

## Kabi penalty rescues point for Ajman

ABU DHABI

By N. D. PRASHANT  
Staff Reporter

Ajman rallied from a goal down to hold Al Dhafra to a 1-1 draw in the Arabian Gulf League at the latter's backyard Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan Stadium yesterday.

Al Dhafra's Senegalese striker and skipper Makhete Diop put them in the lead in the 17th minute while Cote D'Ivoire recruit Boris Kabi drew level for Ajman through a penalty.

Al Dhafra had the early share of the ball and their persistent effort was rewarded soon after the first quarter. Captain Diop's brilliant left-footed on-the-run strike off a measured through from the deep, left the Ajman custodian Ali Mesmari rooted.

Pumped up by that goal, Al Dhafra almost doubled the lead in the 23rd minute when Matias Adrian Defedrico's left-footed shot from the left flank curled enough to find the bottom of the vertical.

Ajman somehow managed to get the equaliser against the run of play following a foul on Ali, who was brought down inside the box by Al Dhafra's Rashid Mohammad. The referee had no hesitation in pointing it out to the spot and Kabi, who stepped up to take the penalty, found the back of the goal with a neat placement.

Diop almost doubled the lead in the 61st minute when his dipping lob from way outside the box beat the Ajman keeper Mesmari in the air but found the top corner of the framework. Another long ranger from Mohamed was negotiated by an alert Mesmari.

Brazilian Paulo De Oliveira almost sealed the match for Dhafra in the dying minutes with his right-footed effort from the top of the box. The goal-bound shot somehow found a defender on its way.



Clint Egbert/Gulf News

### Flip-reverse

- Mohammad Al Qatto competes against Hannu Antero Hiltunen at the Dubai Jiu Jitsu Open Championships at the Al Wasl Club yesterday. A total of 202 competitors, including 75 Emiratis, fought on day two of the tournament, which was reserved for fighters wearing the gi, a heavy cotton jacket also known as the 'kimono'.

# Peres makes Trans settle for two silver medals

BRAZILIAN COMES BACK STRONGER ON SECOND DAY OF DUBAI JIU JITSU OPEN

DUBAI

By ASHLEY HAMMOND  
Staff Reporter

**B**razil's Pedro Henrique Peres beat Denmark's Alexander Trans to win the black belt Open weight division with gi at the two-day Dubai Jiu Jitsu Open Championship at Al Wasl Club yesterday.

Peres' victory made up for a third-place finish in the no-gi category of the same belt and weight division on Friday.

Meanwhile, Trans — who won yesterday's +95kg black belt division with gi and came third in Friday's +93kg division without gi — had to make do with two second-place finishes in both open black belt formats, with and without gi.

"I just tried to stay calm and not to commit the same mis-

takes as yesterday [Friday]," said Peres, who also finished third in the +95kg black belt division on yesterday.

"Maybe it's what's in your head that is the mistake, maybe I wasn't breathing right and that makes you think, but you don't have to think when you fight, you just have to go with the flow.

"This win means that all the effort in training is working. Alexander is a world champion, so all respect to him. Maybe this win is one in a million, but today is mine."

A total of 202 competitors, including 75 Emiratis, fought on day two of the tournament, which was reserved for fighters wearing the gi, a heavy cotton jacket also known as the kimono. Friday had seen 133 participants, including 44 Emiratis, fight without the gi.

On day one, a total of 48 champions were crowned in six weight divisions each within eight belt categories without gi. Day two — with gi — saw a further three belt divisions each with five weight categories for women added to the existing 48 male categories, to total 63 sets of medals up for grabs.

Faisal Al Ketbi, the UAE's first black belt and holder of the Abu Dhabi Professional Jiu Jitsu World Championship brown belt, came second in the +95kg black belt with gi on yesterday in his black belt debut, losing to Trans. "I'm happy with what I achieved because it's my first time to compete in the black belt," he said.

"This is a step forward and it's a new path so we are still learning and we hope to learn fast."

Off the back of Jiu Jitsu's suc-

### RESULTS Jiu Jitsu

**Friday — without gi**  
75kg — Alexandre di Salgado BRA  
83kg Filipe Meirelles Bobrick BRA  
93kg Paulo Jose Pinto BRA  
+93kg Jose Junior BRA  
Open weight Jiddu Bastos Lemos BRA

**Yesterday — with gi**  
75kg Alexandre di Salgado BRA  
85kg Ygor Dantas BRA  
95kg Paulo Jose Pinto BRA  
+95kg Alexander Trans DEN  
Open Pedro Henrique Peres BRA

cessful migration to Dubai, the UAE Jiu Jitsu Federation is now looking to set up similar events in other emirates, growing the sport through the local curriculum — as is already the case in Abu Dhabi where 40,000 boys and girls have taken to the sport in over 100 schools.

## Fitzpatrick keen to impress on Mena debut

DUBAI

Staff Reporter

**M**att Fitzpatrick will showcase his unique talent when the rising young star makes his debut on the Mena Golf Tour at the Shaikh Maktoum Dubai Open to be held at Al Badia Golf Club from today.

Widely regarded as one of the most accomplished amateurs before turning professional at this year's Irish Open, the Englishman will challenge a top international field, including the likes of defending champion Zane Scotland, Stephen Dodd, a three-time winner on the European Tour, and Lee Corfield among other former winners on the Mena Golf Tour.

The Sheffield-born prodigy has already been hailed as one of golf's top prospects. The 20-year-old Fitzpatrick, who is also a golf in DUBAI ambassador, shot to global fame when he became the first golfer since Bobby Jones in 1930 to concurrently hold the low amateur medals for the Open Championship and US Open.

### One to watch

Introduced to golf at the age of nine by his parents, Fitzpatrick also holds the distinction of being the first Englishman since 1911 to win the US Amateur — the USGA's oldest trophy — at Brookline in 2013.

With a string of achievements under his belt, the Yorkshireman will be the player to beat when the Shaikh Maktoum Dubai Open gets under way at Al Badia Golf Club, but he refuses to get carried away with the hype surrounding his debut.

"I am looking forward to competing on the Mena Golf Tour. It will be my first time on the tour, but I have heard a lot of good things about the tournaments and the city from my friends who are regulars there. I have a great respect for players on the Mena Golf Tour and their tremendous competitiveness."

## Interview of the week | RAY ELBE, Al Batal coach

# Elbe: Only a matter of time before we see an Arab champion

Home-grown talent will make it big in MMA, says TV coach

DUBAI

By ASHLEY HAMMOND  
Staff Reporter

**T**he second series of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) reality TV show *Al Batal* premieres on Fox Movies on September 27 from 6.30pm (UAE time). Like *The X-Factor*, the show follows the journey of local amateur fighters in their bid to win a contract with a major promotion. One of the coaches from the show, Ray Elbe, 31, himself a veteran welterweight with 23 wins and 11 losses from 34 fights, tells *Gulf News* what to expect from the second season.

■ **How will this season be different to the last?**

In the first season all the

fighters lived together and trained as one team under one set of coaches, but this season two coaches pick their fighters and train in two separate camps meeting only to fight. It's more competitive. Also, this season there's more focus on psychology, diet, training and conditioning methods, whereas before it was more of a one-hour commercial for Dubai.

■ **Is there anyone from this season who could make it big?**

There are three or four guys who could fight tomorrow. I thought it was going to be amateur across the board, but a few of the guys could make a legitimate career out of this.

■ **Where will the winner of the series compete?**

Al Batal has just signed a formal agreement with the One Fighting Championship (One

FC). It's an alliance which gives Al Batal the opportunity to groom talent before sending them onto a larger promotion. One FC can then showcase Arab talent on a global stage.

■ **Has Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) got big potential in the Middle East?**

There's a history of warriors and fighting in the region, match that primal instinct with the need for healthy activity, what with the rise of obesity and diabetes, and this makes the Middle East a growing market. The Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) has done two events in Abu Dhabi and the One FC has just done one in Dubai. These are global promotions that are now looking at the Middle East as a consumption market, which means the audience has become more educated about what the sport is all about.

■ **How soon before we see home-grown Arab champions?**

There's a Lebanese fighter called Tarec Saffedine in the UFC who is already top-10 in the welterweight rankings. He's just 28 years old and is very capable of becoming a champion, so we're not as far away from having an Arab champion as you may think.

There's a lot of talent in the region and the good thing is people have time and money to spend on their sport and the government supports it, you only have to look at how Abu Dhabi is spreading Jiu Jitsu through local schools, and have salaries and scholarships for local fighters.

For MMA to really grow locally, people have to be able to see one of their own on the big stage but with developing opportunities the chances of this happening will only increase.



Credit

### 'Talented region'

- MMA fighter and Al Batal coach Ray Elbe is confident that there will be an Arab champion in the sport very soon.