

# Iran Lose to Serbia at VNL



The photo shows a view of the match between Iran and Serbia at the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League in Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, the United States, on June 16, 2018.

TEHRAN (Press TV) - The Iran men's national volleyball team has slumped to its first defeat at the fourth week of the 2018 Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) Volleyball Men's Nations League,

going down to the Serbian side. On Saturday evening, suffered a narrow defeat and ceded its second Pool 15 fixture at the 11,000-seat Sears Centre in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, the

United States, 2-3 (25-21, 22-25, 25-27, 25-20 and 11-15) to the Southeast Europeans. The loss came a day after Iranian volleyball players had thumped world champion Poland 3-0 (26-24, 26-24 and 25-22) in their opening match. The Iran men's national volleyball team is scheduled to play against the United States in its third challenge on Sunday. The 2018 FIVB Volleyball Men's Nations League kicked off on May 25, and will run through July 8 in 22 host cities. A total of 16 teams compete in a round-robin format with every core team hosting a pool at least once. The teams are divided into four pools of four teams at each week and compete five weeks long, with a total of 120 matches. The top five teams after the preliminary round join the host of the final round to compete in the last stage. The relegation takes in consideration only the 4 challenger teams. The last-ranked challenger team plays the promotion play-off against the Challenger Cup winners. The winners of the play-off will qualify for the next edition as a challenger team.

## Croatia Defeat Nigeria 2-0

KALININGRAD (Dispatches) - Croatia's golden generation have started their World Cup campaign brilliantly, leading Group D with a 2-0 victory against Nigeria. Featuring four forwards in the line-up, Croatia manifested nothing but ambitions to win their opening match, after witnessing an unexpected draw of Argentina against Iceland earlier in the afternoon. Ranked higher than their opponents though, the Croats, carrying expectations and also pressure, spent almost 30 minutes to find the rhythm.

At the 32nd minute, Luka Modric's corner kick volleyed by Ante Rebic, culminated in Mario Mandzukic's diving header. The off-target shot was deflected by Oghenekaro Etebo into his own goal. The goal gave the Vatreni confidence and helped them gain the momentum gradually. Nigeria, the youngest team of the tournament only struggled to equalize the game with sporadic efforts. After switching sides, Croatia continued to control the game thanks to their talented midfield dual -

captain Modric and Barcelona's midfielder Ivan Rakitic. At the 71st minute, Mandzukic was wrestled down in the penalty by William Ekong, and Croatia's captain did not waste the chance to double the lead. "It's a great start for Croatia, we deserved to win. Nigeria played well, but we were better," said Modric after the match. "I believe we will continue the journey as we planned," added the Real Madrid's midfielder. "We will learn from the mistakes we made today, and look forward

to the game against Iceland," Victor Moses told reporters. "We're a young team, we're learning and I hope in the next game against Iceland we will do much better," said Nigeria's coach Gernot Rohr. Croatia are leading Group D after the first round, followed by Iceland and Argentina, both of which collected only one point each from a 1-1 draw. Croatia will play group favorites Argentina on June 21, and Nigeria are to take on Iceland the next day.

## Lionel Messi 'Hurt' by Penalty Miss in Argentina's Draw With Iceland



Lionel Messi could not secure victory for Argentina

MOSCOW (Dispatches) -Lionel Messi has said he was "obviously hurt" by missing a penalty in Argentina's 1-1 draw with Iceland at the World Cup. The 30-year-old saw a spot-kick saved by Iceland goalkeeper Hannes Halldorsson with the scores level in the 64th minute. It would prove costly as Iceland - the smallest nation ever to compete at a World Cup - held on to frustrate Argentina in their Group D opener. "It would have changed the script. It was the advantage," said

Messi about his penalty. "Obviously it hurts me to have missed the penalty. They would have opened a little more and we could have found more spaces. I feel responsible for not having been able to take the three points. I have no doubt that a goal from the penalty kick would have changed everything. Messi has now missed four of the last seven penalties that he has taken for Argentina and Barcelona. Argentina next face Croatia, who beat Nigeria 2-0 in their opening match to top the group.

## Federer Beats Raonic to Win Stuttgart Title on Return



Roger Federer will return to world number one in the latest rankings on Monday.

STUTTGART (Dispatches) - Roger Federer beat Milos Raonic to win the Mercedes Cup in Stuttgart, his first event for two and a half months. The Swiss had not played since the Miami Open in March, after choosing to miss the clay-court season, but the win in Germany gives him a 98th Tour title. Federer, 36, beat Canadian Raonic 6-4 7-6 (7-3) in the final. The 20-time Grand Slam champion had already secured his return to number one in the world rankings with victory over Nick Kyrgios in the semi-final.

The only break of serve came in the third game of the match with Federer clinching it with a backhand winner. The second set was again tight as both players' serve dominated on the grass court but Federer edged it on a tie-break. Federer also sat out the clay-court season in 2017 but last year lost on his return in Stuttgart before going on to win the Gerry Weber Open in Halle and claim an eighth Wimbledon title. He will again compete at Halle next week, aiming for a record 10th title, before Wimbledon which begins on 2 July.

## Denmark Battle to Narrow Win Over Peru



Christian Cueva's penalty was the fourth to be awarded in four matches

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Denmark began their World Cup campaign with a hard-fought victory against a Peru side that had earlier missed a penalty. The South Americans were awarded a spot-kick after consultation with the video assistant referee but Christian Cueva, the man fouled, shot over the crossbar. That miss proved crucial as the Danes hit Peru on the counter-attack in the second half with Christian Eriksen releasing Yussuf Poulson, who had conceded the penalty, and he fired past Pedro Gallese.

Peru were denied an immediate equalizer when Denmark goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel produced a fantastic one-handed save to deny Edison Flores. Substitute Paolo Guerrero, only able to play after a Swiss tribunal lifted a 14-month drugs ban, backheeled a chance wide as Denmark held on. It means France top Group C on goals scored after their 2-1 win over Australia as Antoine Griezmann's penalty, also awarded via VAR, and Paul Pogba's deflected chip gave Didier Deschamps' side the three points.

## Spence Keeps IBF Title at Home With Quick Knockout of Ocampo

FRISCO, Texas (AP) - Errol Spence Jr. gave the home folks the knockout he figured they wanted. There just wasn't much of the show he hoped would go with it. Spence stopped Carlos Ocampo to retain his IBF welterweight title, dropping the Mexican challenger with a right hand to the body as the first round was ending Saturday night. Fighting at the Dallas Cowboys' practice facility after growing up in the suburbs as a fan of America's Team, Spence improved to 24-0 with his 11th straight knockout and 21st overall. The crowd might have been left wanting more, as Cowboys owner Jerry Jones jokingly suggested after winking at the camera while celebrating with the 2012 U.S. Olympian in the ring. Ocampo crumpled to the canvas after taking the body shot. He tried to get up but went down to his knees and was counted out in the battle of unbeaten fighters. The 28-year-old Spence was fighting in front of a sellout crowd in the 12,000-seat football stadium that doubles as the indoor practice facility for the Cowboys at their headquarters about 30 miles north of Dallas. Cowboys quarterback Dak Prescott

and several teammates were in the crowd along with Jones. It was the second defense of the 147-pound title that Spence won last summer in Englishman Kell Brook's hometown. Ocampo (22-1) was fighting professionally outside his home country for the first time. The buildup for the fight was all the crowd got, with Spence taking the ring to big cheers with a big Cowboys star logo on the front of his robe. Earlier, Spence got a good roar when he was shown on camera alongside Jones near his locker room. Spence battered Lamont Peterson in his first title defense in New York in January, winning in the eighth round. Last summer in Sheffield, England, Spence broke Brook's orbital bone and knocked him down in the 10th round before the fight was stopped in the 11th. This was Spence's first fight as a co-promoter, the other reason besides the hometown crowd that the show was part of the story line. Spence's victory came a week after Terence Crawford took the WBO crown from Jeff Horn, who had beaten Manny Pacquiao a year earlier. But Spence's focus is on the expected August fight



Spence keeps IBF title at home with quick knockout of Ocampo

between Danny Garcia and Shawn Porter for the WBC title. In the previous fight, WBA super bantamweight champion Danny Roman won a unanimous decision over Moises Flores. Roman would have retained the belt regardless of the outcome because Flores didn't make weight. A 10-round junior welterweight fight

between Javier Fortuna and Adrian Granados ended in a no-decision after Fortuna appeared to hit his head while falling backward out of the ring during the fourth round. Fortuna was placed in a neck brace and taken away on a stretcher. The 28-year-old Fortuna went to a hospital and was diagnosed with a concussion.

## Salah in Apparent Discomfort in World Cup Training

GROZNY, Russia (Dispatches) - Egypt's super striker Mohamed Salah needed help from three teammates pulling on a jersey over his injured shoulder, according to AFP reporters at the team's training camp. The Pharaohs' best hope in making the last 16 of a World Cup for the first time since 1990 has been having an eventful time at his team's base camp in the Chechen capital Grozny. Salah watched from the bench

as Egypt succumbed to an 89th minute header by defender Jose Gimenez in a 1-0 loss to Uruguay on Friday. He returned to training on Saturday but was spotted employing the help of three teammates pulling on his top. The team doctor nevertheless pronounced the Liverpool star "100 percent ready" to play in Egypt's second match against host nation Russia in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday.