

SPORTS
sports

Maria Sharapova announces retirement

AFP | London

Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova, one of the world's most recognisable and highest-paid sportswomen, on Wednesday announced her retirement at the age of 32.

"Tennis — I'm saying goodbye," Sharapova said in an article for Vogue and Vanity Fair magazines.

"After 28 years and five Grand Slam titles, though, I'm ready to scale another mountain — to compete on a different type of terrain."

Sharapova burst onto the scene as a supremely gifted teenager and won her Grand Slams before serving a 15-month ban for failing a drugs test at the 2016 Australian Open.

The Russian former world number one's ranking is currently 373rd.

Sharapova has hardly played in the past year because of long-standing shoulder problems.

When she did feature she lost as many matches as she won and was dumped out in the first



Maria Sharapova with the trophy after winning the French Open in 2014 (file photo)

rounds at Wimbledon, the US Open and, most recently, the Australian Open in Melbourne.

Siberia-born Sharapova first picked up a racquet at the age of four in Sochi, where her Bela-



Maria Sharapova's most recent Grand Slam victory was at the French Open in 2014

rus-born parents had settled after escaping the deadly clutches of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

She shot to fame as a giggly 17-year-old Wimbledon winner in 2004, the third-youngest player to conquer the All England Club's hallowed grass courts.

'Tennis gave me life'

She became world number one in 2005, at the age of 18, and won the US Open the next year.

"One of the keys to my success was that I never looked back and I never looked forward," Sharapova said on Wednesday.

"I believed that if I kept grinding and grinding, I could push myself to an incredible place."

But in 2007 Sharapova began her long on-off battle with shoulder trouble.

She would win the 2008 Australian Open before a second shoulder injury kept her off tour for the second half of the season, missing the US Open and Beijing Olympics.

In 2012, the Siberian-born Sharapova captured the French Open to become the 10th woman to complete a career Grand Slam. She added Olympic silver to her resume that year.

Her 2014 French Open title was another high after a dispiriting injury low.

More fitness troubles followed before the bombshell announcement of her positive test for the banned heart drug meldonium.

Always a fighter

Always a fighter -- the seven-year-old Maria and father Yuri left for the US in 1994 with just a borrowed \$700 to their names -- Sharapova returned to the sport in 2017.

"In giving my life to tennis, tennis gave me a life," Sharapova said in her retirement missive.

"I'll miss it every day. I'll miss

the training and my daily routine: Waking up at dawn, lacing my left shoe before my right, and closing the court's gate before I hit my first ball of the day.

"I'll miss my team, my coaches. I'll miss the moments sitting with my father on the practice court bench. The handshakes — win or lose — and the athletes, whether they knew it or not, who pushed me to be my best.

"Looking back now, I realize that tennis has been my mountain. My path has been filled with valleys and detours, but the views from its peak were incredible."

Sharapova had been the highest-paid female athlete in the world in the 11 years up to 2016, according to Forbes business magazine.

She netted prize money alone of \$38.8 million (35.7m euros) in a career during which she won 36 singles titles. Forbes, in its 2016 article, said the Florida-based Russian had banked nearly \$300m from prize money, appearances and endorsements since she turned professional in 2001.

BIC Chief Executive treats karting team members to appreciation breakfast



BIC Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa with the team members

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) Chief Executive Shaikh Salman bin Isa Al Khalifa treated the BIC staff members who competed in the 24-hour final round of the 2019/2020 Bahrain Karting Enduro Championship (BKEC) to a hearty breakfast.

BIC COO Fayez Ramzy Fayeze was also on hand, along with a majority of the group that competed in the race, which was held recently at Bahrain International Karting Circuit

(BIKC) in Sakhir.

Shaikh Salman thanked the staff members who took the time and effort to take part in the day-long event, which is one of the toughest challenges at the grassroots level of motor racing. He also praised them for their bravery and wished them all the best in any future races they may compete in.

BIC entered two squads in the meeting, with many of the drivers racing at this level of motorsport for the first time.

The BIC Nation team included Jassim Marhoon, Mohamed

Juma, Sara Kania, Salman Kania, Mohamed Isa, Ali Abdulnabi, Khalid Al Hubaishi and Ahmed Falmarzi. They completed 1,067 laps in the race.

The BIC Corporate squad featured Royden Giles, Faten Amin, Nigel Dias, Riyanna D'Souza, Amal Moosa, Sunil Chadhuray, Phani Shanker, Mecwyn Castelino and Donald Castelino. They finished the event with a total of 1,009 laps.

All the action took place along BIC's 1.414-kilometre Commission Internationale de Karting (CIK) Track at BIKC.

Rafael Nadal off the mark in Acapulco

AFP | Acapulco, Mexico

Rafael Nadal marked his return to action with a straight-sets victory over Pablo Andujar on Tuesday as he launched his bid to reclaim the world number one ranking at the Mexico Open in Acapulco.

The 33-year-old Spaniard, playing for the first time since



Rafael Nadal hits a return

his quarter-final exit to Dominic Thiem at the Australian Open last month, claimed a 6-3, 6-2 victory over compatriot Andujar in 1hr 30min.

"The most important thing when you have not competed for a while is to win, I needed a match like today to get in rhythm and gain some confidence," Nadal said.

BIC hosts exciting Open Track Day and passenger experiences on Saturday

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) hosts an Open Track Day on Saturday, giving motorsport fans a chance to satisfy their need for speed.

Open Track is a non-competitive event that allows drivers to explore their very own vehicle's performance within a safe and controlled environment.

Driver etiquette is of ultimate importance, so there is no close or aggressive overtaking. Overtaking is by invitation between corners and driving is monitored, with poor or dangerous driving dealt with swiftly by officials.

Saturday's Open Track is scheduled from 12noon until 7pm and it will take place along BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix track—the same that will be raced on in next month's Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020. The cost to take part is BD89,500 for the full day and BD63 for a half day. There is also



A car on the track at BIC

an option of a single session for BD26,500.

Also set to be held as part of Open Track Day are the Jaguar Experience and passenger experiences in a Clio Cup car and a Radical SR3 prototype.

Delivered through a unique and tailored drive, the Jaguar Experience has been designed to ensure that all guests are given a dynamic, hands-on and memorable time in a Jaguar F-Type. The cost for the Jaguar Experience is BD63.

The Clio Cup car is a Renault-manufactured racing machine that features a 1.6-litre, Turbocharged engine that can generate up to 220bhp and 6,000rpm. The passenger experience can be bought for BD26,500.

The Radical SR3 boasts an RPE-Suzuki Generation 1,340 DOHC engine. It can go from zero to 100kph in 3.4 seconds, and it has a six-speed sequential gearbox and paddle gearshift system. The SR3 passenger ride costs BD37.

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