

Champions crowned for national racing season

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● Current championship standings were considered as the final championship classification

TDT | Manama

The champions of the 2019/2020 national racing season have been crowned in both circuit racing and karting.

They include Ahmed bin Khanen for the BIC 2,000cc Challenge; Gracie Rose Grantham, Shantosh Kumar, Lewis Smith, Fahad Al Khaled and Osama Azzouka in the Bahrain Rotax Mojo Max (BRMMC) Challenge; and Ali Baslar in the Bahrain Sprint Sodi World Series (BSSWS).

Praga Middle East and BirelArt Bahrain were also multiple winners as entrants in the BRMMC; while GO Bahrain were double champions in the Bahrain Karting Endurance Championship (BKEC), with Bapco Motorsport, Racing BH Junior and Bapco Engineering winning a title apiece.

The newest title winners were confirmed following the decision of the Bahrain Motor Federation (BMF) to officially conclude the 2019/2020 season, with remaining events of the season cancelled. As per regulations, the BMF concluded that current championship standings were considered as the final



Participants in action during Bahrain Karting Endurance Championship

championship classification.

Bin Khanen was able to claim his first-ever title in the BIC 2,000cc Challenge. The Saudi driver concluded the highly competitive season eight points ahead of his closest rival, Bahraini Raed Raffii; while 14 points clear on the championship standings was former multiple champion, Bahrain's Shaikh Salman bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, in third place overall. All three were competing in the series' Pro class.

Bin Khanen accumulated 206 points in the six of seven rounds held in the season, in which he took on the field driving a Honda Civic EG4. He was able to clinch one victory from 12 races and was on the podium five other times.

Wiebke Buelow emerged as the top driver in the Novice class with 68 points, just three ahead of Husain Al Ghanem and seven in front of Andreas Buelow.

Shaikh Salman added to his top three overall finish by taking another pair of accolades. He also claimed the most pole positions with four, and registered the Season's Fastest Lap of 1min 16.450secs around Bahrain International Circuit's 2.55-kilometre Inner Track.

Meanwhile, in karting, the

ters karters with 165 points, with Fred Clark (152 pts) and Essa Aldossery (51 pts) joining him in the top three.

Praga came away with a championship treble after finishing first in the Micro Max, Junior Max and Max Masters classes; while BirelArt were champions among the Mini Max and Senior Max entrants.

In the BSSWS, Baslar capped a dominant season with 150 points—50 ahead of championship runner-up Abdulla Buhindi. Abubaker Ali was a distant third with 62 points among the series' 18 competitors.

Both the BRMMC and BSSWS were part of the Bahrain Karting Sprint Championship, which had its final two rounds of the season abandoned.

For the BKEC, which was able to complete its campaign with four races featuring three, six, 12 and 24 hours, GO Bahrain won the overall title with 155 points. Racing BH Junior followed with 144 points and Bapco Engineering with 129 points.

GO Bahrain secured their endurance double by also taking the Pro class title with 170 points, well ahead of Bapco Sadeem (135 pts) and Bahrain Airport Services (BAS) A (133 pts).

Bapco Motorsport clinched the Corporate class crown with 180 points, as BAS sister squads BAS C (137 pts) and all-ladies team BAS F (120 pts) were second and third.

Finally, Racing BH Junior and Bapco Engineering added to their top-three placings overall by sharing the title in the Nations class, scoring 167 points apiece. Manama Drift (85 pts) were a far second and BAS B (45 pts) third.

The BMF has also announced that new national racing season is scheduled to begin on October 2.



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BRMMC crowned Gracie Rose as champion of the Micro Max category after finishing the season with 158 points. Khaled Alnajjar (129 pts) and Rasihd Alkhalifa (109 pts) followed in second and third, respectively.

Shantosh won the Mini Max crown with 152 points, finishing ahead of Luca Kane Houghton (127 pts) and Tye Mejia (105 pts); while Lewis triumphed in the Junior Max class with 164 points, as Abdullah Aldossery (143 pts) and Fahad Almuqla (116 pts) followed.

Al Khaled was the Senior Max category champion with 146 points. Mohammed Mattar (125 pts) was the runner-up and Omar Aldereyaan (106 pts) came third. Azzouka clinched the title amongst the Max Mas-

Federer hopes to play in front of crowds on 2021 return



Roger Federer waves to fans after a match (file photo)

AFP | London

Roger Federer, who turns 39 next month, says he hopes to play again in front of crowds as he targets his comeback from a knee injury in 2021.

Having beaten long-time rival Rafael Nadal in an exhibition match in Cape Town in February, in front of a record crowd of 52,000, Federer has not played since knee surgery at the end of that month.

He had another procedure on his right knee in June but hopes to return in 2021 even though he will turn 40 in August next year.

"I want to come back healthy. We'll see how long that lasts," he told German

weekly newspaper Die Zeit.

The Swiss ace says he has missed tennis more than ever since the coronavirus pandemic first hit and forced a shutdown of the sport in March.

"In the beginning it wasn't like that," he said.

"There was nothing we could do anyway, we were just especially glad that we weren't ill and that all our friends and family were doing well.

"But now I miss it, I'd love to be in a full stadium again."

After a career which has yielded eight Wimbledon titles in a total of 20 Grand Slams, the last of which was the 2018 Australian Open, Federer knows his career is drawing to a close.

Chris Froome to leave Team Ineos at end of season

AFP | London

Four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome will leave Team Ineos at the end of the season, the team announced.

The BBC reported that Froome, Britain's most successful cyclist, would join the Israel Start-Up Nation team.

Froome first won the Tour de France in 2013, going on to dominate cycling's leading race for the three years from 2015 in the colours of Team Sky, which became Team Ineos



Chris Froome

last year.

"Chris's current contract comes to an end in December and we have taken the decision now not to renew it," said Team Ineos boss Dave Brailsford.

Pellegrini named as coach of Betis

AFP | Madrid

Former Manchester City and Real Madrid coach Manuel Pellegrini has returned to Spanish football as coach of Real Betis, his new club announced.

The 66-year-old Chilean, who has also worked in China, has signed a three-year deal with the Seville-based outfit, running until June 2023.

The arrival of Pellegrini at the Benito Villamarin had been an open secret for several days, although Betis decided to wait until their La Liga survival had been confirmed before announcing the appointment.

Wednesday's 3-0 home win over Osasuna left Betis in mid-table and ended any fears of relegation with three games of the season still to play.

BRAVE CF to host record-setting five shows in five consecutive weeks

TDT | Manama

For the first time in its history, Bahrain's own BRAVE Combat Federation, the premier Mixed Martial Arts promotion founded by HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa will be hosting five shows in five consecutive weeks. The impressive milestone will set a new record for the organization, which is active since September 2016.

Recently, in early March, BRAVE CF took the lead worldwide among the MMA promotions and paused its operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, BRAVE CF also launched a global awareness campaign, involving the roster of athletes, coaches, celebrities, and influencers that it hosts under its umbrella.

With the recent developments in safety and security regulations, proposed by the Interna-

tional Health bodies, BRAVE CF confirmed that it was resuming its shows, and more, ensuring that the promotion would still host a minimum of 12 shows within 2020, as it was originally planned.

The return of BRAVE Combat Federation is set for July 20, in Romania, where the Bahrain-based organization will hold BRAVE CF 35. One week later, for the second show in a row in the Eastern European country, BRAVE CF 36 will take place.

Five days, and almost 3,000 kilometers, later, on August 1st, BRAVE Combat Federation will land in Scandinavia, for its first-ever event in the country of Sweden, BRAVE CF 37. The following two weeks, August 8 and 15, BRAVE CF 38 and 39 will take place once again in Sweden.

BRAVE CF officials have confirmed that the promotion is fol-



lowing strict health and safety regulations, that include severe social distancing protocols, multiple testing for all athletes and personnel involved in the event, and closed-door fight nights, broadcasted worldwide through BRAVE CF partners around the globe.

The return also means that Bahrain sports will be at the forefront worldwide once again, as BRAVE CF will be one of the first sports organizations to resume its activities. The organization is ready to take the Kingdom of Bahrain around the world with several fight cards across the globe.

The measures, alongside the full strength return, cement the position of BRAVE Combat Federation as the biggest sports media property in Asia, and a true representative of the Kingdom of Bahrain's core values, such as resilience, leadership, and pioneering mindset.