

Tehran Times Sports Desk

Iran defeated Czech Republic at the Goiania Arena on Saturday and qualified for the final game of the 5th edition of Futsal Grand Prix.

Iran was held to a 4-4 draw against Czech Republic but defeated its rival 4-1 in a penalty shootout and advanced to the final game.

Brazil thrashed Romania 12-0 in another semifinal and qualified for the final game.

Iran is to play Brazil at the Newton de Faria Stadium on Sunday.

Hamid-Reza Abrarinia, who was Iran's hero in the penalty shootout, thanked his teammates for being in the final. "I am delighted to reach the final of the competitions. Our goal was to play the final with Brazil. I think we succeeded," the goalkeeper said.

Kopecky, scorer of two goals of the Czech Republic, said, "The penalty shootout is a lottery and the best

Iran, Brazil to hold Futsal Grand Prix final



do not always win. We will now try for third."

Iran and Brazil played in a final game two years ago, in which Iran lost to its powerhouse opponent 4-0

Brazil has won the last four editions and finished in second place.



Charity soccer match featuring Zidane postponed to July 12



VANCOUVER, B.C. — A back injury will prevent soccer legend Zinedine Zidane from playing a charity soccer match Saturday in Vancouver, but the game has been rescheduled for July 12.

The game will be played at a different venue and will lack some of the players that appeared in previous matches in Toronto and Montreal, promoter Ahcene Adlani said Friday.

"Now the big game has been postponed, lots of them cancelled because they have other commitments," Adlani said in a telephone interview. "We hope this week we can talk to other players to come and join him."

"It's a short time. The other ones cancelled because they cannot stay a week here," Adlani said the Vancouver match will feature the French superstar playing with local players.

Zidane, 37, injured his back while bending down to pick up his child Wednesday night as he was watching Vancouver's Canada Day fireworks display.

"This kind of injury can take four or five days," Adlani said. "We decided to find another date. He accepted to stay here until July 12 to do the game."

The match was originally scheduled for B.C. Place Stadium, a 59,000-seat indoor facility. The game will now be played at Swangard Stadium, a 5,200-seat outdoor facility.

Adlani said around 8,000 tickets were sold for Saturday's game. He said refunds will be offered.

The match was supposed to be the final stop on a three-game Zidane and Friends tour.

An announced crowd of 10,152 watched Zidane's team draw 3-3 with the Canadian All-Stars at BMO field in Toronto June 25. On Sunday, 15,010 watched Zidane's side win 10-0 over a team of Montreal police officers at Percival Molson Stadium.

Besides Zidane, the games were originally touted to include other big names like Fabien Barthez, Christian Vieri and Gennaro Gattuso. Instead, Zidane's team included a few lesser-knowns like former West Ham player Sergei Rebrov and Rohann Ricketts, recently let go by Toronto FC.

Proceeds from the games are supposed to go to UNICEF and other causes. Zidane, a former FIFA World Player of the Year, helped France win the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000.

The smooth-passing midfielder guided France to the 2006 World Cup final against Italy, but was sent off for head-butting Italian defender Marco Materazzi. He later said Materazzi had insulted him.

Zidane, who won the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player, retired after that game.

(Source: Canadian Press)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Ronaldo vows to justify price tag



Portugal winger Cristiano Ronaldo says the world record £80m fee that Real Madrid have paid Manchester United for his services is a "fair price."

Ronaldo, 24, will be presented to the Real fans on Monday and insists he will justify the size of the transfer fee.

"I think that it's a fair figure. If Manchester United and Real Madrid agree this amount then there is nothing more to say," said Ronaldo.

"I will show that the money they are paying has been a good decision."

Real Madrid's signing of French midfielder Zinedine Zidane in 2001 for £45.6m was the previous highest transfer fee before the Spanish giants bought Brazilian forward Kaka for £56m in June this year.

(Source: BBC)

Dallara eager for F1 return



Dallara are eagerly awaiting their return to Formula One with the new Campos Meta team, the Italian chassis builder saying the project will be a "fascinating challenge."

The Spanish team are one of three new outfits to have been granted entry to the 2010 world championship and have commissioned Dallara to design and build their car, meaning a return to the F1 grid for the first time in 18 seasons.

"I've accepted this opportunity with enthusiasm," Gian Paolo Dallara told the Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper.

"It's scary, but it's exciting for me and for my entire company, because this is a fascinating challenge that tests energy and creativity."

(Source: Skysports)

Tournament host Woods grabs Congressional lead



Tiger Woods played the role of inhospitable host by soaring to the top of the leaderboard after the second round of the AT&T National on Friday.

The world number one, who is hosting the \$6 million event at Congressional Country Club, fired a four-under-par 66 to finish on 10-under 130, one stroke ahead of Australian Rod Pampling (64).

"I didn't drive the ball as well as I did yesterday or hit my irons as crisp," said Woods, who returned a 64 in Thursday's opening round.

"Either I hit it pretty close to the hole, within 10 feet, or I was missing greens," he told reporters.

(Source: Reuters)

Milan target Huntelaar and Luis Fabiano



AC Milan are targeting Real Madrid striker Klaas Jan Huntelaar and Sevilla's Luis Fabiano, chief executive Adriano Galliani told reporters late on Friday.

Milan, who sold playmaker Kaka to Real, had been pursuing Wolfsburg forward Edin

Dzeko but the German champions will not sell so the Serie A side are now eyeing a loan move for Dutch international Huntelaar or a permanent deal for the Brazilian.

"Huntelaar and Luis Fabiano? More or less," said Galliani, also linked with Arsenal's Emmanuel Adebayor.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran finished 2nd in FIBA 33

Tehran Times Sports Desk

SINGAPORE — Iran was defeated by China in the final game of 3-on-3 Basketball in the 1st Asian Youth Games on Saturday.

Iran narrowly lost 26-29 to China in Singapore's Anglican High School and claimed the silver medal.

"We could have won the title but our players lost their concentration in the last minutes. I am satisfied with what we did in the final game against China," Iran's coach Amir Aghajani said.

FIBA 33 or 3-on-3 Basketball is a less formal variant of basketball, played on playgrounds and in gymnasiums across the world.

France beats Iran in FIBA U19 World Championship

Tehran Times Sports Desk

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Iran suffered its third successive defeat in the 2009 FIBA U19 World Championship when the basketball team lost to France on Saturday.

In the match held in Auckland's ASB Stadium, Iran lost to France 86-68 in Group B of the competitions. The Asian champion has already been beaten by the U.S. and Egypt.

Iran is scheduled to play Angola on Monday for the 13th place.

The Countries participating in the event are Angola, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Spain, Syria, and the United States of America.

The tournament runs from July 2 to 12.

Owen completes switch to Man Utd

Michael Owen has completed his surprise move to Manchester United after the free agent signed a two-year deal with the Premier League champions.

The 29-year-old ex-Liverpool and Real Madrid striker's contract with Newcastle ended earlier this week.

"Michael is a world-class forward with a proven goalscoring record at the highest level," said United boss Sir Alex Ferguson.

Owen had also been linked with Everton, Aston Villa, Stoke and Hull.

But instead he becomes United's second summer signing after the recent addition of Antonio Valencia from Wigan.

"Coming to Manchester United with the expectations that we have is something that Michael will relish," added Ferguson.

Owen said United's interest in him came as a surprise, adding: "I had just begun to talk to other clubs when out of the blue Sir Alex phoned me on Wednesday afternoon, invited me to have breakfast with him next morning during which he told me that he wanted to sign me."

"I agreed without a moment's thought. This is a fantastic opportunity for me and I intend to seize it with both hands."

"I am now looking forward to being a Manchester United player



and I am fortunate that I already know so many of the players here.

"I missed pre-season last year and am pleased that I will be starting from day one."

"I'd like to think that everyone was quite surprised with my medical."

"I've obviously passed them before, and my fitness is high. A lot is made out of it but I certainly don't feel like I'm injury prone."

"I want to thank Sir Alex for the faith he has shown in me and I give him my assurance that I will repay him with my goals and performances."

Owen had checks on an old knee injury in London on Thursday before undergoing a full medical at the private Bridgewater Hospital in Manchester on Friday.

He has been plagued by injuries in recent seasons, suffering with groin, ankle, thigh, hernia, metatarsal and knee ligament problems.

The 2001 European footballer of the year has dropped out of the England squad, but a move to United gives Owen the chance to revitalize his career, even if it involved accepting a lower basic salary.

(Source: BBC)

Ohuruogu finishes sixth in Oslo

Olympic 400m champion Christine Ohuruogu finished sixth behind winner and arch rival Sanya Richards at the Bislett Games in Oslo.

In only her second 400m of the season, Ohuruogu clocked 51.19 seconds, while American Richards finished in 49.23, the best time in the world this year. Usain Bolt withdrew from the 100m because of scheduling problems. In the absence of the Olympic champion and world record holder, fellow Jamaican Asafa Powell won in 10.07.

Simeon Williamson of Great Britain finished fourth behind Powell in the 100m 'A' final in a time of 10.13.

Richards' time in the women's 400m also tied the Bislett Stadium record, set by Czech Tatjana Kocembova in 1983.

Shericka Williams, the Olympic silver medalist from Jamaica, finished second in 49.98. Defending world champion Ohuruogu, who pulled out of a race in Italy last week with a sore throat, runs in the UK trials in Birmingham next week.

Richards, who took Olympic bronze behind Ohuruogu in Beijing, also won the opening event of the six Golden League meetings in Berlin a fortnight ago. Londoner Leevan Yearwood, backed by a very strong following wind, won the 100m 'B' race, sharing a time of 10.10 with American Mark Jelks.

(Source: BBC)

Ramirez avoids doping talk in winning return

SAN DIEGO, California (Reuters) — Manny Ramirez made a low key return to the Los Angeles Dodgers line-up after serving a 50-game ban for a doping offense on Friday, the slugger going 0-for-3 during his team's 6-3 win over the San Diego Padres.

Playing for the first time since the suspension was handed out on May 7 for violating the Major League Baseball drug policy, Ramirez brought the Padres home Petco Park to its feet during his first at-bat, a first-inning walk.

The right-hander also grounded out twice and popped out before being replaced in left field by Juan Pierre in the bottom of the sixth.

"It was great. I was nervous at first but it was fine," Ramirez told reporters.

"I want to thank my fans. I think they drove from (Los Angeles) just to watch me play and it was unbelievable. This team can do a lot of great things without me. I'm just trying to follow those guys."

With a large contingent of Dodger supporters making their way to the sold-out stadium of 42,217 fans, Ramirez was welcomed warmly for the most part with the applause drowning out the boos.

Speedskating's Pechstein gets 2-year doping ban

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) — Olympic speedskating great Claudia Pechstein of Germany was banned for two years because of blood doping Friday and will miss the 2010 Vancouver Games.

The International Skating Union said Pechstein's blood profile indicated ab-

normal changes in a series of tests, in particular after the World Allround Championships in February. The governing body ruled after a two-day hearing.

The 37-year-old skater is a five-time Olympic gold medalist. She is banned until Feb. 9, 2011 and can appeal the

decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Pechstein was stripped of her results in the 500-meter and 3,000-meter races Feb. 7 at the World Allround event, where she finished fifth and fourth, respectively.