

Ghotbi's vision for Iran football

Iran's new coach Afshin Ghotbi has a tall task as he tries to salvage a FIFA World Cup 2010 qualification campaign that sees Team Melli close to the brink of elimination.

Crucial Group B matches against DPR Korea (away), United Arab Emirates (home) and Korea Republic (away) are coming up for Ghotbi, who was thrust into the Iran limelight after replacing Mohammed Mayelikhohan.

Ghotbi is the third Iran coach since the team were beaten 2-1 at home by Saudi Arabia in the World Cup qualifier on March 28, after which Ali Daei was sacked.

The-afc.com managed to catch up with Ghotbi before the team left for a training stint in China.

The-afc.com: You have been appointed as Iran coach at a time when football in the country is at a low following the FIFA World Cup 2010 qualifying defeat to Saudi Arabia. How do you initially propose to make it more positive?

Afshin Ghotbi: I will try to build more unity. I will respect everyone and allow the players, coaches and clubs to work together, as well as the fans. We need their support to help us qualify.

I will try to share with everyone and try to foster a sense of "we are team" and that it is about all of us, not just one person.

The-afc.com: You are well respected because you have worked with big names in football. What lessons have you learned from Guus Hiddink when he was coach of Korea Republic?



Afshin Ghotbi: He led the Korean team to fourth place in the FIFA World Cup 2002 tournament in a very crucial period. His concerns were not only restricted to coaching. Hiddink came up with wonderful medical, technical and media management programs as well. He is a very smart man. On top of that, he created a wonderful atmosphere within the team. What I learned from Hiddink was to build a positive atmosphere and to work with full focus on the task at hand.

The-afc.com: Are you still in contact with Hiddink? Do you still ask him for advice?

Afshin Ghotbi: Yes, I still maintain links with him. Not only Hiddink but other coaches I have previously worked with such as Dick Advocaat, (Australia national coach) Pim Verbeek and US coach Steve Sampson.

The-afc.com: Iran's big problem is scoring goals. Korea Republic have had similar problems in the past because they never had a recognized striker. How did Hiddink overcome this problem at the 2002 World Cup?

Afshin Ghotbi: It is not only a Korea Republic problem. DPR Korea or even Japan also have the same problem. I think they have a lot of difficulty in the final third of the pitch. The fear of making mistakes was a problem for the Koreans when it came to shooting or making that important final pass. Having that cutting edge is always a problem for Koreans and Japanese.

I believe the influence of fringe coaches has changed the way they have played football over the past few years.

The-afc.com: But Iran also suffer from not having a proper goalscorer as well.

Afshin Ghotbi: No, the problem is different. Iran has the quality to convert a zero opportunity into a goal. The current problem is the lack of sufficient replacements and giving them the chance to mature into top goalscorers.

And it is not limited to strikers. There is also a shortage of left-footed players. In addition, we also have few choices in the centre of defense. I need two or three options for this position. This is what we had in Korea. We have a good number of international-level players in various positions.

The-afc.com: What has been Iran's main problem in Group B of the World Cup qualifiers so far?

Afshin Ghotbi: It is complicated. I prefer not to talk about the past. I do not like my players to stay in the past. We have no time to go back to those days. Iran even reached to FIFA World Cup in 2006 but could not show their true abilities. Now, Let us move forward.

The-afc.com: What do you know about current Korean team. You left there after AFC Asian Cup 2007.

Afshin Ghotbi: I have been with them in two World Cups. Then, Pim Verbeek and I restructured the team for Asian Games 2006 in Doha and Olympics in 2008. I brought in some young talent such as Kim Seung-yong from FC Seoul. Many of them are fixtures in the national team now. We helped them adapt to new tactics.

The-afc.com: Your knowledge about Korea is not limited to their technical abilities. You have been working with Korean football since 1999.

Afshin Ghotbi: I know Korean culture and their mentality very well. When it comes to the FIFA World Cup, I have to say they are very experienced. Korea Republic have been qualified six times (in a row, seven altogether). Although our match in Seoul is on June 16, it is the last group match and they may have already earned their ticket by then.

(Source: the-afc.com)

Iran to play China tomorrow



Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Iran's Football Team will play China on Monday in a warm-up in preparation for North Korea match in the 2010 World Cup qualifiers.

It will be Afshin Ghotbi's third warm-up match since he took charge of the team last month. His team had previously defeated

Iran's under 23 team and Indonesia.

Iran will leave China on Thursday to play North Korea in Pyongyang on June 6. The team is scheduled to play the United Arab Emirates, who has been disqualified for the next stage, four days later. Iran will travel to Seoul to hold its last match against

South Korea on June 17.

Iran is fourth in the 2010 World Cup qualifiers in Group Two with six points. South Korea tops the pool with 11 points from five games, followed by its northern neighbor with 10 points from six games, with Saudi Arabia in third, also with 10 points from six games.

Iranian table tennis trio to participate in Morocco Pro Tour

Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Three Iranian table tennis players will take part in the 2009 Morocco Open Hassan II Tournament to be held in Rabat from July 7 to 10.

Mohammad-Reza Akhlaghpasand, Mehran Ahadi and Mohammad Bayrampour are to participate in the four-day event.

The organizers will award a cash prize of \$12,000 to the tournament winners.

Venus Williams beaten at French

PARIS (AP) — Out of breath and out of sorts, Venus Williams played her way right out of the French Open on Friday with her most lopsided Grand Slam loss since 2001.



That the No. 3-seeded Williams would exit in the third round at Roland Garros is not quite so extraordinary, perhaps, considering she now has left this particular Grand Slam tournament at this precise stage in four of the past five years.

That Williams would lose the way she did — 6-0, 6-4 — and to the player she did — 29th-seeded Agnes Szavay of Hungary, whose resume boasts a lone major quarterfinal appearance — was anything but ordinary.

"I'm used to beating people 6-0. I'm not used to my shot not going in and losing a set 6-0," Williams said. "So it completely was foreign ground for me."

The red clay of Paris often feels that way to the older Williams sister, whose seven Grand Slam singles titles were earned at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. Based on seeding and name, her departure qualifies as by far the tournament's most significant.

Limond champion after points win

Glasgow's Willie Limond won the vacant WBU lightweight title with a points win over London southpaw Ryan Barrett.



Limond, 30, took the fight to his taller opponent, forcing the 26-year-old on to the back foot for much of the fight, but Barrett remained a threat.

The judges awarded Limond the title, scoring 117-113, 117-111, 118-113.

"I had to use my brains in there. I think I hurt him a couple of times but he covered well and boxed well behind his jab," said the delighted Scot.

Ahead of the fight Limond was concerned at the direction his career might head in should he lose the contest.

(Source: BBC)

FIFA set to approve Team GB plan

FIFA are expected to approve the deal which would allow England to represent Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympics but hopes that Wayne Rooney, Theo Walcott or even David Beckham could figure in the line-up are set to be dashed.

The world governing body's executive committee will be told of the details of an agreement which will see Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland take no part in the Olympics but allow England to represent Team GB. However, next week FIFA's Congress are expected to scrap current rules where players in the men's Olympic tournament must be under 23, with each team allowed three over-age players.

(Source: Press Association)

Second Announcement



In the name of God

TENDER NO: 3206-33/6-TS/88

TENDER SUBJECT: PROVISION OF MAINTENANCE & CALIBRATION SERVICES FOR MWD EQUIPMENT

National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) a wholly owned subsidiary of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) intends to award the contract of the above-mentioned services to a well known and qualified contractor through a competitive & public tender.

On this occasion and for the purpose of receiving the electronic Tender Documents files, the interested local and foreign companies (legal entity), up to **June 10, 2009**, may obtain set of Bidding Documents, which is containing the proposed contract terms and conditions by sending their formal application along with its company's name, activities and Email to the NIDC's Contracts Department – Ahwaz- Iran, **Fax: 0098 611 4443795 or Email: ahkarimi@nidc.ir**

It is worthy to add that:

1- tenderers should be able to provide Tender Guarantee (**Euro 10,000 for foreign and Iranian Rials 140,000,000 for Iranian Tenderers**) & Good Performance Guarantee (for winner contractor) according to the NIDC's requirements as mentioned in the Tender Documents.

2- The anticipated contract duration will be fourteen (14) months.

3- Tenderers shall be required to provide written attestation proving that its company has specific policy statement as senior and operational levels, proportionate to the subject Contract, reflecting management commitment to Health, Safety and Environment protection.

4- Tender should be submitted in three separate sealed Envelopes marked "A", "B" and "C", Envelope "A" should contain Tender Guarantee, Envelope "B" should contain commercial proposal of Tenderer and envelope "C" containing Technical proposal of Tenderer. It is worthy to add that opening and consideration of the Tenderer's commercial proposal will be subject to NIDC approval for Tenderer's technical proposal.

5- The Tender closing date shall be **July 11, 2009**.

6- National Iranian Drilling Company shall reserve the right to accept or reject any or all of the tender(s) received, in whole or in part at its sole discretion and without any explanation.

Furthermore applicants can visit this Tender announcement in the web site of NIDC with the following address: www.nidc.ir

National Iranian Drilling Company
Contracts Department

WADA, swim body want 2-year ban for Jessica Hardy

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — The World Anti-Doping Agency and swimming's governing body appealed to sports' highest court to restore Jessica Hardy's two-year doping ban.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport said that WADA and FINA want the American swimmer barred for two years and ruled out of the 2012 London Games. CAS is expected to rule within four months.

Hardy tested positive for the anabolic agent clenbuterol at the U.S. Olympic trials last July and missed the Beijing Games.

The American Arbitration Association reduced her ban to one year instead of the standard two this month. The arbitrators found the failed drug test was caused by a contaminated nutritional supplement and requested that Hardy not lose her eligibility for London.

International Olympic Committee rules state that athletes are barred from the next games if they incur a doping ban of at least six months. Hardy's suspension is to end July 31.

She was supposed to swim in Beijing in the 100-meter breaststroke, 50 freestyle and the 400 free relay.

