

## MONACO BRING BRAZILIAN JEMERSON TO EUROPE

**PARIS:** Monaco have sealed a deal to bring Jemerson to the principality on a four-and-a-half year contract from Atletico Mineiro in his native Brazil. The central defender, who was likened to German legend Franz Beckenbauer, played over 100 times for Mineiro and scored seven times. The 23-year-old received his first call-up to the Brazilian national squad in November, but did not play. Jemerson arrived in Monaco on Saturday, has passed his medical and could play for Leonardo Jardim's men very soon. He told the club website that he wants to play international football and in the Champions League, saying that Monaco is a "big European club with a high profile." Jardim is building a squad with plenty of Portuguese-speaking players as Jemerson joins the likes of Fabinho, Ricardo Carvalho and Joao Moutinho at the Stade Louis II. According to various sources, the fee will be in the region of 11 million euros (\$11.9 million). Meanwhile Monaco have released Spanish defender Borja Lopez after his unsuccessful loan spell at Arouca in Portugal, and the 21-year-old will now play for Barcelona B. — AFP



## WCUP SLALOM CANCELLED DUE TO SOFT COURSE

**MARIBOR:** Organizers cancelled a women's World Cup slalom after 25 starters yesterday because the deteriorating course made a fair race impossible. Days of mild temperatures softened the Radvanje course, which started to wear soon after the race started. The snow surface broke in many spots after just a few skiers had completed their runs. Rainfall further affected the conditions. According to the athletes' representative, Sarka Strachova of the Czech Republic, most skiers didn't want the race to be started. "It's always difficult to decide whether a race should take place or not," Strachova said. "I spoke with several racers. Most of them were against it, some coaches as well. But (skiing's governing body) FIS and organizers wanted to stage the race at all costs." Strachova, who wore bib No. 4, said the course was only good enough for the early starters. "The lower number definitely was an advantage," the 2007 world slalom champion said. "Of course it's not fair." FIS and local organizers suspended the race after 25 starters to allow course workers on the piste, before calling off the event just minutes later.

## KOVALEV DESTROYS PASCAL IN REMATCH

**MONTREAL:** Light heavyweight world champion Sergey "Krusher" Kovalev successfully defended his three titles Saturday, demolishing challenger Jean Pascal in a rematch of their March fight. The 32-year-old Russian dominated every round, masterfully cutting off the ring and landing left jabs at will before Pascal's trainer Freddie Roach put a stop to the slaughter before the start of round eight-giving Kovalev a seventh-round technical knockout. This was the Canadian's first fight with six-time trainer of the year Roach, but the outcome was virtually the same as his March light heavyweight fight against Kovalev, which ended with an eight-round TKO for the Russian. Kovalev retained his World Boxing Association, International Boxing Federation and World Boxing Organization titles as he improved to 29-0-1 with 26 knockouts. Kovalev knocked Pascal down in the first round with a straight left jab but the referee ruled it a slip.—AFP



**SINGAPORE:** Jordan Spieth of the United States prepares to play on the third hole during the final round of the SMBC Singapore Open golf tournament at Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong Course yesterday, in Singapore. — AP

## COOKSON CONFIRMS MOTOR FOUND ON BIKE IN NEW CYCLING STORM

**HEUSDEN-ZOLDER:** Cycling was being forced to confront a new controversy yesterday after the sport's head confirmed the first top-level case of "technological fraud" with a hidden motor being found on a Belgian cyclist's bike.

The motor was discovered inside the frame of the machine being used by teenager Femke Van den Driessche at the world cyclo-cross championship in Zolder, Belgium, Bryan Cookson, the president of the International Cycling Union (UCI), said.

"It's absolutely clear that there was technological fraud. There was a concealed motor. I don't think there are any secrets about that," Cookson told a news conference.

Yet the 19-year-old Van den Driessche denied suggestions she had deliberately used a motorised bike in the women's under-23 race and was in tears as she told Belgian TV channel Sporza: "The bike was not mine. I would never cheat."

Van den Driessche said the bike looked identical to her own but belonged to her friend and that a team mechanic had given it her by mistake before the race.

The bike was later seized after she had withdrawn from the race on Saturday with a mechanical problem.

"It wasn't my bike, it was my friend's and was identical to mine," Van den Driessche told Belgian TV channel Sporza.

"This friend went around the course Saturday before dropping off the bike in the truck. A mechanic, thinking it was my bike, cleaned it and prepared it for my race."

Van den Driessche said she feared her career could now be over but she still hoped for a second chance and was not afraid of any investigations into the case.



**HEUSDEN-ZOLDER:** British Brain Cookson, Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) president, speaks during a press conference at the world championships cyclocross cycling yesterday in Heusden-Zolder. The world championships cyclocross cycling takes place this week-end. — AFP

"I'm aware I have a big problem. I have done nothing wrong," she said.

In a sport that has long battled with a major doping problem, suggestions and rumours of 'motorised doping' have long floated around too but nothing has been proved in major competition until this case.

It prompted Cookson, who confirmed the case would be investigated by the UCI's disciplinary commission, to say: "We've heard some sto-

ries for a long time now about the possibility of this.

"We have been alive to a potential way that people might cheat and we have been testing a number of bikes and a number of events for several months.

"I am committed and the UCI is committed to protecting the riders who do not want to cheat in whatever form and to make sure that the right riders win the race." —Reuters

## SPIETH, SONG IN CLIFFHANGER AS WEATHER SUSPENDS PLAY

**SINGAPORE:** A thunderstorm halted the final round of the SMBC Singapore Open yesterday just as world number one Jordan Spieth was attempting to go a stroke behind leader Song Young Han on the 18th hole.

This left the competition in a cliffhanger as the South Korean had two more holes to play and was lining up a 10-foot par on the 16th. The \$1.0 million tournament will now be decided when play resumes Monday morning at the Sentosa Golf Club's Serapong Course.

The South Korean is looking to secure his first career title after taking six-runners-up places in Japan and South Korea during the past three years.

Inclement weather and fading light have dogged the competition since Thursday, suspending play that had to be resumed the following day.

A total of 15 players had to complete round three this morning, with Spieth playing two holes and Song five. The session ended with the Texan trailing the South Korean by five strokes. Plagued by erratic form in the last three days, Spieth conceded he was rushing his game, trying to do too much and making the wrong decisions. Heading into the final round, the 22-year-old resolved to change his approach to nar-

row the gap.

"I have got to hit as many greens in regulation as possible, I just have not done that," said the American. "All it takes is a little bit of a spark, a little confidence with my ball striking to make sure I have got that distance control down and the putting will come."

Spieth lived up to his expectations and put on a commanding performance, shooting five birdies against a bogey before heading into the final hole to shave Song's lead.

"My game really started to come together on the back nine," said the world number one. "I was putting some pressure on the leader. Assuming I make that putt on 18 that is going to put some pressure on him."

Song put on a blistering eight-under-par 63 performance on Friday that equalled the course record, but only managed two and one under in the next two days before play was suspended.

"I am really tired, it has been a long wait. Coming back tomorrow is okay for me as the course should be in a better condition (less wet)," said the 24-year-old. "Tomorrow I will just play shot by shot and hope I can get the win. I have had a lot of second place finishes and it is time for a victory." —AFP

## S KOREA'S CHOI CLINGS TO SHARE OF PGA LEAD

**LOS ANGELES:** KJ Choi, chasing his first US PGA victory in nearly five years, closed with a birdie to share the lead after Saturday's third round of the \$6.5 million Farmers Insurance Open.

The 45-year-old South Korean shot an even par 72 to match American Scott Brown on nine-under 207 after 54 holes at Torrey Pines near San Diego.

Choi, the most successful Asian male golfer in PGA history, has won eight titles on the US tour, the most recent of them at the 2011 Players Championship when he won a playoff over David Toms.

Jimmy Walker fired a 68 to share third with fellow American Gary Woodland on 208 to pace 21 rivals with four strokes of the co-leaders entering the final round, when wet and windy conditions are predicted.

"It's going to be a grind for everybody," Brown said. "Under par or even par is going to be a really good score. You've just got to stay out there and be patient."

Choi stumbled early, answering a bogey at the fifth with a birdie at the sixth but taking a double bogey at the seventh, where he found the rough on his second and third shots and three-putted from 18 feet. Another bogey at the 12th seemed to signal more trouble.

But Choi rebounded, landing his approaches at the par-5 13th and par-4 13th within three feet of the cup to set up birdies.

At the par-3 16th, he found a bunker but sank a clutch nine-foot par putt. At 17, Choi had an 85-foot approach from dense rough over a bunker and rolled the ball two feet from the cup to salvage par.

At 18, Choi planted another approach three feet from the cup and rolled it home to share the lead.

Hoping to qualify for his first Masters start so he can enjoy his hometown's storied event, Brown missed a seven-foot birdie putt at the 18th that would have given him to outright lead.

Brown capped a run of three birdies in five holes with a four-foot putt at the par-3 eighth, then played the back nine at par. Walker charged into contention despite finding only three fairways.

"I know I can't do that again," Walker said. "That's a lot of crazy short game up and downs. It's not much fun. I've got to work on it. I don't want that again." Sweden's Jonas Blixt fired his second consecutive 66 to share fifth on 209 with countryman Freddie Jacobson and Americans John Huh and Michael Kim.—AFP



**GEELONG:** Britain's Peter Kennaugh of Team Sky celebrates after winning the men's elite cycling race in the 2016 Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race in Geelong yesterday. — AFP

## BRIT KENNAUGH WINS AUSTRALIAN ROAD RACE

**SYDNEY:** Current British road race champion and Olympic gold medalist Peter Kennaugh won the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race in Australia yesterday, as fellow countryman Mark Cavendish pulled out before the finish.

Kennaugh (Team Sky) won the second edition of the 174-kilometre (108-mile) race in Geelong, Victoria, in four hours, four minutes and 59 seconds, six seconds ahead of local sprinter Leigh Howard (IAM Cycling) and Italian Niccolo Bonifazio (Trek-Segafredo).

Australian Simon Gerrans (ORICA-GreenEDGE), who claimed a record fourth Tour Down Under in Adelaide last weekend, finished fifth. Britain sprint great Cavendish (Team Dimension Data), the winner of 26 Tour de France stages, and Australia's Caleb Ewan

(ORICA-GreenEDGE) did not complete the race.

Kennaugh, who won gold at the London Olympics in the team pursuit, made his move with 10 kilometres to go, and was able to keep ahead of the chasing pack.

"They (Team Sky) were telling me to stay calm. I went up the road just over a lap to go and they said it wouldn't work," the 26-year-old told broadcaster Channel Seven on his solo victory.

"But they told me just to hit it, kind of what Richie Porte did on Willunga (in the Tour Down Under). Just commit. I know a lot of things about power all the time and I'm not one who likes numbers and that kind of stuff.

"But I've been doing a lot of work on that

stuff and tried to pace myself to the finish. I had the legs. I felt terrible for the first half of the race and then obviously came around."

Australia's Cadel Evans, whom the race is named after, hailed Kennaugh's win and described the race as fantastic. "The guys raced hard. As we saw, chopping and changing, back and forth, I expect more from the expected favourites so to speak," he told Channel Seven.

"But Peter Kennaugh, often riding in the services of others, got a great win. He stayed on after the race last year and trained away. It's good to see him get repaid for that."

Australian Amanda Spratt (ORICA-AIS) won the women's race on Saturday with a time of two hours, 58 minutes and 45 seconds. — AFP