



Osmar leaves Persepolis as a gentleman hero

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Staff writer

His appointment to the job drew scrutiny from the best part of the Persepolis supporters and ex-players, but less than five months on, interim coach Osmar Loss Vieira leaves the Reds bench with a concrete place in the club faithful's hearts. The Brazilian brought weeks of speculation over his future to an end by announcing through his Instagram page that he will not

extend his journey in the Iranian top flight as he wishes to stay close to his family in his home country. When former coach Yahya Golmohammadi, to whom the Brazilian had worked as a number two for a season and a half, stepped down from his role in January, the fans hoped the decision would prove as a blessing in disguise. Persepolis had managed only three victories in Golmohammadi's final 11 games in charge - including a home defeat against Al Duhaail which saw the Tehran gi-

ant crash out of the AFC Champions League group stage, and the inept performances and shallow squad hardly offered any hopes of winning a silverware for the supporters, whose team started the season as the defending league and cup champion. With Branko Ivankovic, then with Oman in the AFC Asian Cup, approaching the end of his contract in the Persian Gulf country, Persepolis fans yearned for the Croatian - widely regarded as the architect of the Reds' domestic dominance in recent years - making a dramatic return to the club.

Osmar remained in charge of the training sessions during the winter break, while club chairman Reza Darvish flew to Doha to lure Ivankovic, to no avail, though, as he made it clear that he has no intention of working in club football and ended up as the new China manager. Other names were brought up in the media for the Persepolis role, before Osmar was named as the caretaker for the rest of the campaign, in what seemed to be desperate move to save the Reds' season. "Osmar has a decent knowledge

of the team, the opponents, and the competitions, while enjoying a friendly relationship with the players. He also played his part in helping Persepolis win a league and cup double last season," the club's statement read after his appointment, though it did little to ease the pressure from the fans, who were expecting a more high-profile face on the bench in chasing a seventh league crown in eight years. Osmar, who had worked as a first-team assistant and academy coach in Brazil for the best part of his career, began his Persepolis reign

with a frustrating 1-0 away loss to Iralco, adding to the questions over his managerial prowess.

However, a 2-0 home victory over Tractor, as well as the winter signing of Issa Alekasir, Uzbek winger Oston Urunov, and Qatari fullback Abdelkarim Hassan, turned the tide for the Reds, who went on to win 12 games in the following unbeaten 14 to eventually beat archrival Esteghlal to the league trophy, though the impressive run was disrupted by a Hazfi Cup shootout defeat against Iralco, in which Osmar's team relinquished a two-goal league twice.

The pinnacle of Osmar's time on the bench came in late May, when Persepolis pulled off the most sensational of comebacks in the history of the Iranian Pro League, overcoming a three-goal halftime deficit to win 4-3 right at the death - a result coupled with Esteghlal's goalless draw at Nassaji which helped Persepolis move atop the table for the first time in the season with two games to spare.

Many still believe Persepolis's change in fortunes was down to the club's busy transfer activity in January rather than Osmar's tactical acumen but few can argue against his behavioral approach keeping the club on the right track toward success.

The Brazilian's gentleness on and off the touchline was the exact opposite of the one displayed by his Esteghlal counterpart Javad Nekounam, who, for all the credit he received for the spot-on tactics, was deemed responsible for his own downfall because of the controversial press conferences he delivered throughout the season, during which the Blues boss constantly hit out at the club hierarchy, referees, and the Iranian football governing body for hindering his side's title charge.

Osmar's virtue was perhaps most embodied in the title celebrations by the end of the final game against Mes Rafsanjan, where he wore a T-shirt bearing a picture of him and Golmohammadi alongside each other to pay tribute to his predecessor.

● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

Iranians collect five wushu medals in BRICS Games

Sports Desk

The first day of the wushu contests at the BRICS Games 2024 saw the Iranians grab five taolu medals - including double silvers - in Kazan, Russia. Shahin Banitalebi took the men's nandaou silver with 9.83 points,

while Abolfazl Qarebaghi tallied 9.52 for the qianshu bronze. In the women's event, Marjan Karimi finished her campaign with a silver thanks to a 9.68-point performance in the taijijian showdown. Zahra Jalili and Nazanin Bardar added a couple of bronzes to

the country's medal count, finishing third in the women's daoshu and nanquan contests respectively.

Iran's Marjan Karimi (L) poses with her taolu silver in the wushu competitions of the BRICS Games in Kazan, Russia, on June 13, 2024.
● bricskazan2024.games



● MNA

Iran's Rasouli wins discus gold in Asian Throwing Championships

Sports Desk

Iran's Hossein Rasouli claimed the men's discus throw gold at the Asian Throwing Championships in South Korea. A gold medalist in last year's

Asian Games, Rasouli registered a best throw of 59.05m for the ultimate prize, finishing above athletes from Qatar and China. Rasouli had tallied 62.04m when he beat fellow-Iranian

Ehsan Haddadi - a former Olympic silver medalist - to the top spot in Hangzhou last October, bringing an end to the legendary thrower's 17-year dominance in the continental showdown.