

Speed Weekend wraps up at BIC

● **Simmenauer and Pereira take Porsche wins**

TDT | Manama

JB Simmenauer and Dylan Pereira were both victorious yesterday to wrap up the fourth and penultimate round of the 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East, held as part of Speed Weekend at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir.

Simmenauer won the meeting's second race while Pereira claimed Race Three for his sec-

ond victory in as many days.

Pereira won the meeting's first race from pole on Friday, and then Simmenauer matched his feat in the second 12-lap sprint around BIC's 5,412-kilometre Grand Prix track.

Simmenauer had clinched pole with a fastest lap of two minutes 02.170 seconds during the second session of Qualifying. He then went on to defend his leading position and take the Race Two chequered flag in a winning time of 24:58.103.

The victor was followed by Leon Koehler who was 1.654 seconds behind, while Pereira came third 2.075s back. Each of the top three overall were competing in the Porsche's Pro class.



Winners on the podium



Cars in action during the race

Jesse van Kuijk was triumphant in the ProAm category ahead of Daan van Kuijk and Christoffer Bergstroem; while the top three finishers in the Am class were Michael Knutzon, Shaikh Jaber bin Ali Al Khalifa and Jean-Marc Cordier.

In the third and final race of the round, Jesse van Kuijk was on pole but Pereira was able to claim the impressive win. He completed the event 4.068s ahead of runner-up Koehler and 10.545s in front of Simmenauer.

Jesse Van Kuijk was once again triumphant in the ProAm



The 2019/2020 Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East now heads to its final round of the season from March 19 to 22, to be held once again at BIC

category ahead of Groeneveld and Daan van Kuijk; while in the Am category Shaikh Jaber led Knutzon to the finish with Michael Doppelmayr coming third.

The winners were presented their respective awards in podium ceremonies held after each race.

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Williamson, Taylor ensure Kiwis head India

AFP | Wellington

Kane Williamson and Ross Taylor combined to ensure New Zealand held a first innings lead in the first Test against India in Wellington yesterday but the advantage was not overwhelming.

India stayed in the hunt with three wickets in the final session including Williamson for 89 and Taylor for 44 and the wicket was showing early signs of taking spin.

"You always want your best players to be at the crease. They (Williamson and Taylor) put on a great partnership, both looking nice for a long period of time, but if we can carry on and keep chipping away with the guys to come ... then it will set us up," New Zealand pace bowler Tim Southee said.

Williamson and Taylor's 93-run stand for the third wicket was enough to lift the Kiwis from 73-2 to be ahead of India's 165 before the tourists fight back.

When bad light brought an early end to the day, New Zealand were 216 for five, to lead by 51.

Ishant Sharma, coming back



Kane Williamson plays a shot

from injury and struggling with jetlag after arriving in New Zealand four days ago, was the pick of the Indian bowlers with three for 31 off 15 overs.

However, with the initial green cover fading from the wicket there were early signs of spin which could impact on

New Zealand batting last at the Basin Reserve.

"You don't usually see that at the Basin and that's where the first innings becomes important," Southee said.

"If we can build those partnerships and eke out as big a lead as we possibly can that

makes that second innings a little bit easier."

Williamson, called to the middle following the early dismissal of Tom Latham and was rocked by Sharma with the first ball he faced but from there he returned to his patient, confident self.

Football national team kick off local training sessions



Bahrain players warming up on the pitch at the start of training

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's men's national football team have kicked off their local training for their upcoming joint-qualifier next month against Cambodia, for the Fifa World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

They are also preparing for a pair of international friendly matches in March.

The practices are being held at the Bahrain Football Association pitches in Riffa under the supervision of national team head coach Helio Sousa.

The Portuguese tactician has selected a squad of 35 players to take part in the practice ses-

sions, with many being new call-ups.

Bahrain are scheduled to take on their Cambodian counterparts on March 26 in their next qualifier, while their friendly games are against Malaysia on March 21 and against New Zealand on March 30.

Bahrain are currently in second place in qualifying Group C with nine points from five matches. Iraq are currently atop the table with 11 points.

Iran are third with six points but have a game in hand, while Hong Kong are fourth on five points and Cambodia fifth with one.

Hasaranga stars as Sri Lanka clinch ODI thriller

AFP | Colombo

A late cameo by Wanindu Hasaranga helped Sri Lanka pull off a thrilling chase to edge out West Indies by one wicket in the first one-day international yesterday.

Hasaranga, known for his leg-spin bowling, hit an unbeaten 42 after coming in to bat at number eight as Sri Lanka chased down their target of 290 with five balls to spare and lead the

three-match series 1-0.

Hasaranga held his nerve after Sri Lanka slipped to 253 for seven following the departure of Thisara Perera for 32 to register his highest ODI score.

He built crucial partnerships including a 38-run stand with Perera and then put on 27 runs with Lakshan Sandakan for the ninth wicket.

With one to get off the last six ball Sandakan was run out but

Keemo Paul bowled a no ball.

"Of course, winning is the ultimate thing but we made couple of mistakes that we have to learn from," skipper Dimuth Karunaratne, who top-scored with 52, said after the victory.

"Both me and Avishka Fernando could have converted our fifties into bigger scores but we will look to correct that in future."

Karunaratne and Fernando, who made 50, put on 111 runs

for the opening wicket to lay the platform for what turned out to be the highest successful chase at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground.

For the West Indies, Alzarri Joseph claimed three wickets after Shai Hope made 115 in his team's 289 for seven.

In response, Sri Lanka lost their way after their strong start despite wicketkeeper-batsman Kusal Perera hitting 42 coming in at number three.



Wanindu Hasaranga plays a shot