

Peykan Remains on Top

In the 14th round of Iran's Premier League (IPL), Peykan held to a 2-2 draw against Foulad.

Peykan has collected 27 points and tops the IPL standings.

Peykan's Meysam Rezapour took the lead in the 15th minute of the game. Foulad's Saeed Ramezani leveled the game 3 minutes into the second half.

In the 69th Amir Bozorgi put the Qazvin-based club ahead but four minutes to the final whistle Ahmad Ale Nemeh netted the equalizer.

Also in this round, struggling Persepolis was held by Saba Batri at Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Thursday. This is while Esteghlal shared points with relegation-threatened Malavan at Anzali in Gilan province, goal, com said.

Esteghlal kicked off the first match of this round at Takhti's Anzali Stadium with a surprise lead by the host in the 28th minute of the game through a penalty kick. However, Esteghlal bounced back quickly to tie the score line only 5 minutes later thanks to its goal scorer Siavash Akbarpour's header through the Brazilian midfielder Fábio

Januário's precise corner kick. Malavan's Mohamad Nezhati scored a valuable second goal in the 77th minute to hope for a victory over Tehran-based Blues. However their lead did not last too long as Alireza Abbasfard capitalized on Malavan defenders' mistakes to net Esteghlal's equalizer in dying minutes of the match to finish the game 2-2.

In the other match of the day, Persepolis played against Saba Batri of Qom but the Red's struggle continued as they gave away their two goal lead to be held by Saba 2-2.

Persepolis dominated the first half with a 1-0 lead thanks to Alireza Nikbakht Vahedi's best finish through Serbian Ivan Petrović's left cross in the 19th minute. In these minutes, Saba increased their attacks but they failed to level the game before the break. They canceled out Persepolis' lead in the second half of the game thanks to Fereidoun Fazli.

Nikbakht Vahedi's brace handed Persepolis the lead 9 minutes later. The 29-year-old player doubled his score with a free kick. His shot was touched by the away team's defender



File photo shows Peykan players cheering after scoring a goal.

and once again Persepolis took the lead. Firouz Karimi's Saba did not gave up to the last minute as Fereidoun Fazli also kept up

the pace and scored his brace in minute 74 to earn a valuable draw for the visiting team. Fazli dribbled past many Persepolis defenders and also

its goalkeeper. Then he netted the second equalizer from a close range to give his side a valuable 2-2 draw at Azadi Stadium.

Nat'l Wrestlers 1st in Asia

Greco-Roman Wrestling Team of Islamic Azad University (Tehran Branch) ranked first at 2008 Amman Asian Clubs Greco-Roman Wrestling Championship.

According to IRNA, the Islamic Azad University had won three more gold and silver medals on Wednesday which was the last day of the games.

At 60-Kg category, Mohammad Qazaee, who had a break at the first round of the Wednesday games, beat his Jordanian and Palestinian competitors at the 2nd and 3rd rounds, respectively.

In the 66-Kg category, Ali Mohammadi beat wrestlers from Jordan, Palestine, and Qatar at three con-

secutive rounds.

Davoud Akhbari beat competitors from Qatar and Palestine at 84-Kg category, but lost to the home club team's wrestler to win the silver medal.

At 120-Kg category Mahdi Sharabian beat two competitors from Jordan to reach the final where he beat a Palestinian club's finalist to win the gold medal.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday three Iranians had won gold medals.

At 55-Kg category Yasin Bahramipour beat his Jordanian competitor at the final to win the games' gold

medal.

Also at the 74 and 86-Kg categories, Farshad Alizadeh and Mohammad Qorbani beat competitors from Jordan and Qatar, respectively to grab the gold medals.

Meanwhile, free style wrestlers from Tehran's Oil Club arrived in the Jordan's capital city, Amman on Thursday for weighing of the 2008 Amman Asian Clubs Free Style Championship.

Iran's international referee Akbar Tahmasbi whistles at both the Greco-Roman and the Free Style games of the games on behalf of FILA.

Honda to Test Di Grassi

Honda will give Renault's third driver Lucas Di Grassi the chance to test for them in Barcelona later this month.

The 24-year-old Brazilian will join the team for their first winter test at the Circuit de Catalunya on 17 November.

Honda plan to name their 2009 drivers before Christmas with both Jensen Button and Rubens Barrichello out of contract at the end of the year, BBC said.

As well as Di Grassi, the team will also give Bruno Senna, the nephew of F1 legend Ayrton, a test in Barcelona.

The team will run this season's RA108 car in Barcelona for three days as they begin their build-up to next season.

Di Grassi will take part in the test after being overlooked by Renault, who have stuck with drivers Fernando Alonso and Nelson Piquet Jr for 2009.



Lucas Di Grassi

"This is a very well-deserved opportunity for Lucas to prove his potential," said Honda team principal Ross Brawn.

"After such an impressive performance in GP2 this season and during his testing responsibilities with Renault, we look forward to seeing Lucas in action and will take a keen interest in how he performs."

Di Grassi has raced in GP2, which has provided several drivers for F1 since its incarnation in 2005, for the last three seasons, finishing second in 2007 and third this season.

The Brazilian has also been part of Renault's development program since 2004 and was the team's third driver in 2008 but is now keen to take the next step in his career.

"The next two weeks will be a very important stage in my development," said the 24-year-old.

"I will be spending a lot of time at the Honda factory before the test to speak with the engineers and learn as much as possible in advance of the test."

"I am very excited to have the opportunity of testing with Honda in Barcelona and look forward to proving myself to the team."

Honda are expected to keep faith with British driver Button next season despite another difficult campaign for the 28-year-old.

Button collected just three points whilst team-mate Barrichello claimed eight in a season marred by a lack of pace and reliability.

Barrichello has spoken of his desire to stay with Honda but the Brazilian is out of contract at the end of the year and at 36 is the oldest active driver in F1.

Venus Makes Doha Semis

Venus Williams came from behind to comfortably beat her sister Serena 5-7 6-1 6-0 and reach the semifinals of the Tour Championships in Doha.

According to BBC, Serena must now beat Elena Dementieva, who defeated Dinara Safina 6-2 6-4, on Friday if she is to progress.

She won the first set in 50 minutes, but then lost concentration and seemed close to tears as defeat loomed.

Earlier, in Group A, Jelena Jankovic progressed to the last four with a 7-6 (8-6) 6-4 win over Svetlana Kuznetsova.

The defeat ended the Russian's participation in the tournament.

World number one Jankovic was far from at her best and needed treatment on a back injury at the start of the second set.

The injury seemed to hamper her serve, but the Serbian said she hoped to be fit to face fellow Group A qualifier Vera Zvonareva on Friday.

"I started being stiff at the end of the first set," said Jankovic. "I couldn't push on so it took a lot of pace off my serve."

"I want to do well here. I will receive some treatment and hopefully I'll be ok for the match."

Serena Williams' future in the tournament depends on the winner-takes-all match against Russia's Dementieva, but she will need to refocus after capitulating against her sister.

"I just couldn't keep a ball in play," admitted Serena, who beat Venus in the quarterfinals of the US Open in September on her way to the title. "Everything was off."

"I have never played like that before. I have never been in a situation where I can't do anything. I was very, very frustrated."

Both sisters started tentatively, but third seed Serena seemed comfortable when she broke serve in the 12th game of the first set to take the initiative.

However, Venus broke serve in the first game of the second set and an emotional Serena, who spent the rest of the match gesticulating to her coach, lost her way.

Juninho Warms to His Task

Olympique Lyon's dead ball specialist Juninho scored his 40th free kick goal for the club against Steaua Bucharest in a Champions League game on Wednesday to make his mark on the French side's scoring records.

The strike in a 2-0 home win meant the Brazilian midfielder joined compatriot Sonny Anderson as the club's all-time top scorer in European competition with 16 by netting his 94th goal in all competitions for the French champions.

"I knew the goalkeeper would try and anticipate on one side so I just shot and wrongfooted him," the 33-year-old told Reuters in an interview on Thursday.

"I am writing a small page in the club's history. I am really happy about that," added Juninho, who joined Lyon in 2001 and has won seven Ligue 1 titles with the club.

Juninho had two difficult years at Lyon after arriving from Vasco de Gama before finding his feet in Ligue 1.

"I have had my highs and lows but I really improved with the club that allowed me to discover the European Cup. My first two seasons were tough but now it's much better," he said.

In March 2007 he said he wanted to leave after Lyon were eliminated in the first knockout round of the Champions League, but now he is happy to stay and has 100 goals in his sights.

"That would be a nice symbol," he said. "However, more than the numbers it's the team's victory that pleases me."

"I just want to help the team win, I'm just doing my job although a big part of it is taking the free kicks."

Lyon are top of Group F and should qualify for the first knockout round thanks to Juninho's inspired performances.

He said his form was due to a sensible lifestyle. "You have to be careful with what you eat, work hard, stay focused and rest when you need to," he said.

"Right now I have a little pain behind my knee but I know how to take care of myself. For example, I did not play to Sochaux (last week). So I am fresh when it really matters."

"This could be my best season at Lyon," he added.

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News in Brief

Asian Club Medals for Iran

In the second day of 2008 Goyang Asian Inter-Clubs Weightlifting Championship, Iranian weight lifters snatched five silver and bronze medals.

According to the PR office of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF), 23 Asian clubs competed at 77 and 85-Kg of the games.

The competition occurred on Wednesday in the adult category of the Asian Clubs Weightlifting Championship.

The event was held at Kenitex Weight Lifting Hall of Goyang city in South Korea.

At the end of the 85-Kg event, Iranian Mohammad Hossein Barkhah had won two silver medals at the Clean and Jerk category (C&J), lifting 500 grams less than the gold medalist. He participated from the South Oil Fields Club.

In the mean time, Hossein Abroun, from the same club, won the silver medal in the snatch event of the 65-Kg. He won silver for the total of the snatch. Hamed Ebrahimi from the National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) won the bronze in the snatch event of the 85-Kg.

At 160-Kg, the NIDC's Mahmoud Esmacelzadeh who had successfully lifted 135 and 160 at C&J and the snatch event gained the fifth stand with a total of 395-kg.

Rajabi Dreams to Lift 300-kg

The world's most powerful man Kazem Rajabi said on Wednesday that he wants to lift 300-kg in the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

The Iranian super heavyweight lifter made history in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games by lifting 265-kg, two kilograms more than Hercules Hossein Rezazadeh as the most powerful man in the world, Mehr News Agency said.

"I dream of doing a great job in the next Paralympic Games. I wanted to surprise everybody in Beijing by lifting 300-kg but my shoulder's injury stopped me. Now, I plan to do that in the upcoming Paralympic Games," said Rajabi.

Rajabi has won the 2004 Athens and 2008 Beijing Paralympic gold medals.

Rajabi

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Hashemian Criticizes AFC Gala

Iran's German-based striker Vahid Hashemian has criticized Asian Football Confederation (AFC) officials for not taking into account Iranian players at the AFC Annual Awards Gala, Mehr News Agency said.

Criticizing the Asian football officials for the omission of Javad Nekounam from AFC player of the year 2008 list, Hashemian said, "AFC officials never consider the rights of Iranian players in the Galas. Iran will qualify for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the players are going to prove them wrong. In my opinion, Iranian players are the best in Asia."

Bochum football striker expressed his satisfaction over getting good results in the Bundesliga.

"We got a huge boost after a draw against Borussia Dortmund in the 11th round of Bundesliga. Bochum will hopefully be back on track in the next matches. We are going to book a place in the next season of European Cups," added former Hannover striker.

Iran veteran striker said he will certainly join the national team if the head coach invites him.

"I will be honored to be a member of Iran team," stated Hashemian.

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