

Faisal Al Sheikh

Strong line-up for ADIT Triathlon

FROM OUR ABU DHABI BUREAU

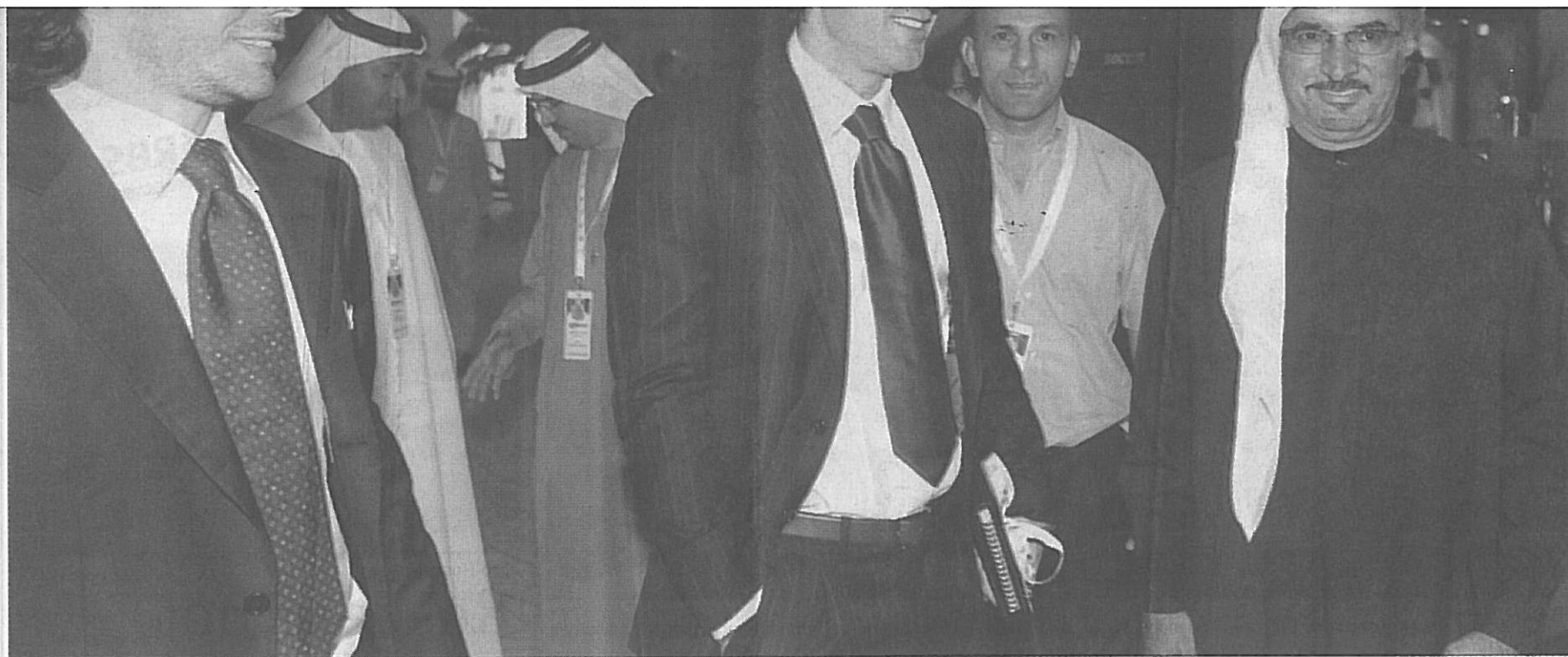
MORE than 317 athletes from 27 countries have signed up for the inaugural \$250,000 Abu Dhabi International Triathlon (ADIT) to be held this March – within just a month of the event launch.

Aimed at attracting up to 1,000 triathletes, including the world's top 50, ADIT has already secured competitors from Australasia, Europe, the Middle East, Americas, North Africa, the Far East, Russia and Africa – a clear indication of ADIT's global appeal.

"We are highly encouraged by the tremendous interest from both amateur and professional athletes. The event, on March 13, will be a landmark on the international triathlon calendar. It will unite triathletes from around the world in one of the most exciting destinations imaginable," said Faisal Al Sheikh, Head – Major Events Division, Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA).

Primed to be an 'instant classic', the adrenaline-pumping ADIT will boast two unique lengths, a testing 223kms 'pure power' course and a second 111.5kms route, which can be run as a team relay event. Both distances are open to elites and amateurs, a key facet in the event's broad appeal.

Some 1,000 places are available for the inaugural ADIT. For further information and to register for ADIT, visit www.abudhabitriathlon.com.



Former FIFA World Player of the Year Luis Figo, (centre), speaks to Saeed Hareb, chairman of the 4th Dubai International Sports Conference, as Tommaso Bendoni listens before the sessions on the third day of the conference in Dubai on Monday.

FIFA agents' regulations evinces keen debate

BY WILFRED PEREIRA

DUBAI: The final day of the 4th Dubai International Sports Conference discussed an important issue of the new FIFA Player's Agents Regulation.

The second session dealing with the agents regulation brought about lot of discussions from the speakers and as well as the audience making it one of the hottest topics of the conference.

After Omar Ongaro, head of FIFA's Players Status and Governance Department, expounded the new regulations for players agents, the chairman of the

session, Mario Gallavotti (member of the FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber), invited the other speakers (mostly agents) on the dais to delve on the topic.

The agents were vociferous in their requests and said that FIFA was not "even aware of the players association."

Rob Jansen, the founding president of the European Football Agents Association (EFAA), said the players are not even heard. "The FiPro represents unions and also business and not players," Jansen quipped.

Countering Jansen, Ongaro said that FIFA has asked the associations to

send proposals in writing which in turn would be referred to the advisory committee.

However, Jansen felt that instead of asking proposals in writing FIFA could invite them to sit down across the table and discuss the issues.

"FIFA refuses to listen to us. All we ask is 'listen to us, bring us in', we want to make the system better and not cancel it," Jansen said.

Jorge Mendes, the agent for Inter Milan coach Jose Mourinho and Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, stressed the need for transparency which ultimately the moderator

Gallavotti said was the best solution.

Earlier in the day, Saeed Hareb, chairman of the 4th Dubai International Sports Conference, whilst welcoming the speakers and the guests on Day 3 said the day coincides with the Accession Day of Vice President and Ruler of Dubai His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum and also the opening of the world tallest building the Burj Dubai.

The conference was organised by Dubai Sports Council under the patronage of Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of

Dubai. Monday was the closing day of the three-day event whose motto was "Meeting the Challenges in Professional Sport."

The first session on Monday focussed on FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players where Gallavotti presented the cases of Andrew Webster and Francelino Matuzalem, both of whom breached their contracts and FIFA's Article 17 was referred to, to sort out their cases. Both cases were referred to the Court of Arbitration, Lausanne.

Former FIFA World Player of the Year Luis

Figo, representing Inter Milan, spoke the problems players faced while others who took part in the session included Fernando Gomes (Porto SC), Danielle Prade (AS Roma), Gregor Reiter (Germany Players' Agent), Gian Luca Nani (West Ham), Andrea Traverso (UEFA), Omar Ongaro (FIFA) and Claudio Garzelli (Italian Association of Sports Directors vice-president).

Dr Ahmed Al Sharif, secretary general of Dubai Sports Council, in his closing address, thanked all the guests, the speakers, the delegates from 40 countries who attended and all those involved to make the conference a success.

Al Attiyah

Al Attiyah takes Dakar charge

LA RIOJA (Argentina): Qatar's Nasser Al Attiyah seized control of the Dakar Rally on Sunday as an investigation into the horror crash which claimed the life of a 28-year-old spectator continued.

Al Attiyah, driving a Volkswagen, won the second stage, a 355km timed run from Cordoba, to take a 1min 19sec overall lead over teammate Carlos Sainz of Spain who was fourth on the day.

It was an early 2010 boost for the Qatari driver whose 2009 race ended in controversy when he was disqualified while leading the race.

France's Guerlin Chicherit, in a BMW, was second on the stage followed by three more Volkswagen drivers — Carlos Neves, Sainz and Mark Miller.

Six-time motorcycle winner and three-time auto champion Stephane Peterhansel of France, in a BMW, was sixth on the day and is third overall.

Spain's Nani Roma, in a BMW, who won Saturday's opening stage, lost 15 minutes on Sunday after suffering a double-roll and finished in 18th spot to be in eighth place overall.

"We caught up with Stephane after 150km. We kept a modest pace for a while then it became very technical. That's where we attacked before ending up in Carlos' dust," said Al-Attiyah. "From then on we kept up a good rhythm. Everything is going great."

Agence France-Presse