

FIVB president: Iran can host Women's Beach Volleyball Championship

Tehran Times Sports Desk
FIVB president Jizhong Wei said Iran can host the Women's Beach Volleyball Championship. "FIVB rules and regulations already allow Beach Volleyball athletes to wear full length uniforms. An example of this is at the recent-

ly completed SWATCH FIVB Junior World Championships in Blackpool, England where athletes used a full length uniform, covering their entire body due to the cold weather," Wei said.

"If Iran Volleyball Federation requested to host an FIVB Beach Volleyball event, we



Jizhang Wei first on right

would welcome it with open arms and help as much as possible to make sure the event was a success," he added.

"Iran is a country which has a great future in the world of sports. Not only does it encompass a population which is passionate about sports, but also the infra-

structure and the personnel running sports within the country have the necessary spirit to make sure the most important objective is obtained, giving young athletes every chance to engage and experience the unique and special qualities of sport," FIVB president concluded.

Benitez defiant over future

Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez remains unconcerned by speculation regarding the security of his job.

Ahead of a must-win UEFA Champions League clash with Lyon on Wednesday, the Spaniard has come under intense scrutiny following a run of six defeats in seven games.

During that time Benitez's transfer policy has been questioned, while he has also been criticised for a failure to produce significant homegrown talent since succeeding Gerard Houllier in 2004.

But the former Valencia boss remains in a determined mood as an injury-hit Liverpool prepare for their outing in France, where defeat would leave the Reds almost certainly facing elimination from Europe.

Benitez said: "The players are working very hard, they are positive and determined. They know this result is important for the club, for everyone."

"But our fans have not turned. They are clever people, they know the position the club was in when I arrived and they know what position it is in now, they know this is the only way."

Problems

"It is important for everyone to see the bigger picture, I am sure things will change in a few weeks when we have our players fit again. When we have our big players available, everything will change."

"I do not accept that we have not signed good players, some may not have settled as quickly, but we are doing a good job."

"This is not the right time to be discussing our signings. But we do have good players, and we have too many injuries."

"We have signed very good players, we have a good team and a good squad."

He added: "Losing would be bad for us, bad for the club, but we will keep going. But we are not thinking that way, we are only thinking of winning."

"In a few weeks these problems will have gone. Key players will be fit."

(Source : Skysports)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Suns stay unbeaten, run past Heat 104-96



MIAMI — Steve Nash scored 30 points and added eight assists, and the Phoenix Suns used a dominant fourth quarter to beat the Miami Heat 104-96 in a matchup of NBA unbeatens Tuesday night.

Amare Stoudemire finished with 16 points and 11 rebounds for Phoenix, which overcame its largest deficit of the season and used a 13-4 run over the middle portion of the fourth to pull away. Jason Richardson scored 10 of his 14 points in the final period for the Suns, who are 4-0 for the first time since the 2004-05 season.

(Source : AP)

Tiger excited by China trip



Tiger Woods has compared the elevation of the Shanghai Champions event to World Golf Championship status with golf's inclusion in the Olympic Games.

The world number one makes his third trip to play in the tournament this week

and will be looking to go one better than his previous two attempts when he finished as runner-up on both occasions.

Woods will now have the extra incentive of landing a 17th World Golf Championship title when he gets his campaign underway on Thursday and feels the move will greatly benefit the development of the game in Asia.

(Source : Skysports)

Murray coasts on comeback



Andy Murray marked his return to action on the ATP Tour with a routine 6-3 6-1 victory over Daniel Gimeno-Tarver at the Valencia Open.

The world number three needed just an hour to see off the challenge of the Spaniard and reach the second round of the tournament.

Making his comeback from a wrist injury, the Brit unsurprisingly looked a little rusty on his first competitive appearance since September 20.

However he still coasted past Gimeno Tarver to set up a second-round clash with Leonardo Mayer, who upset Russia's Igor Andreev 6-3 6-3.

(Source : AFP)

Tyson - Size doesn't matter



Mike Tyson insists size doesn't matter in the ring ahead of David Haye's showdown with giant Russian Nikolai Valuev.

The British heavyweight is hoping to come away from Nuremberg with the WBA belt despite conceding almost 10

inches in height to his opponent. However, during an interview with Sky News, Tyson feels the outcome would come down to each fighter's state of mind, rather than any physiological advantage.

And the former champion, who has arrived in the United Kingdom ahead of a promotional tour, feels Haye can be victorious - provided he believes that Valuev is beatable.

(Source : Sky News)

Report: Toyota to pull out of Formula One, citing economy

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota plans to pull out of Formula One racing, the Mainichi newspaper reported Wednesday.

Toyota would follow Honda as the second major Japanese automaker to withdraw from the sport. Honda pulled out in December last year, citing a slowdown in the global economy. Brawn GP, which took over the old Honda team, won the 2009 F1 championship.

Toyota, the only Japanese automaker participating in F1 this year, is seeking to cut costs as it expects to post an operating loss for the six months ended Sept. 30. The company is due to report earnings Thursday.

Japanese news agency, Kyodo, later cited unnamed sources close to the situation as saying Toyota Motor Corp. would withdraw from F1.

A Toyota spokeswoman said she was checking on reports in the Japanese media.

On Monday, Japanese tire manufacturer Bridgestone announced it would not renew its exclusive deal to supply tires for F1 when its contract expires in 2010.



economic crisis.

Jarno Trulli and Timo Glock raced for Toyota this season. Trulli finished eighth in the driver's standings while Glock was 10th.

Kamui Kobayashi filled in for an injured Glock in the last race of the season and posted a sixth-place finish in Abu Dhabi.

Toyota made its F1 debut in 2002 but has never won a grand prix. The team's best result was in 2005 when Trulli finished second in Malaysia and Bahrain.

Despite a promising start to the 2009 season, Toyota finished fifth in the constructors' standings.

Taiwan set to strike baseball 'mafia' as fans sulk

Taiwan's flagship sport is unraveling like an old rotted baseball, a university graduate said, reflecting the public mood of the moment, as she and I waited at a news conference for the cabinet spokesman to emerge with an official response to an illegal betting scandal.

The case, far from over, has put six people in jail and pointed fingers at eight more, including two of the island's best known pitchers, since it was announced in the final days of October after months of investigation.

Taiwan, population 23 million, wants to be an international player, rivaling South Korea and Japan in Asian baseball. Then from 2008 it lost twice to baseball upstart and political rival China, prompting calls for reform.

As part of a broader baseball reform package, the government pledged to stamp out illegal gambling rings that pay players to throw impossible pitches or drop easy fly balls to make bets come true as the Chicago White Sox players did in 1919.

As the anti-gambling campaign got underway, a massive mafia-driven betting scheme unfolded throughout the Chinese



Professional Baseball League summer season.

Among the eight suspects are former Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Tsao Chin-hui, a household name among Taiwan fans, and former Chinese Taipei (effectively a national team) pitcher Chang Chih-chia.

Fans stunned by nonstop broadcasts of the latest betting scandal and put off by the losses to China have turned to televised U.S. major league games, killing off the local league's TV viewership. Basketball is on the rise among younger folk who haven't picked a favored sport.

"Some fans might even start watching amateur baseball," said Yu Jun-wei, author and assistant professor at a Taiwan sports university. "This case could have a huge impact on the whole professional league."

The college grad waxed on about the Red Leaf Junior Baseball Team, legendary for beating a Japanese rival in 1968 and giving the sport's first big boost in Taiwan. Glory days that are gone for how long?

(Source : Reuters)

United stumble into last 16

Manchester United stumbled into the knockout phase of the UEFA Champions League after a lucky stoppage-time goal secured a 3-3 draw at home to CSKA Moscow.

Russian outfit CSKA appeared to be heading towards a famous win at Old Trafford after moving into a 3-1 lead early in the second half, but Paul Scholes gave United a lifeline before Antonio Valencia's wayward shot took a wicked deflection off Georgy Schennikov in the second minute of added time.

CSKA were lively from the off and, producing a much-improved performance from the 1-0 home defeat by United a fortnight ago, took the lead on 25 minutes through the impressive Alan Dzagoev's thumping finish.

United were playing in fits and starts, but drew level just four minutes after falling behind when Michael Owen's predatory instincts finally kicked in and he fired past Igor Akinfeev from close range.

But CSKA were back in front within another two min-



utes as Milos Krsic capitalised on the gaps in the home defence to skip past Edwin van der Sar and lift his shot into the net. Any hope of a positive start to the second half for United quickly evaporated when CSKA scored a third goal on 47 minutes as the unmarked Vasilii Berezutsky headed home a free-kick at the far post.

The Red Devils should then have had a penalty, only for Darren Fletcher to be booked for diving, while Federico Macheda headed against the post and Akinfeev produced a string of fine saves.

The famous late rally from United eventually materialised, though, as Scholes rose well to head home Gary Neville's free-kick with six minutes to go.

And the comeback was completed in stoppage-time as Valencia's deflected effort left Akinfeev with no chance to ensure United reached the last 16 with two games to spare.

(Source :Skysports)

Djokovic through in Basel

Novak Djokovic needed just 90 minutes to move into the second round of the ATP Swiss Indoors event on Tuesday thanks to a 6-3 7-5 victory over Andreas Beck in Basel.

The world number three, making his debut in the tournament and seeded second behind home hero Roger Federer, served a total of 10 aces against his German opponent.

He now plays the Czech Republic's Jan Herych, who beat Peter Luczak 6-3 6-4 - the Australian qualifier's third straight loss in the first round.

Meanwhile, Switzerland's Marco Chiudinelli made use of home advantage to produce the day's upset as he came from behind in the final set to overhaul German eighth seed Philipp Kohlschreiber 7-6 (7-5) 3-6 7-5.

The fortunes of Chiudinelli, ranked 73 in the world and the third best Swiss behind Federer and Stanislas Wawrinka, have improved in recent months, with the 28-year-old reaching the third round of the US Open and also the quarter-finals in Bangkok.

(Source :Reuters)