

Kranjcar's future in Persepolis in doubt

Tehran Times Sports Desk
TEHRAN — Just hours after Persepolis General Manager Abbas Anzarifard announced coach Zlatko Kranjcar had been dismissed from his job, the club declared the Croat will be in charge until the Tehran

derby. Persepolis dismissed Kranjcar following poor results in the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday and appointed his assistant Hossein Abdi as the interim coach.



But, the Persepolis' managerial board announced Kranjcar will coach the Reds in the must-win game against Esteghlal, the so called Tehran derby, on Friday. Persepolis football team suffered

its first defeat as they went down 2-1 against Paykan in the 8th week of the IPL. Persepolis has only 11 points from eight games and is 8th in the standings. Kranjcar was named the coach

of the Tehran-based team in summer. He had coached Croatia in the 2006 World Cup but was fired after his team was eliminated in the group stages of the event.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Forlan Pens New Atletico Madrid Contract



Atletico Madrid striker Diego Forlan looks set to finish his playing career with Los Colchoneros after putting pen to paper on a contract renewal that will keep him at the club until 2013. The Uruguayan international striker joined Atletico from Villarreal for a fee of €21 million in 2007 and has since scored 61 goals in 105 appearances in all competitions for Atleti. Last season Forlan managed an incredible 32 goals in 33 league appearances for Atletico and secured the Pichichi and European Golden Boot for the second time in his career.

(Source: Goal)

Wenger ends Arsenal's Chamakh pursuit



LONDON (AP) — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said on Friday that he will not continue his pursuit of highly-rated Morocco striker Marouane Chamakh when the transfer window reopens in January.

Arsenal, as well as Premier League rivals West Ham, were linked with a move for the Bordeaux player in the summer before the 25-year-old opted to stay with the French champions.

"No, we don't go anywhere," said Wenger. "We have plenty of strikers. Eduardo has made a recovery and Nicklas Bendtner has extended his contract; that means we have strikers."

Crespo waiting for Maradona call up



BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Former Argentina striker Hernan Crespo is waiting to be called back to the national team by coach Diego Maradona.

"I'm waiting for the phone to ring," Crespo told TyC Sports in an interview.

On the verge of missing its first World Cup since 1970, Argentina needs a boost and Crespo believes he can supply it.

"I am a different kind of player than what they have," said Crespo, who led Argentina in the last three World Cups.

Crespo scored 19 goals in 33 World Cup qualifying matches, a record in South American qualifiers. He scored 35 times in 64 matches for Argentina's national team, but has not been called up since July 2007.

Fergie hails evergreen Giggs as model pro



MANCHESTER, England (AP) — Sir Alex Ferguson has paid tribute to the professionalism that has enabled Ryan Giggs to produce some of the best football of his career at the age of 35.

The Welsh winger has been Manchester United's outstanding performer this season with match-winning performances against both Tottenham and Manchester City in recent weeks.

"The horrible part of being a footballer is that at some stage you are finished with the game - it catches us all," Ferguson said. "When someone like Ryan is playing at the level he is at, he realises to stay there, he has to prepare himself in the right way."

UCI boss vows "endless" fight on doping in the world of cycling

LUGANO, Switzerland — International Cycling Union president Pat McQuaid promised to continue the "endless fight" against doping Friday as he began a second four-year term leading the sport.

Irish-born McQuaid said doping was still a problem, despite a successful Tour de France in which no rider failed a drug test.

"It is an endless fight for the UCI, and one which I am determined that the UCI will continue," McQuaid told delegates at their annual congress on a rest day from racing at the road world championships. "There is no place for cheats in our sport."

"We have had a good Tour de France, and at this stage I am not aware, for the first time in many years, that there are any positive controls."

The return of seven-time Tour champion Lance Armstrong of the U.S. added "another dimension" to media coverage of the sport's signature event, and broadcaster Eurosport enjoyed record ratings, he said.

McQuaid promised that riders who used performance-enhancing drugs faced a greater chance of getting caught than ever before.

The mandatory biological passport anti-doping program demands riders give blood and urine samples to create individual body chemistry profiles. Scientists can then identify evidence of doping instead of specific substances.

"We are no longer looking for a needle in a haystack," McQuaid said.

"We do targeted testing. We test riders morning, noon and night. We chase after riders who we see have suspicious values. We test for more substances."

McQuaid said 13,800 samples had been taken this year from 850 riders across all cycling's disciplines.

Around 7,500 were surprise, out-of-competition tests taken from riders in training, compared to 200 three years ago.

The increased workload produced 47 positive cases so far in 2009, while there were 36 cases three years ago.

One current case involves Spain's Mikel Astarloza who tested positive for the blood-boosting hormone EPO while training for the Tour de France. He went on to win the 16th stage. Astarloza denies doping but faces being banned and stripped of the victory.

McQuaid said the anti-doping fight was improving, and praised race organizers - singling out France's ASO - and teams for helping fund the passport program.

"Teams now offer more support to the riders in an environment where there is less pressure to dope," he said.

McQuaid said it was alarming that a national under-23 team - from Ukraine - was being investigated for an alleged blood doping scheme.

The UCI was to launch a rider education program called "True Champion or Cheat?" later Friday.

McQuaid, who stood unopposed for the UCI presidency, said his first term was dominated by doping scandals and now-settled conflicts with organizers of the three major tours of France, Italy and Spain.

"The most important thing is that they recognize the UCI is the government of the sport of cycling worldwide, and its authority as such is indisputable," he told delegates.

McQuaid said the UCI would continue its policy of globalizing the sport.

The UCI ProTour series of races had added events in California, Australia and Canada, while the sport had "enormous potential" in India and the Middle East.

He pointed to the success of introducing BMX medal races at the 2008 Beijing Olympics as "the best way to get young kids on bikes."

"Overall I think the situation is healthier than when I began four years ago," McQuaid said.

Woods one ahead after untidy finish

ATLANTA (Reuters) — Tiger Woods wasted a chance to take a commanding lead in the Tour Championship with an untidy finish to Friday's second round, ending a sun-splashed day just one stroke ahead of the chasing pack.

The world number one lipped out with short putts at the 15th and 16th before bogeying the par-three last for a two-under-par 68 at East Lake Golf Club.

That left Woods on five-under 135 in the PGA Tour's fourth and final FedExCup playoff event, a stroke in front of playing partner Padraig Harrington (69) and overnight leader Sean O'Hair (70) of the U.S.

South African Ernie Els, boosted by four birdies in five holes from the eighth, was alone in fourth place at three under after a 66.

"The day as a whole was a good day," Woods told reporters after putting himself in position to clinch the FedExCup for a second time, along with a \$10 million bonus.

"I shot under par and I got myself in the lead. But it was a day in which I hit the ball very well starting out, didn't make any putts and hit everything on the high side."

"Then the back nine I hit some scratchy shots but also hit some really good ones too," added the American, who is hunt-



ing his seventh tour victory of the season.

"I had an opportunity at 15 and 16 to make a couple of putts, didn't do it, but made a good save at 17 and unfortunately just made a four at 18."

Woods, champion here in 2007, produced a sizzling three-birdie run from the seventh to go one shot clear.

He then struck a superb five-wood uphill from 247 yards at the par-five 15th to four feet but lipped out with his eagle

putt. The tap-in birdie put him two ahead of the field.

Brilliant Approach

Another brilliant approach followed at the 16th, his ball ending up less than four feet from the pin, but Woods again surprisingly lipped out and had to settle for a par four.

"Fifteen was okay, that's fine, that happens," he said. "It was a strange putt in the sense the grain was left to right ... and the slope was right to left. But 16 was just a bad putt."

After paring 17 despite finding a fairway bunker off the tee, Woods overshot the green at the last and failed to reach the putting surface with his chip from tangly rough.

Harrington, yet to win this season on either the PGA or European tours, relished playing with Woods for the eighth time this year.

Wigan punish ten-man Chelsea

Wigan provided one of the shocks of the season as they crushed ten-man Chelsea 3-1 at the DW Stadium.

Petr Cech saw red in an explosive start to the second-half which saw Chelsea equalize before immediately conceding a penalty, won and dispatched by Hugo Rodallega.

Chelsea had won each of their six games so far this season and only this week were being labelled as almost unbeatable, a tag which manager Carlos Ancelotti rebuffed.

Titus Bramble opened the scoring on 16 minutes when he headed home unmarked from around 8 yards when Charles N'Zogbia delivered after a short corner.

The Latics held on until half-time and perhaps should have taken advantage of some suspect Chelsea defending as Emerson Boyce shot straight at Cech from inside the six yard box.

Chelsea began the second-half with great urgency and were

level on 47 minutes as Didier Drogba steered a Florent Malouda cross past Chris Kirkland in the Wigan goal.

Wigan were back in front soon after when Cech brought down Rodallega inside the after the Columbian raced through on goal.

Florent Malouda was sacrificed as Henrique Hilario came in to replace Cech in the Chelsea goal but he was sent the wrong way by Rodallega, who picked himself up to drill home the penalty.

Chelsea were unable to regain control of the game as play resumed and after using all three subs, they were reduced to nine men after Ashley Cole was unable to continue in injury time.

The away side were massively exposed as they desperately searched for an equalizer and Paul Scharner capitalized when he poked home from a yard out after great wing play by Maynor Figueroa a minute into added time.

Iran to play Italy futsal team

Tehran Times Sports Desk
TEHRAN — Iran's national futsal team is likely to play two friendlies with Italy in November.

Iran, who has recently faced Brazil in two friendly games, is going to travel to Italy to play the team.

Iran's national team lost to Brazil 4-3 and 4-2 respectively in Tehran's Azadi Gym last week.

According to Iran's Futsal Committee's offer, Iran is scheduled to play Italy's futsal team on November 17 and 18.

Iran's national futsal team, coached by Hossein Shams, failed to reach the 2008 World Cup semifinals despite drawing 5-5 with Italy in its third match in the second round of the event.

UEFA investigating 40 cases of match-fixing

LONDON (AP) — UEFA is investigating 40 cases of suspected match-fixing in the Champions League and UEFA Cup, mostly involving eastern European clubs.

The number of matches being scrutinized for suspicious betting patterns has risen from 25 in the last year, Peter Limacher, head of disciplinary services for European soccer's governing body, told The Associated Press on Friday.

The matches under investigation were early qualifying games that took place over the last four seasons, 15 were played in the last two years.

UEFA has beefed up its early warning system to protect against illegal betting and match-fixing, and started a special investigation to clamp down on the problem.

"Right now it's mainly eastern Europe clubs being investigated. They know they are not going to be involved later in the tournament and they are going out, so decide, 'Let's make a profit,'" Limacher said in an interview with the AP in London.

"In the cases we have seen it's really the deliberate planned fix of the games, the whole games. First the result at halftime then after 90 minutes.

"It might take some time (to get a conviction), but in cases where we can work together with the police that might be possible."

Limacher revealed the scale of the probe after his organization announced last month that three Macedonian clubs were being investigated after it banned FK Pobeda from European competitions for eight years.

In the Pobeda case, the club's president and a former player were banned for life after UEFA found they manipulated the result "to gain an undue advantage for themselves and a third party."

"It's possible as well depending on the network that a whole club could be actively involved, that is something that is happening and players are being contacted by these gangs and then they will take money," Limacher said on the sidelines of a World Sports Law Report conference.

"We have to be careful as well to make distinction between inside information and a deliberate fix," he said. "There is a difference but we look into both of them."

Betting syndicates based in Asia are the primary concern for UEFA.

"The fix is often taking place in Europe and all they do is place the money online through an agent in Asia or through another agent," Limacher said. "In Asia you can place bets without any limits for say 50,000 dollars, but in Europe you have more regulated limits."