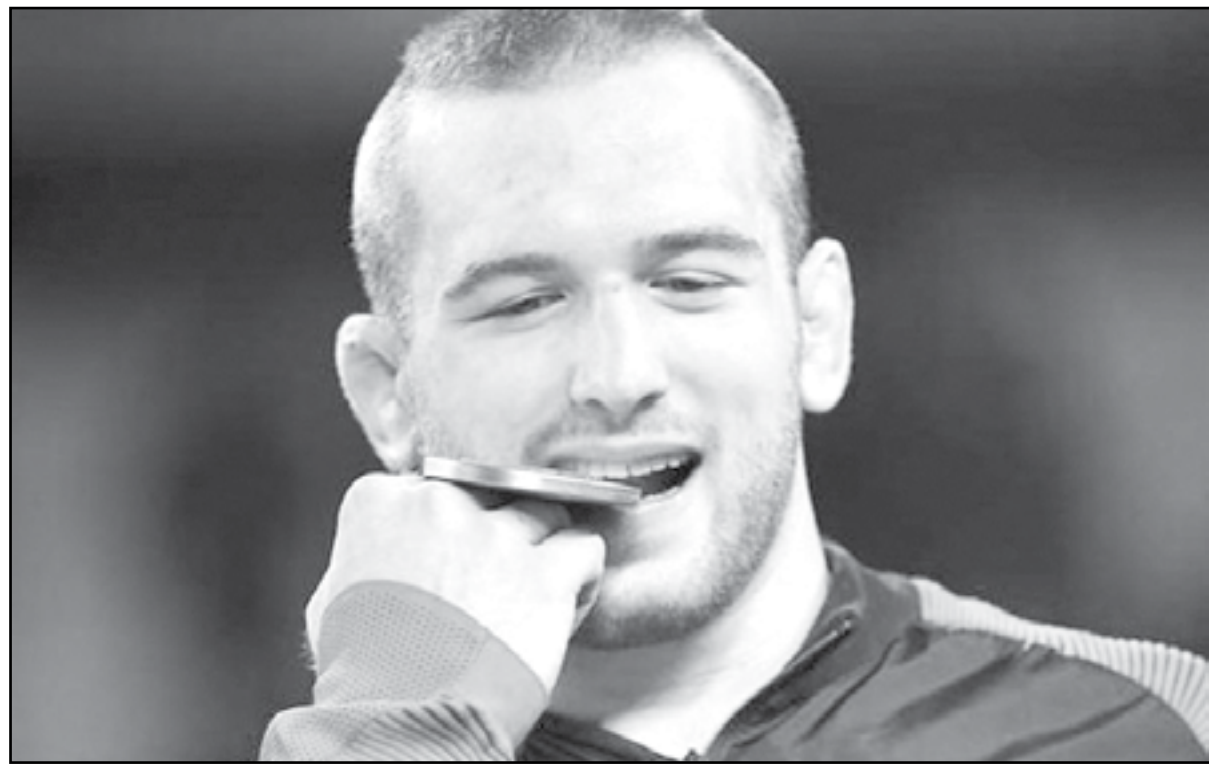


Kyle Snyder: Iran Competition Better Than Rio Olympics



Kyle Snyder

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Olympic gold medalist Kyle Snyder says that the 2017 Freestyle World Cup has been the best tournament he has ever participated in.

USA Wrestling Team finished in second place after suffering a 5-3 defeat to Iran in Kermanshah on Friday.

Snyder beat Amir Mohammadi 6-0 at 96kg category.

Snyder said his mother had been a bit worried when he told her he would travel to Iran. But he said the team was welcomed with nothing but friendliness.

"They (Iranians) gave us roses at the airport, brought our bags, everyone wanted to take selfies with us," Snyder told nytimes.com.

"This was the best tournament I have ever participated in, even better than the Olympics in Rio."

Iran Earn 2nd Straight Win in Rollball World Cup



Iran men's national rollball team

TEHRAN (Press TV) - The Iranian men's national rollball team has triumphed over Tanzania for the second straight win at the preliminary round of the fourth edition of Rollball World Cup in Bangladesh.

On Sunday morning, the Iranian athletes pulled off a dominant 7-2 victory over the East African squad in a Group B match held at Court 3 of Mirpur Indoor Stadium in the Bangladeshi capital city of Dhaka.

It came a day after the Iranian outfit outplayed Egypt 11-0 in its opening match at the same venue.

The Iranian men's national rollball team is scheduled to face Uganda on Sunday evening, before its clash with Argentina in the last group stage fixture the next day.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been drawn in Group B along with Argentina, Egypt, Tanzania and Uganda.

England, India, Ivory Coast, Oman and Sierra Leon are pitted against each other in Group A.

Guinea, Indonesia, Latvia, Pakistan and Rwanda are in Group C. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Hong Kong and Myanmar form Group

D. While Benin, China, France, Nepal and Thailand shape Group E, Group F consists of Denmark, Kenya, the Philippines, Senegal and Sri Lanka.

Belarus, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Uruguay are in Group G. Chinese Taipei, the Netherlands, Vietnam and Zambia form Group H.

Meanwhile, the Iranian women's national rollball team earned a three-all draw against Pakistan in its second fixture on Saturday. The Iranian women had crushed Tanzania 17-0 in their first match.

The fourth edition of RollBall World Cup kicked off in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on February 17, and will wrap up on February 23, 2017.

Rollball is played on skates and between two teams of 12 players. Only six players out of the 12 are allowed to play on court at a time. A player can hold the ball in one hand or both hands, but must dribble the ball while carrying it.

The game was created by Indian sports teacher Raju Dabhade in Pune, India. Dabhade is now the secretary of the International Rollball Federation.

Esteghlal on Fine Run of Form: AFC

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian Esteghlal football team is on a fine form at the moment, having won five Iran Professional League matches in a row, the-afc.com wrote.

The blues have been scheduled to face Al Ahli of the UAE in AFC Champions League Group A on Monday.

Esteghlal claimed victory on their last visit to the UAE when it defeated Al Jazira 1-0 in the 2014 Group Stage.

Al Ahli are set to make their first appearance in the AFC Champions League since suffering a 1-0



aggregate defeat to Guangzhou Evergrande in the 2015 final.

The Emirati team will host two-time Asian champion Esteghlal at Rashid Stadium in Dubai.

The UAE Pro League champions have won their past three games domestically but remains nine points adrift of table-topper Al Jazira.

Elsewhere, debutant Esteghlal Khuzestan of Iran will face off against Saudi Arabia's Al Fateh at Qaboos Sports Complex as Group B of the AFC Champions League on Monday.

Report: Thunder, Clippers Interested in Wilson Chandler



Wilson Chandler

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The countdown is on to the Feb. 23 trade deadline, and Wilson Chandler of the Denver Nuggets has a giant bulls-eye on his back as several teams target him following his reported desire to leave the Mile High City.

The Oklahoma City Thunder and Los Angeles Clippers are both in need of an upgrade at the wing positions, and both teams are interested in acquiring Chandler, reports The Vertical's Adrian Wojnarowski.

The 29-year-old has come off the bench under Nuggets head coach Michael Malone for 19 of his 50 appearances this season, averaging 15.6 points on 45.4 percent shooting, 6.7 rebounds, 2.1 assists, and 0.9 steals in 30.9 minutes.

Most of his playing time has come at small forward (76 percent this

season), although Chandler is more than capable of suiting up at the four, and even defending some shooting guards from time to time as well. That versatility will make many potential buyers swoon, as long as they can afford him.

The Clippers, for example, don't have many assets to send out, as Wojnarowski acknowledges. They do have several expiring contracts, but none are big enough to match up with Chandler's deal - he's locked in for one more season at \$12 million before he has a chance to opt out in 2018-19 with his player option.

Denver guard Emmanuel Mudiay and Italian sharpshooter Danilo Gallinari have also popped up in trade rumors as Nuggets players who could be shipped out ahead of Thursday's deadline.

Nishikori Battles Into Buenos Aires Final



Japanese top seed Kei Nishikori reached his second final of 2017 with a gruelling 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over Argentina's Carlos Berlocq

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) - Japanese top seed Kei Nishikori reached his second final of 2017 with a gruelling 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over Argentina's Carlos Berlocq at the Buenos Aires clay court tournament.

World number five Nishikori needed two hours 45 minutes to see off wild card Berlocq, the 34-year-old world number 77 to set-up a Sunday title showdown against Ukraine's Aleksandr Dolgoplov who beat Spanish fourth seed Pablo Carreno-Busta 7-5, 6-2.

Nishikori made the final on hard court in Brisbane in January but was beaten by Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov in three sets.

The 27-year-old will be chasing his 12th career title on Sunday and third on clay after triumphs in Barcelona in 2014 and 2015.

Dolgoplov, 28, has not dropped a set all week to reach his seventh ATP final.

He will be contesting his first title match in three years, since falling to Rafael Nadal in Rio de Janeiro in 2014.

"I feel very good," said world number 66 Dolgoplov. "It's really nice to be in a final again because because I had a couple of tough years."

Nishikori will square off against Dolgoplov for the sixth time, having won all 10 sets played.

Gareth Bale Scores as Real Madrid Comfortably See Off Mid-Table Espanyol

MADRID (Independent) - Gareth Bale has marked his return to action after a long injury layoff by sealing a 2-0 victory for Real Madrid over Espanyol to provisionally stretch Zinedine Zidane's side's lead at the top of La Liga to four points.

Alvaro Morata headed home a floated cross from Isco to put Real ahead after 33 minutes against a stubborn Espanyol side and Bale steered another pass from the Spain midfielder in off the post in

the 83rd minute shortly after coming off the bench.

Bale, making his first appearance since damaging ankle ligaments against Sporting Lisbon in November, netted his eighth goal of the season. Real also set a club record of scoring in 42 consecutive games in all competitions.

They top the standings on 52 points, four clear of Barcelona who host Leganes on Sunday while Sevilla, in third on 46, entertain Eibar later on

Saturday. Real have two games in hand on both their title rivals.

Earlier on Saturday, Kevin Gameiro came off the bench to score a hat-trick in the space of five minutes to fire Atletico Madrid to a 4-1 win over struggling Sporting Gijon that kept them fourth in the standings on 45 points.

Yannick Carrasco had given Atletico the lead 12 seconds into the second half but Sergio Alvarez gave the impressive

home side a deserved equaliser in the 49th minute.

Sporting continued to cause Diego Simeone's side problems after drawing level and Alvarez missed a gilt-edged chance to put them ahead when he sent a half-volley over the bar from close range.

For the second week in a row, however, Atletico dug deep to rescue the points from an unconvincing display.