

Iran's Women Futsal Team to Play Italy



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian women's national futsal team is scheduled to play two friendly matches against Italy in Tehran on Thursday and Friday.

Iran is preparing for the 2018 AFC Women's Futsal Championship which will be held in May in Thailand.

Team Melli claimed the title of the first edition which was held in Malaysia in 2015.

"The friendly matches will give our players experience and knowledge of modern futsal since Italy is one of the world's strong teams. Our players need to get more experience for the AFC Futsal Championship," head coach of Iran futsal team Shahrzad Mozaffar said.

The Iranian and Italian football federations signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) as part of efforts to boost cooperation between the two countries in October, 2014.

Madrid Celebrate as Benzema, Ronaldo Find Net Again



Real Madrid's Karim Benzema, right, celebrates after scoring the second goal of his team with Luka Modric, center, during the Champions League Group H soccer match between APOEL Nicosia and Real Madrid at GSP stadium, in Nicosia, on Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2017.

"It's good news for everyone and is particularly positive for them. They thrive on goals and they've both got braces to see us to victory. I'm delighted for Benzema, Cristiano and the whole team."

The victory in Cyprus secured Madrid second place in Group H with one round to go. Tottenham, which defeated Borussia Dortmund in Germany, has already guaranteed first place. Dortmund and APOEL were eliminated.

Benzema scored his goals just before halftime, first with a strike from inside the area and then with a shot into the open net after a pass by Ronaldo in a fast breakaway.

The goals allowed Benzema to move into sixth place in the European tournament's all-time scoring list with 53 goals, surpassing Thierry Henry and becoming the top-ranked Frenchman.

Benzema had scored only two goals this season, and hadn't scored since Madrid's 2-1 win at Getafe in the Spanish league in October.

Ronaldo scored his goals early in the second half, taking his tally to eight goals in this season's Champions League, the best among all players. He got on the board with a header and then with a strike into the empty net after a move that started with Benzema.

Ronaldo is the tournament's all-time leading scorer with 114 goals.

Both Ronaldo and Benzema had been among those criticized by some fans and local media as Madrid had won only one of its last four matches entering Tuesday's matchup in Cyprus.

Madrid is third in the Spanish league, 10 points behind leader Barcelona. The team's next match is at home against Malaga on Saturday.

IOC Disqualifies Four Russian Athletes

Lausanne, Switzerland (Dispatches) - The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has disqualified four Russian skeleton athletes for violating anti-doping rules.

Sochi gold medalist Alexander Tretiakov and bronze medalist Elena Nikitina are among those banned from any future Olympic competition.

They had been suspended, along with team-mates Maria Orlova and Olga Potylitsyna, following allegations of "a state-sponsored

doping program".

That suspension was lifted in January.

At the time the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation said there was insufficient evidence but said it would continue to investigate.

Following the release of the McLaren report, all samples collected from Russian athletes at the Winter Games in Sochi in 2014 that were available to the IOC were re-analyzed.

Tottenham Beat Dortmund 2-1 in UEFA Champions League

BERLIN (Xinhua) - Borussia Dortmund have crashed out of Europe's elite competition after losing 2-1 to Tottenham Hotspur in the 5th round of

The hosts had to be grateful as their goalkeeper Roman Buerki denied two golden opportunities within short succession before the break. Buerki first



Andriy Yarmolenko (bottom) of Borussia Dortmund vies with Son Heung-Min of Tottenham Hotspur during the UEFA Champions League group H match at Signal Iduna Park on Nov. 21, 2017.

the Champions League group stage.

The BVB failed to protect their one-goal lead until the end of the clash as Tottenham bounced back on two second-half goals from Harry Kane and Heung-Min Son to seal Dortmund's exit from the Champions League.

However, Peter Bosz' men ensured a bright start on home soil and grabbed the reins. Andriy Yarmolenko unleashed a shot on target in the early stages before he set up the first chance of the game for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who pulled wide from close range in the 19th minute.

Yarmolenko remained in the thick of things as his backheel pass into the path of Aubameyang allowed the Gabon international to drill the ball past Tottenham's goalkeeper Hugo Lloris into the bottom corner of the far post at 31 minutes of play.

Dortmund's opener was a wake-up call for the visitors from Tottenham, who increased the pressure.

blocked Christian Eriksen's side-foot with a superb reflex before he tipped Eric Dier's header on target over the bar.

After the restart, Tottenham responded well and shocked the hosts with the equalizer through Harry Kane, who had time and space to hammer home from the edge of the box four minutes into the second half.

Things went from bad to worse for the hosts, who needed a win to maintain their hopes for the knockout stage, as Dele Alli shrugged off two defenders on the left wing to tee up the 2-1 lead for Heung-Min Son inside the box in the 76th minute.

With the result, Tottenham win Group H while third-placed Borussia Dortmund will have to battle for a berth in the Europa League at the last group stage match on December 6.

It is the first group-stage elimination for Dortmund in six years. They only reaped one win in the last nine matches

Kubica to Test for Williams With View to Formula 1 Return

LONDON (Dispatches) - Robert Kubica will test for Williams in Abu Dhabi after this weekend's season-closing grand prix.

The test is effectively the final step in an evaluation process to see if the Pole can return to Formula 1 in 2018 after

seven years away.

Williams will also assess Renault reserve driver Sergey Sirotkin.

The Russian has emerged as a candidate along with Daniil Kvyat, Pascal Wehrlein and Paul Di Resta, although Kubica remains their first

Trump Warns NFL to Act on 'Take the Knee'

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The NFL must "get tough and smart" over the national anthem protest because it is "killing" the league, says U.S. president Donald Trump.

Trump has criticized players who kneel for the anthem, a move started by Colin Kaepernick in 2016, to highlight racial injustice and police brutality.

Some NFL owners reportedly believe players could soon be kept in locker rooms during the anthem

unifying power".

Kaepernick, 30, has been without a team since he opted out of his contract with the San Francisco 49ers in March and has filed a grievance against team owners.

He first protested by sitting during the anthem before opting to kneel. President Trump was critical when players followed suit, prompting the move to spread further.

In separate tweets, Trump branded the father of U.S. basketball player LiAngelo Ball an "ungrateful



Washington Redskins players take the knee during the U.S. national anthem

as a result.

"That's almost as bad as kneeling," Trump, 71, wrote on Twitter.

"When will the highly paid Commissioner finally get tough and smart? This issue is killing your league!"

In October, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell wrote to franchises stating the take the knee movement threatened "to erode the game's

fool" after he refused to thank the President for his role in securing his son's release from prison in China.

UCLA basketball players Ball, Cody Riley and Jalen Hill were released from detention on shoplifting charges. The three thanked Trump during a news conference after their release but Ball's father - LaVar - played down the President's involvement.

U.S. Olympic Gold Medalist Douglas Says Doctor Sexually Abused Her

Washington (Reuters) - Three-times Olympic gold medalist Gabby Douglas has said she was sexually abused by former USA Gymnastics team physician Larry Nassar, the latest in a list of female athletes to accuse the doctor of misconduct.

Douglas, who last week was criticized for placing some of the onus on women to avoid sexual harassment, apologized again for her remarks while adding that she too was abused by Nassar, who is in jail awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to federal child pornography charges.

In an Instagram post on Tuesday addressing last week's comments that were viewed by some as victim shaming, Douglas wrote: "It would be like saying that because of the leotards we wore, it was our fault that we were abused by Larry Nassar."

"I didn't publicly share my experiences as well as many other things because for years we were conditioned to stay silent and honestly some things were extremely painful."

Jeff Raymond, a publicist for Douglas, confirmed in an email that the gymnast was in fact "confirming that she too was a victim of Larry Nassar."

Nassar's attorney, Matt Newburg, was not immediately available for comment



U.S. gymnast Gabrielle Douglas Face consue cerrypt illicaet

but has previously said that due to a gag order imposed he had no comment.

Douglas is the third member of the 'Fierce Five' gymnastics team who won a team gold at the 2012 London Olympics to allege abuse by Nassar, joining Aly Raisman and McKayla Maroney.

It was after Raisman's allegations last week that Douglas wrote in a since-deleted post on Twitter that "it is our responsibility as women to dress modestly and be classy. Dressing in a provocative/sexual way entices the wrong crowd."

Olympic gymnasts Aly Raisman, McKayla Maroney and Gabby Douglas are among the women who have publicly said they were among Nassar's victims.

Massa is retiring from the sport after this weekend's race.

Kubica has not raced in F1 since 2010 but has done a series of tests this year as he seeks to prove he can return despite the life-changing injuries he suffered in a horrific rally crash in February 2011.