

Volleyballers Thrash Host Bulgaria at FIVB World Championship



Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad led Iran with 21. Seyed Mohammad Mousavi and Amir Ghafour each added 11.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – The Iranian national volleyball team has defeated Bulgaria 3-1 (25-22, 25-20, 22-25, 25-19) to post their 2nd victory in as many matches in Pool D of the 2018 FIVB Men's World Championship.

Mohammadjavad Manavinezhad led Iran with 21. Seyed Mohammad Mousavi and Amir Ghafour each added 11.

Todor Skrimov was Bulgaria's top scorer with 17 but only one in the final set as he played through an ankle injury.

Iran is in Pool D along with Bulgaria, Puerto Rico, Poland, Finland and Cuba.

The 2018 championship is the 19th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship, contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

The final tournament is being held in Italy and Bulgaria from September 9 to 30. For the first time the tournament is jointly-hosted by more than one country.

The final six will be hosted by Italy at the Pala Alpitour in Turin.

Red Bulls Top Singapore Times as Ferrari New Diver Crashes

SINGAPORE (AFP) - Daniel Ricciardo recorded the fastest lap in the first free practice session Friday for this weekend's Singapore Grand Prix but Ferrari's replacement for Kimi Raikkonen had a moment to forget.

Charles Leclerc marked his first session since being announced as Sebastian Vettel's new teammate for 2019 with a blunder near the end of the session.

The 20-year-old Leclerc misjudged his Sauber's exit from the Anderson Bridge, clipped the wall hard at turn 13 and destroyed his right front wheel.

Singapore specialist Ricciardo, who has finished on the second step of the podium for the past three years, powered his Red Bull round in 1 min 39.711 sec at the spectacular Marina Bay street circuit which snakes its way through the heart of Asia's "Lion City".



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Max Verstappen completed a Red Bull one-two just two-tenths of a

second behind but championship leader Lewis Hamilton was only sixth

fastest, 1.521sec off the pace, after Mercedes opted not to use the fastest hypersoft tyres in the session.

Sebastian Vettel, who trails Hamilton by 30 points in the drivers' championship, was third fastest and less than a tenth of a second behind Verstappen. Raikkonen was fourth.

Nico Hulkenberg in his Renault was an impressive fifth fastest but Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes could only come in eighth fastest.

The Marina Bay track has 23 corners, more than any other on the current Formula One calendar, and is a severe test for both drivers and cars with temperatures topping 30 Celsius.

But the first session, which takes place in daylight and the searing heat of the afternoon, is often not a true guide to the pace of the cars for the night race.

Philippines Men's Basketball Team Falls to Iran, 81-73 in FIBA Qualifier



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iran have repelled a spirited Philippines to open their account in the second round of the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Asian Qualifiers with an 81-73 win at the Azadi Gym in Tehran.

This was Iran's sixth win in seven games, while the

Philippines suffered their third defeat against four victories.

Nik Bahrami showed the way for Iran with 21 markers, eight boards, and four dimes.

Iran fly to Tokyo next to play Japan, while the Philippines return home to host Qatar on Sept. 17.

Belgium's Wallays Wins Vuelta 18th Stage, Yates Retains Lead



Jelle Wallays celebrates winning the 18th stage of the Tour of Spain

LERIDA, Spain (AFP) - Belgium's Jelle Wallays has held his nerve to win a sprint finish to the 18th stage of the Tour of Spain, with Britain's Simon Yates retaining his overall lead.

Wallays, riding for Lotto Soudal, held off Norwegian Sven Erik Bystrom, with Slovakia's world champion Peter Sagan coming third in a strong finish by the chasing peloton.

Mitchelton-Scott rider Yates remained 25 seconds ahead of his nearest rival, Spanish veteran Alejandro Valverde, in the general classification.

Another Spaniard, Enric Mas of Quick-Step, stayed in third, 1min 22sec behind the red jersey.

"It was ok today until the final, it was very fast because of the wind and that made it hard, but for the rest it was a nice day and probably the easiest of the race so far. I am looking forward to tomorrow now," said Yates.

Wallays was left happy his risk-taking paid off, praising ex-French rider Thomas Voeckler for his words of wisdom after the duo had shared a sprint finish, won by the Frenchman, back on the Paris-Tours in 2014.

Sapporo Expected to Drop Out of 2026 Winter Olympic Bid Race

TOKYO (China Daily) — The Japanese city of Sapporo is expected to withdraw from bidding for the 2026 Winter Olympics, leaving four candidates as the IOC finds it increasingly difficult to find hosts — particularly for the Winter Games.

A city official said Deputy Mayor Takatoshi Machida and Japanese Olympic Committee president Tsunekazu Takeda will meet International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach on Monday.

City spokesman Akihiro Okumura says the two will brief Bach about an earthquake a week ago in the northern region that

killed about 40 people.

He said "we haven't officially announced other items to be discussed with the IOC, however, I understand various matters might come up."

The withdrawal — widely reported in Japan — isn't a shock. City officials said four months ago that the city was better prepared to bid for the 2030 Games.

The IOC will name the winning bidder a year from now. The four contenders are: Stockholm, Sweden; Calgary, Canada; a joint Italian bid from Turin, Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo; and Erzurum, Turkey.

Coric Gives Croatia Flying Start in Davis Cup Semi



Borna Coric of Croatia plays a return to Steve Johnson of the United States during a Davis Cup semifinal singles tennis match between Croatia and the United States in Zadar, Croatia, Friday, Sept. 14, 2018.

only previous encounter with the U.S. number three at Roland Garros but on Zadar's clay courts drew first blood for the hosts against Johnson, who was leading his country in the absence of John Isner and Jack Sock.

Coric's emphatic win just underlined why the Croats, who had won all their four previous ties with the Davis Cup's most successful nation, were overwhelming favorites to repeat the dose and reach the final of the last Davis Cup to be played in its traditional historic format before next year's revamp.

Both Coric, the world number 18, and Marin Cilic, number six, are ranked significantly higher than their first day singles opponents with U.S. debutant, 20-year-old Frances Tiafoe, facing the former U.S. Open champion in the second rubber.

Coric was impressive from the start, taking an early break for 2-1, aided by Johnson missing plenty of first serves, and controlling the 35-minute opening stanza.

The youngster brought the crowd to their feet with one extraordinary 'tweener' lob that left Johnson flat-footed as he earned another quick break in the second set but the American fought back strongly to take it to a tiebreak.

Coric again stepped up his game, reeling off the final four points of the breaker, featuring a glorious

forehand winner and a fine volley, to seal it 7-4.

He then forged home his advantage over the world number 30 in the

third set to wrap up victory in two hours and 24 minutes and take Croatia's seventh straight win in their favorite Zadar venue.

Man City Break £500mn Revenue Barrier



Manchester City won the Premier League by a record 19 points last season

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak says the club's journey "is not complete" despite reporting revenues in excess of £500m last season.

City's annual report, to 30 June 2018, confirms they are the second English club to break the £500m barrier.

The club reported a profit for the fourth successive season, this time of £10.4m and a wage-revenue ratio of 52%.

The healthy financial report comes four months after City won the Premier League by a record 19 points.

Pep Guardiola's side also became the first to achieve 100 points and score in excess of 100 goals.

Chief executive Ferran Soriano added that further progress in the Champions League was a specific focus.

In 2007-08, their revenues were £104mn, less than Turkish side Fenerbahce.

ZADAR, Croatia (Reuters) - Borna Coric gave Croatia a flying start in their Davis Cup World Group semi-final against the United States, defeating Steve Johnson 6-4 7-6(4) 6-3 in the opening rubber in Zadar on Friday.

The 21-year-old Coric had lost his