

Neymar out of Getafe clash

Brazil forward Neymar has been withdrawn from Barcelona's squad for its Copa del Rey last 16, first leg clash with Getafe after coming down with gastroenteritis.

# FIFA: No decision on 2022 World Cup schedule

FIFA has moved quickly to play down claims from its own general secretary that the Qatar 2022 World Cup will not take place in the summer. The sport's governing body stressed no final decision will be taken until after the 2014 World Cup and only after lengthy consultation, BBC wrote.

It comes after Jerome Valcke told Radio France, "The dates for the World Cup will not be June-July."

He suggested it could take place between November 15 and January 15.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter had already said the tournament would take place in November or December but organizers in Qatar still hope to host it in June and July.

Following Valcke's Radio France interview, a FIFA spokesman said the general secretary had only been expressing "his view".

The spokesperson added: "The precise event date is still subject to an ongoing consultation process which involves all main event stakeholders, including both the international football community—FIFA confederations, member associations, leagues, clubs, players—as well as FIFA's commercial partners."

"The consultation process will not be rushed and will be given the necessary time to consider all of the elements relevant for a decision."

"No decision will be taken before the upcoming 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil as agreed by the FIFA executive committee."

Valcke said, "If you play between November 15 and the end of December, that's the time when the weather conditions are best, when you can play in temperatures equivalent to a warm spring season in Europe, averaging 25 degrees. That would be perfect for playing football."



Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (R) receives the World Cup trophy from FIFA Secretary General Jerome Valcke (C) after Qatar was selected as the host for the 2022 World Cup.



## Iran's Nematpour tops FILA rankings

In the latest FILA rankings of the 2013 Greco-Roman wrestlers, Iranian Taleb Nematpour is the best in the 84kg category.

According to IRNA, Nematpour, 29, is the gold medalist in the 2013 World Wrestling Championship in Budapest, Hungary. He defeated long-time friend Saman Tahmassebi of Azerbaijan with a pair of front headlock exposures for a 5-3 win in the all-Iranian final. Nematpour also grabbed the gold in the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games.

In the 55kg category Yun Won-Chol of North Korea, Ivo Angelov of Bulgaria in the 60kg category, Ryu Han-Su of South Korea in the 66kg class were the best wrestlers.

Kim Hyeon-Woo of South Korea in the 74kg, Russia's Nikita Melnikov in the 96kg and Heiki Nabi of Estonia in the 120kg categories were the best wrestlers.

## Bresciano cleared by CAS

Australia midfielder Mark Bresciano, handed a four-month ban over a transfer dispute, has been cleared to play at the World Cup following a decision by sport's highest tribunal.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said it had rejected a request from Bresciano to temporarily lift the suspension, imposed in November by FIFA, pending his appeal which it said was unlikely to take place for another three months, Reuters reported.

Paradoxically, if CAS had accepted the request, the 33-year-old would have run the risk of having to serve the remainder of the ban during the World Cup if he lost the appeal.

Instead, he will now remain banned un-

til March and then be free to play at his third World Cup if selected, whatever the outcome.

Brendan Schwab, head of Asia division for the world players' union FIFPro, confirmed on Twitter that the decision cleared Bresciano for the World Cup.

"Mark Bresciano will be free to represent the Socceroos at the World Cup if selected," he said.

FIFA banned Bresciano after ruling that his transfer to Qatari club Al Gharafa from United Arab Emirates' side Al Nasr in 2012 was illegal.

FIFA ordered Bresciano and Al Gharafa to pay 1.37 million euros to Al Nasr and banned the Qatari club from signing players for the next two transfer windows.

"The FIFA decision will not be stayed and remains in effect until the CAS Panel renders its final decision, which is expected in around three months' time or less if the parties agree to an expedited procedure," said CAS.

## Proposal for women's Islamic games

The head of women's committee of Asian Paralympic Committee, Fatemeh Rakhshani said that Iran has proposed women's games for Islamic countries.

Speaking to IRNA, she said, "Asian Islamic countries have large population. I think facilitating women's participation in a physical event will help the physically handicapped to shine."

Golden State forward David Lee is making his presence felt and giving a team with many weapons another dimension.

His play of late has reached All-Star caliber. Warriors' coach Mark Jackson insisted after watching Lee lead Golden State to its 10th consecutive win Tuesday night, the Warriors longest streak since the 1975-76 season and one short of the franchise record of 11 wins in a row during the 1971-72 campaign, AP wrote.

Fresh off of being named the Western Conference Player of the Week, Lee dominated around the basket, scoring 22 points on 10-of-12 shooting and grabbing 18 rebounds to spark the Warriors to a 101-80 win over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday night.



Golden State Warriors' David Lee (in blue) drives to the basket against Milwaukee Bucks' Ersan Ilyasova during the first half of an NBA basketball game on January 7, 2014 in Milwaukee.

"I've said all along that (Stephen) Curry is an All-Star, there's no question about that. But the way that David Lee has played the last 15 ball games, he's an All-Star," Jackson said. "He has separated himself."

Lee hit his first nine shots from the field and recorded his 21st double-double of the season.

"I'm trying to be more aggressive and I think our team needs me to be more aggressive in the paint," Lee said. "We have so many guys that are good jump shooters, we need somebody around the rim that's going to attack the basket. It's all about taking what the defense gives us. Most importantly, I think our team is playing more consistent basketball."

Curry contributed 15 points for the Warriors despite connecting on just 5 of 18 shots. Clay Thompson also scored 15 points, on 6-of-18 shooting.

"We're not built offensively, we're built defensively," Jackson said. "You can have off nights offensively and still win ball games. We defended at a high level and when you do that good things happen."

Golden State center Andrew Bogut, who had 12 rebounds and eight points, said he and Lee stress the importance of rebounding each time they take the court. Golden State outrebounded Milwaukee 54 to 37.

"We set a goal. David and myself, to win the rebound battle," Bogut said.

The Warriors played their sixth game of a seven-city road trip that concludes Wednesday night in Brooklyn. Golden State is trying to become the first team in NBA history to go undefeated on a road trip of seven or more games.

## A soldier's redemption

Everything was according to plan. Iranian Omid Norouzi dominated his first two opponents at the 2009 World Championships. Heading into the 60kg quarterfinals, Norouzi was confident in his ability to beat Georgian Revaz Lashki.

Norouzi had scouted the Georgian. He knew what to expect and where his own attacks would be successful. He was mentally and physically prepared for battle, but when the final whistle blew Norouzi had lost the match and any chance for a world championship. Norouzi was disappointed, but his rise within the Iranian national team was already an impressive achievement. Unlike the thousands of wrestlers that pour out of northern Iran, Norouzi grew up in Shiraz, Fars province in the south of Iran.

The future Olympic champion discovered wrestling at the age of nine. Pushed early by family members, Norouzi latched on to the Greco-Roman. He likes the style's throw-or-be-thrown aesthetic style, and enjoyed studying famous wrestlers, Iranian and foreign, for hours.

"My cousins were wrestler and I was always with them. It is the reason why I am a wrestler. I preferred Greco-Roman because it is more interesting than freestyle," says Norouzi.

"Greco-Roman techniques are more beautiful than freestyle. The match of Hassan Rangraz (2001 Greco-Roman world champion at 55kg) attracted me more to wrestling. Among foreigners I like Armen Nazarian's (Bulgarian two time Olympic champion) style."

Norouzi thrived in Greco-Roman wrestling. At the age of twenty he made the Iranian Junior World Team. He hoped to try his hand at major international competition for the first time, but this did not come to pass. Norouzi missed his chance to represent Iran at Asian Junior Championships because on his obligation to serve within Iran's military.

"I was an Iran Junior team member but I couldn't take part in Asian and world championships in 2006. After that I [entered] military service and I couldn't participate in competitions for two years," says Norouzi. "I had only personal trainings. After military service I won the Iran team trial in senior category."



After Norouzi returned from his military service and resumed full time training in wrestling, he rapidly snapped back into elite form. His intense efforts at practices and training camps, as well as impressive results in tournaments, led him to capture a spot on Iran's Senior National Team. His stellar results and aggressive made him a fixture on Iran's wildly successful World-Roman national team.

After finishing the 2009 world championships in tenth place and 2010 World Championship in ninth, Norouzi's senior-level career took off. In 2010 became Iran's first Greco-Roman gold medalist at the Asian Games in sixteen years. The next year, at the 2011 FILA World Championships, Norouzi stood atop the medal stand victorious, a world champion.

He was wrestling better than he ever had before, and he could not have picked a better time, for the 2012 London Olympics loomed on the horizon.

Norouzi arrived at the London Games as part of a star studded contingent of Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers intent on establishing themselves as the most dominant team in the sport. Norouzi looked to maintain his place at the top of the sport, but a tough task remained in front of him. His path to the gold medal finals in the 60kg was littered with wrestling superstars.

Norouzi would face, and defeat one standout opponent after another. First he beat China's Jiang Sheng, a fifth place finisher at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. After Sheng, Norouzi had to go through three different world medalists in a row. In Norouzi's own words, each match felt like the "final" of a tournament. Bulgaria's Ivo Angelov, Kazakhstan's Almat Kebispayev and Japan's Ryutarou Matsumoto all fell to the Iranian, one after another, sometimes less than a half an hour separating matches.

Now in the finals, Norouzi knew that to win Olympic gold, he would have to go through Revaz Lashki, the man who brought his first world championship to an end.

This time, however, nothing would deny Norouzi. His wrestling had progressed too far in the last three years and the Georgian had no answer for Norouzi's positioning and aggression. The Iranian won his Olympic gold in straight periods. After his Olympic triumph, Norouzi expressed his pride in his family and country.

"I hope to make my father and mother happy. I owe them and I like to make them happy by gold medal," Norouzi said after his Olympic final. "Also I dedicate my medal to all Iranians. I act like a soldier for my country in all worlds and Olympic events."

Norouzi, who redeemed himself against an old foe on the world's biggest stage, and who seeks to represent his country with the dignity of a soldier, may get to do so in the next Olympics. Someday Norouzi would like to pursue more leisurely pursuits: hunting, fishing, a master degree in physical education, but for the moment all of his time is spent training for the 2016 Olympics.

There is always time to rest, but for now Norouzi is determined to march forward.

Dan Evans is up and running at Australian Open qualifying but expects his pursuit of a place in the main draw in Melbourne get tougher.

The 23-year-old defeat Liang-Chi Huang 6-1, 6-2 in the first qualifying round Down Under, however the same could not be said for James Ward and Dan Cox, eurosport.com reported.

However Evans, who reached the US Open third round last summer after coming through three qualifying matches, is remaining realistic about what lies ahead.

He faces world No.1 182 Marton Fucsovics of Hungary next and he told BBC Sport: "I'm pretty confident I'll come through but quite a lot can happen through the next two matches."

"I had a good pre-season so I feel as good as anyone in the tournament. I'm sure I won that first match pretty comfortably, played well, and if I keep playing like that I should put myself in some good positions in the matches to come to get through."



Evans breezes through in first-round qualifying eurosport.com