

Iranian women win 25m pistol event in West Asia tourney

Tehran Times Sports Desk
TEHRAN — The Iranian women's team finished in first place with 1682 points in the 25-meter sport pistol event of the West Asian Shooting

Championship on Wednesday. Zeinab Ramezani won the gold medal with 765.7 points. Maryam Soltani came second scoring 753.6 points and Fatemeh Hosseini claimed



the bronze with 744.7 points. Qatar followed Iran with 1600 points. Iran B team came third with 1571 points. Iran men's team finished in third

place in the double trap event with 402 points behind teams from Kuwait (416 points) and Qatar (409 points). The First West Asian Shooting Championship began in Tehran on

October 15 and will be finished on October 23. A total of 180 shooters from six West Asian countries are participating in the event.



Barca have the edge over Real, says Ronaldo

PARIS (Reuters) — Cristiano Ronaldo believes Barcelona play better soccer than his Real Madrid side and has tipped Lionel Messi to win the 2009 Ballon d'Or.



The Portugal winger, who joined Real Madrid from Manchester United for a world record 94 million euros (\$138 million) in the close season, won the Ballon d'Or last year and was included in the 30-strong shortlist for the award formerly known as the European Footballer of the Year released on Sunday.

"Barcelona play better football (than Real), but why?" the 24-year-old told France Football magazine in an interview released on Tuesday.

"Because they have been together for several seasons, not two months. Barca are better than us today but the real question is who will be in front at the end of the season?"

The winner of the Ballon d'Or will be announced on Dec. 1 and Ronaldo said that while Xavi and Samuel Eto'o were strong contenders, Argentina's Messi was likely to be the recipient.

"He's the favorite. He won the Champions League, the (Spanish) league. Why not him? If he wins it, he will have deserved it."

Arguably the world's finest player when on song, Ronaldo has been hampered by injury at Real and is struggling to recapture the form he showed at Manchester United.

He said, however, that he was hungry for more titles and felt he had picked the right club to do that.

"I must do again all I managed to do at Manchester, win the Champions League, league and cup titles," he said.

"I'm convinced I'm in the right club to do that. I'm starting a new career, I feel like a baby."

Cyclist Swanguen suspended after doping violation

The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency says cyclist J.D. Swanguen of San Diego has accepted a suspension after testing positive for a metabolite of marijuana or hashish.

USADA said Tuesday that a sample collected from Swanguen on July 19 at the USAC MTB National Championships tested positive for carboxy THC. All of his competitive results since then will be disqualified.

The agency says Swanguen accepted a three-month period of ineligibility, which began Oct. 9. The 20-year-old cyclist's penalty can be reduced if he completes USADA's anti-doping educational program.

(Source: AP)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Alves out for three weeks



Barcelona defender Dani Alves is set to be sidelined for around three weeks due to a thigh injury, the European champions have announced. It's injury added to insult for Barcelona, with the injury coming in the shock 2-1 Champions League defeat to Rubin Kazan. Alves sustained the injury late on in Tuesday's loss at the Nou Camp and the Brazil international could be ruled out of action for the next six games.

Those games are the Primera Division fixtures against Real Zaragoza, Osasuna and Real Mallorca, both legs of the Copa del Rey tie with Cultural Leonesa as well as the return Champions League meeting with Rubin in Russia. Barca coach Pep Guardiola said of the injury: "It's very bad news. He's a player who we thought was indestructible, but the human body always has a limit."

Boro sack Southgate



Middlesbrough have announced that manager Gareth Southgate has been 'relieved of his duties'.

Boro have endured an indifferent start to the Championship season following relegation from the Premier League last term.

Southgate has been in charge at Boro for over three years after taking over in the summer of 2006 from Steve McClaren - who left to take charge of England.

Boro actually won on Tuesday evening to end a three-match losing streak at home - but the crowd against Derby County was less than 18,000 - the lowest league attendance ever at The Riverside.

(Source: Skysports)

Dodgers extend contract



The Los Angeles Dodgers have agreed to a long-term contract extension for general manager Ned Colletti, the team said on Tuesday.

Colletti was hired by the Dodgers in November 2005 after serving as vice president and assistant general manager of the San Francisco Giants for nine seasons.

"One of our core promises to our fans is championship caliber baseball, year-in and year-out," Dodger owner Frank McCourt said in a statement. "Ned has been instrumental in our going a long way toward fulfilling that promise."

"The stability and continuity that extending his contract provides will further help us achieve the goal of being a consistent winner."

(Source: Reuters)

Johnson expects Reds return



Liverpool defender Glen Johnson has told he is confident he will be fit in time to face Manchester United this weekend.

Johnson missed Tuesday night's UEFA Champions League defeat to Lyon after picking up a groin problem in training. Reds boss Rafa Benitez was unsure of the full extent of the injury and whether or not the England international would be available for Sunday's crunch clash with Premier League leaders United at Anfield.

However, Johnson is hopeful he will recover in time to hand Benitez a much-needed boost with Fernando Torres and Steven Gerrard both struggling for fitness.

(Source: Skysports)

Oladi may join Schalke

Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Iranian midfielder Mehrdad Oladi may join Bundesliga side Schalke 04.



Oladi, who is training with the team, is looking forward to a five-year contract with the German team, according to his agent.

Schalke 04 coach Felix Magath is satisfied with the performance of the 24-year-old player.

Oladi took part in the La Liga team Deportivo Xerez training in September but could not join the Spanish team due to his lack of necessary documents.

Iranian duo Vahid Hashemian and Ashkan Dejagah have previously worked under Magath in Bayern Munich and Wolfsburg.

I am the father of Iran's cricket, Sawhney says

Tehran Times Sports Desk

TEHRAN — Chief of Iran's Cricket Council (ICC) Juggoo Sawhney said on Wednesday that he is the number one man in the sport in Iran and he is nicknamed the 'Father of Iran's Cricket'.

"Iran has many talented players but they remain unknown. ICC is always looking for opportunities to bring cricket to new territories," said Sawhney.

"Iranian cricket teams train at the number four ground of Azadi Stadium. Meanwhile, the Takhti Stadium is being prepared as well. Iran's national cricket team will likely take part in the 2010 Asian Games which will be held in Guangzhou, China. But first we have to establish a league in the country," the 63-year-old Indian expatriate added.

Hossein Sadeq Abedin President of Iran's Cricket Federation presented a plaque of honor and appreciation to Sawhney in recognition of his services to the sport.



Mourinho insists Group F wide open

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan boss Jose Mourinho claimed there are no favorites in his team's Champions League group after a 2-2 home draw against Dynamo Kyiv left the Italian champions bottom of the pile.

All four teams in Group F are separated by just a single point though with Barcelona, Rubin Kazan and Kyiv all on four points and Inter on three after three games.

What also makes the group stand out is that it is the only one of the eight Champions League groups to include four teams who are champions of their country.

"There's no favorite. We have the chance to qualify. With three teams on four points and one on three, eight or nine points should be enough to qualify," said Mourinho.

"I didn't expect us to have only three points after three games, of course I expected more but the difference between a draw and a win is minimal."

"This group is very difficult but we already knew it would be. There's four teams who are champions of their country and if you compare it with other groups it's clear that other teams have been more fortunate whereas we four teams have been unlucky, but that's the way it is and we'll fight to the end."

The group picture could have looked very different if Barcelona had won at home to debutants Rubin but the Russian champions' stunning 2-1 win at the Camp Nou has left everything in the balance.

Mourinho was asked if it would have been better for Barca to win, allowing them to run away with the group while leaving Inter's rivals for second place with fewer points.

But the former Chelsea boss explained that if reigning champions Barca were to qualify in advance it would make their last game, away to Dynamo, meaningless for them,



making it easier for the Ukrainians to get a result.

"The equality in this group is a positive thing. The Rubin result is good because it leaves everything open," said Mourinho.

"It means that when we get to the last match we won't know who has qualified so when Barca play Dynamo at the end it will be a decisive game for them too."

"Every match is one where every result is possible. We have three draws and of course this one is the worst because the first was against Barcelona and the second was away, but it's difficult for everyone."

The draw means Inter have won only two of 11 Champions League games under Mourinho, continuing the club's dismal trend in Europe's premier competition despite their dominance at home.

But the Portuguese said it was too early to suggest his team has a psychological block when playing in Europe.

"Wait a little while, we're only halfway through, there's three more games and we'll talk after them. I think my team will qualify," he said.

Kyiv twice took the lead through Taras Mikhaliuk and a Lucio own goal but Inter pegged them back through Dejan Stankovic and Walter Samuel.

Even so, with two home games and only one away match left, Dynamo coach Valeri Gazzaev insisted they were in with a good chance of progressing.

"It's a good thing to be playing two more games at home. It's a very difficult group, Inter and Barca are great teams," he said.

"We can do it but there's still everything left to do. Rubin and ourselves have shown ambition but we have young players who still need more experience."

"We played well today but it's difficult to be thrust straight into such a hard group."

Phelps set for British debut in December

Michael Phelps will compete in Britain for the first time in December when the U.S. take on a European Select team made up of athletes from Britain, Germany and Italy at the British Gas "Duel in the Pool" in Manchester.

The 14-time Olympic gold medal winner will be part of the American team for the event, which will be held at the Manchester Aquatics Centre on 18-19 December.

Both teams will include up to 18 men and 18 women, with British Swimming, Germany and Italy each



sending a team of six men and six women for the short-course meet. Full line-ups for both teams will be announced next week.

Rebecca Adlington, a double Olympic champion from Beijing, said: "To be able to watch the cream from Britain, Italy and Germany race the best of the United States, including Michael Phelps in the UK for the first time, is an amazing opportunity."

(Source: Guardian)