

Almansoori extends perfect BTCC season

Ali Almansoori continues incredible winning run in Bahrain Touring Car Challenge at BIC

● Ahmed Algaidy, Fahad Almulhem, Yzeed Alsu hail, Faris Almutari, Hamad Albalooshi, Hesham Bediea, and Sulaiman Alsu hail all claim victories in class in Time Attack

Manama

Ali Almansoori continued his incredible undefeated run in the 2025/2026 Bahrain Touring Car Challenge (BTCC), winning both races over the weekend in the season's fourth round, held as part of National Race Day at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

Almansoori powered his Honda Civic contender to victory in both of the meeting's 15-lap sprints, earning him his seventh and eighth victories in as many events so far this campaign.

His latest double highlighted an action-packed occasion at 'The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East', where action was also held in Time Attack.

Taking victories in the series' various categories were Ahmed Algaidy in the SU class, Fahad Almulhem in MA, Yzeed Alsu hail in SA, Faris Almutari in MB, Hamad Albalooshi in SB, Hesham Bediea in ULB, and Sulaiman Alsu hail in ULA.

National Race Day was organised by BIC in cooperation with the Bahrain Motor Federation, the Circuit Racing Commission, and the Bahrain Auto X and Drift Commission. Action was held



along BIC's 2.554-kilometre Inner Track.

In the BTCC, Almansoori was the pace-setter from the opening session. He then won race one from pole position in a time of 25 minutes 10.556 seconds after 15 laps, finishing 1.104 seconds ahead of runner-up Isa Ebrahim. Algaidy, who was also competing in the BTCC, joined them on the podium after going 1.913s from the victor. Both Ebrahim and Algaidy were also behind the wheel of their own Civics.

Completing the top six were Ahmed Bajnaid in a Civic, James Taylor in an Acura RSX DC5, and Moaaz Elzahrawi in another Civic.

In race two, Almansoori was once again the pole-sitter and

he took the chequered flag in 20:46.596 while enjoying a wider gap of 4.491s from Elzahrawi in second. Ebrahim was classified third 7.023s off the winner's mark, while Bajnaid and Taylor completed the finishers.

In Time Attack, there was plenty of heated competition in each class across the practices and opening heats.

In the decisive second heats, Algaidy took first place amongst the SU competitors with a fastest time of 1:10.096 at 131.17kph. Ebrahim Elshreeda came second and Rakan Alsu hail third.

Almulhem won the MA category with a best mark of 1:14.921 at 122.72kph. Ahmed Mulhim was the runner-up and Mohamed Aljuraiban completed

the top three.

Yzeed Alsu hail triumphed in the SA division with a dominant lap of 1:11.095 at 129.33kph. He was more than 10 seconds quicker than the rest of the field, which had Mohamed Ebrahim in second and Sayed Ali Jawad third.

Almutairi was then victorious in the MB class with a fastest mark of 1:19.910 at 115.06kph. Mazen Dabbous and Amr Elmorsi followed on the classification.

Albalooshi claimed a tight victory amongst the SB runners, winning in 1:24.959 at 108.22kph. Just two-tenths adrift was Ali Alkhdaier as runner-up while Freddie Richard came third.

Bediea then won the ULB divi-



sion with a top mark of 1:18.021 at 117.85kph. Abdulaziz Alramih was second and Mahmood Almaraghi third.

Sulaiman Alsu hail completed the round's Time Attack winners in the ULA category, where he topped the timesheet with a best lap of 1:10.175 at 131.02kph. Mohamed Alsheryan was the runner-up while Haitham Maddah ranked third.

Following all of the meeting's action, the winners in the BTCC and Time Attack were presented

their respective awards in the podium ceremonies.

BIC's 2025/2026 racing calendar features seven rounds of National Race Day. Action resumes with round five on 6 February, and then the sixth and penultimate meeting will take place on 13 March. That will set the stage for the grand finale on 24 April.

For more information on National Race Day or other events and activities at BIC, visit bahraingp.com or call the BIC Hotline.

Williams loses golden oldie clash in final Australian Open warm-up



Venus Williams in action

AFP | Hobart

Venus Williams was dumped out of the Hobart International in straight sets by Tatjana Maria yesterday to dent her Australian Open preparations in a historic clash between two players with a combined age of 83.

It was the second consecutive tournament in which the 45-year-old Williams had crashed at the first hurdle after last week's Auckland Classic.

She survived 87 minutes in Hobart against German world number 42 Maria, who is 38, before slumping 6-4, 6-3, hav-

ing gamely saved six of nine break points.

The first meeting between the pair set a new record for the highest combined age for a main draw match since the WTA Tour was founded in 1973.

Maria said her daughters Charlotte, 12, and Cecilia, four, were probably cheering for Williams, one of their favourite players.

"Everybody loves Venus. I love her too," said Maria.

"For me, to play her was such an honour because I never played her before. It was not easy with all the wind but it was amazing."

Riffa Snatch Late Winner as Budaiya Continue Climb

Hussain Almaskati
TDT | Manama

Matchweek 12 of the Nasser bin Hamad Premier League opened with late drama, as Riffa edged Al Najma 2-1 at Bahrain National Stadium, while Budaiya continued their rise with a 3-1 victory over Al Shabab at Khalifa Sports City.

Riffa opened the scoring in the 29th minute when Wellington Moreira's low free kick was spilled by Al Najma goalkeeper Ammar Mohammed, allowing Vinicius Vargas to react first and tap into an empty net from close range. Al Najma responded immediately after the restart through Achraf Douiri. The Dutchman curled a precise free kick from a tight angle on the left wing around the wall, catching Riffa goalkeeper Dziugas Bartkus at his near post to level the score.

The decisive moment arrived in the 87th minute. Vargas launched a sensational counterattack from inside his own half, skipping past defenders before his close-range effort was



Riffa players celebrate Samuel Toscas' winning goal

saved. Al Najma failed to clear their lines, and when the ball was swung back into the box, Samuel Toscas rose highest to head home despite the goalkeeper charging out.

At Khalifa Sports City, Budaiya produced a strong second-half performance to beat Al Shabab 3-1. A first-half penalty appeal was waved away after VAR review, before Budaiya

broke the deadlock straight after halftime. Kablan N'Goma's cross caused confusion in the Shabab box, and Daniel Asante produced an acrobatic backheel volley that struck the crossbar on its way in. Asante then got his brace in the 60th minute, meeting Clement Ogbobe's through ball and slipping a low finish inside the near post. Al Shabab pulled one back six minutes later when Hussain Al Qassab met Mujtaba Hussain's low cross with a first-time finish from close range.

Budaiya sealed the result in the 80th minute as a poorly cleared corner fell to Hamad Fuad, who finished calmly from a few yards out.

The results move Riffa up to second on 27 points, level with leaders Al Khaldiya, who have a game in hand. Budaiya climb to fifth on 15 points, while Al Najma remain 10th and Al Shabab stay bottom on goal difference. Matchweek 12 continues today, with Al Khaldiya facing A'ali and Al Malkiya taking on Al Hidd at 7 PM.