

# Mogeni credits fans after title-boosting victory



Enock Mogeni salutes the Dar Kulaib faithful

**Hussain Almaskati**  
TDT | Manama

Dar Kulaib's Enock Mogeni praised the return of the fans after a crucial 3-1 victory over defending champions Muharraq in Tuesday's Isa bin Rashid Bahrain Volleyball League clash. The result tightened the title race and sent his side to the top of the standings.

"First, I want to thank God and the Dar Kulaib family," Mogeni said, dedicating the win

to the club supporters. The Kenyan star highlighted the impact of the crowd following their return after a previous suspension linked to regional tensions. "The energy from the fans was incredible. They carried us through the tough moments, and we will need them in the final three matches," he added.

At Isa Bin Rashid Arena in Riffa, Dar Kulaib recovered from a set down to claim a dramatic 19-25, 25-20, 25-20, 32-30 win in a closely contested encounter. Muharraq struck first, tak-



Fans embrace the Kenyan star after his performance at Isa Sports City

ing the opening set 25-19 with sharp attacking play. Dar Kulaib responded immediately, raising their tempo and stabilising their reception to swing momentum.

Mogeni played a key role in the turnaround, contributing important points at the net, including a crucial block-out that shifted the rhythm of the match.

The challengers then controlled the third set, with Hasan Al Warqaa's spike helping them build a 15-10 lead. Hassan Abbas

later brought up set point, before a Muharraq error sealed it.

The fourth set developed into a tense, point-for-point battle. Dar Kulaib surged ahead 21-15 after an Abdulwahed spike, only for Muharraq to fight back and level at 24-24 following a Sayed Hashem Issa block on Abdulnabi. From there, the set became a test of nerve.

At 30-30, fine margins decided it. A Muharraq net fault handed Dar Kulaib match point, before a decisive block sealed the victory.

Mogeni led the attacking effort throughout as Dar Kulaib extended their perfect season to 23 wins from 23 matches, moving to 67 points and remaining top of the table. Muharraq stay second on 65 points after a costly defeat.

Dar Kulaib now face Al Dair tomorrow at 6:45 PM, before closing their season against Al Maamir and a second meeting with Al Dair. Muharraq take on Al Shabab and Al Ahli, with no margin for error remaining in the title race.

## Alcaraz pulls out of Barcelona Open with wrist injury



Carlos Alcaraz

AFP | Barcelona

Carlos Alcaraz withdrew yesterday from the Barcelona Open because of a wrist injury that troubled him in his first-round match, potentially casting doubt over his Roland Garros defence.

"I won't be able to continue in the tournament," Alcaraz told reporters a day after his win over Finnish qualifier Otto Virtanen.

"I felt my wrist give out on a return during the match. After the tests, we saw that it's a more serious injury than any of us expected, and I have to listen to my body so it doesn't affect me in the future."

It is the second time in three years injury has forced Alcaraz to withdraw from the Barcelona tournament. He won it 2022 and 2023, and finished runner-up to Holger Rune 12 months ago.

Alcaraz had been scheduled to face Tomas Machac on Thursday for a place in the quarter-finals.

## Bahrain Football League enters business end

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Matchweek 18 gets underway tonight with two fixtures that carry major implications at both ends of the table. It also marks the return of supporters to stadiums following the lifting of restrictions introduced on March 12 amid regional tensions.

The evening begins at 7pm with the return of Al Ahli Stadium after a long absence, where Al Najma will face Budaiya. For Budaiya, it is also the start of a new chapter under fresh management, adding another layer of uncertainty to an already difficult campaign.

Al Najma arrive on the back of a 1-1 draw with Al Shabab and sit 8th on 19 points, just one point above the relegation play-off zone. Their season has lacked stability, with narrow results defining much of their campaign. With the margin so tight, every remaining fixture now carries survival weight rather than routine importance.

Al Budaiya, meanwhile, are in transition in 10th place following the departure of Sayed Hassan Isa, with Adel Al Noami now in charge. Their 2-0 defeat in the last round exposed ongo-



Muharraq fans in full voice at a previous match

ing structural issues. The new coach's immediate task is to stabilise performances and rebuild confidence in a side needing points to move clear of danger.

The other fixture, also kicking

off at 7pm, sees holders Muharraq face Al Hidd in a clash between two in-form sides at the top end of the table.

Muharraq arrive in strong form under Portuguese coach

Fernando Manuel de Jesus Santos, following a 3-0 league win. Their progress to the King's Cup final has further boosted momentum, and with just two points separating them from top spot, their title challenge remains firmly on track.

Al Hidd, however, come in with momentum of their own following a 2-0 victory over Budaiya. Just one point off fourth, their structure and discipline make them difficult to break down, setting up a contest likely to be decided by midfield control and efficiency in key moments.

At the summit, Al Khalidiya lead on 42 points, with Muharraq close behind on 40 and Riffa still in contention on 34. The title race remains finely balanced, with little room for error as the season enters its final seven matchdays.

Tomorrow sees Bahrain Club take on Al Ahli at Bahrain National Stadium at 5:25 PM, followed by Riffa against A'Ali at 7:35 PM at Khalifa Sports City Stadium.

On Saturday, the round concludes with Malkiya facing Al Shabab at Bahrain National Stadium at 5:25 PM, followed by Sitra meeting league leaders Al Khalidiya at 7:35pm at Khalifa Sports City Stadium.

## Liverpool captain Van Dijk says PSG 'deserved' Champions League semi-final spot



Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk heads the ball

AFP | London

Virgil van Dijk had no complaints after Liverpool were knocked out of the Champions League by title-holders Paris Saint-Germain in a defeat compounded by a serious injury to Hugo Ekitike.

Ousmane Dembele's double sealed a 2-0 quarter-final second-leg win for PSG against an outclassed Liverpool on Tuesday.

Six-time European champions Liverpool were, however,

still fortunate to be in the tie after escaping from last week's first leg at the Parc des Princes with just a 2-0 defeat after entering what Reds manager Arne Slot labelled "survival mode".

Premier League champions Liverpool were much improved compared to the first leg but that was scant consolation to club captain Van Dijk who, when suggested his side had at least given it a go on home soil, replied: "That's the bare minimum, isn't it?"