To subscribe
GULF TIMES
Newspaper
Please call
44466635



CRICKET | Page 2

Pakistan rout Sri Lanka to victory T20I tri-series



PREMIER LEAGUE | Page 3

Foden double helps Man City secure thrilling win over Leeds

To advertise here,
PLEASE CALL
444 666 21

Sunday, November 30, 2025
Jumada II 9, 1447 AH

GULF TIMES
SPORT



FOOTBALL

Over 700,000 tickets sold as excitement builds for FIFA Arab Cup

Page 4

QATAR GRAND PRIX

Piastri takes pole, wins sprint to ramp up pressure on Norris

If Norris finishes ahead of Piastri and Verstappen, the Briton will seal his maiden Formula 1 title



Oscar Piastri leads the field at the start of the sprint race at Lusail International Circuit. **PICTURE:** *Noushad Thekkayil*



Qatar sprint race winner Oscar Piastri of McLaren, runner-up George Russell of Mercedes and third-placed Lando Norris of McLaren pose with Serbian tennis legend Novak Djokovic at the Lusail International Circuit. (AFP)



Metallica's lead vocalist James Hatfield, who will perform today after the Qatar Grand Prix, walks on the grid before the sprint race at the Lusail International Circuit. *(AFP)*

By Sahan Bidappa
Doha



The starting grid for today's Qatar Grand Prix.

Oscar Piastri may have left it late in his title bid, but he is certainly not going out without a fight. The McLaren driver took pole position for the Qatar Grand Prix yesterday, just hours after winning the sprint to cut teammate Lando Norris's lead to 22 points at the floodlit Lusail International Circuit.

Four-time defending champion Max Verstappen, the only other driver still in title contention and 25 points adrift of Norris, qualified third for Red Bull.

Norris had initially topped the leaderboard after the first Q3 laps, but a brief delay to clear debris, a strip of tyre compound that had peeled off Carlos Sainz's Williams, halted proceedings. When the session resumed, the championship leader ran wide at Turn 2 on his final push lap after appearing slightly unsettled while negotiating George Russell's Mercedes on the out-lap. The error forced him to abandon the lap, opening the door for Piastri.

The Australian made it count as he delivered a superb 1m 19.387s on his second flying lap, securing his sixth career pole by 0.108s. The 24-year-old Piastri was delighted with his day's effort.

"We left the car pretty much the same, very minor tweaks here and there, but everything has been feeling great all weekend, so if it ain't broke, don't fix it," Piastri said. "It was really good. We had a question mark on which tyres to use because I did a quick lap on a used set in Q2, but Q3 was really good on the new tyres."

Looking ahead to today's race at the physically demanding, high-grip Lusail circuit, he added: "Pretty tough. With the two stops, we're probably going to be pushing hard the whole time. It won't be as hot as a couple of years ago, but I'm expecting it to be a tough race. You're pulling G forces at multiple points on the lap, so it's hard work but incredible fun."

Norris, who knows victory today will seal his maiden Formula 1 title ahead of next weekend's Abu Dhabi finale, was left frustrated but offered no excuses as he praised his teammate. "I just got a bit of understeer and was going to go off, so I had to abort. Which is a shame, but that's the way it is. Oscar did a good lap and has driven very well all weekend, so nothing to complain about," he said.

"The first couple of laps are opportunities for everyone, but after that it should probably be straightforward," he added.

Verstappen ended the session just over a tenth further back. The Dutchman must finish ahead of Norris today to keep his title hopes alive and take the fight to Abu Dhabi. "This qualifying was a little bit better. We are still quite far off, but at least I felt a little bit happier," Verstappen said. "Some limitations prevent us from pushing harder around the lap, but we are P3 and starting on the second row, and that creates better opportunities because it's hard to pass around here. We will see what we can do tomorrow."

Behind the top three, Russell and Kimi Antonelli locked out the third row for Mercedes, with Sainz seventh. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin), Pierre Gasly (Alpine) and Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) completed the top ten.

Earlier in the evening, Piastri had returned to winning ways with a dominant lights-to-flag victory in the sprint. He controlled the 19-lap dash to claim his first win since the Dutch Grand Prix in August, collecting eight points to further erode Norris's lead. Norris finished where he started in third behind Russell.

Verstappen gained two places with a brilliant launch to take fourth. Yuki Tsunoda and Antonelli were fifth and sixth, despite both serving five-second penalties for repeated track-limits infringements. Alonso secured seventh, with Sainz taking the final point.

Ferrari endured a miserable evening, with Leclerc slipping back at the start and finishing 13th. Lewis Hamilton fared even worse, crossing the line 17th on what is turning into another deeply frustrating weekend for the seven-time world champion.

The frustration deepened in qualifying later, where Hamilton suffered a second straight Q1 elimination – becoming part of an unwanted Ferrari record. His lap was only good enough for 18th on today's grid, matching his sprint starting position.

"I was generally feeling better. We made changes. The car was feeling better. Just wasn't great," the 40-year-old said. Asked for a message to his fans, he added: "I don't really have a message right now. I'm sorry. But I'm incredibly grateful for the support I've had all year. I wouldn't have made it through this year without them."

QMMF and LIC president al-Mannai meets motorsport officials at Qatar Grand Prix

President of the Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif al-Mannai, along with LIC CEO Abdulaziz Ali al-Mohannadi, yesterday met with Alexander Wurz, Chairperson of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), Georges-Louis Bouchez, Chairman of the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, and Toto Wolff, Team Principal of the Mercedes team, on the sidelines of the ongoing Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix. The discussions centred on strengthening collaboration and sharing insights to advance motorsport and enhance support for drivers at both regional and international levels.





QatarTribune
Sports
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025

"I am expecting it (F1 Qatar Grand Prix) to be a tough race. You are pulling G forces here at multiple points on the lap, so it's hard work but incredible fun.

Oscar Pisatri





QMMF & LIC PRESIDENT AL MANNAI MEETS MOTORSPORT OFFICIALS







President of Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al Mannai, along with Abdulaziz Ali Al Mohannadi, CEO of Lusail International Circuit, on Saturday met with Alexander Wurz, Chairperson of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), Georges-Louis Bouchez, Chairman of Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, and Toto Wolff, Team Principal of Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team, on the sidelines of the ongoing F1 Qatar Grand Prix. The meetings focused on strengthening collaboration and exchanging insights on advancing motorsport and supporting drivers at both regional and international levels. (TNN)

Piastri makes F1 title race statements with sprint win and Qatar GP pole

DPA
LUSAIL

OSCAR Piastri mounted the pressure on McLaren team-mate Lando Norris in the Formula One title race when he continued a perfect Qatar weekend on Saturday with victory in the sprint race and pole position for the Grand Prix proper at the Lusail International Circuit.

Piastri won the sprint race in Lusail for the third time in a row ahead of Mercedes driver George Russell, Norris and title holder Max Verstappen of Red Bull who is also still in contention.

A few hours later he claimed what could be a crucial first place on the grid for the Qatar GP in track record time ahead of Norris and Verstappen.

The promises at least an exciting start on the Lusail International Circuit where the sprint confirmed that overtaking is notoriously difficult and winning the battle into turn one could have a big influence on the championship race.

Norris can clinch title Norris dropped two points on Piastri in the sprint while gaining one on Verstappen. He is 22 points ahead of Piastri and 25 in front of Verstappen.

There are still 50 points up for grabs from Sunday's race and the season-ender in Abu Dhabi where there is no sprint.

With 25 points for a victory and 18 for second, Norris will clinch the title on Sunday without the help of others if he wins. If he doesn't he would need four points more than Piastri and not finish behind Verstappen to succeed with one race to spare.

Piastri eyes turnaround

But Piastri has been impeccable all weekend after some difficult months during which he lost the championship lead to Norris again. He has topped every session in Lusail and will hope to take the title race to the wire.

The sprint showed how crucial qualifying would be as the top three had started in the same order while Verstappen rose two spots from sixth on the grid to fourth right after at the start.

"It's been a good weekend so far. Everything went smoothly in the sprint there, so I'm happy with how it's been so far and just need to keep it rolling," Piastri said after the sprint.

Piastri delivers in qualifying

That's what he did when it mattered in qualifying where Norris led the way in the final session but a small mistake did not allow any improvement on last flying lap.

Piastri seized the moment to post 1 minute 19.387 seconds for the third track record of the night, beating Norris by .108 of a second and Verstappen by .264.

"We left the car pretty much the same. Everything felt great all weekend. If it ain't broke, don't fix it," Piastri said.

Looking ahead at Sunday and the title race, he added: "I will try my best, starting from the best spot so I will try and do some more of what I did today in the sprint and see what we can do."



Australian formula one driver Oscar Piastri of the McLaren Team drives during the qualifying session at the Lusail International Circuit ahead of the Formula One Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday. (PA Wire/DPA)



Action from the sprint race on Saturday, ahead of the Formula One Qatar Grand Prix on Sunday.

Norris remains hopeful

Norris lamented some understeer which led to the costly mistake and said he has not yet thought about how to attack Piastri at the start.

"We will review some things and then see if I can do better than I did this morning," he said. "Otherwise, I think we are in good position. The car has been feeling good, I was much happier today than yesterday so progress but it is a long race tomorrow."

Bouncing back from Vegas

DQ McLaren were also happy to be back on track after Norris and Piastri were disqualified at last weekend's Las Vegas Grand Prix for a technical infringement concerning the cars' skid blocks.

"It was a strong reaction in terms of the result on track," team principal Andrea Stella told *Sky*. "We understood why we found ourselves in that unfortunate circumstance. I'm very proud. Our culture was tested by a hard situation. We emerged even stronger and aware that we have more work to do to not face those situations."

Ferrari struggle again

It was another difficult day for Ferrari, with Charles Leclerc coming 13th in the sprint and placing 10th in qualifying where he also overcame a scary high-speed spin in Q3. Lewis Hamilton came third last 18th in the sprint and in qualifying.

"It's frustrating to see that even maximum risk, a good lap is still bringing us P10 and nothing better," Leclerc told *Sky TV*. He agreed with Hamilton that the car was feeling better, "but when you look at the timings we are very, very, very far."

In the sprint, Red Bull's Yuki Tsunoda originally finished fifth but was hit with a track limits five-second penalty which dropped him to sixth.

Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli inherited fifth, and Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin and Carlos Sainz of Williams were also in the points.



McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri (left), McLaren's British driver Lando Norris (C), and Red Bull Racing's Max Verstappen after the qualifying race ahead of the Qatar Airways Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix 2025 at the Lusail International Circuit on Saturday.

Results & Stadnings

Results of the sprint race at Qatar Grand Prix.
1. Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren) 26min 51.033sec, 2. George Russell (GBR/Mercedes) 26:55.984, 3. Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren) 26:57.312, 4. Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull) 27:00.087, 5. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN/Red Bull) 27:10.360, 6. Kimi Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes) 27:12.424, 7. Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin) 27:15.589, 8. Carlos Sainz (ESP/Williams) 27:18.366, 9. Isack Hadjar (FRA/Racing Bulls) 27:19.239, 10. Alex Albon (THA/Williams) 27:19.958, 11. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA/Sauber) 27:23.999, 12. Oliver Bearman (GBR/Haas) 27:25.562, 13. Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari) 27:26.215, 14. Liam Lawson (NZL/Racing Bulls) 27:27.949, 15. Esteban Ocon (FRA/Haas) 27:29.871, 16. Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Sauber) 27:30.671, 17. Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Ferrari) 27:37.204, 18. Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine) 28:00.567, 19. Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin) 28:08.993, 20. Franco Colapinto (ARG/Alpine) 28:11.837

World championship standings
Drivers: 1. Lando Norris (GBR) 396 pts, 2. Oscar Piastri (AUS) 374, 3. Max Verstappen (NED) 371, 4. George Russell (GBR) 301, 5. Charles Leclerc (MON) 226, 6. Lewis Hamilton (GBR) 152, 7. Kimi Antonelli (ITA) 140, 8. Alex Albon (THA) 73, 9. Isack Hadjar (FRA) 51, 10. Nico Hulkenberg (GER) 49, 11. Carlos Sainz (ESP) 49, 12. Fernando Alonso (ESP) 42, 13. Oliver Bearman (GBR) 41, 14. Liam Lawson (NZL) 36, 15. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN) 32, 16. Esteban Ocon (FRA) 32, 17. Lance Stroll (CAN) 32, 18. Pierre Gasly (FRA) 22, 19. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA) 19, 20. Franco Colapinto (ARG) 0, 21. Jack Doohan (AUS) 0
Constructors: 1. McLaren 770 pts - champions, 2. Mercedes 441, 3. Red Bull 400, 4. Ferrari 378, 5. William 122, 6. Racing Bulls 90, 7. Aston Martin 74, 8. Haas 73, 9. Sauber 68, 10. Alpine 22.
Grand Prix Starting Grid
1 Oscar Piastri (McLaren); 2 Lando Norris (McLaren); 3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull); 4 George Russell (Mercedes); 5 Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes); 6 Isack Hadjar (RB); 7 Carlos Sainz Jnr (Williams); 8 Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin); 9 Pierre Gasly (Alpine); 10 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 11 Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber); 12 Liam Lawson (RB); 13 Oliver Bearman (Haas); 14 Gabriel Bortoleto (Sauber); 15 Alexander Albon (Williams); 16 Yuki Tsunoda (Red Bull); 17 Esteban Ocon (Haas); 18 Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari); 19 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); 20 Franco Colapinto (Alpine).

Amro Al Hamad in third appearance as FIA Formula 1 Steward at Qatar Grand Prix

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
LUSAIL

AMRO Al Hamad, Executive Director of Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) is serving as an FIA Formula 1 Steward at the Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix 2025 — marking his third appearance in this prestigious role, following previous stewarding appointments in 2021, 2024.

In 2021, Al Hamad became the first and only Qatari to earn the FIA F1 Steward License, a milestone that reflects both his expertise and his commitment to advancing motorsport governance in the region.

Beyond his stewarding duties, Al Hamad also serves as the Vice President of the FIA Single Seater Commission, further solidifying his influence within international motorsport. Holding two significant FIA positions, he continues to represent Qatar with excellence and unwavering passion for the sport.



Amro Al Hamad, Executive Director of Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF).

'Talking nonsense' – Norris fires back after Verstappen's title jibe

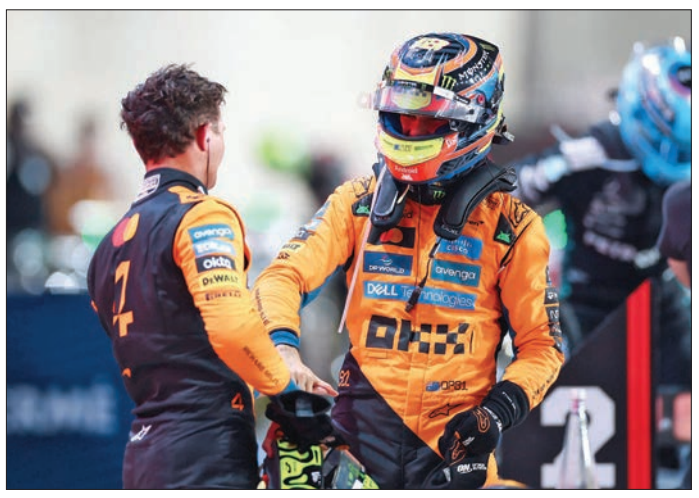
PA MEDIA/DPA
LUSAIL

LANDO Norris hit back at Max Verstappen's dig that he would "easily" have won the world championship for McLaren by claiming there are things his rival "doesn't have much of a clue about".

On the eve of the penultimate round of the season in Qatar, Red Bull's Verstappen threw shade at Norris and team-mate Oscar Piastri when he said the title battle would be over if he was driving their car.

Piastri won Saturday's sprint race from pole position to reduce Norris' championship advantage from 24 points to 22. Norris finished third, a place ahead of Verstappen, who is now 25 points adrift of the British driver.

Norris will secure his first world title on Sunday if he outscores Piastri by four points and finishes ahead of Verstappen in any position.



McLaren's British driver Lando Norris (left) with McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri after the sprint race ahead of the Qatar Airways Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix 2025 at the Lusail International Circuit on Saturday.

Responding to Verstappen's jibe, Norris said: "Max is very welcome to say everything he wants. He has kind of earned the right because he has won four world championships.

"I have a lot of respect, and he has achieved an incredible amount - more than anyone could dream of achieving - and that gives anyone credit.

"He generally has a good clue about a lot of things, but there is also a lot of things he doesn't have much of a clue about.

"But it is also Red Bull's way of going about things, an aggressive nature and just talking nonsense a lot of the time.

"It depends if you want to listen to it and talk about it he like he would love you to do, or do what we do as a team which is keeping our heads down and stay focused.

"Maybe he would have done (won the title easily) but he hasn't done so far."

QATARI DRIVERS MARK STRONG PRESENCE AT WRC SAUDI ARABIA

Qatari drivers delivered a sharp, disciplined showing at World Rally Championship- WRC Saudi Arabia, proving their pace and consistency across key categories. Rally legend Nasser Al Attiyah showed clear speed through the week. He matched the leading WRC times on several stages and maintained strong rhythm despite multiple punctures that cost minutes. He kept pushing and finished 11th in RC1. In WRC2, Abdulaziz Al Kuwari produced a steady run in a competitive field. He placed 4th in the WRC2 Challenger class and finished as the top Arab driver in WRC2, showing clean execution through the stages. Mohammad Al Marri drove with control and confidence to win RC4. Rashed Al Muhannadi backed him up with a solid run to take 2nd place, giving Qatar a 1–2 finish in the category.











F1 Qatar Grand Prix continues to wow fans from all across and ages

VINAY NAYUDU
DOHA

THE three-day annual Qatar Airways F1 Qatar Grand Prix extravaganza is continuing to thrill fans from far and wide at the Lusail International Circuit (LIC).

Every third or fourth spectator at the LIC you'd meet could be from as far as Australia, The Netherlands or Canada!

So what is it that attracts crazy fans of Formula 1 motorsport to Qatar? "It is the nice free feeling and the grand ambience," says Elyssa Redmond, who along with Cassidy have travelled to Doha all the way from Brisbane in Australia.

"We are of course F1 fans and we have been to other races in Singapore and elsewhere but this time we chose to come to Qatar. It's quite nice here and we are having a great time," quipped the two while speaking to Qatar Tribune.

"It's beautiful here absolutely. The lights, the track," said Cassidy. "If we compare with the 500,000 in the whole weekend in Melbourne, it's a lot better here," added Elyssa. "Quite nice, the people, the place."

A father, accompanied with his daughter, had this to say: "Qatar No. 1. All way here from Vancouver in Canada!"

Two travelling fans from Hong Kong - Adonis and Kay said they were enjoying both the hospitality and the culture of Qatar. "I think it is much more convenient here than in Europe. We took the Metro and then the shuttle to reach the circuit, and it was comfortable," said Adonis.

Prambs Isi from Spain was more focused on who will triumph in Qatar. "We got Max (Verstappen) who is normally very dominant in Qatar having won almost every Grand Prix here but it is going to be tight. But my hunch is McLaren are going to win!"

Christine from Doha, said, "It's either going to be Max (Verstappen) or Lando Norris but I am still rooting for Charles Leclerc."

From the stands to the grid and paddock to the entertainment areas, LIC offers a lively environment for fans of all ages, resulting in packed areans.

The interactive Fan Zone and F1 merchanding stores, eateries and music zones are buzzing with activities providing for a great fan experience.

Fans interacted directly with drivers and team managers receiving exclusive merchandise during the Fan Forum.

For many international attendees who traveled from across the globe, this forum offered a once in a lifetime opportunity. Adding to the premium race weekend experience, Paddock Club guests enjoyed an exclusive Pit Lane Walk, giving them unparalleled access to team garages and behind the scenes activity. The excitement continued with the Paddock Club Track Tour, offering a guided lap of the circuit and unique insights into the challenges drivers face on track. The off track entertainment program continued with British singer Seal, delivering a soulful performance that delighted fans at the Lusail Live Stage.

The presence of tennis star Novak Djokovic, who also did a movement session at the track, added to the spectacle.

The floodlit Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix is the crown jewel of Lusail International Circuit's annual calendar, and is set to host the F1 extravaganza until at least 2032.

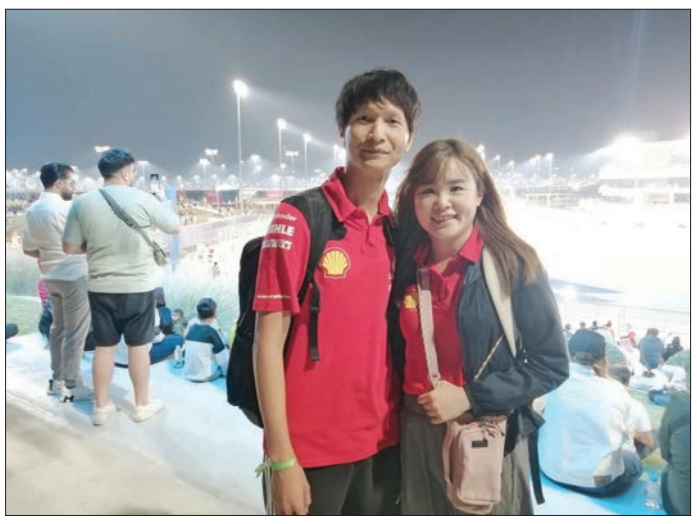
The event lost also includes a number of international racing galas such as MotoGP Qatar Grand Prix, World Superbike Championship (WSBK), Porsche Carrera Cup Middle East, apart from regional and national motorsport events.

In recent years, the circuit has undergone major upgrades to enhance the experience of both competitors and fans alike. The paddock was expanded, garages were rebuilt, and hospitality areas were redesigned to meet the highest F1 standards.

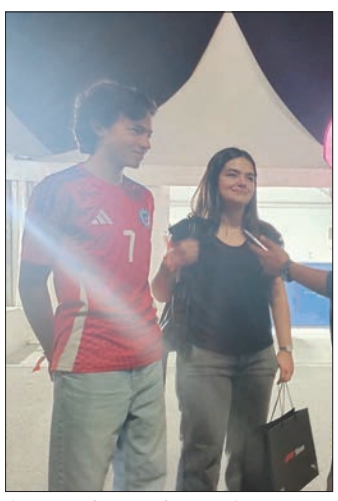
A new track surface was added to handle the demands of current-generation cars. Spectator capacity jumped from 8,000 to 52,000, turning Lusail into a large-scale venue capable of hosting the biggest races long-term.

In recent years, the circuit underwent major upgrades to enhance the experience of both competitors and fans alike. The paddock was expanded, garages were rebuilt, and hospitality areas were redesigned to meet the highest F1 standards. A new track surface was added to handle the demands of current-generation cars.

Spectator capacity jumped from 8,000 to 52,000, turning Lusail into a large-scale venue capable of hosting the biggest races long-term.



Adonis and Kay from Hong Kong at the Lusail International Circuit on Friday.





Spanish fans (left) and Cassidy and Elyssda Redmond from Australia at the Lusail International Circuit on Friday.



F1 drivers with fans during the Fan Forum event at the Lusail International Circuit on Saturday.



> We are pleased to see such a strong and enthusiastic turnout at Lusail International Circuit for Sprint Saturday, as the FORMULA 1® QATAR AIRWAYS QATAR GRAND PRIX continues to deliver world-class racing. This event reflects the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030, uniting passionate fans from around the world while proudly highlighting Qatar's rich culture and renowned hospitality on the global stage.
>
> **Abdulaziz Ali Al Mohannadi, CEO, Lusail International Circuit**

Foden scores late City winner against Leeds

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

PHIL Foden scored a stoppage-time winner as Manchester City killed off a Leeds fightback to a snatch a dramatic 3-2 victory at the Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

Struggling Leeds had remarkably fought back from 2-0 down at the interval to level and put themselves in sight of an unlikely and much-needed three points in the Premier League.

That would have eased the pressure on their under-fire manager Daniel Farke but Foden, who had begun the afternoon by scoring inside the opening minute, had other ideas.

As the game went into 10 added minutes, the England midfielder's low strike found the bottom corner.

The goal was greeted with much relief by the hosts, who had looked comfortable after Josko Gvardiol had added to Foden's early strike.

Leeds were revived by the half-time introduction of Dominic Calvert-Lewin, who pulled one back after a blunder by Matheus Nunes and then won the penalty from which Lukas Nmecha equalised at the second attempt.

Brian Brobbey came off the bench to snatch Sunderland victory as they fought back from two goals down to beat Bournemouth with the same 3-2 scoreline and in saimilar, although not as late, fashion.

Amine Adli's opener and Tyler Adams' stunning long-range strike had given Andoni Iraola's men a dream start on a wintry afternoon at the Stadium of Light.

However, Enzo Le Fee's penalty and an equally emphatic Bertrand Traore finish either side of half-time set the stage for Brobbey - who denied Arsenal victory on Wearside with a late equaliser in his side's last home game - to win it in the 69th minute.

Igor Thiago scored twice to help Brentford beat relegation-threatened Burnley 3-1 after an exciting finish.

The Brazilian opened the scoring in the 81st minute from the penalty spot before Zian Flemming responded with a spot-kick of his own a few minutes later.



Manchester City's Phil Foden (3rd R) scores his side's first goal during the English Premier League match against Leeds United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Saturday. (PA Wire/DPA)

Just as it appeared that the spoils would be shared in west London, Thiago popped up in the box with a brilliant 86th-minute finish before Dango Ouattara wrapped up the points in stoppage time.

The later games are Everton v Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur v Fulham. Sunday's fixtures include a table-topping London derby between Chelsea and runaway leaders Arsenal.

Results; Sunderland 3 Bournemouth 2; Brentford 3 Burnley 1; Manchester City 3 Leeds United 2; Everton 1 Newcastle United 4.

Quick read

Napoli miss midfielders for Roma date

Serie A champions Napoli have several injury absentees when they take on leaders Roma on Sunday. Kevin De Bruyne and Frank Anguissa are long-term absentees and felloe midfielder Billy Gilmour is set to undergo undergo surgery on a groin injury. Napoli have got back to winning ways as before last week's 3-1 win over Atalanta, Napoli had been winless in their last three matches, while overcoming Qarabag 2-0 in the Champions League. Roma travel to the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona on the back of a four-match winning run in all competitions, seeing off Danish side FC Midtjylland 4-1 on Thursday in the Europa League. **(PA Media/DPA)**

Piastri marks hat-trick of Qatar sprint wins to trim Norris' lead

McLaren's Australian driver also seals pole for today's Qatar Grand Prix on dominant evening at Lusail

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: With the spotlight fixed on championship leader Lando Norris and a revived Max Verstappen ahead of the Qatar Grand Prix, Oscar Piastri had slipped somewhat out of the conversation following a recent dip in form. But at Lusail International Circuit, the Australian reminded everyone why he remains a serious title contender.

Piastri is delivering one of his sharpest weekends of the season. After topping free practice and securing sprint pole, the 24-year-old led the 19-lap sprint from start to finish, claiming his third consecutive Qatar sprint win under the lights.

The victory cut Norris' lead to 22 points, breathing new life into Piastri's bid for a maiden drivers' crown.

His win was never under threat, finishing 4.951 seconds ahead of Mercedes' George Russell, with Norris another 1.3 seconds back in third. Four-time champion Verstappen, unable to match McLaren's pace, came fourth and now trails Norris by 25 points.

Further down, Yuki Tsunoda and Kimi Antonelli – both handed five-second penalties for exceeding track limits – finished fifth and sixth. Fernando Alonso ended seventh for Aston Martin, while Carlos Sainz claimed the final point in eighth for Williams.

Piastri's win was his first since the Dutch Grand Prix in August, a result that had once given him a commanding lead. Since then, only a podium in Italy had interrupted a lean run. He credited the characteristics of the Lusail track for helping him rediscover his rhythm.

"We're having a good weekend so far. Everything went smoothly in the short race, so I'm very happy. I just need to keep going like this," said Piastri.

"This circuit has higher speeds and more grip. I've always think the past few weekends were more about things going wrong, rather than lacking pace."

Norris, who can clinch the world title with a victory in today's race, said he kept his focus ahead.

"I never saw Max, just George ahead. I wasn't looking behind. It felt like a lot of pushing, and it will be a tough race tomorrow," he said.

Verstappen tried to challenge Norris but soon dropped back, complaining of bouncing issues in his Red Bull.

Ferrari endured another difficult outing, with Charles Leclerc slipping to 13th after losing ground early. Lewis Hamilton continued his struggles, finishing 17th in another disappointing weekend.



FROM LEFT: Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic, Mercedes' British driver George Russell, McLaren's Oscar Piastri and McLaren's Lando Norris pose for a photo after the sprint race. PICS: AFP

The sprint unfolded in a lively atmosphere, with Lusail's grandstands packed and the roar of the cars echoing around the circuit.

"We are pleased to see such a strong and enthusiastic turnout at Lusail International Circuit for Sprint Saturday," said Abdulaziz Ali Al Mohannadi, CEO of Lusail International Circuit.

"This event reflects the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030, uniting passionate fans from around the world while proudly showcasing Qatar's rich culture and hospitality."

Piastri caps fine night with Qatar GP pole

Later, Piastri secured pole position for the Qatar Grand Prix after edging title rival Norris.

"We didn't expect it to be so good, but Q3 was really good on the new tyres, so very happy," he said.

"It will be pretty tough, with the two-stops we're going to be pushing pretty hard the whole time. I don't think it's going to be as hot as a couple of years ago, so hopefully it's not as bad as that."

Norris added: "Oscar did a good lap and drove very well all weekend. Nothing to complain about, just didn't do the lap, and still P2 for tomorrow."

Russell qualified third while Verstappen came fourth for the 57-lap race.

"I think this qualifying was a little bit better even though we were still quite far off. At least we are P3 and starting on the second row, it creates better opportunities because we know it's quite hard to pass around here," said Verstappen.

Hamilton struggled again, posting the 18th fastest time and failing to advance from the first qualifying session. It was his fifth straight early exit in qualifying.

> *We are pleased to see such a strong and enthusiastic turnout at Lusail International Circuit for Sprint Saturday. This event reflects the ambitions of Qatar National Vision 2030, uniting passionate fans from around the world while proudly showcasing Qatar's rich culture and hospitality.*
> ***Abdulaziz Ali Al Mohannadi,** CEO of Lusail International Circuit*

QATAR GRAND PRIX QUALIFYING RESULTS

1 Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 1:19.387
2 Lando Norris (McLaren) 1:19.495
3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing) 1:19.651
4 George Russell (Mercedes) 1:19.662
5 Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) 1:19.846
6 Isack Hadjar (Racing Bulls) 1:20.114
7 Carlos Sainz (Williams) 1:20.251
8 Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin) 1:20.219
9 Pierre Gasly (Alpine) 1:20.324
10 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 1:20.343
11 Nico Hulkenberg (Kick Sauber) 1:20.353
12 Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls) 1:20.433
13 Oliver Bearman (Haas F1 Team) 1:20.438
14 Gabriel Bortoleto (Kick Sauber) 1:20.534
15 Alexander Albon (Williams) 1:20.629
16 Yuki Tsunoda (Red Bull Racing) 1:20.761
17 Esteban Ocon (Haas F1 Team) 1:20.864
18 Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) 1:20.907
19 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin) 1:21.058
20 Franco Colapinto (Alpine) 1:21.137

Amro Al Hamad makes third appearance as FIA Formula 1 Steward at Qatar Grand Prix

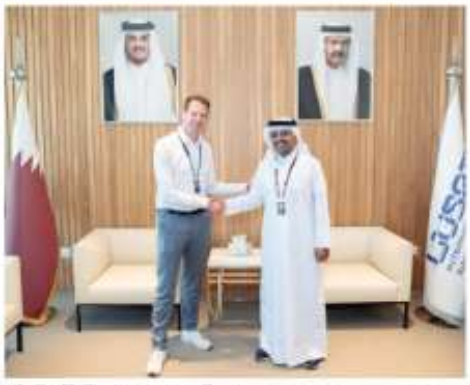
THE PENINSULA



LUSAIL: Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) Executive Director Amro Al Hamad **(pictured)** is serving as an FIA Formula 1 Steward at the Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix, marking his third appearance in this prestigious role, following previous stewarding appointments in 2021 and 2024.

In 2021, Amro Al Hamad a milestone that reflects both his expertise and his commitment to advancing motorsport governance in the region.

Beyond his stewarding duties, Amro Al Hamad also serves as the Vice President of the FIA Single Seater Commission, further solidifying his influence within international motorsport. Holding two significant FIA positions, he continues to represent Qatar with



Al Mannai meets top motorsport officials

Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) President Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al-Mannai, along with LIC CEO Abdulaziz Ali Al-Mohannadi, yesterday met with Alexander Wurz, Chairperson of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), Georges-Louis Bouchez, Chairman

August, a result that had once given him a commanding lead. Since then, only a podium in Italy had interrupted a lean run. He credited the characteristics of the Lusail track for helping him rediscover his rhythm.

"We're having a good weekend so far. Everything went smoothly in the short race, so I'm very happy. I just need to keep going like this," said Piastri.

"This circuit has higher speeds and more grip. I've always enjoyed it here, and I

Amro Al Hamad makes third appearance as FIA Formula 1 Steward at Qatar Grand Prix

THE PENINSULA



LUSAIL: Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) Executive Director Amro Al Hamad **(pictured)** is serving as an FIA Formula 1 Steward at the Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix marking his third appearance in this prestigious role, following previous stewarding appointments in 2021 and 2024.

In 2021, Amro Al Hamad became the first and only Qatari to earn the FIA F1 Steward License, a milestone that reflects both his expertise and his commitment to advancing motorsport governance in the region.

Beyond his stewarding duties, Amro Al Hamad also serves as the Vice President of the FIA Single Seater Commission, further solidifying his influence within international motorsport. Holding two significant FIA positions, he continues to represent Qatar with excellence and unwavering passion for the sport.



McLaren's Australian driver Oscar Piastri and McLaren's British driver Lando Norris drive during the sprint race.



Al Mannai meets top motorsport officials

Qatar Motor and Motorcycle Federation (QMMF) and Lusail International Circuit (LIC) President Abdulrahman bin Abdullatif Al-Mannai, along with LIC CEO Abdulaziz Ali Al-Mohannadi, yesterday met with Alexander Wurz, Chairperson of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA), Georges-Louis Bouchez, Chairman of the Spa-Francorchamps Circuit, and Toto Wolff, Team Principal of the Mercedes team, on the sidelines of the ongoing Formula 1 Qatar Grand Prix. The discussions centred on strengthening collaboration and sharing insights to advance motorsport and enhance support for drivers at both regional and international levels.



QATAR SPRINT RACE RESULTS

1. Oscar Piastri (AUS/McLaren) 26min 51.003sec
2. George Russell (GBR/Mercedes) 26.55.984
3. Lando Norris (GBR/McLaren) 26.57.312
4. Max Verstappen (NED/Red Bull) 27.00.087
5. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN/Red Bull) 27.10.360
6. Kimi Antonelli (ITA/Mercedes) 27.12.424
7. Fernando Alonso (ESP/Aston Martin) 27.15.589
8. Carlos Sainz (ESP/Williams) 27.18.366
9. Isack Hadjar (FRA/Racing Bulls) 27.19.239
10. Alex Albon (THA/Williams) 27.19.958
11. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA/Sauber) 27.23.999
12. Oliver Bearman (GBR/Haas) 27.25.562
13. Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari) 27.26.215
14. Liam Lawson (NZL/Racing Bulls) 27.27.949
15. Esteban Ocon (FRA/Haas) 27.29.871
16. Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Sauber) 27.30.671
17. Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Ferrari) 27.37.204
18. Pierre Gasly (FRA/Alpine) 28.00.567
19. Lance Stroll (CAN/Aston Martin) 28.08.993
20. Franco Colapinto (ARG/Alpine) 28.11.837

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS

DRIVERS

1. Lando Norris (GBR) 396 pts
2. Oscar Piastri (AUS) 374
3. Max Verstappen (NED) 371
4. George Russell (GBR) 301
5. Charles Leclerc (MON) 226
6. Lewis Hamilton (GBR) 152
7. Kimi Antonelli (ITA) 140
8. Alex Albon (THA) 73
9. Isack Hadjar (FRA) 51
10. Nico Hulkenberg (GER) 49
11. Carlos Sainz (ESP) 49
12. Fernando Alonso (ESP) 42
13. Oliver Bearman (GBR) 41
14. Liam Lawson (NZL) 36
15. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN) 32
16. Esteban Ocon (FRA) 32
17. Lance Stroll (CAN) 32
18. Pierre Gasly (FRA) 22
19. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA) 19
20. Franco Colapinto (ARG) 0
21. Jack Doohan (AUS) 0

STANDINGS - CONSTRUCTORS

1. McLaren 770 pts - champions
2. Mercedes 441
3. Red Bull 409
4. Ferrari 378
5. Williams 122
6. Racing Bulls 90
7. Aston Martin 74
8. Haas 73
9. Sauber 68
10. Alpine 22



McLaren's Oscar Piastri secures pole position at the end of the qualifying session.