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Focus on... Saudi Arabia: Asia's leading country for courts again in 2024

The **Qatar Airways Premier Padel Tour** season began in **Riyadh** and on a continent – Asia – where padel's strong expansion continues. Over 1,200 facilities (padel clubs and accommodations) and more than 4,100 courts on the continent, with a very strong presence in the Middle East (75% of clubs are concentrated in this area).

Saudi Arabia in 2024 confirmed itself as the Asian country with the largest number of facilities (431) and courts (1,097) and an estimated – according to data held by the **FIP Research & Data Analysis Department** – around 400,000 amateur players. The province where most padel is played is Riyadh, followed by Eastern Province and Mecca Province.

The **Saudi Padel Committee** federation was established in August 2021 and started its activities at the end of 2021 promoting the sport throughout Saudi Arabia by joining the International Padel Federation as an affiliate in 2022. This has involved the organisation of local tournaments (more than 100 in 2024), the formation of local teams and the creation of national teams for all age groups to represent the country internationally. To date, there are 39 certified coaches and 95 referees. An important milestone in 2024 was the launch of the Saudi Padel League and, in September 2024, the signing in Riyadh of a cooperation agreement between the Saudi Federation for University Sports and Saudi Padel Committee. The agreement aims to promote padel within Saudi universities and broaden the base of participants.

Also defined are the federation's strategic goals over the next five years (2025-2030), which are to:

- register 5,000 players in local competitions (currently there are around 1,000 professional licences) and reach half a million practitioners;
- have three athletes ranked in the top 100 of the world ranking;
- install 1,000 courts to provide playing opportunities in 13 regions and 26 cities and governorates of Saudi Arabia;
- increase community participation in padel within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia so that it becomes one of the top five most popular sports.

At the level of international FIP circuit competitions, the **Riyadh Season P1 2025** is the fifth tournament to be held in the Middle Eastern country. The first tournament was the FIP Star Riyadh in May 2023 only for men's category, while three other combined tournaments were held in 2024, the Riyadh Season P1 in February, the FIP Rise also in Riyadh in June and the FIP Rise in Jeddah in October.

There are currently eight players with points in the FIP ranking: **Sara Mohammed Salhab** is the highest ranked with position 249, followed by **Najwa Salhab** (number 307) and **Areej Khalil Fareh** (number 317). In the men's category there are 27 players (last year there were 12): **Sattam Alshahrani** and **Omar Althagib** are both at number 359, **Faisal Alrebdi** is number 380 followed by **Abdullah Alabdullah** (number 385).

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