

# Bahrain open winners crowned



In pictures, highlights from Bahrain Open MMA and Boxing Championship

## Manama

**H**SHaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Honourary President of Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation, appointed Abdulrahman bin Sadiq Askar, Assistant Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, Secretary-General of the Bahrain Olympic Committee, to attend and crown the winners of the Bahrain Open Mixed Martial Arts and Boxing Championship, which ended yesterday at the Khalifa Sport City Hall.

Shaikh Khalid praised the large participation of Bahraini youth in the Boxing and MMA competitions and for the outstanding performances they delivered and the participation of national teams and clubs from the GCC.

He commended the efforts of the Bahrain Mixed Martial Arts Federation (BMMAF), headed by Colonel Abdulaziz Al Khayat, in organising the first official competition launched by the Federation.

Shaikh Khalid said: "We will continue with the efforts and support till we achieve our vision of promoting MMA amidst Bahraini sports and the region. Our goal is to see national teams that confirm their strong



presence in various international forums and participations in order to reach a developed stage. We have won our first three medals, the first at the European Open in Birmingham, UK, the second in the World Amateur Championships held in Las Vegas, US last

year and the European Open in Sofia, Bulgaria in March".

Askar watched the competitions of the championship, in the presence of Colonel Al Khayat and crowned the champions in the two competitions, stressing that this tournament



comes within the programme developed by the Federation which is goes in line with the directives of Shaikh Khalid to promote mixed martial arts.

He said: "The spread of MMA locally and at the level of GCC countries, was due to the support of Shaikh Khalid and his personal pursuit and encouragement to fighters and develop the sport in the sporting community and develop the talent to represent Bahrain in the near future."

The final day of competition held under the patronage of Shaikh Khalid included holding of the amateur MMA competition, in which 34 fighters participated. The fights were filled with strength, excitement and enthusiasm from the fighters, who delivered performances that reflected on their preparations for the championships.

Each bout was over three three-minute rounds and could end anytime if an opponent surrendered, with the full bout winner over three rounds determined by the judging panel.

Among participants in the mixed martial arts competition was the participation of fighters from teams and clubs from Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates who played a major role in the success of this event.

# Nibali to defend Giro

## Paris

**B**ahrain-Merida have given their captain Vincenzo Nibali every chance of defending his Giro d'Italia title by naming a squad for the centenary edition starting next Friday entirely crafted around the Sicilian climber.

The team was announced yesterday and features two strong climbing mates for Nibali in compatriot Franco Pellizzotti and Spain's Javier Moreno.

Race organisers for the climber-friendly three-week tour -- with six mountaintop finishes -- have even programmed stage five to finish at Nibali's hometown of Messina.

The 32-year-old is one of six Italians

in the Bahrain team and is the nation's top cyclist, having clinched the Giro in 2013 and 2016, the Tour of Spain in 2010 and the Tour de France in 2014.

## Bahrain-Merida

### Giro line-up:

- Vincenzo Nibali (ITA),
- Valerio Agnoli (ITA),
- Manuele Boaro (ITA),
- Enrico Gasparotto (ITA),
- Javier Moreno (ESP),
- Franco Pellizzotti (ITA),
- Luca Pibernik (SLO),
- Kanstantsin Siutsou (BLR),
- Giovanni Visconti (ITA)

# Navardauskas out of Giro

## Manama

**D**r. Carlo Guardascione a member of the Bahrain Merida Pro Cycling Team medical staff has confirmed that Lithuanian cyclist Ramunas Navardauskas will miss the Giro d'Italia starting on May 5 and won't be joining his teammates on the races in the near future, due to health problems.

He said, "The persistence of a gastrointestinal symptomatology, which had already appeared at the end of the Tenerife Training camp had forced him to retire during the recent Tour of Croatia, convinced the medical staff of Bahrain Merida Team to support further in-depth examinations carried out by the rider himself in Lithuania. These examinations showed a gastric infection by helicobacter pylori and some deficiencies of microelements, requiring adequate antibiotic therapy and reintegration for at least two weeks."

This unfortunately means for precautionary purposes, Navardauskas will not be able to take part in Giro d'Italia and his fellow riders and staff fully support him in his medical examinations, although he will be very missed on the races, as one of the strongest members of the team.



Ramunas Navardauskas

# US rider Young dies of injuries

## Washington

**A**merican pro cyclist Chad Young died Friday night of injuries suffered in a crash during last weekend's final stage of the Tour de Gila in New Mexico, his team announced Saturday.

The 21-year-old rider from Newmarket, New Hampshire, was hurt last Sunday during a high-speed mountain descent in the fifth stage of the New Mexico race, a seven-mile (11.3km) trek known as the Gila Monster.

Young suffered severe head injuries in the wreck and was flown to a hospital in Tucson, Arizona.

"I am very sorry to let everyone know that Chad Young did not survive his crash last Sunday. He passed away Friday evening, surrounded by his family," said Axel Merckx, general manager of the Axelon Hagens Berman Cycling Team.

"We lost a friend, a teammate and a family member. I have no words that can express my pain over this loss. I can only say that I am very thankful to have known him and that I feel privileged to have been able to share in his passion for cycling."

Merckx, who thanked supporters for their well wishes, said Thursday that Young was not expected to survive.

"We are devastated by this news & send our sincere condolences to his family, friends, & teammates," Tour of the Gila tweeted in reaction to the announcement.

"It's a heartbreaking situation," said race director Jack Brennan. "The Axelon Hagens Berman team and its team director, Axel Merckx, have always recruited and mentored these incredible young men to help them mature in the sport of cycling and Chad was certainly in that mold."