



GCC Women in Sports

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Within the last decade, women in the GCC states emerged as significant athletes, taking prominent strides across sporting arenas, both regionally and internationally. The 2012 London Olympic Games was a landmark for women in sports in the Gulf region. Women from Saudi Arabia and Qatar participated for the first time, and Bahrain won its first-ever Olympic medal. Since then, female athletes in the region have continued to seize opportunities to represent their country in the sports sector.













In the past year alone, Saudi Arabia organized its first women's motor event, Rally Jameel, as well as the 2022 Aramco Saudi Ladies International. Saudi Arabia's national women's football team won its first-ever international match in February 2022 in a 2-0 victory against the Seychelles. Saudi Arabia also held the first Women's Football League, the first Women's Volleyball League, and the second Women's Basketball League. The kingdom is also organizing the first edition of the Saudi Games, a prominent national sports event, with 45 different sports featured. Saudi Arabia will also host the 22nd Asian Games in 2034 in Riyadh.

Female athletes from the United Arab Emirates participated in the Special Olympics Invitational Games Malta 2022, winning 4 gold and 3 silver medals. In Dubai, the UAE will host the 9th edition of the Dubai Women's Run in November, with 6,000 runners expected. Additionally, Dubai will host the 5th Dubai Women's Triathlon with three categories: Super Sprint, Sprint, and Olympic Distance.

In Bahrain, female athletes participated in the 2021 IMMAF World Championships, winning 3 gold medals, 1 silver medal, and 1 bronze medal. Female athletes from Qatar also competed internationally, with women competing in the 2019 Asian Games in Jakarta, as well as in rowing at the 2020 Olympics in Japan for the first time. From climbing Mount Everest to being the first female tennis player from the Gulf region, female athletes in Oman are also flourishing both domestically and internationally.

Moreover, Kuwait most recently made headlines and progress for GCC women in sports by hosting the third edition of the GCC Games, a multi-sport regional event for the GCC countries. A turning point for women's sports in the region, female athletes participated for the first time at the 2022 GCC Games. From 22-31 May, female athletes from the Gulf competed for the first time in Kuwait in six sports: Athletics, 3x3 Basketball, Cycling, Futsal, eSports, and Padel. A total of 227 female athletes participated from the GCC, as shown in Table 1 below.



	 KSA	 UAE	 BRN	 KUW	 QAT	 OMA
 3x3 Basketball	4	4	4	4	4	4
 Athletics	7	8	15	25	5	3
 Cycling	8	7	7	7	5	0
 eSports	7	0	1	3	0	1
 Futsal	14	14	14	14	0	0
 Padel	6	8	8	8	0	8
Total	46	41	49	61	14	16

Source: [Kuwait 2022](#)

Female athletes from Saudi Arabia won 7 total medals (1 gold, 1 silver, and 5 bronze). In Athletics, Miznah Alnassar won 2 bronze medals, and Raghad Abu Arish won 1 bronze medal. Moreover, Saudi Arabia won a silver medal in the Team Road Race, while Daniah Sembawa won a bronze medal in the Individual Time Trial. Regarding eSports, the kingdom won gold in the FIFA HD. Lastly, Saudi Arabia's Futsal team won a bronze medal.

Regarding the United Arab Emirates, female athletes won 17 total medals (7 gold, 3 silver, and 7 bronze). The UAE women's team won a gold medal in 3x3 Basketball and bronze medal in Padel. In Athletics, the UAE won both silver and bronze medals in the relays, whereas Latifa Alkaabi won gold and silver medals, Fatima Alhosani won gold and bronze medals, Fatma Alblooshi won a bronze medal, Ruqayya Almarzooqi won a bronze medal, and Wedad Robari won a bronze medal, in individual sports. The UAE also won gold medals in both the Team Road Race and the Team Time Trial in Cycling, while Shaikha Rashed won a gold medal and Huda Hussain won a bronze medal in the Individual Road Race.

Bahrain won the greatest number of total medals with 27 medals (12 gold, 10 silver, and 5 bronze). The women's team won a gold medal in Futsal, a silver medal in eSports, and bronze medals in 3x3 Basketball and Cycling. Female athletes from Bahrain excelled in Athletics, winning 23 total medals (11 gold, 9 silver, and 3 bronze). Bahrain won a gold medal in the 400m Relay and a silver medal in the 100m Relay. Individually, Bontu Rebitu, Aminat Jamal, and Winfred Yavi each won 2 gold medals, both Tigest Mekonen and Noora Jasim won a gold and a silver medal, Saleha Lahdan won a silver and a bronze medal, both Muna Mubarak and Fatima Mubarak won a gold medal, Violah Jepchumbna, Zenab Mahamat, Ruth Jevet, Ahmed Awaif, and Tigist Belay each won a silver medal, and Hajar Alkhaldi and Iman Essa both won a bronze medal.

Female athletes in Kuwait won 22 total medals (4 gold, 11 silver, and 7 bronze). Kuwait won a gold medal in the 100m Relay and a bronze medal in the 400m Relay. In individual athletics, Mudahawi S Alshammari and Salsabeel Alsayar each won a gold and a silver medal, Amal Alroumi and Maryam Hasan both won a silver and a bronze medal, Aisha Alkhedher won 2 bronze medals, Nadiyah M Alhaqan won a gold medal, Dalal Faraj and Shekha Kh Alsaqhan won a silver medal each, and Dana H Alzanki won a bronze medal. Moreover, Kuwait won silver medals in 3x3 Basketball, Futsal, and Padel. Kuwait also won a silver medal in the Women's Team Time Trial and a bronze medal in the Team Road Race in Cycling. Additionally, Latefa Alyassen won a silver medal in the Individual Time Trial.

Qatar won the least number of medals, a total of 6 medals (1 gold, 2 silver, and 3 bronze), all in Athletics. Samar Mansouri won a silver and a bronze medal, and Saja Saadoun won 2 bronze medals. Rania Alnaji and Lial Tamam each won a silver medal. Moreover, female athletes from Oman won a total of 7 medals (4 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze). The women's teams won a gold medal in Padel and a bronze medal in eSports. In athletics, Mazoon Al Alawi won a gold and silver medal, Hiba Al Asmi won a gold and bronze medal, and Hana Al Touqi won a gold medal.

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
 KSA	1	1	5	7
 UAE	7	3	7	17
 BRN	12	10	5	27
 KUW	4	11	7	22
 QAT	1	2	3	6
 OMA	4	1	2	7

Source: [Kuwait 2022](#)

Although women participated in only six out of the sixteen sports at the GCC Games, the participation of those talented athletes is a catalyst for inculcating a sports culture across the GCC states. As a push for more progress in the sports sector, the GCC Games Executive Committee committed to expanding women's participation in all sports in future multi-sport events such as the 4th GCC Games in Qatar in 2026. In addition, the Committee will also feature female athletes in the Indoor Martial Arts in Saudi Arabia in 2024 and the Beach Games in Oman in 2025. This move is a wonderful development for women in sports in the Gulf region. One can only be excited and proud to see where the region will go next.

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