

Iran Beat Canada to Register First Win at FIVB World Cup

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Igor Kolakovic's team finally registered a win at the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Men's World Cup on Friday.

Team Melli beat Canada 3-1 (18-25, 25-23, 27-25, 25-19) at the White Ring Arena in Nagano.

Kolakovic fielded the young players like Amirhossein Esfandiari, Porya Yali, Aliasghar Mojarad and Javad Karimi in this match.

Sharone Vernon-Evans led Canada with a match-high 24 points.

Mojarad scored 15 points for Iran, joined by Esfandiari with 14 points.

Iran started the campaign with a 3-1 loss against Russia and then was defeated against Egypt 3-1.

Team Melli will meet Australia on Saturday.

Iran national volleyball team coach Igor Kolakovic says that the young players showed their quality in the match against Canada at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup on Friday.

"After two defeats this was a really



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important victory for us because our confidence was down a little bit. After the first set we started to play with our energy and I'm so happy because some players showed their quality, especially players from the bench and the young players who are really the future of Iranian volleyball. I hope that we can keep this kind of energy for the next games," Kolakovic said after the match.

The Montenegrin coach praised Aliasghar Mojarad who led Iran with 15 points in this match.

"Mojarad is more of a blocker than an attacker. I'm not satisfied with his block, because he can be much better in the block, even though he made some points in attack. But he surprised me with his service, because he didn't make as many mistakes as usual, and for that reason I am happy

with his performance," he added.

Iran national volleyball team captain Saied Marouf says that the young players deserved to win against Canada.

"I think we earned a great victory after two losses in the first two days. Today, our young players were so perfect, and I'm so happy with this victory," Marouf said.

"I'm so happy that our young players fought for each point. They played point by point and at the end I think they deserved to win today," he added.

The 2019 edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup features 12 national teams from the five continental confederations playing in Nagano, Fukuoka and Hiroshima in a round-robin format from October 1 to 15.

The Men's World Cup kicked off for five match days in Fukuoka and Nagano before teams move to Hiroshima for the remaining six match days.

Djokovic Stuns Japan Open With Machine-Like Tennis



Serbia's Novak Djokovic overwhelmed his opponent in the quarterfinal match.

TOKYO (Dispatches) – World number one Novak Djokovic on Friday put on a stunning show of supremacy at the Japan Open with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Lucas Pouille of France.

The Serb overwhelmed his opponent in the quarterfinal match, showering Pouille with a barrage of powerful, precision shots to deep, wide corners mixed with delicate drop shots.

"I am not a machine. But I did play like one today," he said after their 50-minute contest.

"This was one of the best matches I played this year. Very, very pleased with the way I feel and played on the court," said Djokovic.

"I am looking forward to another battle tomorrow, hopefully I will be able to keep up with this quality of tennis."

In the semifinals, Djokovic will face 2017 Japan Open champion David Goffin of Belgium, who also comfortably defeated Chung Hyeon of South Korea 6-2, 6-2.

Djokovic's latest victory provided further evidence of his swift recovery from a left shoulder injury that caused him to pull out of the US Open.

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The Japan Open is the first competition for Djokovic since the incident.

He nailed eight aces and never committed double fault while collecting points on 82 percent of his successful first serves.

After cruising through the first set, Djokovic stepped up his tennis and began the second set by taking four games straight.

Pouille fought back to keep the fifth game and in the sixth game, he collected his only break of the match.

But Djokovic denied any other attempt by the French challenger, who was able to survive only one of seven break points.

It was the third meeting between the two men this year. Djokovic won all of them.

In the rest of the Tokyo tournament, qualifier John Millman of Australia defeated Japanese wild card Taro Daniel 6-4, 6-0.

The winner will face American player Reilly Opelka, who beat Japanese qualifier Yasutaka Uchiyama 6-3, 6-3, in the semifinals.

Thiem Tames Murray to Reach China Open Semis

BEIJING (Reuters) - Top seed Dominic Thiem held off a spirited display from Britain's Andy Murray in a 6-2 7-6(3) victory to reach the China Open semi-finals in Beijing on Friday.

Austrian Thiem was off to a flying start as he broke serve in a 14-point opening game, and did so again to move 4-2 up before closing out the first set.

Thiem failed to serve out the match at 5-4 in the second set as he hit three double faults in four points to allow Murray to draw level.

Former world number one Murray, playing his first quarter-final in over a year following a career-saving hip surgery in January, forced the second set into tiebreak but Thiem soon rediscovered his rhythm.



Britain's Andy Murray (R) and Dominic Thiem of Austria react after the match.

Thiem won five of the first six points in the tiebreak before securing a place in his seventh Tour-level semi-final of the season.

"I was a little bit unsure kind of how to go about the match at the beginning... I was feeling a little

bit tired this morning," Murray said.

"We talked about maybe, 'If you are feeling that way, try to finish off some of the points'... I wasn't that happy with the way I went about the match after the first game.

"I went a bit off track there at first, in terms of how I was playing. The week overall was good."

Should Thiem overcome Karen Khachanov in Beijing on Saturday, the 26-year-old will qualify for the season-ending ATP Tour Finals to be held in London from Nov. 10-17.

Alexander Zverev continued his steady progress this week with a 7-6(3) 6-2 win over American Sam Querrey.

From 2-2 in the second set, Zverev reeled off four consecutive games to set up a semi-final showdown with Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Third seed Tsitsipas struck 25 winners and committed just seven unforced errors in a clinical display to beat American John Isner 7-6(3) 6-3.

Esteghlal Earn First Win after Six weeks

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Esteghlal football team eventually earned a win at the Iran professional League (IPL).

On Friday, the Blues defeated Gol Gohar Sirjan 2-1 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

It was Esteghlal's first win after six weeks under coaching of Andrea Stramaccioni.

Esteghlal Croatian defender Hrvoje Milić gave the host a lead just six minutes into the match but Behnam Barzai levelled the score from the penalty spot five minutes later.

Mehdi Ghaedi scored the winner in the 49th minute. Gol Gohar goalkeeper Milad Farahani gifted him the ball into the six-yard area.

Esteghlal started the new season with a 1-0 late defeat to Machine Sazi in Tabriz and drew 1-1 with Foolad and Naft Masjed Soleyman in the second and third weeks, respectively.

Esteghlal lost to its arch-rival Persepolis 1-0 in week fourth and drew 2-2 with Zob Ahan in its next match.

Esteghlal has six points from six matches in the table.

Three Iranian Referees at Tokyo 2020 Wrestling Test Event

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Three Iranian referees have traveled to Tokyo for the 2020 wrestling test event.

Mohammad Ebrahim Emami, Mohammad Mossallaeipour and Nima Sadeghi have been invited

by Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee.

Fans will not be able to attend the test event.

Test events hosted or co-hosted by the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee serve as a rehearsal

to test the organizational and operational readiness.

Tokyo 2020 will be held from July 24 to August 9.

McLaren to Return to Mercedes Engines From 2021

SOCHI, Russia (Reuters) - McLaren will be reunited with Mercedes engines from the 2021 season as the former champions go back to using the German manufacturer's power units in their bid to return to the top.

The Woking-based team are currently supplied by Renault, having joined forces with the French company last year.

They will see out that deal, which runs until the end of 2020, before making the switch back to Mercedes as part of a long-term agreement until at least 2024.

"We are delighted to welcome McLaren back to the Mercedes-Benz racing family with this new power unit supply agreement," said Mercedes motorsports head Toto Wolff in a joint statement with McLaren

issued at the Russian Grand Prix on Saturday.

"We hope that this new long-term agreement marks another milestone for McLaren as they aim to take the fight to the sport's top teams, including our Mercedes works team."

The McLaren-Mercedes partnership initially ran from 1995 to the end of 2014.

It turned McLaren, enduring a slump after their heady days of dominance during the late 1980s and early 90s with Honda, into a force to be reckoned with once again.

The combination won 78 races, a constructors' title and three drivers' titles with Mika Hakkinen (1998, 1999) and Lewis Hamilton who raced to his first Formula One title with the team in 2008.

Man Utd Held by AZ Alkmaar in Europa League



Daniel James (C) is Manchester United's joint-leading scorer this season with three goals.

LONDON (AFP) – Manchester United stuttered to a drab 0-0 draw against AZ Alkmaar in the Europa League group stage on Thursday, while Steven Gerrard's Rangers conceded an injury-time goal in a 2-1 loss at Swiss side Young Boys.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team again struggled badly in attack and failed to test Alkmaar goalkeeper Marco Bizot to leave United still searching for a first away win since March.

Academy product Brandon Williams was handed his first start for United, who saw teenager Mason Greenwood denied by a superb block from Ron Vlaar on 30 minutes.

The game was played in The Hague, on an artificial surface described as "one of the worst" by Solskjaer, after a storm damaged Alkmaar's home ground in August.

United were without Paul Pogba after the midfielder aggravated an ankle injury against Arsenal on Monday. He was also left out of the France squad named Thursday by Didier Deschamps.

Since their 4-0 thrashing of Chelsea on the opening day of the Premier League campaign, United have failed to score more than once in any match.

They rarely threatened in the Netherlands with substitute Jesse Lingard firing wide and Solskjaer reacting in disbelief when Marcus Rashford appeared to be chopped down in the penalty area.

Owen Wijndal and Oussama Idrissi forced David de Gea into a couple of smart saves at the other end as the draw left United level on four points in Group L with Partizan Belgrade, who won 2-1 away to Astana.

Colombian forward Alfredo Morelos put Rangers ahead just before half-time in Bern, but Young Boys levelled through Roger Assale before Christian Fassnacht grabbed a 93rd-minute winner for the hosts.

Goals from Jens Toornstra and Rick Karsdorp gave Feyenoord a 2-0 home victory over Porto in a clash of former European champions in the other match in Group G.

Wolves, in their first European campaign since 1980, rebounded from an opening loss to Braga as Willy Boly's stoppage-time goal earned them a 1-0 win at Besiktas.

Braga and Slovan Bratislava drew 2-2 to bump both sides up to four points at the top of Group K, while Austrian debutants Wolfsberg drew 1-1 at home to Roma in Group J.

Arsenal host Standard Liege in Group F later while Celtic take on CFR Cluj, the Romanians who ousted them in the third qualifying round of the Champions League.

Five-time Europa League champions Sevilla are also at home toAPOEL.