

HH Shaikh Nasser hails Team Bahrain McLaren's success



Team Bahrain McLaren rider Mikel Landa rides during Tour de France

TDT | Manama

HM the King's Representative for Humanitarian Work and Youth affairs and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sport, HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, has praised Team Bahrain McLaren after its success in clinching the third place in the Tour de France's team classification, while its cyclist Mikel Landa finished fourth in the general classification.

HH Shaikh Nasser asserted

that the results confirm Bahrain's leading position in the cycling sport at the international level.

"Finishing third in the team classification and fourth in the general classification fuels our optimism. We are extremely happy," HH Shaikh Nasser said.

"The team will continue to accomplish victories and win titles, raising Bahrain's flag high in the global scene. The team is following a precise plan and strategy, therefore it will keep improving," HH Shaikh Nasser added.

'An exciting mission'

Michael Roth appointed as Bahrain's handball team coach

● Newly signed national handball coach looks forward to guiding Bahrain in world cup, Olympics, Asian championships

TDT | Manama

Former German handball player and Olympic medalist Michael Roth will be guiding Bahrain's national team in two of the sport's biggest global competitions, both of which will be taking place next year, and he says he is "very excited about this mission".

The Bahrain Handball Association confirmed Roth's appointment as head coach following the departure of former chief tactician Aron Kristjansson of Iceland.

The 58-year-old Roth has agreed to a 15-month contract with Bahrain, starting on October 1 when he is scheduled to arrive in the Kingdom. He will be steering Bahrain's internationals in the IHF Men's World



Michael Roth

Championship in January of 2021, as well as the postponed Tokyo Olympic Games in July and August.

In addition to the two major global events, Roth will be coaching Bahrain in the Men's Asian Championship in January of 2022, just before the end of his contract.

"I am very happy to be the new coach of Bahrain national team, and I am very excited about this mission and can't wait to start my career with the team next October," Roth was

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MICHAEL ROTH

quoted as saying.

"We want to play a successful global tournament in the World Cup Egypt 2021 and then in the next Olympic Games, and at the present time it is difficult to define a realistic goal for us. When I arrive at Bahrain and go through the first training with the team and talk to the players, I will speak about our realistic goals.

"They have qualified for the major tournaments so they can play well.

"Mixing between young and old players is important, of course, and some of them are experienced and can educate

young players. Young people will add speed, seriousness, so mixing between generations is the key to success, and everyone gets their chance when a new coach arrives, and I will give it to young and old players."

Regarding the preparations for the World Cup, Roth said: "In the first few months we will train as much as possible and participate in tournaments and friendly matches. We want to prepare well to reaching a good level of teamwork, maintain group dynamics and physical fitness, and we may also hold a training camp in Germany."

Roth added: "Our goal is to reach the main round in the tournament, and also to develop and gain experience as a team."

Roth will have big shoes to fill with the departure of Kristjansson, who made history by guiding the national team to the Tokyo Games, which will be their first-ever appearance at the Olympics. The Bahrainis booked their berth after winning the Men's Asian Qualification Tournament held in Doha last October, defeating South Korea in the final.

Halep warms up for Roland Garros with first Rome trophy

● Halep claims Italian Open title after Pliskova retires with injury

AFP | Rome

Simona Halep lifted her first Italian Open trophy yesterday, a confidence-boost ahead of next week's French Open, after defending champion Karolina Pliskova retired injured in the Rome final.

World number two Halep was competing in her third Rome WTA final, having finished runner-up in 2017 and 2018 on the clay at the Foro Italico.

The top seed finally won her coveted trophy after Czech Pliskova retired while trailing 6-0, 2-1 in the final.

"Finally I've won it," said the 28-year-old Halep.

"The start of my going up in the ranking was here in 2013. So I really dreamed to have this title."

Pliskova, the second seed,



Simona Halep with her trophy

was playing with her left thigh heavily strapped after a series of tough matches on clay coming off the US hard court tour.

"I feel sorry, because an injury is an injury and is never easy," said Romanian Halep.

"But it doesn't change with anything. This trophy, it's mine now."

Czech Pliskova struggled

with her serve, falling behind to a double break and handing Halep a 3-0 advantage in the opening set with a double fault.

Halep saved three break points against her on her next service game before conquering a one-sided first set in 20 minutes.

Pliskova had treatment on her lower back and upper leg before

the second set, but pushed on with a break for 1-1 after half an hour.

But the 28-year-old called time in the third game, heading towards Halep to signify the end of the match after 32 minutes.

"Of course it's not the end of the tournament that we wish for," said Halep. "But I felt amazing in the first set, and I was very confident that even if we kept playing, I had the chance to win the match."



Wimbledon champion Halep's 22nd career title comes just a week before the start of the final Grand Slam of the season in Roland Garros, which she won in 2018

Basketball finals series set

● Best-of-three title clash between long-time rivals Manama and Al Ahli to tip off tomorrow

● Khalifa bin Salman Cup remaining game schedule also released by national federation

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) announced yesterday a revised schedule for the best-of-three championship series of the 2019/2020 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

The finals will be between long-time rivals Manama and Al Ahli in what is expected to be a hotly contested affair.

Game one is scheduled to take place tomorrow, while game two will be held on Saturday.

Game three, if needed, will take place on its new date on September 30.

Each contest is scheduled for a 7pm tip-off at Zain Basketball Arena in Um Al Hasam.

Manama earned their finals slot after defeating Riffa in the Golden Square semi-final round, while Ahli followed suit after dethroning defending champions Muharraq. Both series were decided in two games.

Meanwhile, the BBA also announced yesterday the schedule for the remaining games for this year's Khalifa bin Salman Cup.

The cup is currently in its quarter-final stage, with two of the four games still to play. They are set for October 4.

The semi-finals, to be played in best-of-three format, will then be held on October 9, 13 and 17; to be followed by the one-off final match on October 20. That will also be the last game of the 2019/2020 national season.

Man City's Gundogan tests COVID-19 positive

AFP | London

Manchester City midfielder Ilkay Gundogan has tested positive for coronavirus, the Premier League club announced yesterday, hours ahead of their first match of the new campaign.

The Germany international is now in self-isolation as the club prepare to play Wolves at Molineux.

"Ilkay is now observing a 10-day period of self-isolation in accordance with Premier

League and UK government protocol on quarantine," said a City statement.

"Everyone at the club wishes Ilkay a speedy recovery."

Gundogan is the third City player to return a positive test this month, following Aymeric Laporte and Riyad Mahrez.

City missed the opening weekend of the Premier League to give them extra time to recover from a late end to the 2019/20 season due to their involvement in the Champions League.

Djokovic wins fifth Rome title for record 36th Masters crown

AFP | Rome

World number one Novak Djokovic overcame a sluggish start to lift his fifth Italian Open title yesterday, defeating Argentine Diego Schwartzman 7-5 6-3 for a record 36th ATP Masters crown.

Playing his maiden ATP 1000 final, eighth seed Schwartzman raced out of the blocks to convert two break point opportunities for a 3-0 lead as Djokovic struggled to put a lid on his



Novak Djokovic with his trophy

backhand errors.

An on-and-off drizzle at Foro Italico added to Djokovic's frustration but he still found a way past Schwartzman's serve to draw level at 3-3.

Djokovic's relentless baseline hitting came to the fore when he broke Schwartzman in the 12th game to take the opening set, despite committing 18 unforced errors.

Schwartzman, who outplayed defending champion Rafa Nadal in the quarter-finals, snatched

another early break in the second set but this time Djokovic was quick to respond.

The top seed stepped up the intensity to break Schwartzman's serve twice before serving out the match comfortably to seal victory.

The result also comes as a relief for Djokovic, who was desperate to return to court this week following his U.S. Open disqualification for inadvertently striking a line judge with a ball.