

Iranian Wrestlers to Participate in Paris Grand Prix

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Six Iranian free-style wrestlers will take part at the Grand Prix de Paris Seine Ouest this weekend.

The 2nd Grand Prix de Paris Seine Ouest will be held in Paris on January 31 and February 1.

Iran will take part in the tournament with six wrestlers in five

weight categories.

The participants are as follow:
61kg: Iman Sadeghi
65kg: Masoud Esmailpour
70kg: Hassan Yazdani
74kg: Mohammad Maktabdar
86kg: Mohammad Hossein Mohammadian and Alireza Karimi



UAE Claim Asian Cup Third Place

ABUDHABI (Tasnim) - The United Arab Emirates defeated Iraq 3-2 in the Asian Cup third-place playoff in Newcastle, Australia, on Friday.

The UAE's previous best finish was second in 1996, while Iraq was champion in 2007.

UAE's captain Ahmed Khalil netted in the 16th minute. However, the Lions of Mesopotamia struck back with goals from Waleed Salim and Amjad Kalaf giving them a 2-1 advantage at half time.

Ahmed Khalil equalized the

match in the 51st minute, expertly created by Omar Abdulrahman.

Disaster struck for Iraq in the 55th minute when a turnover at the back forced defender Ahmed Ibrahim to pull down Ali Mabkhout inside the box.

Ibrahim was red-carded and Mabkhout converted the penalty, taking his Asian Cup goal tally to five and giving UAE a match-winning lead.

The final match will be held today (Saturday) between host Australia and South Korea.

Queiroz Is Like a Father to Us, Says Ashkan Dejagah



Iran's Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz (R) shakes hands with Iran's forward Ashkan Dejagah (L)

TEHRAN (Persian League) - Iranian international midfielder Ashkan Dejagah believes Carlos Queiroz is the best coach he has worked with and hopes he remains in his post.

"Queiroz is the best coach I've worked with. Every time in each training session I learn something new from him. He has done a lot for Team Melli and I believe the federation has to do everything to keep him as the head coach," De-

jagah said.

Iran failed to advance to the 2015 Asian Cup semi-final under tutelage of the Portuguese coach, being beaten by Iraq 7-6 on penalties.

"We have done our best in the Asian Cup but you can't change referee mistakes, it is part of the game. I hope Queiroz remains as Iran coach and the Iranian football officials must do everything to keep him," Dejagah Added.

UAE to Be Named Host of 2019 AFC Asian Cup

ABUDHABI (Tasnim) – The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will reportedly be named as host for the 2019 Asian Cup.

An official announcement is not due until March but sources close to the UAE FA have told

Sport360° they believe their bid will be successful.

The UAE has several tournament-ready stadiums: Al Ain's 25,000-capacity Hazza bin Zayed, the Mohammed bin Zayed in Abu Dhabi

which holds 42,056, Zayed Sports City which can accommodate 43,000 and the 30,000 Dubai Cricket Stadium.

It's while a two-people delegation from the Asian Foot-

ball Confederation (AFC) will come to Iran on February 2 to examine the country's facilities for hosting 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran has previously hosted the editions in 1968 and 1976.

First Labor Sport Olympiad to be Held in Mazandaran Province

MAZANDARAN (IRNA) – Acting head of Iran's Labor Sports Federation said on Wednesday that the first Labor Sport Olympiad will be held in Northern Province of Mazandaran on February 26-28.

Ahmad Hossein-zadegan said that 1,655 men and 335 women athletes will compete in the sport Olympiad in 23 fields.

He said that torch of the first labor Olympiad will be moved on February 5 from Shalamche, an area in southwestern province of Khuzestan which had many martyrs during 8-year Iraqi-imposed war 1980-1988.

The torch will pass provinces of Khuzestan, Lorestan, Markazi and Qom into Tehran and then through Semnan

province will go to Khorasan Razavi and from there by passing northern Khorasan and Golestan provinces will enter to Mazandaran.

The inaugural and wind-up ceremony will be held in Sari, capital of Mazandaran province, and the events will be held in 23 different towns and cities of the province.



Iran's Labor Sports Federation logo

Djokovic Fights Off Wawrinka to Reach Open Final

MELBOURNE (Dispatches) - World number one Novak Djokovic fought off defending champion Stan Wawrinka over five sets to reach his fifth Australian Open final on Jan. 30, where he will meet Andy Murray.

The Serb top seed won 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-0 in 3hr 30mins and will face the British sixth seed for a third time in Sunday's Grand Slam decider.

The clash was Djokovic's toughest match of the tournament and his serve was broken five times in a titanic duel with the Swiss world number four.

It was their fourth straight Grand Slam encounter to go to five sets with Djokovic winning three of them. He lost to Wawrinka in the quarter-finals at last year's Australian Open.

The top seed won through to his fifth Australian Open final after winning his previous four deciders in Melbourne. He beat Murray in the 2011 and 2013 finals.

But Murray also has form against Djokovic, beating him in the 2012 US Open and 2013 Wimbledon finals.

It was not a convincing performance from Djokovic, who made 49 unforced errors to 27 winners

"Stan stepped it up and credit to him for taking the match to the fifth set.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after victory against Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka during their men's singles semi-final match on day twelve of the 2015 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne

and won just 70 percent of his first serves, but crucially he broke Wawrinka's strong serve seven times.

"My game is dependent on how well I move. I think I was too defensive, especially in the second set and in the fourth set as well," Djokovic said.

"I managed to stay consistent and tough in the right moments in the fifth set, served well when I needed to and I'm just so glad to go through."

Djokovic had lost only one of his 74 service games prior to the semi-final, but Wawrinka broke him in the seventh game of the

match with a series of withering backhands.

But the Serb hit straight back with outstanding side-to-side movement to level up with the set going to a tiebreaker.

Djokovic was too strong in the tiebreak with Wawrinka too loose with his shots to drop the opening set.

The Swiss fought off break points in his opening serving game of the second set, but Djokovic double-faulted on break point in the sixth to lose the set.

Both players traded service breaks in the third set, but the world number one seized control after Wawrinka could not close out a 40-15 lead and he reeled off the next four points to take the lead in the match.

But again Wawrinka hit back with two breaks in the fourth set to take it into a fifth, just like their three previous Grand Slam encounters.

Two double-faults and an over-hit backhand cost Wawrinka an early service break in the final set and another errant backhand lost him a second service to hand the Serb a winning 4-0 break.

Former Portuguese footballer Luis Figo

LISBON (China Daily) - Football great Luis Figo is the latest to announce his bid to become the president of FIFA, the international football governing body.

The former Portuguese international said Wednesday that he feels a responsibility to enter the race to become the FIFA president as the international body is plagued by rumors of corruption and scandal.

Figo told CNN in an interview that he does not like the current image of FIFA, and that the beautiful game deserves much better than this.

"If you search FIFA on the internet you see the first word that comes out: scandal -- not positive words. It's that we have to change first and try to improve the image of FIFA," he said.

Figo, now 42, is one of the best wingers football has ever seen. He played glorious years for Spanish giants FC Barcelona before moving to Santiago Bernabéu to play for Barca's archrivals Real Madrid. Figo also shined in Italy, where he spent successful years

with FC Internazionale.

Declaring candidacy for FIFA presidency needs endorsement from five member associations of the body. Until now, four people have announced their bid to assume the post, including former French winger David Ginola, Asian Football Confederation Vice President Prince Ali bin Al Hussein, ex-FIFA executive Jerome Champagne and the president of Dutch football association, Michael van Praag. Thursday is the deadline for submitting the bids.

Figo said the main reason behind his move for presidency was the fact that FIFA refused to publish details of investigations into the faulty bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

The incumbent FIFA president, Sep Blatter, has announced that he will go for a fifth term in office in the May 29 election. The 78-year-old Swiss is accused of having a major role in FIFA corruption cases, especially the controversial decision to award Qatar hosting of the 2018 World Cup.

Arabs Want Australia Out of Asian Football

KUALA LUMPUR (Press TV) - Arab countries in the Persian Gulf have urged the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) to dismiss Australia whose presence in the body since 2006 has not gone in their favor.

AFC chief Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa said Thursday that not only Arabs, but other football confederations in West Asia are no longer happy with Australia's presence in the AFC.

Salman said in an interview with Dubai-based newspaper al-Ittihad that there are clear indications that a desire exists among the football associations in West Asia to see Australia evicted from the AFC.

"I also know that the Arabs are not the only ones who are not convinced that Australia's membership in Asia's football is feasible," said Salman.

Until 2006, Australia was forced to go through breath-taking play-off rounds to book a place in the World Cup. However, since joining the AFC in January that year, it has faced a much easier job in the qualifications. Australia has made it to the world Cup both in 2010 and 2014 while it has also performed well in the Asian Cups.

However, the success seems to have been obtained at the expense of the Arab nations of the Persian Gulf who have had no representatives in two previous World Cup tournaments.