

Radhi Shenaishil talks about each of Iraq's five games so far



Match #1: Australia 2-0 Iraq

Radhi: "Australia had a state of stability and harmony between its players, whereas our Iraqi team had not played many matches together. We played well in the first half and did not concede any goals, but we made some mistakes in the second half that led to our opponents scoring. This was frustrating as our strategy was to keep a clean sheet and try to score on the counter. A number of players were not at their best but increasing the harmony between the players was important."



Match #2: Iraq 1-2 Saudi Arabia

Radhi: "We missed a big opportunity in this game. I take responsibility for this loss. I did not promise anyone that we would qualify for the World Cup. The penalties they received were incorrect decisions but we are not able to change the decisions of the referee. We handed the match to the Saudis but nonetheless I was proud of our performance. The other teams have been preparing for the qualifiers for a long time but Iraqi football has experienced a period of decline and now we are in transition."



Match #3: Japan 2-1 Iraq

Radhi: "I think we played in a good, balanced way. No team can play at the same level for 90 minutes. We were not able to take advantage of the opportunities that we had, and Japan were quicker than us and took advantage of their chances. We need to translate our chances into goals if we want to win games. I feel like we played a good game and deserved a draw, but we ended up losing again."



Match #4: Iraq 4-0 Thailand

Radhi: "We desperately needed to beat Thailand to lift the morale of the players and give us a chance of still qualifying. Scoring four goals against a disciplined team like Thailand is something to be proud of. After three consecutive losses, this match was crucial for keeping us in the race for a qualifying spot and it gave a psychological boost to the players."



Match #5: United Arab Emirates 2-0 Iraq

Radhi: "The team did not provide its normal level in this game, especially in the first half. We lost focus and UAE punished us playing with high morale and tactical discipline. We attempted to get back into the game in the second half and we had chances but we couldn't score. UAE's performance was no different to how they had played in the previous games - it was our poor performance that gave them the win. We are trying to qualify for the World Cup at the same time as building team of new players, many of them from the Iraqi League, while the other nations have already completed building their teams."