

Iran Crush Germany, Advance to FIFA U-17 World Cup Quarters



Iran defeated Germany 4-0 in Group C of the FIFA U-17 World Cup 2017 on Tuesday.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran national under-17 football team, more commonly known as Nojavanan, has trounced Germany in its second fixture at the preliminary round of the 2017 the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) U-17 World Cup, and advanced to the next stage of the tournament following two emphatic wins.

The Persians, who had beaten Guinea 3-1 in their Group C opener two days earlier, defeated Germany 4-0 on Tuesday to book a place at the knock-out round with six points.

Iranian professional footballer Younes Delfi, who plays as a forward for Iranian club Esteghlal Khuzestan in the Persian Gulf Pro League, opened the scoring for his side in the sixth minute of the match staged at the multi-purpose Fatorda Stadium, officially known as the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, in the Indian city of Margao.

Delfi extended Iran's lead in the 42nd minute. Germany sought to break the resolute Iranian defense, led by goalkeeper Ali Gholamzadeh, but all to no avail.

Allahyar Sayyadmanesh made it 3-0 in 49th minute, and Vahid Namdari jabbed Iran's fourth goal in the 75th minute.

Iran national under-17 football team Iran will play its last group stage match against Costa Rica on October 13.

Russia, Iran Draw in FIFA World Cup Warm-Up Match



World Cup host Russia drew 1-1 with the Iranian national football team in a friendly in Kazan on Tuesday.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Russia has held the Iran men's national football team, also known as Team Melli, to a draw in an international friendly match played as part of preparations for the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

On Tuesday evening, 26-year-old Russian professional footballer Dmitry Dmitriyevich Poloz, who plays as a second striker for Zenit St. Petersburg, scored a goal with a quarter of an hour to go to salvage a 1-1 draw at Kazan Arena in the southwestern Russian city of Kazan, which is located on the banks of the Volga and Kazanka rivers.

Poloz was free at the box in the 74th minute to meet a pass from a teammate. He well placed the ball between Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand and the post to stun the visitors, and deny Iran a victorious departure.

Iranian professional footballer Sardar Azmoun, who plays as a forward for Russian side Rubin Kazan, put Team Melli ahead with a flawlessly executed kick in the 58th minute, giving Russian goalie Andrey Lunyov no chance to save.

On June 12, the Iran national football team defeated Uzbekistan 2-0 at Tehran's Azadi Stadium, and became the first Asian team - and the third squad after Brazil and hosts Russia - to secure its place at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Azmoun opened the scoring for the host team in the 23rd minute.

Mehdi Taremi found the back of the net from inside the area in the 88th minute, and finished off the White Wolves.

This is the second time in a row that Team Melli has won the ticket for the FIFA World Cup finals under the tutelage of its 64-year-old Portuguese head coach Carlos Queiroz.

Messi Hat-Trick Secures Argentina World Cup Spot

RIO DE JANEIRO (Xinhua) - Barcelona forward Lionel Messi bagged a hat-trick as Argentina secured a direct berth at next year's World Cup in Russia with a 3-1 victory over Ecuador on Tuesday.

In a dramatic final round of South American zone qualifiers, Brazil eliminated Chile with a 3-0 home victory, Venezuela wrecked Paraguay's hopes with a 1-0 win in Asuncion, Uruguay won 4-2 at home to Bolivia and Colombia clinched an automatic place by drawing 1-1 with Peru.

By finishing fifth in the 10-team CONMEBOL group, Peru earned the right to meet Oceania winners New Zealand in a two-legged playoff.

Needing to win to avoid missing the World Cup for the first time since 1970, Argentina got off to the worst possible start against an Ecuador side already out of contention for next year's tournament.



Argentina's Lionel Messi (2nd L) celebrates after scoring during the FIFA World Cup 2018 qualifier match against Ecuador, at Atahualpa Olympic Stadium, in Quito, Ecuador, on Oct. 10, 2017.

The hosts took the lead in the first minute when Romario Ibarra fired in from close range after combining

smartly with Roberto Ordonez. It took just 12 minutes for Argentina to equalize via Messi's first-time

strike after Angel Di Maria's pull-back.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner gave the visitors the lead eight minutes later when he snatched possession from Ecuador's defense before thumping a shot past Maximo Banguera.

Messi pocketed his third goal just after the hour mark, chipping into the top left corner from the edge of the box while being dragged to the ground.

The result broke a run of four matches without a victory for Argentina in the CONMEBOL qualifiers. Before Tuesday, their last win in the qualifying tournament was a 1-0 defeat of Chile on March 23.

"It's an enormous feeling of happiness," an elated Albiceleste coach Jorge Sampaoli told TyC Sports moments after the final whistle.

Portugal & France Qualify for World Cup But Dutch Eliminated

LONDON (Dispatches) - European champions Portugal beat Switzerland in Lisbon to finish top of European Qualifying Group B and reach the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

A draw or a loss would have left Portugal in the play-offs but an own goal from Johan Djourou and a goal from Andre Silva took Portugal through.

France beat Belarus 2-1 to win Group A, with Sweden finishing second despite losing 2-0 to the Netherlands.

The Dutch, who finished third in the 2014 World Cup, are eliminated.

They needed a seven-goal win to nudge Sweden out of the play-offs but could not add to the two first-half goals scored by Arjen Robben, who retired from international football after the game.

In Group H, Greece ensured their place in the play-offs with a 4-0 win over Gibraltar.

Belgium had already won that group and thrashed Cyprus 4-0 with Chelsea's Eden Hazard scoring twice, and further goals from his brother Thorgan and one late on from Manchester United striker Romelu Lukaku.

The European teams to qualify for the World Cup so far are France, Portugal, Germany, Serbia, Poland, England, Spain, Belgium and Iceland.

There are four more European places up for grabs, with eight nations - Sweden, Switzerland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Greece and Croatia - taking part in two-legged play-offs.

Four of the teams will be seeded, and



Portugal scored 32 goals in their 10 World Cup qualifying matches

they will be confirmed when the next Fifa world rankings are announced next week.

Slovakia, who finished below

England and above Scotland in Group F, are the nation to miss out on the play-offs as they are the second-placed side with the worst record.

Kyrgios Fined for Storming Off Court in Shanghai

SHANGHAI (AFP) - Temperamental Australian Nick Kyrgios was fined \$10,000 and lost another \$21,085 in prize money on Wednesday after storming off midway through his first-round match in Shanghai, tennis officials said.

And the 22-year-old, for whom this was just the latest in a string of

controversies, could yet face further punishment from the ATP after it fined Kyrgios for unsportsmanlike conduct.

A spokesman for the body said Kyrgios was also not allowed to collect his prize money for taking part in the tournament because he failed to get signed off for a medical afterwards

to prove he was unwell or hurt.

Kyrgios, whose Shanghai Masters is over after he also pulled out of his scheduled doubles match with Frenchman Lucas Pouille on Wednesday, apologized after walking off court on Tuesday after losing the first-set tie break to the American Steve Johnson.

In a statement posted on Twitter a few hours later he said that he had a "stomach bug" and had hurt his shoulder. The tweet later appeared to have been deleted.

The world number 21 rowed with spectators and was accused of giving away points in a defeat at the same Shanghai event last year.

USA Knocked Out of World Cup After Trinidad Defeat

LONDON (Sky News) - The United States failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1986 on Tuesday, crashing to a shock 2-1 defeat against already-eliminated Trinidad and Tobago.

In a result that will be viewed as a catastrophe for soccer in the United States, Trinidad took all three points via an Omar Gonzalez own goal and a superb strike from Alvin Jones.

U.S. star Christian Pulisic pulled a goal back in the second half, but the

increasingly desperate Americans were unable to find another to rescue their hopes.

Their exit was confirmed by results in Tuesday's other CONCACAF qualifiers, where Panama booked their place at the World Cup for the first time with a 2-1 win over Costa Rica in Panama City.

Honduras then snatched fourth place in the table with a 3-2 win over Mexico, who had already qualified.

Bulls Hold Off Cavs in LeBron's Debut

WASHINGTON (NBA.com) - For the first time this preseason, the Cavaliers starting five officially took the floor together. And, at times, it looked like it.

That group of starters might be the most talented quintet in the Conference, but they were expectedly out of synch against Chicago - as the young Bulls jumped ahead and stayed ahead, keeping Cleveland winless in the preseason with the 108-94 win on Tuesday at The Q.

Fans finally got to see LeBron James in the Cavaliers new threads and, like the rest of the squad, the four-time MVP had his share of ups and downs - leading Cleveland with 17 points on 8-for-13 shooting, adding five boards and three assists, but committing a game-high eight miscues in the loss.

"I know for me, personally, it was off," explained LeBron. "I could feel it. (It was) my first action since The Finals, so my timing was a little off and the turnovers I think just trickled down to everybody. So it made everyone's timing off."

On the negative side of the ledger, the Cavaliers finished with 22 turnovers that led to 35 Bulls' points. Kevin Love and Dwyane Wade shot a combined 2-for-19. And Justin Holiday, who Cleveland waived in Training Camp back in 2012, finished with 28 points and 11 boards.

On the positive side, the Cavs second unit was solid in relief - with Iman Shumpert and Jeff Green leading the way, combining to go 7-for-10 from the floor, and Tristan Thompson notching seven points and a team-high 11 boards off the bench.