

## Ajax's Blind makes comeback after heart operation

Reuters | Amsterdam

Ajax Amsterdam defender Daley Blind returned to action for the first time since undergoing a heart operation by making a substitute appearance in Wednesday's 3-0 Dutch Cup win over Vitesse Arnhem.

Blind was diagnosed with heart muscle inflammation after suffering from dizziness in a Champions League game against Valencia in December.

The 29-year-old Dutchman was fitted with a subcutaneous implantable cardioverter defibrillator, which sends electrical pulses to regulate abnormal heart rhythms, and he made a surprise return to first-team training last week.

"I am really happy to be back on the pitch," Blind, who came off the bench in the 77th minute, told Fox Sports Netherlands.

"I had a little bit of tension beforehand because you don't know how it will go.

"The doctor really needed to hold me back and step on the brakes because I wanted to get back ASAP. I wasn't scared at all, I wanted to get back on the pitch as fast as possible."

# REHC set for action-packed day

## REHC to host seven races on the card today

TDT | Manama

A thrilling day of action is set to take place today at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC) in Riffa.

Seven races are on the cards, with the last four offering a total prize of BD3,000 each.

The seventh and final race will be for the Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup, featuring 10 imported horses aged three years old and above. It will be over eight furlongs, and the trio of Al Jellaby, Coolagh Forest and Balestra have been tipped to have a chance to win.

Al Jellaby and Balestra are both owned by Al Mohamediya Racing, with Al Jellaby trained by Osama Hashim and to be ridden by Abdulla Faisal and Balestra trained by Hesham Al Haddad and to be ridden by Adrie De Vries. Coolagh Forest is owned by Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim and trained by Paul D'Arcy, and will be ridden by John Egan.

In the sixth race for the Bahrain Jewellery Centre Cup, six imported horses aged three and up are entered. They will be battling over 12 furlongs, and the



Action from one of last week's races (File Photo)

pre-race favourites are Jazeel, Port Douglas and Saajid.

Jazeel is owned by Victorious, trained by Hesham Al Haddad and will be ridden by Adrie De Vries. Port Douglas will be competing for Al Hassanain Syndicate, Mohammed Al Sammak and Abdulla Faisal while Saajid is representing Shamtoot Syn-

dicate, Taleb Ali and Hasan Al Saffar.

Both the fifth and fourth races of the day are offering a Porsche Cup.

Only four locally bred horses aged three years old and up are entered in race five, which is to cover seven furlongs. Sadara, Ramani and Yaoud have

been tipped with a chance to win. Sadara and Yaoud are both owned by Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa and trained by James Naylor, with Abdulla Faisal riding Sadara and Andrew Elliott on Yaoud. Ramani is owned by Al Afoo Racing Stable and trained by Mohammed Saeed, with Lee



Irish Thoroughbred Marketing Cup, the seventh and final race of the day, will feature 10 imported horses aged three years and above

Newman as the jockey.

In race four, a massive field of 18 imported horses aged three and up and rated zero to 75 are in the fray. They will be battling it out over seven furlongs.

Meanwhile, the third race of the day is over six furlongs with a BD2,000 prize, and it will be for the Chevron Cup; while race two is over six furlongs with a BD2,000 total prize.

Kicking things off today, six horses will be competing in the opening race for a Bahrain Jewellery Centre Cup. It will be held over 10 furlongs and it offers a BD2,000 total prize.

All are welcome to attend today's events at REHC. Entrance is free.



Cars lined up prior to a race at BIC

## BIC hosts back-to-back days of exciting action in 15th annual GulfRun

GulfRun is one of several major motorsport events for groups of motorsport enthusiasts hosted by BIC throughout the calendar year

TDT | Manama

Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) is hosting a group of around 50 cars from Kuwait this weekend for the 15th edition of the annual GulfRun.

The meeting is one of the longest-running and most beloved events at "The Home of Motorsport in the Middle East".

It kicked off yesterday morning with a full-day programme of on-track sessions

and the action continues until today evening with another whole day's worth of running.

Spectators are welcome to watch the event. Today's activities will be held from 10am until the awarding ceremony at 7pm. Entry is free of charge.

The action is taking place along four of BIC's track configurations, including the Inner, Outer, Endurance and Grand Prix circuits.

The schedule includes a friendly timing competition. Points will be awarded for each participant's fastest completed time per track, with the winners being determined based on the combined points from all four tracks. Trophies will then be presented to the top three in each car class. Cars are placed in their respective categories according to their capa-

bility, power, weight and tyre type.

GulfRun showcases many top-of-the-line sports cars from major internationally renowned brands each year. It started in 2005 as a weekend getaway for a group of friends passionate about automobile racing. The goal is to promote automobile racing and training in a professional environment; while educating drivers on proper racing techniques. There are track-certified marshals monitoring the event at all times to ensure that the event is safe and secure.

GulfRun is one of several major motorsport events for groups of motorsport enthusiasts hosted by BIC throughout the calendar year. BIC has become a favourite amongst race lovers from across the region and beyond.

## Ajax's Ziyech to join Chelsea in 40m-euro deal

AFP | London

Hakim Ziyech will join Chelsea from Dutch champions Ajax this summer in a 40 million-euro (\$43.4 million) deal, the two clubs confirmed yesterday.

The announcement ends days of speculation over the future of the 26-year-old attacking midfielder, a Moroccan international.

"Ajax and Chelsea have reached an agreement for the transfer of Hakim Ziyech. The player will join the Premier League club on July 1st 2020 and will finish the season in Amsterdam," the Eredivisie champions said in a statement.

"The clubs have agreed a deal of 40 million euros. This sum could potentially increase to a maximum of 44 million, with variable factors."

Chelsea confirmed the deal, praising Dutch-born Ziyech as a "prolific scorer throughout his career."

"Ziyech is a left-footed attacker who is comfortable playing off the right flank and coming inside, as he has often done in recent years to such devastating effect for Ajax, or on the left to attack with width and deliver into the box," Chelsea said.

The London-based side added: "The move is subject to the player agreeing personal terms and he will remain at the Dutch club for the rest of this season."

Ziyech joined Ajax in 2016 from fellow Eredivisie club FC Twente for a fee of 11 million euros, and has now scored 49 goals in 160 appearances for Ajax.

His contract at Ajax was due to run until June 2022.

### 'Originality, bravery'

Ziyech was a key figure in Ajax's sensational run to the Champions League semi-finals last year.

But he reportedly wanted more football in Europe's top flight after the Dutch side were eliminated in the group stage this year -- in part because they lost at

home to Chelsea and later threw away a three-goal lead at Stamford Bridge.

Ziyech made his comeback Wednesday evening with his team's victory in Arnhem (0-3) in the quarter-finals of the Dutch KNVB Cup after a calf muscle tear in January.

Dutch media this week said Frank Lampard believed Ziyech "is a top player and such an essential reinforcement to his 11 that he gave the club instructions to have a deal done before the summer."

Clubs can agree and sign transfers outside the English Premier League's January transfer window, but players may not be registered with new clubs until it opens again in the summer.

Ajax is known for selling home-grown talent to richer European clubs. After last season, they sold Matthijs de Ligt to Juventus and Frenkie de Jong to Barcelona.

In 2018, Ziyech, who was born in the central Dutch town of Dronten, was crowned Dutch Player of the Year.

"He brings technique, originality, bravery, depth and enjoyment," to the game, said De Volkskrant daily newspaper.

"After eight seasons in the Eredivisie he'll leave behind an emptiness" on Dutch football fields, the paper lamented.

The top two finishers in the Dutch league qualify each year for the Champions League and Ajax are top, 10 points clear of third-place Willem II.



Hakim Ziyech