SPORTS

SOCCER

China looks to 'Serg' in Saudi

Ivankovic puts faith in newly naturalized Brazilian midfielder, as his side attempts to spring a surprise in Riyadh

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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With a new offensive weapon in its arsenal and a solid training camp paying dividends, Team China is primed to resume its 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign in style, aiming to stun host Saudi Arabia in a crucial fixture on Thursday.

Despite being halfway through the third-phase of qualifiers and ranked bottom in the six-team Group C, the Chinese men's team has arrived in Riyadh in high spirits stemming from a naturalized new recruit and the feel-good factor of a morale-boosting warm-up win.

The result of the late-night match in Riyadh, which kicks off early Friday morning, Beijing time, will decide Team China's fate one way or the other, even with three more qualifiers left to play.

Led by Croatian head coach Branko Ivankovic, Team China finished its 2024 campaign with three wins, two draws and five losses, and, in the current phase, is tied with the Saudis, Indonesia and Bahrain on six points, only one behind current group runner-up Australia. The group-leading powerhouse Japan is already out of sight on 16 points.

Should it upset the Saudis as hoped, Team China will likely break out of the current four-team draw to close the gap with the Socceroos and the runaway Samurai Blue, both of which are expected to dominate in their respective home ties with Bahrain and Indonesia on Thursday.

One point from a draw on the road against the world's 59th-ranked nation would also be an acceptable outcome for Ivankovic's men, and would still keep them in the running. The top two teams from each of the three groups secure direct qualification to the 2026 Cup finals, while the third- and fourth-placed sides progress to a fourth phase to fight for the two remaining direct tickets to next summer's marquee tournament in the United States, Canada and Mexico.



Newly naturalized Brazilian attacking midfielder Serginho takes part in training with Team China in Riyadh on Tuesday. China will play Saudi Arabia in a 2026 FIFA World Cup Asian qualifier on Thursday night. XINHUA

After a two-week training camp based in Dubai, all his players are 100 percent physically and mentally ready for the high-stakes battle against the Saudis, with some new blood bringing vitality and healthy competition to his squad, according to Ivankovic.

"The training camp has worked pretty well for us. All of our players have shown optimal form, met my requirements in training and drills, and practiced the tactics to a high standard," said the 71-year-old Croatian, who took over Team China from Serbian interim manager Aleksandar Jankovic one year ago.

Ivankovic's optimism was backed up by a 3-1 warm-up win on Saturday over Kuwait, which is fighting for its own survival in Group B.

"I think a warm-up win like this was very important. It helped us gel better as one unit and better exercise our plays than we could in training," said Ivankovic, who led Chinese Super League club Shandong Tai-shan to a domestic title in 2010.

Building on the team's collective strength is the newly recruited playmaker Serginho, a Brazilian-born attacking midfielder with CSL club Beijing Guo'an, who has met the five-year requirement of playing in China's domestic league, and recently acquired Chinese citizenship to be eligible for a call-up by Ivankovic.

Serginho, who is known in China as Sai Erjiniao, joined his adopted national team last week in Dubai and made an immediate impact offensively — an area where Team China has been crying out for creativity and experience — during the warm-up win against Kuwait.

"I am really happy that we brought him in. I hope he can fit in as quickly as possible, and we will, for sure, try to maximize his value on our roster," said Ivankovic.

In recent years, China's struggling national team has followed other countries by turning to naturalized players, mostly Brazilians plying their trade in the CSL, but has reaped very few benefits.

Also named in Ivankovic's 27-man squad is Liverpool-born former England youth international defender Tyias Browning, now called Jiang Guangtai, who has emerged as one of the few reliable and consistent naturalized representatives for Team China.

The 30-year-old Serginho, who was developed in youth program of Brazilian club Santos, made his domestic top-flight debut in 2014, before moving to Japan, where he helped the Kashima Antlers win the AFC Champions League in 2018.

He was signed by Changchun Yatai, then in China's second-tier League One, in January 2020. He played 96 matches for the club in both League One and the CSL, scoring 27 goals, before drawing attention from Guo'an.



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Branko Ivankovic,
on newly recruited Serginho

Even with the strong addition of Serginho, Chinese players have vowed to rely on their collective strength, particularly in defense, to realize their goal of leaving Riyadh with at least a point.

"I think we need everyone, from everywhere, to play a high-quality match against the Saudis, no matter who is on the pitch or on the bench," said Chinese defender Gao Zhunyi.

"I've done my research and preparation for containing Saudi's most dangerous offensive player. He's a very skillful attacker, and I am sure I will get help from my teammates and we can execute what we've planned collectively as one," Gao said of Saudi's veteran goalscorer Salem Al-Dawsari.

The six critical points earned by Team China's two wins so far in the current phase, against Bahrain and Indonesia, respectively, will alleviate some of the pressure on the squad, knowing that it still has two remaining matches against the group underdogs to pick up points.

"If we just relax and give it our all, I'm confident the result will take care of itself for us," said Gao.

Injuries hamper Chinese preparations for U-17 Asian Cup

The Chinese U-17 national team departed for Dubai on Monday, aiming to make an impact at the upcoming AFC U-17 Asian Cup in Saudi Arabia, despite struggling with injuries to key players.

China secured its place at the tournament with an impressive qualifying campaign last October, scoring 19 goals and conceding only two. However, preparations were disrupted by a string of injuries during a recent training camp in Foshan, Guangdong province.

"Almost half of the team's starters are injured and are currently undergoing treatment and recovery," the side's Japanese head coach Kenichi Uemura said after a 2-0 defeat to China's U-18 team in a closed-door practice match last week.

Playing without five key players, the U-17 squad failed to register a single shot on goal, raising concerns about its form ahead of the tournament. Among those sidelined was team captain Hebibilla Nurhaji, who watched from the sidelines after twisting his ankle during training. Attacking midfielder Yao Junyu, winger Wang Yi, right-back Wang Gengrui, and central defender Ailinizhaer Luoheman are also dealing with injuries of varying severity.

"Our plan in Foshan was to regain match fitness quickly, but the high number of injuries disrupted our preparations," Uemura said. He remains uncertain whether the injured players will recover in time for the tournament. "We'll rely on the team doctors' diagnoses and hope they can return as soon as possible. What is certain is that they are eager to train again."

As the winners and runners-up of the four groups in the Asian Cup will qualify for the FIFA U-17 World Cup finals, China, which has missed the last eight editions of the global soccer jamboree, will be looking to grasp this opportunity.

"From the team's perspective, the primary goal is to advance from the group stage and secure World Cup qualification, then strive for the best possible result," Uemura said. "Some players have spoken about winning the title. Whether or not that happens, having such ambition is a positive mindset."

On Monday, Uemura took 27 players, including those carrying injuries, to Dubai for a pre-tournament training camp. Goalkeeper Ihsen Ilham emphasized the importance of the upcoming sessions.

"We hope to use these training sessions and matches to fine-tune our form, saving our best performance for the first game against Saudi Arabia," he said.

China will face the tournament host on April 3, before taking on Uzbekistan and Thailand in its other group matches.

In the last edition of the U-17 Asian Cup two years ago, Uzbekistan reached the semifinals, and Saudi Arabia and Thailand were quarterfinalists. The last time China survived the group stages was at the 2006 edition.

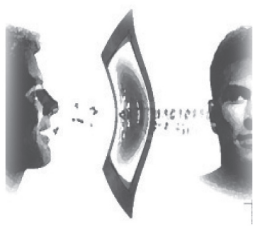
"Overall, our three opponents have similar offensive and defensive styles, emphasizing build-up play from the back and penetrating attacks," Uemura said. "However, this plays to our strengths with our high-pressing defense. We have the opportunity to capitalize on that by effectively pressing in the attacking third and quickly transitioning into offense."

Despite the injury setbacks, China remains determined to compete at a high level and will look to make the most of its final preparations before the tournament begins.

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NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING APPLICATION

Notice is hereby given to the owner(s) of Lot Nos. 1012 S.B, 1012 S.C, 1013, 1014 RP, 1015 S.A, 1015 S.B, 1015 RP, 1016, 1018, 1034 and 1035 in D.D. 113, Yuen Long, New Territories that we intend to apply for planning permission under section 16 of the Town Planning Ordinance for 'Proposed Temporary Warehouse (excluding Dangerous Goods Godown) with Ancillary Office' for a Period of 3 Years and associated filling of land and pond on Lot Nos. 1012 S.B, 1012 S.C, 1013, 1014 RP, 1015 S.A, 1015 S.B, 1015 RP, 1016 (Part), 1018, 1034 (Part) and 1035 in D.D. 113, Yuen Long, New Territories.

New Success International Investment Limited

20 March 2025

CHINESE VIEWS ON GLOBAL NEWS
CHINA DAILY
GLOBAL EDITION

IN THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN SUPREME COURT
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
TERRITORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS
COMMERCIAL DIVISION

Claim No: BVIHCOM2025/0044

IN THE MATTER OF SKY SUCCESS FINANCE LIMITED
AND IN THE MATTER OF THE INSOLVENCY ACT 2003 (AS REVISED)

BETWEEN:

SINO TOPPER HOLDINGS LIMITED

Applicant

-and-

SKY SUCCESS FINANCE LIMITED

Respondent

NOTICE
(Rule 161 of the Insolvency Rules 2005 (as revised))

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an application for the appointment of Joint Liquidators over **SKY SUCCESS FINANCE LIMITED** (company number 2032942) whose registered office is c/o Vistra Corporate Services Centre, Wickhams Cay II, Road Town, Tortola, VG1110, British Virgin Islands was filed at the Commercial Division of the High Court of Justice, British Virgin Islands on 5 February 2025 on behalf of Sino Topper Holdings Limited (the "**Applicant**"), c/o Loeb Smith Attorneys, 6th Floor, Waters Edge Building 1, Wickham's Cay II, Road Town, Tortola, VG1110, British Virgin Islands.

The application will be heard on 14 April 2025 at the Commercial Court, Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands at a time to be specified in the final Commercial Court List.

Any person intending to appear at the hearing of the application (whether to support or oppose the application) shall give notice of their intention to do so to the Applicant or its legal practitioners in accordance with Rule 162 of the Insolvency Rules 2005 (as revised) by 4:00 pm on 11 April 2025.

A copy of the application will be furnished by the undersigned to any director, member or creditor requiring the same on payment of the prescribed fee.

Loeb Smith Attorneys
Legal Practitioners for the Applicant
6th Floor, Waters Edge Building 1
Wickham's Cay II
Road Town
Tortola
VG1110
British Virgin Islands
Telephone: +1 (284) 494 1848
Email: gary.smith@loebsmith.com
Reference: H2709-001

申請酒牌續期公告

其匠燒

現特通告：陳國守其地址為九龍尖沙咀厚福街12-12A號藍馬商業大廈10樓，現向酒牌局申請位於九龍尖沙咀厚福街12-12A號藍馬商業大廈10樓其匠燒的酒牌續期。凡反對是項申請者，請於此公告刊登之日起十四天內，將已簽署及申明理由之反對書，寄交九龍深水埗基隆街333號北河街市政大廈4字樓酒牌局秘書收。

日期： 2025年3月20日

NOTICE ON APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LIQUOR LICENCE

KI YAKITORI

Notice is hereby given that CHAN, Kwok Sau of 10/F, THE LAMMA TOWER, NOS. 12-12A HAU FOOK STREET, TSIM SHA TSUI, KOWLOON is applying to the Liquor Licensing Board for renewal of the Liquor Licence in respect of KI YAKITORI situated at 10/F, THE LAMMA TOWER, NOS. 12-12A HAU FOOK STREET, TSIM SHA TSUI, KOWLOON. Any person having any objection to this application should send a signed written objection, stating the grounds therefor, to the Secretary, Liquor Licensing Board, 4th Floor, Pei Ho Street Municipal Services Building, 333 Ki Lung Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon within 14 days from the date of this notice.
Date : 20 March, 2025