



Francesco Friedrich of Germany (second left), and his team mates celebrate after winning the men's four-man bobsleigh World Cup race in Igls, near Innsbruck, Austria. (AP)

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Hamilton slices into Max pts lead

Brit wins inaugural Qatar GP

LOSAIL, Qatar, Nov 21, (AP): Lewis Hamilton inched closer to the Formula One championship lead with a dominating victory Sunday in the inaugural Qatar Grand Prix to earn back-to-back wins and chip away at Max Verstappen's points advantage.

Hamilton, who also won last week in Brazil, has trimmed 17 points from Verstappen's lead in the title race in a week. Verstappen still holds an eight-point lead with two races remaining in one of the most dramatic F1 title fights in at least a decade.

MOTOR RACING

"I'm really, really grateful for these points. It's been a hell of a year," Hamilton said. "To be at this point in the year and have back-to-back wins is a great feeling."

The seven-time champion started from pole for Mercedes and was never challenged on the Losail International Circuit as Hamilton won his 102nd career race. It was his seventh victory of the season.

Verstappen finished second for Red Bull, nearly 25 seconds behind Hamilton.

"It was pretty lonely at the front," Hamilton said.

Verstappen was hit with a penalty before the race even began when he was dropped five spots on the starting grid for violating a yellow flag in

F1 Driver Standings

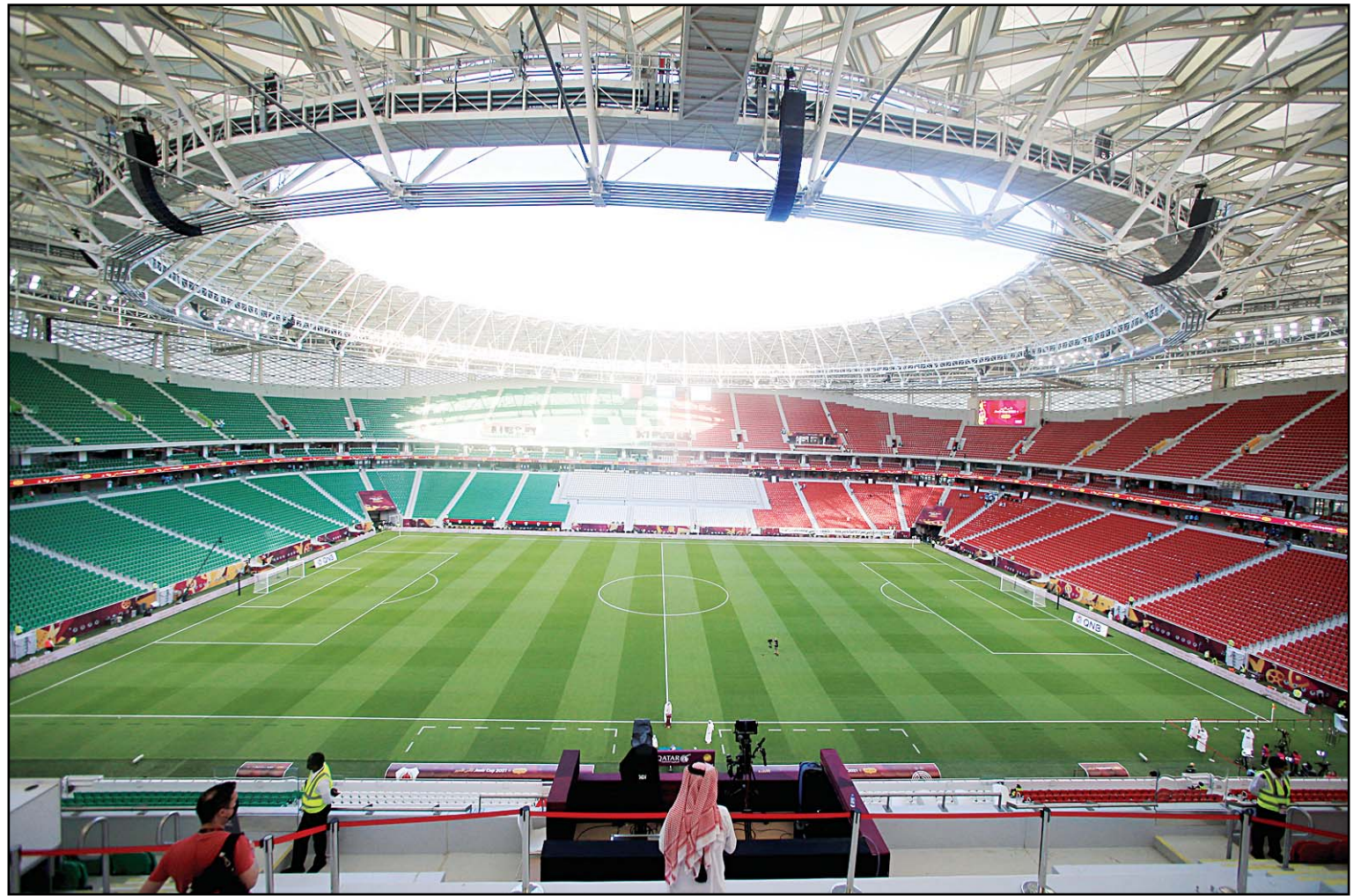
Doha, Qatar, Nov 21, (AP): Formula drivers standings on Sunday.

1. Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, 332.5 points.
2. Lewis Hamilton, Great Britain, Mercedes, 318.5.
3. Valtteri Bottas, Finland, Mercedes, 203.
4. Sergio Perez, Mexico, Red Bull Racing, 178.
5. Lando Norris, Great Britain, McLaren, 151.
6. Charles Leclerc, Monaco, Ferrari, 148.
7. Carlos Sainz Jr, Spain, Ferrari, 139.5.
8. Daniel Ricciardo, Australia, McLaren, 105.
9. Pierre Gasly, France, AlphaTauri, 92.
10. Fernando Alonso, Spain, Alpine, 62.
11. Esteban Ocon, France, Alpine, 50.
12. Sebastian Vettel, Germany, Aston Martin, 42.
13. Lance Stroll, Canada, Aston Martin, 26.
14. Yuki Tsunoda, Japan, AlphaTauri, 20.
15. George Russell, Great Britain, Williams, 16.
16. Kimi Raikkonen, Finland, Alfa Romeo Racing, 10.
17. Nicholas Latifi, Canada, Williams, 7.
18. Antonio Giovinazzi, Italy, Alfa Romeo Racing, 1.

Saturday's qualifying. The Dutchman had qualified second but the stewards ordered him to drop back on the grid following Sunday hearings for Verstappen, Valtteri Bottas and Carlos Sainz.

All three were accused of not following yellow flag rules near the end of qualifying. Bottas, who had qualified third, was penalized three starting spots. Sainz was not penalized.

Red Bull was mystified by the grid penalty for Verstappen, who lost any chance to challenge Hamilton for the win when he was penalized. Red Bull principal Christian Horner criticized the penalty when it was handed down.



A general view of the Al Thumama Stadium is seen during official inauguration ceremony in Doha, Qatar. The stadium will be one of the venues for the World Cup 2022 in Qatar. (AP)

Stadium 974 set for 2022 World Cup

Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC) said the iconic Stadium 974 is ready to serve as one of the country's seven hosting venues of the FIFA 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Officially unveiling the venue, SC Secretary-General Hassan Al-Thawadi took pride in his country's getting closer to the hosting of the

2022 World Cup for the first time in the Middle East and the Arab world.

The Stadium, with its innovative design, is model for other gigantic cost-effective projects to follow, he noted.

The venue, formerly known as Ras Abu Aboud Stadium and located on the shores of the Gulf close to Doha Port, was named

after the country's international dialing code 974 and the number of shipping containers used in construction.

It will host the first match of the FIFA Arab Cup Qatar 2021 between the United Arab Emirates and Syria on November 30, said the SC, the committee in charge of the implementation of preparations

for the World Cup.

The innovative 40,000-seater stadium, which will be entirely dismantled after the World Cup, is mainly made up of shipping containers, removable seats and other modular building blocks; its innovative design is inspired by Qatar's worldwide trade and seafaring. (KUNA)



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain leads at the start of the Qatar Formula One Grand Prix in Lusail, Qatar. (AP)

German edges Medvedev

Zverev wins second 'title' at ATP Finals

TURIN, Italy, Nov 21, (AP): If Alexander Zverev's performance this weekend is any indication, a lot can be expected from the third-ranked German in 2022.

Zverev beat the top two players in consecutive matches to earn his second title at the ATP Finals.

After eliminating No. 1 Novak Djokovic over three sets in the semifinals, Zverev put on a dominant performance in Sunday's final, beating No. 2 Daniil Medvedev 6-4, 6-4.

The title culminates quite a year for Zverev, who also won the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics and who has now finished 2021 with more wins on tour - 59, one more than Medvedev - than anyone else.

The main thing missing in Zverev's trophy collection is a Grand Slam trophy, having lost an epic final to Dominic Thiem in last year's US Open final.

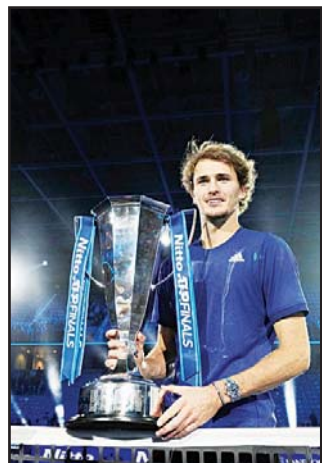
The final was a rematch of a round-robin encounter on Tuesday, when Medvedev beat Zverev in a third-set tiebreaker.

This one went Zverev's way from the start, as the 6-foot-6 (1.98-meter) player crushed a huge backhand to the corner then gained from a net-cord winner to break Medvedev's serve in the third game of the match.

Helped by fast conditions inside the Pala Alpitour, Zverev was virtually untouchable on his serve, winning 20 of 25 points with his serve in the first set.

Zverev broke again in the opening game of the second set then grew so confident that he began executing audacious swinging-volley winners as he followed his serve to the net on occasion.

This marked the first edition of



Alexander Zverev of Germany poses with his trophy after winning the singles final tennis match of the ATP World Tour Finals, at the Pala Alpitour in Turin, Italy. Zverev defeated Daniil Medvedev of Russia 6-4/6-4. (AP)

the season-ending event for the top eight players in Turin - after 12 years in London, where Zverev won his first finals title in 2018.

Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut won the doubles title by beating Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury 6-4, 7-6 (0).

TENNIS

Meanwhile, Djokovic says he's going to have to "wait and see" if he plays the Australian Open after tournament chief Craig Tiley confirmed that everyone who attends the first Grand Slam tennis tournament of 2022 will need to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 - including all the players.

MANCHESTER, England, Nov 21, (AP): Joao Cancelo's latest brilliant assist and a long-range thunderbolt from Rodri led Manchester City to a 3-0 win over Everton in the Premier League, lifting the defending champions back to within three points of leaders Chelsea on Sunday.

Raheem Sterling was the recipient of an outside-of-the-foot pass by Cancelo that pierced Everton's defense, with the England winger providing a sidefooted finish into the corner in the 44th minute.

Cancelo is proving to be City's biggest creative threat at the moment. Before the latest international break, he set up three goals in a Champions League match and another two a few days later in the Manchester derby.

Rodri, the Spain defensive midfielder, slammed home a shot from 30 yards (meters) after the ball ran free to make it 2-0 in the 55th minute.

Bernardo Silva completed a routine victory in the 86th by slotting home from close range after Cole Palmer, an academy product who made his first start in the Premier League, had a shot blocked.

SOCCER

It was a strong response by City to big wins by title rivals Chelsea and Liverpool on Saturday over Leicester and Arsenal, respectively.

City leapfrogged Liverpool back into second place.

Liverpool 4, Arsenal 0

Liverpool handed Arsenal a harsh reality check by tearing through the Gunners in the second half for a 4-0 win.

A resurgent Arsenal side had the chance to climb above Liverpool in the standings with a win, but Jurgen Klopp's side gave the visitors a reminder that there is still a big gulf in class between the teams.

Liverpool's unbeaten start to the season had ended at West Ham before the international break but the Reds looked back to their best at Anfield.

Sadio Mane scored the opener in the first half and Liverpool then dismantled Mikel Arteta's side after the break, with Diogo Jota, Mohamed Salah and substitute Takumi Minamino running up the scoreline.

Arteta got into a heated shouting match with Klopp on the touchline when the game was still scoreless, and the incident seemed to spark both the Anfield crowd and Liverpool's players.

Arsenal were on a 10-match unbeaten streak but goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale had already needed to make several good saves before Mane nodded

Citizens rout Everton

City leapfrog Liverpool back into second place

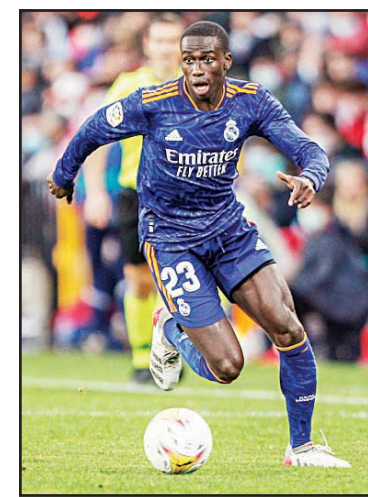
Real cruise to win over Granada

MADRID, Nov 21, (AP): Real Madrid kept their momentum from before the international break, cruising to a 4-1 win over 10-man Granada in the Spanish league on Sunday.

Marco Asensio, Nacho Fernandez, Vinicius Junior and Ferland Mendy all scored to give Madrid their fourth straight victory in all competitions.

Carlo Ancelotti's team reached 30 points from 13 league matches. Granada played a man down from the 67th as midfielder Ramon Rodriguez was sent off for a hard sliding tackle on Vinicius Junior. Granada coach Robert Moreno was later sent off for complaining.

Xavi Hernandez needed a penalty to start his return to Camp Nou as Barcelona coach in winning fashion. Barcelona's 1-0 win against Espanyol began the way Xavi wanted, with his team dominating the ball like the Spain great had when he joined Lionel Messi and Andrés In-



Real Madrid's Ferland Mendy runs with the ball during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Granada and Real Madrid at Los Cármenes stadium in Granada, Spain. (AP)

esta to forge one of soccer's greatest sides as its midfield maestro.

But the same problems that had led to the demise of his predecessor soon emerged. Barcelona's attack failed to turn its huge advantage in possession into shots on goal other than Memphis Depay's second-half penalty, while its defense came apart in the final stretch. Only Espanyol's misfiring forwards stopped the Catalan derby from ending in a draw.

SOCCER

The victory extended Madrid's unbeaten streak to seven matches in all competitions ahead of their Champions League visit to Sheriff on Wednesday.

Ancelotti took some of his key players out of the match in the second half to give them some extra rest, including Luka Modric, Karim Benzema, Vinicius Junior and Toni Kroos.

home Alexander-Arnold's free kick in the 39th minute, having been left unmarked in the six-yard area.

Liverpool started the second half at a furious pace and former Arsenal player Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain had a chance to double the lead when the influential Fabinho intercepted Bukayo

Saka's pass, but the midfielder steered a shot wide of the post.

Arsenal kept turning the ball over and Nuno Tavares gifted Liverpool the second goal when he gifted a pass straight to Jota who showed real composure to side-step Ramsdale and score into an empty net.



Everton's Cenk Tosun, (center), duels for the ball with Manchester City's Rodri, (left), during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Everton at Etihad Stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

Man United fire coach Solskjaer

LONDON, Nov 21, (AP): Manchester United fired Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after three years as manager on Sunday after a fifth loss in seven Premier League games.

"Ole will always be a legend at Manchester United and it is with regret that we have reached this difficult decision," United said a day after a 4-1 loss to Watford.

Former midfielder Michael Carrick, who was on Solskjaer's coaching staff will be in temporary charge, starting with a trip to Spain for a Champions League match at Villarreal in the group stage on Monday. United said they would look to then appoint a manager only until the end of the season.

Solskjaer's future has hung in the balance before but he has finally lost his job at the club where he was adored as a player, notably for scoring the dramatic late winner in the 1999 Champions League final. He couldn't replicate that success as a manager, failing to win a single trophy.