

## Federer to miss French Open after knee surgery

Reuters | London

Roger Federer has said he will miss a number of tournaments, including the French Open, after undergoing keyhole surgery on his knee in Switzerland on Wednesday but he is targeting a return in time for Wimbledon.

The 20-times Grand Slam champion struggled with injury at the Australian Open, where he lost in the semi-finals to eventual champion Novak Djokovic, and has not played since.

Federer, 38, said he would miss ATP tournaments in Dubai, Indian Wells, Bogota and Miami as well as the French Open which starts at the end of May.

It will be the fourth time in five years that Federer, champion at Roland Garros for the only time in 2009, has missed the claycourt slam.

"My right knee has been bothering me for a little while. I hoped it would go away, but after an examination and discussion with my team, I decided to have arthroscopic surgery in Switzerland yesterday," Federer said in a statement on Twitter.

"After the procedure, t h e

doctors confirmed that it was the right thing to have done and are very confident of a full recovery."

The Swiss skipped the entire claycourt season in 2017 and 2018 and last year played only two tournaments on the surface before arriving in Paris for the French Open where he lost to Rafa Nadal in the semi-finals.

His agent told Reuters last week that Federer was planning on playing only at Roland Garros while skipping the Madrid and Rome Masters. The French Open begins on May 24.

While the prospect of Federer being away from the Tour for so long will dismay his vast army of fans, they can be encouraged that his decision to undergo knee surgery for a second time seems designed to extend his career.

"I can't wait to be back playing again soon, see you on the grass," Federer added on his Twitter page.

Federer has proved in the past that he can return to his peak after an injury layoff.

He had knee surgery to repair a torn meniscus in 2016 and missed the second half of that season as he struggled to recover. But he returned in style to win the 2017 Australian Open, ending a near five-year Grand Slam title drought.

Federer's ranking will drop from its current three but he is still likely to be seeded in the top 10 at Wimbledon where he will be seeking a record-extending ninth title.



Roger Federer

## HH Shaikh Nasser's Cup set for main race today at REHC

TDT | Manama

As the temperatures begin to heat up, so does the action at Rashid Equestrian and Horseracing Club (REHC), where an action-packed day of seven races is on the cards today.

The seventh and main event is for the HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup, and it carries a whopping total prize of BD10,000. The race is over 11 furlongs in distance, and it is for imported horses aged three years old and up.

Tipped with a chance in the six-horse field are New Show, Fayeze and Coolagh Forest. New Show is owned by Victorious, trained by Hesham Al Haddad and will be ridden by Adrie De Vries, who has enjoyed plenty of success in recent races at REHC. Fayeze is owned by Al Mohamediya Racing and is also trained by Hesham Al Haddad, and will be ridden by Paddy Mathers. Coolagh Forest, who is coming off a runner-up finish in last week's main race, will be competing for Mohammed Khalid Abdulrahim, Paul D'Arcy and John Egan.

The rest of the three entries are all owned by Victorious and trained by Hesham Al Haddad, including Vale Do Sol, Macaque and Albert Finney.

Meanwhile, there are two other races offering HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cups, including the sixth and third events.

Race six is over 11 furlongs, with a BD5,000 total prize and featuring six locally bred horses three years old and up.

Tipped with a chance at victory are Pulsar, owned by Abdulla Fawzi Nass, trained by Hesham Al Haddad and to be ridden by Adrie De Vries; News Breaker,



Plenty of exciting action is set for today at REHC (file photo)



**HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa Cup carries a whopping total prize of BD10,000**

owned by Victorious, trained by Alan Smith and to be ridden by Lee Newman; and Milyar, competing for HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulla bin Isa Al Khalifa, trained by James Naylor and to be ridden by Abdulla Faisal.

Race three will be over a straight of five furlongs, and it carries a total prize of BD3,000. Eight locally bred horses aged

three years old and up, rated zero to 35, are in the fray.

The fifth race of the day features 12 imported horses, and they will be competing for the HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup. The sprint is over seven furlongs and it offers a prize of BD5,500.

With a chance are Gomati, competing for Abdulla Fawzi Nass, Hesham Al Haddad and Adrie De Vries; Aluqair, representing Shaikh Isa bin Duaij bin Salman bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Sami Saloom and John Egan; and Chatham House, racing for Hasan Mefareh Alajmi, Yousif Taher and Abdulla Faisal.

Race four features the biggest field of 17 horses, all imported and aged three years and up with a rating of zero to 80. They will be battling over a straight of five furlongs for the lion's share of the BD3,000 prize and the right to lift the HH Shaikha Sheemah bint Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup.

The second race of the day, over nine furlongs with a BD2,000 prize, is for the HH Shaikh Hamdan bin Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup. Ten horses are entered. They are local breeds aged three and up with a rating of zero to 40.

Kicking off the day's action in the first race of the day is for the HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa Cup. It is over eight furlongs in distance and it carries a BD3,000 total prize. The WAHO event features just four horses aged three and up.

Tipped with a chance are two horses owned by Victorious and trained by Yousif Taher, including Kuheil Al Afas 1708 (jockey Abdulla Faisal) and Al Jellaby 1544 (jockey Marcialis Jaures), and Al Jellaby 1683, owned by Al Riffa, trained by Yousif Alboainain and to be ridden by Hasan Al Saffar.

All are welcome to attend the races. Entrance to REHC is free.

## Porsche, 2,000cc title battles to heat up in Speed Weekend

TDT | Manama

There will be no room for error as the title battles head down to the wire in the penultimate rounds of the Porsche Sprint Challenge Middle East and the BIC 2,000cc Challenge.

Both are set to hit the tarmac as part of Speed Weekend today and tomorrow at Bahrain International Circuit (BIC) in Sakhir, and each series is set to feature their own thrilling fights for wins, podium places and all-important championship points.

Racing will be held along BIC's 5.412-kilometre Grand Prix track, which will be hosting motorsport's biggest stars less than a month from now in the Kingdom's highly anticipated Formula 1 weekend from March 19 to 22.

Speed Weekend will be held from 8am to 5pm today and then from 11am to 6pm tomorrow. All are welcome to attend. Tickets are available at the gate.

Heading into the fifth of six rounds in its 2019/2020 season, Leon Koehler of Germany tops the overall championship standings in the Porsche Sprint Challenge.

He has 213 points and enjoys a comfortable lead over

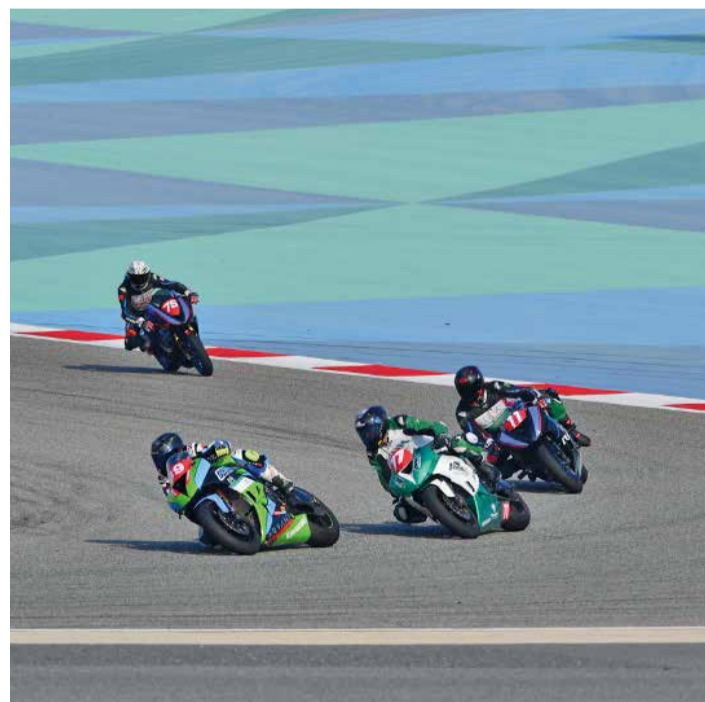


Cars in action at BIC (file photo)

countryman and current second-placer Julian Hanses, who is on 170 points. A further two points behind is JB Simmenauer of France, while Saul Hack of South Africa is fourth with 163 points and Richard Wagner from Austria is fifth with 147 points. Jesse Van Kuijk from the Netherlands rounds out the overall top six with 129 points.

All of the leading group, aside from Hanses and Hack, are on the 14-car provisional entry list for this round.

Koehler, Simmenauer and Wagner are all competing in the series' Pro category, where they will be joined on the grid at BIC by David Beckmann of Germany and Dylan Pereira of Luxembourg; while Van Kui-



Bikes in action during BMR 600 race (file photo)

jk is competing in the ProAm along with fellow-Dutch drivers Daan Van Kuijk and Lucas Groenvelde, Christoffer Bergstrom of Sweden and Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa of Bahrain.

The remainder of the entry list is made up of competitors in the Am class, including Jean Marc Cordier of France, Michael

Doppelmayr of Austria, Michael Knutzon of Sweden and Shaikh Jaber bin Ali Al Khalifa.

Meanwhile, the BIC 2,000cc Challenge is set to feature a 17-car grid for its sixth and penultimate meeting of the season.

Following the first five rounds, there is a close two-horse race in the front with Shaikh Salman

bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa leading in his Honda Civic with 175 points, just four ahead of Ahmed bin Khanem who drives a Honda Civic EG4.

Then, not far behind are Mohammed Faqih, also in a Civic, with 152 points and Raed Raffii in a Honda S2000 with 148 points. Tareq Al Tajer is fifth with 135 points in his Ford Focus, and Nasser Al Alawi is sixth in a Honda S2000 with 115 points. Each of the top six are competing in the 2,000cc's Pro class.

Leading the Novice category is Andreas Buelow with 61 points, a mere two points from Husain Al Ghanem. Both are driving Civics.

All are set to suit up this Speed Weekend. The rest of the grid includes Majed Himmo (Civic), Raed Himmo (Civic), Mohammed Janahi (Honda DC5) and Shaikh Hamad bin Isa bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa (Civic) in the Pro class; and Bassim Al Alawi (Honda CRX), Ali Al Bahrani (Civic), Wiebke Buelow (Civic), Ali Toblani (Mini Cooper) and Shaikh Abdulla Al Khalifa (BMW Z3) in the Novice category.

Speed Weekend is also set to feature action in the Bahrain Motorcycle Racing (BMR) 600.