

Hamilton, Alonso back off in war of words over Spa crash



Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton (R) collides with Alpine's Spanish driver Fernando Alonso
AFP | Spa-Francorchamps

Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso eased off to avoid a prolonged war of words yesterday following their acrimonious collision in Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix.

Mercedes' seven-time world champion and his one-time McLaren team-mate crashed on the opening lap with Hamilton forced to retire after an airborne ride over his rival's Alpine car.

In the heat of the moment the veteran Spaniard blasted the British driver as "an idiot".

Hamilton revisited the incident on social media, writing: "First I want to apologise to my fans and especially those who came out to support me."

"After almost 30 years of racing, the feeling left from a mistake cuts just as deep as the first."

"My team, who work so hard, deserved more."

Alonso, 41, was also more composed in his comments after the race and distanced himself from the impact of his original outburst on team radio when he said: "What an idiot! Closing the door from the outside."

"I mean, we had a mega-start, but this guy only knows how to drive and start

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LEWIS HAMILTON

in first."

Hamilton accepted full blame for the collision but was clearly put out by Alonso's initial fury.

He suggested he had intended to speak to the Spaniard until he "heard what he said. I know that's how things feel in the heat of the moment, but it's nice to know how he feels about me".

Alonso admitted "I was angry", adding: "The radio, anyway, when you talk, you talk to your engineer and to your team."

"It's a shame that sometimes everything is broadcasted, because if it's broadcasted, it is what you say now (in the moment), this (right now) is how you behave in the media."

"When you're talking on the radio, it's only a comment to your team, normally."

Bahrain fall to China in World Cup qualifier

Senior men's national team bow to continental powerhouses 67-80 in Group F game of Asian qualifiers for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023

Bahrainis suffer second straight defeat in qualifiers, stay bottom of Group F

Mustafa Hussain top scores for Bahrain with 24 points in losing effort

TDT | Manama

Bahrain fell to their second successive defeat last night in the second round of Asian qualifying for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2023.

The nationals bowed to continental powerhouses China 67-80 in their Group F contest played in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

The Bahrainis trailed by as many as 18 points but then made a furious 10-1 rally to start the final quarter. That brought them to within just seven, 56-63, but they came no closer the rest of the way.

The result followed Bahrain's 50-104 loss to Australia at home last week, putting them at the bottom of their division with four games still to play. Bahrain dropped to a 2-6 win-loss record.

In yesterday's other Group F fixture, Australia defeated Iran 98-68 at home. The Aussies im-



Bahrain's Mohammed Ameer grabs a rebound during their game against China last night

Group F Standings

	P	W	L	+/-	Pts
Australia	8	8	0	232	16
China	8	6	2	121	14
Iran	8	5	3	68	13
Kazakhstan	7	5	2	56	12
Bahrain	8	2	6	-162	10
Japan	7	2	5	-77	9

proved to an 8-0 mark while Iran went to 5-3.

In Bahrain's loss last night, they fell behind 11-25 at the end of the opening period. They raised their play in the second and cut the deficit to single digits, 33-42, at the half. But after the break, the Chinese managed to widen the gap once more as they took a 62-46 advantage into

the final canto.

The nationals tried valiantly to stay in the game, getting to within seven points twice in the fourth. But the Chinese made the key baskets down the stretch to escape with the 13-point win.

Young point guard Mustafa Hussain top scored for Bahrain with 24 points, including four makes from beyond the three-point line. Ahmed Aldurazi added 10 points as the only other player in double figures, while Mohammed Ameer had nine points to go with seven rebounds. Ali Hussain chipped in with eight, while Wayne Chism scored seven points and took down 11 rebounds.

Qi Zhou paced China with 22

markers, while Junlong Zhu had 14 and Mingxuan Hu 12.

Following last night's game against China, the Bahrainis next host Japan on November 11 before hosting the Chinese in the Kingdom on November 14. The nationals then travel to Australia for an away game on February 23 next year, before playing in Japan on February 26.

The 12 remaining teams in Asian qualifying have been divided into two groups for this round. Group E features New Zealand, Lebanon, Jordan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia and India. The top three teams from each group, along with hosts Japan and the Philippines, qualify for next year's FIBA Basketball World Cup.

Zain launches Playhera MENA



Officials of Zain and PLAYHERA at the launch event

TDT | Manama

Zain, the leading mobile telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa announced the launch of the PLAYHERA MENA esports and gaming platform, having unveiled a joint venture collaboration between Zain Group, Zain KSA and PLAYHERA Global, at the beginning of this year.

PLAYHERA MENA will primarily host own- and third-party esports tournaments, while also supporting ancillary activities such as cloud gaming, content hosting, e-commerce, and merchandise sales. With the speed and stability of the network being further boosted by Zain's award-winning 4G, 5G and fiber infrastructure, the user experience is set to be second-to-none.

To mark the launch of the platform, Zain Esports is conducting a regionwide PUBG Mobile league from that will end on October 3, 2022.

Zain Esports' success in attracting and engaging gamers will bolster PLAYHERA MENA's efforts to leverage and expand its existing 150,000 global player base. The multi-faceted gaming social hub will help various industry stakeholders to converge and engage, with over 50 popular esports and other competitive games on offer, including popular titles such as Fortnite; Valorant; PUBG Mobile; FIFA 22; Rocket League; and Call of Duty Warzone.

Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Deghaither, Zain KSA CEO said, "The MENA is one of the fastest-growing gaming regions in the world and we are commit-

ted to fostering the growth of the ecosystem and unlocking the many opportunities that will arise for the benefit of all industry participants. We are enthusiastic to bring this platform to market and are certain that PLAYHERA MENA will further uplift and electrify this high-growth sector."

Malek Hammoud, Zain Group's Chief Investment and Digital Officer commented, "Through Zain Esports, we have an impressive ecosystem already established, and we expect it to evolve and grow exponentially as we empower PLAYHERA MENA's regional gaming ambitions. This joint venture enables Zain operations across our markets to efficiently connect with the gamer community and offer the best-in-class products and services that they need."

Conte backs 'son-in-law' Son to end goal drought



Antonio Conte and Son Heung-min
Reuters | London

Tottenham Hotspur manager boss Antonio Conte has said he would be happy for Son Heung-min to marry his daughter as he defended the struggling South Korea forward.

Son has failed to hit the heights he established last term as his goalless start to the season continued during Spurs' 2-0 win away to Nottingham Forest on Sunday.

His form so far this term has been far removed from the run of 10 goals in the final nine games of last season that helped Son win the Premier League Golden Boot award.

Nevertheless, Conte said: "I understood Sonny is a really sensible player. He's really sensible and a top man, a really good guy. If I am to make an example, if I have to find a husband for my daughter I'd like it to be a person like him."

Najma win handball Super Cup



Al Najma claimed the first trophy of the national handball season after winning the 2022/2023 Bahrain Super Cup last night. Najma defeated Al Ahli 31-24 in the one-off contest. The Super Cup is the traditional season-opening fixture on the calendar. Najma were able to fight back in the contest after trailing 13-14 at the half. Following the game, Najma were awarded the Super Cup and both teams their medals by General Sports Authority CEO Dr Abdulrahman Askar alongside Bahrain Handball Association president Ali Issa and other officials. Above, Najma's Mohammed Mirza receives the Super Cup from officials during the awarding ceremony after the match.

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