

Team Melli to Enter Austria and Sweden Without Pouladi

TEHRAN (Persian League) -The Iranian Football Federation has made no attempts to get permission for Mehrdad Pouladi and Soroush Rafiei to join Team Melli in its European camps.

Pouladi and Rafiei are tied up with military service and won't be allowed to join Team Melli in their upcoming camps.

The Iranian Football Federation

hasn't made any requests to the government in order to have these two players granted special rights, so that they can be allowed off of conscription- even if temporarily.

Team Melli will play Chile, on March 24th, in Austria. Then on March 31st, they will face Sweden at Friends Arena Stadium in Stockholm.

Shiraz Candidate to Host 2016 Greco-Roman World Cup

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Shiraz has been proposed to World Wrestling Union as a host city for 2016 Greco-Roman World Cup.

United World Wrestling bureau

member KIM Ik-Jong from South Korea traveled to city of Shiraz in Fars province, southern Iran, Saturday morning to examine the city's facilities for hosting the

World Cup.

Russia and the United States are also candidates for hosting the event.

The 2015 Greco-Roman World

Cup held in Tehran on February 19-20 with the participation of eight teams.

Azerbaijan Republic won the tile followed by Russia and Iran.

Nigeria, Guinea Secure Spots at Chile 2015

SANTIAGO (FIFA) - Nigeria and Guinea punched their ticket to the FIFA U-17 World Cup Chile 2015 after finishing first and second respectively in Group A of the CAF U-17 Championship 2015 played in Niger. The four semi-

finalists from the tournament will represent Africa at the U-17 World Cup, with the two teams from Group B to be determined on Sunday.

The Golden Eagles, who beat Zambia 3-1 on Saturday, ended

the group phase one top with two wins and one draw. Meanwhile, Guinea, despite being beaten by Niger 2-1, finished second in Group A with one win, one draw and one defeat.

With Cameroon unable to finish

second in Group B after losing their first two matches, the final two semi-final tickets and subsequent spots up for grabs to Chile 2015 will be decided between Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and South Africa on Sunday.

Fernando Alonso Hospitalized After Crash

MONTMELO (China Daily) - Fernando Alonso has been taken to hospital by helicopter after crashing in his McLaren during Formula One preseason testing on Sunday.

Track officials at the Barcelo-

na-Catalunya circuit say Alonso went off at turn three and hit the wall. They say he was transported to hospital "to continue with medical tests" after being treated at the circuit medical center.

McLaren has been plagued

by technical problems this pre-season after switching to Honda engines ahead of the upcoming season.

Ferrari, the two-time champion's former team, tweeted "All the best Fernando."



McLaren Formula One driver Fernando Alonso of Spain walks by the paddock while escorted during a testing session at the Catalunya's race-track in Montmelo, near Barcelona

Man City to Offer Jovetic as Part of Pogba Deal

LONDON (FNA) - Manchester City are hoping to use Steven Jovetic as a bargaining tool to land £75 million Paul Pogba.

Juventus have already told champions City that they will take Jovetic off their hands in the summer after both player and club accepted that the Montenegrin striker's future lies away from the Etihad, Mirror reported.

And City are hoping to use that interest to get the Italian champions around the negotiating table for talks about Pogba.

As exclusively revealed by Sunday Mirror Sport last month, they



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are one of a number of clubs who have been alerted to the growing belief in Turin that Juventus will cash in on the French midfielder at the end of the season.

A swap deal that would see Jovetic as a makeweight is unlikely, given the complications of arranging such a transfer, but City will look to use Juve's interest in their striker to open a dialogue about Pogba's availability.

Jovetic, a £22 million signing from Fiorentina 18 months ago, has been devastated by City's decision to dump him from their Champions League squad for Wilfried Bony.

Increase of Female Referees One of the Goals in NORCECA

SANTO DOMINGO (FIVB) - Development and increase of the number of female referees are among the main tasks in 2015 for the NORCECA Refereeing Commission which concluded its meetings in Santo Domingo on Friday following a one-day seminar.

NORCECA has 18 international female referees, including five candidates, of a total of 105 (80 male referees and 7 candidates) currently registered.

The information was presented by Jose Ramon Perez Vento, president of the commission and member of the FIVB Refereeing Commission.

Perez Vento informed that, in collaboration with the NORCECA/FIVB Regional Development Center in the Dominican Republic, courses for international candidates for both volleyball and beach volleyball are programmed to take place in 2015.

Other important goals for the year include to reach the 70 percent of countries within NORCECA Confederation (41 members, including territories) with at least one international referee and also to increase the participation of the referees in FIVB competitions.

One of the proposals to be submitted to the NORCECA Board of Administration will be the classification of the referees in three categories (A, B and C) based on experience and number of matches officiated in the different level of events.

The topics of the seminar included the following:

Psychological and Physiological factors impacting high performance refereeing, review of the changes of the rules of the game and the case book, use of new technology, cooperation with referee manager and duties of the referee delegates before, during

and after the competition.

The president of NORCECA Confederation, Cristobal Marte



The members of NORCECA Refereeing Commission gathered together for two days in Santo Domingo

Hoffiz, participated in the seminar and also pronounced the welcoming and closing speeches.

Marte Hoffiz expressed, "the

development of referees should maintain the same improvement of the quality of the game in the region," adding that

NORCECA Confederation will continue making constant efforts to conduct refereeing that direction as well.

Iran Ranks 8th in Fencing World Cup

WARSAW (IRNA) - An Iranian athlete came eighth in men's Saber competition at the Fencing World Cup in Warsaw, Poland on Saturday.

Mojtaba Abedini defeated Russian Alexander Trushakov 15-12 in round of 64 and then beat Alexey Yakimenko also from Russia 15-14 and advanced to Round of 16.

The Iranian fencer beat Woo Young Won from South Korea 15-10 and qualified for Round of 8 and in this stage he lost to Romanian

Tiberiu Dolniceanu 15-14, Tasnim reported.

In the final match, Bongil Gu from South Korea defeated Dolniceanu and won the gold medal.

The bronze medal went to Luca Curatoli from Italy.

Iran's Mohammad Rahbari, Ali Pakdaman and Mohammad Fotouhi finished in 35th, 39th and 75th places respectively.

The World Cup brought 203 fencers together.

Persepolis Can be Different in Asia

TEHRAN (Persian League) - Former Persepolis and Team Melli player Mehdi Mahdavia believes that the Reds can get good results despite struggling in the Iran Professional League.

"Persepolis was not what the fans expected in the current season in the Iran football league but AFC Champions League is a different story and they can get good results there," Mahdavia told Persepolis official website.

"I think one of the main reasons of

Persepolis poor performance is that players are suffering mental problems. If the fans come to stadium in the first game against Lekhwiya we will see a different Persepolis and the players will play with more enthusiasm," former Hamburg player added.

Persepolis has been drawn alongside Saudi champion Nassr, Qatari Stars League winner Lekhwiya and Uzbek side Bunyodkor in group A of the Asian Champions League.

Nadal Crashes Out of Rio Open

RIO DE JANEIRO (Xinhua) -- Rafael Nadal was eliminated from the Rio Open on Saturday, suffering a 1-6, 6-2, 7-5 defeat to Italian Fabio Fognini in the semifinals.

The 14-time Grand Slam winner looked remarkably fresh early despite having only 14 hours to recover from his quarterfinal victory over Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas.

The first four games of the second set went against serve before Fognini won the next three games to take the match into a deciding set.

Nadal became visibly affected by cramp as both players held serve in the final set.

The 28-year-old Spaniard twice saved match points in the 12th game before the tournament's fourth-seed secured victory with a backhand cross-court winner.



Nadal crashes out of Rio Open

Nadal was upbeat after the match despite suffering his first semifinal defeat on clay since falling to Carlos Moya in Croatia 12 years ago.

"It was not a negative week. I feel my tennis is close, closer than a month ago to the level I want to arrive again," said Nadal, who underwent surgery to remove his appendix in November.

"I have to be happy the way I played that first set. I got tired too early today but these kinds of things can happen."

Fognini will play David Ferrer in Sunday's final after the Spaniard overcame Andreas Haider-Maurer of Austria 7-5, 6-1 in the other semifinal.

"Everybody knows he (Nadal) is the best on this surface," Fognini said. "I don't have words to describe this moment. I am super happy. It's the best match I have won so far in my career."

Meanwhile top seed Sara Errani of Italy will play Slovakia's Anna Schmiedlova in the women's final.

Errani progressed by defeating Sweden's Johanna Larsson 7-5, 6-3 while Schmiedlova beat Irina-Camelia Begu of Romania 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.