

Iran qualifies for Asian Volleyball Championship SF

Tehran Times Sports Desk
Manila — Iran booked a berth in the semifinal round of the 15th Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship on Saturday. Iran came out victorious against Kazakhstan at the San Andres Gym 3-1 (24-26, 25-22,

25-21, 25-23) in Pool E and advanced to the semifinal round as the first team. Iran is scheduled to play second-placed Pool F South Korea on Sunday. China and Japan will face in the other match. Iran has already defeat-

ed South Korea in the World Championship qualifiers last month. The Persians so-called "dark horse" in the event, has already defeated China, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Taiwan in the event.



Carlo ready for Rafa

Carlo Ancelotti and Rafa Benitez are both relishing meeting for the first time since their UEFA Champions League final clashes of 2005 and 2007.

The two face each other for the first time since 2007 when AC Milan claimed revenge for their 2005 defeat by beating Liverpool.

It will also be the first time that Ancelotti has faced a fellow top-four manager since taking charge at Stamford Bridge.

But the Italian is in jovial mood ahead of the SuperSunday clash.

"I don't remember 2005 but I can remember 2007. Rafa only remembers 2005!" joked Ancelotti.

"There is no pain in those memories. A difficult moment can teach you to improve.

"We lost an unbelievable game (in 2005) - it was one of the best matches for me when I was at AC Milan.

"It will remain a memory - not a positive one, but not a negative one either.

"It was fantastic for us to have revenge against Liverpool in 2007. We were sure we would win. The score is level between us now."

Ancelotti is full of admiration for Benitez's Liverpool, claiming their style is akin to something in Serie A.

"Rafa's teams are well organized, especially defensively, and they work very hard to win the ball. I like this kind of work," he said.

"Liverpool are very hard to play against. I think Rafa has looked at a lot of matches in the Italian league.

"At AC Milan it was very hard to beat Liverpool because they don't concede opportunities in defense. I hope it will be easier."

Rafa Benitez was equally quick to heap praise on Ancelotti - who he considers a coaching 'magician'.

"I am looking forward to seeing him again, it will be an interesting meeting and I have great respect for him," said Benitez.

"He knows how to manage a top side, he had great experience at AC Milan and he is already doing a good job at Chelsea.

"He has not changed too much here, maybe the shape of the team a little but the style of football is similar and the people there are happy because he is winning games."

"I have a lot of respect for Ancelotti, he is a nice man and wants to win. But we do respect each other.

"He has experience of working with top-class players, that is important. In Istanbul against us (in 2005) he was winning and we came back, but he was always working to change that situation.

"In Athens (in 2007) it was very close, but after they scored he was on top of things. As a manager he does not change very much, but that makes him a magician, someone who can alter very little but then produce a victory." "When he was at AC Milan, he allowed me to study his work. I have a lot of respect for Milan, his team and the way they played."

(Source: Skysports)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Vettel on pole in Japan



Red Bull's Sebastian Vettel claimed pole position for Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix after an eventful qualifying session at Suzuka.

Knowing a win this weekend is vital to keep alive his title hopes, the German posted a best lap time of one minute 32.160 seconds.

Jarno Trulli was second in his Toyota while Lewis Hamilton - winner in Singapore last week - will start from third on the grid for McLaren. However championship leader Jenson Button could only manage seventh place, with his Brawn GP team-mate and main rival Rubens Barrichello in fifth.

(Source: Skysports)

Redknapp rules out exit



Harry Redknapp has dashed rumors suggesting he is set for an imminent exit from Tottenham.

Bookmakers have been left bemused after receiving a flurry of bets on the Spurs chief becoming the first Premier League boss to leave

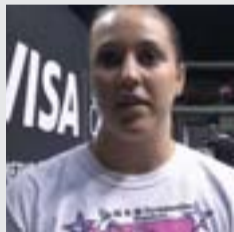
his post this season.

He said: "I'm definitely not leaving. It's absolute nonsense. Absolute rubbish.

"I couldn't be happier than I am here. There's not a chance of that happening. I love it here and I have no intention of leaving. It couldn't have gone better for me."

(Source: Skysports)

American gymnast out of world championships



American Chellsie Memmel, winner of the 2005 all-around title, is out of this month's world championships in London.

Memmel, a member of the silver medal-winning U.S. team at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, had ankle surgery at the end of last year and has

not yet been able to regain top form.

"I have run out of time and I am not quite where I want to be," the 21-year-old told the United States Olympic Committee's official website (teamusa.org) on Friday.

"I haven't been able to do the number of routines and repetitions I need to represent the U.S. at the highest level." The world championships take place from October 13-18.

(Source: Reuters)

Rogge: IOC to keep up doping fight



International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge says there is no place in sports for a "win-at-all-cost" mentality. Opening the Olympic Congress on Saturday, Rogge said the Olympic movement had contempt for cheating, and would continue

to fight against doping and match-fixing.

Rogge said: "A first-place finish that endangers the health and safety of an athlete is not a victory, it's a disgrace."

He said sports leaders should be tough on people who encouraged and helped athletes to dope, and called for the IOC to create a Trainers' Commission.

The three-day gathering is examining the values and future of the Olympic movement. It began the day after the IOC awarded the 2016 Games to Rio de Janeiro.

(Source: ESPN)

Iranian fencers refuse to compete with Israelis

Tehran Times Sports Desk



Four Iranian athletes pulled out of the 2009 Fencing World Championships in Antalya, Turkey on Friday.

Mohammad Hossein Ebrahimi withdrew from the foil weapon to refuse competing with an Israeli

fencer.

Hamed Sedaghati and Seyyed Sadegh Abedi in epee pulled out of race so as not to compete with Israeli fencers as well.

Hamid-Reza Taherkhani, another Iranian fencer, in saber discipline refused to face the Israeli athlete.

Iran has not competed against Israel athletes since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Iran does not recognize Israel as a sovereign state and its athletes have always refused to compete alongside Israelis as a sign of solidarity with the Palestinians.

The 2009 Fencing World Championships started on September 30 at the Antalya Expo Center and will run till October 8.

Iran's futsal team headed for Libya

Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Iran's futsal team will travel to Libya on early Sunday to take part in the Futsal Confederations Cup which will be held from 5 to 11 October 2009 in Tripoli.

A total of six teams namely, Libya, Iran, Guatemala, Uruguay, Solomon Islands and Spain will participate in the tournament.

Brazil was originally scheduled to participate in the event but was replaced by Uruguay.

Hossein Shams' team will be accompanied by Iran's Football Federation President Ali Kaffashian.

Most of the major expenses for the trip including air travel, accommodation and meals are to be met by the host federation.

The winner of the tournament will receive \$50,000 while the bottom placed team will walk away with \$10,000.

The tournament has been approved by FIFA.



Sharapova wins comeback title in Tokyo

TOKYO (Reuters) — Former world number one Maria Sharapova won her second Pan Pacific Open title after Jelena Jankovic retired with a wrist injury in Saturday's final.

It was Sharapova's first title since shoulder surgery last October and the 20th of her career. Her last tournament win came at Amelia Island in April 2008.

The Russian was leading 5-2 when seventh seed Jankovic complained of shooting pains down her right arm and called for the trainer to tape up her wrist at the changeover.

The Serb managed just two more points after a medical timeout before throwing in the towel.

"These things happen but I'll certainly take it," Sharapova told reporters after the abbreviated final, her second of the year after a runner-up finish in Toronto in August.

"It's great to have that adrenaline again," added the three-times grand slam winner, set to break into the world's top 20 after coming into the \$2 million Tokyo event ranked 25th.

"It's funny to win trophies again after thinking I might never be able to hit a tennis ball again. But I'm back and I'm hungry. I can be better than before and win more grand



slams."

Sharapova, who has now beaten the 2008 year-end number one Jankovic in five of their six meetings, also won the Pan Pacific Open crown in 2005.

Tokyo Charm

Four of her 20 WTA Tour titles, including her breakthrough victory at the 2003 Japan Open, have come in Tokyo.

"It's a special place for me," said Sharapova, who had recovered from 2-0 down to rattle off five straight games before Jankovic's retirement.

"I'm proud of how I stepped it up," continued the 22-year-old, a third-round loser at last month's U.S. Open.

"After an early loss in a grand slam I didn't just put my head down and go on vacation."

Jankovic admitted her participation in next week's China Open may be in doubt.

"I had real pain in the shoulder going down to my wrist," said the world number eight. "The wrist is swollen and the whole arm is inflamed."

"I'll see if I can play in Beijing after I get treatment. I wanted to finish but I couldn't even hold the racket. I had to stop or risk maybe not being able to finish the year."

Blatter moved by Lula's Rio 2016 bid speech

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) — Sepp Blatter, head of world soccer's governing body FIFA, heaped praise on Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Friday after his speech in support of the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympic candidacy.

Lula, in Copenhagen to back Rio's effort to become the first South American city to host the Games, had addressed International Olympic Committee (IOC) members in the final presentation prior to the vote later on Friday.

"I told the president (Lula), whom I know very well for a long time, that his speech went under my skin," Blatter, also a voting IOC member, told Reuters.

"It is what I have advocated: that we should have a kind of rotation system also with the Olympic Games," Blatter said.

Rio is up against Chicago, who had U.S. President Barack Obama speaking to the IOC session earlier on Friday, Tokyo



and Madrid.

Lula and Blatter hugged and had a brief, warm discussion after Rio's presentation, accidentally meeting outside the hall.

"I was so glad to see him and told him it was a very good speech," Blatter said.

While FIFA have a rotation system in place, meaning soccer World Cups alternate between continents, the IOC has no such procedure and

the Games have yet to go to an African or a South American country.

Speaking for Rio de Janeiro, Lula had said Brazil was the only one of the world's 10 most powerful nations to have never staged the Games.

"I honestly think it is Brazil's turn," he said. "It is South America's bid. This is a continent that has never held the Games. It is time to address this imbalance."

Brazil will host the 2014 soccer World Cup while South Africa is gearing up for the 2010 tournament.