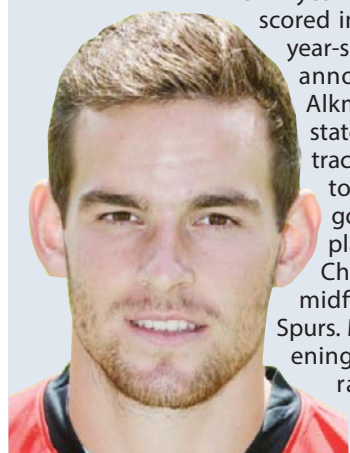


## SPURS SIGN HOTSHOT DUTCH STRIKER JANSSEN

**LONDON:** Prolific Dutch international striker Vincent Janssen signed for English Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur yesterday from AZ Alkmaar for a reported fee of £17 million (\$22.3m, 20.1m euros), the buying club announced.



The 22-year-old well known to English football fans having scored in a 2-1 friendly win over England in March this year signed a four-year contract. "We are delighted to announce the signing of Vincent Janssen from AZ Alkmaar, subject to international clearance," read a statement from Spurs. "The striker has signed a contract with the club until 2020." Janssen, who finished top scorer in the Dutch league last term with 27 goals and won the Johan Cruyff trophy for young player of the year which future Spurs team-mate Christian Eriksen won when at Ajax, joins Kenyan midfielder Victor Wanyama as fresh faces at Spurs. Manager Mauricio Pochettino has been strengthening the squad for the twin challenges of the title race—having finished third last term—and the Champions League. — AFP

## BERTRAND SIGNS NEW FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT

**LONDON:** England defender Ryan Bertrand has signed a contract extension that will keep him at Southampton until 2021, the Premier League club said yesterday. The 26-year-old, who was in his country's squad for Euro 2016, initially joined the club on a season-long loan in July 2014, but completed a permanent move from Chelsea in February the following year. But now he has signed a new five-year deal as the club continues to tie up key players on long-term contracts. "I'm very pleased. It's been a fantastic move for me since the day I came to this club and I look forward to many more successful years and really pushing forward," Bertrand told the club's website (www.saintsfc.co.uk). "I've enjoyed my football here. I've really enjoyed the club, and the fans have been fantastic with me personally as well, so I couldn't think of any better place to play football and to keep on developing. Bertrand, who had a frustrating spell with Chelsea, made 32 league appearances last season to lead Southampton to a sixth-place finish in the table and a place in the Europa League group stages. — Reuters

## MODRIC QUESTIONED IN DINAMO ZAGREB GRAFT CASE

**ZAGREB:** Real Madrid midfielder star Luka Modric has been questioned by Croatian prosecutors over a multimillion-euro corruption case involving former high-ranking Dinamo Zagreb officials, a report said yesterday. Modric — who is not suspected of any wrongdoing — had already been questioned by anti-graft prosecutors (USKOK) in Zagreb in September 2015 and his testimony was considered key in the case. At the time local media reported Modric was questioned on the financial details of his 2008 transfer to Tottenham Hotspur. From there he joined Real Madrid. There were no details about the latest meeting with prosecutors, which took place in the Croatian capital on Monday, the Jutarnji list daily said. Former Dinamo Zagreb boss Zdravko Mamic — considered the most powerful man in Croatian football — and his brother Zoran, the club's ex-coach, were charged by USKOK in April with abuse of power and bribery. The Mamic brothers were charged along with one of the club's former directors and a tax inspector. — AFP



# FROOME QUESTIONS QUINTANA'S TACTICS

**ANDORRA LA VELLA:** Chris Froome and his Sky manager Dave Brailsford have questioned the tactics of chief rival Nairo Quintana at the Tour de France. The defending champion led the Colombian by 23 seconds ahead of today's 10th stage from Andorra to Revel, back in France.

But over three Pyrenean mountain stages, Quintana failed to attack Froome, leaving the Briton and his team perplexed. "I would be interested to find out from him (why he didn't attack)," said Froome, 31.

"I was expecting an attack from him (on Sunday) and was keeping something in reserve, and in the back of my mind just waiting for his big move. But it never came."

There may be 12 stages left in the Tour but Froome's Sky have the yellow jersey and are set up to defend it. "It really is a good place to be at the moment, I'm really happy to have the yellow jersey on my shoulders," said Froome.

"Tactically, but also for morale and for the team. Tactically it puts the shoe on the other foot—it's up to other teams now to go out to try to gain back time they've lost already."

Quintana admits he could lose time to Froome in Friday's 13th stage time-trial but says he's happy with the position he finds himself in. "Froome is quite strong, his team is quite strong but I'm better than previous years," said the 26-year-old Colombian.

"I've got more maturity. I hope to get through the time-trial, that's where I'm weakest in relation to him. We'll see day by day, both me and the team. There's a long way to go in the Tour, a lot of mountains—you can't lay down your whole life on just one day."

"You have to take it slowly to see how your rivals are and where the possibility to attack will be."

### 'COMPACT RACE'

Brailsford said he's been surprised that other teams, not just Quintana's Movistar, have simply let Sky control the race, rather than trying to put them into difficulty. "We've seen Chris attack, we've seen a couple of other skirmishes if you like, but as of yet it's been a relatively compact race," he said. "At the end of the day there's only one team controlling this race, that's us."

"No other team has made any attempt to control the race. We controlled the race even when one of the big teams (BMC) was in the (yellow) jersey. "At some point in time, either the race gets taken on and (with) some of the other teams we have a battle with it, or we're going to continue to control the race until a couple of key showdowns."

Froome believes the race so far has shown he's simply got the strongest team-mates to fall back on. "With the team that I've got, I think they've shown themselves over the last few days, just in terms of numbers in the final, we do have the strongest team here," he said. "I'm confident the guys will be able to ride in that defensive way to help me. "When it comes to that final moment, even when other GC riders have only got one or two team-mates left, I'm sitting there with four or five and that's certainly going to work in my favour."

But Movistar manager Eusebio Unzué said his team are merely biding their time. "We're concentrating on effectiveness, there's no prize for the one who attacks the most," he said. "The compensation will come from being effective, either through attacking or through great defence." — AFP



**REVEL:** (From L) Australia's Richie Porte, Colombia's Nairo Quintana, Great Britain's Christopher Froome, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, Italy's Fabio Aru, Spain's Joaquim Rodriguez and France's Warren Barguil ride during the 197 km tenth stage of the 103rd edition of the Tour de France cycling race yesterday between Escaldes-Engordany and Revel. — AFP

## NEW GENERATION IS TAKING OVER: BARDET

**LA MASSANA:** A new generation of professional riders is emerging intent on breaking with old habits in the peloton and doing things their own way, according to Frenchman Romain Bardet. Speaking to Reuters on the first rest day of the Tour de France, Bardet, sixth overall in the 2014 Tour and a potential podium finisher in Paris, said riders should not be seen as brainless pedal pushers. "We like to put a tag on cyclists—saying they're a bit thick, just good to push on the pedals, with their shaven legs and trademark tan, but it's not just that," the 25-year-old said.

"I hate this cliché. It's a simplistic approach, riders are profoundly human, with their sensibility, their political awareness."

After years of Lance Armstrong domination, a new generation of riders born in the 1990s is taking over, looking to bring a breath of fresh air into a sport long plagued by Omerta—the law of silence imposed by the disgraced American rider. The professional peloton has until recently been ruled by self-proclaimed leaders, such as Fabian Cancellara, whose influence in the pack is still being felt.

"I have no link (with him). Cancellara has never spoken to me, I think he does not even know I'm a professional bike rider," said Bardet, a composed and articulate character who has a degree in management.

"There is a new generation coming that will have their own approach to riding although we mean no disrespect to the past. I was talking about Cancellara but Alberto Contador is a very respectful rival, who'll pat you on the back, like Alejandro Valverde."

"It's more open, there is no clear hierarchy, even if (world champion Peter) Sagan is a bit of a leader there will be no boss like before," he added.

Sagan, 26, has spoken up for riders' safety recently and is extremely popular in the peloton, unlike the 35-year-old Cancellara.

Just like Sagan, Bardet is concerned about safety and believes authorities have not been dealing

swiftly enough with the concern.

### UNITY NEEDED

Riders need to unite but the nature of the sport makes it difficult. "In an environment that is so fiercely competitive, it's really hard to find unity," said Bardet. "It is absolutely necessary but it's hard to bring the riders together. We're not being consulted much by the (cycling) authorities. "It's a precarious world, riders have one or two-year contracts which means it is hard for them to commit for the sport in the long term." French riders, however, are quite united, a consequence of years of abuse by other riders when France was at the forefront of the fight against doping in the late 1990s. "Français de merde" (shitty Frenchman) is an insult that is still being heard in the peloton, Bardet confirmed, saying the fight against old habits is not over.

"You even hear that from riders who pretend they rule the peloton," he said. "So nothing is won yet. But it's changing with the new generation. I'm thinking of (Italian Fabio) Aru, (the 2015 Vuelta winner) who is not like that at all. It's more a question of generation than nationality."

Bardet, who was ninth on last year's Tour and now lies sixth after nine stages, 44 seconds behind overall leader Chris Froome, said he intends to keep a cautious approach in the rest of the race, reining in his attacking instincts. "It's not like in 1998 when it was 'open bar', when you could attack day after day," he said referring to the year of the Festina doping scandal when widespread use of the blood-boosting EPO was revealed. "We're human. I'm aware of my capacities, I know that if I go too deep into the red one day I'll pay for it the next day. "Attacking when you've got five Sky riders at the front of the peloton and ending up with a five-minute deficit just to show my face on telly, I'm not interested. That would be shooting myself in the foot twice." — Reuters

## INJURED CONTADOR LIKELY TO MISS RIO OLYMPICS

**MADRID:** Spanish cyclist Alberto Contador said yesterday that he is almost certain to miss the Rio Olympics next month after the injuries that ruined his shot at a third Tour de France victory. The 33-year-old, a two-time Tour de France champion, quit cycling's most famous race on Sunday's ninth stage after crashing on both of the opening two stages, suffering injuries including down his right side. He finished fourth in the individual time trial at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, but missed the following Games in London after he was handed a two-year doping ban.

"Regarding the Olympics, it is practically impossible (for me to participate) because the question is not whether I have recovered but if I can participate in top condition," he told a press conference in Madrid after having medical tests.

"At first glance it looks like that will not be possible." Doctors said it would take about four weeks for Contador to recover from a range of injuries, which include muscle tears in his left thigh and bruising to his right shoulder.

Contador said missing the Olympics, which start on August 5, would deal "a big blow to morale because it is the second main objective of the year after the Tour."

He is hoping to recover in time to ride in the Vuelta a España, which begins on August 20. "I think I can get there," he said of the Vuelta, a race he has won on three occasions. Contador insisted he had no regrets after persevering in this year's Tour despite the early crashes that eventually forced him into a premature exit. "I had to try it, I had to try to give it everything," he said. He dismissed any thoughts of retirement, just a day after compatriot Joaquim Rodriguez, 37, announced he would call time on his career at the end of the season.

"We're going to conclude an agreement in due course with a team for next year," said Contador, who acknowledged having made contact with various teams in the final year of his deal with Tinkoff. — AFP



**MADRID:** Tinkoff team's Spanish cyclist Alberto Contador gestures during a press conference at the CENTRO hospital in Madrid yesterday. Spanish cyclist Alberto Contador said yesterday that he is almost certain to miss the Rio Olympics next month after the injuries that ended his shot at the Tour de France. — AFP

## RED BULL TO VOTE AGAINST 'HALO' SAFETY DEVICE

**LONDON:** Red Bull would oppose the introduction of a proposed 'halo' cockpit protection device in Formula One next season if it comes to a vote, team principal Christian Horner has said. Former champions Red Bull had the device installed on their car at the start of the sport's second in-season test at Silverstone yesterday, becoming the second team to try it out after Ferrari. The 'halo' concept, more like a wishbone with a central pillar supporting a protective loop above the driver's head, has been promoted by Ferrari and Mercedes, whereas Red Bull prefer their own 'aeroscreen'. The latter device, more attractive to some, did not perform as well in testing by the governing body and the halo is now the main focus. "Personally I'm not a big fan of the halo," Horner told reporters after

last weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone. "I think it's an inelegant solution to the problem that it's trying to deal with. "I'd prefer there to be more research time taken to do the job properly, rather than rushing something through that may have other consequences. So I'm not a big fan of the halo and the limitations that it has. "I certainly wouldn't vote in favour at the moment." The International Automobile Federation (FIA) is keen to introduce the halo next year but that would normally require a unanimous vote by top teams in the core Strategy Group, including Red Bull, as a change to the technical regulations.

The FIA could impose it on safety grounds, however, while approval for 2018 would acquire only a majority vote. — Reuters