

Oman wary of 'struggle' in Singapore clash

SINGAPORE: Oman coach Paul Le Guen is concerned his side will still be feeling the effects of fasting during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan when they take on Singapore in an Asian Cup qualifier today. Le Guen was worried that his side would struggle, like they did the last

time they travelled to Southeast Asia after Ramadan only to be thrashed 3-0 by underdogs Thailand. "This period is always a little bit difficult, Ramadan," the former Olympique Lyon coach told reporters in Singapore yesterday. "Two years ago, we played at the end of Ramadan against Thailand

and we were punished. We have to remember that lesson." Le Guen also faces the prospect of trying to lift a deflated side whose dreams of a first World Cup finals appearance ended with a narrow defeat in Jordan in June. Oman are missing the key trio of goal-

keeper Ali Al Habsi, midfielder Ahmed Mubarak and striker Amad Al Hosni for today's match and Le Guen also has concerns about the artificial turf used at the Jalan Besar Stadium in Singapore. "I think it will be a tough game and I am respectful of the Singapore team," the Frenchman said.

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FAIRYTALE FAREWELL

● Isinbayeva wins pole vault gold

MOSCOW: The world championships finally caught fire yesterday as the fans turned up to say farewell to Yelena Isinbayeva, only for the Russian pole vault queen to roll back the years and win an emotional gold medal against all the odds.

Without a global title since 2008, struggling for form and due to retire after this event, the 31-year-old fed off the energy produced by a finally near-full and raucous Luzhniki Stadium to triumph with a leap of 4.89 metres.

Ever the show-woman, Isinbayeva ended the night with an assault on her own world

record, set in her pomp when she won the second of her Olympic titles in Beijing.

With chants of "Yelena" ringing in her ears, she fell short, but there was no trace of disappointment from her, the crowd or the organisers who finally got the memorable night they had craved.

There was plenty of drama elsewhere as LaShawn Merritt won the 400 metres as defending world and Olympic champion Kirani James hit the wall on the home straight.

The hundreds of yellow and blue-clad Ukraine fans, who had done their best to bring atmosphere to the stadium during the first few days, also got their reward when Ganna Melnichenko triumphed in the heptathlon.

Russia's Elena Lashmanova won the 20km walk but only just, after she stopped with a lap of the track to go thinking the race was over.

Robert Harting claimed his third successive discus gold, Ethiopia's Mohammed Aman won the 800 metres and Milcah Chemos Cheywa took the women's steeplechase.

Twice Olympic and world champion, four-times world indoor champion and multiple world record holder, Isinbayeva has been an icon of the sport.

But after finishing sixth in the last world championships and third at the 2012 Olympics it seemed as if the glory days were behind her.

American Jenn Suhr and Yarisley Silva of Cuba, who had the five best vaults of the year, came to Moscow as favourites.

The home fans had other ideas, however, having finally decided to attend in numbers after nights of embarrassingly low crowds.

Tuesday felt different – they even mustered their first Mexican wave – and Isinbayeva, who

knows better than anyone how to work a crowd, surfed the wave of goodwill.

With four athletes left, the bar went to 4.82 – beyond her best of the season. She cleared it on the second attempt, only for Olympic champion Suhr to follow her over to regain the lead on countback. The bar was hoisted to 4.89 and, writing a script the organisers could only have dreamed of, Isinbayeva soared over at the first attempt.

Suhr and Silva could not match her, taking silver and bronze respectively, and the Russian tore off to climb into the crowd and hug her coach.

● Merritt claims 400m gold; Farah in 5,000m final
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■ Isinbayeva celebrates after winning the women's pole vault final

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New coaching duty for Hudson

By PATRICK SALOMON

ENGLISHMAN Anthony Hudson has been named as the new head coach for Bahrain's senior men's national football team.



■ Hudson

This was announced late last night by the Bahrain Football Association (BFA). The decision was confirmed in a meeting of the BFA board of directors yesterday evening, chaired by BFA vice-president for technical affairs Ali Al Buainain. Hudson is currently Bahrain's under-23 Olympic team coach and tomorrow will begin guiding his side in this year's Olympic Teams Gulf Cup, which is being hosted by Bahrain.

According to the BFA, Hudson will begin his duties with the first team once the Olympic Teams competition is complete.

Speaking exclusively to the GDN last night, the 32-year-old said of his appointment: "This is a wonderful opportunity for me as a coach. I'm very proud to have been selected to lead the first team and I'm looking forward to the challenge."

"I love being here in Bahrain. Having been with the Olympic team for nearly two years now, I know many of the players well, especially the younger guys, and I believe I can be a great fit

with the senior squad."

Hudson is set to replace Argentinean Gabriel Calderon at the helm of the kingdom's first side. Calderon left the national team after his contract expired at the end of June. Hudson is one of the game's most prominent young coaches. He is the son of former Chelsea, Stoke City, Arsenal and England midfielder Alan Hudson.

He started his playing career at the youth team of West Ham United before playing with lower division English club Luton Town FC, and then American outfit Wilmington Hammerheads.

After moving on to coaching, Hudson became one of the youngest-ever to obtain a UEFA Pro License, while also becoming the youngest head coach in the US second division.

Hudson also worked under Harry Redknapp at Tottenham Hotspur, and then was the coach at Welsh club Newport County before joining Bahrain's Olympic team in March of last year.

Hudson was recently rewarded by the BFA for his good work with the under-23 side with a contract extension of two years as the kingdom's Olympic team head coach.

He now, however, has an even bigger role as the new national team manager.

