages. After impressing in the domestic league, he moved to Kuwait's Al Arabi in 2007 where he spent two years. He played for one year with Al Riffa and featured in the 2010 AFC Cup before returning to Al Hala.

Jaycee John - 08/10/1985 (FORWARD)

Nigerian-born striker Jaycee John was selected for the national team after he received the Bahraini nationality in January 2007. He featured in Bahrain's three matches in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup but he failed to score. John started his career with Al Ahli before moving to Muharraq in 2006. After spending two years with Muharraq, he moved to Europe where he played for Excelsior Mouscron in Belgium and then he joined Turkish outfit Eskisehirspor at the start of 2010.

Abdulla Al Dakeel - 03/06/1985 (FORWARD)

The 25-year-old Abdulla Al Dakeel broke onto the football scene in Bahrain as a member of the country's Olympic team for the continent's qualifiers for Beijing 2008, scoring three times in Bahrain's unsuccessful attempt to qualify. He also featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and was part of the Muharraq squad that won the 2008 AFC Cup.



SALMAN SHARIDA

Former Pakistan and Muharraq coach Salman Sharida was named Bahrain coach in October 2010 following the surprise resignation of Austrian coach Josef Hickersberger.

The former Bahrain international is the most highly regarded locally-born coach in the Gulf state and he led the Muharraq club to success in the 2008 edition of the AFC Cup, when his side defeated Lebanon's Safa in the final.

His first task in charge of the national team came at the Gulf Cup in Yemen in November, but the Bahrainis were eliminated from the competition at the group stage following losses against Iraq and the United Arab Emirates.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
09 January Sunday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
10 January Monday	19:15	Korea Republic vs. Bahrain	Al-Gharafa Stadium
13 January Thursday	11:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
14 January Friday	19:15	Bahrain vs. India	Al-Sadd Stadium
17 January Monday	12:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
18 January Tuesday	16:15	Australia vs. Bahrain	Al-Sadd Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Yunes Mansoor





AFC
Asian Cup
QATAR 2011

GROUP D

GROUP PROFILE

Any group featuring the defending champions alongside a nation that has won the AFC Asian Cup on three occasions and a country that has just returned from appearing at the finals of the FIFA World Cup promises much.

The prospect of Iraq, Iran and DPR Korea going head-to-head for the two places in the quarterfinals could well provide one of the most enthralling battles of Qatar 2011, but to consider the battle a three-horse race would be to erroneously dismiss the challenge of the United Arab Emirates.

While the UAE had fallen away from the very pinnacle of the continental game over much of the last decade, the nation's run to the final of the Asian Games in Guangzhou in November highlights the progress being made in the Emirates.

As a result, Group D looks like being a thriller. Encounters between Iran and Iraq always fizz with excitement and the two countries have met throughout the history of the tournament and their last meeting in the finals came in the group stages of Lebanon 2000, which the Iranians won 1-0.

The Iranians, meanwhile, will be looking for revenge against a DPR Korea side that qualified ahead of Team Melli for the finals of the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, a feat that saw the North Koreans appear at the game's leading tournament for the first time since 1966.

Iraq's historic win in the 2007 edition of the competition made headlines across the globe and the three-time Gulf Cup winners will once again be a serious threat to anyone who holds aspirations of claiming the title.

The majority of the squad who lifted the title with victory over Saudi Arabia in Jakarta remains in place, guaranteeing a stellar array of talent on display when this quartet faces off at the AFC Asian Cup.

GROUP D

IRAQ



DPR KOREA



UAE



IR IRAN





IRAQ

Name	Iraq National Team
Full Association name	Iraq Football Association
Foundation	1948
FIFA Affiliation	1950
AFC Affiliation	1971



Victory for Iraq in the 2007 edition of the AFC Asian Cup was one of the highlights of the 55-year history of the continental championship but, with that win now a memory, the Gulf nation will be aiming for a repeat performance of their heroics in South East Asia.

The prevailing three-and-a-half years since that emotional 1-0 win over Saudi Arabia in the final in Jakarta have been far from plain sailing for the Iraqis, who continue to be blighted by instability at home.

The nation's under-23 side fell short of qualifying for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing – just four years after the country finished fourth in Athens – before the national side failed to progress to the final phase of the continent's qualifying tournament for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

There have been coaching changes aplenty – with the likes of Bora Milutinovic, Egil Olsen and Adnan Hamed filling the position – but the country recently settled on the services of experienced German coach Wolfgang Sidka.

Sidka took Iraq through the West Asian Championship in Jordan in September, where they lost out in the last four to Iran, before leading his side to the semi-finals of the Gulf Cup in Yemen.

The current Iraq side features many of the players who became heroes at home with that surprise win in 2007, with Younis Mahmoud – the country's talismanic striker – continuing to lead the attacking line and captaining the team.

The situation in Iraq means many of the players continue to play professionally outside of their homeland, with a number featuring for clubs in Qatar, Lebanon and Iran.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Mohammed Kassid - 10/12/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

Mohammed Kassid made his debut for the senior national team in 2007 and was a member of their Asian Cup-winning squad as a back-up to Noor Sabri. He started in all of Iraq's games at the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup, allowing only one goal in three games.

Ali Mutashar - 07/05/1989 (GOALKEEPER)

Ali Mutashar started his football career with Al Kadhimiya before moving in July 2007 to Al Nafat, where he spent two seasons before joining his current club Al Talaba. He has played for Iraq at various youth levels and took part in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship before recently being called up to the senior national team.

Haider Raad - 27/04/1991 (GOALKEEPER)

The 22-year-old custodian was recently called up by Iraq coach Wolfgang Sidka and was a member of the national squad for the 2010 Gulf Cup. Haidar Raad, who plays for Al Karakh, has featured in some of Iraq's recent international friendlies in the build-up to the 2011 AFC Asian Cup and impressed with some good performances.

Mohammed Ali Kareem - 25/06/1986 (DEFENDER)

A member of the Iraq squad which reached the final of the 2006 Asian Games, Mohammed Ali Kareem, was first called up to the senior national team in 2008 for the FIFA World Cup qualifiers. The 24-year-old, who plays for local giants Al Shorta, was part of the national squad for the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Saad Atiya - 26/02/1987 (DEFENDER)

Saad Atiya was the youngest member of Iraq's Olympic Games team which produced a stunning run to the semi-finals in Greece in 2004. He was also part of the Iraq squad that reached the quarter-finals of the 2004 AFC Asian Cup but he was not included in the team that won the continental title in Jakarta three years later.

Samal Saeed - 07/01/1986 (DEFENDER)

The twin brother of Iraq national midfielder Samer Saeed, Samal Saeed began his career with Al Shorta but moved to Arbil where he won two Iraq League titles before returning to his original club. He was a member of the Iraq squad that won the gold medal at the 2005 West Asian Games and also featured in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Basem Abbas - 01/07/1982 (DEFENDER)

Basem Abbas made his international debut in 2001 in a friendly against Qatar. He played for Iraq in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and was a key member of the team that won the continental title three years later. The 28-year-old defender played for clubs in Iran, Lebanon and Qatar before he landed in Turkey where he currently plays for Konyaspor.

Ali Erhaima - 08/08/1985 (DEFENDER)

Ali Errhaima began his career with Al Nafat in 2002 and had spells with Al Quwa Al Jawiya and Arbil before moving in 2007 to Libyan side Al Ahli Tripoli, where he stayed for a year before joining Qatari side Al Wakra. His made his debut for Iraq's national team in 2005 and he was a member of the 2007 AFC Asian Cup winning team and also featured in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Salam Shaker - 31/07/1986 (DEFENDER)

Salam Saker has been one of Iraq's most solid defenders since he first hit the headlines after signing for Iraqi giants Al Talaba in 2005 as an 18-year-old. He played for two years at Arbil before he earned a move to Qatari club Al Khor. He made his debut for the national team in January 2008 and he has featured in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers and also played in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Ahmed Ibrahim - 25/02/1992 (DEFENDER)

Ahmed Ibrahim started his career with Al Sharqat and joined

Salah Al Deen in 2008 before earning a move to Iraq champions Arbil a year later. The 19-year-old defender made his debut for Iraq in an international friendly against India in November 2010.

Muthana Khalid - 14/06/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

After beginning his career at Al Naft, the 21-year-old midfielder moved to his current club Al Quwa Al Jawiya in 2007. Muthana Khalid was called up by Iraq for a friendly tournament in the United Arab Emirates in November 2009 and made his first International debut against Azerbaijan.

Saad Abdulameer - 19/01/1992 (MIDFIELDER)

Saad Abdulameer, who is considered one of his country's most promising young talents, began his career at Al Karkh in 2008 at the age of 16. The 18-year-old midfielder was called up to Iraq's senior national team in September 2010 and made his International debut against Oman.

Qusay Muneer - 12/04/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

One of Iraq's most reliable midfielders over the past decade, Qusay Muneer played for his country during their run to the AFC Asian Cup quarter-finals in 2004 and their successful campaign in 2007. The veteran midfielder has had spells at clubs in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar where he currently plays for Qatar SC. He was named Iraq's footballer of the year in 2004.

Mahdi Kareem - 10/12/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Mahdi Kareem was first called up by Iraq in 2001 and played a major role in their AFC Asian Cup victory in 2007 as well as appearing for his country in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup. The 27-year-old played for several clubs in Iraq before joining Cypriot side Apollon Limassol in 2005. He also had spells in Libya at Al Ahly Tripoli and in Qatar at Al Khor before returning to Iraq to sign for Arbil.

Nashat Akram - 12/09/1984 (MIDFIELDER)

Nashat Akram made his international debut for Iraq in the 2002 World Cup qualifiers at the age of 18. He played in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and played an important role in Iraq's successful campaign three years later. After playing for a number of different clubs in the Gulf region, he joined Dutch side FC Twente in 2009 before moving on to Qatar's Al Wakra at the end of 2010.

Kerrar Jasim - 11/06/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

After impressing at Al Najaf, Kerrar Jasim moved to Qatar in 2007 where he played for two years for Al Wakra before going on to Iran to join Tractor Sazi. He played a major role in Iraq's successful 2007 AFC Asian Cup campaign, scoring a goal in the 3-1 win over Australia during the group stage.

Hawar Mohammed - 01/06/1981 (MIDFIELDER)

One of Iraq's most experienced players, Hawar Mohammed began his career with Mosel in 1998 as a 17-year-old. He played for Al Quwa Al Jawiya before joining clubs in Lebanon, Cyprus, United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Iran, where he currently plays for Esteghlal. He was in Iraq's squads for the 2004 and 2007 AFC Asian Cups and the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Samer Saeed - 01/07/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

The 23-year-old midfielder made his debut for the national team in 2008 and was included in their FIFA Confederations Cup squad a year later. He began his career with Arbil and also played for Al Quwa Al Jawiya before moving to Libyan side Al Ahly Tripoli. He had spells in Qatar at Al Shamal and Al Siliya before returning to Al Ahly Tripoli.

Ahmed Ayad - 01/01/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Ahmed Ayad, who will turn 20 in January, is considered as one of the emerging stars of Iraqi football. He began his football career with Al Quwa Al Jawiya as a 16-year-old and impressed during the

2007-2008 season when he was named the Most Valuable Player in the Iraqi league.

Ala'a Abdulzahra - 22/12/1987 (FORWARD)

After starting his career with Al Zawra'a, Ala'a Abdulzahra joined Mes Kerman of Iran before playing for Shabab Al Ordun in Jordan. He then moved to Sudan where he played for one season with Al Merrikh before going on to Qatari clubs Al Khor and Al Khraitiat. He played for Iraq in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup.

Younus Mahmood - 03/02/1983 (FORWARD)

Younus Mahmood captained Iraq to success at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, where he scored the only goal in the final against Saudi Arabia to earn his nation an historic triumph. He was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament and also finished joint top scorer with four goals. Started his career in 1997 at Iraqi third division side Al Dibs but currently plays in Qatar with Al Gharafa, who he joined in 2006.

Imad Mohammad - 24/07/1982 (FORWARD)

Veteran striker Imad Mohammad was a key member of the Iraq side that won the AFC U19 Championship 2000. He played for his country in the 2000 and 2004 AFC Asian Cups but was not included in the winning squad in 2007. He has played with a number of clubs in Qatar, Egypt and Iran, where he joined Shahin Bushehr at the end of 2010.

Mustafa Kareem - 16/07/1987 (FORWARD)

Mustafa Kareem made his debut for Iraq against Jordan in a friendly in 2008 having previously spent his early career at Egyptian club Ismaily before signing with Al Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He joined his current club, Qatar's Al Siliya, at the start of 2010. Kareem featured in the qualifiers for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.



WOLFGANG SIDKA

Wolfgang Sidka's experience of working in the Middle East – he previously coached Bahrian's national team as well as several clubs around the region – made him a logical candidate to take over as head coach of the Iraq national team.

The 56-year-old former Werder Bremen midfielder took charge in July 2010 and since then he has taken the Iraq national team to the semifinals of the Gulf Cup.

During his initial three-year stint in Bahrain, Sidka laid the foundations for the country to climb the FIFA Rankings and become one of the most feared teams in the Middle East, qualifying the country for the final phase of Asia's qualifying tournament for the FIFA World Cup for the first time in 2001.

Date	Time	Activity	Location
10 January Monday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
11 January Tuesday	19:15	Iraq vs. Iran	Al-Rayyan Stadium
14 January Friday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
15 January Saturday	19:15	UAE vs. Iraq	Al-Rayyan Stadium
18 January Tuesday	12:30	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
19 January Wednesday	19:15	Iraq vs. DPR Korea	Al-Rayyan Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Waleed Tabra





DPR KOREA

Name	DPR Korea National Team
Full Association name	DPR Korea Football Association
Foundation	1945
FIFA Affiliation	1958
AFC Affiliation	1954



DPR Korea ended a 44-year absence from the FIFA World Cup finals in mid-2010 when the nation represented Asia in South Africa and the country is now ending another lengthy drought by playing at the finals of the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar.

The North Koreans last played at the continental championship back in 1992, when they were eliminated in the group stages, while the country's only other appearance at the competition came in

1980, when they finished in fourth.

DPR Korea qualified for the 2011 AFC Asian Cup in Qatar by winning the 2010 edition of the AFC Challenge Cup – they defeated Turkmenistan in a penalty shootout - as the nation continues to establish itself among the leading countries within the Asian game. Success at the AFC U-16 Championship and the AFC U-19 Championship during 2010 leaves DPR Korea in the unique position of being able to aim to hold all of the confederation's men's titles should they be successful in Qatar.

New coach Jo Tong-sop will be hoping his team has learned the lessons handed out at the World Cup finals and his side is sure to remain defensively sound, making DPR Korea a very difficult side to beat.

Jo's squad will feature many of those who represented the team in South Africa, where the squad was among the youngest at the tournament as DPR Korea balanced the experience brought by older heads such as captain Hong Yong-jo and defender Ji Yun-nam alongside the likes of Pak Nam-chol and Ri Myong-guk.

With striker Jong Tae-se now sharpening his skills in Germany with VfL Bochum, the Koreans could be a more potent side than before and no one will be foolish enough to right off their chances of going far into the tournament.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Ri Myong Guk – 09/09/1986 (GOALKEEPER)

Despite being just 24, Ri Myong Guk established himself as the leading goalkeeper for DPR Korea with a series of fine displays throughout Asia's qualifying tournament for the FIFA World Cup finals. Although not the most commanding in the air, his reflexes are sharp and he kept goal in all three of his nation's appearances at the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals.

Kim Myong Gil – 16/10/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Kim Myong Gil previously held down the position between the posts before the graduation of Ri Myong Guk to the national side and he remains a capable deputy, who gained a significant amount of experience during DPR Korea's failed attempt to qualify for the 2006 World Cup finals in Germany.

Ri Kwang Il – 13/04/1988 (GOALKEEPER)

Uncapped 22-year-old goalkeeper Ri Kwang Il was a surprise inclusion in the DPR Korea squad and will be used as the team's third choice behind Ro Myong Guk and Kim Myong Gil. Plays his club football for the Rimyongsu club.

Ri Jun Il – 24/08/1987 (DEFENDER)

Ri Jun Il is one of the first names on the DPR Korea team sheet, marshalling the defence from his position between the two central defenders. He played at the FIFA World Cup finals and was an ever-present throughout their campaign to qualify for South Africa.

Ji Yun Nam – 20/11/1976 (DEFENDER)

At 34 years of age, Ji Yun Nam is one of the veterans of the team yet the left wing back continues to hold down his place in the squad. Famously scored his country's goal in their 2-1 defeat at the hands of Brazil at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa and his experience remains invaluable within the squad.

Pak Chol Jin – 05/09/1985 (DEFENDER)

Another veteran of DPR Korea's appearance at the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa – where he played in all three of his country's games – 25-year-old central defender Pak Chol Jin is one of the most experienced players in the North Korean squad having featured in the 2006 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Pak Nam Chol – 03/10/1988 (DEFENDER)

Defender Park Nam Chol has established himself as a regular member of the squad despite his youth. He anchored his country's defence at the East Asian Games in Hong Kong in December 2009 and was included in the squad for the FIFA World Cup finals, although he did not feature during the tournament.

Ri Kwang Chon – 04/09/1985 (DEFENDER)

A stalwart at the heart of DPR Korea's defence, Ri Kwang Chon started all three of his country's fixtures at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa having been a regular for his country during qualifying for the tournament. Ri has played in more than 25 World Cup qualifiers after also featuring during the failed attempt to qualify for Germany 2006.

Ri Kwang Hyok – 04/09/1985 (DEFENDER)

Ri Kwang Hyok is another graduate of DPR Korea's youth system that has, in recent years, produced a steady stream of players capable of performing well at Asian level. He was a member of the team that represented his country at the FIFA U20 World Cup in 2007 and was included in the squad for the FIFA World Cup finals.

Cha Jong Hyok – 25/09/1985 (DEFENDER)

Another member of DPR Korea's FIFA World Cup squad to be retained by new coach Jo Tong-sop, Cha Jong Hyok is another of the handful of players from the country to play overseas, having spent several seasons with Swiss club FC Wil. Made three appearances in South Africa.

Jon Kwang Ik – 05/04/1988 (DEFENDER)

Defender Jon Kwang Ik has represented DPR Korea at U17 and U20 level and has now managed to successfully graduate to the full national squad for the AFC Asian Cup finals. Another product of the country's impressive youth system, he was a member of the successful AFC Challenge Cup squad.

Pak Nam Chol – 02/07/1985 (MIDFIELDER)

Not to be confused with the young defender with the same name, Pak Nam Chol established himself in the DPR Korean midfield back in 2005 during the qualifying tournament for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. One of the most trusted players in the DPR Korea team, Pak started all three games for his country in South Africa.

Mun In Guk – 29/09/1978 (MIDFIELDER)

Another of the veterans of the DPR Korean side, Mun In Guk is the engine room of the midfield. Hard working and dynamic, he has been at the heart of the team since DPR Korea made their return to the sharp end of Asian football following the 2002 FIFA World Cup and he was an ever-present in South Africa.

Kim Yong Jun – 19/07/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the few players from North Korea to have played overseas, Kim Yong Jun joined Chinese second division side Yanbian from Pyongyang in 2006. He joined Chengdu Blades in 2008 and spent one season in the Chinese Super League before being released and returning home.

An Yong Hak – 25/10/1978 (MIDFIELDER)

Japan-born central midfielder An Yong Hak was another member of the DPR Korea squad to feature in all three of his country's matches at the FIFA World Cup finals in South Africa in 2010. Currently plying his trade for J.League side Omiya Ardija, he was previously on the books of Nagoya Grampus before moving to Korea Republic to play for Busan I'Park and Suwon Bluewings.

Kim Kuk Jin – 05/01/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Kim Kuk Jin is another graduate from the teams that represented DPR Korea at the U17 World Cup and the U20 World Cup in 2005 and 2007 respectively and he is one of only a handful of DPR Korea-born players to play professionally in Europe. He joined FC Wil in the Swiss second division during 2009 after previously spending a season with FC Concordia Basel.

Choe Myung Ho – 03/07/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Winner of the AFC Young Player of the Year Award in 2005, Choe Myung Ho spent three years with Russian Premier League side Krylia Sovetov Samara but only started one game for the club before returning to DPR Korea. He was a member of the squad that finished as runners-up at the AFC U17 Championship in 2006.

Ryang Yong Gi – 07/01/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

Japan-born midfielder Ryang Yong Gi is renowned for his goal scoring ability and he impressed early in 2010 with J.League side Vegalta Sendai, although it was not enough for him to earn a place in the squad for the FIFA World Cup. Ryang's performances did help earn DPR Korea victory at the AFC Challenge Cup, where he was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

An Chol Hyok – 27/06/1987 (FORWARD)

Once scored four goals for DPR Korea against Guam in an East Asian Championship game but, despite that haul, An Chol-hyok would not normally be considered a regular in the team's starting line-up. Usually used off the bench, he was an unused member of the nation's FIFA World Cup squad.

Choe Kum Chol – 09/02/1987 (FORWARD)

A rare starter for DPR Korea, Choe Kum Chol was one of former coach Kim Jong Hun's attacking options off the bench when Hong Yong Jo or Jong Tae Se are miss-firing. He was included in the DPR Korea squad for the FIFA World Cup and has retained the

faith of new coach Jo Tong-sop.

Jong Tae Se – 02/03/1984 (FORWARD)

Jong Tae Se's physical presence and eye for goal made him one of the most feared strikers in the J.League and led to his transfer from Kawasaki Frontale to German second division side VfL Bochum after the FIFA World Cup. Jong caused ripples in Japan and Korea Republic – both of whom he was eligible to play for – when he shone at the 2005 edition of the East Asian Championship.

Hong Yong Jo – 22/05/1982 (FORWARD)

Another of the DPR Korea-born players to have experience of playing overseas, Hong Yong Jo can play either as a striker or as an attacking midfielder. Hong, who is the captain of the team, relocated to Europe in 2007, joining Serbian side FC Bezanjia before moving to Russia a year later to sign for FC Rostov.

Pak Chol Min – 10/12/1988 (FORWARD)

Another product of DPR Korea's impressive talent production line, striker Pak Chol Min was part of the squad that won the AFC Challenge Cup title in 2010, earning the country their berth at the AFC Asian Cup. Pak also featured in the early stages of his country's qualifying campaign for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.



JO TONG-SOP

Jo Tong-sop took over as head coach of the DPR Korea national team in the aftermath of the country's appearance at the FIFA World Cup finals, replacing Kim Jong-hun at the helm upon the team's return to Pyongyang.

Having worked as Kim's assistant in South Africa, Jo's appointment represents a smooth transition of power within a squad that has close bonds, many of which have been formed with Jo at the centre. Jo oversaw the country's win in the AFC Challenge Cup in 2010 and was also in charge for last year's Asian Games and the East Asian Games in 2009. He was also head coach when DPR Korea won the Asian U-19 Championship in 2006 and steered the nation to the quarterfinals of the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Peru a year earlier.

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18 January Tuesday	13:00	Pre-match conference	Main Media Center
19 January Wednesday	19:15	Iraq vs. DPR Korea	Al-Rayyan Stadium

MEDIA OFFICER

Kim Myong-chol





UAE

Name	UAE National Team
Full Association name	UAE Football Association
Foundation	1971
FIFA Affiliation	1972
AFC Affiliation	1974



The United Arab Emirates' record as consistent qualifiers for the AFC Asian Cup has seen the country be a regular participant in the continental championship since their first appearance in 1980, but the country has yet to lift the title.

Only once – in Lebanon in 2000 – have the UAE failed to reach the finals while the nation's peak came in the early 1990s.

That run of success began when the country qualified for their first – and so far only – appearance at the FIFA World Cup in Italy in 1990, where they exited the competition at the group stage.

Two years later in Japan, the Emirates reached the semifinals of the AFC Asian Cup™, the first time the national team had progressed beyond the group stages of the competition.

That was just a precursor for their performance in 1996 as the Emirates hosted the finals, when the Tomislav Ivic-coached team reached the final, only to lose in a penalty shoot-out to Saudi Arabia.

Since then, the UAE has been going through a relatively barren spell – except for a triumph on home soil in the Gulf Cup in 2006 - but the signs are promising that their disappointing run could be coming to an end.

The country's hopes for a strong performance at the AFC Asian Cup were given a boost in November when the nation reached the final of the Asian Games in Guangzhou, where they lost to Japan in the final.

That achievement further highlighted the impressive work being done to develop young talent within the Emirates and the country's youthful footballers will have another chance to impress in Qatar.

Coach Srecko Katanec has fashioned a team built on a mixture of youth and experience, where the likes of 19-year-old Ahmed Khalil – the 2009 AFC Young Player of the Year – sits comfortably beside veterans such as Subait Khater in a side that could upset the formbook.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Majed Naser - 01/04/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

Majed Naser has become the United Arab Emirates' first-choice goalkeeper after his impressive displays with his club, Al Wasl, in recent years. The 26-year-old started in his country's first two matches in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup finals against Vietnam and Japan.

Ali Khaseif - 09/06/1987 (GOALKEEPER)

Ali Khaseif earned his spot in the United Arab Emirates senior national team after his impressive performances for the U19 team in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship. He was also the first-choice goalkeeper for the U23 side in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and helped them to reach the final of the 2010 Asian Games.

Obaid Tawila - 26/08/1979 (GOALKEEPER)

Obaid Tawila replaced Al Wahda goalkeeper Adel Al Hosani who was injured just days before the Asian Cup finals. The experienced goalkeeper started his career with Dubai before joining giants Al Ahli in October 2007 just one year before he was called for the national team to feature in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Khalid Sebil - 22/06/1987 (DEFENDER)

Khalid Sebil was a member of the United Arab Emirates team that played in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship and he also was part of the UAE squad during the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. He has also gained invaluable experience playing for his club, Al Jazira in the AFC Champions League in 2009 and 2010.

Abdulla Mousa - 23/02/1987 (DEFENDER)

Despite his young age, Mousa has already appeared in five editions of the AFC Champions League. He began his career with Al Ain but moved to Al Nasr in July 2007, spending one season there before joining his current club, Al Jazira.

Hamdan Al Kamali - 02/05/1989 (DEFENDER)

One of the best young defenders in the United Arab Emirates,

Hamdan Al Kamali skippered his side to victory in the 2008 AFC U19 Championship and he was also the captain of the team in the 2009 FIFA U20 World Cup. The 21-year-old appeared for the senior side in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers.

Mahmoud Khamis - 28/10/1987 (DEFENDER)

A 23-year-old defender, Mahmoud Khamis played in all of the United Arab Emirates' U19 national team matches in the 2006 AFC Youth Championship and was also involved during the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. He played for his club, Al Wahda, in three matches during the 2010 FIFA Club World Cup.

Yousef Jaber - 25/02/1985 (DEFENDER)

Yousef Jaber is one of the most experienced players in the United Arab Emirates national team. He was in the UAE squad which played in the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championship and was also involved in the senior national team during the 2007 AFC Asian Cup.

Walid Abbas - 11/06/1985 (DEFENDER)

Walid Abbas played in the United Arab Emirates U23 side during the 2008 Olympic qualifiers and also featured for the senior side during the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. The 25-year-old was also a member of the Al Shabab team that took part in the 2009 AFC Champions League.

Mohamed Ahmed Gharib - 16/04/1989 (DEFENDER)

A 21-year-old defender, Mohamed Ahmed Gharib began his career in 2006 with Al Shabab and graduated to the United Arab Emirates senior side after some impressive performances for his country during the 2009 FIFA U20 World Cup. He played in three matches for his country at that youth championship and scored a goal in the 2-1 victory against Venezuela in the Round of 16.

Fares Juma - 30/12/1988 (DEFENDER)

A 22-year-old defender, Fares Juma is considered one of the most promising young defenders in the United Arab Emirates. After impressing with Al Ain in 2008, he was called up by his country for the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers and also played in the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers. He started in all six of Al Ain's six matches during the 2010 AFC Champions League.

Omar Abdulrahman – 20/09/1991 (MIDFIELDER)

Omar Abdulrahman was a member of the United Arab Emirates' squad that won the 2008 AFC U19 Championship. He helped Al Ain to the 2008 Emirates Cup title and the UAE President's Cup in the same year while he also won the UAE Super Cup in 2009.

Ali Al Wehaibi - 27/10/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Ali Al Wehaibi enjoyed a career breakthrough year in 2003 when he made his senior debut for Al Ain and helped the club to beat BEC Tero Sasana of Thailand to become the first winners of the AFC Champions League. He also caught the eye in the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championship when he played in all of his country's matches and scored their opening goal of the tournament.

Amir Mubarak - 28/12/1987 (MIDFIELDER)

A 23-year-old midfielder, Amir Mubarak played in four matches for the United Arab Emirates during the 2008 Asian Olympic qualifiers. His good displays for Al Nasr and the UAE's Olympic team earned him a place in the senior national team during the 2007 AFC Asian Cup where he played in three matches.

Subait Khater - 27/02/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

One of the most experienced midfielders in the Gulf region, Subait Khater was a key member of the Al Ain squad that won the inaugural AFC Champions League in 2003. He played for the UAE in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup but missed out on the finals three years later. He is well known for his deadly free kicks, having scored a number

of goals for both his club and national team.

Theyab Awana - 06/07/1990 (MIDFIELDER)

A 20-year-old midfielder at Bani Yas, Theyab Awana is one of the products of the United Arab Emirates' team that won the AFC U19 Championship in 2008. He also played in the FIFA U20 World Cup in 2009 and scored a stoppage-time equaliser in the 2-2 draw against South Africa during the group stage as UAE reached the quarter-finals.

Amer Abdulrahman - 03/07/1989 (MIDFIELDER)

Amer Abdulrahman began his career at Bani Yas when he was 17 years old. He was a member of the United Arab Emirates team that won the 2008 AFC U19 Championship and also took part in the FIFA U20 World Cup a year later. His impressive performances earned him a call-up to join the senior national team in November 2009.

Ismail Al Hammadi - 01/07/1988 (MIDFIELDER)

Ismail Al Hammadi began his football career in 2007 with Al Ahli and he was chosen as the rookie of the year in the UAE league that season before winning the player of the season award the following year. His good performances earned him a place in the UAE's national team which played in the qualifiers for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the 2011 AFC Asian Cup.

Ismaeil Matar - 07/04/1983 (FORWARD)

Ismaeil Matar first came to prominence when he was awarded the Golden Ball at the 2003 FIFA World Youth Championship. He was part of the UAE squad at the 2004 AFC Asian Cup finals and featured in two matches there before starting in all three of his team's matches during the finals three years later.

Mohamed Al Shehhi - 28/03/1988 (FORWARD)

Mohamed Al Shehhi topped the scoring charts with the United Arab Emirates U17 side in the 2003 Youth Gulf Cup. The 22-year-old, who is considered as one of the team's most talented strikers, also played in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup as well as in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

Saeed Al Kathiri – 20/02/1976 (FORWARD)

Experienced striker Saeed Al Kathiri spent 10 years with Al Sharjah before joining his current club Al Wasl. His impressive performances with Al Sharjah earned him a place with UAE national team in 1998 and he featured in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup where he scored goals against Japan and Qatar.

Saeed Al Kathiri - 28/03/1988 (FORWARD)

The 22-year-old striker was a member of the United Arab Emirates squad that took part in the 2008 Olympic qualifiers. Saeed Al Kathiri has also played in three editions of the AFC Champions League with Al Wahda and also managed one match during the 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers.

Ahmed Khalil - 08/06/1991 (FORWARD)

The best striker in the United Arab Emirates at the moment, Ahmed Khalil boasts plenty of skills and power, which earned him the AFC Young Player of the Year award in 2008 after helping his side to win the AFC U-19 Championship. He played well in the 2009 FIFA U20 World Cup and also helped the Olympic team to reach the final of the 2010 Asian Games.



SRECKO KATANEC

Former Stuttgart and Sampdoria midfielder Srecko Katanec took over at the helm of the United Arab Emirates' national team in 2009, successfully steering the team to the AFC Asian Cup finals from a group that featured Uzbekistan and Malaysia. Katanec took over from Frenchman Dominique Bataney and brings a wealth of experience to the role having already steered Slovenia to the finals of the FIFA World Cup in 2002. Katanec, who played internationally for Yugoslavia and Serbia, previously also worked with the Macedonia national team prior to joining the United Arab Emirates, as well as the Olympiacos club in Greece

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MEDIA OFFICER

Salim Al Naqbi





IR IRAN

Name	IR Iran National Team
Full Association name	Ir Iran Football Association
Foundation	1920
FIFA Affiliation	1945
AFC Affiliation	1958



Possessing one of the finest histories in the Asian game has been both an honour and a curse for the footballers of Iran, such is the pressure associated with representing a country that has won the AFC Asian Cup on three occasions.

Iran's golden period on the pitch came from 1968 to 1978, when the country not only won the continental title on three consecutive occasions but also qualified for the finals of the FIFA World Cup in

Argentina in 1978.

Since then, Team Melli has gone close to emulating those remarkable achievements without quite matching them.

Qualifying for the finals of the FIFA World Cup in 1998 and 2006 highlighted the country's position within the upper echelon of the Asian game but, as yet, Iran has yet to reclaim the continental crown last won in 1976.

With the country's golden generation (which comprised an astonishing four winners of the AFC Player of the Year Award – Ali Daei, Khodadad Azizi, Mehdi Mahdavi and Ali Karimi) now having moved on, the task for coach Afshin Ghotbi is to fashion a winning team out of a squad that possesses talent but does not have the fear-inducing reputation of their predecessors.

That is not to say that Iran's current vintage are lacking in talent: Osasuna duo Masoud Shojaei and Javad Nekounam – who will captain the team – possess the talent and drive to hurt their opponents and take the Iranians deep into the tournament once again.

PLAYERS PROFILE

Mahdi Rahmati - 03/02/1983 (GOALKEEPER)

Iran's undisputed no.1, Mehdi Rahmati has developed into the country's best keeper since the legendary Ahmadreza Abedzadeh. An excellent shot stopper who kept Iran in with a shout of reaching the 2010 World Cup with a string of fine saves throughout the qualifying campaign. A member of Iran's 2004 and 2007 AFC Asian Cup squads without playing a match.

Ebrahim Mirzapour - 16/09/1978 (GOALKEEPER)

Ebrahim Mirzapour is a veteran of the 2006 FIFA World Cup, when he played in all three of Iran's matches. He has made a gradual return to the national squad after a long-term knee injury and Mehdi Rahmati's form saw him cast into the cold by successive coaches following the World Cup. Agile and good with crosses but has a tendency to show nerves when under pressure.

Shahab Gordan - 21/05/1984 (GOALKEEPER)

A hugely improved goalkeeper in the last two years, Shahab Gordan has broken into the squad as a result of his solid performances in the 2010 AFC Champions League, in which he kept four clean sheets out of Zobahan's six knock-out matches. Made a crucial penalty save from Christian Wilhelmsson in the semi-finals against Saudi Arabia > Al Hilal.

Khosro Heidari - 14/09/1983 (DEFENDER)

An attacking right-back Khosro Heidari has often been used by Afshin Ghotbi on the right of midfield. Likes to make overlapping runs but is sometimes unconvincing in a defensive capacity. Won the 2008-09 title with Iran's second most popular club, Esteghlal.

Hadi Aghili - 15/01/1981 (DEFENDER)

A veteran of Sepahan's run to the 2007 AFC Asian Champions League final, Cyprus-born central defender Hadi Aghili is one of the leaders of the squad who has formed a regular partnership with Jalal Hoseini for club and country. Also a very confident penalty taker.

Jalal Hoseini - 03/02/1982 (DEFENDER)

Centre-back Jalal Hoseini is dangerous from set pieces, scoring his fair share of goals with headers, including Iran's first at the 2007 AFC Asian Cup against Uzbekistan. His lack of pace is at times exposed and his occasionally suspect partnership with Hadi Aghili usually keeps Mehdi Rahmati busy in goal. A linguist with a degree in German.

Farshid Talebi - 24/08/1981 (DEFENDER)

One of three Zobahan players whose form in the 2010 AFC Asian Champions League has seen him into the squad, Farshid Talebi is a tall and commanding central defender who was a rock at the back as Zobahan surprised the continent by reaching the final. Physically strong and good in the air but lacks pace.

Mohammad Nosrati - 11/01/1982 (DEFENDER)

Mohammad Nosrati has developed into a dependable and versatile defender who can play in all four positions across the back. Not a favourite amongst fans but has nevertheless been in the national team for seven years, scoring the goal which sealed Iran's 2006 World Cup berth.

Ehsan Haji Safi - 25/02/1990 (DEFENDER)

Ehsan Haji Safi burst on to the scene as a teenager three years ago in Sepahan's run to the AFC Asian Champions League final. Can play as a speedy left winger but will be used at full-back where his lack of defensive knowhow is sometimes exploited by the opposition. Yet to realize the potential shown in those early days.

Mohsen Bengar - 06/07/1979 (DEFENDER)

Mohsen Bengar was called up just days before the start of the tournament when Afshin Ghotbi decided to have extra cover in central defence instead of at left-back. A two-footed player who is strong in the air and dangerous in the opposition's penalty area. Has only a handful of caps despite making his Iran debut seven years ago.

Ghasem Hadadifar - 12/07/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Ghassem Hadadifar captained Zobahan to the final of the AFC Asian Champions League. A cultured, left-footed midfielder who is dangerous from free kicks, he likes to link up with the forwards but lacks composure in front of goal. Made his debut in a friendly against Armenia in August.

Javad Nekonam - 07/09/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

The team's heartbeat and captain, Javad Nekonam has forged a successful career with Osasuna in Spain's La Liga since his transfer from Al Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates four years ago. With his long range shooting and prowess in the air, he is the team's biggest goal threat, despite being a defensive midfielder.

Iman Mobali - 03/11/1982 (MIDFIELDER)

A hugely talented, two-footed creative midfielder Iman Mobali has represented Iran at all age levels, including at the 2001 World Youth Cup. But Mobali has never fulfilled his early promise, failing to hold down a regular first-team place in his nine-year international career. Missed one of the penalties when Iran went out to China on spot kicks in the semi-finals of the 2004 Asian Cup.

Mohammad Nori - 09/01/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Mohammad Nori is a clever attacking midfielder who has been on the fringes of the national team since making his debut just before the 2007 AFC Asian Cup, to which he was taken but not used. Good on the ball with a strong shot and dangerous from set pieces but can get out-muscled. Usually plays as a link-man between the mid-field and a lone striker.

Pejman Nouri - 14/07/1980 (MIDFIELDER)

A favourite of Ghotbi's since he used him in a number of positions during Persepolis's 2008 title-winning season, Pejman Nouri is a hard-working, left-footed defensive midfielder who can also play at left-back but who has limited attacking ambitions.

Anderanik Teymourian - 06/03/1983 (MIDFIELDER)

Signed for Bolton Wanderers after a tenacious display at the 2006 FIFA World Cup Anderanik Teymourian fell out of favour a year later following Sam Allardyce's departure. Then drifted around English reserve team football before joining Teraktorsazi last autumn. Likely to be the nominal attacker in a three-man midfield.

Mohammad Reza Khalatbari - 14/09/1983 (FORWARDS)

A speedy and mobile forward who can run the channels as well as attack defenders with his raw pace, Mohammad Reza Khalatbari put in a string of shining performances in Zobahan's surprising run to the AFC Asian Champions League final. Things usually happen when he's on the pitch, but Afshin Ghotbi prefers to use him as an impact substitute down the flanks.

Arash Afshin - 21/01/1989 (FORWARDS)

Arash Afshin is a speedy striker who prefers playing with the ball at his feet rather than in the air. The most inexperienced member of the squad, the 21-year-old scored half of his league tally this season in one match when he hit four in Foulad's 6-0 win against Peikan.

Karim Ansari Fard - 03/04/1990 (FORWARDS)

The rising star of Iranian football, 20-year-old striker Karim Ansari Fard scored on his international debut in 2009 and has been the target of his former mentor at Saipa, Ali Daei, who has tried to sign him for Tehran giants Persepolis. Led the attack with four goals as Iran finished fourth in the 2010 Asian Games.

Masoud Shojaei - 09/06/1984 (FORWARDS)

A striker whose prodigious talent gained him a move to Spain's La Liga, Masoud Shojaei has nevertheless struggled to cement a first-team place at Osasuna. The side's best technical player, he is most comfortable when playing up front, rather than on the wings where he is also used. But his goals to games ratio needs improvement.

Gholam Reza Rezaei - 06/03/1984 (FORWARDS)

Gholam Reza Rezaei scored on his international debut in 2008 but suffered a frustrating 2009 with injuries. A favourite of legendary striker Ali Daei, his coach at Persepolis, who gave him his first Iran cap and coached him at Saipa. Prefers to play down the flanks in a three-pronged forward line rather than down the middle.

Mohammad Gholami - 13/02/1983 (FORWARDS)

A newcomer to the squad, Mohammad Gholami scored on his debut in a 2-0 friendly win against China in September. Skillful and good in the air, he has impressed at club level despite Steel Azin lying bottom of the table.

Reza Norozi - 21/09/1982 (FORWARDS)

A right-footed striker whose calm finishing makes him lethal inside the box, what Reza Norozi lacks in speed and technique he makes up for with physical strength and accuracy. The leading Iranian scorer in the domestic league, he could be a useful substitute as nine of his 12 league goals this season have come in the second half.


AFSHIN GHOTBI

Afshin Ghotbi cut his coaching teeth working in the United States before being appointed as an assistant coach by Guus Hiddink during the Dutchman's time in Korea Republic.

The Iran-born coach played a role in Korea's run to the semi-finals of the 2002 FIFA World Cup and, from there, Ghotbi worked with Suwon Bluewings in the K-League before joining the Los Angeles Galaxy, once again as an assistant.

A further stint with the Korea Republic national team was followed by his first job as a head coach with Iran Pro League side Persepolis, where he won the domestic title at the first attempt before being named national team coach in late 2009.

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MEDIA OFFICER

Khosrow Valizadeh





MATCH SCHEDULE - AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2011™

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	Group Stage													Quarter Finals	Semi Finals	3rd/4th Place	FINAL								
Stadium	7-Jan-11	8-Jan-11	9-Jan-11	10-Jan-11	11-Jan-11	12-Jan-11	13-Jan-11	14-Jan-11	15-Jan-11	16-Jan-11	17-Jan-11	18-Jan-11	19-Jan-11	20-Jan-11	21-Jan-11	22-Jan-11	23-Jan-11	24-Jan-11	25-Jan-11	26-Jan-11	27-Jan-11	28-Jan-11	29-Jan-11		
Khalifa	Group A QAT VS UZB 19:15				Group A CHN VS QAT 19:15					Group A QAT VS KUW 19:15				Rest Day	QF1 1A VS 2B 19:25		Rest Days	SF1 WQF1 VS WQF3 19:25	Rest Days			FINAL 18:00			
Al-Sadd			Group C IND VS AUS 16:15				Group C BHR VS IND 19:15				Group C AUS VS BHR 16:15		QF3 1C VS 2D 16:25										3rd/4th Place 18:00		
Al-Gharafa	Group A KUW VS CHN 16:15		Group C KOR VS BHR 19:15		Group A UZB VS KUW 16:15		Group C AUS VS KOR 16:15		Group A CHN VS UZB 19:15		Group C KOR VS IND 16:15		QF2 1B VS 2A 16:25					SF2 WQF2 VS WQF4 16:25							
Qatar Sports Club		Group B JPN VS JOR 16:15		Group D DPRK VS UAE 16:15		Group B SYR VS JPN 19:15		Group D IRN VS DPRK 16:15		Group B JOR VS SYR 16:15		Group D UAE VS IRN 19:15			QF4 1D VS 2C 19:25										
Al-Rayyan		Group B KSA VS SYR 19:15		Group D IRQ VS IRN 19:15		Group B JOR VS KSA 16:15		Group D UAE VS IRQ 19:15		Group B KSA VS JPN 16:15		Group D IRQ VS DPRK 19:15													

GROUP A

Qatar
Kuwait
China PR
Uzbekistan

GROUP B

Saudi Arabia
Japan
Jordan
Syria

GROUP C

Korea Republic
India
Australia
Bahrain

GROUP D

Iraq
DPR Korea
UAE
IR Iran



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