

IPL Teams Cleared to Start Training in Iran

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – All Iranian league clubs can begin group training sessions on Thursday, acting president of the Iran Football League Organization Soheil Mahdi said.

“The teams will start their group training sessions on Thursday and the competition will resume on 11 June,” Mahdi said. “We will announce the fixtures as soon as possible,” he added.

Persepolis leads the Iran Professional League (IPL) standings on 47 points with Sepahan and Tractor 10 points behind.

The death toll from the novel coronavirus in Iran surpassed 7,000 on Monday, while nearly 95,661 positive cases have recovered from the disease.



Bayer Leverkusen Beat Werder Bremen 4-1



Leverkusen's German midfielder Kai Havertz (C) scores the opening goal during the German first division Bundesliga football match Werder Bremen v Bayer 04 Leverkusen on May 18, 2020 in Bremen, northern Germany as the season resumed following a two-month absence due to the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

BREMEN, Germany (Dispatches) - Bayer Leverkusen stayed in the hunt for a top-four finish in the Bundesliga after two goals by striker Kai Havertz as well as one each by Mitchell Weiser and Kerem Demirbay helped them to a 4-1 win at struggling Werder Bremen.

The result left Bayer fifth on 50 points from 26 games, one behind fourth-placed Leipzig and eight adrift of leaders Bayern Munich. Werder, who suffered a record-extending seventh straight home defeat, stayed 17th on 18 points from 25 matches.

With no spectators present in the stadium as part of the COVID-19 precautions, the game descended into a lull before a frantic five-minute spell produced three goals midway through the first half.

Havertz fired Leverkusen ahead in the 28th minute when he rose above his marker at the far post and headed past keeper Jiri Pavlenka after a darting run and cross by Moussa Diaby.

Theodor Gebre Selassie levelled two minutes later with a cheeky back-heel from six metres after Leonardo Bittencourt swung in a corner, but more slack defending by Bremen allowed the visitors to nose ahead again in the 33rd minute.

Havertz was left completely unmarked to head home from eight meters after Kerem Demirbay floated in an inch-perfect free kick and Bremen fell apart in the second half as the visitors carved them open almost at will.

Ronaldo Back Training at Juventus After Two Months

TURIN, Italy (AFP) - Cristiano Ronaldo returned to training with Juventus in Turin on Tuesday after an absence of over two months because of the coronavirus pandemic. The 35-year-old drove himself into the Juventus Training Centre in a Jeep with tinted windows.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner will undergo medical and physical tests before joining up with his teammates in training, according to media reports.

Juventus players returned to individual training on May 4, the day Ronaldo returned to Italy after spending lockdown in his native Portugal.

For the past two weeks, he has



FILE - In this March 8, 2020 file photo, Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo runs with the ball during the last Serie A soccer match Juventus played before the coronavirus stop, at the Allianz Stadium in Turin, Italy.

been in quarantine in his villa in Turin.

Ronaldo played in Juventus's last Serie A game before the season was suspended, a 2-0 win over Inter Milan behind closed doors at the Allianz Stadium on March 8.

Italy has been one of the countries hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic with more than 32,000 deaths.

Juventus are leading Lazio by one point as they target a ninth consecutive Scudetto.

Ronaldo is the first Juventus foreign player, among those who left Italy during the lockdown, to return to the team's Continassa training centre.

Lance Armstrong Admits to First Doping 'Probably at 21'



Lance Armstrong taking part in a three-day race in Costa Rica in 2018.

PARIS (AFP) - Disgraced former American cyclist Lance Armstrong has revealed he first started doping from the age of 21, during his first season as a professional.

“Wow, straight to the point, probably 21,” Armstrong replied when asked how old he was when he first doped as part of an ESPN documentary.

The exchange with U.S. journalist Marina Zenovich appeared in a 90-second trailer released on Monday for a two-part documentary called “Lance”

which will be broadcast by ESPN on May 24 and 31.

During the clip, in which former U.S. Postal Service teammates Tyler Hamilton and George Hincapie respond to the same question about performance-enhancing drugs, Armstrong, now 48, explains there are “a bunch of ways to define doping”.

Armstrong dominated professional cycling in the 2000s and won the Tour de France seven years in a row from 1999 to 2005.

Olympic Finalist Runner Banned 4 Years for Evading Test



Bralon Taplin

LAUSANNE, Switzerland (AP) - Olympic finalist Bralon Taplin lost his appeal against a four-year ban for dodging a doping test, and will miss the Tokyo Games and the next two track and field world championships.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport on Tuesday said its judge found Taplin's explanation “to be implausible” that he was never approached or chaperoned to give a sample after winning an April 2019 race in Grenada.

The judge “was comfortably satisfied that the athlete was guilty of the offense of evading sample collection,” the court said in a statement. The 28-year-old Taplin, a for-

mer NCAA relay champion running for Texas A&M University, is banned until Sept. 24, 2023.

Taplin finished seventh in the 400 final running for Grenada at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, and is the eighth fastest man on the all-time list at 400 indoors.

The CAS judge upheld a ruling by the Caribbean anti-doping organization. It found Taplin was told by a chaperone during track-side media interviews in Grenada that he was needed to give a sample.

The Florida-born athlete's defense was “he had not been properly notified that he had been selected for the doping control test,” the court said.

Fury Plans to Emulate Klitschko's Longevity

LONDON (AFP) - Tyson Fury has set his sights on emulating Wladimir Klitschko's sustained dominance as the British fighter warned he can remain a world champion until he retires.

Klitschko was the undisputed world champion for over four years until Fury earned a shock win against the Ukrainian in 2015.

Fury was unable to defend those titles amid mental health problems, but he has bounced back impressively.



Tyson Fury, right, in the fight against Wladimir Klitschko

The 31-year-old wants to stay at the top after regaining his WBC heavyweight belt in February with an emphatic win over Deontay Wilder, who he is due to face again once the coronavirus is subdued.

“I've won every single belt in boxing. From the English title to becoming the undisputed heavyweight champ of the world. All done, all finished. Considered the best, done,” Fury told Sky Sports on Tuesday.

Man Utd Urge Fans to Stay Away If Matches Resume

LONDON (AFP) - Manchester United have warned fans to stay away from matches played behind closed doors at Old Trafford if the Premier League restarts amid the coronavirus crisis.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side are set to resume small group training on Wednesday as Premier League clubs step up the “Project Restart” plan to finish the season.

But all 92 remaining matches will have to be played in front of empty stands due to the pandemic, leading United to activate a refund or rebate to ticket holders for their remaining

home fixtures. If the Premier League get their wish to play at clubs' normal stadiums rather than at neutral venues, then United will have four home league matches to play.

Aware of the danger of supporters gathering in large groups during the health crisis, United have pleaded with their fans to stay away from matches and watch on television.

“We share your disappointment that you will not be able to watch United in person from within the stadium, but we would encourage you to give your continued loyal support from



the comfort and safety of your home,” United said in an email to supporters on Tuesday.