

Attieh extends advantage

Saudi golfer stretches advantage to five shots heading into final round of play in fifth Bahrain Amateur Open golf championship

● **Khalid Attieh cards a day two score of four-under-par to go an 11-under 133 total after 36 holes**

● **Sam Mullane of UAE scores second round's best of five-under 67 to recover from first day 74**

● **Yousif Ali Janahi remains top-ranked Bahraini, Fahad Abdulla Al Hakam just one shot behind**

TDT | Manama



Bahrain's Mohammed Al Noaimi in action

Saudi Arabia's Khalid Attieh extended his lead atop the leaderboard yesterday heading into the final round of play in the fifth Bahrain Amateur Open golf championship, currently taking place at the Royal Golf Club.

Attieh carded a four-under-par 68 on day two of the 54-hole stroke play event to widen his advantage over the rest of the field to five shots from three overnight.

Attieh now boasts an 11-under-par gross total from his two rounds of 65 and 68 for an aggregate of 133.

The title frontrunner posted four birdies yesterday on the front nine but also had one bogey, and then finished off with another birdie over the back nine.

Saleh Al Kaabi of Qatar moved into second place behind him. He played



Following yesterday's play, 50 players made the cut for today's final round, with Bahraini Hussain Salem being the last to qualify with a 29-over-par 173 total after 36 holes

a three-under 69 yesterday to match his round one score for a six-under-par 138 total.

Sam Mullane and Jay Mullane from the UAE were tied-third on three-under-par total gross scores of 141. Sam carded yesterday's best score of five-under 67 to recover from his opening day outing of 74. He had six birdies over the second round's 18 holes but also bogeyed the 12th.

Jay also had an impressive showing

yesterday of a four-under 68, which added to his 73 on day one.

Mousa Shana'ah of Jordan followed in fifth place with a one-under-par 143 total, while Ali Sakha, who was ranked second after the first day, struggled yesterday with a four-over-par 76 to go to an even par 144 heading into today's concluding round.

Top-ranked

Yousif Ali Janahi remained as the top-ranked Bahraini in seventh overall with a one-over 145 total, but compatriot Fahad Abdulla Al Hakam is just one shot behind in tied-eighth along with Alistair Hess of the UAE.

Yaseen Le Falher of Bahrain and Johan Van Jaarsveldt of Saudi completed the top 10, tied on three-over-par 147 totals.

Former champion Khalifa Al Merisi improved to tied-12th yesterday

Bahraini golfer Khalifa Duaij Al Kaabi tees off yesterday

day with countryman Khalifa Duaij Al Kaabi, both on four-over-par 148 totals, while defending champion Ahmed Al Zayed was tied-19th on eight-over-par 152.

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The fifth Bahrain Amateur Open golf championship is a World Amateur Golf Rankings (WAGR) event. It also acts as a qualifier for the 2023 King Hamad Trophy, set to take place 23 to 25 November at the same Colin Montgomerie-designed 18-hole championship course.

This year—following the mega announcement of the first-ever Bahrain Championship on the 2024 DP World Tour, also known as the PGA European Tour—the Bahrain Amateur Open offers an additional bonus. The tournament's overall winner plus the leading Bahraini amateur will come away with spots at the Bahrain Championship, scheduled to take place 1 to 4 February next year with a US\$2.5million prize fund.

Additionally, the winner of the King Hamad Trophy as well as the leading Bahraini player will tee it up alongside DP World Tour Professionals in the much-anticipated tournament.

BRX duo play it safe in Morocco

● **Loeb, Terranova give Bahrain Raid Xtreme steady start as Al Attiyah closes in on world title**

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Sebastien Loeb and Orly Terranova played it safe for Bahrain Raid Xtreme in the Rallye du Maroc today as the final round of this year's World Rally-Raid Championship got under way with an emphasis on caution.

The two BRX drivers are both attempting to secure a second successive victory in the event for the Prodrive Hunter, and they were happy to play supporting roles as Swede Mattias Ekström set the fastest time on the 19km Prologue from Audi team-mate, Stéphane Peterhansel.

With Terranova and new Argentine co-driver Bernardo Graue taking tenth spot on the day, BRX team-mates Loeb and Fabi-



Sebastien Loeb in his Bahrain Raid Xtreme Prodrive Hunter

an Lurquin were 11th quickest on the stage in their Prodrive Hunter, although the battle in earnest begins tomorrow.

Sebastien Loeb said, "The speed was not great in the Prologue, but in the end we are in a good position for tomorrow. We just need to get the best feeling back in the car. It's a long time since I drove it. We will try to adjust two or three things, and hopefully tomorrow will be a better day."

Orly Terranova said, "I felt fast, confident, and it was a good Moroccan stage. But after 11km there was an aggressive jump, and on landing the car started to fail. So we had to stop, re-set, start again and we lost time. But the car was fantastic."

The restrained nature of the Prologue was highlighted by the fact that Qatar's Nasser Al Attiyah, who is on the verge of a second W2RC

Sebastien Loeb

crown, finished the day in 21st position, ahead of five tough desert stages that will decide the rally and championship outcomes.

Third on the day in his Toyota, Saudi Arabia's Yazeed Al Rajhi is the only driver who can prevent Al Attiyah from retaining the W2RC drivers' title. To do that, he must win the rally outright, and finish near the top in every individual stage over the next five days.

Nine-time World Rally Champion Loeb, and Terranova, last year's runner-up in the event, want to underline the liking of the Moroccan desert, where Frenchman Guerlain Chicherit gave the car its first rally victory 12 months ago.

Chicherit, now an Overdrive team-mate of Al Rajhi, was fourth fastest today, while two other Prodrive Hunters, driven by Brazilian brothers Cristian and Marcos Baumgart, finished in the top ten.



This is Loeb's first W2RC appearance since April's third round in Mexico, where Lurquin broke his shoulder, although the French star has seen plenty of other action in Rallycross, Extreme E and rallying

The Prologue took the 34-strong cars on a fast, rolling, sandy appetiser for the five demanding desert stages to follow. Later, the top ten drivers were selecting their starting positions for tomorrow's 324km stage from Agadir to Zagora, the first of five demanding desert time trials in a route of 2,240km, which finishes at Merzouga, near the Algerian border, on Wednesday.

This is Loeb's first W2RC appearance since April's third round in Mexico, where Lurquin broke his shoulder, although the French star has seen plenty of other action in Rallycross, Extreme E and rallying.

He has been relishing his return to action in the BRX Prodrive Hunter, which he drove to victory in Andalucia last year, and took to a record-breaking six successive Dakar Rally stage wins back in January.

Espargaro clocks record Indonesia MotoGP lap, Bagnaia struggles



Aprilia Racing's Aleix Espargaro (L) rides his bike

AFP | Jakarta

Aleix Espargaro produced a late flash of brilliance to set a lap record for the Indonesia MotoGP at yesterday's crash-marred second practice, in which championship leader Francesco Bagnaia finished outside the top 10.

The Aprilia rider coped with the hot and humid conditions to snatch a lap record of one minute 30.474secs from VR46-Ducati rider Marco Bezzecchi, who had broken the record himself despite an earlier crash a week after surgery for a broken collarbone.

The Spaniard's lap -- which came before a crash -- was nearly two-tenths of a second clear of teammate Maverick Vinales in second and Bezzecchi in third.

Jorge Martin, who sits second in the overall standings, was 0.400sec back in fifth but he outgunned his championship rival Bagnaia.

The championship leader

Aleix Espargaro's lap -- which came before a crash -- was nearly two-tenths of a second clear of teammate Maverick Vinales in second and Bezzecchi in third

never got going and the Italian finished more than a second back in 16th.

Martin's pace will be of concern to the reigning champion, with just three points separating them heading into Saturday's sprint race and the main event on Sunday.

The second session was filled with crashes, with Augusto Fernandez and Brad Binder colliding just several laps in, while Jack Miller crashed twice.

In the first practice session, Martin secured the fastest time, again showing his pace over Bagnaia, who was 0.759sec back in sixth.