

Iran Beach Soccer Still Fifth in World Ranking

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – The Iranian national beach soccer team remained unchanged in the world ranking. Team Melli is the top team in Asia with 2309 points. Iran defended its title at the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup in November. Portugal replaced Brazil at top of the ranking with 4266 points. Brazil moved down to second place with 4245 points. Italy and Russia are third and fourth with 3946 and 3923 points, respectively.



Tennis Establishes Virus Player Fund, Raises \$6mn



Austria's Dominic Thiem is sceptical about a relief fund for struggling tennis players

PARIS (AFP) - A fund for tennis players hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic has been created, the sport's governing bodies announced, adding that they had contributed more than \$6 million (5.3 million euros). In a joint statement, the ATP and WTA tours, the International Tennis Federation and the four Grand Slam tournaments -- the Australian Open, Roland-Garros, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open -- said the Player Relief Program will support those "who are facing unprecedented challenges due to the global impact of COVID-19". With the tennis season suspended until at least July 13, some "800 ATP/WTA singles and doubles players" are in need of financial support, the statement continued, with eligibility for the fund determined by a player's ranking and previous prize money earnings.

The fund can also be donated to via initiatives including auctions, player donations and virtual tennis games, added the governing bodies, who last month announced talks about creating the program. The virus has caused havoc to the calendar, with Wimbledon cancelled for the first time since World War II and the French Open postponed until the end of September. The United States Tennis Association will decide in mid-June whether or not the U.S. Open will take place in New York. However despite the financial difficulties facing hundreds of players, the idea of a relief fund was dismissed by world number three Dominic Thiem, who said last month he would not give lower-ranked players his money.

Bundesliga Set to Be Given Green Light for Restart

BERLIN (Reuters) - Germany's Bundesliga is set to be given the green light for a restart, probably from May 15, as part of measures to further ease the country's coronavirus regulations, two people familiar with the preparations told Reuters. The Bundesliga would be the first of the five major European domestic soccer leagues to resume play after a stoppage which has seen almost all football put on



Bayern Munich's players practice during a training session with headcoach Hansi Flick at the football team's training grounds in Munich, southern Germany, on May 5, 2020.

hold around the world since mid-March. German states are set agree on the restart in a teleconference with Chancellor Angela Merkel scheduled for Wednesday, the sources said. Matches would take place under strict conditions - and with no fans in stadiums. So far Portugal, Poland and Hungary have given dates for restarting their national leagues, all towards the end of May.

Juventus Players Back Training Awaiting Quarantined Ronaldo



Aaron Ramsey resumes training for Juventus.

centre, while Cristiano Ronaldo began two weeks' coronavirus quarantine after returning to Italy. Captain Chiellini, 35, arrived early with Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci, just after midfielder Aaron Ramsey. Playmaker Miralem Pjanic showed up in the afternoon, along with Juan Cuadrado, Mattia De Sciglio, Federico Bernardeschi and Daniele Rugani. Serie A champions Juve said the training sessions, which are allowed thanks to Sunday's green light from the Italian interior ministry, "will take place

on an individual basis and with staggered arrivals to allow full compliance with the regulations in force". "After a day of tests and exams carried out yesterday at J Medical, some of the Juventus players started training at the Continassa Training Centre, where they officially began their recovery to regain competitive form," Juve added. Ronaldo's return is more uncertain after two months of confinement on his native island of Madeira, having played in Juventus' last match against Inter Milan on March 8 behind closed doors.

Giro d'Italia Branded 'Biggest Loser' in New Cycling Calendar

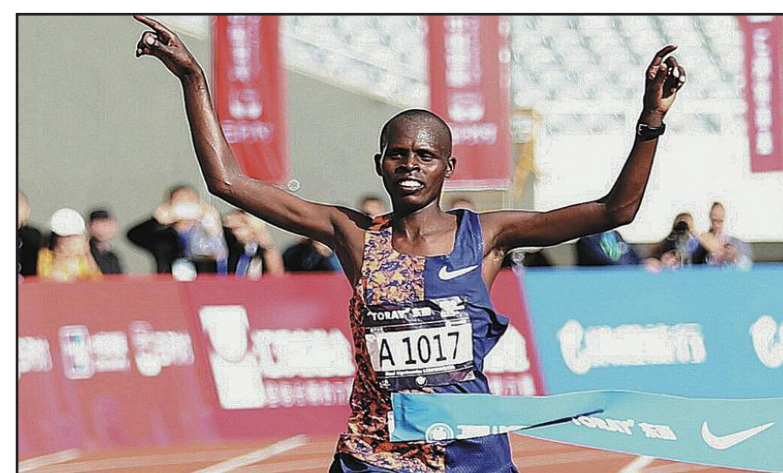
MILAN (AFP) - Italy's Giro d'Italia was branded "the biggest loser" on Wednesday amid anger over the revised international cycling calendar which Italians believe favors the Tour de France. "Rosa Di Rabbia (Pink with anger)," daily Gazzetta Dello Sport wrote on the front page of "a decision that goes against common sense and history". "Lots of races and little space: the Giro loses," agreed La Repubblica. Cycling governing body UCI on Tuesday revealed the new calendar which it is hoped will salvage



Ex-world champion Peter Sagan had been expected to compete for the first time in the 2020 Giro d'Italia

a season in turmoil amid the coronavirus pandemic which has killed nearly 260,000 worldwide. Italy, where 29,000 people have died, will host the first race on August 1 with the Strade Bianca in Siena, with the final European race also on the peninsula with the Giro di Lombardia on October 31. But the three-week Giro d'Italia, which had been due to get underway this weekend, has been slated from October 3-25 with a six-day overlap with rival Spanish tour, Vuelta a Espana and will be raced at the same time as three 'Monument' classics.

Kenya's Lonyangata Keeps Eyes on Paris Prize



Kenya's Paul Lonyangata is hopeful of a return to competition at October's Paris Marathon, provided the race gets the go-ahead by the French government.

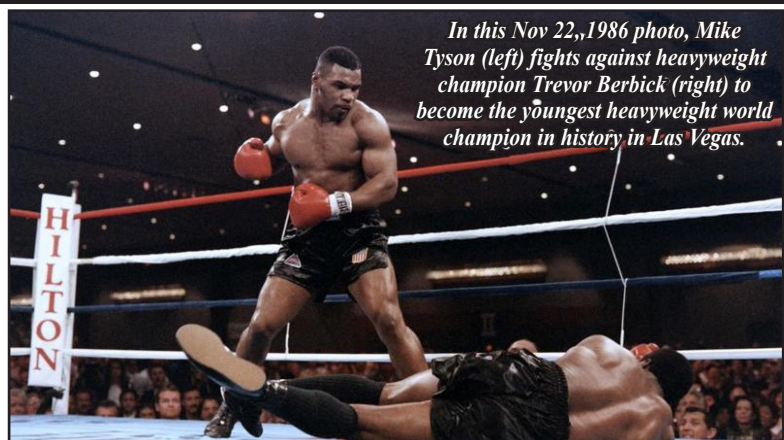
LONDON (AP) - Kenya's Paul Lonyangata is targeting a glorious return to action at the postponed Paris Marathon in October. Lonyangata, the reigning Shanghai Marathon champion, finished third in Paris last year to miss out on a hat-trick of victories in the French capital, having won the 2017 and 2018 editions. This year's race has been rescheduled from April 5 to Oct 18 due to the coronavirus pandemic. Now, with his training restricted

back home, Lonyangata is trying to prepare as best as possible for a road-racing resumption, with reigning in Paris again top of his agenda. First and foremost, though, Lonyangata wants to see the world rid of COVID-19. "The world today is different and we must adapt to what the health officials are telling us. I still do my training, though not as I would have wanted," the 27-year-old said last week from West Pokot in Kenya.

Mike Tyson Back in Shape as He Considers Charity Exhibitions

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Mike Tyson's decision to return to training has been met with enthusiasm from fans and some fellow fighters after the release of a short video that shows the 53-year-old still has plenty of speed and power as he ponders boxing in exhibition bouts. The former world heavyweight champion, who said he could return to the ring in exhibitions to raise money for charity, posted a training video on social media that

has been viewed more than nine million times. The video shows American Tyson, the first heavyweight to hold the WBA, WBC and IBF titles, working the pads with trainer Rafael Cordeiro. "I've been working out, I've been trying to get in the ring, I think I'm going to box some exhibitions and get in shape," Tyson said in an Instagram Live session with rapper T.I.



In this Nov 22, 1986 photo, Mike Tyson (left) fights against heavyweight champion Trevor Berbick (right) to become the youngest heavyweight world champion in history in Las Vegas.

NBA Remains on Track to Open Practice Facilities

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) -The NBA told teams that it's still on track to allow for practice facilities to reopen Friday in states where stay-at-home measures have been removed or relaxed. Players will have access to facilities on an individual basis, provided they follow extensive health and sanitation guidelines. The NBA has been suspended since March 11 when Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for COVID-19. Facilities closed a week later. League officials, both with the NBA and teams, said last week that the opening of team facilities was not a signal that games are on the horizon. The NBA remains hopeful that it can finish the remainder of the regular season and hold a postseason that could extend deep into the summer.