

PRIME TIME

friday — (all times are kuwait local)

- 07:00 wta premier — madrid/tennis ... bein sports 9 hd
- 08:15 lyon vs ajax/soccer bein sports 3 hd
- 11:00 dodgers vs rockies/baseball ... bein sports 12 hd
- 13:45 leicester vs watford/soccer bein sports 2 hd
- 15:00 atp 1000 madrid/tennis bein sports 10 hd
- 17:00 man utd vs celta/soccer bein sports 11 hd
- 20:00 lopez vs rojas/boxing bein sports 13 hd
- 21:30 west brom vs chelsea/soccer ... bein sports 2 hd

Sports

Latest sports scores at — <http://sports.arabtimesonline.com>

Skouris to head ethics committee

FIFA boss Infantino slams fake news, defends record

MANAMA, May 11, (AFP): Gianni Infantino slammed "fake news" and "alternative facts" surrounding FIFA and insisted football's scandal-ridden governing body had changed in an impassioned speech to its annual congress in Bahrain on Thursday.

Fifteen months after being elected as president to bring forward wholesale change to a disgraced organisation, Infantino also claimed FIFA's corruption crisis was over and would never happen again.

Despite this, the main controversy surrounding FIFA this week has been the decision to remove the two men responsible for rooting out corruption in the world game — Hans-Joachim Eckert and Cornel Borbely.

Congress backed the recommendation of the all-powerful FIFA Council, chaired by Infantino, to replace them with the former president of the European Court of Justice Vassilios Skouris of Greece and Colombia's Maria Claudia Rojas.

But Infantino denied this had put back any anti-corruption agenda.

"FIFA has changed now, this is a new FIFA and we are new people here and we act with facts, not with words," he told Congress.

Infantino then invoked American President Donald Trump: "Fake news, alternative facts, these terms did not exist until some time ago, they have become en vogue.

SOCCER

"There's a lot of fake news and alternative facts about FIFA circulating — FIFA-bashing has become a national sport, especially in some countries."

Asked afterwards to give an example of fake news, Infantino responded: "Generally, it's my feeling."

And he said it was not the media but "a lot of people spreading the wrong information".

Alternating between English, French, German and Spanish, Infantino said his organisation was now different and would "nunca mas — never again" be hit by widescale corruption.

Infantino, whose critics maintain he has not shown a real commitment to reform, also told those who wanted to enrich themselves through football to leave FIFA.

"If there is anyone in this room or outside of this room who still thinks he can enrich himself, he can abuse football, I have one clear and strong message to tell him: leave, leave football and leave football now," added Infantino.

Getting into his stride, he also reaffirmed his belief that FIFA's finances were healthy, saying: "We don't have to bullshit with alternative figures."



FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaks during the 67th FIFA Congress in the Bahraini capital Manama on May 10. (AFP)

Infantino also criticised unnamed "highly-paid experts" who did little to help reform, and rubber-stamped "a sick and wrong system".

The decision to replace Eckert and Borbely caught the headlines earlier in the week, but there was no controversy inside the Congress hall where delegates backed the proposal with 97 percent of the votes.

The investigators claimed their removal, at the end of their four-year term, would put back FIFA reform as hundreds of cases were still outstanding.

Infantino, though, said the row was "a storm in a teacup" and questioned why they had left so many cases remaining.

However, he failed to convince everyone.

Jordan's Prince Ali Bin Al-Hussein said afterwards that things hadn't moved on from Infantino's predecessor, Sepp Blatter. "I think it is fairly obvious that a lot of things have not changed," said Prince Ali.

He added that FIFA under Infantino had "already lost the battle of public opinion".

Also on Thursday, a decision on Israeli clubs playing in the West Bank was pushed back until October.

The Palestine Football Association (PFA) argues that the presence of six Israeli clubs on its territory is in breach of FIFA statutes, but Israel argues the rules are unenforceable as there is no permanent border.

Congress, meanwhile, ratified a decision to open up the bidding process for the 2026 World Cup to any federation except those from Asia and Europe.

Infantino also raised the prospect of a "world women's league", but gave no further details.

And there could potentially be new regulations placed on transfers, he speculated, following news earlier this week that FIFA is investigating the £89.3 million (\$111 million, 105.2 million euros) transfer of Paul Pogba to Manchester United from Juventus.

Celtics grab series lead

Bradley on fire

BOSTON, May 11, (AP): Playing in the Garden has brought out the Boston Celtics' best basketball this postseason.

Wednesday night it was home to one of the best nights of Avery Bradley's career.

Bradley scored a playoff career-high 29 points as the Celtics beat the Washington Wizards 123-101 to take a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference Semifinals.

After being thoroughly picked apart in losses at Washington in Games 3 and 4, Boston shared the ball in Game 5, and again resembled the team that entered the game having won seven straight and 11 of 13 in the Garden against Washington.

Al Horford added 19 points, seven assists, and six rebounds. Isaiah

BASKETBALL

Thomas scored 18 points and handed out nine assists.

"We're a team. And it's going to take a team effort to beat the Washington Wizards," Bradley said.

Game 6 is Friday night in Washington, where the Wizards easily won their two games. If the Celtics win, they would move on to host the Cleveland Cavaliers to open the Eastern Conference Finals. Game 7 would be in Boston on Monday.

Boston led by as many as 26 points, negating Washington's physicality by spreading the floor and knocking down 16 3-pointers.

John Wall had 21 for the Wizards, who haven't won a playoff game in Boston since 1982.

The Wizards scored the first four points of game but that was followed by 16-0 run by the Celtics.

"The great start kind of got us going



Marcus Smart #36 of the Boston Celtics and Bradley Beal #3 of the Washington Wizards battle for a loose ball during the second half of Game Five of the Eastern Conference Semifinals at TD Garden on May 10, in Boston, Massachusetts. The Celtics defeated the Wizards 123-101. (AFP)

on both ends of the floor," Bradley said. "Tonight we saw if we're able to start the right way, the game's in our control."

It marked the fourth time in the series that one team has had a run of at least 16-0, including three times in the first quarter. Washington had a 16-0 spurt to start Game 1, a 22-0 run in Game 3 and 26-0 burst in Game 4.

During Boston's first-quarter spurt Wednesday, the Wizards missed eight straight shots before it was ended by Otto Porter's basket.

Boston did a good job of sharing the

ball, getting assists on 12 of 13 baskets in the opening 12 minutes. Thomas had five assists, more than Washington's entire team (four) in the period.

The Celtics also outrebounded the Wizards 48-45, after being outrebounded by 26 boards through each of the previous two games (95-69).

"They were the more physical team today," Wall said. "Throughout this whole series, whoever's the most physical team has won every game."

The Wizards responded with more energy after halftime, but each of their mini-runs were quickly beaten back by

Boston, which continued to share the ball and take advantage of their fast-break opportunities.

The Celtics' lead grew to 26 points in the fourth quarter.

Thomas said one thing that became apparent in watching film from the Celtics' losses in Games 3 and 4 was that he had to adjust his game with three or four defenders guarding him.

He said he's found maturity to step back and not force plays that he might not have had earlier in his career.

"Now I'm seeing the game differently," Thomas said.



Boston Celtics guard Avery Bradley drives to the basket against Washington Wizards forward Markieff Morris (left), during the second half of Game 5 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series in Boston, on May 10. Bradley scored 29 points as the Celtics won 123-101. (AP)

'Zlatan will play for many years'

HONG KONG, May 11, (AFP): Zlatan Ibrahimovic will continue playing for "many years", the surgeon who operated on the 35-year-old Manchester United striker's knee has said.

Sweden Ibrahimovic underwent surgery last week in the United States after suffering major knee ligament damage.

"Fixed, done and stronger", he declared after the operation carried out by Hong Kong-born Freddie Fu and Volker Musahl.

And Fu, in an interview with Thursday's South China Morning Post, gave his football A-list patient a glowing assessment.

"He's so healthy, so strong, biologically, bone morphology, everything, is absolutely very healthy."

"He can still play for many years." Fu, chairman of the department of orthopaedic surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre, has carried out over 20,000 knee operations.

But he said Ibrahimovic was "one of the top athletes I've ever touched, he is in superb shape." Ibrahimovic faces a long period of rehabilitation and with his United contract due to expire at the end of the season, his future at the club is in doubt.

24/7

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