



The Qatar International Baja 2023 FIA-Cars podium finishers (on left) and FIM-Bikes (right) with Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation President Abdulrahman Al Mannai, QMMF Executive Director Amro Al Hamad and other officials during the presentation ceremony at Lusail Boulevard on Saturday.

# Al Attiyah and Dabrowski claim car and motorcycle victories at Qatar International Baja 2023

## Kuwait's Meshari Al Thefiri and Frenchman Jeremie Warnia win T3 and T4 categories

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK  
LUSAIL

QATAR'S Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah and co-driver Mathieu Baumel clinched victory in the car category in their Toyota GR DKR Hilux, while Polish KTM rider Konrad Dabrowski stayed clear of late trouble to defend his motorcycle title at the end of a punishing Qatar International Baja on Saturday.

Al Attiyah controlled proceedings through the demanding last stage to take the day's win by 10min 18sec from Chinese rival Guoyu Zhang and that was sufficient for the Qatari to finish 16min 21.6sec ahead of Overdrive Racing team-mates, Denis Krotov and Konstantin Zhiltsov, in their Toyota Hilux. Zhang and his Spanish co-driver Oriol Mena rounded off the podium places in their Baic ORC BJ40.

Al Attiyah said: "It was a good Baja. The first day I had a small margin and the second day I pushed a lot. I thank Jean-Marc (Fortin) from Overdrive Racing for bringing me a new car and thanks to Qatar Airways for flying this car over very swiftly so that I was able to compete here. I am very glad to win here again on my home race. I always want to compete in every international event in Qatar and it's great to bounce back with a win after my big crash in Abu Dhabi."

Runner-up Krotov added: "After 35km, I had to stop and change the tyres. After that we lost a little power and didn't have a big speed. One turbo was not working. But the race was good and I enjoyed the stages."

Competitors tackled 224.96km on the final day and



Qatar's Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah speaks during the presentation ceremony of Qatar International Baja 2023 as QMMF Executive Director Amro Al Hamad looks on at Lusail Boulevard on Saturday.

the route was split into four sections of 33.73km, 28.51km, 43.23km and 113.20km by three non-competitive transfer zones.

Overdrive Racing's Juan Cruz Yacopini and Daniel Oliveras moved up to fourth overall on the final stage in the third of four Toyotas.

The experienced Meshari Al Thefiri began the day second in T3 behind his usual co-driver Nasser Al Kuwari and the Kuwaiti delivered a solid stage performance to set the fastest time and sneak through to win the FIA T3 category for lightweight prototype machines on his first race with a new MCE-5 T3M and Oriol Vidal looking after the navigation. Al Thefiri also finished fifth overall.

He said: "We managed to finish. It's so difficult with the road book to know if you are out of the route. It is not easy. The car was very good. We caught Nasser (Al-Kuwari) about 20km from the start, so I managed my pace then and I knew what my advantage was. I am very happy that this is the first win for the MCE-5. Hard

luck to Nasser."

With Nasser Al Kuwari and French co-driver Francois Cazale dropping precious minutes on the stage with the lack of brakes and puncturs, that opened the door for the Qatari's brother Abdulaziz to snatch second place in the category in his QMMF Rally Team Can-Am. On his debut in this type of motor sport, the former winner of the Qatar International Rally also finished in an excellent sixth in the general classification. Nasser came home in seventh and third in T3.

"From the first 20km, we had one flat tyre and we changed it," said Nasser Al Kuwari. "Then we catch Meshari and we had another flat tyre. We changed it. We catch him again and try to pass him and then we had a third one. Then we had no chance to win and we just tried to get the car to the finish. We also had brake issues. But I am happy with my performance."

Abdulaziz Al Kuwari said: "Very happy to finish second. I would love to have won T3 but it is not easy after the de-

lay with the puncture on the first day. Unlucky for Nasser to come with the third puncture. I took it safely. I wanted to do all the mileage. I want to transfer to this kind of rallies. I prefer this type of rallies. You don't have to drive every week."

The French crew of Jeremie Warnia and Loic Minaudier managed to overhaul Brazil's Cristiano de Sousa Batista and Portuguese co-driver Fausto Moto to secure a narrow victory in the FIA T4 category in their Polaris RZR 1000 R. They finished eighth overall and beat their Can-Am rivals by 2min 10sec on the final day to secure a winning margin of just 30.3 seconds.

Seventeen minutes of time penalties for missing route waypoints had pushed Pau Navarro down the T4 rankings after the third stage in his FN Speed Team Can-Am. He climbed back to third on the final day.

Saudi Arabia's Khalid Al Feraih and French co-driver Sebastien Delaunay boosted their FIA Middle East Baja Cup title aspirations with valuable points for finishing 11th overall

## 2023 Qatar International Baja - Positions after stage 4 (unofficial @ 15.45hrs):

### FIA - Cars (Top 16 only)

1. Nasser Saleh Al Attiyah (QAT)/Mathieu Baumel (AND) Toyota GR DKR Hilux	4hr 51min 49.7sec*
2. Denis Krotov (KGZ)/Konstantin Zhiltsov (ISR) Toyota Hilux Overdrive	5hr 08min 11.3sec*
3. Guoyu Zhang (CHN)/Oriol Mena (ESP) Baic ORC BJ40	5hr 11min 00.6sec*
4. Juan Cruz Yacopini (ARG)/Daniel Oliveras (ESP) Toyota Hilux Overdrive	5hr 23min 50.9sec*
5. Meshari Al Thefiri (KWT)/Oriol Vidal (ESP) MCE-5 T3M (T3)	5hr 30min 32.4sec*
6. Abdulaziz Al Kuwari (QAT)/Alexei Kuzmich (ARE) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3)	5hr 38min 05.3sec*
7. Nasser Al Kuwari (QAT)/Francois Cazale (FRA) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3)	5hr 42min 23.3sec*
8. Jeremie Warnia (FRA)/Loic Minaudier (FRA) Polaris RZR 1000 R (T4)	5hr 45min 51.5sec*
9. Cristiano de Sousa Batista (BRA)/Fausto Moto (PRT) Can-Am Maverick XRS Turbo (T4)	5hr 46min 21.8sec*
10. Ronan Chabot (FRA)/Gilles Pilot (FRA) Toyota Hilux Overdrive	5hr 47min 36.5sec*
11. Khalid Al Feraih (SAU)/Sebastien Delaunay (FRA) Nissan Pick-Up	5hr 56min 24.7sec*
12. Otavio Sousa (BRA)/João Ferreira (PRT) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3)	5hr 59min 07.7sec*
13. Fernando Alvarez (ESP)/Xavier Panseri (FRA) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T4)	5hr 59min 39.7sec*
14. Pau Navarro (ESP)/Goncalo Reis (PRT) Can-Am Maverick XRS Turbo (T4)	6hr 02min 01.5sec*
15. Ahmed Al Kuwari (QAT)/Manuel Luchesse (QAT) Yamaha YZ 1000 R (T4)	6hr 07min 26.6sec*
16. Adel Abdulla (QAT)/Marc Serra (QAT) Can-Am Maverick X3 (T3)	6hr 11min 45.9sec*

### FIM - Bikes (top 16 only)

1. Konrad Dabrowski (POL) KTM 450 Rally 7hr 22min 09.3sec	11. Ola Fløene (NOR) KTM 450 Rally 9hr 12min 54.5sec
2. Robert Wallace (GBR) KTM 450 RFR 7hr 53min 14.1sec	12. Abdullah Larjajwi (ARE) Husqvarna FE450 9hr 13min 09.9sec
3. Mirjam Pol (NLD) KTM 8tr 43min 18.1sec	13. Mishaal Al Ghuneim (SAU) KTM 450 Rally 9hr 15min 00.1sec
4. Andrew Houlihan (AUS) Husqvarna FR 8tr 44min 24.5sec	14. Simon Marcic (SVN) Husqvarna 450 Rally Replica 9hr 15min 42.8sec
5. Mawar Al Rahmani (ARE) KTM 450 Rally 8tr 46min 07.6sec	15. Oran O'Kelly (IRL) KTM 450 Rally 9hr 30min 09.2sec
6. Jonathan Finn (CAN) Honda CRF 450 LR 8tr 47min 47.5sec	16. Ehab Al Hakeem (LBN) Yamaha WR 450F 10hr 12min 08.3sec
7. Cesare Zaccchetti (ITA) KTM EXC 350F 8tr 49min 09.5sec	
8. Mohamed Al Balooshi (ARE) KTM 450 Rally Replica 9hr 04min 24.8sec	
9. Abdullah Al Shatti (KWT) Husqvarna 450 Rally 9hr 10min 08.2sec	
10. Alex Molins (GBR) Husqvarna FE450 9hr 10min 56.0sec	

in their Nissan Patrol behind the 10th-placed Ronan Chabot in his Overdrive Toyota.

Krzysztof Holowczyzc (Mini JCR Rally Plus) and Ahmed Al-Shegawi (Can-Am) retired on Friday after their mechanical issues.

### Dabrowski retains motorcycle title

Konrad Dabrowski retained his motorcycle title in Qatar with a polished performance that saw his win every stage on his KTM. The Pole won Saturday's last stage by 6min 49sec to record a winning margin over Great Britain's Robert Wallace of 31min 04.8sec. He also claimed the honours of finishing as the first FIM Junior.

Dabrowski said: "Qatar is very lucky for us. A second win here in a row. I like to come here because it is great experience and I can improve my navigation and my riding. I was sick today on the stage after

spending a night in the air conditioning. It was so difficult just to ride the bike on the second part of the stage. I am very tired but happy to win this race. I was super tired when I finished but it's a great feeling to win."

With Martin Chalmers dropped out of contention on the final morning, the battle for the final place on the podium swung in favour of the Dutch female racer Mirjam Pol. The KTM rider climbed from eighth to third to finish as the top Women. She edged out Andrew Houlihan for the last podium place by just 66.4 seconds, although the Australian had the consolation of winning the Veterans' class and finishing a fine fourth.

The delighted Pole said: "When you start eighth overall and you finish third it is a big surprise. I had all the route waypoints and when I arrived I only saw two lines and that's when I realised I had achieved a very good result."

# Olunga brace against QSC puts Al Duhail back on top

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK  
DOHA

AL Duhail defeated Qatar SC 3-1 in Week 17 of the 2022-2023 season QNB Stars League at the Al Duhail Stadium on Saturday.

Al Duhail (39 points) thus reclaimed top position in the table from Al Arabi (37 points). Qatar SC remained on 26 points. The Red Knights battled hard before finding rhythm to overcome Qatar SC's strong challenge in front of a large number of fans.

Michael Olunga (10th and 79th minutes) and Khaled Mohammed (90th minute) scored the goals for Al Duhail.

Qatar SC's lone success came in the dying moments of the match through Badr Benoun (90+8 minute penalty).

Al Duhail's Luiz Martin Junior was shown the red card in 90+4 minute.

In the process, Olunga moved to the top of scorers' list with 13 goals, ahead of Jacinto Dala of Al Wakrah on 12 goals.

While Al Duhail's opening goal came with relative ease as Olunga drove home a fine Ferjani Sassi assist, Qatar SC defended hard through the remainder of the opening half.

But Olunga returned again to strike late in the second half, this time with a left-footer picking up on a long ball from Fed-



Al Duhail's Michael Olunga celebrates one of his two goals against Qatar SC at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium on Saturday. Al Duhail won 3-1.

erico Fernandez.

Towards the end, both teams produced more exciting play. In the 81st minute Omar Al Emadi of Qatar SC succeed-

ed in scoring, but was ruled offside and the VAR confirmed that he was marginally out of the line.

Al Duhail then seized on a

defensive lapse of their rivals to make a fine move and Under-20 player Suhaib Gannan provided a fine cross with a flick from near the goalline for Khaled to score.

Qatar SC in the end benefitted from Almoez Ali's handball offence while trying to defend in front of the goal and Benoun scored off the resultant penalty.

In the other games of the day, Al Rayyan rallied to beat Al Markhiya 3-2 while Al Wakrah defeated Al Ahli 5-2.

Sofiane Boufal (37th minute penalty) and Jason Vargas (42nd and 87th minutes) scored for Al Rayyan. Ayoub Assal (fourth minute) and Jose Correia (77th minute) were Al

Markhiya's scorers. Al Wakrah returned to winning ways, prevailing 5-2 over Al Ahli. The Blue Wave showed their intent and form right from the word go, with Mohamed Benyettou (19th-minute penalty), Khaled Munir (38th minute), Jacinto Dala (40th and 90th minutes) and Yousef Abduriss (49th minute) getting the five goals for them.

Al Dokali Al Sayed helped Al Ahli pulled back two goals, striking in the 33th and 64th minutes.

The win also saw Al Wakrah inch their way into 27 points from 17 games, while Al Ahli stayed on 21 points from 17 matches.

# Saints come from behind to earn point against Spurs



Southampton's English midfielder James Ward-Prowse (centre) celebrates with teammates after scoring his team third goal during the English Premier League football match against Tottenham Hotspur at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England on Saturday. (AFP)

## AGENCIES

A late James Ward-Prowse penalty earned Southampton a deserved point in a thrilling encounter as they came from behind against Tottenham at St Mary's.

A fragmented first half never really got going as both sides were forced into two substitutions apiece with Richarlison and Ben Davies coming off injured for Spurs and Saints' Arnel Bella-Kotchap and Jan Bednarek also replaced.

Pedro Porro broke the deadlock, hammering a shot into the roof of the net just before half time.

Che Adams levelled 47 seconds into the second half, but Saints were staring at defeat with 15 minutes to go thanks to Harry Kane's header before a fine Ivan Perisic effort.

But Theo Walcott inspired Southampton's comeback with a

slotted finish from Sekou Mara's header and Ward-Prowse completed it from the spot to secure a vital point.

A point does nothing to improve Southampton's position in the table as they remain rooted to the bottom, but it does highlight the improvements made under manager Ruben Selles.

They have managed just one win so far under the Spanish coach - against fellow strugglers Leicester in March - but this spirited second-half performance showed promising signs as they face a tough battle to stay in the Premier League.

Saints had to substitute both their central defenders inside 33 minutes with Mohammed Salisu replacing Bella-Kotchap and Ainsley Maitland-Niles returning to the fold after two weeks on the sidelines after Bednarek was taken to hospital

with a suspected rib injury.

But the home side were rejuvenated in the second half with Adams' early goal putting Spurs on the back foot, and they were unlucky to concede the second goal to a quality Kane header. Even trailing by two goals it was Southampton who had the chances as Walcott gave the St Mary's crowd hope, before Mara went close to an equaliser but was denied by Spurs keeper Fraser Forster.

Southampton were eventually rewarded for their tenacity when Pape Sarr made contact with Maitland-Niles in the box and Ward-Prowse drove a powerful penalty into the back of the net.

Spurs struggle in face of spirited Saints With Manchester United in FA Cup action on Sunday, victory would have seen Spurs move one point above Erik ten Hag's side in the battle for Champions

League football.

In other other games, Leicester City gained a crucial point and ended their five-match losing run as Harvey Barnes netted a second-half equaliser at high-flying Brentford.

Leeds climbed out of the Premier League relegation zone after holding off a late Wolves fightback to win an enthralling game at Molineux. The victory lifts Javi Gracia's side - who started the day in 19th - four places and two points above the bottom three. Aston Villa claimed their third win in four Premier League games as they cruised past struggling Bournemouth at Villa Park.

## English Premier League Saturday results

Aston Villa 3 Bournemouth 0; Brentford 1 Leicester 1; Southampton 3 Tottenham 3; Wolves 2 Leeds 4

# Champions League success 'a huge step' for Serie A, says Inter's Inzaghi

DPA  
ROME

SIMONE Inzaghi has congratulated Milan and Napoli on joining his Inter side in the quarter-finals of the Champions League and says it is "a huge step" for Serie A.

Italy's top flight will have three representatives in the last eight of the competition for the first time since the 2005-06 campaign.

With Juventus and Roma also through in the Europa League and Fiorentina progressing in the Europa Conference League, six Italian clubs are through to the quarters of UEFA competitions for the third time ever after the 1998-99 and 1990-91 seasons.

Inzaghi, whose Inter side will face Benfica over two legs in the next round, believes it can only be a good thing for Italian football when their teams hold their own on the continent.

"We all played great games," he said at a press conference on Saturday. "I have to congratulate Milan and Napoli - they deserved it like us. So too did Roma, Juventus and Fiorentina."

"There are six teams through, which is a huge step. Now we must all continue, because the more we go on,

the better it is for our country." Two of Serie A's European representatives face off at San Siro on Sunday in a game that could potentially have huge repercussions in the top-four race.

Second-place Inter are 12 points better off than Juventus in seventh, but the Bianconeri are said to be optimistic about overturning a 15-point deduction imposed on them in January.

That could change the complexion of the higher echelons of Serie A, and Inzaghi hopes a decision is soon made by the authorities one way or another.

"I look at the standings, but we are aware there are legal proceedings ongoing," Inzaghi said. "I hope that we find out soon because the teams need clarity." Inter have lost three of their past six Serie A matches after their Champions League games, including their last two against Bologna and Juventus in the reverse match.

Juventus, by comparison, have won each of their last six league games after European matches.

"We are thinking only of tomorrow's game," Inzaghi said. "Now that we have obtained qualification, we have this final game of an intense period."



Inter Milan's Italian coach Simone Inzaghi at the Dragao stadium in Porto recently. (AFP)

# Liverpool forward Darwin Nunez withdraws from Uruguay squad

DPA  
BERLIN

LIVERPOOL forward Darwin Nunez has pulled out of Uruguay's squad for their upcoming friendlies.

The 23-year-old had been included in Uruguay's squad for the games against Japan and South Korea on March 24 and 28 respectively.

However, the Uruguayan Football Association and Liverpool both announced on Friday that Nunez will not be linking up with his international team-mates.

According to reports from Uruguay, the former Benfica man is recovering from an ankle injury sustained in Wednesday's 1-0 loss at Real Madrid. Nunez has 14 goals and four assists in 33 appearances in his first campaign at Anfield - only Mohamed Salah (33) has been directly involved in more goals among Liverpool players.

Uruguay have called up Club America forward Jonathan Rodriguez as Nunez's replacement.



Liverpool's Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez (right) vies with Real Madrid's Spanish defender Dani Carvajal during the UEFA Champions League in Madrid recently. (AFP)

# Hoffenheim stop the rot as Schalke draw in battle to avoid the drop

DPA  
BERLIN

HOFFENHEIM lifted themselves off the bottom of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 3-1 win over fellow strugglers Hertha Berlin, ending a run of seven straight defeats.

Striker Andrej Kramaric scored two first-half penalties and Ihlas Bebou struck on 51 minutes as the hosts moved out of the drop zone to 15th place, with Hertha slipping into the relegation play-off spot.

VfB Stuttgart replaced Hoffenheim at the bottom after a 1-0 defeat at home to Wolfsburg with nine games left, while second-bottom Schalke scored a controversial



Schalke's German forward Marius Buelter celebrates after his penalty goal for Schalke during the German first division Bundesliga football match against FC Augsburg in Augsburg on Saturday. (AFP)

penalty in stoppage time for a 1-1 draw at 10-man Augsburg.

Bochum now sit three points above Hoffenheim and four above Hertha in a packed

lower half thanks to a lucky 1-0 win at home to third-placed RB Leipzig, whose Champions League qualification hopes took a knock.

# Pioli confirms Ibrahimovic is fit enough for Milan start

DPA  
BERLIN

ZLATAN Ibrahimovic is in contention to start for Milan against Udinese on Saturday as the 41-year-old looks to lift Stefano Pioli's struggling champions.

The striker, recalled by Sweden this week, has recovered from major knee surgery and come through three substitute appearances.

Now the veteran is a prime contender to line up from the first whistle as Milan are forced to cope without the suspended Olivier Giroud in their last game before the international break.

Ibrahimovic is already the oldest player to feature for Milan in a Serie A game during

the three-points-for-a-win era (since 1994-95), and Pioli would have no doubts about his readiness.

"Zlatan is calm; he wants to play and win every game," Pioli said on Friday. "He's feeling good, but I don't think he's got 90 minutes in him. He could start, as could Divock [Origi] and Ante [Rebic]." Ibrahimovic has been involved in five goals in his last four games against Udinese in Serie A (3 goals, 2 assists) and is looking to start a game in Serie A for the first time since January 23, 2022, when he faced Juventus.

Winger Rafael Leao should keep his place despite what Pioli described as a "strange situation" on Monday, when the Portugal international put



File photo of Sweden's forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic. (AFP)

in a flat performance in the 1-1 draw with Salernitana, a result that followed defeat to Fiorentina in Milan's previous league game.

Coach Pioli is surprised

by how little impact Leao is having at times, but he expects him to come good.

"Rafa is training really well. He's very motivated and determined, and he remains

an important figure in our attack because, even if he's not scoring, he keeps opposition defences occupied," Pioli said.

"My advice to him would be to stay close to those who care deeply for him and want to help him grow. Goals and decisive pieces of play are expected from him, but, as previously mentioned, he's dangerous even when he doesn't score." Ibrahimovic was left off Milan's Champions League squad list, so Pioli must plan without him for the quarter-final against runaway Serie A leaders Napoli.

That was the match-up that came out of Friday's draw, and it is not one that intimidates the Rossoneri, who have won Europe's premier club competition seven times.

Quoted on Milan's official website, Pioli said: "Napoli are enjoying a great league campaign, but the Champions League is the Champions League and AC Milan are AC Milan. It's exciting and fascinating and our opponents are very strong, but we're deservedly part of it and have plenty of motivation and ambition."

"We'll play with the aim of making it through. We'll have time to talk about the Champions League, which is certainly an objective of ours, but, right now, doing well in our next three league games is crucial." Milan sit fourth in Serie A, a point ahead of Roma who have a derby against third-placed Lazio coming up on Sunday.

**QATAR EQUESTRIAN TOUR  
LONGINES HATHAB RD 12**



Qatar Equestrian Tour - Longines Hathab Round 12 Big Tour podium winners after being presented their prizes by Ali bin Yousef Al Rumaihi, Event Director, Hathab, at Al Shaqab on Saturday. The annual 14-leg domestic equestrian series has two more rounds to go before the overall winners are decided in various categories of showjumping and dressage.

**Al Duhami excels on High Quality J to win Big Tour title**

VINAY NAYUDU  
DOHA

IN what was a challenging Round 12 of Qatar Equestrian Tour - Longines Hathab, Saudi Arabia's Ramzy Al Duhami topped the Big Tour with a flawless and swift show with his mount High Quality J - a 16-year-old bay gelding - at Al Shaqab's Longines Outdoor Arena on Saturday.

Al Duhami cleared the first round of the Table A, Special Two phases, Art. 274.2.5 | 130/145cm event in 30.47 secs and returned a cautious but clear round again in the second phase in 36.61 secs.

Al Duhami had earlier also won the Medium Tour on Friday.

Speaking of his good show, he said, "I must say, the sport has evolved so much in Qatar that I had to be sure of having a good horse. Last week I had put up two of my inexperienced horses and that didn't work. So this time I am really pleased.

"The level at Hathab has really changed, these young riders can ride excellently well at this very super Longines Arena of Al Shaqab, one of the best in the world. An opportunity to ride here is a pleasure for me and a plus for me and my horses as well.

"I am thankful too everyone here at Qatar Equestrian Federation for hosting me here and I am grateful to them. It's a pleasure to be among my brothers here in Qatar," he added.

Qatar's Ghanim Nasser Al Qadi, who finished as the runners-up on his chestnut stud Morocco, also had flawless two phases but clocked 31.37 and 38.74secs.

Faleh Suweed Al Ajami, who clinched the Open Class title earlier in the day, secured third position in the Big Tour. The Qatari rider partnered with 14-year-old Crispo to register clear rounds of 30.98 and 41.79 secs.

French rider Cyrine Cherif, astride I'am Moerhoeve's Princess Z, was fourth completing the two phases in 31.56 and 42.70 secs, while Qatar's Hamad Nasser Al Qadi, who rode



Open Class podium winners with officials during presentation at Al Shaqab on Saturday.

14-year-old Sirocco, also had flawless phases in 30.19 and 42.71 secs for fifth position.

Earlier, Al Ajami, aboard 15-year-old Steyburn, won the Open Class after a brilliant round in 61.08 secs. Mohammed Khalifa Albaker on What A Pleasure clinched second position with a time of 66.31 secs, while Faris Saad Al Qahtani and 11-year-old Hero combined to clock 68.30 secs to seal third position.

Hamad Nasser Al Qadi rode eight-year-old Fernet MH to fourth place in the Open Class with a time of 69.75 secs, while Mohammed Nasser Al Qadi and 11-year-old Happy Tina completed the top five with a penalty-free round of 73.16 secs.

**Results**  
**Big Tour | Table A, Special Two phases, Art. 274.2.5 | 130/145cm | Prize Money: QR45,000**  
1. Rider: J Ramzy AL Duhami; Horse: High Quality J; Faults: 0; Time: 30.47secs; Faults: 0; Time: 36.61secs; Prize: QR15,000  
2. Ghanim Nasser Al Qadi; Morocco; 0; 31.37secs; 0; 38.74secs QR12,000  
3. Faleh Suweed Al Ajami; Crispo; 0; 30.98secs; 0; 41.79secs; QR9,000.

**Open Class | Table A, One round against the clock, Art. 238.2.1 | 115/125cm Prize Money: QR25,000**  
1. Faleh Suweed Al Ajami; Steyburn; 0; 61.08secs; QR6,250  
2. Mohammed Khalifa Albaker; What A Pleasure; 0; 66.31secs; QR5,000  
3. Faris Saad Al Qahtani; Hero; 0; 68.30secs; QR3,750.

**Perez claims 2nd straight Saudi pole after shock Verstappen exit**

DPA  
RIYADH

SERGIO Perez saved the day for Red Bull by claiming pole position for Sunday's Saudi Arabian Formula One Grand Prix, with world champion Max Verstappen starting from 15th after meeting disaster in qualifying.

Verstappen had won the season-opener in Bahrain and dominated all three practice sessions in Jeddah but he then encountered what the team identified as a driveshaft mechanical error midway through Q2 on Saturday.

That ended his session and he now faces an uphill battle to the top in what promises to be an intriguing race on Sunday.

"I think so far we had a really good weekend, every session was going really well. Every time we were on the track the car was working really well," Verstappen said.

"Now it will be a bit more tricky to get to the front but it's all about scoring points. It's a very long season. Of course I would have liked to have started further up the road but I can't change that now.

"Anything is possible at this track. We have seen a lot of crazy things. Let's stay a little bit realistic. It is going to be tough but we have good pace, so for sure we'll move forward."

Perez seized the momentum by clocking 1 minute 28.265 seconds on the 6.174-kilometre Jeddah Corniche Course for his second career pole, with his first coming on the same circuit last year.

He was just over one-tenth ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who however loses 10 places on the grid owing to power unit component changes beyond the legal limit and will start three places ahead of Verstappen in 12th.



Pole position winner Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez is congratulated by his mechanics at the end of the qualifying session of the Saudi Arabia Formula One Grand Prix at the Jeddah Corniche Circuit in Jeddah on Saturday. (AFP)

**Starting Grid**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Sergio Perez, Mexico, 1 minute, 28.265 seconds. | 11. Nico Hulkenberg, Germany, 1:29.451.    |
| 2. Charles Leclerc, Monaco, 1:28.420.              | 12. Guanyu Zhou, China, 1:29.461.          |
| 3. Fernando Alonso, Spain, 1:28.730.               | 13. Kevin Magnussen, Denmark, 1:29.634.    |
| 4. George Russell, Great Britain, 1:28.857.        | 14. Valtteri Bottas, Finland, 1:29.668.    |
| 5. Carlos Sainz Jr, Spain, 1:28.931.               | 15. Max Verstappen, Netherlands, 1:49.953. |
| 6. Lance Stroll, Canada, 1:28.945.                 | Eliminated after first session             |
| 7. Esteban Ocon, France, 1:29.078.                 | 16. Yuki Tsunoda, Japan, 1:29.939.         |
| 8. Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, 1:29.223.        | 17. Alexander Albon, Thailand, 1:29.994.   |
| 9. Oscar Piastri, Australia, 1:29.243.             | 18. Nyck de Vries, Netherlands, 1:30.244.  |
| 10. Pierre Gasly, France, 1:29.357.                | 19. Lando Norris, Great Britain, 1:30.447. |
| Eliminated after second session                    | 20. Logan Sargeant, USA, 2:08.510.         |

As a result, ex-champion Fernando Alonso joins Perez on the front row after qualifying third, just short of a first pole in more than a decade.

"It was tricky, it was tricky that Q3, especially not getting that second lap," Perez said, adding "you really feel the Formula One cars coming alive in this place."

"It's a shame because Max has been really strong the whole weekend, so hopefully tomorrow we can have both cars up there.

"You never know with these cars and reliability issues can hit you at any time."

Alonso said: "Qualifying was our weak spot in Bahrain but we performed very well [here] so let's see what we can

do. It is amazing. We are confident, we feel very strong. The strongest part is the long-run pace so it should be better on Sunday."

Leclerc said that Red Bull are "on another planet" but that "the race pace looked quite good but it is very difficult to compare.

"We will see but it is not going to be easy because I think everyone is going to be very close on race pace."

George Russell of Mercedes and Carlos Sainz in the second Ferrari will start from the second row while seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton starts from seventh in the other Mercedes.

"Our car doesn't have the performance we want but George got everything out of the car," Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff told Sky TV.

**Asia Lions make a roar, set up final LLC Masters clash with World Giants**

**India Maharajas lose Eliminator by 85 runs**

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK  
DOHA

SHAHID Afridi-led Asia Lions displayed an all-round performance to trounce Gautam Ghambir's India Maharajas by 85 runs and set up Monday's Legends League title clash against World Giants.

From winning the toss, everything went in favour of Afridi's side in the Eliminator on Saturday as Sri Lankan pair of Upul Tharanga and Tillakaratne Dilshan combined for an 83-run opening wicket partnership to set platform for a big total at the Asian Town International Stadium.

Tharanga played a valuable



Man of the Match Upul Tharanga of Asia Lions during his knock of 50 runs against India Maharajas in the Legends League Cricket Masters 2023 at the Asian Town International Stadium on Saturday.

knock of 50 from 31 balls, hitting seven boundaries and a six in the process. Owing to his fine in-

nings, the Lions amassed a total of 191-5 after electing to bat first. Dilshan (27 off 26), Mo-

ammed Hafeez (38 off 24), Asghar Afghan (34 off 24) and Thisara Perera (24 off 12) also made useful contribution.

The Lions were equally impressive in defending their total, bowling out Maharajas for only 106 in 16.4 overs.

Hafeez (2/21) Abdur Razzak (2/27) and Sohail Tanvir (2/25) were the main performing bowlers for the Lions. Apart from captain Ghambir, who struck 32 from 17 balls, no other Maharajas batsmen managed to pose threat for the Lions.

**Scores: Asia Lions 191 for 5 in 20 overs** (Upul Tharanga 50, Tillakaratne Dilshan 27, Mohammad Hafeez 38, Asghar Afghan 34n.o, Thisara Perera 24, Stuart Binny 2 for 38, Pragyan Ojha 2 for 26) **bt India Maharajas 106 in 16.4 overs** (Gautam Gambhir 32, Sohail Tanvir 2 for 25, Abdur Razzak 2 for 27, Mohammad Hafeez 2 for 21).

**LAHORE QALANDARS DEFEND PSL TITLE WITH THRILLING 1-RUN WIN**



Lahore Qalandars' captain Shaheen Shah Afridi (C) celebrates with the PSL final trophy during a ceremony at the end of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Twenty20 cricket final match between Lahore Qalandars and Multan Sultans at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium in Lahore on Saturday. On right: Shaheen Shah Afridi runs out of Mulatan Sultans's Khushdil Shah. Lahore Qalandars produced a stone-cold death-bowling performance to pip Multan Sultans by one run. Sultans needed 4 runs to wrench the title away from Qalandars. In the end, a heroic Khushdil Shah was run-out diving to complete the third at the non-striker's end, and the Qalandars' title defence was complete. Lahore Qalandars 200 for 6 (Shafique 65, Shaheen 44\*, Mir 3-24) beat Multan Sultans 199 for 8 (Rossouw 52, Shaheen 4-51, Rashid 2-26) by one run.



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