


Marc Marquez leads the pack during the sprint race.

Marc Marquez wins sprint to move within reach of world title in Qatar

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Marc Marquez moved closer to his eighth MotoGP world title after winning a dramatic sprint at Lusail International Circuit yesterday, surviving a collision with pole-sitter Marco Bezzecchi to take victory.

The race was red-flagged on the second lap after a heavy crash involving Marquez's Ducati team-mate Francesco Bagnaia and Fermin Aldeguer at the final corner.

The Ducati rider and Bezzecchi fought for the lead after the restart, but their battle ended on the fourth lap when the Aprilia rider attempted an overtake at Turn 1. The two made contact as Marquez moved back towards the racing line, sending Bezzecchi crashing out.

The stewards investigated the incident but decided to take no further action, allowing Marquez to continue towards victory.

With Bezzecchi out of title contention, closest title rival Jorge Martin emerged as Marquez's main challenger. Returning after suffering a broken right wrist, Martin produced an impressive recovery from 11th on the grid to challenge the championship leader.

Martin put pressure on Marquez but could not find a way past the Ducati rider. He eventually lost second place to Fabio Di Giannantonio on the final lap to finish third.

A second-place finish for Martin would have denied Marquez a chance to clinch the title in Qatar. Instead, the victory extended Marquez's championship lead to 49 points, leaving Martin as his only remaining challenger.

"It was a strange sprint race, especially with the red flag. I was super concentrated. When I opened a gap, I tried to control the race and 12 points are very important," Marquez said.


Marc Marquez celebrates after winning the sprint.

Marquez can seal the championship today if he wins the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar and Martin fails to score. Martin, however, needs to finish 15th or higher to keep the title race alive, with two rounds remaining after Qatar.

"I'm really proud of the work I'm doing. When I was fighting with Marc it was really nice. Finally, I didn't have the power to keep pushing, but to be here on the podium is incredible. For me, it's already a victory," Martin said.

Bezzecchi was disappointed to crash out after his clash with Marquez, saying he had little chance of avoiding the contact.

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> ***Marc Marquez***

"Not the sprint I wanted, of course, after a very good qualifying, a very good weekend," Bezzecchi told TNT Sports.

"You saw already the images. At the end, I tried to keep my line, and the contact happened, so at the end I couldn't really do anything to avoid it.

"At the end, the one that crashed was me, but it's like this. So we move forward, and we try to bounce back tomorrow."

A Ducati statement, quoting MotoGP Medical Director Angel Charte, said initial medical examinations at the Lusail International Circuit Medical Centre had revealed two fractures in Bagnaia's right foot, involving the fourth and fifth metatarsals. The Italian was ruled out of the Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar.

Raul Fernandez finished fourth, ahead of Johann Zarco and Pedro Acosta, while Ai Ogura, Enea Bastianini and Iker Lecuona completed the points-scoring positions. Aldeguer finished 11th after serving two long-lap penalties.

Earlier, Bezzecchi claimed pole position with a record-breaking lap of 1:50.028, beating Marquez by 0.266 seconds. Di Giannantonio, riding for Ducati's VR46 team, was third, 0.299 seconds off the pace.

Martin, Bezzecchi's Aprilia team-mate, qualified 11th on his return from injury but produced an impressive recovery to finish third in the sprint.

QATAR AIRWAYS GRAND PRIX OF QATAR 2026

SPRINT RESULT

1. Marc Marquez (Ducati Lenovo Team)	18:46.450
2. Fabio Di Giannantonio (Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing)	+0.862
3. Jorge Martin (Aprilia Racing)	+1.519
4. Raul Fernandez (SuperFile Trackhouse MotoGP Team)	+2.700
5. Johann Zarco (Castrol Honda LCR)	+3.720
6. Pedro Acosta (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing)	+4.664
7. Ai Ogura (SuperFile Trackhouse MotoGP Team)	+4.858
8. Enea Bastianini (Red Bull KTM Tech3)	+5.582
9. Iker Lecuona (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP)	+8.082
10. Diogo Moreira (Pro Honda LCR)	+9.220
11. Fermin Aldeguer (BK8 Gresini Racing MotoGP)	+9.429
12. Brad Binder (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing)	+9.483
13. Luca Marini (Honda HRC Castrol)	+12.727
14. Franco Morbidelli (Pertamina Enduro VR46 Racing)	+12.874
15. Maverick Vinales (Red Bull KTM Tech3)	+13.483
16. Jake Dixon (Honda HRC Castrol)	+19.373

QATAR AIRWAYS GRAND PRIX OF QATAR 2026 - QUALIFYING RESULTS

Pos	Rider, Nationality, Team	Time/Difference
1	Marco Bezzecchi (ITA) Aprilia Racing	1'50.028s
2	Marc Marquez (SPA) Ducati Lenovo	+0.266s
3	Fabio Di Giannantonio (ITA) Pertamina VR46 Ducati	+0.299s
4	Raul Fernandez (SPA) Trackhouse Aprilia	+0.429s
5	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA) Ducati Lenovo	+0.564s
6	Ai Ogura (JPN) Trackhouse Aprilia	+0.568s
7	Johann Zarco (FRA) Castrol Honda LCR	+0.707s
8	Pedro Acosta (SPA) Red Bull KTM	+0.844s
9	Fermin Aldeguer (SPA) BK8 Gresini Ducati	+0.862s
10	Enea Bastianini (ITA) Red Bull KTM Tech3	+0.973s
11	Jorge Martin (SPA) Aprilia Racing	+1.036s
12	Brad Binder (RSA) Red Bull KTM	+1.876s
13	Franco Morbidelli (ITA) Pertamina VR46 Ducati	1'51.271s
14	Luca Marini (ITA) Honda HRC Castrol	1'51.350s
15	Iker Lecuona (SPA) BK8 Gresini Ducati	1'51.387s
16	Diogo Moreira (BRA) Pro Honda LCR	1'51.504s
17	Jake Dixon (GBR) Honda HRC Castrol	1'51.621s
18	Maverick Viñales (SPA) Red Bull KTM Tech3	1'51.991s

Spain retain women's FIP World Cup crown

THE PENINSULA


Spain's players celebrate after winning the world title.

DOHA: Spain successfully defended their women's FIP World Cup title, defeating Argentina 2-0 in the final in Doha yesterday.

At the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex, Ariana Sanchez and Andrea Ustero gave Spain an early advantage with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Osoro Ulrich and Fassio Goyeneche in the opening match.

Paula Josemaria and Gemma Triay then clinched the title in style, overcoming Delfina Brea Sensei and Claudia Jensen 6-2, 6-7, 6-3 in a closely fought second encounter to seal the decisive point.

The third match, featuring Bea Gonzalez and Claudia Fernandez against Virginia Riera and Julieta Bidahorria, was not played as Spain had already secured the title.

Italy claimed third place after defeating France 2-0 in the bronze-medal match.

Giulia Sussarello and C. M. Baldi secured the opening point with a 6-4, 6-6 victory, while Giulia Dal Pozzo and Emily Stellato sealed Italy's win with a 7-6, 6-3 success over Alix Collombon and Louise Bahurel.

The third match was not played.

Ezpeleta praises Qatar's preparations, hails LIC as top facility on MotoGP calendar


Carlos Ezpeleta

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: MotoGP Deputy CEO Carlos Ezpeleta has praised Qatar's preparations for the MotoGP Qatar Airways Grand Prix of Qatar, describing Lusail International Circuit as probably the best facility on the championship calendar and saying this year's event matches the high standards of previous editions.

Ezpeleta's comments reflect the strong standing Qatar holds within the championship, with Lusail International Circuit widely regarded as one of the premier venues in world motorcycle racing.

Speaking to media, Ezpeleta highlighted the strong relationship MotoGP has built with Qatar over more than 20 years. Since first welcoming the championship in 2004, the country has grown into a landmark fixture on the calendar and a regular stage for some of the sport's most memorable racing.

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> ***Carlos Ezpeleta***
> ***MotoGP Deputy CEO***

"We are really happy to be in Doha. Qatar is now a landmark event for us because we have been coming here for over 20 years. We've always had incredibly good racing and we feel part of Qatar, and Qatar feels part of MotoGP," he said.

Lusail made history in 2008 when it hosted MotoGP's first-ever night race, and racing under the floodlights in Doha has since become one of the championship's most recognisable spectacles.

Ezpeleta also commended the circuit's preparations and the warm hospitality extended to the championship, its teams and its staff. He noted a sign of the growing interest surrounding the event, and said the response from teams and riders had been positive.

Looking ahead, Ezpeleta discussed the 2027 technical regulations, which mark one of the most significant changes to the championship in recent years. The new rules, including new engines, reduced aerodynamics and new tyres, are aimed at improving safety, creating more overtaking opportunities and enhancing the overall racing experience for riders and fans alike.

Al Duhail fight back to beat Al Gharafa as Al Sadd face Al Rayyan


Al Duhail players celebrate a goal against Al Gharafa.

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Duhail staged an impressive comeback to defeat Al Gharafa 2-1 in the Qatar Stars League at Thani bin Jassim Stadium yesterday.

The victory lifted The Red Knights temporarily to the top of the standings with 21 points, while Al Gharafa remained on nine points.

The Cheetahs made a promising start and took the lead in the 23rd minute through Florinel Coman, putting Al Duhail on the back foot.

The visitors went into half-time trailing by a goal but returned with renewed determination after the break. Polish striker Krzysztof Piatek brought Al Duhail level before Boubakary Soumare scored the winner in the 63rd minute to complete the comeback.

The victory strengthened Al Duhail's position in the title race, while Al Gharafa were left disappointed after surrendering their lead.

Earlier at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium, Al Shamal cruised to a 5-0 victory over Al Sailiya.

Wesley Said opened the scoring in the 20th minute before Riyad Mahrez doubled the lead five minutes before half-time.

Tiago Silva struck two minutes after the restart, with Moufak Awad (61st) and Baghdad Bounedjah (65th) completing the rout.

The victory, Al Shamal's third of the season, took them to 12 points, while Al Sailiya remained on one point after suffering their eighth defeat.

Meanwhile, Al Sadd and Al Rayyan face off in the Qatar Clasico today, with both sides level on 18 points.

The match at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium carries added significance as defending champions Al Sadd look to maintain their title push, while Al Rayyan aim to strengthen their position at the top of the standings.

Al Sadd coach Razvan Lucescu expects a tough contest, saying his team must give their best to collect all three points.

"We are well aware of the importance of this match," Lucescu said.

Al Rayyan coach Vicente Moreno acknowledged the importance of the Clasico for the club's supporters and called on his players to produce a strong performance.

"We know how important this match is for our fans and for us. We want to win tomorrow and I have full confidence in my players," Moreno said.

Earlier today, ninth-placed Lusail, with nine points, take on 11th-placed Qatar SC, who have six points, at Al Khor Stadium at 5:15pm. The Clasico kicks off at Jassim bin Hamad Stadium at 7:30pm.

Argentina FA to appeal World Cup final sanctions to CAS

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's football association (AFA) announced yesterday it had appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the sanctions FIFA imposed on it over World Cup final incidents.

Midfielder Leandro Paredes was the hardest hit with a 10-game ban and $90,000 fine for his role in clashes with Spain players.

He grabbed Eric Garcia by the throat and wrestled Gavi to the ground while holding his substitute's bib, which led to an escalation in the incidents on the field after the final that Spain won 1-0 at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey on July 19.

The AFA was fined $321,000 for breaches of FIFA's disciplinary code relating to using a sports event for making demonstrations of a non-sporting nature, team misconduct, and discriminatory chants and gestures by its supporters.

Nahuel Molina and Thiago Almada were also hit with bans and fines, as was Roberto Ayala, a member of Argentina's coaching team.

In a statement, AFA said FIFA's appeals body had rejected their complaint against the sanctions handed out to Paredes and the association, but had reduced Molina's punishment from a seven-match ban and $90,000 fine to four games and $60,000.

AFA also stated it would now take its appeals against its own and Paredes's sanctions to CAS. — ***AFP***

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Finland clinch skeet mixed team world title in Lusail

THE PENINSULA

LUSAIL: Finland's Marjut Heinonen and Eetu Kallioinen claimed the Skeet Mixed Team world title at the ISSF World Championship in Lusail yesterday, holding off a determined challenge from Peru's Daniella Borda Olaechea and Nicolas Pacheco Espinosa. China 1 completed the podium with bronze at the Lusail Shooting Range.

The final delivered a close contest between Finland and Peru, with both teams trading targets throughout the competition. Finland eventually came out on top with 50 hits, just one ahead of Peru, who finished with 49 in a gripping fight for gold.

Heinonen and Kallioinen combined for a winning performance, with Kallioinen contributing 27 hits and Heinonen adding 23. The Finnish pair maintained their composure through the closing stages to secure the world title.

Peru's Borda Olaechea and Pacheco Espinosa pushed the champions all the way. Pacheco recorded 25 hits, while Borda added 24, leaving their team just one target short of gold with a total of 49.

China 1, represented by Jiang Yiting and Lyu Jianlin, took bronze with 43 hits. Jiang contributed 23 targets and Lyu added 20.

India 1, featuring Raiza Dhillon and Mairaj Ahmad Khan, finished fourth with 19 hits. Dhillon recorded seven, while Khan contributed 12.

Hosts Qatar narrowly missed out on a place in the final, finishing seventh in the qualification round with 144 hits. The home team, represented by Reem Ghanem Al-Sharshani and Rashid Saleh Al-Athba, finished with identical scores of 72 targets each. Reem hit 23, 25 and 24 targets across the three rounds, while Rashid recorded 25, 23 and 24, leaving Qatar just outside the top six.


Finland's Marjut Heinonen and Eetu Kallioinen celebrate their victory.

Arab Championships: El Hali takes early lead at Doha Golf Club


The 45th Arab Men's and 17th Arab Women's Golf Championships, features 72 golfers from 14 countries competing for individual and team honours.

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Morocco's Reda El Hali surged to the top of the men's individual leaderboard yesterday with a five-under-par round as Qatar made its hosting debut at the 45th Arab Men's and 17th Arab Women's Golf Championships in Doha.

The tournament, running through Tuesday at Doha Golf Club, features 72 golfers from 14 countries competing for individual and team honours.

El Hali leads the men's standings at five under par, two strokes clear of the UAE's Jonathan Selvaraj. Morocco's Hugo Mazen Trommetter and Mohamed Bouhamou share third place with Bahrain's Khalifa Al Marisi at one under par.

Qatar's Ali Abdullah Al Shahrani and Saleh Ali Al Kaabi share seventh place at one over, while Daniel Sokolov is 10th at two over and Fahad Mir 24th at six over.

In the women's competition, the UAE's Intissar Rich and Lara Al Shuaib share the lead with Morocco's Rim Imni, all at three under par. Qatar's Nada Mir is 15th at 14 over, followed by Mouza Al Thani in 16th at 16 over.

Morocco lead the men's team standings at seven under par (209 strokes), ahead of the UAE (214) and Qatar (220). In the women's team event, the UAE lead at six under, followed by Morocco (two under), Tunisia, Egypt and Qatar.

India edge NZ by four runs to take 2-0 lead

WELLINGTON: India's seam bowlers thrived in helpful conditions for a second straight one-day international as they beat New Zealand by four runs yesterday to take a 2-0 series lead.

New Zealand were unable their defend their total of 134, with wet conditions in Wellington having reduced game two to a maximum 47 overs each and made batting conditions treacherous.

India were 113-7 off 26 overs when rain ended play, four runs ahead of the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern par score of 109.

KL Rahul was at the crease on 26 and Auqib Nabi on one, with the pair having done just enough to put the tourists in front.

They require one more win to wrap up the five-match series, heading into game three in Hamilton on Tuesday.

India won the rain-hit opener in Auckland on Wednesday by five wickets when the home side were skittled for 185.

They were never comfortable in their Wellington chase, rocked onto the back foot when New Zealand seamer Jacob Duffy (3-35) dismissed Indian captain Shubman Gill for a golden duck and Virat Kohli for seven. Paceman Kyle Jamieson (3-35) made a key breakthrough when removing top-scorer Shreyas Iyer for 30, leaving the chase teetering at 86-5.

New Zealand were all out in 41 overs, led by a watchful 55 from Daryl Mitchell and 31 from captain Mitchell Santner.

No other home batsman scored more than 11, many of them undone by unpredictable bounce and tight Indian seam bowling.

Gurnoor Brar produced his best ODI figures of 4-30, making a key double-strike in the 20th over when he removed Tom Latham and Glenn Phillips cheaply to leave New Zealand 53-5.

Earlier, Auqib Nabi claimed his first two international wickets, taking openers Will Young and Tim Seifert to finish with 2-31.

BRIEF SCORES

India 113 for 7 (Iyer 30, Rahul 26*, Duffy 3-35, Jamieson 3-35) **beat New Zealand** 134 (Mitchell 55, Santner 31, Brar 4-30, Kamboj 2-25, Axar 2-28, Nabi 2-31) **by four runs (DLS method).** — ***AFP***

Cherif wins Diamond Tour as Hathab fifth leg concludes

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Cyrine Cherif won the 150cm Diamond Tour on the final day of the fifth leg of the 10th Longines Hathab Qatar Equestrian Tour at the Qatar Equestrian Federation's indoor arena yesterday.

Cherif topped the event in 32.67 seconds aboard Triple T Calamando. Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Eid finished second in 34.35 seconds on Rakar, while Abdulaziz Fahad Al-Eid took third place in 36.16 seconds on Real Star.

In the 120cm Bronze Tour individual category, Abdulaziz Saud Al-Fakhroo claimed first place on Valo in 48.94 seconds. Saeed Hamad Juma finished second on Duros in 49.36 seconds, while Abdullah Ahmed Al-Khulaifi took third place on Quinta in 49.97 seconds.

In the team category, Team Ajwad secured first place with a combined time of 105.33 seconds, followed by Team Nujoom Al-Doha in second with 134.94 seconds and Team Al Shaqab in third with 97.47 seconds.


The podium winners of Diamond Tour pose for a photo. They were honoured by QEF's Head of the Veterinary and Farriery Department Khajeem Faraj Al Athba.


Chairman of the Tournament's Ground Jury Ahmed Al-Badawi awarded trophies to the podium winners of Future Riders class.

Meanwhile, Al-Qaqa bin Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani won the 90cm Future Riders class on Nirvana in 25.63 seconds. Mashael Mohammed Al Thani finished second on Malaga in 26.27 seconds, while Noura Jassim Al Thani took third place on Gabana in 26.85 seconds.

The fifth leg concluded after three days of competition, organised by the Qatar Equestrian Federation in partnership with Al Shaqab.

Dressage competitions across the Preliminary, Introductory and Gold levels featured on the final day of the fifth leg.

Jodie Leader won the Preliminary test with 63.81 points, followed by Khalid Mohammed Al-Ghanim (63.334) and Zahra Zahidi (61.31). Michelle Grimes topped the Introductory Silver Tour with 70 points, while Hamad Nasser Al-Marri won the junior category with 68.396 points. In the Gold Round, Sheikha Maryam Hamad Al Thani claimed first place with 69.817 points, ahead of Yousef Asamlali (69.217) and Michelle Grimes (69.2). The team competition saw Triple A take the top spot with 139.817 points, followed by Spurs (135.842) and Doha Harmony (134.413).

Arsenal edge past Hull to stretch Premier League lead

LONDON: Arsenal beat stubborn Hull 1-0 to stretch their lead at the top of the Premier League to six points yesterday while Tottenham's recent revival was halted at Leeds.

Mikel Arteta's Gunners were strongly tipped to get the better of the visitors, who have not won in the league since August, but were made to sweat despite dominating the match.

Captain Martin Odegaard finally broke the deadlock for the champions and title favourites in the 72nd minute to give Arsenal their ninth win in 10 games.

Manchester City can close the gap to three points if they beat struggling Nottingham Forest in the late kick-off as they seek to avoid a third straight defeat.

Arsenal, who hogged possession at the Emirates, had a claim for a penalty in the closing minutes of the first half after Kai Havertz had his shirt pulled by Nobel Mendy.

But VAR ruled that Havertz was in an offside position in the build-up.

Frustration mounted as the second half unfolded but Odegaard came to Arsenal's rescue, scoring his first goal since early September with a poacher's finish.


Arsenal's Martin Odegaard celebrates after scoring a goal.

Noni Madueke cut in from the right before unleashing a left-footed shot that Hull goalkeeper Konstantinos Tzolakis spilled, with Odegaard firing home from close range.

In the early kick-off, Leeds struck in the 79th minute through substitute Noah Okafor to end Tottenham's three-match winning run. The major talking point in the first half was a challenge by Leeds defender Jayden Bogle on Spurs winger Mathys Tel, which was reviewed for a potential red card by VAR officials before eventually being cleared.

Tel had to leave the field shortly before half-time.

Elsewhere, Jacob Murphy put Newcastle on course for a much-needed win with a spectacular strike in the 80th minute at Craven Cottage but substitute Rodrigo Muniz levelled just three minutes later to earn a 1-1 draw. — ***AFP***