

Iran, South Korea Share Spoils in Friendly International



South Korea's Na Sang-ho (red shirt) fights for the ball against Iran's Morteza Pouraliganji during their friendly international in Seoul on June 11, 2019. The match ended 1-1.

SEOUL (AFP) - South Korea scored once but also put one into their own net as an entertaining football friendly against Iran ended in a 1-1 draw in Seoul Tuesday.

Hwang Ui-jo found the net in his second straight match for the Taeguk Warriors at Seoul's World Cup Stadium, but Kim Young-gwon conceded an own goal for the hosts.

The Iranians, known as "Team Melli", have never lost to South

Korea in six meetings, with four wins and two draws.

The only thing missing in the action-packed first half was a goal.

Both sides generated strong scoring chances and the two goalkeepers, Jo Hyeon-woo and Alireza Beiranvand, came up huge to keep clean sheets.

Kim Young-gwon nearly powered home a Son Heung-min corner in the 15th minute, but Beiranvand

came up with his first big save of the night.

Jo faced his first test three minutes later when he denied Mehdi Taremi from a low shot from outside the box.

Mehdi Torabi aimed at the far post from the left corner of the box in the 20th minute and saw his well-struck attempt bounce just wide of the target.

Hwang tried to respond for South Korea in the 22nd minute, but Beiranvand turned aside his shot from close range.

Iran had the South Korean defense on their heels for the rest of the half. Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Karim Ansarifard got themselves open in the attacking zone, but neither beat Jo with multiple attempts.

Son Heung-min breathed some life into the South Korean attack with a left-footed shot in the 41st minute, with Beiranvand once again slamming the door shut.

South Korea beat Beiranvand but not the woodwork, as Na Sang-

ho's volley off a Lee Yong cross hit the bottom of the bar and bounced just in front of the goal line.

Iranian sub Ahmad Noorollahi was also denied by the crossbar in the 55th minute, as the teams picked up right where they left off in the second half.

South Korea finally beat Beiranvand in the 57th minute.

Two defenders, Milad Mohammadi and Morteza Pouraliganji, ran into each other as they were tracking the flight of a long pass, and Hwang capitalized on the blunder and flicked a shot over Beiranvand, who'd charged out of the net to challenge the forward.

South Korea's lead last only five minutes, however, as Kim Young-gwon had a Ramin Rezaeian corner hit ricochet off his leg past Jo into the goal.

Neither side came close to breaking the deadlock until Son's strike on stoppage time forced Beiranvand to make another great save.

View photos

Spain Beat Sweden to Stay Ahead in Euro 2020 Qualifying

MADRID (AP) - Sergio Ramos has extended his scoring streak and helped Spain defeat Sweden 3-0 to remain leader of their qualifying group for the 2020 European Championship.

Substitutes Alvaro Morata and Mikel Oyarzabal also scored at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium to give Spain a comfortable five-point lead over second-placed Sweden after four matches in Group F. Romania are also five points back.

"It's a great result in a difficult match against a tough opponent," Ramos said. "We've taken an important step toward making it to the European Championship."



Spain's Sergio Ramos celebrates after scoring the opening goal with a penalty during the Euro 2020 Group F qualifying soccer match between Spain and Sweden at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, June 10, 2019.

Ramos reached 20 goals with the national team, with seven coming since last year's World Cup. He is the national team's top scorer under coach Luis Enrique, who again was absent

for personal reasons.

The result at the Bernabeu extended Spain's winning streak to five matches, and ended Sweden's seven-game unbeaten run.

Ramos converted a 64th-minute penalty kick after a handball by Swedish midfielder Sebastian Larsson following a cross by Spanish forward Marco Asensio.

Ramos also opened the scoring in a 4-1 win at the Faeroe Islands last week, when the central defender became the player with the most wins with a national team, surpassing the record of 121 previously held by fellow Spaniard Iker Casillas.

Tokyo 2020 Podiums to Be Made of Recycled Plastic



TOKYO (Reuters) - Medallists at next year's Summer Olympics will stand on podiums made from recycled plastic waste collected from local households or the ocean, Tokyo 2020 organizers said on Tuesday.

From June 13, collection boxes will be set up at more than 2,000 outlets of local supermarket chain AEON for residents to deposit any unwanted plastic items for the podiums project, organizers said. They are looking to collect as much as 45 tones of plastic to make the approximately 100 podiums needed for next summer's showpiece, they said. It would be the first time Olympic podiums were made from recycled material.

Organizers have sought to frame the Games as environmentally friendly and a mechanism to bring about sustainable change in Japan, which, along with the United States, did not sign on to the G7's ocean plastics charter in 2018. The medals for the Games are being forged from recycled metal collected from old mobile phones and other electronic devices, while the uniforms to be worn by runners in the torch relay will be partially made from recycled plastic bottles.

Roma Hire Paulo Fonseca From Shakhtar Donetsk

ROME (AP) - Roma have hired Paulo Fonseca as coach from Shakhtar Donetsk to try leading the club back into the Champions League.

Roma say the Portuguese coach signed a two-year contract, with an option for a third year.

The club's American president, Jim Pallotta, says Fonseca has "a winning mentality and a reputation for bold, attacking football that will excite our fans."

Roma placed sixth in Serie A after Eusebio Di Francesco was fired in March and Claudio Ranieri took over as interim coach.

Fonseca led Shakhtar to three straight league and cup doubles in Ukraine and leaves behind a spot in the group stage of the Champions League.

Roma start in the Europa League qualifying rounds on July 25.



Paulo Fonseca

Warriors Beat Raptor to Keep Alive NBA Title Hopes



Kawhi Leonard's 26 points for the Raptors were not enough in the fifth game of the NBA Finals

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - The Golden State Warriors kept their pursuit of a third straight NBA title alive with a 106-105 victory over the Toronto Raptors in game five.

The Raptors, seeking a first title, had led the seven-match series 3-1, an advantage that has only been overturned once in Finals history.

Stephen Curry scored 31 points for the Warriors, who lost the returning Kevin Durant to injury in the second quarter.

The Raptors have a second chance to clinch the title in Oakland on Friday.

Game seven, if required, will be back in Toronto on Sunday.

Point guard Curry, 31, described Monday's game as "do or die", adding: "It wasn't pretty in the second half but we just made the shots."

The relief was tempered, however, by the loss of Durant, who had just returned to the court from a calf problem after missing nine play-off games, and suffered a right Achilles tendon injury that left him unable to continue.

The 30-year-old, who was

named 2017 and 2018 NBA Most Valuable Player and is Golden State's top play-off scorer with 34.2 points a game, left the venue on crutches and will have a scan.

"On the one hand I'm so proud of them, just the amazing heart and grit they showed, and on the other I'm just devastated for Kevin," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

"So it's a bizarre feeling we all have right now - an incredible win and a horrible loss at the same time."

The Warriors have won three titles in the past four seasons - their loss to the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2016 is the only occasion a team has given up a 3-1 lead in Finals, which began in 1947.

And that stat is sure to give the Raptors hope of making history on Friday night after seeing their advantage reduced to 3-2 with a turnaround late in the fourth quarter.

Kawhi Leonard top-scored for Toronto with 26 points, including a back-to-back three-pointer, to give his side a lead of six (103-97) with just over three minutes remaining in the game.

Italian Clubs Oppose Juventus-Led Champions League Plan



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah kisses the trophy after winning the Champions League final soccer match between Tottenham Hotspur and Liverpool at the Wanda Metropolitano Stadium in Madrid, Saturday, June 1, 2019.

ROME (AP) - Most of the clubs in the Italian league have opposed Champions League reform ideas pushed by Juventus chairman Andrea Agnelli to close off entries to the competition.

The league said Tuesday that a "significant majority" of the 20-team Serie A refused to support a proposal for changing UEFA club competitions in 2024 that the Agnelli-led European Club Association wants.

Serie A said only Juventus backed the plan at a league meeting in Milan. AC Milan, Inter Milan, Roma and Fiorentina abstained.

Italy joins the other big-five leagues in England, Spain, Germany and France whose members opposed the ECA plan.

The plan seeks guarantees for 24 of 32 Champions League group teams to return the following season. That

would reduce end-of-season intrigue in domestic leagues.

Some storied clubs also want to play each other more often, appearing to be bored with a lack of competition at home. Juventus has won eight straight Italian titles, Bayern Munich has won the last seven in Germany, and Paris Saint-Germain has won six of seven in France.

The ECA concept circulating since March calls for eight-team groups instead of four. That would guarantee clubs more revenue from UEFA for playing 14 games before the knockout rounds instead of the current six.

One option to find space in a congested calendar for more Champions League games is cutting 20-team leagues such as Serie A to as few as 16 teams. Smaller leagues risk having less commercial value.