

FIFA Reveals Iran's Slogan at 2018 World Cup



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran national football team will take part at the 2018 World Cup with "80 million people, one nation, one heartbeat," slogan.

FIFA revealed the 32 winning slogans for the World Cup in Russia after choosing from 96 slogans that were created by FIFA.com users.

According to the governing body's official site, the 32 winners will get a chance to travel to Russia. A public vote decided the winners.

Iran has been drawn in Group B along with Morocco, Spain and Portugal.

Team Melli will open the competition with a match against Morocco on June 15.

Gordon Leads Rockets Over Warriors 98-94 to Take Series Lead



HOUSTON, TX - MAY 24: James Harden #13 of the Houston Rockets drives against Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors in the first half of Game Five of the Western Conference Finals of the 2018 NBA Playoffs at Toyota Center on May 24, 2018 in Houston, Texas.

HOUSTON (AP) - Chris Paul's grit and veteran leadership have pushed the Golden State Warriors to the brink of elimination.

Now the Houston Rockets must wait to see if his injured leg is strong enough to help them take one last step to the NBA Finals.

Eric Gordon came off the bench to score 24 points and his steal on Golden State's last possession secured a 98-94 victory Thursday night that gave the Rockets a 3-2 lead in the Western Conference finals. But the victory came with a cost, as Paul had to leave the game in the final minute with a right hamstring injury that could keep him out of Game 6.

Paul was receiving treatment after the game and did not speak to reporters.

The Rockets head to Oakland for Game 6 on Saturday night a win away from knocking off the defending champions and advancing to the NBA Finals for the first time since winning back-to-back titles in 1994-95.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points for the Warriors, who lost in Game 5 of a playoff series for just the second time since 2015. Just like Cleveland in the East, a run of three straight trips to the championship round is on the verge of ending.

The Rockets won a second straight defensive struggle between the two potent offenses, leaving the Warriors a loss from missing the NBA Finals for the first time since 2014.

Draymond Green made a 3-pointer with just over minute left to get Golden State within one. Harden,

who was 0 for 11 on 3s, missed his last one with less than 30 seconds left, giving the Warriors the ball back.

Curry missed a floater and Trevor Ariza grabbed the rebound and was fouled with 10 seconds left. But he made just one of two free throws to give the Warriors another chance.

But Gordon came up with his steal when Green lost control in the lane and added two free throws with 2.4 seconds left to put it away.

Green was asked what was supposed to happen on the play.

Harden scoffed at a reporter who questioned him about his struggles from long range in the last two games, where he's gone a combined 3 for 22.

Klay Thompson shook off a knee injury that had his status for this game in question to score 23 points and Curry added 22. A bruised left knee kept Andre Iguodala out for the second straight game, and Kevon Looney started in his place.

After losing Game 1 of the series, the Rockets made the best of home-court advantage this time, thrilling a sellout crowd that included Justin Timberlake, Houston Texans star J.J. Watt and rapper Travis Scott.

It's Houston's second straight win in the series after snapping Golden State's NBA playoff-record, 16-game home winning streak with a 95-92 victory on Tuesday night.

Golden State led by one to start the fourth before Paul got going, scoring seven points to power a 10-5 run that gave the Rockets an 81-77 lead with about 9 1/2 minutes left.

Venus, Serena to Team Up at French Open

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Venus and Serena Williams have been awarded a wild-card entry as a doubles pair to the 2018 French Open, marking their first appearance at a major tournament together in two years.

The duo won the 1999 and 2010 French Open doubles championship and was awarded a wild-card entry. Overall, Venus and Serena have racked up 14 Grand Slam wins as doubles partners, but have only made

appearances at the French Open twice since the 2010 win. They lost in the first round in 2013, and the third in 2016.

Both sisters are expected to compete in the singles tournament as well; Serena is slated to make her first Grand Slam appearance since winning the 2017 Australian Open, then taking time off to give birth to her first child.

Serena made her 2018 return in a doubles match with Venus at the Fed Cup in February. She

has since competed alone at both the BNP Paribas Open, where she was eliminated by her sister after three matches, and the Miami Open, where she lost in the first round to Naomi Osaka. In early May, she pulled out of both the Madrid Open and Italian Open, raising questions as to whether she would show at the French Open.

If she does play singles, it is likely Serena will have to face high-ranking players early in the

tournament, as the French Open adheres to the World Tennis Association's seeding rules. Serena was ranked No. 1 when she went on maternity leave, but is now ranked No. 453 by the WTA; Venus is currently No. 9 in the world.

Several of Serena's top competitors have voiced their support, advocating for a WTA rule change, but any such amendment would not take effect until next year.

Swimmer to Cross Pacific, Raising Awareness of Plastic Pollution



French Benoit Lecomte is swimming off the coast of Brittany, 10 sea miles from Port-Maria de Quiberon, 25 September, after crossing the Atlantic from the United States to France.

YOKOHAMA, Japan (Reuters) - When Ben Lecomte stepped onto land for the first time after swimming across the Atlantic Ocean in 1998, he told himself "never again".

Yet, 20 years on, Lecomte is attempting an even more daunting challenge as he looks to become the first person to swim across the Pacific Ocean, covering 9,100 kilometers.

On Tuesday, Lecomte and his nine-person support team will set out from Tokyo on an epic expedition expected to last more than six months and see the Frenchman arrive in San Francisco.

"I knew it was something that was part of me and my identity," Lecomte told media as his team undertook the final preparations to the support yacht in

Yokohama's Bayside Marina on Friday.

The 50-year-old's plan is to swim for eight hours a day, as well as consume over 8,000 calories, as he undertakes an extraordinary journey that is part-adventure and part-scientific experiment.

More than 27 different scientific organizations, some medical and some oceanographic, will be benefiting from the data gathered during the expedition.

Much of the research will focus on plastic pollution in the Pacific Ocean, specifically the build-up of 'plastic smog' containing billions of pieces of microplastic.

There is increasing concern among scientists about the effect of pervasive plastic pollution on marine ecosystems.

Istanbul to Host UEFA Champions League Final in 2020

ANKARA (Dispatches) - The 2020 UEFA Champions League final will be played in Istanbul, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced during a party meeting here on Thursday.

UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin confirmed the announcement in Kiev.

The Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, which has a 76,092-seat capacity, won the right to host the event in the competition against Estadio da Luz in Portuguese capital Lisbon, according to Ceferin.

The stadium will host its second Champions League final after the one in 2005 between Italy's AC Milan and England's Liverpool.

Vodafone Park in Istanbul, the home of Besiktas, will host the UEFA Super Cup final match in 2019.

The UEFA executive committee will also decide in September whether Turkey or Germany should host the 2024 European Championship.

Ricciardo Quickest in Monaco as Red Bulls Dominate

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (Dispatches) - Record-breaking Daniel Ricciardo has made it a "double top" for Red Bull when he and team-mate Max Verstappen dominated second practice for the Monaco Grand Prix.

The Australian lapped the unforgiving steel-lined streets of the Mediterranean principality in one minute and 11.841 seconds to outpace the Dutchman by nearly two-tenths of a second with the first lap under 1:12 at the track.

The pair had earlier dominated morning practice to establish Red Bull as the team to beat this weekend with Ferrari and Mercedes in pursuit.

Four-time champion German Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari was third ahead of current series leader and defending four-time champion Briton Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes. The two Finns Kimi Raikkonen of Ferrari and Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes were fifth and sixth.



Red Bull's Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo tops the times for Thursday's free practice at the Monte Carlo grand prix.

German Nico Hulkenberg of Renault was seventh ahead of the McLarens of Belgian Pascal Vandoorne and two-time champion Spaniard Fernando Alonso with another Spaniard Carlos Sainz 10th in the second Renault.

It was a clear show of Ricciardo and Red Bull's harmony with the new pink-walled "hyper-soft" tyres at the resurfaced track where their nimble car looked outstanding on warm afternoon.

McIlroy Storms Into Lead at PGA Championship

LONDON (Reuters) - Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy blazed a trail to the top of the BMW PGA Championship leaderboard with a scintillating seven-under 65 in his second round at Wentworth on Friday.

Starting the day a couple of shots behind leader Lucas Bjerregaard, McIlroy gave an iron-play master class and matched it with a fine putting display to card seven birdies as he moved to 12 under for the tournament.

McIlroy, bidding to win the European Tour's flagship event for the second time after his 2014 triumph, was playing with Swede Alex Noren and England's Lee Westwood with the trio not dropping a shot between them on a becalmed West Course.

Noren is on seven under with Westwood at five under.

Thailand's Kiradech Aphibarnrat played his way up the leader board but, like on Thursday, found water on the way to bogeying the 18th. He ended with a 69 to leave him

tied with Noren and England's Robert Rock who took the early clubhouse lead with an impressive round of 68.

Denmark's Bjerregaard failed to build on his opening-day 65, struggling to a one-over 73 after a double-bogey on the 18th.

It took a while for McIlroy to fire up his putter.

He failed to make birdie on the opening three holes but did so on the fourth, seventh and ninth.

The 29-year-old added four more birdies on his inward nine and his round could have been even better but for two disappointing pars on the par-five 17th and 18th.

His 36-hole total of 132 was only one shot off the record for the tournament and he will take some stopping.

Northern Ireland's Graeme McDowell, named as a Ryder Cup vice captain this year, put himself in contention with a five-under 67 to climb up to six under for the tournament going into the weekend when thunderstorms are expected.