

# BIC launches ticket sales for endurance racing spectacle

● **Launch coincides with 100th edition of the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans this weekend**

● **The Spirit of Le Mans to captivate Bahrain this 3-4 November as WEC's 2023 season-finale**

TDI | Manama



Action from last year's 8 Hours of Bahrain at BIC

Motorsport fans around the world can now book their tickets to one of the region's biggest race weekends, marking a spectacular culmination to the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC).

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) announced yesterday the launch of ticket sales for this year's Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain, taking place this

November 3 and 4 as the seventh and final round of the WEC season.

The meeting will be the first major international event of BIC's 2023/2024 racing calendar, which will be highlighted by celebrations marking the landmark 20th anniversary of "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

Tickets cost just BD5 for adults and BD2.5 for kids for the two-day WEC weekend, which will feature plenty of motor racing action as well as off-track family entertainment for all to enjoy. Tickets can be purchased online at bahraingp.com or by calling the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

The launch of ticket sales co-

incides with the staging of one of the world's most iconic races this weekend and the crown jewel of the WEC each year, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, which will be celebrating its Centenary on 10 and 11 June.

Fans are urged to purchase their WEC tickets at the soonest so as to not miss out on the Spirit of Le Mans coming to Bahrain, boasting many of motorsport's leading endurance drivers and teams as well as some of the biggest brands in all of motoring.

This year's Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain will also be the first time Bahrain's race lovers will get to see the all-new grid of WEC Hypercars—the top-tier category of the series—featuring brand new entries such as Cadillac Racing, Floyd Vanwall Racing Team, Porsche Penske Motorsport, Hertz Team Jota and Ferrari-AF Corse joining defending WEC champions Toyota Gazoo Racing as well as Peugeot

TotalEnergies and Glickenhaus Racing.

There will also be plenty of thrills in the Le Mans Prototype 2 (LMP2) and Le Mans Grand Touring Endurance Am (LMGTE Am) classes, all as part of a massive grid of WEC race contenders.

The packed field will be battling it out from day to night around BIC's 5.412-kilometre track, making for a brilliant spectacle that flags off under the afternoon sun and then wraps up under the stars while being brilliantly lit by BIC's state-of-the-art floodlights.

In support of the WEC, the newly rebranded Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East will be hitting the tarmac during the weekend, featuring the region's best gentleman racers of different nationalities. This championship, formerly known as the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, is the region's premier

one-make series that was born and is based at BIC.

BIC has also planned an incredible line-up of off-track entertainment for the race weekend that race-goers of all ages can look forward to.

The Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain will be crowning the 2023 FIA WEC champions, wrapping up a fantastic season that saw races also held in the US, Portugal, Belgium, France, Italy and Japan before coming to Sakhir.

It will be the 12th WEC race at BIC and fifth in the eight-hour format, following the six-hour races which took place since the WEC's inaugural season in 2012.

More details of this year's Bapco Energies 8 Hours of Bahrain will be announced in due course.

For any information on the WEC race weekend or other BIC events and activities, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline on +973-17450000.

# Al Najma through to Asian clubs final

Bahrain champions hold off Qatar's Al Rayyan to book repeat appearance in tournament's gold medal game

● **Mohammed Ahmed named Match Most Valuable Player against Al Rayyan**

● **Mohammed Ahmed, Hussain Al Sayyad and Mahdi Habib score six goals each**

● **Najma to face off with Qatar's Al Duhail for Asian clubs crown**

TDI | Manama

Bahrain champions Al Najma punched their tickets yesterday to the gold medal game of the 25th Asian Men's Club League Championship, currently taking place in Isfahan, Iran.

Najma secured their place after defeating Al Rayyan of Qatar 31-29 in their semi-final clash.

The Bahrainis led for most of the contest and showed their poise down the stretch with their opponents threatening.

Najma now march on to the



Al Najma's Mohammed Ahmed looks to make a play against Al Rayyan during their game yesterday

final where they will face Qatar's Al Duhail for the tournament title.

Duhail advanced to the championship match with a 23-19 victory over Kazma SC in last night's other final four fixture.

Najma are making a return to the title contest, scheduled to take place tomorrow with a 4.30pm start, Bahrain time. The Bahrainis are hoping to be crowned champions in order to book the sole Asian spot in the 17th IHF Men's Super Globe, to be held from October 17 to 23 in Saudi Arabia.

Rayyan and Kazma battle for the bronze medals the same day, in the clash for third place set for 2.30pm, Bahrain time.

Following Najma's win yesterday, Mohammed Ahmed was named the Match Most Valuable Player. He was presented his award by Bahrain Handball



**Tournament final to be played tomorrow, when Najma are hoping to be crowned champions in order to book the sole Asian spot in the 17th IHF Men's Super Globe, to be held from October 17 to 23 in Saudi Arabia**

Association president Ali Issa.

The Kingdom's representatives held a narrow 19-16 lead at the break and Rayyan stayed within striking distance throughout the second half.

Najma took their biggest lead of five goals, 29-24, with around 10 minutes left following a Yoel Cuni Morales conversion. But Rayyan gradually roared back and got to within a goal on a Rami Fekih throw with five minutes remaining.



Al Najma players celebrate as Mohammed Ahmed, back no. 93, receives the Match MVP award from Ali Issa

Najma's Mohammed Habib Naser replied to put Najma back up by two, but the Qataris cut the deficit to one again on a Wael Mzoughi penalty.

Ahmed then scored from the right wing with under two minutes to peg the final score and seal the hard-earned win for Najma. Goalkeeper Mohammed Abdhussain made a key stop on a Fekih attempt and Najma were able to dribble out the clock.

Three players finished with

six goals for Najma to spearhead their team, including Ahmed, Hussain Al Sayyad and Mahdi Habib. Qassim Qambar chipped in with four goals while Morales had three.

The championship has been organised and run by the Asian Handball Federation (AHF). Najma are hoping to replicate or improve on their finish in last year's Asian clubs competition held in Hyderabad, India, where they won the silver medals after losing to Kuwait SC in the final.

# Muchova in epic comeback to stun Sabalenka and reach French Open final

AFP | Paris

Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic saved a match point and battled back from 2-5 down in the final set to shock world number two Aryna Sabalenka and reach her maiden Grand Slam final at the French Open yesterday.

Muchova, ranked at 43, defeated the Australian Open winner 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 in a thrilling three-hour 13-minute match and will face either defending champion Iga Swiatek or Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia in Saturday's final.



Karolina Muchova

"It's unbelievable. I just kept fighting. But I don't want to sound cocky, I just keep working on my game," said Muchova.

The 26-year-old added Sabalenka to an impressive list of victims in Par-

is which included eighth seed Maria Sakkari in the first round and 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in the quarter-final.

For Sabalenka, defeat ended her run of 12 successive match wins at the Slams as she paid a heavy price for 53 unforced errors while the versatile Muchova saved nine of 13 break points.

Muchova, playing in her second Grand Slam semi-final, dug deep to save two break points in the fourth game of the opening set.

Her clever angles countered the raw power of Sabalenka, taking her to set point in the 10th game.



**It's unbelievable. I just kept fighting. But I don't want to sound cocky, I just keep working on my game**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA

She was unable to convert that opportunity but made no mistake at the second time of asking, a wrong-footing, deep backhand giving her the set via a tiebreak after 68 minutes on court.

It was the first set Sabalenka had dropped at the tournament.

Muchova was 2-0 ahead and sensing a shock triumph in the second set but Sabalenka battled back, overcoming double-faulting on a first set point in the tiebreak to level the semi-final on the second.

Suddenly the momentum was with the Belarusian who broke for 4-2 in the decider after seeing four break points come and go in the second game.

Muchova appeared doomed to wilt under the barrage.

However, she saved a match point in the eighth game before incredibly racing away with the last five games to claim a famous win.