

SPORTS

sports

Drag racers set to bring the heat in round three of Bahrain championship at BIC

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The region's premier drag racing series is back in action this week at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

The third round of the 2019/2020 Bahrain Drag Racing Championship (BDRC) kicked off Tuesday night and continues until Friday at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

The first two days of the meeting sees the participants fine-tuning their cars and motorbikes in a Test and Tune. Qualifying will then be held on Thursday, to be followed by the eliminations at Race Day on Friday.

The series is the region's biggest and most competitive championship and it attracts hard-core drag racers from all over the world, including many legends of the sport. In the previous round held last month, a whopping field of more than 140 entrants battled in the 16 competition categories, and NHRA champions Bahrain1 Racing stole the show with a new World record set by Khalid Al Balooshi.

More of the same heated action is expected this week as BIC's quarter-mile drag strip hosts the racing. BIC is a member of the prestigious Worldwide Network of the USA-based National Hot Rod Association (NHRA), allowing the Bahrain championship



A car in action at BIC

to run under the prestigious NHRA banner.

The second day of Test and Tune on Wednesday will be held from 6pm to 11pm, while Qualifying will be from 4pm to 11pm on Thursday night. Race Day will begin from 4pm Friday until the completion of all events.

The 16 competition categories include 12 for cars and four for motorbikes. The car classes consist of Street 4 and 6, Outlaw FWD, Super Street 6-Cyl, Outlaw 6-Cyl, Street V8, Super Street V8, Competition 4.5, Outlaw 10.5, Pro Mod, Index 10.5, Index 9.5 and Index 8.5. For motorcycles, the classes include Street Fight Bikes, Street Bikes, Super Street Bikes and Pro Bikes.

All are welcome to attend the third round of the season. Tickets can be purchased at the gate. For Test and Tune, they are BD2 apiece. For Qualifying and Race Day, tickets are BD5 at the Start Line Grandstand, while tickets are BD3 for the Batelco Grandstand. Children aged from three to 12 years old can attend for half the price.

Peterhansel wins stage nine

Stephane Peterhansel of Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team edges Nasser Al-Attiyah in Dakar Rally stage nine

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Stephane Peterhansel and co-driver Paulo Fiuza triumphed yesterday for Bahrain JCW X-Raid Team in the ninth stage of the 2020 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia.

They completed the longest stage of the race of 891 kilometres from Wadi Al Dawasir to Haradh.

They completed the leg in three hours eight minutes and 31 seconds, just 15 seconds ahead of their closest challengers Nasser Al Attiyah and Matthieu Baumel of Toyota Gazoo Racing.

Bahrain JCW X-Raid teammates Carlos Sainz and Lucas Cruz had a problematic day as they finished fifth, six minutes and 31 seconds behind the stage winners.

Following the result, Sainz and Cruz stayed in first place on the general ranking for cars but their lead was cut to a mere 24 seconds ahead of Al Attiyah and Baumel.

Sainz and Cruz have a total time of 35:11:54 after nine rounds. Peterhansel and Fiuza are third more than six minutes back.

"Today it was, again, a stage with full attack," said Peterhansel. "We tried to push at full attack from the beginning,



Peterhansel and Fiuza go through rough terrain during yesterday's ninth stage



This morning the tracks were really rough and more twisty, a little bit like in Morocco, and after it started to be really fast

STEPHANE PETERHANSEL

but never opening the gas too much. In the end, it's a little bit the same as since the beginning of the race. This morning the tracks were really rough and more twisty, a little bit like in Morocco, and after it started to be really fast. We made no mistakes at all with the navigation."

Sainz commented: "On the first part we lost a little bit of time when we lost the way - we

lost five minutes or something like that. After, I don't know what happened...the tread came off the tyre and we had to stop. It wasn't like a puncture, it was more the lamination of the tyre. It was not a good day for us."

Today, the field travel from Haradh to Shubaytah along a course that includes 534km of special stages and 608km in total.

Bahrain name squad for handball event



Bahrain's national handball team

Bahrain announce final 19-player squad for Asian handball championship

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Bahrain named their final 19-player line-up that will be competing in the 2020 Asian Men's Handball Championship, which will be held in Kuwait starting tomorrow.

The Bahrainis are scheduled to fly to Kuwait City today ahead of the start of the competition.

The national team will be spearheaded by their top overseas-based talents, including

captain Hussain Al Sayyad (Al Wehda, Saudi Arabia), Ali Mirza (Sharjah, UAE), Mohammed Habib Madan (Ahli Shabab Dubai, UAE), Jassim Al Salatna (Al Khaleej, Saudi) and Ali Eid (Al Nasr, UAE).

The players who suit up for Bahraini clubs are Mohammed Abdul Hussein, Hassan Shehab, Mahdi Saad, Mohammed Mirza, Bilal Basham and Mohammed Habib (Al Najma Club); Hassan Al Samaheji, Mohammed Abdulredha and Mahmoud Hussein (Al Ahli); Ahmed Al Maqabai (Barbar Club); Ahmed Jalal and Abdulla Zeimour (Al Shabab); Hussain Mahfoudh (Tubli); and Abdulla Ali (Al Etihad).

The Bahrainis are coached by

Aron Kristjansson from Iceland. Thirteen teams are taking part in the Asian championship in Kuwait City. They have been divided into four groups for the preliminary round. Bahrain have been drawn in Group A along with Iran and New Zealand.

Group B features Qatar, Japan and China; Group C includes South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Australia; and Group D consists of the UAE, Hong Kong, Iraq and hosts Kuwait.

The Bahrainis, who last year made history by qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics, play their first game tomorrow against the Kiwis. They then face their Iranian rivals on Saturday to complete the first round.

The top two teams from each group at the end of a single round-robin move on to the next phase. This ensuing main round will feature eight teams in all, to be divided into another two groups and another single round-robin. The top two then march on to the semi-finals, scheduled for January 25. The final match will then be held on January 27 along with the bronze medal game.

The Asian championship also acts as the continental qualifying tournament for the 2021 World Men's Handball Championship. Each of the competition's four semi-finalists will book their tickets to the worlds, set to take place in Egypt in January of 2021.

BTC welcomes ITF seniors manager ahead of championship



Abdul Jawad, left, presents the memento to Byford

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Bahrain Tennis Club (BTC) welcomed International Tennis Federation (ITF) Seniors Tennis Manager Matt Byford to give a lecture to the technical committee ahead of the first Bahrain ITF Seniors Tennis Championship, which is set to be hosted by BTC from April 1 to 6.

Byford conducted a number of classes where he talked about the tournament regu-

lations and the registration procedure for players in these kinds of competitions.

Byford added that the ITF is following with great interest the activities being held at BTC, and said that they appreciate the BTC's organisation of the seniors' championship for the first time in the Gulf.

BTC Manager Hamdi Abdul Jawad presented a memento to Byford to commemorate his visit.