

## Teenager Alcaraz mirrors Nadal with Barcelona crown



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz holds a trophy as he celebrates after his win

Reuters | Barcelona

Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz captured the fourth title of his young career by beating eighth seed Pablo Carreno Busta 6-3 6-2 in the Barcelona Open final on Sunday, hours after winning a gruelling semi-final that was postponed due to rain.

The 18-year-old will enter the top 10 of the world rankings yesterday at the same age, on the same date and after a triumph in the same tournament as compatriot and 21-times major winner Rafael Nadal did in 2005.

The U.S. Open quarter-finalist joins countrymen including Nadal, coach Juan Carlos Ferrero and Carlos Moya in lifting the trophy in the ATP 500 clay-court tournament.

"It means a lot. I've watched this tournament since I was a kid. I always wished to play in this tournament and of course be able to win this tournament," Alcaraz said. "I'm really happy to be part of the (historic) Spanish list."



**Carlos Alcaraz singles tally stands at four titles following triumphs at Miami and Rio de Janeiro this year and a victory at Umag last July, when he became the youngest tour-level champion since Kei Nishikori claimed the title at Delray Beach in 2008**

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# 'Three-peat' for Ahli

Al Ahli capture Khalifa bin Salman Cup for third successive season after defeating arch-rivals Manama in tournament final



Al Ahli players and officials celebrate at the awarding

● **Mohammed Qurban buries crucial three-pointer with 35.3 seconds to play to give Ahli late five-point lead**

● **Adrian Uter and Hesham Sarhan combine for 42 points to spearhead balanced attack for newly crowned champions**

TDT | Manama

**A**l Ahli captured an unprecedented "three-peat" last night after winning the Khalifa bin Salman Cup for the third successive season.

Ahli were crowned the 2021/2022 champions of the

prestigious tournament after defeating Manama 84-76 in the final, played at the Khalifa Sports City Arena in Isa Town.

Veteran Ahli skipper Mohammed Qurban buried the biggest basket of the game—a three-pointer from the left corner that gave his team an 81-76 lead with just 35.3 seconds to go.

Free-throws from Ahmed Aldurazi and Hesham Sarhan then pegged the final score.

Ahli claimed their 15th overall title in the annual competition. Last night's final was a re-match of the title-decider from the past two seasons, both clinched

by Alawi. They presented Ahli team members and club officials the coveted Khalifa bin Salman Cup, as well as the medals for both finalists.

American professional Adrian Uter and Sarhan combined for 42 points of Ahli's game output. Uter finished with 22 to go with an impressive 16 rebounds. Sarhan had 20 with eight boards.

Aldurazi contributed 18 markers while Maitham Jameel had 14, both with two three-pointers apiece.

Qurban had five points, including his crucial triple for the victors.

Devin Ebanks from the U.S. paced Manama with 26 points, while Mohammed Ameer chipped in with 21 and Ahmed Salman had 13. Manama were playing without their other American import, Davion Berry, who was suspended for the

game.

It was a tight finish to the contest but Ahli came up with the big baskets down the stretch.

An Uter power move in the paint gave Ahli a 76-72 lead, but Ebanks scored on the other end before Sarhan had a reply for Ahli. Ameer then had a put-back for Manama to make it 76-78 with just under a minute remaining, setting the stage for Qurban's huge three-pointer.

Earlier in the game, Ahli were able to go ahead by as many as eight in the third quarter, and after Manama got back to within a single point, Sarhan helped Ahli head into the final canto

up 65-59.

Manama rallied to begin the fourth and it was a see-saw affair until the finish. Manama held a 22-17 lead at the end of the first quarter, but Ahli were able to get within 41-42 at the interval.

## Norris shocked to be on podium again

Reuters | Imola

McLaren's Lando Norris said he was shocked to be back on the Formula One podium after his team had seemed so far off the pace at last month's season-opener in Bahrain.

Norris finished 15th in Bahrain while Australian team mate Daniel Ricciardo was 14th after running last at the end of the opening lap, but McLaren have been improving steadily since then.

"I genuinely didn't think we would be on the podium all year after Bahrain. So it's quite a shock," the Briton, who has now scored points in his last three races, told reporters after finishing third at Imola.

"Maybe not surprising after the kind of progress we've made over the last month but yeah, definitely not a podium you know, with how much quicker the Red Bulls and the Ferraris are."



McLaren's Lando Norris celebrates third place on the podium



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LANDO NORRIS

Norris was also third at last year's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix and Sunday's conditions, initially wet but with the track drying, suited him.

He had also started third after a strong showing in Saturday's points-paying sprint race.

Asked whether he felt he had the third fastest car, Nor-

"You should say it's all the driver, mate. All the driver," said the world champion and race winner.

"It is," replied Norris.

"You had the worst car," exclaimed Verstappen, getting into the spirit.

"Yeah, we're ninth or tenth but my driving this weekend has been pretty amazing," said Norris, who felt his car had been slightly quicker than Russell's fourth-placed Mercedes but maybe slower than the Alfa Romeo.

"It doesn't really matter: we beat two cars who are probably a second a lap quicker than us," he added, referring to the Ferraris of Carlos Sainz and championship leader Charles Leclerc.

## Final week of Nasser bin Hamad football league set

● **Defending champions Riffa to take on AFC Cup winners Muharraq on Thursday night, needing just a point to retain title**

● **Manama need to beat Al Khalidiya, also Thursday, and hope that Riffa lose their game to go level on points and force winner-take-all contest**

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Football Association has announced the match dates for the final round of action in the 2021/2022 Nasser bin Hamad Bahrain Premier League.

The title race has gone down to the last day of play between defending champions Riffa and chief title rivals Manama, with only three points separating the two teams heading into Week 18.



Riffa and Manama...engaged in tight, two-horse race for title (File photo)

Both teams will be in action on Thursday, the league's concluding day.

Riffa will face off with AFC Cup champions Muharraq at the National Stadium in Riffa, and will need at least a point to retain their crown.

Manama will go head-to-head with Al Khalidiya that same evening, and Manama will need to win and hope that Riffa in order to go level on points.

In that scenario, both teams will play a single-game, winner-take-all match to decide the 2021/2022 champions.

Both fixtures are scheduled

for 9.30pm kick-offs Thursday.

Meanwhile, tomorrow night, relegated club Al Najma will face off with Budaiya, while Al Ahli and Hidd face off. Both matches are crucial as Budaiya and Hidd are also threatened to be relegated.

Budaiya are currently eighth while Hidd are ninth with just two points separating them. The team that finishes eighth will have a play-off against a second division side for the right to claim a Premier League spot, while the ninth-placed team will drop down to the second division with Najma.