

Tuesday, 4 June 2013

## Oman beats Iraq 1-0 in World Cup qualifier



Oman scored in first-half stoppage time Tuesday to beat Iraq 1-0 and boost its chances of qualifying for the 2014 World Cup. With time running out on an uneventful first half, Ismail al-Ajmi headed the winner past keeper Noor Sabri Abbas and striker Humam Tareq Faraj, who failed to clear it off the line. The victory moves Oman into second in Group B behind Japan which became the first team to qualify for the World Cup in Brazil with a 1-1 draw against Australia. Oman and Japan only have a match remaining while Australia, Iraq and Jordan have two matches. Oman had several counterattacks in the second half that nearly doubled its lead. Al-Ajmi fired a close-range strike from just inside the area that Abbas swatted away in the 60th minute and Abdul Aziz twice got behind the defense and fired shots just wide in the 80th and 88th minute. Iraq rarely challenged Omani keeper Faiyz al-Rusheidi, as the Omani defense largely contained striker Younus Mahmood. The Iraqi captain had a good chance in the 87th when he took a pass in the area but fired a weak shot just to the right of the goal. Iraq still has a mathematical chance of advancing, but is bottom of the group and its two remaining matches are against Asian heavyweights Japan and Australia.