

# Manama, Al Ahli stay undefeated

Manama outclass Al Hala while Al Ahli rally late in win over Bahrain Club in 2022/2023 Zain Bahrain Basketball League

● **Elijah Alon-Love scores 26 points to lead five Manama players in double figures against Hala**

● **Mohammed Kowayed scores team-high 24 to help lead Ahli to win against Bahrain Club**

TDT | Manama

Defending champions Manama and contenders Al Ahli were both victorious last night in their week eight games in the 2022/2023 Zain Bahrain Basketball League.

Manama showed their class in a resounding 102-85 win over Al Hala, while Ahli used a furious end-game rally in the fourth quarter to come away with an 80-68 win over Bahrain Club.



Manama's Ahmed Najaf goes for a lay-up against Al Hala last night

Both victors were able to maintain their undefeated records so far in the new national basketball season.

Manama were the aggressors in their game against Hala from the opening tip. They took a 23-16 lead at the end of the opening quarter and extended it to 54-36 at the half. Hala tried to valiantly battle back but Manama were too good on the night, extending their advantage to as many as 22 points in the fourth period en route to their sixth straight win.

Five players finished in double figures for Manama, with Elijah Alon-Love leading the way with 26 points, including three three-pointers. Ahmed Najaf added 18 off the bench while Mohammed Ameer and Hassan Nowrooz had 16 apiece, with Ahmed Salman chipping in with 13.

For Hala, who went to a 2-4 win-loss record, import Tony Christopher poured in 39 points



**Both Manama and Al Ahli claimed their sixth successive victories in league play and are the only two remaining teams that are unbeaten**

to go with 14 rebounds, while Ahmed Khalifa was the only other player to score over 10 points after finishing with 12.

Meanwhile, in Ahli's triumph, the game was close for much of the first half and Ahli were ahead 42-37 at the break. Bahrain Club, however, took control in the third and a Jawad Abdulla

lay-up late in the period gave them a 56-53 advantage heading into the final canto.

But there, after Bahrain Club's Ali Abbas buried a three-pointer to tie the game at 65-all, Ahli went on a decisive 15-3 run until the final buzzer to close out the contest.

Mohammed Kowayed finished as their leading scorer with 24 points, while Ali Aqeel added 17 and professional Lenny McArthur had 16 to go with 16 rebounds.

Gibson Xavier paced Bahrain Club with 19 points in the loss. Sadiq Shukrallah added 18 and Abbas had 13.

Like Manama, Ahli improved to a 6-0 win-loss record, while Bahrain Club dropped to a 3-4 mark.

League action continues tonight with just one game on schedule between Muharrag and Al Najma. The contest is scheduled for a 7.30pm tip-off at the same venue.

## Verstappen beats Perez to pole for Abu Dhabi GP

● **Red Bull occupy front row with Ferraris in third and fourth**

● **Lewis Hamilton and George Russell fifth and sixth for Mercedes**

AFP | Abu Dhabi

Max Verstappen outpaced team-mate Sergio Perez to grab pole position for Sunday's season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix as Red Bull locked out the front row in a closely-fought qualifying session.

The two-time world champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 23.824 seconds to finish two-tenths clear of the Mexican, delighting Red Bull after a week of reported rifts between the two drivers.

Charles Leclerc was third ahead of Ferrari team-mate Carlos Sainz and the two Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton and George Russell, who claimed his maiden victory last weekend in Brazil.

Verstappen's success brought him his third consecutive pole at the Yas Marina Circuit, his seventh of the season and 20th of his career ahead of a race in which he bids for a record-extending 15th win in a single season.

"Great job everybody, good



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands reacts after winning pole position after qualifying session

**Very pleased for that and very happy that both cars are on the front row because we want to win the race but we also want to finish second with Checo (Perez) in the championship so that's definitely a great start for tomorrow**

MAX VERSTAPPEN

team effort," said Verstappen on his slow down lap. "Well done

everybody," added Perez, the two offering low-key enthusiasm after a stormy week since their 'team orders' row.

Lando Norris was seventh for McLaren ahead of Alpine's Esteban Ocon and retirement-bound four-time champion Sebastian Vettel of Aston Martin. Daniel Ricciardo was 10th on his last drive for McLaren.

Under the dazzling floodlights, Vettel's father Norbert was conspicuous in his green Aston Martin shirt as he cheered his son from the garage for his final qualifying session.

A full five minutes passed before the 'big guns' emerged, Mercedes delaying their entry to exploit a cooling track on a

very warm evening with an air temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and the track at 34.

Much as expected, following their speed in final practice, the Red Bulls of Verstappen and Perez set the pace ahead of the Ferraris on their first runs before a frantic final flurry in Q1.

That left Kevin Magnussen as the fastest of the rest, eliminated in 15th place just a week after claiming his and Haas's maiden pole in the rain at Interlagos.

Out with him went Pierre Gasly in his last weekend with Alpha Tauri before joining Alpine, Alfa Romeo's Valtteri Bottas and the Williams pair of Alex Albon and Nicholas Latifi.



**A week after Verstappen revealed a rift in the Red Bull team by refusing an order to yield sixth place to Perez in the Brazilian Grand Prix, Verstappen led Perez out onto the final lap of qualifying with a slipstream in a display of team unity**

## Djokovic beats Fritz to reach final of ATP Finals



Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Taylor Fritz  
AFP | Turin

Novak Djokovic remained non course for a record-equalling sixth ATP Tour Finals title after a 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (8/6) win over Taylor Fritz in Turin yesterday.

Djokovic brushed off his bruising encounter with Daniil Medvedev the day before to boss the semi-final against the ninth-seeded American.

The 35-year-old Serb will face the winner of the second semi-final between Andrey

**"I'm very happy to be able to compete for another big trophy, one of the biggest ones that we have in our sport"**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Rublev and Casper Ruud. Victory in Sunday's final will see him equal Roger Federer's haul of six wins in the tournament comprising the top eight players in the world this season.

"I had to fight to survive," said Djokovic, who has now reached the final of the season-ending event eight times and last won in 2015.

"I didn't feel very reactive or very comfortable. I knew coming into today's match from yesterday's gruelling battle against Medvedev, it would take me some time to adjust and find the dynamic movement I need against Fritz, who is one of the best servers on the Tour."

Djokovic has now beaten 25-year-old Fritz, in all six of their meetings.



**As well as possibly matching Federer's record, Djokovic also stands to claim the largest payday in tennis history on Sunday, with \$4,740,300 on offer for claiming the ATP Finals trophy undefeated**

## Germany goalkeeper Neuer to defy FIFA on captains' armbands

AP | Doha

Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer is set to defy FIFA's campaign for captains to wear only official armbands with selected slogans at World Cup games.

"Yes," the veteran goalkeeper said when asked at the Ger-



Manuel Neuer

many training camp about overriding a new FIFA project backed by United Nations agencies.

Denmark is also not backing down, playmaker Christian Eriksen said yesterday.

The launch a day before the opening World Cup match

seemed designed to supplant a pledge by European teams to wear their own armbands as part of a Netherlands-led anti-discrimination campaign drawing attention to host nation Qatar's laws and record on human rights issues.