

Majid Jalali expects 'much different Iraq team' against Iran

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TEHRAN- Majid Jalali, the Iranian football expert, thinks that Iran national team will face a different Iraq squad when the two teams meet in the 2022 World Cup Qualifiers.

Iran won their first game against Syria with the goal scored by the captain Alireza Jahanbakhsh. The Persian Leopards will start Matchday Two as the leader of Group A.

On Tuesday, Iran and Iraq will face off in Doha. With their renowned head coach, Dick Advocaat, Iraq held the Korea Republic to a goalless draw in Seoul.

The experienced Iranian football manager, Majid Jalali, shared his views about the game in an interview with Tehran Times.

Iran's first game was not satisfying from a technical and tactical point of view. Of course, there were convincing reasons for that because we had some problems before the match. The most important issue for us was that we could get three points even though we were not good enough," Jalali said.

Asked about the second match against Iraq, Jalali responded: "Iraq national team have done a lot of work recently and is very different from the team we faced three months ago. They have had good training camps with a high-profile manager, and they could get one valuable point against Korea in their first match. So we won't have an easy game by any means," added Jalali, who is known as "The Teacher" in Iranian football.

The quality of the Iran national team's players is the positive point in Jalali's view: "Our players are at their best level, especially at the front line. I can say with certainty that we have the best strikers in Asia.

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Meanwhile, comparing with the first match, we have had enough time for the players and technical staff to train together for this game. It helps our team to reach the highest point of mental readiness and technical harmony. I again emphasize that we have an arduous task against Iraq, but the more we are ready mentally, the more our chances to win the game.

Speaking about the role of the head coach and his staff, Jalali said: "The most important role of coaches right now is to create the mental and technical harmony in the team. The players are completely motivated as they all want to play at the World Cup.

So they only need to become sensitive about the importance of this game. We have to play calmly, being aware of what special opponent we are playing against," Jalali concluded.