

## Serbia, China post wins at Water Polo Championship

## Kuwait hope to regain balance in match against US

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Kuwait's water polo U-20 team hopes to regain its balance in a match with the water polo team of the United States of America to be played Sunday afternoon, as part of the fourth round of Group C qualification round in the 20th FINA World Men's Junior Water Polo Championship at the Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Swimming Pools Complex, Kuwait, in which 20 national teams are participating.

Kuwait's water polo team had lost its two matches against Iran (7-15) and Montenegro (7-42), whereas

## WATER POLO

Iran was nailed 27-4 by the United States of America.

In the second round of other groups, Spain appears to be going for its second win against Canada in the afternoon, whereas Hungary which lost in the hands of Spain (7-9) might end up recovering when it clashes with Russia Sunday evening after defeating Egypt 19-7 Saturday.

In Group D, Greece seems to experience less difficulties in the group stages as it prepares to meet Uzbekistan to book its place in the quarter finals, whereas tough times stand in the way of Brazil, which is scheduled to clash with Australia Sunday at 9:30 am.

The second group matches, which took place on Friday, saw Serbia defeating Japan (13-7), China beats South Africa (14-13) in Group A, and Spain defeated Egypt (18-4); Canada defeated Russia (12-10), while in Group B Greece beat New Zealand (14-5) and Brazil crushed Uzbekistan (23-6).

In a related development, head of Asia and Kuwait Swimming Federations Sheikh Khaled Al-Bader affirmed that hosting the championship in Kuwait puts her for the second time on the global sports map

## FINA approves qualifying guidelines for 25 meters world swimming competition

KUWAIT CITY, Dec 14: Executive Office of the Federation Internationale de Natation (FINA) held a meeting in Kuwait headed by Chairman of FINA Julio Maglione shortly before launching the Water Polo World Championships for players under 20 years old in Kuwait. The event is slated for Dec 12-20,

2019.

The meeting approved the qualifying guidelines for 25 meters world swimming competition to be held in Abu Dhabi in 2020 and another competition in Fukuoka, Japan in 2021. The

meeting also approved of sports construction and the dates of the world cup slated for Dec 15-20 in Abu Dhabi.

FINA expressed satisfaction with the rate of accomplishment of the water sport complex built in Abu Dhabi, which is expected to be completed by April 2020.

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Julio Maglione said he was happy to be in Kuwait in honor of an invitation from the First Deputy Chairman of FINA Hussain Al-Musallam. He wished Kuwait the best of luck in organizing the water polo world cup. He also wished the participating players, trainers and administrative staff the best in their endeavors.



Chairman of FINA Julio Maglione with First Deputy Chairman of FINA Hussain Al-Musallam pose for a group photo during the FINA meeting in Kuwait.

after enduring sports ban.

Sheikh Khaled praised the generous sponsorship of the championship by the Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanim, noting his presence at the opening ceremony gave more support to local sports in general, and specifically, the water sports.

Sheikh Khaled also praised total support of the Public Authority for Sports and Kuwait's swimming federation for facilitating the organization of the championship, which coincided with the opening of the new Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Swimming Pools Complex. He considered the development 'pride for the youth of this country'. He also praised the efforts of volunteers and media outlets in their quest to shed light on water polo and water sports in general.

## Goggia leads Italian 1-2 in WC super-G, Shiffrin third

## Brignone second

ST MORITZ, Switzerland, Dec 14, (AP): She can joke now about the accident that sent her car into a twisting fall off a mountain road and left it balancing on top of a van as if parked there by choice.

On Saturday, Sofia Goggia won her first World Cup ski race since walking away uninjured from the incident in her native Italy eight months ago.

"I am more famous for this car accident, better than Olympic gold," quipped the 2018 Pyeongchang Games downhill champion.

"It was not my moment to go, I think," Goggia said when asked about the crash at a news conference after winning a super-G race and edging World Cup champion Mikaela Shiffrin into third. "My life continued without any stop."

Her silver Audi left a slippery

## SKIING

road at Sestriere when she steered to avoid hitting the car in front which had slowed.

Goggia said the accident caused "a little bit of shock," and then described some after-effects.

"I had just, like, three nights in which I was waking up during my sleep with the feeling that I was turning in my car. But that was it."

Goggia added: "It's a signal that you have to reassess something in your life, but it was really okay."

The 27-year-old Italian's skiing was more than okay on a sunny but windswept mountain above the high-end resort of St. Moritz.

Goggia won by the smallest margin, just 0.01 second faster than teammate Federica Brignone.

Shiffrin trailed Goggia by 0.13 in third. A sixth podium finish in eight World Cup races so far extended her overall standings lead as she seeks a fourth straight title.

It was the second time in two weeks that Shiffrin stood looking up at two Italians. It also happened in a giant slalom at Killington, Vermont, where Marta Bassino edged Brignone for victory.

"They are all great skiers and they have a really aggressive mindset," Shiffrin said of her friendly rivalry with the Italy team. "It's super cool to see."

Goggia is one of the most flamboyant racers, and seemed at the limit making some turns before losing a ski pole landing a jump near the end. She chose to let the pole go



Italy's Sofia Goggia speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup super G in St Moritz, Switzerland, on Dec 14. (AP)

## Ivanova wins World Cup luge race

WHISTLER, British Columbia, Dec 14, (AP): Russia's Tatyana Ivanova had the fastest time in both heats and was an easy winner in a women's World Cup luge race.

Germany's Anna Berreiter was second and Russia's Viktoriya Demchenko took third. Germany's Julia Taubitz was fourth, good enough to keep her spot atop the World Cup overall standings.

Emily Sweeney was the top US finisher, placing seventh. Summer Britcher of the US struggled in her first

run and finished last in a 28-racer field, yet remained third in the seasonlong standings - two spots ahead of Sweeney.

In the men's race later Friday, Russia's Roman Repilov rallied in the second heat to hold off Germany's Felix Loch for the win. Italy's Dominik Fischnaller was third and first-heat leader Johannes Ludwig of Germany slipped to fourth.

Tucker West led the Americans, placing eighth.

after soaring "too long, too high" at the jump.

Brignone watched while sitting in the leader's box and applauded with hands above her head on seeing her teammate's time.

"It's an amazing thing for all the team to share the podium and share happiness," said Brignone, though acknowledging it hurt to lose by so little.

"It's one-hundredth so it burns. A lot," she said.

A seventh career World Cup win was Goggia's third in super-G. She also took silver at the biennial world championships in February when Shiffrin won by just 0.02.

Goggia also held nothing back standing atop the podium, loudly and heartily singing her national anthem, known by its opening line of Fratelli d'Italia, with eyes closed.

In a tight race, 10 racers were within one second of the winner. Nicole Schmidhofer, the 2017 world champion on this course, was fourth and there was a three-way tie for sixth.

By placing 10th, Viktoriya Rebenburg rose to lead the super-G standings after two races. The German racer is also second overall though her World Cup points total is less than half of Shiffrin's 532 tally.



Tatyana Ivanova, of Russia, celebrates her win following the second run of the Viessmann Luge World Cup in Whistler, British Columbia on Dec 13. (AP)

"For now, she (Shiffrin) is unbeatable for the overall," said Brignone, who is third.

However, Shiffrin will not chase 100 more points Sunday in the parallel slalom racing event she won last year.

The U.S. team said Shiffrin would sit out the race to rest ahead of a busy schedule in the next two weeks.

Goggia will be at the start line, making her debut in the newest Alpine event.

Meanwhile, organizers of the Alpine World Cup canceled a men's slalom on Saturday due to strong winds and rescheduled it for one day later.

The International Ski Federation already switched the racing schedule at Val d'Isere to try to race the slalom in the worst of the weather which was forecast for Saturday.

The rescheduling leaves no space for a giant slalom originally planned for Sunday.

The previous giant slalom was won by American racer Tommy Ford, who got his first career World Cup win last Sunday at Beaver Creek, Colorado.

Skiing's governing body did not immediately announce a venue and date to make up the giant slalom race.

## Australia top Ireland

## England and Samoa upset in 7s openers

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Dec 14, (AP): England and Samoa, semi-finalists in the world sevens rugby series less than a week ago, lost their opening matches at the Cape Town Sevens.

England fell to Scotland 26-24, to a last-gasp try by Femi Sofolarin, who played for England last season. Samoa lost to Kenya 24-19, a late charge in vain.

In another upset, Australia was beaten by Ireland 26-21.

South Africa, the winner of the first leg of the series in Dubai last weekend, blew away Japan 49-0.

Fiji, even down to five men, was too good for the United States 28-14, and New Zealand romped past Wales 43-7.

England regained the lead for a second and seemingly secure time through Harry Glover, but Scotland broke out from deep, Dougie Fife taking the attack into England's half.

Sofolarin received the ball on the right wing, and reached out in Dan Norton's tackle to score the match-winning try.

Sofolarin played XV's for Scotland Under-18s last year but switched to England for the world sevens series last season. However, he couldn't be

## RUGBY

captured by England until he turned 20 - next month - and changed allegiance last month back to Scotland.

Samoa couldn't overcome two yellow cards against Kenya, and Australia had a man in the sin-bin when Ireland's Terry Kennedy sliced through them on halfway and ran untouched to the right corner for the match-winning try.

South Africa started strongly in its bid to win its home event for the first time in four years.

Aminiasi Tuimaba's two tries a minute apart launched Fiji to victory against the US and hoped-for redemption for failing to reach the quarterfinals in Dubai for the first time.



Action shot taken during the Water Polo World Championships match.



Winner Elena Nikitina (center), of Russia, celebrates on the podium with second place finisher Jacqueline Loelling (left), of Germany, and third place finisher Janine Flock (right), of Austria, following the women's skeleton World Cup race in Lake Placid, NY, on Dec 13. (AP)

## Russia sweep golds in WCup skeleton race at Lake Placid

LAKE PLACID, New York, Dec 14, (AP): Russia swept the gold medals at a World Cup skeleton race at Mount Van Hoevenberg, with Elena Nikitina's winning margin in the women's race the largest on tour in nearly three years.

Nikitina finished two runs in 1 minute, 49.93 seconds. Germany's Jacqueline Loelling was second in 1:51.05 and Austria's Janine Flock was third in 1:51.11.

Nikitina's 1.12-second margin of victory is enormous for sliding and was

the biggest in a World Cup race since Jan. 20, 2017, in St. Moritz, Switzerland, where Canadian Mirela Raheva topped runner-up Kendall Wesenberg of the US by 1.83 seconds.

Raheva was fourth on Friday, while Wesenberg was the top American and placed fifth.

In the men's race, Russia's Alexander Tretiakov won in 1:46.55. Latvia's Martins Dukurs was second in 1:46.59 and Germany's Felix Keisinger was third in 1:46.97. Austin Florian was the top US finisher, placing 12th.

## Paralympian Aggar resigns from WADA in fallout from Russia case

LONDON, Dec 14, (AP): Former British Paralympian Victoria Aggar resigned from the World Anti-Doping Agency's athlete committee, saying "I simply can no longer be part of an organization that places politics over principle."

Aggar's departure from the committee is the latest in an avalanche of fallout from WADA's decision to forego a full ban of the Russian team from next year's Olympics in the wake of evidence that officials tampered with data that was supposed to help corroborate cases against athletes involved in the country's doping scandal.

Aggar, a retired rower, was in the majority on the committee when it issued a statement last weekend pressing WADA to issue the full ban. WADA did not heed that call and instead will allow some Russian athletes to compete as neutrals in To-

kyo next year.

Aggar said Thursday in a statement that WADA's actions "have fundamentally shaken my belief in an organization that I felt initially served a great purpose in protecting the integrity of sports."

The U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Athletes Advisory Council was among those supporting Aggar.

"WADA's decision to ignore the majority of its own Athlete Committee ... is out of touch and the current sanctions will not be enough to cause significant change in Russia," the AAC said in a statement.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday, WADA compliance chairman Jonathan Taylor said disallowing the Russian flag and its Olympic officials from the Tokyo Games, but not barring all its athletes, "was the appropriate line to draw."



From left, second placed Italy's Federica Brignone, the winner, also of Italy, Sofia Goggia, and third placed United States' Mikaela Shiffrin, celebrate on podium after an alpine ski, women's World Cup super G in St Moritz, Switzerland, on Dec 14. (AP)