

Nekounam Shortlisted for Carlos Queiroz’s Assistant



TEHRAN – Javad Nekounam is a leading candidate to be one of Carlos Queiroz’s assistants.

The current Foolad coach is one of Iran’s best young managers and would help bolster a strong coaching staff.

The 69-year-old Portuguese coach has again taken charge of Iran as replacement of Dragan Skocic.

Queiroz took Iran to the 2014 and 2018 World Cup finals during an eight-year stint at the

helm, the longest in the national team’s history.

“Carlos Queiroz was chosen as the head coach of Iran’s national football team,” the federation of Iran confirmed on its website.

Iran will compete at the World Cup for the sixth time.

Iran is drawn in Group B along with England, the U.S. and Wales in the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

Foolad and Nekounam have not reacted to the speculations so far.

Ruud Reaches U.S. Open Final With Confident Win Over Khachanov

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Norwegian Casper Ruud harnessed his mighty forehand to reach his second Grand Slam final this year by beating Russian Karen Khachanov 7-6(5) 6-2 5-7 6-2 at the U.S. Open, keeping alive his hopes of reaching the top of the world rankings.

The first Norwegian man to reach the final at Flushing Meadows won an extraordinary 55-shot rally to close the first-set tie break on his way to victory at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The fifth seed next faces either home hope Frances Tiafoe or third seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain in the final.



Casper Ruud, of Norway, celebrates winning the first set against Karen Khachanov, of Russia, during the semifinals of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Sept 9, 2022, in New York.

a 5-1 lead in a near-flawless second set.

His form deteriorated in the third,

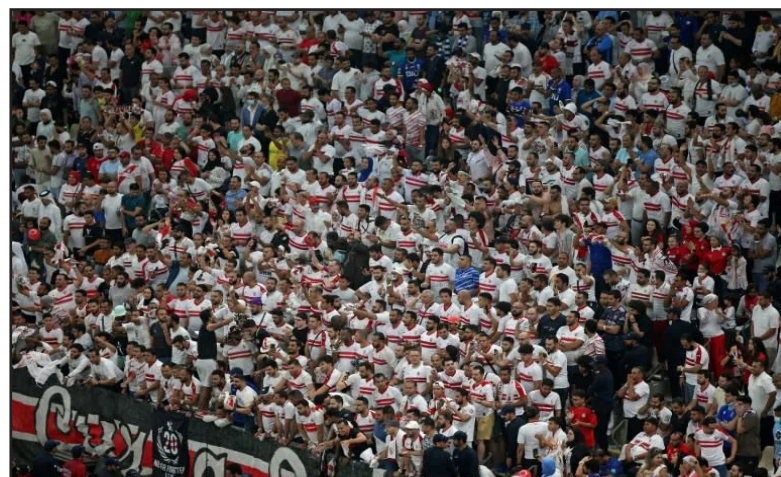
where he racked up 11 unforced errors and handed Khachanov the break on set point.

However, Ruud bounced back to convert breaks on chances in the third and fifth game of the fourth set and clinched the contest with a forehand winner, one of 20 across the match.

Ruud would make the leap from world number seven to number one if he hoists the trophy on Sunday or if Tiafoe beats Alcaraz in their semifinal later on Friday, according to the ATP.

Khachanov, who rose to a terrific level to upset Australian Nick Kyrgios in a five-set quarterfinal thriller, said he was pleased to notch a few great wins in New York but was utterly exhausted from the grueling slate of competitors.

World Cup Final Stadium Tested With First Sellout Crowd



DOHA (AFP) - The \$675 million stadium that Qatar will use for this year’s World Cup final was put through its first sellout test Friday with a match between the Egyptian and Saudi champions.

Seventy-two days from the start of the tournament, organizers said the 80,000 capacity Lusail Iconic

Stadium was full for the pre-match concert by Egyptian superstar Amr Diab and the game in which Al Hilal beat Egyptians Zamalek on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

Lusail was the last stadium to be officially inaugurated and Hassan Al-Thawadi, head of the Qatari organizing committee, said it was

“an emotional moment”.

“It is the culmination of a 13-year journey,” he told beIN Sports.

The stadium, shaped like a traditional Arabic bowl, is at the heart of a new city being built north of the tiny Gulf state’s capital. It will host 10 World Cup matches, including the December 18 final.

No more games are planned before the tournament starts on November 20 however.

The game was a test run for security, the border immigration system and the multi-billion dollar driverless train metro that will take the strain, ferrying more than one million fans around Doha during the World Cup.

To take pressure off the main international airport, Qatar this week reopened an old airport that had been kept for use by the ruling family and other VIPs.

Hundreds of Saudi and Egyptian fans crossed the Abu Samra fron-

tier in buses, after leaving their cars on the Saudi side.

All had to apply for a special fan ID, the Hayya card, that all supporters will need to enter Qatar during the World Cup.

The processing system in a tent at Abu Samra was being used for the first time. Qatari authorities are expecting thousands of Saudis to support their national team during the tournament.

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Barcelona’s LaLiga Spending Cap Raised by 800 Million Euros

MADRID (Reuters) - LaLiga has raised Barcelona’s spending limit by 800 million euros (\$803 million), bringing it out of a spending deficit after the Catalan side sold off chunks of assets to patch up its finances, the Spanish league said.

Barcelona were given a cap of 96 million euros last year, which was slashed by January to minus 144 million euros - meaning the team had to find savings elsewhere to sign new players - after they ran up debts and future liabilities of 1.35 billion euros, with 673 million owed to banks.

As a result of their financial turnaround, the league said on Friday it has given Barcelona a cap of 656 million euros for the 2022-23 season, according to Reuters.

To offset losses and comply with LaLiga’s financial fair play

rules, Barcelona sold 25% of their domestic television rights to U.S. investment firm Sixth Street for the next 25 years in two deals worth over 500 million euros.

The club raised an additional 200 million euros from the sale of a 49% stake in Barca Studios in two separate transactions, while also signing a long-term sponsorship deal with streaming giant Spotify in March.

That allowed Barcelona to spend more than 150 million euros on Robert Lewandowski, Raphinha and Jules Kounde, while Andreas Christensen, Franck Kessie, Hector Bellerin and Marcos Alonso all arrived on free transfers.

LaLiga president Javier Tebas said Barcelona will have to continue to reduce their wage bill to maintain their spending limit for next season.



When asked if LaLiga had been too generous in accommodating the club’s needs, Tebas said: “Not at all. The same rules are applied to all the clubs in Spain. To register Kounde, the president of Barcelona had to put up a personal guarantee.

Real Madrid have the highest

spending cap in the league at 683 million euros, while Atletico Madrid are third behind Barcelona at 341 million euros.

LaLiga’s spending limit accounts for the maximum amount clubs can spend on salaries, bonuses and amortization payments on transfers across a season.

Pedersen Wins Stage 19 of Vuelta a Espana



Denmark’s Mads Pedersen celebrates after winning the 19th stage of the Vuelta cycling race, in Talavera de la Reina, Spain, Sept 9, 2022.

MADRID (Reuters) -Denmark’s Mads Pedersen has dominated a bunch sprint to win stage 19 of the Vuelta a Espana in style—his third victory at this year’s race.

Overall race leader Remco Evenepoel of Belgium finished safely in the peloton maintaining his two minutes seven seconds advantage over Spaniard Enric Mas with two days remaining.

Former world champion Pedersen (Trek-Segafredo) already held a huge lead in the points category and showed his finishing prowess again to win by a bike length at the end of the 138km stage that started and finished in Talavera de la Reina.

The stage featured two ascents of the category two Puerto del Pielago but was not tough enough to have an impact on the battle for the red jersey, and predictably finished with a bunch sprint through the town.

Miles Scottson (Group-

ama-FDJ) was the first to make his move but Pedersen, set up perfectly by team mate Julien Bernard, roared around the final corner and hit the front with 150 meters remaining and never looked like being beaten.

Briton Fred Wright (Bahrain Victorious) finished strongly for second place with Belgian Gianni Vermeersch (Alpecin-Deceuninck) third.

Pedersen has 379 points ahead of Wright’s 174 and will take the green jersey barring anything untoward over the weekend.

Olympic champion Richard Carapaz (INEOS Grenadiers) bolstered his lead in the climber’s category with victory on the day’s second climb.

Evenepoel (Quick-Step Alpha Vinyl) looks unshakeable in the overall standings, although Saturday’s stage features three first category climbs and will offer Mas a final opportunity to try and close the deficit.

Poland Eliminate USA in Five-Set Thriller at FIVB Championship

WARSAW (AFP) - Poland’s men’s volleyball team overcame a strong challenge by the United States team in front of home fans in Gliwice to continue on their quest for a third straight FIVB Men’s World Championship title.

After a strong start, the Poles saw the Americans come back to win sets three and four and force a tie-breaker, but in the end, the home team found a way to win in five sets (25-20, 27-25, 21-25, 22-25, 15-12) to the delight of a partisan crowd.

In the semifinals, the Poles will meet Brazil in a rematch of the finals of both the 2014 and 2018 editions of the tournament. Their next opponents overcame Argentina 3-1 in an all-South American quarterfinal earlier on Thurs-

day.

The other semifinal will reunite Italy and co-host Slovenia, who defeated France and Ukraine respectively on Wednesday.

Dominating the middle was one of the keys to the Polish victory in Gliwice. While Jakub Kochanowski and Mateusz Bieniek combined for 34 points on the European side, American middle blockers David Smith, Jeff Jendryk and Taylor Averill produced just 16.

25-year-old Kochanowski was on fire from the service line, tallying a match-high three aces to go with his 15 kills and round up an 18-point performance. Bieniek, on the other hand, was in top form at the net, producing a match-high six blocks - he also had eight kills and two aces in his 16-point match.