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TENNIS

Unstoppable Alcaraz corners Qatar Open glory

WORLD NO. 1 WINS NINTH ATP 500 TITLE AS HE FLIES PAST FILS FOR HIS MAIDEN DOHA WIN

By Rizwan Rehmat
Doha

He came. He saw. He conquered. Top seed Carlos Alcaraz arrived in Doha last week seeking his first Qatar Open title. Six days into the hugely popular tournament on the ATP Tour, Alcaraz stormed to his maiden trophy in Doha yesterday when he crushed young Frenchman Arthur Fils in straight sets in the one-sided final.

Producing winners almost at will, Alcaraz won 6-2, 6-1 in just 50 minutes at a packed centre court of the iconic Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex. Alcaraz fired five aces in his slick display of attacking tennis from the baseline.

Alcaraz, 22, got richer by a staggering amount of \$529,945 reserved for the Doha winner.

Fils took home \$285,095 for his brilliant run to the final watched by around 7,000 fans yesterday. It was Alcaraz's 26th title win on the ATP Tour.

By virtue of his impressive tactics yesterday, Alcaraz is now 12-0 for the 2026 season that also includes the Australian Open win three weeks ago. Yesterday's title triumph marked Alcaraz's ninth ATP 500 trophy. Alcaraz has now drawn level with former World No. 1 Andy Murray of Great Britain for the fourth-highest tally in the category that was launched in 2009.

"I came this year hungry for more," said Alcaraz, who fell in the Doha quarter-finals in 2025. "I think after every tournament, we just have to set new goals. I'm just really happy and proud of everything I have done with my team on and off the court," Alcaraz said before the fireworks show at the Centre Court.

"It's been a really strong start to the year. It wasn't easy... I had to be strong mentally with my team. I'm just playing great tennis and I'm really happy about this week. This trophy means a lot to me," Alcaraz said with his trademark smile across his face.



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain with Arthur Fils of France after the Qatar Open final.

ATP 500 Title Leaders
(Since series was introduced in 2009)

Player	Titles
1) Roger Federer	16
2) Rafael Nadal	15
3) Novak Djokovic	14
T4) Andy Murray	9
T4) Carlos Alcaraz	9

NOT AN EASY FIELD IN DOHA
The Doha field wasn't an easy one to conquer but Alcaraz didn't seem to be bothered.

With three past champions in Andrey Rublev, Karen Khachanov and Daniil Medvedev in the field besides the presence of arch-rival Jannik Sinner,

Alcaraz was only stretched in the quarter-finals. In the last-eight clash on Thursday, Khachanov pulled a set off Alcaraz but apart from that blip, the Spaniard stormed to his maiden Qatar Open glory with sublime ease.

Alcaraz yesterday received the trophy from Olympic Council of Asia President and Chairman of the Qatar Olympic Committee HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani. Qatar Tennis Federation president Nasser al-Khelaifi was also present at the trophy ceremony held on the Centre Court.

Despite the crushing defeat in the final yesterday, French tennis standout Fils will remember his week at the Qatar Open. The tournament marked a significant milestone in Fils' ongoing comeback as he reached his first Tour-level final since winning the Tokyo title in 2024.

Despite falling to the world No. 1 in yesterday's championship match, the former World No. 14 demonstrated a strong return to form following his extended injury layoff. "It's been eight long months with my injury," said Fils. "So in a time like this, you just have to think about the last eight months when I was struggling, not playing tennis. I just want to thank my team... Today was not the day but I think we did a hell of a job," Fils added.

Fils will next travel to the United Arab Emirates to compete in the ATP 500 in Dubai. The draw has set up an immediate rematch with Jiri Lehecka, whom the Frenchman recently defeated in the Doha quarter-finals.



Champion Carlos Alcaraz of Spain celebrates after beating Arthur Fils of France in Qatar Open final at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex in Doha yesterday. PICTURES: Noushad Thekkayil



ANNOUNCEMENT

Team Qatar ready to make historic debut at 24 Hours of Le Mans

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Team Qatar is set to make history this June by participating for the first time ever in the 24 Hours of Le Mans, marking a milestone moment for Qatari motorsport on the global endurance racing stage.

Held annually at the iconic Circuit de la Sarthe, the 24-hour endurance race is regarded as one of the most prestigious and demanding events in world motorsport. The 2026 race will take place on June 13-14, bringing together leading manufacturers and elite teams from around the world.

Team Qatar will compete in partnership with the renowned Italian squad Iron Lynx for the 2026 edition, combining international endurance expertise with Qatar's growing ambitions in global circuit racing.



Abdulrahman bin Abdulatif al-Mannai, President of the Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation and Lusail International Circuit

First held in 1923, the 24 Hours of Le Mans is the world's oldest active endurance race and forms part of the prestigious Triple Crown of Motorsport. Over the decades, it has become a symbol of technological innovation, reliability, and human endurance, attracting legendary manufacturers and drivers who have shaped the history of circuit racing.

This participation reflects Qatar's strategic expansion into top-tier international motorsport



platforms and reinforces the nation's commitment to competing at the highest levels across disciplines. Taking part in Le Mans represents more than a race entry, it is a statement of intent. Competing in the world's most demanding endurance event requires precision, resilience, and technical excellence, qualities that

mirror Qatar's long-term motorsport development strategy. The collaboration with Iron Lynx highlights a focused and professional approach aimed at delivering a competitive and credible debut on one of motorsport's greatest stages. Abdulrahman bin Abdulatif al-Mannai, President of the Qatar

Motor & Motorcycle Federation and Lusail International Circuit, commented: "We are proud to announce Qatar Team's participation in the upcoming 24 Hours of Le Mans, a landmark moment that reflects our strategic commitment to international motorsport and strengthening Qatar's presence on the global racing stage."

He added: "Le Mans stands as one of the world's most prestigious endurance races, and competing at this level is both an honour and a responsibility. Our team has undertaken extensive preparation, and we are confident in their professionalism, technical capability, and determination to represent Qatar with excellence."

"This participation goes beyond competition. It forms part of our long-term vision to create meaningful pathways for drivers and engineers, and inspire the next generation of Qatari motorsport professionals."

TENNIS

Pegula sees off Svitolina to win Dubai Open

'I couldn't ask for a better birthday present. I'm just super proud of myself'

AFP
Dubai

Jessica Pegula gave herself an early birthday present by clinching her fourth WTA 1000 crown with a comfortable 6-2, 6-4 victory over Elina Svitolina in the Dubai final yesterday.

The fourth-seeded American denied Svitolina a chance to win a third title in the northern emirate, and improved her record against the Ukrainian to 6-3 head-to-head.

Pegula, who turns 32 on Tuesday, has made at least the semi-finals in each of her last seven tournaments and walks away from Dubai with a 10th career title.

Pegula fought back from a set and a break down in the semi-finals against Amanda Anisimova on Friday, while Svitolina battled through a three-hour marathon against Coco Gauff.

It was Svitolina who appeared to be suffering the most from the aftermath of the previous night, though, and it gave Pegula the chance to jump to a double-break lead early in the final, and she never looked back as she wrapped up the victory in 72 minutes.

"I couldn't ask for a better birthday present. I'm just super proud of myself. I had to play at a very high level, it was awesome," Pegula said in her on-court interview.

"I feel like when you can get off to a quick start, that eases the



Jessica Pegula of the US celebrates with the trophy after winning the Dubai Open final against Ukraine's Elina Svitolina yesterday. (Reuters)

nerves a little bit.

"Mentally, I think, especially the match yesterday, I was down a set and 3-1, and I fought back, which made me feel free today. I trusted the things we've been

working on and it paid off."

Svitolina, a champion in Dubai in 2017 and 2018, has lots to be proud of, having reached her first WTA 1000 final since Rome 2018. The Ukrainian 31-year-old re-

turned to the top 10 earlier this month for the first time since coming back from maternity leave and has enjoyed a phenomenal start to 2026, amassing a 15-3 win-loss record.

FOOTBALL

Al Thumama Ramadan Tournament begins

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The third edition of the Al Thumama Ramadan Tournament kicked off at Al Furjan Stadium in cooperation with the Qatar Sports for All Federation, featuring 13 teams in the 10-14 age category (born 2012-2016).

Opening day delivered excitement and plenty of goals. Abdullah Bin Turki's team stormed to a 9-0 win over Doha, with Ibrahim Hassan al-Emadi named Man of the Match.

Al Zaeem and Al Wajba shared a 1-1 draw, as Adam Mazen earned the individual award. In

the third match, Al Rayyan defeated Al Thumama 3-1, with Taim Allah Ayman taking Man of the Match honors.

The tournament is divided into two groups. Group A includes Doha, Turki Bin Abdullah, Al Wajba, Al Zaeem, Al Rayyan and Al Thumama. Group B features Al Dafna, Al Shaab, Al Waab, Medical Care, Palestine, Al Shaqab and Al Shahaniya.

Hassan al-Ishaq, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, praised the strong start and growing stature of the tournament, highlighting its role in developing young talent and the added value of cooperation with the Qatar Sports for All Federation.



Action from the Al Thumama Ramadan Tournament.

BOXING

Mayweather to come out of retirement

AFP
Los Angeles

Floyd Mayweather is coming out of retirement and will return to professional boxing after his exhibition fight with Mike Tyson this spring, the 48-year-old announced Friday.

Former multi-weight world champion Mayweather retired from boxing in 2017, unbeaten in 50 bouts, though he has appeared in several exhibition fights since.

"I still have what it takes to set more records in the sport of boxing," Mayweather, said in a statement to AFP.

"From my upcoming Mike Tyson event to my next professional fight afterwards -- no one will generate a bigger gate, have a larger global broadcast audience and generate more money with each event -- then (sic) my events."

A first professional fight is tentatively scheduled for this summer, against an opponent to be announced.

Details will be revealed "in the coming weeks," said the statement.

Nicknamed "Money", Mayweather was once the world's highest-paid athlete, with earnings of \$500 million in 2015, according to Forbes.

At his peak he was widely considered boxing's pound-for-pound king, dominating the welterweight division for more than a decade.

Despite his success, May-

weather has long been a controversial figure.

He was often criticized for an overly defensive style, and accused by some of dodging the most dangerous opponents simply to embellish his record.

Mayweather has also spent time in prison for one of a string of domestic violence incidents.

But his supreme fitness, work ethic, athleticism and boxing brain earned him the respect of his peers in the ring.

Mayweather's last professional bout was in 2017 against UFC star Conor McGregor.

He has continued to appear in exhibitions, including a victory over John Gotti III in Mexico in August 2024, as well as bouts with reality television stars and YouTube fighters.

Mayweather has signed an exclusive agreement with promoter CSI Sports/Fight Sports, to begin following his Tyson bout.

Boxing outlet Ring Magazine recently reported that Mayweather's exhibition fight with Tyson will take place on April 25th in the Congo, though neither date nor location has been officially confirmed.

"Iron Mike" Tyson, 59, last appeared in the ring in a lopsided loss to YouTuber-turned prizefighter Jake Paul in November 2024 in Texas.

Tyson barely landed a punch in that Netflix-backed bout, which was watched by a live crowd of around 70,000 spectators with an estimated millions more tuning in around the world.



BUNDESLIGA

Kane nets double as Bayern beat Frankfurt

AFP
Munich

Harry Kane scored his third straight Bundesliga brace as Bayern Munich beat Eintracht Frankfurt 3-2 yesterday to move nine points clear of chasers Borussia Dortmund atop the table.

Dortmund, who have won six consecutive Bundesliga matches, play at RB Leipzig in Saturday's late game. Aleksandar Pavlovic's low strike gave Bayern the lead and Kane added goals either side of half-time, before giving away a penalty converted by Germany forward Jonathan Burkardt with 13 minutes remaining.

Bayern captain Joshua Kimmich gifted Frankfurt's Arnaud Kalimundo a late goal with a poor pass but the hosts held on.

Kane has now scored more than one goal in a match 13 times this season in all competitions. The England captain has netted 28 goals in 23 Bundesliga appearances and 43 in total this campaign.

The only negative for Bayern was a second-half injury to wing-back Alphonso Davies.

The Canada captain, who returned after eight months out with an ACL injury in December, clutched his ankle after a tackle and pulled his jersey over his face as he was substituted.

Bayern earlier burst out of the blocks and Pavlovic broke through on 16 minutes. The Germany midfielder latched onto a failed clear-



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates scoring against Eintracht Frankfurt in Munich yesterday. (AFP)

ance and blasted in a low shot, which slipped through Frankfurt goalkeeper Kaua Santos' fingers and trickled over the line. Kane

doubled Bayern's lead four minutes later, heading in a corner from close range. The England captain added another midway through

the second half, sneaking the ball just inside the post with his left foot.

Burkardt's penalty looked a mere consolation until Kalimundo jumped on Kimmich's mistake to cut Bayern's lead to one with four minutes remaining, but the hosts kept Frankfurt at arm's length in the final stages.

Bayer Leverkusen's top-four hopes took a hit with a 1-0 defeat at Union Berlin, days after an impressive Champions League win at Olympiacos.

Home captain Rani Khedira overpowered former Union midfielder Robert Andrich to pounce on a loose ball and hammer home in the 28th minute.

The defeat leaves Leverkusen in sixth, three points behind fourth-placed Stuttgart.

Elsewhere, third-placed Hoffenheim dropped points for just the second time in eight matches in a 2-2 draw at Cologne.

Cologne took the lead thanks to an incredible bicycle kick from Ragnar Ache but Hoffenheim hit back either side of the break to take the lead thanks to goals from Ozan Kabak and Andrej Kramaric. Teenager winger Said El Mala put Cologne level with an excellent solo goal on 63 minutes and the hosts held on to grab a valuable point against the in-form visitors.

Augsburg were behind twice but won 3-2 at Wolfsburg, with Elvis Rexhbecaj scoring in stoppage time to lift the visitors nine points clear of the relegation play-off place.

PENGE AND BRIDGEMAN SHARE RIVIERA LEAD WITH MCILROY IN HOT PURSUIT

Marco Penge and Jacob Bridgeman fired impressive seven-under par 64s on Friday to share the US PGA Tour Genesis Invitational halfway lead, one stroke in front of world number two Rory McIlroy. England's Penge posted seven birdies without a bogey on the way to a 12-under par total of 130 at Riviera Country Club, where Bridgeman birdied the last three holes to join him.

Northern Ireland star McIlroy, who completed his career Grand Slam with a Masters victory last year,

was snapping at their heels after a six-under par 65 that featured an eagle and four birdies. Meanwhile world number one Scottie Scheffler made the cut by the skin of his teeth to push his streak of cuts made to 68 - the longest active streak on the PGA Tour.

"I think my driving has been kind of the way I normally drive the ball. It's definitely the best part of my game by far," said Penge, a 27-year-old from England who won three times on the DP World Tour last year to head the group

of 10 players from the circuit who secured dual membership on the US tour this year. "But the way I pushed, you know, especially inside 10 feet, and my pace behind it has been really on point."

Penge, Bridgeman and McIlroy were among the four players who emerged from the weather-hit first round sharing the lead on five-under. McIlroy and Bridgeman finished their rounds on Thursday, while Penge and Aaron Rai had to pull double-duty on Friday. "I think I just managed it really well

today," said Penge, who birdied the first and sixth before five birdies on the back nine, starting with a 22-foot birdie putt at the 12th. He got up and down from a greenside bunker for birdie at 17, and even after the long day wasn't feeling tired. "I think when you're playing well and kind of up at the top of the leaderboard, I think you can kind of keep going," he said. Bridgeman, chasing his first tour title, opened with a 34-foot eagle putt at the first and added seven birdies the rest of the way. That

included a three-birdie burst at nine, 10 and 11 and, after a bogey at 12, birdies at 16, 17 and 18. "I'm excited," said Bridgeman, who finished tied for eighth at Pebble Beach last week. "I'm excited to be back in the hunt trying to get a win."

McIlroy, whose Pebble Beach bid was doomed by a raft of mistakes, was delighted to post a bogey-free round. "No bogeys is always nice," McIlroy said. "Making one bogey through the first 36 holes compared to the big numbers I

had last week ... Tidied everything up, which is good."

"Overall really pleased with the day and excited for the weekend," Scheffler was less pleased with his work so far but certainly pumped to be heading into the weekend after drilling a seven-foot par-saving putt on 18 to make the cut without a stroke to spare. "I tried to make a mess of a pretty basic chip there on 18," Scheffler said. "So it was nice to be able to hole a putt and get another two cracks at the course."

FOCUS

Devos, Jobs claim victories at CHI Al Shaqab



Belgium's Pieter Devos astride Jarina J during the CSI5* 1.50m Faults and Time feature event on the third day of CHI Al Shaqab.

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Belgium's Pieter Devos delivered a standout performance at Al Shaqab's Outdoor Arena, winning Friday's CSI5* 1.50m Faults and Time feature on the third day of CHI Al Shaqab Presented by Longines.

Aboard Jarina J, Devos produced a flawless round in 59.58 seconds to secure the title. Germany's Janne Friederike Meyer-Zimmermann, riding Iron Dames High Level, finished a close second in 59.72 seconds, while Saudi Arabia's Khaled Almoby partnered with Spacecake to take third place

in 59.82 seconds. The winners were crowned by Sheikh Talal bin Khalid, Assistant Director of the Championship.

In the CSI3* 1.45m Faults & Time, American rider Eve Jobs claimed first place aboard Kannandillo in 61.10 seconds. Brazil's Marlon Modolo Zanotelli finished second on Collin S 4 with a time of 62.37 seconds, while Jordan's Bashir Kayali took third on Wilfredo in 62.51 seconds. The winners were crowned by the Championship's Sports Director, Salmeen al-Suwaidi.

Saudi Arabia's Khalid al-Hadi topped the CSI3* 1.30m Jump & Drive class aboard Doremi du Flot Z in 89.43 seconds. Jordan's Ibrahim Hani Bisharat followed in



USA's Eve Jobs rides Kannandillo on her way to winning CSI3* 1.45m class.

second with Corona Irw in 89.95 seconds, while Saudi rider Mohammed Alasaker secured third on Scoobylenky Theyss with a time of 90.41 seconds.

At the Longines Indoor Arena, Britain's Carl Hester riding Fame claimed victory in the CDI5* Grand Prix. Poland's Sandra Sys-ojeva (Maxima Bella) and Denmark's Nadja Aaboe Sloth (Favour Gersdorf) finished second and third respectively.

In the CDI1* Intermediate Freestyle, Qatari riders dominated the podium. Jassim al-Kuwari took first place on Jack Sparrow, followed by Maryam Ahmad al-Boimn on Blue Hors Touch Of Olympic L in second and Wejdan Majed al-Malki on Faisao in third.

In the CPEDI3* Grand Prix B classes, Brazil's Luiz Felipe Queiroz Menin (Ocaso Do Luar) won Grade I.

America's Fiona Howard (Ferguson) prevailed in Grade II, while her compatriot Kate Shoe-

maker (Jagger) topped Grade IV. Sweden's Lena Malmstrom (Fabulous Fidelie) emerged winner in Grade V. At the second Outdoor Arena, Qatari rider Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani secured first place in the SIC-B - 1.10m - Jump Off - Group VII series qualifier aboard Gabbana M in 31.80 seconds. It was an all-Qatari podium, with Abdullah Ahmed al-Musafri (Celia Z) finishing second and Salha Khalid al-Obaidli (Roxette van de Achterhoek) taking third.

In the CSII* 1.15m Faults & Time, Saudi Arabia's Abdullah Ibrahim Abdullah on Erosa triumphed in 57.94 seconds. Qatar's Sheikh Fahad Jassim HK al-Thani, riding Ciara LU, placed second in 59.18 seconds, while Saudi Arabia's Halah Alrasheed on Cruising On The Ridge completed the podium in 63.38 seconds.

Sheikh Talal said the championship holds a distinguished place on the international equestrian calendar, attracting more than



Qatari riders Jassim al-Kuwari astride Jack Sparrow won the the CDI1* Intermediate Freestyle event.



Qatari rider Abdulaziz bin Jassim al-Thani secured first place in the SIC-B - 1.10m - Jump Off - Group VII series qualifier.

300 riders from 40 countries, including world No.1 Scott Brash of Great Britain. He stressed that the strong global participation reflects the event's prestige and high-

lighted its role as a platform for sporting and cultural exchange, underscoring Qatar's significant progress in organising world-class equestrian competitions.

PREMIER LEAGUE

Villa, Chelsea drop points as Milner breaks record

'You want to be the best every day whether it's game or training'

AFP
London

Burnley dented Chelsea's chances of Champions League qualification by snatching a 1-1 draw at Stamford Bridge, while Aston Villa also struck late to salvage a point against Leeds yesterday.

The Blues climb into the Premier League's top four only on goal difference after they paid for failing to build on Joao Pedro's fourth-minute opener. Chelsea were dominant until Wesley Fofana was sent off with 18 minutes remaining for a second yellow card.

Burnley took full advantage as Zian Flemming headed in from a corner in the 93rd minute to boost their battle to beat the drop.

"It is not enough clean sheets and not enough basic values of defending set-pieces. That is something I have to address," said Chelsea boss Liam Rosenior.

"There were players on the pitch who were assigned to do their job and who didn't do their job. That is what cost us the two points."

The Clarets are still eight points from safety in their daunting fight for survival.

Villa defied the odds to keep pace with Arsenal and Manchester City in the title race until recent weeks, but a 1-1 draw continued their poor run at Villa Park.

Anton Stach's spectacular free-kick from fully 40 yards (37 metres) at an angle caught out Emi Martinez at his near post to give Leeds the advantage. Daniel Farke's men have lost just twice in



Burnley's Zian Flemming celebrates with Josh Laurent after scoring a goal against Chelsea in London yesterday. (Reuters)

their last 16 games to relieve their fears of being dragged into a battle for survival. But Tammy Abraham then snatched a point for Villa two minutes from time. Five Premier League sides are set to qualify for next season's Champions League thanks to the strong performance of English sides in European competition this season.

But Liverpool and Manchester United have the chance to close in when they face Nottingham Forest and Everton in the coming days.

James Milner set a new record of 654 Premier League appearances in Brighton's 2-0 win at Brentford.

The 40-year-old started for the Seagulls as they secured a first win in seven games to ease the pressure on boss Fabian Hürzeler.

"It's the drive and hunger. You want to be the best every day whether it's game or training," said Milner on the secret to his longevity. Diego Gomez drilled in the opening goal for the visitors after Ferdi Kadioglu's stunning strike came back off the bar. Danny Welbeck then pounced on some slack Brentford defending to double Brighton's lead just before half-time.

Third-bottom West Ham

missed a chance to boost their survival bid after a dour 0-0 draw with Bournemouth at the London Stadium.

Manchester City can close to within two points of leaders Arsenal when they host Newcastle in Saturday's 2000 GMT kick-off.

The Gunners have breathed new life into City's title challenge with disappointing draws at Brentford and Wolves since Pep Guardiola's men last played in the Premier League.

Arsenal are in action on today when they travel to Tottenham in the north London derby.

SPOTLIGHT

Mkhitarian, Akanji fire Inter 10 points clear in Serie A

AFP
Milan

Henrikh Mkhitarian's second-half goal helped Inter Milan move 10 points clear at the Serie A summit with a 2-0 win at Lecce on Saturday, while beleaguered Juventus slumped to defeat by Como.

Cristian Chivu's Inter struggled to break down their stubborn hosts but 37-year-old Mkhitarian and Manuel Akanji struck late to put the pressure on second-placed AC Milan ahead of their match against Parma today. Inter suffered a surprise 3-1 defeat by Norwegians Bodo/Glimt in the Champions League knockout play-off first leg in midweek, but have now won seven successive games in Serie A.

They were given a boost by Milan's draw with Como on Wednesday and strengthened their grip on the title race further at Lecce as they look to regain the Scudetto from Napoli.

Inter wing-back Luis Henrique had an early effort cleared off the line by Lecce defender Jamil Siebert, before home goalkeeper Wladimiro Falcone made a fine save to deny Pio Esposito.

Falcone was called into action again in the 36th minute, tipping an Esposito header around

the post, and Davide Frattesi fired over shortly afterwards.

Inter thought they had scored six minutes after the restart but Federico Dimarco's effort was ruled out after a VAR review for a tight offside against Marcus Thuram in the build-up.

The visitors finally made their dominance count with 15 minutes remaining, though, as Mkhitarian fired home a half-volley through a crowded penalty area. Inter put the game to bed when Akanji headed in a Dimarco corner with eight minutes remaining.

Juventus were jeered off after capping a dreadful week with a 2-0 home loss to fellow Champions League chasers Como. Luciano Spalletti's men were thrashed 5-2 by Galatasaray in their Champions League knockout play-off first leg in midweek and slumped to another disappointing loss. Sixth-placed Como inflicted a damaging first home league defeat of the season on Juve, moving to within one point of their fifth-placed opponents. Roma, who hold the fourth and final Champions League berth, could move four points clear of the Turin giants when they host Cremonese today. "There is too much pressure over recent results, and these moments make the difference," Juve coach Spalletti said.

LEADERS REAL MADRID STUNG BY LATE OSASUNA WINNER

Raul Garcia's superb 90th-minute strike consigned leaders Real Madrid to a 2-1 defeat at Osasuna in La Liga yesterday, in a blow to their title hopes. Champions Barcelona trail Madrid by two points but can overtake them on Sunday if they beat Levante at Camp Nou. Alvaro Arbeloa's Madrid put on a below-par performance in Pamplona and fell behind to an Ante Budimir penalty, before Vinicius Junior pulled the visitors level.

The second leg of Madrid's Champions League play-off against Jose Mourinho's Benfica on Wednesday seemed to play on their minds as they failed to kick on at El Sadar. Vinicius, who scored a sensational goal to give Madrid a slender first-leg lead but was then the victim of alleged racial abuse, thought he had earned his team a point before Garcia blasted home the winner. Croatian target man Budimir curled narrowly wide of Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois's far post early on, the first of many problems he gave the visitors. The Belgian stopper made an excellent save a few minutes later, after Budimir tried to nod home Ruben Garcia's cross under pressure from Alvaro Carreras.

Budimir also clipped the post with a header as Osasuna impressed, with their victory helping them rise to ninth. Madrid defender David Alaba came close when Alejandro Catena blocked his shot, shortly before the hosts took the lead. Budimir burst into the area and went down under a challenge from Courtois. Although he was initially booked for diving a VAR review showed the goalkeeper stood on his foot. The veteran forward took the resulting penalty himself and sent Courtois the wrong way to give Osasuna the lead. Osasuna sat deep at times in the second half, looking to fend off 15-time European champions Madrid. Arda Guler came close with a vicious shot that flew just over. Chasing an equaliser, Arbeloa threw on creative duo Trent Alexander-Arnold and Brahim Diaz and his team began to take control.

Edmilson Junior helps Al Duhail hold Al Arabi 1-1

A fabulous free kick from Edmilson Junior saw Al Duhail hold Al Arabi 1-1 in their Qatar Stars League (QSL) match at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium yesterday. The Dream Team had fetched the lead in the 23rd minute after Karl Toko Ekambi chested down a long ball in front of the six-yard box before scoring off a rebound from the rival goalkeeper's block.

The Red Knights got the equalizer in the 65th minute as Al Arabi goalkeeper Jassem al-Hail was beaten by Edmilson's powerful kick - taken from five yards away of the goal-line on the left. The flying ball also took Al Hail into the net with its force. The shared spoils meant that Al Arabi moved down a rung to sixth place in the standings with a total tally of 24 points while Al

Duhail remained eighth, moving up by a point to 21. Today, Al Sadd will take on Al Wakrah, while Al Rayyan will meet Al Ahli and Al Gharafa will meet Al Shamal.

Al Duhail's Edmilson Junior in action against Al Arabi in the QSL match at the Abdullah Bin Khalifa Stadium yesterday.

