

# Belgium's Wilmots Appointed as Iran's New Head Coach



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Former Ivory Coast and Belgium manager Marc Wilmots has arrived in Tehran and is set to sign a

three-year deal as national coach, Iran's domestic media reported.

The 50-year-old who was capped 70 times for his country was expected to sign on until the end of the 2022 World Cup for a fee of \$1.2 million (1 million euros) a year.

He replaces Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz who stepped down after eight years in charge in January following Iran's semi-final exit in the Asian Cup when they went down 3-0 to Japan.

He led Iran to two World Cup finals and extended his contract to 2019 after the 2018 tourna-

ment in Russia.

Wilmots guided Belgium into the 2014 World Cup during his stint as coach with them between 2012-2016.

He took charge of Ivory Coast in 2017 but parted company after failing to qualify the west Africans for the 2018 World Cup.

The Belgian coach will be reportedly assisted by an Iranian coach, namely Javad Nekounam.

Team Melli is preparing for the 2022 World Cup qualifiers that will begin in the second half of this year.

## Iranian Judokas Win Gold, Silver at IBSA Judo Grand Prix Final



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iranian judokas Vahid Nouri and Mohammadreza Kheirollahzadeh have claimed two gold and silver medals at the Baku 2019 IBSA Judo Grand Prix.

Asian Para Games champion Vahid Nouri topped the podium in the men's +90kg after defeating Azerbaijan's Rovshan Safarov.

Russia's Vladimir Fedin and Ukraine's world title holder Oleksandr Nazarenko were third.

Iran's Kheirollahzadeh, who had defeated rivals from Georgia and England on his way to the final match, lost to Uzbekistan's Shirin Sharipov in the fi-

nal of the men's +100kg.

Georgia's Revaz Chikoidze was third whilst Kento Masaki also secured bronze for Japan.

The Baku 2019 IBSA Judo Grand Prix was held at the Heydar Aliyev Sports Complex in the Republic of Azerbaijan's capital. It was part of a series of four Grand Prix taking place in 2019-2020.

As well as offering qualification for Tokyo 2020, the competition was also an important part of the build-up to regional Championships taking place this year.

More than 240 judokas from 36 countries took part in the competition in Baku.

## Svitolina, Zverev Shocked in Rome as Serena Withdraws From Italian Open

ROME (AFP) - Two-time women's holder Elna Svitolina have been crashed out of the WTA and ATP Italian Open along with Germany's Alexander Zverev as Serena Williams's return to the courts was short lived with her knee injury flaring up to force the American star out of the final warm-up before the French Open in two weeks times.

Svitolina -- who had a first round bye as fifth seed -- held a match point at 5-2 in the third set before slumping 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 to Belarus Victoria Azarenka in a 2hr 14min battle at the Foro Italico which was twice interrupted because of rain.

Serena earlier announced she was withdrawing having just returned after two months out injured, before she was due to play her older sister Venus for the first time in 21 years in Rome.

The 37-year-old had eased past Sweden's Rebecca Peterson in her first round match on Monday, but a day later could not continue "due to pain in my left knee".

Her withdrawal sends Venus, the 1999 winner, through to a third round meeting with either Britain's Johanna Konta or US seventh seed Sloane Stephens.

Nevertheless, last year she arrived at Roland Garros



Alexander Zverev, the 2017 winner and runner-up to Novak Djokovic last year in Rome, extended his terrible clay-court run, falling 7-5, 7-5 to Italian wild card Matteo Berrettini in the second round.

without any clay-court warm-up and still reached the last 16 before retiring before her match against Maria Sharapova, also because of injury.

Svitolina and Azarenka battled late into the night at the Foro Italico before former two-time Australian Open winner Azarenka won through.

Svitolina came back after the rain break to drop the second set but rolled off the first three games in the third, before being broken when serving for the match at 5-2 in the third set.

Azarenka saved match point and took the next game for love, rolling off five in a row to set up a meeting former French Open winner Garbine

Muguruza or Danielle Collins for a place in the third round.

Collins advanced past former world number one Caroline Wozniacki who retired with a lower leg injury, after losing the first set 7-6 (7/5).

Czech fourth seed Karolina Plisková eased through to the third round along with Australian Ashleigh Barty, the eighth seed.

In the men's competition, world number five Zverev, the 2017 winner and runner-up to Novak Djokovic last year in Rome, extended his terrible clay-court run, falling 7-5, 7-5 to Italian wild card Matteo Berrettini in the second round.

"The match that I played was horrendous," said Zverev, who

has won just four matches on clay this season, including a run to the quarter-final of the Madrid Open where he was the defending champion.

"I've lost my voice screaming, I'm overjoyed. This is a victory that charges me," said 33rd-ranked Berrettini.

Belgian David Goffin rallied from a set down to beat former French Open champion Stan Wawrinka 4-6, 6-0, 6-2 to set up a meeting with Argentine seventh seed Juan Martin Del Potro for a place in the third round.

Ninth seed Marin Cilic beat Italian wild card Andrea Basso 6-1, 7-5 as Australian Nick Kyrgios struck 15 aces and 41 winners to get past Russian 12th seed Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

Portugal's Joao Sousa saved four match points in the deciding set to battle past American Frances Tiafoe 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4).

Sousa, who also trailed 1/4 in the deciding set tie-break, will play third seed Roger Federer in the second round.

Eight-time Rome winner Rafael Nadal will start his tournament against Jeremy Chardy on Wednesday, after the Frenchman beat compatriot Richard Gasquet 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 in a match suspended overnight on Monday.

## Curry Inspires Warriors to Opening-Game Win Over Blazers



Stephen Curry (middle) is three years older than his brother Seth (right)

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Stephen Curry inspired the Golden State Warriors to a 116-94 win over the Portland Trail Blazers in game one of the NBA Western Conference finals.

Curry scored 36 points, including nine three-pointers, for the defending NBA champions, who are playing their fifth straight Western Conference final.

He also added seven assists and six rebounds as the hosts dominated.

Game two in the best-of-seven series is on Thursday, 16 May, also on top-seeded Golden State's

home court.

"It was a nice flow," said Curry. "It just puts so much pressure on the defense.

"It's fun when everyone's running around, cutting, and we're whipping the ball around - that's when we're at our best."

Klay Thompson also hit 26 points for the Warriors, who won a second consecutive game without star forward Kevin Durant, ruled out because of a calf injury.

The Blazers, whose side included Curry's younger brother Seth, made just seven of 28 three-point attempts.

## Injured Dumoulin Abandons Giro After Start of Fifth Stage

BERLIN (Reuters) - Former Giro d'Italia winner Tom Dumoulin abandoned the race shortly after the start of the fifth stage on Wednesday.

The Dutch rider, winner in 2017 and one of the favorites for the three-week race, injured his left knee in a massive pileup about six km from the line in a 235-km ride

from Orbetello on Tuesday.

"Tom Dumoulin's injuries have proved too painful and he is forced to abandon the Giro d'Italia in the early kilometers of stage 5," Team Sunweb said on Twitter.

The team had said earlier that he had been cleared to race by medical staff and would "give it his best shot".

## Alonso, McLaren Baffled by Issues in Indy 500 Practice

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) - Fernando Alonso has been forced to take it slow in order to pass his Indianapolis 500 "Refresher Test" before he was allowed to turn it loose on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway oval.

Alonso easily passed that final phase with 10 laps over 215 mph, but he never got a chance to turn it loose later in the day.

The two-time Formula One World Champion from Spain was prepared to develop a baseline setup on his car during Tuesday's "Opening Day" practice session for the 103rd Indianapolis 500.

Instead, an electronic issue sent his McLaren Chevrolet

back to the Gasoline Alley Garages.

He completed 50 laps around the 2.5-mile Indianapolis Motor Speedway oval but without full power from his engine, his best lap was 224.162 miles per hour. That was 32nd fastest out of 39 car/driver combinations that turned laps.

Compare that to the fastest speed of the day when defending Indy 500 winner Will Power went 229.745 mph in the No. 12 Verizon Chevrolet.

There are 36 car/driver combinations entered in the race. The extra three car/driver combination laps came when drivers shook down the race setup for their teammates, such



as James Hinchcliffe in the No. 60 Honda for Jack Harvey at Meyer Shank Racing.

According to McLaren officials, Alonso was frustrated at the lack of track time on a

beautiful day in Indianapolis.

The 39-year-old left the track without speaking to the media, but that was part of McLaren's plan to "lay low" on Opening Day.

## Italy's Oldest Club Genoa to Be Put Up for Sale

MILAN (Reuters) - Genoa, Italy's oldest professional football club, will be put up for sale, the Serie A outfit said in a statement.

Founded in 1893, the club has been owned by Enrico Preziosi, head of Italy's largest toy manufacturer, for the last 16 years. "Genoa Cricket and Football Club announces that a mandate had been given to Assietta S.p.A., a financial advisory firm specialized in corporate finance, as advisor for the sale of the company," said the statement.

## Germany Eye Return to World Elite After Decade in Doldrums

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany are targeting a return to the world's elite at the Women's World Cup next month after a string of disappointing results for the two-times champions in recent years.

The Germans won the World Cup in 2003 and 2007 but were eliminated in the quarter-finals in 2011 and finished fourth in 2015, and the fans' passion for women's football appears to have waned. A shock quarter-final exit at the 2017 European Championship, an abysmal performance at the invitational SheBelieves Cup and a poor start to their World Cup qualifying campaign led to coach Steffi Jones being sacked last year.