

Mollaei Claims Silver for Iran at Asian Judo Championships

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Saeid Mollaei of Iran won a silver medal in the Asian Judo Championships 2017 in Hong Kong on Saturday.

Mollaei lost to 19-year-old Japanese Sotaro Fujiwara in the final match of the -81kg.

Fujiwara became the youngest winner of the tournament.

The bronze medal jointly went to Vladimir Zoloev from Kyrgyzstan and South

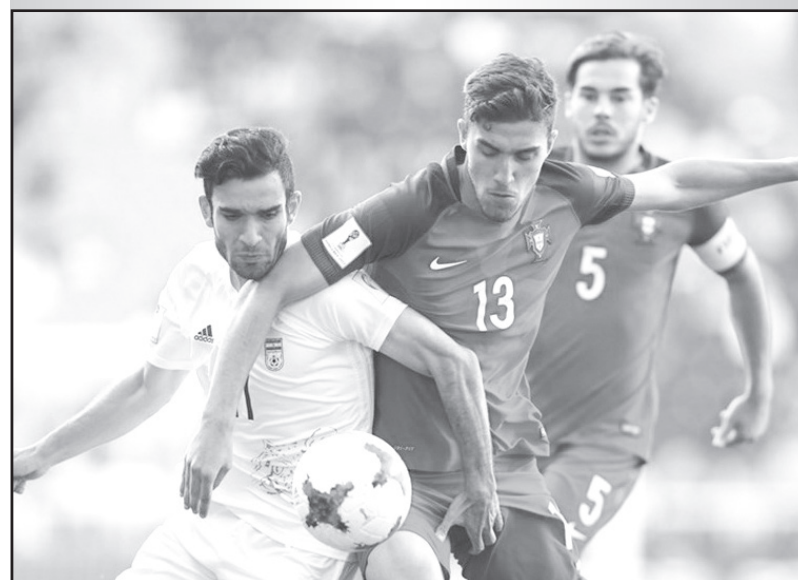
Korean Lee Moon-jin.

On Friday, Mohammad Rashnonejad from Iran claimed a silver medal in the -60kg weight class.

The 2017 Asian Judo Championships are the 23rd edition of the Asian Judo Championships, and are being held in Hong Kong from May 26 to May 28.

The competitions have brought more than 200 judokas from 28 countries together.

Iran Eliminated From FIFA U-20 World Cup



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran failed to book a place in the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017 knockout stage.

The Iranian football team, who had previously defeated Costa Rica 1-0 and lost to Zambia 4-2, lost to Portugal 2-1 in Group C on Saturday.

Iran opened the scoring just four minutes into the match when Reza Shekari found space at the near post to head in Ali Shojaei's corner kick for his third of the tournament.

Portugal was then forced to take the initiative in searching for a goal while Iran sat in a compact defensive posture.

Diogo Goncalves equalized the match in the 54th minute. Portugal then created the majority of chances.

In the 86th minute, substitute Xande Silva's cross on the right wing deflected off Iran defender Nima Taheri and snuck into the far side of the net. Iran then created a couple of late chances, but Portugal held on to ensure its progression to the knockout stages.

Portugal will now face host Korea Republic in the Round of 16 on Tuesday 30 May in Cheonan, while Iran is eliminated from the competition and still in search of its first knockout berth in the tournament.

Thiem, Zverev Aiming to Upset Old Guard at French Open

PARIS (AP) - The old guard may still be winning the major trophies but the youngsters are creeping up on them.

Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka have dominated the Grand Slams since 2005. However, a couple of dark horses are hoping to spring a surprise at the French Open, which starts on Sunday.

The 20-year-old Alexander Zverev beat Novak Djokovic to win the Italian Open last Sunday, while the 23-year-old Dominic Thiem also impressed in the tournament, defeating Nadal.

"I think that Rafa is the big favorite," Thiem said on Friday. "Novak is coming, for sure behind him. And then Murray, you never know. He's such a big player. He can also play amazing here."

"And after these three I think there are some players who can go very deep here who can make big surprises and to these players I count Sascha (Alexander Zverev) and myself."

This is the first week in the 40-year-plus history of the ATP computer rankings that the top five men are all 30 or older.

However, the seventh-ranked Thiem doesn't see that as failure by the younger players.

"They are so big players that it's I think normal that they are still so good with a little bit older age," Thiem said. "But I wouldn't say that the younger players, they didn't make it. I mean there is Milos (Radic) or Kei (Nishikori) that have been in



Alexander Zverev beat Novak Djokovic to win the Italian Open

the top 10 for a very long time.

"Everybody should know how tough it is. Because they didn't win a slam yet, it doesn't mean that they didn't make it because obviously the Big 4 are so strong that it's in this period really tough to win a big title."

Nadal will be favorite to claim a 10th title at Roland Garros, on his favorite surface.

Thiem has already faced Nadal three

times this year, losing finals in Barcelona and Madrid before beating the Spaniard in Rome 6-4, 6-3.

"The win over Rafa was of course a big thing for me," Thiem said. "I played the best player on clay three times in three tournaments. I learned a lot ... so I think I prepared well for this tournament."

Thiem reached the French Open semifinals last year, losing to eventual champion Djokovic.

If the Austrian gets to the same stage this season he will most likely face Nadal again, and he knows the 30-year-old Spaniard is the one to beat.

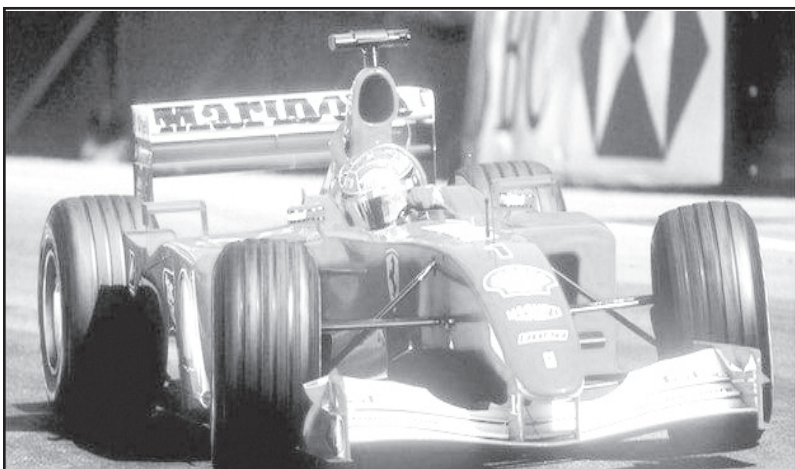
"100 percent he's the big favorite. He's on the top to win here," Thiem said of Nadal. "Of course I think he's back at his best this year, and then also he won nine times. So he knows how it works to win here."

"I will think he will try everything to win Le Decima, I think it will be very unique in tennis to win a Grand Slam title 10 times. It's pretty crazy, I guess. So 100 percent he's the one to beat here and the big favorite."

Nadal, who retired last year before his third-round match with a wrist injury, has a 72-2 record at the clay-court major and is the only player with nine trophies from one Grand Slam tournament.

This season, he has been the dominant player on clay, winning 17 straight matches on his favorite surface and three consecutive titles before Thiem halted his run.

Hamilton 14th as Raikkonen Takes Pole



Ferrari haven't won at Monaco since 2001, when Michael Schumacher triumphed

LONDON (Dispatches) - Kimi Raikkonen is on pole position for the Monaco Grand Prix as Lewis Hamilton took 14th at Formula 1's biggest race.

The 37-year-old Finn is at the front of the grid for the first time in nine years - his last pole was the 2008 French Grand Prix.

Raikkonen edged out teammate Sebastian Vettel by 0.043 seconds, with Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas 0.002secs further back.

Jenson Button will start from the back after qualifying ninth on his return to F1 because of a grid penalty.

The Briton was struggling with a lack of grip, had to abort two laps for almost-crashes, and then came across another crashed car on his final lap.

The Mercedes driver had been struggling since second practice on Thursday afternoon and, despite set-up changes for Saturday

morning, he was still struggling going into qualifying.

He was 10th in the first session, 0.3secs off Bottas, but the second session began unravelling from the start.

On his first lap, a flick of oversteer at the fast Massenet corner at the top of the hills looked set to trigger a heavy crash, but Hamilton just kept the car out of the barriers, taking his hand off the wheel and shaking it afterwards as a reaction to how close he had come to an accident.

He complained to engineer Peter Bonnington: "I've got no grip, Bono. I've got to come in. Something is just not right with the car."

When he went out again, things were no better. This time it was Casino that nearly caught him out, the car flicking into oversteer over the crest at the famous corner, Hamilton again just rescuing it from the barriers.

That left him with one last lap to try to get into the top 10 shootout, but as he was on it, Stoffel

Vandoorne crashed his McLaren at the Swimming Pool, bringing out the yellow flags and meaning Hamilton could not improve.

As Ferrari's main title contender, Vettel will start a strong favorite for victory on Sunday, but Bottas is in the same place on the grid as he was when he won in Russia a month ago.

Ferrari have never said that Vettel has number one status but it is widely believed within the paddock that he does.

Ferrari therefore face a conundrum - do they let the two drivers race and potentially have Raikkonen win, or engineer a situation that enables Vettel to take the flag and maximise his points gain against Hamilton, who is six points behind heading into the race?

Strategy is expected to be flexible, with the ultra-soft tyre durable enough to last the race but the teams forced by the regulations to make at least one pit stop to switch to the super-soft.

Manchester City Complete £43m Deal for Monaco Midfielder



Bernardo Silva

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City have completed a £43m deal for Portugal attacking midfielder Bernardo Silva from French champions Monaco.

The 22-year-old, who will join City on 1 July, said: "I'm now at one of the best teams in the world".

Silva has made 58 appearances for Monaco this season - including two against City in the Champions League - scoring 11 goals and 12 assists.

He said the chance to work with Pep Guardiola influenced his decision.

"Of course when you have the opportunity of being trained by Guardiola, you don't say no," added the playmaker, who has

played 12 times for Portugal, scoring once.

"If not the best coach in the world, he is one of the best."

Guardiola's City finished third in the Premier League this season, securing Champions League football next year.

Silva was integral to the Monaco side that reached the semi-finals, suffering eventual defeat to Juventus, who play Real Madrid in the final on Saturday, 3 June.

I am surprised in that I think that is the one area of the pitch where they have enough options. Manchester City's attack has been sensational this season. Bernardo Silva is very similar to David Silva. I wouldn't let David Silva go, I think he's been tremendous.