

Iran's Tavasoli Nominee for Best Women Goalkeeper of World



Farzaneh Tavasoli

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — Iran's goalkeeper Farzaneh Tavasoli has been nominated for Best Women Goalkeeper of the World. According to Futsal Planet, Tavasoli

will vie with nine other girls to win the one of the most traditional prizes of futsal.

She helped Iran win AFC Women's Futsal Championship in September.

"I am happy and I think it's a great honor for Iran's Futsal. I think the Portuguese goalie (Ana Catarina Silva Pereira) could win the award," Tavasolis told the Tasnim News

Agency.

Nominees are as follow: (in strict alphabetical order!) Ana Catarina Silva Pereira (POR) Lazio Femminile (ITA) SL Benfica (POR) - Portugal N.T. Belén De Uña Marzo Atlético de Madrid Navalcarnero (ESP) - AD Alcorcón FSF (ESP) - SPAIN N.T. Gabriella Gonçalves "Gabi" Tardelli Ternana Futsal Femminile (ITA) - ITALY N.T. Patrícia Moraes Faria "Giga" Female/Chapecó (BRA) - BRAZIL N.T. Anastasia Ivanova FK Aurora Sankt-Peterburg (RUS) - RUSSIA N.T. Joziane de Oliveira "Jozi" CD Burela FS Femenino (ESP) - BRAZIL N.T. Missiara Luiza Papst Unifor/Nacional Gás (BRA) - BRAZIL N.T. Karen Julieth Murillo Rey Liga de Fútbol de Bogotá (Col) - COLOMBIA N.T. Farzaneh Tavasoli Sis Tehran Azad University (IRN) - IRAN N.T. Vanessa Barberá Martínez Ourense Envialia FSF (ESP) - SPAIN N.T.

Tiger, Wolf and Cat Shortlisted to Be Russia 2018 Mascot

MOSCOW (FIFA) - The campaign to select the Official Mascot for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ has taken another step forward, with three shortlisted designs now being prepared for the public vote that will take place across Russia in autumn 2016.

A tiger, wolf and cat have emerged as the finalists, with each character brought to life thanks to the efforts of three Russian student designers. Each of the designers, all from Russian art universities, today attended an award ceremony in Moscow to celebrate the selection of their characters to advance to the third and final stage of the campaign.

Russia 2018 Local Organizing Committee (LOC) CEO Alexey Sorokin was present at the ceremony to reward the shortlisted students and mark the end of the second stage of the mascot-development campaign. Sorokin revealed how inspired he was by their creativity and desire to be part of the World Cup in Russia.

"It's a great pleasure to see these young and happy faces," Sorokin declared while handing out certificates to the three

designers. "When we thought up this competition, we were confident that a positive young audience would rise to the challenge. You've created some fascinating designs, one of which will become one of the main brand assets of the tournament and a hero for millions of World Cup supporters."

The three young women arrived at the award ceremony in Moscow from across the country. Ekaterina Bocharova had the longest journey to the capital, coming from the Department of Graphic Design at Tomsk State University in Siberia. Ekaterina opted to draw a wolf, inspired by Russian cartoons and her dog, named Tyson.

"I've always liked drawing animals and all kinds of cartoon characters," says Ekaterina, explaining her choice to sign up to the competition. "Plus I also love watching football. I decided that I simply couldn't miss out on the chance to do what I love."

Valeria Taburenko, from the Saint Petersburg State University of Technology and Design, chose to depict a tiger. Valeria loves animated cartoons and has watched all the best films from well-known

international and Russian studios.

"They regularly post ads at our university about competitions that students can get involved in," Valeria reveals. "Of course, such an interesting project like creating the Russia 2018 mascot was no exception. I immediately wanted to take part, even just for the sake of experience."

"It's always interesting how the final project will turn out and how I will approach the task. The news that the panel had picked out my design was the perfect reward for getting actively involved."

Sofia Podlesnykh, meanwhile, was representing Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University at the award ceremony with her design of a cat. Once she found out that the LOC and FIFA were opening up the competition to university students, Sofia immediately sent in her application.

"I didn't have to think twice about whether to work on this project," said the student from Veliky Novgorod. "When designing my cat, I was guided by the World Cup's signature style and the general official style of the tournament."

Immediately before the ceremony,

held in the Russian Ministry of Sport, the students attended a special seminar on designing the mascot. FIFA and LOC design experts also attended the seminar, along with representatives from the design agency tasked with finalizing the three characters and ensuring they are aligned with all requirements. Now fans across the country need to patiently wait for these adjustments to be completed. The characters designs will be unveiled to the public and put to a nationwide vote in autumn 2016 to choose the Official Mascot for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia.

The three designs were selected by a specially appointed jury panel, which included Russia goalkeeper and Russia 2018 Ambassador Igor Akinfeev, director Fedor Bondarchuk, actor Viktoriya Tolstoganova, television presenter Oxana Federova, music producer Victor Drobys, singer Polina Gagarina, members of the theatrical group 'Kvartet I' Leonid Barats and Rostislav Khait, designer Igor Gurovich and Chairman of the Board of Directors at the company 'State Sports Lottery' Armen Sarkisyan.

to his Dunk title defense.

"I'm excited for tomorrow," LaVine said. "I'm going to try to put on a show."

Wiggins, who was named MVP after leading the World to the Rising Stars win in New York last year, said he didn't mind that LaVine earned MVP honors this time around.

He was just happy to put on a show in Toronto.

"It felt great," Wiggins said. "I got to play in front of a lot of people I haven't seen in a long time. My family and friends got to watch it. It's great being back home and playing for my hometown."

Experience to Make 2022 Olympic Winter Games in China "A Great Success"

LILLEHAMMER (Xinhua) -- International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach said on Friday that China's experience in organizing the 2008 Olympic Games will make its 2022 Olympic Winter Games "a great success."

"China has great experience in organizing Olympic Games. With the brilliant 2008 Games in Beijing, I think this experience will help China a lot and we'll see a great success," Bach told reporters ahead of the opening ceremony of the second Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

The IOC chief said many million people in China are participating in winter sports and more people will join in the years leading up to the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, which will be co-hosted by Beijing and Zhangjiakou.

"Of course the winter games will inspire many Chinese to practice winter sports. Right now, just after the election, there are already more interests by the Chinese public in the winter sports," Bach said.

China has launched an ambitious program to encourage 300 million people in the country to participate in winter sports while preparing for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Bach said the IOC and China have been in the first stage of cooperation as the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympics Winter Games (Beijing 2022) was launched in December.

"I will announce in the next couple of weeks the composition of our coordination commission and then the work will start," he said, adding that both sides are making efforts to make the 2022 Winter Games embrace the reformative Olympic Agenda 2020.

Bach also said the recent heavy snow on China's existing ski slopes was a good signal that the snow was coming at the right time.

"I was very happy to see...the photos of the huge ski slopes covered with a lot of snow, with 40 centimeters of snow already in November, and this might have made some people in other continents a little bit jealous," he said.

Bach is in Lillehammer for the second Winter Youth Winter Olympics, in which 1100 young athletes from the age of 14 to 18 from about 70 Olympic Committees will compete in 70 medal events from Feb. 12 to 21.

Pakistan Beat India 1-0 to Clinch Gold in South Asian Games Hockey



Pakistan's Awais-Ur-Rehman scores the winner against India in the men's hockey final.

GUWAHATI (DAWN) - Pakistan beat India 1-0 to win gold in the hockey event of the 12th South Asian Games in Guwahati.

Awais-ur-Rehman scored the decisive goal at the end of first-half as Pakistan successfully completed hat-trick of SAG hockey titles.

The match, played out in front of a near-capacity crowd at the Moullanna Tayebullah Stadium, saw both teams starting cautiously before the Greenshirts upped the ante and broke through the Indian defense.

Rehman's strike in the added time of the first half pushed Mohammad Irfan's side to attack even more but found a strong wall in Indian goalkeeper Vikas Dahiya.

It was the fourth time the two arch-rivals were clashing in the final of men's hockey at the regional extravaganza.

Pakistan beat India in both the 2004 and 2010 finals in Colombo and Dhaka, respectively, while India won the gold in 1995 in Madras.

Yesterday, Pakistan's men and women shooting teams won silver medals in 50m rifle prone events as the country's track and field stars brought home five bronze.

The men's shooting team of Umar Siddique, Midrar Ali and Mohammad Amir shot a combined total of 1838.2 to finish second behind India (1871.5) at the Kahilipara Shooting Range.

Umar claimed bronze in the individual event when he shot 182.2 to finish behind Indians Chain Singh (204.6) and Gagan Narang (203.7).

The women's team, meanwhile, managed a total of 1805.4 to secure silver behind the Indian team which shot a combined score of 1835.6.

The India dominance spilled onto the India Gandhi Athletics Stadium with Pakistan's bronze medals in the men's 400m hurdles, shot put and triple jump coming behind 1-2 finishes for their arch-rivals.

Mahboob Ali claimed bronze in the 400m hurdles while a throw of 16.28 meters got third place for Mohammad Waseem in the shot put.

Mohammad Afzal leapt 15.76 meters to win the triple jump bronze.

Pakistan's Liaquat Ali clocked 21.53 seconds to finish third in the men's 200m, his time 0.53 seconds shy of Sri Lankan winner Suranjana De Silva, while the country's men's 4x400m team also ending third behind India and Sri Lanka.

LaVine Shines as US Beat World in NBA Rising Stars Challenge

MONTREAL (AFP) - Minnesota forward Zach LaVine scored 30 points and pulled down seven rebounds to lead the United States to a 157-154 victory over the world team in the NBA's Rising Stars Challenge in Toronto.

LaVine was named Most Valuable Player of the contest featuring many of the NBA's top rookies and second-year players, which launched the festivities of All-Star weekend.

Sunday's All-Star Game will cap the action at Air Canada Centre, but before then LaVine will defend the title he won last year in Saturday's Slam Dunk contest.

He limbered up for that event -- in which he'll hope to join Michael Jordan (1987-88), Jason Richardson (2002-03) and Nate Robinson (2009-10) as the only back-to-back winners -- by leading the squad of US-born rising stars against a World team featuring his Timberwolves teammate Andrew Wiggins of Canada, the Knicks' Latvian rookie Kristaps Porzingis, and the Denver Nuggets' Congolese guard Emmanuel Mudiay.

Both Porzingis and Mudiay scored 30 points in the game played in 20-minute halves.

Wiggins, last season's Rookie of

the Year, added 29 points for the World -- to the delight of the Canadian crowd.

It was the second straight year that the contest featured a USA v World format, rather than the old first-year v second-year showdown.

The talent and athleticism of the league's young players was on full display with a bevy of dunks, but there was little in the way of defense to be seen.

LaVine admitted that he wanted to take it to Timberwolves teammate Wiggins in front of the Canadian's home fans.

But he was already looking ahead