

Champions Al Ahli make strong start

Back-to-back title winners see off Nuwaidrat while title challengers Al Hala also post big victory as 2021/2022 Zain Bahrain Basketball League tips off

● **Ahmed Al Durazi and Anthony McClain combine for 43 points to pace Ahli, who enjoyed margins as big as 46 points against Nuwaidrat**

● **Amir Williams has 22-point, 20-rebound game as Hala lead by as many as 30 points against Samaheej**

TDI | Manama

Defending back-to-back champions Al Ahli kick-started their quest for an historic "three-peat" last night in the 2021/2022 Zain Bahrain Basketball League with a lopsided 94-51 victory over



Al Ahli's Ahmed Al Durazi looks to make a play as he is guarded by Nuwaidrat's Mohammed Salman Ali

Nuwaidrat.

Fresh from having won the season-opening Zain Super Cup last week, Ahli continued to fire on all cylinders and made a strong statement of their title intentions.

They barged out of the gate and piled on the pressure until the final buzzer. Their biggest lead was 46 and they never allowed their opponents to make a serious challenge.

Bahraini guard Ahmed Al Durazi and American professional Anthony McClain combined for 43 of Ahli's points. Al Durazi finished with a team-high 22 while burying four three-pointers and dishing out five assists. McClain had a fine double-double with 21 points and 14 rebounds.

Hesham Sarhan was the only other Ahli player in double figures, scoring 16 points. Key off-season addition Mohammed



League action continues today with Manama taking on Sitra at 5.30pm, followed at 7.30pm by Bahrain Club facing Al Najma

Kuwayed chipped in with eight off the bench while Subah Husain and Sayed Hashim Habib had six points apiece.

For Nuwaidrat, import Anthony Walker had 25 points and nine rebounds to lead his team. Husain Hasan contributed 12

points while Hassan Abbas had 11. Only four players made it onto their scoresheet in the loss.

Meanwhile, Al Hala also got off to a winning start following a 78-68 decision against Samaheej.

Hala raced out to a 22-6 lead at the end of the first quarter and never looked back, leading by as many as 30 points the rest of the game.

Samaheej had a huge 34-14 fourth quarter to reduce the deficit at the final buzzer. Amir Williams led Hala with 22 points, 20 rebounds and four blocked shots, while Sayed Kadhem Majed added 19.

Jerrell Martin paced Samaheej with 30 points in the loss.

League action continues today with Manama taking on Sitra at 5.30pm, followed at 7.30pm by Bahrain Club facing Al Najma.

Man City legacy rests on Champions League glory admits Guardiola

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola said yesterday he accepts his Manchester City legacy hinges on whether he can deliver Champions League glory for the club after they fell at the final hurdle last season.

The Premier League champions start their campaign against Bundesliga side

RB Leipzig on Wednesday, less than four months after their painful 1-0 defeat to Chelsea.

But Guardiola said he would not be dwelling on the missed opportunity in Porto -- City's first-ever Champions League final -- and that it would be a mistake to regard last season's European campaign as a failure.

Ronaldo goal in vain as Lingard backpass gifts hosts 95th minute win



Cristiano Ronaldo scores Manchester United's first goal

AFP | London

Young Boys struck in the 95th minute to sink Manchester United in dramatic fashion thanks to Jesse Lingard's horror backpass.

Cristiano Ronaldo scored his third goal in two Manchester United games since returning to the club.

But it was not enough to get the Red Devils off to a winning start in the Champions League as they were sucker-punched in the last minute of injury time.

Ronaldo fired his side in front on 13 minutes at the back post after Bruno Fernandes picked him out expertly.

But Aaron Wan-Bissaka saw red ten minutes before half-

time.

The right-back stamped on Christopher Martins' ankle with Jadon Sancho sacrificed for Diogo Dalot to come on.

Young Boys kept pushing and earned their equaliser on 66 minutes.

Hefti made progress down the right and his deflected low ball across found Moumi Ngamaleu who poked in at the near post.

Ronaldo and Fernandes were subbed off with 20 minutes to go as Nemanja Matic and Lingard came on to try and hold on for a point.

But ironically it was Lingard whose blind passback went straight to Jordan

Siebatcheu made no mistake to tuck in sparking chaotic scenes in Switzerland.

Bahrain lose to Qatar, fall out of title contention in Asian volleyball

TDI | Manama

Bahrain were yesterday knocked out of title contention in the 21st Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship in Chiba, Japan, following a 0-3 (19-25, 20-25, 24-26) loss to Qatar.

The match was their last in Pool A of the competition's preliminary round, which they ended with a 1-2 win-loss record.

It was a disappointing outcome for the Bahrainis after beginning the tournament with a resounding victory.

The host Japanese and the Qataris moved on to the top



Bahrain's Ali Ebrahim looks to launch an attack against Qatar

eight from their group. Japan 25) win over India in their last game.

Bahrain and India are now set to compete in the ninth to 16th classification bracket. Both teams will be in Pool G alongside Kuwait and Uzbekistan. In this round, Bahrain's games will take place tomorrow and Friday. The result of their game against India, which they won in straight sets, carries over to this stage.

Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Hong Kong and Kazakhstan are the other nations in this classification bracket in Pool H.

Competing in the top eight are hosts Japan, Australia, China, Qatar, defending champions Iran, Chinese Taipei, South Korea and Pakistan.

South Africa demolish Sri Lanka to sweep T20 series

AFP | Colombo

Inspired bowling and unbeaten fifties from Quinton de Kock and Reeza Hendricks helped South Africa sweep the Twenty20 series 3-0 against Sri Lanka with a crushing 10-wicket win in Colombo yesterday.

Chasing 121 for victory, South Africa romped home in 14.4 overs with De Kock on 59 and Hendricks making 56 in the third T20 in Colombo.

Visiting bowlers Bjorn Fortuin and Kagiso Rabada took two wickets each to restrict Sri Lanka to 120-8 after the hosts elected to bat first.

The Proteas extended their winning streak to seven in T20 matches. They had clinched their third straight series in the shortest format with victory in the second match.

"Full credit to the boys, they played really well after losing the ODIs," said skipper Keshav Maharaj, who made his T20 debut at the start of the series.

"Good preparation building up to the (T20) World Cup."

De Kock and Hendricks put on South Africa's highest T20 partnership of 121 for any wick-



South Africa's Quinton de Kock (21) celebrates with teammate Reeza Hendricks (28) after the victory

et against Sri Lanka in another show of dominance after their previous nine-wicket win.

De Kock, a left-hand wicketkeeper-batsman who hit a match-winning 58 in the second T20, raised his fifty in 40 balls and took the attack to the opposition bowlers.

Hendricks recorded his seventh T20 half-century and hit five fours and one six in his 42-ball knock.

South Africa's bowlers set up the win after Rabada rattled the top order with his pace. He sent back Avishka Fernando for 12

and bowled Bhanuka Rajapaksa for five.

Fortuin got two key wickets including Dhananjaya de Silva, stumped for one, and Wanindu Hasaranga, out for four, to return figures of 2-21 with his left-arm spin.

Opener Kusal Perera top-scored with 39 before falling to skipper and left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj who trapped the wicketkeeper-batsman lbw.

Sri Lanka slipped to 86-7 before number nine Chamika Karunaratne hit an unbeaten 24 off 19 balls to give the team total

some respect as he finished the innings with a six.

"Our bowling was good but we need to think again about our batting unit," captain Dasun Shanaka said.

"The boys know what they need to do to step up and we'll do that. Wickets are key in T20s, though we had starts we just threw wickets in the middle overs and that is a concern going ahead."

It was a disappointing result for the hosts who had won the three-match one-day series 2-1 last week.



The Proteas extended their winning streak to seven in T20 matches. They had clinched their third straight series in the shortest format with victory in the second match