

Muharraq Back on Top

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Muharraq kept their title challenge alive with a 3-1 win over Al Najma at Khalifa Sports City last night. They remain second in the 2025-26 Nasser bin Hamad Premier League standings as leaders Al Khaldiya stay two points clear with 51 points.

Under Portuguese coach Fernando Manuel de Jesus, Muharraq started brightly and dominated early possession, creating several clear chances. Their best opportunity of the first half came in the 33rd minute when Abdulwahab Al Malood met Elliott Simoes' cross with a close-range header, only for Al Najma goalkeeper Ammar Mohammed to produce an excellent save.

Muharraq broke the deadlock early in the second half when

Soufiane Mahrouk capitalised on defensive confusion in the 49th minute. A long ball caused uncertainty between defender Dusan Jokovic and the advancing goalkeeper, allowing Mahrouk to finish into an empty net.

Al Najma responded quickly, equalising in the 55th minute through Zachary Hadji, who reacted first in a crowded box after a set-piece scramble to level the score. The decisive moment came in the 76th minute when Hussain Abdulkarim struck again following his heroics last week. The forward latched onto a clever lobbed pass from Mahrouk and lifted a composed finish over the goalkeeper to restore Muharraq's lead.

Simoes then sealed the win in the 84th minute when his corner kick surprisingly sailed directly into the net. Al Najma briefly thought they had pulled



Hussain Abdulkarim fires in Muharraq's second goal against Al Najma



Muharraq and Al Khaldiya are set to meet next Monday in a top-of-the-table clash that could have major implications in the title race.

one back through Hadji, but the goal was ruled out for offside.

Elsewhere, A'ali secured a 1-0 victory over Al Hidd at the Bahrain National Stadium. Diego Cardoso scored the only goal in the 11th minute, heading in Matheus Lima's free-kick. The

match was not without controversy, as Al Hidd were awarded a second-half penalty after a VAR review upheld the decision for a foul inside the area, despite strong protests from A'ali's bench. Osama Belatrech stepped up but saw his effort saved by goalkeeper Omar Salem Rajab in the 59th minute.

With these results, Al Khaldiya remain top of the table on 51 points, with Muharraq close behind on 49 points, keeping the title race finely poised. The two sides meet next Monday in a crucial top-of-the-table clash that could have major implications in the championship battle.

Today's fixtures bring Matchweek 20 to a close, with Al Shabab facing Riffa at Khalifa Sports City and Al Ahli taking on Sitra at the Bahrain National Stadium, both kicking off simultaneously.

City hand title control to Arsenal

TDT | Manama

Manchester City's Premier League title hopes suffered a major setback yesterday as they were held to a dramatic 3-3 draw away at Everton, a result that leaves them no longer in control of the title race heading into the final stretch of the season.

City started strongly at Hill Dickinson Stadium, dominating possession and territory in the opening stages. Their control was rewarded just before half-time when Jeremy Doku produced a brilliant finish in the 43rd minute, curling a shot into the far corner to give the visitors a 1-0 lead at the break.

Everton responded far more aggressively after half-time and quickly turned the match on its head. The equaliser came in the 69th minute when a poor back pass from Marc Guehi was intercepted by Thierno Barry, who calmly finished to make it 1-1.

Momentum shifted fully in



Erling Haaland and Rayan Cherki look dejected at Everton's Hill Dickinson Stadium

Everton's favour five minutes later when Jake O'Brien rose highest to head in from a corner, putting the home side 2-1 up. The pressure continued to build on City, and in the 81st minute Everton extended their

lead to 3-1 after Barry scored his second, finishing off a swift counterattack that stunned the visitors.

City, however, refused to collapse. Just two minutes later, Erling Haaland pulled a goal

back in the 83rd minute, reacting quickly inside the box to make it 3-2 and set up a tense finale.

Everton defended deep as the clock ticked down and looked set to secure a famous win, but City struck again in the 98th minute. Doku stepped up once more, scoring his second of the game to rescue a dramatic 3-3 draw.

The result carries significant implications for the title race. City remain on 71 points with a game in hand, but they now trail Arsenal, who sit on 76 points with just three matches left to play. As things stand, the destination of the title is no longer in City's control, with Arsenal firmly in the driving seat heading into the decisive final weeks of the season.

Everton, meanwhile, will be left to reflect on a missed opportunity of major proportions, having been seconds away from securing a statement victory over the reigning champions.

Basketball Tournament Scrapped at 4th Gulf Games



Bahrain's national basketball team in training prior to the announcement

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The men's basketball competition at the Gulf Games in Doha, scheduled for May 11-22, has been canceled after the number of participating teams dropped below the required minimum.

Organizers said the field was reduced to three teams following a withdrawal, leaving the tournament without a workable format under the regulations.

The cancellation is a setback for Bahrain, as the event was expected to be the national

team's first major outing of the year and part of its preparation for upcoming competitions.

However, the 3x3 basketball events for both men and women are still expected to take place, with Bahrain set to participate. The Kingdom will also compete in volleyball and handball, which remain on schedule.

Looking ahead, Bahrain's men's team will turn its focus to the FIBA Asia Cup 2029 pre-qualifiers in Dubai from August 24 to September 1, followed by the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya from September 19 to October 4.

Forest sink woeful Chelsea to boost survival bid

AFP | London

Nottingham Forest took a huge step towards Premier League survival with a 3-1 win at Chelsea yesterday that dealt a major blow to the Blues' hopes of qualifying for the Champions League.

Taiwo Awoniyi marked his 100th Forest appearance with the early opener at Stamford Bridge and Igor Jesus's penalty doubled their advantage soon afterwards.

Cole Palmer compounded Chelsea's misery when he missed a penalty late in the first half.

Awoniyi struck again after the interval and Joao Pedro's eye-catching bicycle kick in the closing stages was no consolation for lacklustre Chelsea.

Languishing in ninth place, Chelsea's wretched run has left them on the verge of failing to reach next season's Champions



Nottingham Forest's Nigerian striker #09 Taiwo Awoniyi (2nd R) heads the ball in for the team's first goal

League.

Chelsea have lost six consecutive league games for the first time since 1993.

Scoring for the first time in six league matches was the only positive in a shambolic display. Calum McFarlane's team are

10 points behind fifth-placed Aston Villa, with only nine points available in the race for the top-five finish that secures Champions League qualification.

However, sixth will also earn a Champions League berth if Villa finish fifth and win the Europa League, leaving Chelsea -- currently four points adrift of sixth-placed Bournemouth -- still with a slender chance.

Forest's third successive league victory moved them six points clear of the relegation zone, with four more points needed to guarantee survival.

There are just three games left for each club in Forest's scrap with fourth-bottom Tottenham and third-bottom West Ham.

Pereira made eight changes from Forest's previous league game as he prioritised holding onto their 1-0 lead in Thursday's Europa League semi-final second leg at Aston Villa.

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