Singapore Lions In Group D: Australia, Iraq And Tajikistan Await At AFC Asian Cup 2027

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Singapore football has waited 42 years for a moment like this. On 9 May 2026, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of At-Turaif District in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the Lions were placed into Group D of the 2027 AFC Asian Cup alongside Australia, Iraq, and Tajikistan. For the first time since 1984 â?? when Singapore hosted the tournament on home soil â?? the national team will compete at Asiaâ??s showpiece international football competition.

The Draw: Group D Breakdown

The draw ceremony in Riyadh brought together the 24 qualified nations for the AFC Asian Cup 2027, which will be hosted by Saudi Arabia from 7 January to 5 February 2027. Singapore, ranked 147th in the FIFA world rankings, were placed in the lowest seeding pot â?? and their group reflects the challenge ahead.

Australia, the Socceroos, are the groupâ??s heavyweights. They are ranked in the top 25 in Asia, are a regular presence at the AFC Asian Cup, and have the individual quality to test any side on the continent. Iraq, meanwhile, are ranked among Asiaâ??s elite and were semi-finalists at the previous AFC Asian Cup. Tajikistan â?? like Singapore â?? are relative newcomers to this stage but have been one of Central Asiaâ??s fastest-improving sides in recent years.

Group D at the AFC Asian Cup 2027: Singapore face Australia, Iraq, and Tajikistan â??
Source: AFC Official

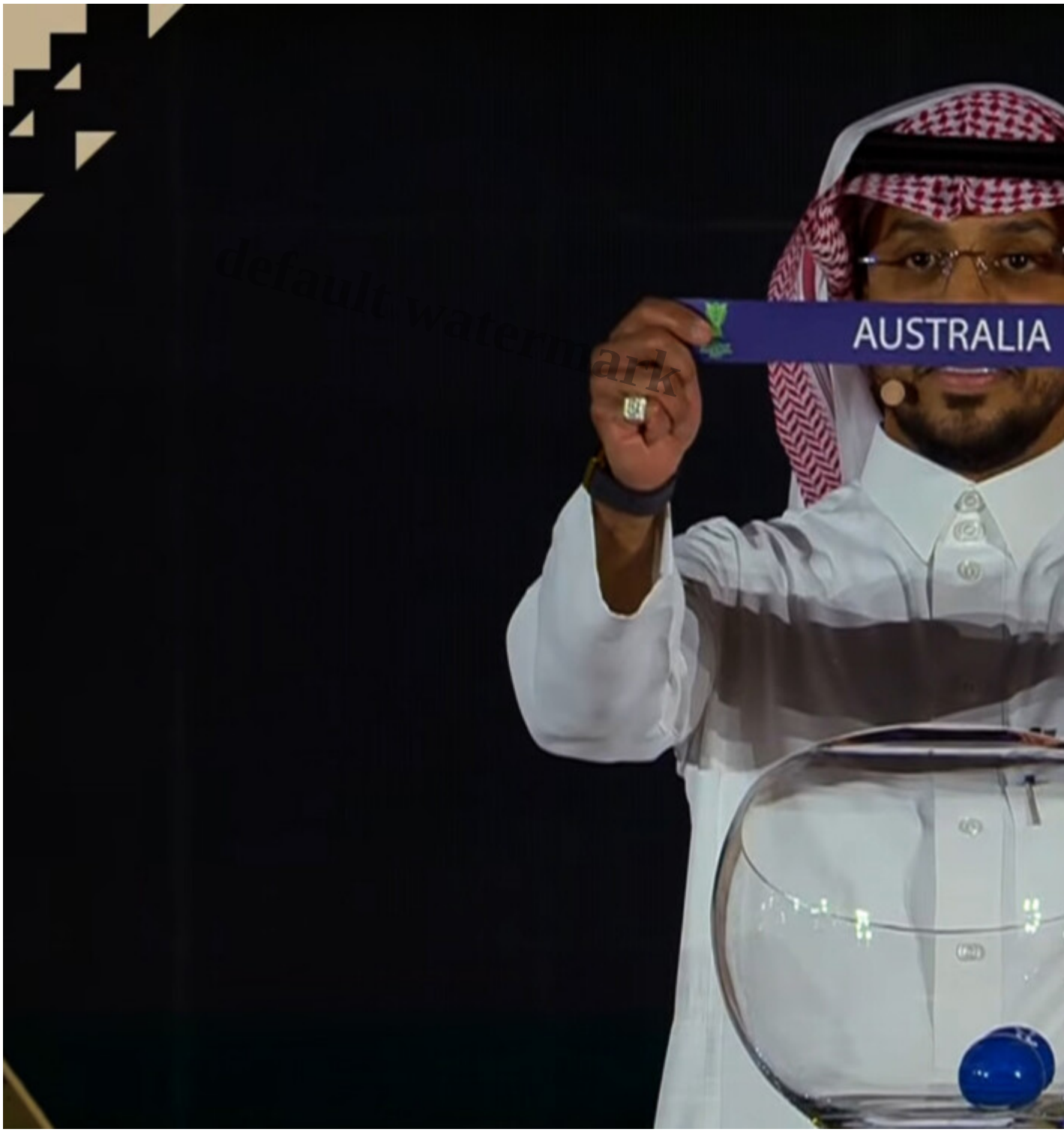
Singaporeâ??s group stage fixtures are as follows: versus Australia on 9 January; versus Iraq on 14 January; versus Tajikistan on 19 January. All three matches will take place at venues across Saudi Arabia. The top two teams in each group advance automatically to the round of sixteen, with four of the best third-placed finishers also progressing.

How Singapore Got Here

Qualification for the AFC Asian Cup 2027 was itself a landmark achievement for Singapore football. The Lions navigated the AFC qualification rounds â?? a process involving matches against regional

rivals â?? to earn their place at the tournament for the first time since the 1984 edition, which Singapore famously co-hosted alongside Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Head coach Gavin Lee, appointed in November 2025, has spoken openly about the significance of the qualification. Lee inherited a squad that had been building momentum under the Football Association of Singaporeâ??s long-term development plans, and has quickly put his stamp on the teamâ??s playing style â?? pressing higher up the pitch and looking to build attacks from the back with purpose.



The AFC Asian Cup 2027 draw ceremony in Riyadh â?? Source: AFC Official

Ranked 147th in the world, Singapore will enter the tournament as rank outsiders in Group D. But for a football nation that has spent decades rebuilding its top level â?? investing in youth development, professionalising the Singapore Premier League, and strengthening its national team pipeline â?? simply competing at this stage is validation of an entire generationâ??s work.

The Road Ahead: Friendlies and Preparation

Before Singaporeâ??s January 2027 group stage campaign begins, there is important preparatory work to be done. The Football Association of Singapore has confirmed two home friendlies in the coming weeks, both at Jalan Besar Stadium.

First up is Mongolia on 31 May, followed by China PR on 5 June. These matches offer Gavin Leeâ??s squad the chance to test their shape and personnel against different styles of opposition, and will also serve as a vital connection point between the Lions and their supporters ahead of the Asian Cup. Tickets are on sale from 11 May, priced between $15 and $25, and demand is expected to be strong given the national teamâ??s recent profile boost.

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The China PR match in particular will attract attention â?? China are a higher-ranked nation and the fixture will provide a genuine indication of where the Lions stand against strong Asian opposition. For local fans, it is also a rare chance to watch the national team at Jalan Besar before the team departs for Saudi Arabia in January.

What to Expect in January 2027

Realistically, the objective for Singapore at the AFC Asian Cup 2027 will be to compete with discipline and pride, to avoid heavy defeats, and â?? if fortune allows â?? to take points from Tajikistan and perhaps spring a surprise or two. A passage to the round of sixteen would be a historic achievement. For the national team programme, even spirited performances at this level will lay the groundwork for the generation that follows.

The AFC Asian Cup 2027 in Saudi Arabia promises to be one of the largest editions of the tournament in history, with 24 nations, state-of-the-art venues, and the full weight of Asian footballâ??s attention. For Singapore fans, the group stage â?? three matches in three different cities â?? will be worth every moment of the journey to get there.

For more Singapore sports coverage, read about Albirex ending Lion City Sailorsâ?? unbeaten SPL run . And stay tuned ahead of the Lionsâ?? upcoming friendlies â?? we will preview each fixture in full. Friendly tickets are available now from the Football Association of Singapore.

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