

Kish Island to Host FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A total of 21 teams have announced their readiness to participate at the 2018 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour on Iran's Kish Island.

The 3-star competition is scheduled to take place on Kish Island from Feb. 20 to 24.

Miguel Quintana from Spain will be the event's supervisor and Switzerland Heinz Tschumi is Referee Manager

The 2018 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour is the global elite professional beach volleyball circuit organized by the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) for the 2018 beach volleyball season.

Starting in September 2017 after the end of the year season, the 2018 FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour Calendar comprises three FIVB World Tour 5-star tournaments, eleven 4-star, five 3-star, five 2-star, seventeen 1-star events and the World Tour Finals, all organized by the FIVB.

Williams Leads Clippers Past Grizzlies, 113-105

LOS ANGELES (AP) - It's happening with such regularity now, people are just expecting Lou Williams to come off the bench and put up 20-plus points while leading the Los Angeles Clippers to a victory.

Williams did it again Tuesday night, scoring 33 to send the Clippers to their fourth consecutive win, 113-105 over the Memphis Grizzlies.

The standout reserve shot 8 of 15 from the field. Continually driving to the basket, he hit all 15 of his free throws.

"He's obviously a great scorer, but when you draw that many fouls and get to the free throw line that many times, you're almost impossible to guard," Memphis interim coach J.B. Bickerstaff said.

Williams leads NBA reserves in scoring at 21.6 points per game. He scored 40 off the

bench in his last game against Charlotte. He has scored at least 30 off the bench eight times this season, tied for the second-most in NBA history. Ricky Pierce (1989-90) holds the record with 17.

Williams got scoring help Tuesday from Blake Griffin, who had 21 points - including five down the stretch after the Grizzlies had erased most of an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter to close to 103-101.

Tyreke Evans led Memphis with 18 points, six assists and five rebounds. Mario Chalmers had 15 points off the bench.

Williams and Griffin, however, proved too much for the Grizzlies in the final moments.

Rookie guard C.J. Williams, starting for an injured Austin Rivers, added a career-high 18 points for the Clippers in his 10th career start.



Lou Williams #23 of the LA Clippers shoots the ball during the game against the Memphis Grizzlies on January 2, 2018 at STAPLES Center in Los Angeles, California.

Iran's Tayebi Nominated for Best Player of World Prize



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Hossein Tayebi from Iran national futsal team has been nominated for the Best Player of the World prize.

Tayebi is a member of the team who won the title of the 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Turkmenistan in late September.

The final results will be announced on Jan. 10 by futsalplanet.com.

The Iranian national futsal team and U-20 team have been nominated for the Best Team of the World.

Two Iranian goalkeepers namely, Sepehr Mohammadi and Alireza Samimi will vie for the Best Goalkeeper of the World award.

Team Melli coach Mohammad Nazemalsharieh is a candidate for the Best Team of the World, and Tohid Lotfi has been nominated for the Best Young Player of the World prize.

Best Player of the World Nominees

(In strict alphabetical order!)

*Santiago Basile (ARG)

Kimberley A.C. Futsal (ARG) - ARGENTINA N.T.

*Carlos Ortiz Jiménez (ESP)

Movistar Inter FS (ESP) - SPAIN N.T.

*Dyego Henrique Zuffo (BRA)

FC Barcelona Lassa (ESP) - BRAZIL N.T.

*Rodolfo Fortino De Araujo (BRA/ITA)

Sporting Clube de Portugal (POR) - ITALY N.T.

*Jackson "Samurai" Van Riel Dalcana (BRA)

JEC/Krona Futsal Joinville (BRA)

*Humberto Honorio (BRA/ITA)

ASD Luparense C5 (ITA) - ITALY N.T.

*Landry Ngala (FRA)

Garges Djibson Futsal (FRA) - FRANCE N.T.

*Ricardo Filipe da Silva Braga "Ricardinho" (POR)

Movistar Inter FS (ESP) - PORTUGAL N.T.

*Jirawat Sornwichian (THA)

Chonburi Bluewave Futsal Club (THA) - THAILAND N.T.

*Hossein Tayebi Bidgoli (IRN)

AFC Kairat Almaty (KAZ) Thai Son Nam Futsal Club (VIE) - IRAN N.T.

Halep Secures Top Melbourne Seeding After Gritty Fightback

SHENZHEN, China (AFP) - Simona Halep guaranteed top seeding for this month's Australian Open after battling back from a set down to defeat Duan Yingying 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 in Shenzhen Wednesday.

The Romanian is now assured to remain world number one ahead of Caroline Wozniacki and Garbine Muguruza for the season's first Grand Slam which begins in Melbourne on Jan. 15.

Looking for a first victory over a top 10 player and cheered on by

her home fans, the powerful world number 91 from China blasted her way to the first set without conceding a single break point.

Halep roared back, dropping just three more games to reach the quarter-finals of the WTA Tour event that she won in 2015 after an hour and 37 minutes of action.

Halep, who posted 21 winners to just 13 unforced errors, will next face another big hitter in teenage sensation Aryna Sabalenka from Belarus.

S. Korea Well Prepared If N. Korea Attends Olympics: Organizers

SEOUL (AFP) - Host South Korea is well prepared should North Korea decide to take part in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, with a cruise ship ready to transport and accommodate its athletes, organizers said Wednesday.

Lee Hee-beom, head of the 2018 Olympic organizing committee, said they had long been preparing for the North's attendance at what he described as the "largest-ever winter festival in history".

"We're making preparations in case North Korea sends not only its athletes but a cheering squad and support staff as well," Lee said.

"The International Olympic Committee has also said several times that it would support North Korea's participation," Lee added.

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un said in a new year speech that his country wished success for the Olympics, to be held from February 9-25, and would consider sending a delegation.

Kim also announced the reopening of a hotline with the South to discuss attending the Olympics, as a "significant first

step" in improving ties.

Seoul and organizers have billed the Winter Games as a "peace Olympics" and have been keen for the North to take part.

But the main venues are just 80 kilometers (50 miles) from the heavily fortified border and the build-up to the event has been overshadowed by high tensions over the North's nuclear and missile tests.

Governor Choi Moon-soon of Gangwon province, where the event is sited, has said the province is willing to send a cruise ship to the North to take its delegation to the South's port of Sokcho near the Olympic venues.

Choi said he had made the offer to a North Korean official, who reacted positively and promised to convey it to leader Kim.

"A cruise ship will be a convenient solution to the problems with security and lodging," the governor said.

When the North attended the 2002 Asian Games in the South's port city of Busan, its delegation arrived on a cruise ship and used it as a floating hotel during the event.

Bayern Confirm Interest in Schalke Star Goretzka



Leon Goretzka

MUNICH (Goal.com) - Bayern Munich sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic has confirmed the club are keen to sign Schalke midfielder Leon Goretzka.

The Germany international is out of contract at the end of the season and has attracted significant interest from some of Europe's biggest clubs in recent weeks.

Barcelona, Juventus and Bayern are said to be the front-runners, with the Bundesliga champions firmly throwing their hat into the ring with Salihamidzic's latest comments.

Speaking to reporters at Bayern's training camp in

Doha, Salihamidzic said: "Leon Goretzka is a great player, that's clear.

"But he is a Schalke player and we obviously respect that. But he is a Germany international and we can say that we are interested in him."

Salihamidzic's revelations come a day after Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes praised the 22-year-old, but suggested Barcelona are still interested.

"If I read it correctly, his manager [Jorg] Neubauer said that they have not yet decided. The Spaniards are still there in the race," Heynckes said.

"He is a bright, intelligent boy. He knows exactly what is best for himself."

Goretzka joined Schalke from Bochum in 2013 and has made 130 appearances for the Gelsenkirchen side, scoring 19 goals.

Vonn Ready for Ski Battle in Pyeongchang

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Lindsey Vonn has vowed not to take the safe option at what are likely to be her last Winter Olympics next month despite being dogged by questions about her health after recent crashes.

The 33-year-old American is the most successful World Cup women's skier of all time with 78 victories while clinching four overall titles, but has only two Olympic medals -- a gold in downhill and bronze in super-G, both won in Vancouver in 2010.

In recent competitions, however, Vonn has seen a mix of crashes and wins, making her chances in Pyeongchang difficult to handicap.

In early December she crashed twice at Canada's Lake Louise, where she has a long history of success, before racing to a super-G World Cup win at Val d'Isere in France two weeks later.

"As long as I'm healthy and I'm confident, then I'll be in a great position when I get to Pyeongchang," she told the Vail Daily in November.

"Everyone asks me if I'm afraid, after so many crashes do I take my foot off the gas pedal? And while I am smarter and I try to manage my risk better than I have in the past, it's still ski racing.

"You can try to manage risk as much as you want, but at the end of the day, it's a dangerous sport."

Managing risk has been on her mind for the past four years after she missed the 2014 Sochi Olympics due to a right knee injury.

It was arguably the most serious of a career that had been relatively injury free during her first decade as a professional as she became a household name for her exploits on the slopes and off them, courtesy of a high-profile relationship with golfer Tiger Woods.

Since the February 2013 crash that contributed to her missing the Sochi Games she has endured a series of setbacks that include multiple broken bones, surgeries and grueling rehabilitations.

"I'm 33, I've been injured quite a few



Lindsey Vonn of the U.S. skis during in the Alpine Skiing World Cup women's downhill race in the Bavarian ski resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, February 6, 2016.

times, but my passion for the sport has never changed," she said.

"Since I started skiing and started racing when I was eight years old, I've loved what I do, and I don't want to

stop doing it.

"I'm focused on winning the World Cups, but just getting to February healthy is the only thing I should be really focused on."