



## RENAULT AL BABBAIN, MAIN PARTNER OF 2016 NBK WALKATHON

**KUWAIT:** Renault Al Babbain has announced its major partnership of the 22nd NBK walkathon scheduled to kick off on December 3rd, 2016. Titled, 'We Are Stronger With each Step' organized by the National Bank of Kuwait, this will be Renault Al Babbain's 2nd consecutive year to take a major part in this initiative in strong support of the organiza-

tion's passion for life and healthy living. Al Babbain has always proudly worked with key local partners, who like us, share the responsibility of spreading awareness on the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Al Babbain thrilled to support the Walkathon, which is by far the most popular and awaited walkathon in the country, that

continues to grow year after year. Participants will also be entering a draw for three exciting prizes Three 2016 Renault Captur vehicles. The Renault models will be displayed inside the registration tent for viewing. The participants expected to reach record numbers this year will be joined by several public figures, NBK senior

officials along with Al Babbain's senior representatives and will begin the race along the scenic coastline area of the Arabian Gulf Road, assisted by NBK volunteers and amidst cheering fans, relatives and friends. This partnership with NBK coincides with Renault Al Babbain's health awareness month making it an ideal fit within

Renault Al Babbain's on-going partnership portfolio. This partnership continues Al Babbain's long-standing tradition of contributing to a wide variety of local sporting activities. Registration for the NBK Annual Walkathon has already started at the scientific center and will end on December 1.



**SAO PAULO:** Williams Martini Racing's Brazilian driver Felipe Massa, holding his country's flag, greets fans after his final appearance at Interlagos circuit before retirement, at the end of the Brazilian Grand Prix in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Sunday. —AFP

## BRAZIL'S MASSA CRASHES BUT GETS WARM FAREWELL AT HOME

**SAO PAULO:** Williams' veteran driver Felipe Massa failed to finish his last race in front of his home crowd at Interlagos on Sunday, but he still earned a warm and emotional goodbye.

In a Brazilian Grand Prix deeply impacted by rain, Massa crashed out in the 48th of 71 laps when he was in 14th position. In tears, the 35-year-old driver walked through the pit lane wrapped in a Brazilian flag and was greeted by his wife Anna Raffaella, his son Felipeinho, a rowdy local crowd and members of all teams.

"I am leaving with my head up and my heart still aching," Massa told reporters by the pit lane.

"I apologize to this crowd, this is not the result that I expected here. I can only thank them for the love, for all the emotions that I felt." The Brazilian driver also said he expects to be part of a different racing series next year, without providing further details.

Massa has 11 Grand Prix career wins, including two in Brazil. Two weeks from now, he will make his final appearance in a

Formula 1 car at the season-fincher in Abu Dhabi, after reaching his 250th start.

Massa's F1 career began in 2002 as a member of Sauber. He shone at Ferrari, the team that gave him his best chance at the title race in 2008. At a Brazilian GP that he won, Massa lost the crown to Lewis Hamilton after the British driver made a key overtake on the very last lap.

One year later Massa's life was put at serious risk after he was struck on the head by a wheel at the Hungarian Grand Prix. He stayed in the hospital for days.

Massa joined Williams in 2014. In the current season he is 11th with 51 points. With his retirement and the difficulties for Felipe Nasr of Sauber to renew his contract, there is a chance that no Brazilian drivers will be on the grid in 2017. That would be the first time in 48 years. There are no other Brazilian drivers in Europe being considered for a place at the moment. Sunday's race was won by three-time series champion Hamilton, forcing a showdown for the season title with Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg in Abu Dhabi. —AP

# PEREZ WINS BY TWO SHOTS IN MEXICO

**PLAYA DEL CARMEN:** Pat Perez won the OHL Classic at Mayakoba on Sunday in his third start since returning from shoulder surgery. Perez closed with a 4-under 67 for a two-stroke victory over third-round leader Gary Woodland on the Greg Norman-designed El Camaleon course. Perez finished at 21-under 263. Perez had surgery on his shoulder in February. He returned with a tie for 33rd in Malaysia, and tied for seventh last week in Las Vegas.

Perez shot a 62 on Saturday to pull within a stroke of Woodland. The 40-year-old former Arizona State player birdied five of the first eight holes and had a bogey on the par-4 12th.

He also won the 2009 Bob Hope Classic. Woodland birdied the final two holes for a 70. Russell Knox was third at 18 under after a 66.

### CHARLES SCHWAB CUP CHAMPIONSHIP

Paul Goydos and Bernhard Langer got the big trophies and checks in the PGA Tour Champions' season-ending Charles Schwab Cup Championship. Goydos completed a wire-to-wire victory in the tournament, and Langer finished second to win his third straight season points title and fourth overall.

Goydos shot a 4-under 66 to finish at 15-under 195 on Desert Mountain's Cochise Course. He opened with a 62 in windy conditions and shot a 67 on Saturday to take a two-stroke lead in the final round. Langer had a 64. Recovering from a left knee injury that forced him to withdraw from the playoff opener at Sherwood, the 59-year-old German star won the \$1 million annuity as the Charles Schwab Cup season champion and also topped the tour with four victories and \$3,016,959.

Colin Montgomerie had a 68 to finish third at 11 under. The 52-year-old Goydos earned \$440,000. He also won the Dick's Sporting Goods Open in July in New York and has four victories on the 50-and-over tour. He won twice on the PGA Tour.

### CITIBANAMEX LORENA OCHOA INVITATIONAL

Carlota Ciganda rallied to win the Citibanamex Lorena Ochoa Invitational for her second LPGA Tour victory in four starts. The 26-year-old Spaniard shot a 4-under 68 at Club de Golf Mexico for a two-stroke victory over six players. She played the four par-5 holes in 5 under, making an eagle on No. 2 and birdies on 6, 11 and 17. Ciganda won the LPGA KEB-Hana Bank Championship a month ago in South Korea for her first tour title. The former Arizona State player has five straight top-10 finishes.

Ciganda won a year after finishing second



**PLAYA DEL CARMEN:** Pat Perez of the United States holds up his trophy after he won the OHL Classic at Mayakoba golf tournament in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, Sunday. — AP

Inbee Park on the tree-lined course. Third-round leader Austin Ernst had a 71 to drop into a tie for second with Angela Stanford (69), Jodi Ewart Shadoff (67), Karine Icher (69) and Sarah Jane Smith (70). Tournament host Ochoa won 27 LPGA Tour titles. The Mexican star retired in 2010. She will be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame next year.

### NEDBANK GOLF CHALLENGE

Alex Noren rallied to win the Nedbank Golf

Challenge, rebounding for a third-round 75 with a 63 for a six-stroke victory.

The 34-year-old Swede has four European Tour victories this season. Noren was 9 under through the first 11 holes at Gary Player Country Club. He finished at 14-under 274 and earned \$1.16 million to move into third place in the Race to Dubai standings entering the season-ending World Tour Championship next week in Dubai. Third-round leader Jeunghun Wang of South Korea had a 75 to finish second. — AP

# JAPAN AHEAD OF ENGLAND AS WCUP HOSTS: RUGBY CHIEF

**LONDON:** World Rugby's chief executive tried to allay fears about Japan's readiness to stage the 2019 World Cup, saying yesterday the country was three years ahead of where 2015 hosts England were at the same point.

There was consternation last year when the original plan for the redevelopment of Yokohama Stadium—the main venue for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and 2019 Rugby World Cup final—was abandoned because of spiralling construction costs.

This led to speculation that the first Rugby World Cup in Asia could be moved to one of rugby union's more established nations. But World Rugby CEO Brett Gosper said feedback from "everyone down" from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had convinced him that Yokohama, scene of the 2002 football World Cup final, would be ready to stage the climax of the 2019 rugby showpiece.

"We were out there a couple of months ago for a formal review," Gosper told reporters on the sidelines of the World Rugby conference in London. "From the prime minister down we got a good sense of momentum. We are happy with Yokohama."

Organisers of the 2015 World Cup in

England—where Japan caused one of the all-time great upsets by beating South Africa—were widely praised for delivering a successful tournament on and off the field.

But Gosper said Japan was primed to deliver in its own right. "There is a lot of excitement in Japan," the Australian said. "They're ahead of England at this stage of the preparations, three years out, on most of the criteria."

Gosper's comments were endorsed by World Rugby chairman Bill Beaumont, who said he had been pleased by what he saw on his visits to Japan. "I was both impressed by the passion and the expertise," Beaumont, captain of England's 1980 Grand Slam-winning side, said.

"Japan will be groundbreaking for the sport of rugby in terms of attracting new fans and players in Asia as they look to the 'Land of the Rising Scrum'."

### 'NO EASY SOLUTION'

While upbeat about Japan's progress, the 64-year-old said solving the thorny issue of a global rugby calendar, another major task in his in-tray when he succeeded France's Bernard Lapasset in July, was proving more difficult. A global calendar aligning the northern and

southern hemisphere rugby union seasons has long been seen as a way of bringing more order to a congested fixture list and easing the demands on top players.

"It's challenging," said Beaumont. "I came in thinking it was something I could sort out pretty quickly, but I found otherwise. It is a case of one step back and one step forwards. I'm hopeful that by early next year we'll reach a solution, but there is no easy solution."

Former lock Beaumont, who played 41 Tests — 34 for England and seven for the British and Irish Lions—said the physical demands of rugby made it impossible for the sport to copy football's schedule. "Our number one priority is player welfare, we can't play more than once a week."

"We're not like soccer where a player in the Premier League can fly to Chile and play an international on Tuesday and come back and play for his club on the Saturday."

### 'OLYMPIC HALO'

But Beaumont was unequivocal about the success of the Olympic debut of rugby sevens at this year's Games in Rio, saying it had done wonders for the sport's profile. — AFP

## BRAZIL'S F1 FUTURE REMAINS CLOUDY AFTER WET THRILLER

**SAO PAULO:** Lewis Hamilton emphasised how much the Brazilian Grand Prix meant to him after winning in the wet on Sunday, but the race's future on the Formula One calendar remains clouded by uncertainty. "I just assume this is going to be on the grand prix calendar because it is one of the best races," said the triple champion after succeeding at Interlagos, his boyhood idol Ayrton Senna's home track, for the first time. "It is part of the heritage of Formula One. We cannot lose this grand prix."

Despite the Mercedes driver's words, the chances of Brazil remaining on the calendar remain very much a 'maybe' due to the country's ongoing economic crisis. Brazil will also have only one driver next year, in an uncompetitive car, and even that is not certain with Felipe Nasr yet to be confirmed by struggling Sauber. The atmospheric amphitheatre has an asterisk against it, along with Canada and Germany, on the 2017 draft calendar and commercial supremo Bernie Ecclestone is not sounding positive. "I think we may well be able to sort Canada out, possibly, but the other two..." the Briton told Reuters with a shrug.

The final calendar, currently 21 races, will be published in December. Interlagos, with fans exposed to the elements and the track close by slums on one side, has undergone an upgrade to the cramped pits and paddock area but there is always more to do. "They've done a good job, but it needed to be done," commented Ecclestone, who is married to a Brazilian and owns a ranch in the country.

The 86-year-old Briton said long-standing talks with Argentina, which last hosted a race in 1998, could lead to another South American option but "it would be good not to lose this race". Canadian promoters have sounded optimistic about keeping their grand prix but the prospects for Germany, a home race for champions Mercedes and Ferrari's four-times champion Sebastian Vettel, do not look good. "Trouble is it's all commercial. If they can't make it work commercially they will stop," Ecclestone said of Germany. Hockenheim held the race this year but has been reluctant to do so in successive seasons unless the hosting fees are frozen, while the Nuerburgring has balked at the cost. —Reuters