

SEVILLA SNAP UP ARGENTINE MONTOYA

MADRID: Sevilla made Argentine midfielder Walter Montoya their third signing of the January transfer window yesterday on a four-and-a-half year deal from Rosario Central. "Sevilla will count on the services of Argentine midfielder Walter Montoya, 23, once he passes the required medical," Sevilla said in a statement. "The agreements are complete both with his club, Rosario Central, and the player himself. He will sign for four-and-a-half years until June 30, 2021." However, Montoya may be loaned back to Rosario until the end of the season unless Sevilla can offload someone from their current squad from a non-European Union country before Tuesday's transfer deadline. La Liga imposes a limit of three non-EU players per squad. Rosario confirmed that the transfer fee will depend on whether Montoya leaves immediately or not. "The figures of the transfer are variable depending on whether Walter stays or not in the next six months," said the Argentine club in a statement. "The figures will be announced once that situation is confirmed by the Spanish club in the next few days." Spanish media reported Sevilla will pay around five million euros (\$5.3 million). Sevilla have already boosted their squad with the signing of French defender Clement Lenglet and forward Stevan Jovetic on loan from Inter Milan this month. — AFP



CHILE STRIKER VARGAS TO JOIN MEXICAN CHAMPIONS TIGRES

MEXICO CITY: Chile striker Eduardo Vargas is joining Mexico's UANL Tigres from Bundesliga side Hoffenheim, the Liga MX champions said. The 27-year-old striker, due to arrive in Mexico today, will become one of nearly 200 foreign-born players in the Liga MX, the vast majority South Americans. "Eduardo Vargas, one of the stars of Chilean football, is coming to Tigres to reinforce the team's attack which will seek the title in the Clausura 2017," the Monterrey-based club said on their website (www.tigres.com.mx). Tigres won the Apertura, the first of two championships in the season, in December and can now pair Vargas with France's Andre-Pierre Gignac in a formidable strike force as they look to retain their crown in the Clausura, which began three weeks ago. Vargas will hope to improve on a modest club career outside his home country where he won the domestic league and Copa Sudamericana with Universidad de Chile in 2011. He was signed for 13.5 million euros (\$14.4 million) by Napoli in 2012 but went on loan to Brazil's Gremio, Valencia and Queens Park Rangers before joining Hoffenheim in 2015 for six million euros. — Reuters

DISCUS ACE HARTING TO END CAREER IN 2018

BERLIN: Germany's Robert Harting, the 2012 Olympic discus champion, has revealed he will retire after the 2018 European championships in Berlin. "I am looking forward to this year and next, then after that I'll just be watching," the 32-year-old three-times world champion told website leichtathletik.de. The burly German, famous for ripping off his shirt when celebrating major titles, suffered a serious knee injury in 2014 when he tore the cruciate ligament while training. In the build up to last year's Olympics, Harting was outspoken in his criticism of athletes who dope and of the perceived inaction on the issue of IOC president Thomas Bach. He missed the final, and the chance to defend his Olympic title, at the Rio de Janeiro Games after injuring his back while turning off a light switch. In his absence, his brother Christoph Harting won gold to keep the Olympic title in the family. The European championships in his home town of Berlin in 2018 will be his last and he also plans to compete at the 2017 world championships in London from August 5-13. — AFP



Obaid al-Osaimi and Duaij al-Otaibi.



Technical committee officials.

COMPETITION HEATS UP IN AMIR'S SIXTH SHOOTING GRAND PRIX

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Sixth Shooting Grand Prix being held at Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex enters its second day today with four competitions starting at 9 am which are 10 air rifle men, 50 meter pistol men, trap for men and women shooting at 75 targets. The finals of these competitions will take place at noon, while the women's medal rounds will be at 4 pm. Competitions are expected to be challenging especially that Arab Federations sent mixed teams of experienced and new shooters, so Kuwait shooters will do their best to leave a strong impression on this tournament and prove that it is able to win tournaments.



Ghassan Shaaban



Some of the heads of delegations.

Meanwhile, the technical meeting for the tournament was held yesterday morning during which discussions took place between Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee Eng. Duaij Al-Otaibi and heads of participating delegations about the technical and organizational aspects of competitions.

President of Egyptian and African Shooting Federations Hazim Hosni expressed his pleasure to participate in the tournament's activities for the sixth time as he was present during each Grand Prix. He said the tournament succeeded in attracting shooters from around the world each year.

Hosni said that the event is considered a forum during which federation's presidents meet to discuss all what is new in the world of shooting including changes on or new rules and regulations for the game.

He also lauded Kuwait's winning the two gold and bronze medals at the Olympics adding that Kuwait is considered a pioneer of Arab shooters, and is always generous with Arab federations with its expertise and this reflects on the general standard of the sport in the Arab world.



Pre-event training.



MANY CLOUDS DIES AFTER THISTLECRACK UPSET

CHELLENHAM: Many Clouds, the 2015 Grand National winner, collapsed and died in the shadow of the winning post after upsetting odds-on favourite Thistlecrack in a Gold Cup warm-up at Cheltenham yesterday.

After one of his career-best performances the 10-year-old faltered and fell to the ground, in front of the packed grandstand. Screens were quickly put up around him but veterinary officers were unable to save trainer Oliver Sherwood's stable star.

"So sorry, we were beaten by a better horse on the day, poor old Many Clouds, this is as sad as it can be," said Colin Tizzard, trainer of Thistlecrack.

The tragic outcome turned the mood at Cheltenham from one of surprise celebration at Many Clouds' stirring victory over the ante-post Gold Cup favourite to one of sombre reflection at the loss of one of National Hunt racing's most cherished equine sons.

Many Clouds, who ran in the colours of British tycoon Trevor Hemmings, owner of second tier English football league side Preston North End, perished after a typically foot-perfect and gutsy performance.

Sent off at 8-1 for the Cotswold Chase he led Thistlecrack over the last and got the better of his year younger



CHELLENHAM: Many Clouds ridden by Leighton Aspell, right, jump an early fence in company with Thistlecrack ridden by Tom Scudamore before going on to win The Cotswold Chase Race run during Festival Trials Day at Cheltenham Racecourse, in Cheltenham, England, yesterday. Many Clouds, the winner of Britain's 2015 Grand National, has collapsed and died after winning a race at Cheltenham yesterday. — AP

rival, the 4-9 favorite, in a no-holds-barred battle up the famous Cheltenham hill. Many Clouds' finest hour came at Aintree on April 15, 2015, when he produced an exhilarating exhibition of jumping to land the world's

most famous steeplechase under jockey Leighton Aspell, who was on board as usual for his ill-fated last ever outing.

He returned last year to try to defend his Liverpool crown but had to settle for 16th behind Rule The World. — AFP

NORWAY IN WORLD FINAL AFTER EXTRA-TIME WIN

PARIS: Norway reached the final of the world handball championships for the first time on Friday with a dramatic 28-25 extra-time victory over Croatia.

The Norwegians, who were only fourth at the last European championships, will face defending champions France in today's final. France will be going for a sixth world crown and will be buoyed by knowing that they beat Norway, who only qualified for the championships after being granted a wildcard, 31-28 in the preliminary round. But Norway, who failed to make the Olympics in Rio, know that they have the measure of France having defeated them 29-24 at the European championships in Poland in 2016.

"It's my 10th championship and at last we have achieved our main goal of winning a medal. It's incredible," said Norway pivot Bjarte Myrhol. "We never stopped believing, we were on the attack all the time. We always said our time would come and that is our year. "I am not going to think about France tonight. I am going to sleep well and continue this dream."

Goalkeeper Torbjorn Bergerud was named man of the match in Friday's semi-final after the 22-year-old pulled

off a fine save from a penalty taken by Zlatko Horvat in the last minute of normal time.

That kept the score at 22-22, sending the tie into two five-minute periods of extra-time. Croatia, world champions in 2003, led 24-22 in the extra period but the faster style of Norway eventually paid dividends. "We are devastated, but

the most important thing is to stay united and try and rest for yesterday (third-placed game against Slovenia) because there is a bronze medal at stake," said Croatia's right-back Luka Stepanic. "After we missed the penalty in the last minute, we scored two goals. But in the last five minutes we just couldn't find a way to their goal. — AFP



PARIS: Norway's Espen Lie Hansen, left, shoots over Croatia's Zeljko Musa to score during the 25th men's Handball World Championship semi-final match Croatia against Norway at the Bercy arena in Paris, Friday. — AP