

Muharraq set up Hala semis clash



Action from Hala's win over Nuwaidrat

TDT | Manama

Muharraq and Al Hala set up last night an exciting semi-final clash in this year's Khalifa bin Salman Cup of basketball.

Muharraq crushed Isa Town 117-67 to book their tickets to the final four while Hala followed suit with a one-sided 92-55 victory over Nuwaidrat.

Both games were played at Zain Arena in Um Al Hassam. In Muharraq's win, Sayed

Mohammed Hameed scored 21 points off the bench to lead six players in double figures.

Ahmed Al Tayeb had 21 to pace Isa Town in the loss.

For Hala, Ahmed Khalifa was the top scorer for the victors with 18 points, while Hussain Hasan had 12 for Nuwaidrat.

The cup's quarter-finals continue next month with the other two games between Al Ahli and Bahrain Club and a titanic clash between Manama and cup holders Riffa.

Liverpool sign Diogo Jota from Wolves

AFP | London

Liverpool have completed the signing of Portugal forward Diogo Jota from Wolverhampton Wanderers on a long-term contract, the Premier League champions said.

Liverpool's versatile 18-year-old defender Ki-Jana Hoever moved in the other direction on a five-year contract, having played four senior games for the Anfield club following his arrival from Ajax Amsterdam in 2018.

Djokovic made to work before reaching Italian Open semi-finals

AFP | Rome

Top men's seed Novak Djokovic dropped a set before fighting off German qualifier Dominik Koepfer to reach the semi-finals of the Italian Open yesterday.

The world number one needed more than two hours to see of the 97th-ranked German 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in the final warm-up tournament on clay before the French Open.

Two weeks after his US Open default for accidentally hitting a line judge with ball, the Serb again showed signs of frustration, throwing his racket after a lost service game, with shouts of anger resounding in the silence of the empty Central Court of Foro Italico.

Djokovic was broken four times before advancing to his 11th semi-final in Rome, where he reached the final nine times and won four titles.

"Credit to (Dominik) for fighting back, but I have myself to blame for putting myself in a position to play a third set," said Djokovic.

"I was a set and a break up and everything was looking great. I just wasn't managing to make that final shot, that final step to win in straights."



Novak Djokovic hits a return against Dominik Koepfer

Clay is definitely Casper's preferred surface. This is where he feels most comfortable. It's semi-finals and it is anybody's game. I'll do some homework and be ready for that one

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

The 33-year-old next plays Norway's Casper Ruud who

earlier battled past Italian fourth seed Matteo Berrettini 4-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

"Clay is definitely Casper's preferred surface," said Djokovic.

"This is where he feels most comfortable. It's semi-finals and it is anybody's game. I'll do some homework and be ready for that one."

Djokovic is bidding for a record 36th Masters crown in the Italian Open, being currently tied on 35 with Spain's Rafael Nadal, the number two seed in Rome.

Pogacar poised to win Tour after shock turnaround

Tadej Pogacar wrestled the yellow jersey from his compatriot Primoz Roglic with one of the great rides in Tour de France history

● UAE Team Emirates rider overturns 57sec deficit in time trial

AFP | Paris

Tadej Pogacar all but clinched the Tour de France yesterday after his Slovenian compatriot Primoz Roglic let a 57 seconds lead slip in a tricky individual time-trial, the last day of real racing.

The 21-year-old Pogacar will lead the peloton into Paris on Sunday wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey and, barring disaster, will climb onto the top step of the podium.

Staggeringly, the youngster will also pull on the polka dot jersey as best climber on the Tour, and also the white jersey as best under-25s rider.

"My dream was just to take part," said Pogacar on his first Tour de France.

"I could hear nothing on the final climb and I went for it with everything," he said.

Often unlucky Australia's Richie Porte climbed to third overall here to make the Tour de France podium for the first time, while Spain's Mikel Landa and Enric Mas rounded out the



Tadej Pogacar crosses the finish line

top five with strong finishes too.

Ireland's Sam Bennett looks set to win the best sprinter's green jersey, but must negotiate the eight lap dash that ends the Tour de France along the Champs Elysees in Paris on Sunday.

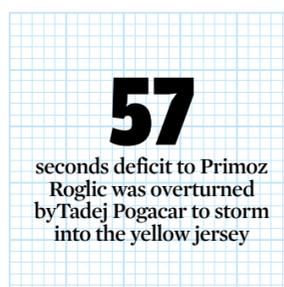
Here in the time-trial Pogacar pulverised the field with his stage-winning performance, and his team hugged and kissed him as they realised the 2020 Tour was theirs.

Roglic Meltdown

Roglic had led the Tour since stage nine and his dramatic meltdown on the final climb means even as loser he remains the big story.

Pogacar also is set to become the youngest postwar champion as a generational shift takes hold of cycling with a string of young stage winners.

The UAE rider Pogacar changed bikes, which took 12



seconds, after the 30km rolling section to tackle the 6km eight percent climb at top speed.

The 30-year-old Roglic only decided to change bikes once he began to crumble fast, but it became painfully clear he was in for a horrible finale.

Dressed in yellow for the first time after covering the 36km in 55mins 55sec Pogacar said he could hardly think let alone answer questions.

The defeat comes as a bombshell for the Dutch Jumbo team, but the rookie's performance will go down as one of the all-time-great turnarounds.

All the more so as Roglic has previously produced outstanding time-trial performances at the 2019 Giro d'Italia through the Tuscan vineyards and later that year on his way to Vuelta a Espana victory on the stage 10 time-trial at Pau.

Zaha scores double against pallid United

AFP | London

Manchester United's Premier League season got off to a dreadful start as Wilfried Zaha scored twice against his former club to hand Crystal Palace a 3-1 win at Old Trafford.

The Eagles have now won their first two games of a Premier League season for the first time and on their last two visits to United.

After Andros Townsend opened the scoring early on, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men felt aggrieved with the nature of Palace's second from the penalty spot as Victor Lindelof was harshly punished for handball and David De Gea's save from Jordan Ayew's spot-kick was ruled out by VAR before Zaha converted the retaken penalty.

But they could have no complaints about the result as they looked way off the pace in their first match of the new campaign, little over a month since they ended the last one with defeat to Sevilla in the Europa League semi-finals.

United finished last season on a 14-match unbeaten run in the Premier League to secure a third-place finish and raise hopes of mounting a title challenge to rivals Liverpool and Manchester City this season.

But on this evidence they need far more than the solitary



Wilfried Zaha shoots to score a goal



United finished last season on a 14-match unbeaten run in the Premier League to secure a third-place finish and raise hopes of mounting a title challenge this season

signing of Donny Van de Beek, who scored on his debut, to compete at the top of the table. Solskjaer kept faith with

De Gea in goal ahead of Dean Henderson, who has returned to Old Trafford from an impressive loan spell at Sheffield United.

The Spanish international was beaten after just seven minutes but was blameless as the United defence was carved open by Jeffrey Schlupp's run and cross from the left and Townsend ghosted in ahead of Luke Shaw to convert at the far post.

Solskjaer had left Mason Greenwood on the bench after complaining he was thrust into the spot-light too soon by England after the 18-year-old was sent home in disgrace from international duty for breaking coronavirus protocols.