

Iranian Taekwondo Player Wins Gold Medal in Asian Games



Mehdi Khoda-Bakhshi

INCHEON (ISNA) - Iranian taekwondo player Mehdi Khoda-Bakhshi competing in (-80kg-category) crashed his Uzbek rival, winning a gold medal in Asian Games.

Iran has so far won 15 gold medals in 2014 Asian Games underway in Incheon, South Korea.

He also defeated his rivals from Nepal and Japan (16-0) and (5-1) and crashed another rival from Tajikistan.

Masoud Hoji-Zawareh and Sousan Haji respectively won gold and bronze medals in the

first day of taekwondo competitions in Incheon.

The 2014 Asian Games began in South Korea's northwestern city of Incheon on September 19, and will wrap up on October 4.

Some 9,500 athletes from 45 countries are competing at the Games. The sports event is the world's second-biggest multi-sport event after the summer Olympics, with 439 gold medals in 36 sports up for grabs.

Iran has participated in the tournament with 276 athletes in 22 sports.

Iran Basketball Team Advances to Final Asian Games 2014



Iran basketball team advances to final Asian Games 2014.

INCHEON (IRNA) - Iran edged past Kazakhstan 80-78 on Wednesday in semi-finals of basketball competitions of the 17th Asian Games underway in Incheon South Korea to reach the final.

The Iranian team managed to

win the game, while they were 8 points behind their rival, with just four minutes remaining to the end of the game.

In the final game on Friday, Iran will face the host, South Korea that defeated Japan 71-63 in the semi-finals.

Muslim Player Penalized for Praying

WASHINGTON (IQNA) - An American Muslim footballer has been penalized for prostrating after scoring a six-point touchdown in Kansas City Chiefs win over the New England Patriots, sparking condemnations over the unjustified penalty.

"If I get a pick, I'm going to prostrate before God in the end zone," Husain Abdullah, a devout Muslim player, told The Kansas City Star on Tuesday, September 30.

During Monday's game, the National Football League (NFL) player Abdullah received a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty after punctuating his 39-yard interception return for a touchdown.

"It's a basic crossing route that we've probably walked through since training camp," Abdullah said.

"It was one of those things where he never saw me. He was looking at his receiver and I stole it."

The refs flagged the 29-year-old veteran for dropping to his knees after the play to prostrate to Allah, technically a violation of the league's celebration rules.

Rule 12, Section 3, Article 1 (d) of the NFL rulebook states that "players are prohibited from engaging in any celebrations or demonstrations while on the ground."

However, NFL experts confirmed that going to one's knees to give praise is



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exempt from that enforcement. "You're not penalized for going to the ground to give praise after a TD," former NFL referee Mike Pereira pointed out last season.

Over the past years, there have been some exceptions made for religious expressions, such as Tim Tebow's prayer while kneeling.

For Tebow, falling into his knees to perform his Christian prayer has

not been penalized, but became a highly embraced phenomenon during the 2011 season.

Anger

Though Abdullah seemed to accept the decision, the penalty sparked a quick outrage on Twitter where it was noted that plenty of Christian players mark their scores with prayers.

"Brandon Marshall gets on knees & raises hands to Jesus after TD..

No penalty..Husain Abdullah bows to Mecca..15 yards!," Arsalan Iftikhar™ wrote on Twitter.

"Husain Abdullah was very gracious about the penalty. Says he was praying but thought he was flagged for sliding into it. "I got too excited", Danny Parkins tweeted.

"Abdullah said the ref didn't say anything to him and he didn't ask for an explanation because he was pretty sure it was for the slide," he added.

Feeling that the penalty has been justified, rumors about further penalties sparked Abdullah's agent anger.

"If the NFL tries to fine for his TD celebration there's going to be some problems," the agent, CJ LaBoy, said on Twitter late Monday night.

Offering a role-model to young Muslims, Abdullah and his brother, Hamza, who spent 2005-11 with the Arizona Cardinals, made a 30-city-in-30-day, cross-country road trip in a minivan during the 30 days of Ramadan in July and August.

They spoke and prayed at mosques and performed community service from coast-to-coast and in Canada, even while fasting during Ramadan.

After the trip, Abdullah decided not to return to the Minnesota Vikings, taking his wife, parents and two older brothers on a month-long spiritual journey to Saudi Arabia at the prime time of his career.

Karimi Observes Esteghlal Training



Ali Karimi, showed up to observe The Blues' training session

TEHRAN (Persian League) - Newly appointed Team Melli assistant coach, Ali Karimi, showed up to observe The Blues' training session on Tuesday.

Ali Karimi (along with Markar Aghajanian) observed Es-

teghlal's practice in order to keep a close eye on this team's players.

Although he is new to the job, Karimi has been very active, and has already observed Naft and Persepolis training sessions.

Sami Khedira Could Make Move to Arsenal or Chelsea for Free

MADRID (FNA) - Sami Khedira could make a stunning move to the Premier League for free at the end of the season.

The Real Madrid star, 27, has nine months left on his contract and is yet to decide where his future lies.

Arsenal and Chelsea both considered moves for the Germany World Cup winner over the summer.

However, Khedira's huge wage demands forced the Prem giants to end their interest.

Khedira is currently sidelined with

a hamstring injury and was in Madrid last week for the official team photo.

Bernabeu chiefs last held talks with Khedira's agent came during this World Cup. The midfielder turned down a new contract in the hope of a big pay-day but no offers came.

Khedira has still given no indication whether he is staying or leaving when his contract expires in June.

Reports in Spain claim the Real Madrid boards are convinced that he has not yet signed anything with Arsenal or any other club, and that he would not

do so without telling them first.

But Arsenal are short of a quality holding midfielder and Arsene Wenger knows he could fit the bill, and Jose Mourinho is also a big fan.

Khedira will be fit and ready to return to Real action after the next international break.

He's understood to have impressed the club with his professionalism and boss Carlo Ancelotti will have no qualms in throwing him back into action despite his uncertain future.



Sami Khedira

India Face Pakistan in Asiad Hockey Final After 32 years

INCHEON (DAWN) - Arch-rivals India and Pakistan face off in a mouth-watering field hockey final at the Asian Games on Thursday with a place in the 2016 Olympics at stake.

Millions of fans in both nations will be glued to their television screens for the title clash which earns the winner a ticket to Rio de Janeiro and the loser left facing a hazardous qualification route.

India and Pakistan last met in an Asiad final way back at New Delhi in 1982 where the Indians suffered a stunning 1-7 rout in front of their hown fans that included then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

In Beijing in 1990 when Paki-

stan claimed the gold and India the silver, there was no final since the winner was decided after a round-robin league.

Eight-time Olympic champions India have won the Asiad title just twice, both in the Thai capital of Bangkok in 1966 and 1998.

In contrast, defending champions Pakistan are the most successful team in the continental games with eight golds, highlighted by four successive wins over India in a final from 1970 to 1982.

Pakistan, coached by former international Shahnaz Sheikh, start as favourites following their 2-1 win over India in the preliminary league.

But Sheikh was worried by the failure of his strikers to score against Malaysia in Tuesday's semi-final which ended in a 0-0 draw before Pakistan edged ahead 6-5 in the tie-breaker.

"We played better than them but just could not score," said Sheikh, a former striker himself. "We don't want to make the same mistake again.

"Fans love an India-Pakistan game. I am sure the final will be exciting."

India upset hosts South Korea 1-0 in the semi-final through Akashdeep Singh's 44th minute winner, but face a tougher test against Pakistan's goalkeeper Imran Butt, the

star of the shoot-out win against Malaysia.

The Indians, coached by Australian Terry Walsh, will also bank on reliable goalie P. R. Sreejesh to block the Pakistani forwards as star midfielder and Captain Sardar Singh attempts to control the game upfront.

"The final is a very important game for our young side," said Walsh.

"There was a lot of energy shown against the Koreans but we must seize the chances that come our way."

South Korea and Malaysia will contest the bronze medal play-off ahead of the final.

(Asiad) Medal Standings

INCHEON (Yonhap) -- The medal standings for the top 10 countries at the Asian Games as of Monday:

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	131	90	73	294
2	South Korea	62	61	66	189
3	Japan	39	63	53	161
4	Kazakhstan	20	17	29	66
5	Iran	15	11	14	40
6	North Korea	10	10	12	32
7	Thailand	9	6	23	38
8	Qatar	9	0	4	13
9	Uzbekistan	8	11	14	33
10	Chinese Taipei	8	9	14	31

