

Najma, Muharraq triumph in basketball league

TDT | Manama

Al Najma and Muharraq were both victorious last night in their week 10 games of the 2021/2022 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Najma edged out a gritty Al Ettihad in a come-from-behind 92-87 win, while Muharraq pulled away late from Samaheej to come away with a 94-84 victory.

In Najma's triumph, Ali Jaffar made a go-ahead three-pointer with just under two minutes to play to take the lead for good at 86-84. They then did enough in the final moments to keep the advantage, with Ali Jaffar burying two crucial free-throws with just five seconds to play to seal the victory.

Najma enjoyed a balanced attack, with six players finishing in double figures. Ali Jaffar had 18 to lead the way, while Mohammed Buallay chipped in with 17. Big man CJ Giles finished with 12, while Ali Jaber, Hussain Mohammed and Ali Jassim all scored 11 markers apiece.

Brian Bridgeforth carried Ettihad in the contest with 36 points. He also had 16 rebounds and four steals. Hassan Fahad finished with 13 in the loss.

With the result, Najma improved to a 7-3 win-loss record, which is second-best so far in the league.

In yesterday's other game, Muharraq faced a deficit in the



Muharraq's Bader Abdulla Malabes squares up as he is about to take a shot against Samaheej

first quarter but were in control the rest of the way. They stretched their lead in the last two periods to close out the double-digit decision.

Three players scored 20 points or more for the victors. Veteran court general Husain Shaker was Muharraq's top man with 25, which included six three-pointers. Ali Rabea added 21 and 11 rebounds, while Dwayne Jackson had a triple-double with 20 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists. Bader Abdulla Malabes chipped in with 15 for Muharraq, who claimed their sixth victory in nine games.

Basel Adel had 29, Masnour Kasse 19 and Sayed Ali Mahmood 18 to pace Samaheej, who dropped to a 1-9 win-loss mark.

League action continues tonight with Al Hala taking on Nuwaidrat at 7pm.

Spurs in crisis after 13 players and staff test positive for coronavirus

AFP | London

Tottenham manager Antonio Conte said yesterday that eight players and five members of staff had tested positive for coronavirus and he expected more confirmed cases.

Spurs are due to play a crucial Europa Conference League game against Rennes on Thursday and UEFA has said the match is due to take place as scheduled.

It remains unclear whether the club will ask for their Premier League match at Brighton

on Sunday to be postponed.

"Eight players and five members of staff," Conte said at a press conference, which was held virtually rather than in person at the club's Hotspur Way training centre.

"Every day we are having people with Covid, people who were not positive yesterday. This is not a good situation."

Conte was supposed to be joined by Danish midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg at the pre-match press conference, but instead faced the media on his own.

Sajid and Pakistan rage against dying light to snatch victory

Pakistan beat Bangladesh by an innings in race against dying light

● Sajid Khan took his 12th wicket of the match to seal victory on the final day

AFP | Dhaka

Off-spinner Sajid Khan claimed 4-86 and finished with a match haul of 12 wickets as Pakistan defied fading light to beat Bangladesh by an innings and eight runs and take the two-Test series 2-0 in Dhaka yesterday.

All-rounder Shakib Al Hasan let Bangladesh's middle order in a brave resistance but could not salvage a draw as the hosts' last wicket fell just minutes before sunset.

Shakib top-scored for Bangladesh with 63 off 130 balls and in the process made an all-round career double of 4,000 runs and 200 wickets, the quickest in history and beating a record long held by Ian Botham.

But despite a 51-run partnership with Mehidy Hossain for the seventh wicket, Bangladesh's hopes were dashed when Pakistan skipper Babar Azam trapped his teammate.

"I felt that I needed to bowl at that stage and really happy I got that wicket," said Babar of his maiden Test wicket.

"Our batsmen and especially



Pakistan's Sajid Khan celebrates after dismissing Bangladesh's Liton Das

4,000
runs and 200 wickets
milestone has been
achieved by Bangladesh's
Shakib Al Hasan

openers gave us a good start and our mindset was just to dominate despite the bad weather," he added.

Sajid, who took 8-42 in the first innings, broke through the defence of Shakib in the next over to bowl him out.

He also took the final two wickets when the light started

dimming, which prevented Pakistan's fast bowlers from bowling at the tail-enders.

Mushfqr Rahim and Liton Das earlier scored 48 and 45 runs respectively for Bangladesh, but two wickets apiece from Hasan Ali and Shaheen Afridi held the side to 25-4 after Pakistan forced the follow-on.

Mushfiqu made decent partnerships with Liton and Shakib before he was run out on the stroke of tea.

"In the second innings we had an opportunity to play better than the first," said Bangladesh captain Monimul Haque.

"Though some of our senior players played well, we couldn't hang on."

The hosts could only add another 11 runs to their first in-

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The team, the captain trusted me to do the job. The plan was to go for the win, and we tried to keep it tight and bowl on one spot. The entire team gets credit for their effort

SAJID KHAN

nings total after resuming with three wickets remaining to get dismissed for 87, their lowest score on home soil and 213 behind Pakistan.

Sajid struck in his first over of the morning to trap Taijul Islam leg before for a duck before Afridi bowled Khaled Ahmed for none in the next over.

Shakib Al Hasan was the last man dismissed when he holed out a catch to Azhar Ali at short cover off Sajid after making 33 runs, the highest in Bangladesh innings.

Only 63.2 overs of play were possible in the first three days because of rain and bad light.

Pakistan declared their first innings with 300-4.

Pakistan won the first Test in Chittagong by eight wickets.

They finished the tour unbeaten, having won the preceding three-match T20 series 3-0.

Djokovic on entry list for Australian Open, no Serena

AFP | London

Men's world number one Novak Djokovic was named among the entries for the Australian Open yesterday, following intense speculation about his vaccination status, but women's great Serena Williams was missing.

The Serbian had cast doubt on whether he would defend his Melbourne title next month, refusing to reveal whether he was inoculated against coronavirus,



Novak Djokovic

a requirement to play.

But after being named on Tuesday as part of the Serbia

team for January's ATP Cup in Sydney that will precede the opening major of the year, he was also listed for the Grand Slam.

Williams, who is marooned on 23 Grand Slam titles -- one short of the all-time record held by Margaret Court -- had been expected to play, but she is not fully fit.

The American superstar turned 40 in September and may have played her last Australian Open.

The seven-time Melbourne champion said she had withdrawn following advice from her medical team.

"While this is never an easy decision to make, I am not where I need to be physically to compete," she said.

"Melbourne is one of my favourite cities to visit and I look forward to playing at the AO every year. I will miss seeing the fans, but am excited to return and compete at my highest level."

BIC welcomes world's best Rotax karters for Grand Finals 2021

● Nearly 400 karters representing more than 75 countries are gathered in Bahrain for event

● Bahrain to be represented by 10 of Kingdom's best karter talents

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Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) is all set to host one of the biggest karting events in the world from this Saturday to next in Sakhir.

The Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals (RMCGF) 2021 will be hitting the tarmac at BIC's history-making karting facility,

Bahrain International Karting Circuit (BIKC), with close to 400 karters from all across the globe taking part.

This is the first time the RMCGF is being held in the Kingdom, and the stage is set for a spectacular event.

BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa commented: "We are honoured to be hosting this prestigious meeting as the Rotax MAX Challenge Grand Finals is one of the biggest karting events on the global stage."

"We are proud that our world-class karting facility is helping to grow young drivers and this event further highlights our commitment to enhancing motorsport in the region, particularly at the grassroots level."

"The event brings together hundreds of karters, their crews and fans into the Kingdom for an



All set for karting action in Bahrain (File photo)

exciting and extraordinary week of racing.

"We wish everyone a safe, successful and memorable Grand Finals!"

All roads have led to Bahrain this year, with karters gaining

invitations to race this week having excelled in their individual country-based Rotax MAX qualifying competitions from more than 75 nations.

The participants will be battling it out in seven different

categories, including the Micro MAX, the Mini MAX, the Junior MAX, the Senior MAX, the DD2, DD2 Masters and the EKART Senior. The week's action will be held along BIC's 1.414-kilometre CIK track, which has been the setting for world championship-level races in the past.

Scrutineering and pre-race formalities are scheduled to take place on the opening two days, with the raffle of karts set for Sunday morning.

Monday's start to racing will feature the Non-Qualifying Practices, which continue until yesterday, which is when the Qualifying Heats will take place until Thursday.

Next Friday will then see the Pre-Finals be held, setting the stage for the Finals for next Saturday.

Spectators wishing to witness the very best in global karting

can attend between 13 and 18 December, with entry free of charge. Due to limited capacity at the karting circuit, entry will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Amongst the competing karters will be 10 drivers representing the Kingdom of Bahrain, all of whom are champions in the national Rotax MAX series.

Set to compete in the Micro MAX category is Shaikh Rashid bin Salman Al Khalifa; while Gracie Rose Grantham, Luca Kane Houghton, Charles Goddard and Khaled Najar will all be racing in the Mini MAX class.

Abdulqader Qasem and Tye Mejia will be competing in the Junior MAX category; while flying the Kingdom's flag amongst the Senior MAX karters are Fahad Almuqla and Lewis Smith; and Shaikh Salman bin Rashid Al Khalifa in the DD2 Masters class.