

# Esteghlal, Persepolis tie in IPL

**Tehran Times Sports Desk**  
**TEHRAN** — Esteghlal was held to a 1-1 draw by its arch-rival Persepolis in the Iran Professional League at the Azadi Stadium on Friday.  
 Tehran derby was watched by about 90,000 spectators and for the sixth straight time ended in a tie.  
 Persepolis, who suffers from

managerial problems these days, was the better team in the first half. They dominated the match and kept control of the ball but failed to benefit from their chances.  
 Six minutes into the second half Hadi Norouzi was tripped by Esteghlal keeper Vahid Taleblu in the penalty box. Mehdi Shiri could not



Meisam Bao of Persepolis (L) carries the ball in Tehran derby at the Azadi Stadium on Friday.

(MEHR/Mehdi Zare)

convert the penalty kick and Adel Kolahkaj scored for Persepolis on a rebound.  
 After that Esteghlal put Persepolis under pressure. They were the better team and eventually equalized the match. Hossein Kazemi's header in the 55th minute leveled the match.  
 Esteghlal maintained control

of the match and created some good opportunities, but their strikers could not take advantage of them.  
 The spectators protested to the way the two teams played in the derby. Esteghlal and Persepolis players have been widely condemned by the fans of being in collusion.

This match was considered to be the most important derby in Asia and the 22nd most important match in the world in June 2008 by World Soccer magazine.  
 Esteghlal and Persepolis have played together 67 times in which Esteghlal has won 20 times, lost 16 times and 31 matches ended in a draw.

NEWS IN BRIEF



## Bjorn banishes Paris woes



Thomas Bjorn put the disappointment of last week's Vivendi Trophy behind him to open a two-shot lead after the first day of the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship.  
 The Dane captained the Continental Europe side who were well beaten by Great Britain and Ireland in Paris last week, but had much more to smile about after firing a superb eight-under-par 64 at Kingsbarns on Thursday. That earned him a two-stroke advantage over England's Ross McGowan and Gareth Maybin of Northern Ireland who shot 66s at St Andrews and Kingsbarns respectively.

"It was a hard week last week - I spent a lot of time thinking and using the head - but I got inspired by it," he explained.

(Source: Skysports)

## Sharapova beats Radwanska



Former world number one Maria Sharapova battled to a 6-3 2-6 6-4 victory over Agnieszka Radwanska to set up a meeting with Jelena Jankovic in the final of the Pan Pacific Open.

Sharapova, 25th in the world rankings and chasing her first title since shoulder surgery 11 months ago, overcame a mid-match slump to see off 11th seed Radwanska at the \$2 million Tokyo event.

The Russian dominated to take the opening set 6-3 but lost her way in the second, double faulting to hand Radwanska a 5-2 lead and the Pole duly served out to level the contest. Sharapova, a three-time Grand Slam winner prior to her rotator cuff injury, fell 2-0 down in the decider before drawing on all her big-game experience to rescue the situation.

(Source: Skysports)

## Kimi guarded on F1 future



Kimi Raikkonen has said he will only remain in Formula One if he can join a team capable of mounting a world championship challenge.

The Finn, winner of the drivers' title in 2007, is to leave Ferrari at the end of the current season following their announcement that Fernando Alonso will join next year. It had been widely predicted that Raikkonen would move back to McLaren, for whom he raced between 2002 and 2006; however, he has also dabbled in rally driving of late.

"Maybe I will race, maybe not," Raikkonen said on Thursday ahead of this weekend's Japanese Grand Prix.

(Source: Skysports)

## Berbatov: I need to change



Dimitar Berbatov admits he still needs to change in order to fit in at Manchester United.

The Bulgarian failed to hit the heights expected of him in his first season following his £30.75million move from Tottenham last year.

"That is my fault, not theirs. It is me who must change," he said of the criticism. Manchester United are their club. They have treated me perfectly since I came.

(Source: Skysports)

## Haddadi sprains ankle at practice

Tehran Times Sports Desk



Iranian Memphis Grizzlies' player Hamed Haddadi was injured in his team's training camp on Wednesday.

The 7 foot 2 inches (218cm) Iranian did not finish practice in the Grizzlies' training session held at the Birmingham-Southern College.

Haddadi suffered a sprained left ankle while participating in a defensive drill.

He crashed onto the court and writhed in pain. Haddadi rolled on the court for several minutes and eventually needed help off the court.

Team officials said the injury seemed serious to onlookers. Haddadi has rolled the ankle before and recuperated quickly.

## Sourian presents his gold medal to Ahmadinejad

Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Greco-Roman gold winner Hamid Sourian in a ceremony held at the Iran's Presidential Office on Thursday, presented his medal to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the country's war veterans.



The 55kg category Sourian won the title of the 2009 FILA World Championships in Herning, Denmark last week and collected his fourth gold medal of the World Championships.

The talented Iranian wrestler had previously claimed the gold medals in 2005 Budapest, 2006 Guangzhou and 2007 Baku. He has also won the 2007 Bishkek and 2008 Jeju City competitions in the Asian Junior Championships.

## Beckham confident he'll play against Fire

CARSON, Calif. (AFP) — Galaxy star David Beckham is confident that an inflamed right Achilles tendon will not keep him from playing in a game against the Chicago Fire with postseason implications.

"I'll be ready," Beckham said after Thursday's practice. "I don't see why not. I've trained every day this week and I've worked on fitness this week so it's been good."

"Obviously it's hard to practice and train on that, but I don't see it being a problem for tomorrow."  
 Los Angeles is on the verge of qualifying for the Major League Soccer playoffs for the first time since 2005, when it won the MLS Cup. It would also be the team's first time in the postseason since Beckham arrived in 2007.

"I think it would mean a lot to all of us," Beckham said. "It's

been disappointing the last few years not even reaching the playoffs. We've made small steps forward this year and worked hard as a team. Hopefully, the hard work will pay off."

Galaxy coach Bruce Arena was taking a more cautious approach.

"We hope he's going to be able to play," Arena said. "We'll see how he reacts to training. Today we just had a light day. He's certainly improved from where he was last week."

The winner Friday will enhance its chances of reaching the MLS playoffs, and would qualify outright if D.C. United loses to or ties Chivas USA on Saturday night. Los Angeles and Chicago have 41 points apiece.

Fire midfielder Cuauhtemoc Blanco did not travel with the team because of a strained left hamstring.

## Idowu named top European athlete

British triple jumper Phillips Idowu has been voted men's European Athlete of the Year after his victory in August's World Championships.

The 30-year-old, who beat Portuguese rival Nelson Evora by 18cm to clinch gold in Berlin, will be presented with his award in Budapest on 17 October.

Idowu is the first Briton to win the award since Dwain Chambers in 2002.

Spain's distance runner Marta Dominguez received the female award in a poll of experts, fans, media and federations.

The accolade caps a season in which Idowu has finally begun to fulfil his true potential on the global stage.

At this year's World Athletics Championships the East Lon-



doner shrugged off memories of a disappointing silver in Beijing to take the title with a world-leading and personal best jump of 17.73m.

Previous British winners include Colin Jackson, Linford Christie and Jonathan Edwards, one of Idowu's predecessors as triple jump world champion.

Norwegian javelin thrower Andreas Thorkildsen came second in the men's vote, with high jumper Yaroslav Rybakov of Russia in third place.

Croatia high jumper Blanka Vlasic finished second in the women's award, just ahead of pole vault phenomenon Yelena Isinbayeva.

(Source: BBC)

## Sir Alex pays tribute to Wenger

Wenger this week became the longest-serving boss in Arsenal's history and most of his 13 years in north London have been spent going head to head with Ferguson for the game's major prizes.

While there have been plenty of confrontations between the pair down the years, a thaw in relations has taken place in recent times to the extent that they appeared together at a lavish question-and-answer session at Wembley last season.

Although he avoided discussion over whether Wenger had brought the best out of him, Ferguson feels the statement is particularly true of Arsenal.

"Arsene has brought the best out of Arsenal," the United manager said. "Since he has gone there, the success of the club has been fantastic. He sticks to what he believes in - and so do his players.

"That is why he has been there so long. I read some quotes from his players the other day that sum up the situation pretty well. They owe everything to him. That is nice to read."

Red Devils boss for 23 years himself, Ferguson feels Wenger's success at Arsenal proves his own theory that if clubs stand by their own decisions and give managers time, they will eventually be rewarded.

"If you look at Brian Clough, myself and Arsene, it proves longevity brings rewards," said Ferguson. "His team play the right way and he has a stadium that is full every week."

"He has been an incredible manager for that football club. There is no question about that."

(Source: ESPN)



## Ronaldo doubtful for Sevilla with ankle sprain

Madrid (Sports Network) — Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo sprained his ankle in Wednesday's 3-0 Champions League win over Marseille and is doubtful for Sunday's La Liga match with Sevilla.

Ronaldo scored twice in the win over Marseille at the Bernabeu, his eighth and ninth goals in seven matches since his summer switch from Manchester United.

Ronaldo was hurt in the second half when Marseille defender Souleymane Diawara fouled him in the area, drawing a red card and handing Madrid a penalty kick.

## Footballer jailed for death crash

A footballer has been jailed for 32 months after causing a fatal crash because he was trying to change songs on his MP3 player.

Sheffield United striker Jordan Robertson, 21, pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving at Leicester Crown Court.

Robertson crashed into the car driven by father-of-five Omar Mohamed on the M1 in Leicestershire on Christmas Day.



Mr Mohamed, 38, from Leicester, died in hospital on Boxing Day.

Both drivers had been travelling on the southbound carriageway of the M1 by junction 19 near Lutterworth when Robertson's Mercedes CLC 180 sports car hit Mr Mohamed's Ford Galaxy.

### Driving ban

Robertson, of Hazelbarrow Road, Sheffield, told police he had been using the MP3 player - a personal digital music player - at the time of the incident.

Mr Mohamed was airlifted to Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry but died later with his wife at his bedside.

Sheffield-born Robertson, who was on loan to Southampton at the time of the crash, was also banned from driving for five years.

He joined Sheffield United as a trainee but has spent much of his career on loan to other clubs including Torquay United, Northampton Town, Oldham Athletic and Bury.

He also played for Sheffield United's Hungarian sister club, Ferencvaros.

A spokesman for Sheffield United said the club's thoughts were with the victim's family, but it was "too early to say anything else".

(Source: BBC)