

## McLaren's Norris pips Russell in second Barcelona F1 practice



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris is pictured in the pit lane during the second practice

AFP | Barcelona

Lando Norris edged fellow Briton George Russell by just 0.009s to top second practice yesterday for the Barcelona-Catalunya Formula One Grand Prix.

Reigning world champion Norris, who sat out the opening session, and his team-mate Oscar Piastri sandwiched the Mercedes driver for the top three, with the Australian coming in 0.057s off the top time.

Italian teenage sensation Kimi Antonelli, who leads the championship after five straight triumphs in the other Mercedes, came in fifth, over half a second behind Norris, with Charles Leclerc fourth in his upgraded Ferrari.

Piastri, who came second in the opening practice and triumphed in Barcelona last year, set an early time to beat of

1:15.724, already ahead of the best morning time as McLaren flexed their muscles.

Russell, who was quickest in the opening session on a hot, sunny day in Barcelona, with track temperatures up at 50 degrees centigrade, was soon on his tail, two 10ths of a second behind.

The 28-year-old is competing in his 100th Grand Prix for the Silver Arrows and two strong practice sessions are encouraging after his troubled start to the season.

Racing Bulls' Liam Lawson pulled up in the pit exit lane after losing power because of a suspected gearbox issue, with the virtual safety car deployed.

Several teams used that time to bolt on the softs, including Mercedes, and midway through the session Russell zipped into the lead by 0.289 seconds, with Antonelli half a second behind.

# Burgan pull away late to end Al Najma hopes

Hussain Almaskati  
TDT | Manama

Bahrain's Al Najma were knocked out of the 28th Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship yesterday after falling 28-24 to Kuwait's Burgan Club at Sabah Al-Salem, Kuwait.

The result ended Najma's hopes of reaching the semi-finals and also confirmed their elimination from contention for qualification to the 19th IHF Men's Handball Club World Championship, set to take place in Egypt in October.

Najma came into the match needing a result to stay in contention but could not hold off a strong late surge from Burgan, who pulled away in the closing minutes after a closely contested battle.

The first half was evenly matched, with both sides trading goals throughout a fast-paced opening spell. Al Najma struck first through Mohamed Ahmed, but Burgan quickly responded and gradually edged ahead behind the scoring of Hussain Almutawa and Mahmoud Mohsen.

The Kuwait side carried a narrow 14-13 lead into half-time after a back-and-forth opening 30 minutes that saw neither team establish full control.

Najma stayed within reach for much of the second half and briefly levelled the contest at 21-21 midway through the pe-



Al Najma's Sayed Ali Shubbar goes for goal

riod, with Sayed Ali Shubbar and Jasim Khamis among those keeping the Bahrain side in contention.

However, Burgan began to assert themselves in transition as the match entered its final stages. Mahmoud Mohsen proved decisive, finishing as the game's top scorer with 11 goals, while Burgan's fastbreak efficiency and clinical finishing created the separation they needed.

After Najma had once again closed the gap to 23-22, Burgan

responded with a decisive run, scoring five of the final seven goals to put the contest beyond reach. Consecutive strikes in the final minutes ensured a four-goal margin at the buzzer.

For Al Najma, Saud Aljunaid and Sayed Ali Shubbar led the scoring with five goals each, while Mohamed Ahmed and Jasim Khamis added four apiece in a valiant but ultimately unsuccessful effort.

Burgan's supporting cast also made key contributions, with

Hussain Almutawa adding six goals, while Hussain Ali and Ahmad Alqallaf provided important late strikes to seal the win.

The defeat leaves Al Najma with a record of one win, one draw, and three losses from their campaign.

They will now conclude their tournament schedule against Khaleej Club of Saudi Arabia tomorrow at 8pm Bahrain time, in what will be a final opportunity to end their Asian campaign on a positive note.

## Bahrain Aquatics Cup opens with 380 swimmers

The Bahrain Aquatics Federation Cup got underway yesterday, bringing together 380 swimmers from 28 countries; the two-day competition concludes today.

The opening day saw strong participation and highly competitive races across multiple events, reflecting the continued rise in aquatic sports standards in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The event also attracted a vibrant crowd, with spectators and families contributing to an energetic atmosphere around the pool.

Notable sporting figures attended the tournament, including Abdulla Attiya, President of the Bahrain Aquatics Federation, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa, Head of Riffa Aquatics, and Saeed Khalifa Al Buflasa, Vice President of Riffa Aquatics.

Organisers noted that the strong turnout and level of performance reflect the ongoing development of swimming in Bahrain, alongside growing public interest in aquatic disciplines across the region.

The championship features a structured prize system designed to reward top performers across all categories. Individual awards will be presented to the



Swimming action at the General Sports Authority Swimming Pool in Khalifa Sports City



Bahrain Aquatics Federation President Abdulla Attiya with Riffa Aquatics officials during the opening day of the event

leading swimmers: the winner receives \$1,000, second place \$500, and third place \$250.

A Club Open Champion title

will also be awarded, along with a \$3,000 prize and the championship trophy for the top-performing club.

In addition, gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded to the top three finishers across all age categories and events.

## Bahrain re-sign JaKarr Sampson ahead of Asia Cup pre-qualifiers



Sampson in action during the Men's Arab Basketball Championship

Hussain Almaskati  
The Bahrain Basketball Federation has announced the re-contracting of American player JaKarr Sampson to represent the men's national team during the upcoming phase of preparations for the 2029 FIBA Asia Cup.

Bahrain's journey in the First Round of the Asia Cup Pre-Qualifiers will take place in Dubai from August 24 to September 1, with the team placed in Group A alongside the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, and Nepal. The

side is coached by Georgios Vovoras.

Sampson, a former NBA player, previously represented Bahrain during the summer of 2025. He featured in the 44th William Jones Cup in Chinese Taipei and later played a key role in the 26th Men's Arab Basketball Championship held in Bahrain.

During that tournament, Sampson delivered standout performances and was named Most Valuable Player, underlining his impact on the national team setup.