

FOURCADE WINS RACE IN BIATHLON W CUP



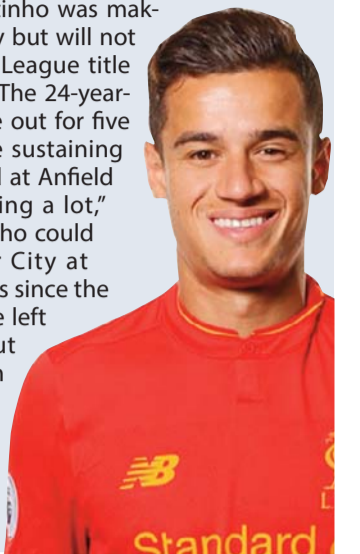
NOVE MESTO: Martin Fourcade's domination of the men's biathlon World Cup continued yesterday with the defending champion and overall leader's victory in the 15-kilometer mass start. Dropping to 14th after missing one target at the second shooting range, the Frenchman didn't waste time in overcoming one penalty lap. He pulled away after the next shooting to cross the finish line in 36 minutes, 18.9 seconds. Germany's Simon Schempp finished 8.3 seconds behind in second, while Anton Babikov of Russia was third, 9.4 back. Fourcade also won the sprint on Thursday and pursuit on Saturday and claimed seven of the individual eight races this season. Fourcade has a 158-point lead over Russia's Anton Shipulin in the overall standings. — AP

MILITO QUILTS AS ARGENTINE COACHING EXODUS CONTINUES

BUENOS AIRES: Former Barcelona and Argentina defender Gabriel Milito has quit as coach of Independiente after Saturday's 1-0 home defeat by Banfield in the Argentine first division. Milito, who took charge in May and as a centre back helped Independiente win their last league title in 2002, is the 15th coach to leave a club in Argentina's 30-team championship since the beginning of the season in August. "I gave of my best but it didn't work out. I think this is the time to step aside," the 36-year-old, younger brother of former Inter Milan and Racing Club striker Diego Milito, told reporters. Independiente were jeered and whistled off the Estadio Libertadores de America pitch by fans angered by insipid performances in a poor recent run which had delivered two wins in their last seven matches. They go into the summer break with 22 points from 14 matches, including six wins. Independiente, who lifted the last of their record seven crowns in the elite South American Copa Libertadores 32 years ago, last won a title in the second-string Copa Sudamericana in 2010. —Reuters

KLOPP WON'T RUSH BACK IMPROVING COUTINHO

LONDON: Influential midfielder Philippe Coutinho was making encouraging progress from an ankle injury but will not be rushed back to boost Liverpool's Premier League title aspirations, manager Juergen Klopp has said. The 24-year-old Brazilian, who was initially expected to be out for five to six weeks, has been on the sidelines since sustaining the injury during the 2-0 win over Sunderland at Anfield last month. "It would be cool. He is improving a lot," Klopp told British media when asked if Coutinho could be back for the clash against Manchester City at Anfield on New Year's Eve. "He is off his crutches since the West Ham United game (on Dec. 11), when we left the stadium he was walking in front without them." Coutinho said he has set his sights on making his return against City. Klopp, however, insisted the midfielder will not be rushed back into action. "We will have to see," the German manager added. "No idea at the moment." — Reuters



KUWAIT SPORTS DAY SUPPORTS DISTINGUISHED ATHLETES: KOC

KUWAIT: Organizing the First Kuwait sports day buttresses Kuwait's distinguished athletes, Chairman of Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC) Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah stressed Saturday. Speaking in statements to reporters after concluding the event at Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium, Sheikh Fahad said the KOC would continue backing and organizing sports activities and programs that serve Kuwaiti sons and daughters. A large number of sports federations, clubs and committees took part in today's event which was held under the auspices of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. Sheikh Fahad lauded efforts of male and female athletes in today's competitions that made brilliant performances in different competitions. Meanwhile, Chairman of the Kuwait Shooting Association and Arab Shooting Federation Duaij Al-Otaibi said that KOC intends to hold this sports event annual-

ly. He welcomed the event held over nine days and in which 14 sports federations like Judo, shooting, athletics, tennis and others took part. The KOC's initiative to organize this sports day comes in implementation of the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah that call for taking care of athletes, he noted. He extolled the support of Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud that helped sports federation and clubs share contests. Al-Otaibi pointed out that the KOC would seek to hold an international sports conference to discuss some mechanisms and strategies in order to develop Kuwait's sports movement through joint cooperation amongst all State's institutions, including the legislative and executive authorities, and sports bodies. He said appropriate solutions would be provided for the development of youth action and sports in Kuwait. The event ended with honoring all winners in all competitions. —KUNA



—Photos by Abdellatif Sharra

