

Iran Secure Spot in 2018 Youth Olympic Games



TEHRAN (Press TV) - Iran men's national under-20 futsal team has thrashed Thailand in a quarterfinal showdown of the 2017 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-20 Futsal Championship, and secured its spot in the Buenos Aires 2018 Summer Youth Olympic Games.

On Wednesday, young Iranian futsal players overcame rivals from the host nation 7-5 at the end of a match played at the Bangkok Arena in the Thai

capital city of Bangkok.

Winger Panat Kittipanuwig scored the first goal by hitting the target in the first minute to give Thailand an early lead. Iran's Captain Touhid Lotfi drew level a minute later though.

Kittipanuwig then put the hosts ahead in the 10th minute, before Iranian midfielder Mohammad Taheri scored an equalizer shortly afterwards.

Midfielder Mohammad Jame

grabbed Iran's third in the 39th minute before Worrapluch Jiw-jaratrang before the second period ended in a three-all draw.

The Iranian sportsmen kept their composure as they returned to action. They maintained the lead, and Lotfi netted his second goal in the 43rd minute.

Muhammad Osamanmusa, however, put the ball into back of the net in the 45th minute to get Thailand's fourth goal of the match.

Hamidreza Karimi's shot hit the back of the net a minute later, before Iran's captain scored a hat trick.

Kittipanuwig scored Thailand's final goal in the 48th minute, before Iran's striker Hamzeh Kadhoda netted the winner in the 50th minute.

Iran men's national under-20 futsal team will play Iraq in the final match of the 2017 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship on Friday.

The tournament kicked off in Thailand on May 16, and will wrap up on May 26.

A total of 21 teams are participating in the continental sports event. The 21 teams have been divided into four groups (one with six teams and three with five teams), with the group winners and runners-up advancing to the quarter-finals.

The 2017 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship serves as qualifying for the futsal tournament at the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the winner and the runner-up qualifying for the boys' tournament, where they will be represented by their U-18 representative teams.

Man United Beat Ajax 2-0, Win Europa League



LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester United's Paul Pogba and Henrikh Mkhitaryan scored a goal in each half as their team comfortably have outclassed Ajax Amsterdam to win an emotional Europa League final 2-0 and qualify for the group stages of the Champions League.

A minute's silence held for the victims of Monday's suicide bombing at a pop concert in Manchester in which 22 people died turned into applause as chants of "Manchester" and "We'll Never Die" bellowed out from the English supporters before the match.

World record signing Pogba opened the scoring in the 18th minute as United won the ball after an Ajax throw-in, the Frenchman's shot taking a wicked deflection to wrong-foot goalkeeper Andre Onana and fly into the net.

Mkhitaryan then flicked the ball home early in the second half following a corner and, with chants of "Manchester, Manchester" echoing around the stadium, United held on to win the one European trophy missing from the Old Trafford cabinet.

"We know things like this are very sad all over the world," said Pogba referring to the attack. "We had to focus. Manchester - we won for them. We played for England, we played for Manchester and we played for them -- the people who died."

"The goal was to win all the way through this season. We've done it, and we're proud," said Pogba. "People say we've had a bad season but the prize is great and we've done it now. We have three trophies so enjoy it now," he added.

United's triumph followed success in the League Cup and the Community Shield in Jose Mourinho's first season in charge at Old Trafford with Champions League football secured af-

ter United could only manage a sixth-place finish in the Premier League.

United, wearing all blue as they did in winning the 1968 European Cup final, made an imposing start, with Pogba whistling a shot wide of the near post within the first minute.

The France midfielder was all over the pitch, appearing as a third centre back one moment to head the ball away from danger, channeling pinpoint passes to striker Marcus Rashford the next.

Pogba, who first came to United at the age of 16 before leaving for Juventus, put his side ahead with a hopeful low shot from the edge of the area that was sent looping past Onana in the Ajax goal thanks to a huge deflection from Davinson Sanchez.

Mourinho's coaching staff flew out of the dugout in celebration but the Portuguese stayed calm.

Ajax, fielding the youngest starting lineup in a European final, were expected to make a quick start as they did in their 4-1 win over Olympique Lyonnais in their semi-final first leg.

Instead the Dutch side were fenced in by United, nullified by Marouane Fellaini and man of the match Ander Herrera in the middle and stretched by Rashford's darting runs.

They rarely threatened during the first half and were given no time to settle in the second as Mkhitaryan reacted fastest to Chris Smalling's knockdown from a corner, the Armenian leaping to knock the ball into the roof of the net after 48 minutes.

Ajax hogged the ball for the rest of the match but rarely looked like getting past United, who saw the game out to preserve Mourinho's 100 percent record in European finals and deliver the continental trophy missing from their collection.

Djokovic, Nadal Could Meet in French Open Semifinals

PARIS (Dispatches) - Rafael Nadal could face Novak Djokovic in the semifinals of the French Open in his quest for a 10th title at Roland Garros.

The fourth-seeded Nadal, the only player with nine trophies from one Grand Slam tournament, will open against Benoit Paire.

Nadal has been the dominant player of the clay-court season and has won 17 straight matches on his favourite surface, while Djokovic has been struggling with form and confidence recently. Djokovic completed a career Grand Slam at the French Open last year by beating Andy Murray in the final.

The top-ranked Murray will open against Andrey Kuznetsov.

Conte Can Achieve the Double With Chelsea

LONDON (Dispatches) - Antonio Conte acknowledges it's been a great first season with Chelsea, the new English Premier League champion.

It could have a sweeter ending on Saturday if they can take the FA Cup, too.

The ability of the managers' manager of the year to get his side up for a second big match in a fortnight will be key.

Chelsea has been in party mode for two weeks, since clinching the league then a week later lifting the trophy at home in the final round.

"The real danger for us is to

think that the season has finished," Conte says.

"It's important to celebrate and enjoy this moment but ... I'll try to push a lot to explain that this season is already great, but this season can become fantastic if we're able to win the FA Cup. We must find the right motivation."

Facing Arsenal in the final at Wembley reminds when Conte turned around Chelsea's season.

Chelsea was eighth in the league in late September after it was humbled at Arsenal 3-0. Midway through that game, he made a tactical switch that

would prove pivotal. Chelsea would thrive in a 3-4-3 formation, and claim 83 of a possible 96 points from that moment, including a 3-1 home win over Arsenal in February.

Conte has showed a preference for fielding three central defenders in his career, but he is far from predictable or rigid.

There are subtle yet significant variations to the formations he deployed with Juventus, Italy, and so far at Chelsea. All relied on a back three, but Conte has adapted to the attacking players at his disposal.

At Juventus, the attack can-

tered on the dynamism of central midfielder Paul Pogba.

At Chelsea, it is winger Eden Hazard who has received the most freedom in Conte's system.

With Hazard and the formation, Conte can follow in the footsteps of Italian compatriot Carlo Ancelotti, who won a domestic double in 2010 in his first season at Chelsea.

Ancelotti was well liked in west London, but the Chelsea fans have taken to Conte with the sort of vigor usually reserved in England for home-grown talents like stalwart John Terry.

Cavs Crush Celtics, Devour Records as LeBorn's Boys Book NBA Finals Spot

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - LeBron James was at his imperious best for the Cavs, who have taken their third Eastern conference crown on the trot and have their return ticket to the NBA finals.

His 32 points helped the home side crush the Boston Celtics 132 - 102 with the Cleveland crowd roaring on their champions, who will meet Golden State for a hat-trick of winner-takes-all shoot-



outs with the western Conference champions.

It was a night for superlatives. The Cavs stand tall 12-1 for the postseason, and broke the NBA record for series closeout wins. They never trailed, led by 21 at the end of the first quarter and at one point by 39. For James, it will be his seventh straight finals appearance. He has also beaten Michael Jordan's record as Top playoffs pointscorer.

Ronaldo Defrauded €8mn in Tax: Report

MADRID (Xinhua) -- The Spanish Tax Authorities (Agencia Tributaria) considers that Cristiano Ronaldo defrauded over 8 million euros by not correctly declaring his image rights for the period between 2011 and 2013 according to reports in the Spanish press.

The revelations were made on Thursday by radio stations, Cadena Ser and Cadena Cope, citing sources in the Spanish tax authorities.

However, the radio stations add that there is an internal debate within the tax authority over whether Ronaldo actually committed a crime or an administrative error, given that he tried to bring his situation up to date before the investi-

gation began.

If finally it is considered that Ronaldo merely committed an administrative error, he would have to repay the 8 million euros, as well as the corresponding fine, but if it was considered to be a criminal offense, he would face a prison sentence of four months in jail for every year he was considered to have offended, (2011, 2012, 2013).

These revelations come just 24 hours after the Spanish Supreme Court maintained a 21-prison sentence for Leo Messi, who was considered to have defrauded 4.2 million euros in tax from earnings related to his image rights during the period 2007-2009.