

Tehran Times Sports Desk
MANILA — Iran's volleyball team claimed their first silver medal in the Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship.

In the final match played at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila on Monday, Iran was beaten 3-1 (25-19, 18-25, 23-25, 22-25) by six-time champion Japan and came second.

Iran had won the bronze medal in 2003 in the competitions held in China.

"There is no excuse and the Japanese team played very well against us. We had a good start in the final but it was too hard to continue.

I am so happy because of Iran's performance in the tournament," Iran's coach Hossein Madani said in the post-match news conference.

Korea defeated China in four sets (25-23, 25-22, 22-25, 25-22) at the Bronze medal match of the

Iran wins silver at Asian volleyball championship

15th Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship was held in Manila, the Philippines, with the participation of 18 teams in four pools.



Safina and Venus crash out in China

BEIJING (Reuters) — World number three Venus Williams lost to Russian teen-ager Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova for the second week in a row to exit the \$6.6 million China Open with a 3-6 6-1 6-4 second round defeat Monday.

The world number 39 simply refused to be awed by Williams and dominated the final two sets of the 132-minute contest to claim her second win over the seven-times grand slam winner after last Monday's upset in Tokyo.



"She played really well, unfortunately sometimes I made errors too soon in the play," Williams, 29, said in a brief news conference. "Twelve double faults didn't help me today, I wasn't counting those, though."

Williams had an inkling of the fight on her hands when her 18-year-old opponent took her to six deuces as she was serving for the first set.

"She started way aggressive today," Pavlyuchenkova told reporters. "She wanted to kill me, I guess."

Brief wobble

The Russian raced through the second set, wobbled a bit losing her serve to love at 5-2 in the third, but held her nerve to serve out for the match two games later.

"I had nothing to lose," Pavlyuchenkova added. "I just tried to move her around as much as I could, just hit as hard as I could in the court and just enjoy the match."

Sixth seed Svetlana Kuznetsova joined her compatriot in the third round with a 6-2 6-1 victory over Spain's Anabel Medina Garrigues.

World number one Dinara Safina, who must at least match Serena Williams's progress in Beijing to retain the top ranking, plays China's Zhang Shuai in the second round later on Monday.

Earlier on center court, Novak Djokovic shrugged off the effects of jet lag to become the first seed to reach the men's second round with a 6-3 7-5 victory over Victor Hanescu.

The Serbian ultimately justified his second seeding but struggled to impose his game on his 1.98-meter (6ft 6in) Romanian opponent throughout the absorbing, if not high quality, contest.

A crosscourt winner for his fifth break of the match finally sealed Djokovic's place in the last 16 but he will need more consistency if he is to win a third title of the year this week.

"That's the first round, you have to get used to the ups and downs," said the 22-year-old, who was playing his first match since his U.S. Open semi-final defeat to Roger Federer.

"I am aware I need to raise my level of performance to get far in the tournament. I'm still a bit jet-lagged, I think you could see that in the second set."

In other men's first round action, Spain's Tommy Robredo thrashed German Benjamin Becker 6-2 6-1.

Iran volleyball advances to FIVB World Grand Champions Cup

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TEHRAN— Iran will take part in the FIVB Men's World Grand Champions Cup which will be held in Osaka and Nagoya, Japan from November 18 to 23, 2009.

The competitions will be held with the participation of four continental champions who have reached the highest ranking at the Olympic Games preceding the matches.

Japan, the Asian volleyball champion, is the host, and Iran as the second-placed team will represent Asia in the tournament.

The World Grand Champions Cup is a men's and women's volleyball competition. Established in 1993, it is an international tournament that is played in every year following the Olympic Games.

Beijing offenders to learn fate

The five athletes who tested positive for doping after blood sample retests from the 2008 Beijing Olympics will learn their fate in December.

The five include Bahrain's 1500m gold medal winner Rashid Ramzi, plus Italian cyclist Davide Rebellin who won silver.

German cyclist Stefan Schumacher, Greek 20km walker Athanasia Tsoumeleka and Croatian 800m runner Vanja Perisic are the other Olympians to be found guilty.

All five tested positive for new blood-booster Cera, and face probable bans.

The International Olympic Committee has a scheduled executive board meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland, in December - and will announce its verdicts then.



The IOC has the power to find the athletes guilty, and strip them of medals.

But the cases would then be referred to the respective international federations of each sport, which are responsible for handing out bans.

The positive results came in April after the IOC retested 948 athletes' samples, focusing mainly on endurance events in cycling, rowing, swimming and athletics.

Nine other athletes tested positive during the Games as well as six horses in the equestrian events.

The IOC conducted the largest ever doping operation with about 5,000 blood and urine samples taken during the Beijing Games.

(Source: BBC)

IOC to mull tougher anti-doping requirements

COPENHAGEN (AP) — Tough anti-doping laws that give police the power to raid and investigate those suspected of helping athletes to dope could become a new requirement for countries hoping to host the Olympics.

The value of such police powers was driven home to the International Olympic Committee by the 2006 Turin games, where Italian police raided the Austrian cross-country and biathlon team lodgings and seized a large amount of doping products and equipment.

IOC medical commission chairman Arne Ljungqvist said IOC president Jacques Rogge has asked him to prepare a formal proposal that such laws become a requirement for bidding cities. Ljungqvist said it "absolutely" should be in place for cities bidding for the 2018 winter games.

"This is something that I feel should be a prerequisite for bidding cities, that countries do have these laws in place that makes it possible for public authorities and sport to work together, like we did in Italy," Ljungqvist said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press.



During the 2006 Winter Olympics, he said the IOC received intelligence "that something suspicious might be going on" with the Austrians but couldn't act on it because "we have no authority to make a raid." The IOC passed the information to the Italian police, "and they came back to us and said 'Yes, this looks serious and we will make a raid.'"

Drug tests on the athletes came back negative, but the raid netted what Ljungqvist called "a hematological laboratory, more or less, with all sorts of equipment and substances."

"This was a very significant experience," Ljungqvist said. "The whole story would have remained unknown to everyone had the Italian law not been in place and had we not shared the information between ourselves."

"It would be dramatically negative for the host country if something happens, or if suspicions happen, that cannot be pursued. It would look very bad," he added. "They have to have the law in place that supports their police authorities to do it ... because this will happen again."

Carragher promises response

Jamie Carragher has vowed Liverpool will be ready for the 'massive week' which could reignite their season.

The Reds suffered another dent in their quest for the Premier League title as Sunday's 2-0 defeat to rivals Chelsea saw Rafa Benitez's side collect their third loss in eight matches this term, one more than the entire 2008/2009 campaign.

Despite trailing Carlo Ancelotti's Blues by six points going into the latest international round of fixtures, Carragher believes the Reds can kick-start their season with positive results in the Merseysiders' next three games.

Premier League clashes against Sunderland and Manchester United, sandwiching a UEFA Champions League contest with Lyon lie in wait and the 31-year-old defender is fully focussed on the task ahead.

"It's never nice to lose before an international break, particularly a game as big as this, but we have got to put it behind us," Carragher told the Liverpool Echo.

"It would have been good to send the international lads away with a bit of a buzz but it wasn't to be and now it's a case of putting it behind us.

"When we get back to it, we have got a massive week coming up with those games against Sunderland, United and Lyon.

"But every week you have as a Liverpool player is massive



and we know we'll have to be at our best to get going again at Sunderland, as they are in good form."

Benitez called for a positive response at Stamford Bridge following Liverpool's disappointing show at Fiorentina in the Champions League last Tuesday.

But while the Reds equaled Chelsea's energy and endeavor, crucial errors proved costly as Nicolas Anelka and Florent Malouda's second-half goals

sealed victory for the hosts. Carragher admits those mistakes must be improved on quickly, otherwise the Reds will be out of the title race before Christmas.

"I thought we played quite well and done alright for most of the game yet we have still come away with a 2-0 defeat," he added.

"It's the small details that are so important at this level and we know that there are certain areas we have got to improve. There's a gap at the top and we've got to close it.

"Games against Chelsea are notoriously tight and a bit of quality or a mistake is always going to be the thing that turns it one way or another.

"But we have lost the ball in midfield for their first and I felt myself that I should have done a bit better for their second one."

(Source: BBC)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Button vows to keep cool



Jenson Button has vowed to keep his cool and avoid making any mistakes as the race for the world championship reaches its climax.

The Brawn GP driver saw his lead cut to 14 points after he finished eighth in the Japanese Grand Prix, with team-mate and title rival Rubens Barrichello taking the chequered flag one place ahead of him.

Meanwhile, Red Bull's Sebastian Vettel now stands just two points further back after winning at Suzuka.

"It is all about mistakes," he stressed in the aftermath of Sunday's race. "It is about finishing races and picking up points.

(Source: Skysports)

FA to review comments



The Football Association have revealed they will look into the comments made by Sir Alex Ferguson over the weekend.

The Red Devils boss was unhappy with the fitness of referee Alan Wiley after he declared that the official could not keep up with the pace of the game, missing crucial decisions as a result.

Ferguson could also be pulled up for his touchline behavior after he was seen ranting at fourth official Mike Dean in the second-half after a number of contentious decisions.

Many have suggested that the Scot was merely trying to deflect the attention away from what had been a poor performance by his side.

(Source: Skysports)

Another win for Ishikawa



Teenage golfing sensation Ryo Ishikawa fired birdies at the last two holes to clinch a dramatic victory in the Tokai Classic.

The 18-year-old recorded a final round 69 to win by a shot and claim a fourth title on the Japanese Tour in 2009

and the sixth of his career. Takeshi Kajikawa finished runner-up after a 69 while Shingo Katayama (70) and Yuta Ikeda (71) claimed a share of third at 11 under.

"I won by a hair but I just couldn't face losing," Ishikawa said. "I was motivated by wanting to beat my earnings for last season and get past the 100 million yen barrier again."

(Source: Skysports)

Foster out with chest injury



Manchester United have revealed that Ben Foster's absence from the England squad is down to a chest injury.

The Football Association did not specify why the goalkeeper was left out of the squad to face Ukraine and Belarus causing many to suggest that the 26-year-old had been dropped.

The former Watford loanee picked up the problem during the 2-2 draw at home to Sunderland on Saturday.

The clash saw Foster's performance come under intense scrutiny once more after he failed to deal with a high cross from Andy Reid to allow Kenwyne Jones to out muscle him and head home.

(Source: Skysports)