

Iran Futsal Thrashes Vietnam at AFC Futsal Asian Cup



TEHRAN – The national Iranian men’s futsal team has trounced the team of Vietnam at the quarterfinal of AFC Futsal Asian Cup.

Iran trounced Vietnam in the quarterfinal of AFC Futsal Asian Cup 8-1 on Tuesday.

The Iranian futsal team trounced Vietnam 14-1 in the 2016 Asian nations cup.

With these results, Iran has now advanced to the semifinal and in order to reach the final, it will have to compete against the winner of Thailand and Tajikistan.

The competitions are held in Kuwait.

Defending champions Iran ended its AFC Futsal Asian Cup™ Kuwait 2022 Group C campaign with a perfect record of three wins on Sunday.

U.S. Players ‘Horrified’ by Report of Abuse in Women’s Soccer

WASHINGTON (AP) - As the United States was preparing for its game Friday against England at Wembley Stadium, players were trying to process an investigation that found emotional abuse and sexual misconduct are systemic in women’s soccer.

“We are horrified and heartbroken and frustrated and exhausted and really, really angry,” said defender Becky Sauerbrunn.

Former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Q. Yates and the law firm of King & Spaulding released a report Monday after being retained by U.S. Soccer to investigate allegations of abuse in the National Women’s Soccer League following a series of scandals last year.

The NWSL and its players association are conducting another investigation.

Five of 10 NWSL coaches either were fired or stepped down last season amid allegations of misconduct. Among them was North Carolina Courage coach Paul Riley, who was dismissed after two former players, Mana Shim and Sinead Farrelly, accused him of sexual coercion and harassment dating back a decade. Riley denied the allegations.

Yates’ report focused on three former coaches, including Riley. Not only did the investigation find misconduct by all three, it also said their teams did not fully cooperate.

“I think for so long this has fallen on the players to demand change. That is because the people in authority and decision-making positions have repeatedly failed to protect us and they have failed to hold themselves and each other accountable. Who are you actually protecting and what values are you upholding? You have failed in your stewardship,” Sauerbrunn said. “And it’s my opinion that every owner and executive and U.S. Soccer official who has repeatedly failed the players and failed to pro-

tect the players, who have hidden behind legalities and have not participated fully in these investigations, should be gone.”

As Sauerbrunn was speaking in London, her NWSL team, the Portland Thorns, announced owner Merritt Paulson, general manager Gavin Wilkinson and executive Mike Golub would immediately withdraw from any Thorns-related decision-making until the league investigation is complete.

Farrelly and Shim played for the Thorns when Riley was coach from 2014-15. At the time, the Thorns conducted an internal investigation of the allegations and decided not to renew Riley’s contract. But no reason for the decision was made public and Riley went on to coach elsewhere in the league.

Sauerbrunn was asked about increasing pressure on Paulson to sell the team. She said it was her belief the NWSL’s joint investigation would make its own recommendation as far as discipline.

“I don’t know if anything is going to come out in this other report that’s going to make any sort of difference. And so at the end of the day, if people continue to fail the players and they don’t comply to anything that gets asked of them or gets implemented because of these reports, then they need to be gone,” Sauerbrunn said.

Some of the details in Yates’ report were disturbing.

The report made numerous recommendations to prioritize player health and safety. Among them is the requirement that teams accurately disclose coach misconduct to the league and the soccer federation to ensure coaches aren’t allowed to move between teams. It also calls for meaningful vetting of coaches and timely investigations into allegations of abuse.

U.S. Soccer also said it would immediately implement programs to protect players.

Iranian Taekwondo Athletes to Compete at Beirut Open

TEHRAN - Iran will send 19 taekwondo practitioners to the 2022 Taekwondo WT Beirut Open Tournament.

The competition will be held from October 7 to 9.

Saeideh Nasiri, Maryam Rezanejad, Ghazal Soltani, Mobina Nematzadeh, Zahra Sheidaei, Narges Nourolahi, Zeynab Esmaili and Fatemeh Shafiepour will represent Iran the female category and Mehdi Hajmoosaei, Armin Hadi-



pour, Farzan Ashoorzadeh, Ali Najafi, Reza Kalhor, Amir Muhammad Bakhshi, Mirhashem Hosseini, Muhammad Hussein Yazdani, Mehran Barkhordari, Abolfazl Abbasi and Sajad Mardani are members of Iran’s men’s team in the competition.

The tournament will serve as tune-up for the 2022 World Taekwondo Championship in November in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Inter Strike 1st Blow in CL Fight for 2nd With Barcelona

MILAN (AP) — It’s advantage Inter Milan in what has been billed the fight for second spot in Group C. Hakan Çalhanoğlu scored the only goal of the match in first-half stoppage time as Inter beat Barcelona 1-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday to move second behind Bayern Munich, which seems set to run away with the group.

Both sides also had goals disallowed and Barcelona hit the post, while the visitors also felt they should have had a penalty right at the end of the eight minutes of stoppage time. Inter defender Denzel Dumfries appeared to handle a cross when trying to head the ball away, but images from a different angle suggested Ansu Fati got his head to it.

“I’m outraged ... no one can understand what happened,” Barcelona coach Xavi said. “It’s my opinion obviously, I would have wanted to talk to the referee, why he didn’t whistle, was it a mistake? ... But it’s a great injustice. The referee should face up to us, instead he goes away and nothing happens. He should come here and give us an explanation.”

Bayern routed Viktoria Plzeň 5-0 earlier to maintain its perfect start to the competition and it has also yet to concede a goal.

That leaves Barcelona and Inter seemingly fighting it out for second spot and the battle will resume at Camp Nou next Wednesday.

Both Inter and Barcelona had experienced similar starts in the Champions League, beating Plzeň and losing 2-0 to Bayern. But they have had contrasting domestic form. Barcelona topped the Spanish league table after winning its previous six league matches, while Inter had lost four of its last six Serie A games to leave coach Simone Inzaghi under pressure.

Some of that pressure will have been removed with Inter’s first win over Barcelona since its 3-1 Champions League semifinal victory in 2010, on the Nerazzurri’s way to the treble under José Mourinho. That was followed by one draw and four defeats.

“It’s an important night, it should give us confidence,” Inzaghi said. “We’re going through a difficult moment but the victory against Barcelona will remain ... The guys



Inter Milan’s Hakan Çalhanoğlu celebrates scoring the opening goal during the Champions League group C soccer match between Inter Milan and Barcelona at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022.

put their heads and their hearts into the game.”

Inzaghi’s game plan was clearly to defend in numbers and counter at pace and that almost led to the opening goal but Marc-André ter Stegen did well to fingertip Çalhanoğlu’s powerful, 30-yard effort over the bar.

Inter thought it should have got a penalty midway through the first half for a handball by Barcelona defender Eric Garcia but play was waved on and, after reviewing the

incident on the pitchside monitor, referee Slavko Vinčić decided that Nerazzurri forward Lautaro Martínez had been offside in the build-up and interfering with play despite not touching the ball.

The home side did have the ball in the back of the net a few minutes later but Joaquín Correa had been marginally offside when he collected Federico Dimarco’s pass and raced forward before rounding Ten Stegen and depositing into an empty net.

Memory of Maradona Evoked as Napoli Thrash Ajax

AMSTERDAM — (Reuters) - Diego Maradona is never far from the minds of Napoli and after their 6-1 drubbing of Ajax Amsterdam away in the Champions League, coach Luciano Spalletti was quick to invoke the memory of the club icon.

“We played a great game. We have shown what we are capable of. Even Maradona would have been proud of us,” said the Napoli coach after the runaway win that ensured a 100% record in Group A at the halfway stage of the group phase campaign.

Napoli now have an opportunity to clinch a berth in next year’s knockout phase when they host Ajax in the return game in the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium next week.

“We have an excellent chance to advance in the Champions League.



Ajax’s Dutch defender Deyne Rensch (left) jumps for the ball with Napoli’s Georgian forward Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (right) during the UEFA Champions League group A football match between Ajax Amsterdam and SSC Napoli at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam on Oct 4, 2022.

What would make that achievement even more special is the qual-

ity of the opponents in the group. Ajax remains a great club,” added

Spalletti, whose side have scored 13 goals in three games after also beating Rangers 3-0 away and Liverpool 4-1 at home.

Ajax took an early lead on Tuesday but once Napoli equalized they looked unstoppable.

“When you concede a goal quite quickly here in a churning stadium, it’s not easy to give an answer right away, but my players reacted great. The goal didn’t affect our game in any way,” the coach told a post-match news conference.

Napoli’s Champions League exploits come on top of an unbeaten start to the Serie A season, where they share the lead with Atalanta.

They are chasing a first league title since the pair they won in 1987 and 1990 when Maradona was at his peak and Spalletti made clear this was not far from his mind.

Kyrgios Cruises Past Tseng in Breathless Japan Opener



TOKYO (AFP) - Nick Kyrgios said he “struggled to breathe” in the Tokyo air Tuesday before finding his feet and crushing Taiwan’s Tseng Chun-hsin 6-3, 6-1 in his first match since the U.S. Open.

Kyrgios dropped just seven points on his own service in his opening match at the Japan Open as he dismantled world number 87 Tseng in 1hr, 6min.

The maverick world number 20 was playing his first match since his “heartbreaking” quarter-final loss to Karen Khachanov at last month’s U.S. Open but he said he made a “solid” return despite a slow start.

“The first couple of games I struggled to breathe, I think just the humidity and getting back into competitive play,” said Kyrgios, whose lawyer appeared for him earlier in the day at a court hearing in Australia,

where he faces a charge of common assault.

The Tokyo crowd cheered Kyrgios’ name and clamored for the signed balls that he hit into the stands after the match.

He put on a show on the court as well, hitting one shot between his legs and bickering with the umpire over line calls.

Kyrgios has posted several pictures of himself sightseeing in Tokyo on social media since he arrived and he said he was “excited” to be playing in Japan.

“To play in front of the crowd is amazing, they’re so respectful and they always love good tennis,” said the 27-year-old.

“The last couple of years, COVID has affected the tournament so it’s just good to have this event back and running again.”