

Five Iranians Compete at Karate1-Premier League

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Five Iranian karatekas take part at the Karate 1-Premier League in the Netherlands.

The prestigious event took place in Rotterdam from March 17 to 19. Zabihollah Poorshab, Sajjad Ganjzadeh, Saman Heydari, Ebrahim

Hassanbeigi and Soheil Sajedifar will represent Iran in the competition.

A total of 1258 karatekas from 73 countries participated in the three-day competition.

The Karate1-Premier League- is the most important league event in

the world of Karate. It comprises of a number of the most prominent Karate competitions and endeavors to bring together the best Karate athletes in the world in open championships of unprecedented scale and quality.

Initiated in 2011 with two tourna-

ments held in Paris and Istanbul, the Karate1-Premier League- has made exponential progress in terms of magnitude and status of the tournaments as well as the number of participants and countries represented.

Women's Handball Team Suffers Narrow Defeat to Vietnam

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran suffered third successive defeat in the 2017 Asian Women's Handball Championship, losing to Vietnam 33-31 on Friday. Iran was previously defeated against China (33-8) and host South Korea (44-22) in Group A.

The Iranian team will play winner of Uzbekistan and Hong Kong in the 5th to 8th classification on Monday.

South Korea has been the dominant force at the Asian Championship, winning 12 times in the last 15 editions.

The Asian Championship doubles as the qualifying tournament for the 2017 World Women's Handball Championship.

Top three finishers will advance to the 24-team world competition in Germany in December.

Real Madrid to Play Bayern in Champions League Quarterfinals

NYON, Switzerland (AP) - The road to a Champions League record for Bayern Munich coach Carlo Ancelotti will go through his old club -- defending champion Real Madrid.

When Ancelotti fulfilled Madrid's quest for the "Decima" -- a record-extending 10th European Cup title -- in 2014, he joined a select group of five coaches to win the competition with two different clubs. He also coached AC Milan to two Champions League titles.

Ancelotti's new team will host his previous club in Munich in the first leg of the quarterfinals on April 12. The return

anytime," Ancelotti said.

Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge called it a "clash of the titans," while Madrid director Emilio Butragueno lamented the pairing arriving so soon.

"It could be a final but it's a quarterfinal, unfortunately," Butragueno said.

Barcelona won its fifth European title two years, beating Juventus 3-1 in Berlin, in coach Luis Enrique's first season with the club. A Champions League final on June 3 in Cardiff, Wales, would be Luis Enrique's final match before leaving the club.

Juventus did oust Barcelona in the

Russians Defeat Iranian Greco-Roman Wrestlers



TEHRAN (Dispatches) – The Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers who had defeated Germans at their first bout on Thursday, the 1st day of Abadan Greco-Roman World Cup 2017, were defeated by Russians in their second encounter.

The UWW 2017 Greco-Roman World Cup was opened early in the morning on Thursday in Iranian southwestern city of Abadan and Iranian wrestlers of Greco-Roman style thrashed their German rivals 7-1, in their first event at the group stage of the tournament where eight top world wrestling teams, namely Iran, Russia, Turkey, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Germany, Ukraine and Azerbaijan are racing for the title.

At 06:00 p.m. the second session of the tournament competitions was opened with Group competitions between Russia and Iran, Kazakhstan and Germany, from Group A, and, Azerbaijan and Belarus, Turkey and Ukraine, from Group B.

As the Iranian roster lost 3-5 to Russia's roster of medalists, the only chance of Iranians is to beat Kazakhstan and then the winner of Belarus vs. Turkey to win the bronze medal of the event.

On Thursday, the Iranian and Russian wrestlers grappled between 06:00 p.m. and 08:30 p.m. and the following results were recorded. In the 59 kg category, Russia's international bronze medalists Mingiyar Semenov defeated Iran's Saman Abdoli 3-1. In the 66 kg weight class, Iran's Ali Arsalan lost 4-7 to 2015 bronze medalist Artem Surkov. In the 71 kg weight category, Mohammadali Abdolhamid Geraei of Iran defeated Russia's Abuzaid Mantsigov, 4-0. In the 75 kg weight category, Russia's Two-time Olympic gold medalist Roman Vlasov defeated Iran's Rio 2016 bronze medalist Saied Morad Abdvali, 5-1. In the 80 kg weight class Yousef Ahmad Ghaderian of Iran beat Reigning and former world champions Ramazan Abacharaev of Russia, 3-0. In the 85 kg weight class Russia's Davit Chakvetadze, Rio 2016 champion, humiliated Iran's Hossein Ahmad Nouri by technical fall, 9-0. In the 98 kg weight class, Iran's Seyed Mostafa Seyedghanbar Salehizadeh beat Russia's Maksim Safarian, 2-0. And finally in the 130 kg weight category, Russia's bronze medalist Sergey Semenov defeated Iran's Behnam Aliakbar Mehdizadeh Aryatapeh, 2-1.

Iran U-20 Football Team in Tough Group: Coach

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran has been drawn in a tough group at the 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup, the head coach of Iran under-20 national football team Amir Hossein Peyrovani said.

Iran has been drawn against two-time World champion Portugal, Zambia and Costa Rica in Group C of the competition.

"At the first look, it seems we have been in an easy group but we will have a difficult task to advance," Peyrovani said.

"Portugal is one of the best teams in the world and has intro-

duced so many famous players to world. The Portuguese team has qualified for the World Cup easily, while the Netherlands, Serbia and Ukraine failed to book their places," he added.

"We will hold a 10-day training camp in Germany. Iran U-20 football team will play Hamburg and a senior team from Denmark in the camp," Peyrovani concluded.

The 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup will be played in six venues across South Korea Republic from May 20 to June 11, 2017.

Monaco Stun Man City to Reach Champions League Quarters

PARIS (Dispatches) - Monaco have stunned Manchester City to reach the Champions League quarter-finals, overturning a two-goal first-leg deficit with a 3-1 victory in a pulsating clash to go through on away goals.

French prodigy Kylian Mbappe, Fabinho and Tiemoue Bakayoko scored for Monaco on a memorable European night for the principality club, who underlined their growing status as one of the continent's most exciting sides.

City, who won the first leg 5-3, were completely overwhelmed in the first half and fell two goals behind, but reacted after the break and Leroy Sane reduced the arrears as Monaco seemed to run out of steam.

Monaco, who were without the injured Radamel Falcao, are the only French side left in the competition after Paris St Germain were knocked out by Barcelona.

Atletico Madrid goalkeeper Jan Oblak was the hero as the Spanish

side reached the Champions League quarter-finals for the fourth year in a row after drawing 0-0 with Bayer Leverkusen in an open last-16 second leg on Wednesday.

Slovenia international Oblak made an outstanding triple save to deny Julian Brandt and Kevin Volland in the second half and he made further impressive stops late in the game to shut out the Germans and secure a 4-2 aggregate success.

Atletico had the better of the first half and it took a top-class save from Oblak's opposite number Bernd Leno to prevent Angel Correa giving Atletico the lead before the break, flying to his left to tip away a goalbound shot.

The impressive Correa nearly crafted an outstanding goal in the second half but could not find the target while top scorer Antoine Griezmann also came close to putting Atletico out of sight, sending a classy chip just wide.

Ex-Iran Goalkeeper Alireza Haghghi Joins AFC Eskilstuna



Alireza Haghghi

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Haghghi joined AFC Eskilstuna ahead of the upcoming Allsvenskan season.

The 28-year-old goalie had been linked with a move to Port Vale Football Club in February.

Athletic Football Club Eskilstuna, also known simply as AFC Eskilstuna, is a Swedish football club located in Eskilstuna.

The Swedish football side gained promotion to the Allsvenskan last season after finishing

second behind IK Sirius in the second-tier.

Haghghi started his playing career at Persepolis in 2006 at the age of 16.

He joined Rubin Kazan of Russia in 2012 and then moved to Sporting Covilha on loan. He has also played for Portugal's Penafiel.

Haghghi represented Iran national football team in the 2014 World Cup and showed a decent performance against Argentina in group stage.

Thompson Scores 21 in 1st Quarter, Warriors Roll Past Magic 122-92

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- A tighter defense that gave Orlando trouble all night and another early scoring outburst from Klay Thompson have the Warriors feeling a lot better about their position in the West.

A much-welcomed blowout of the Magic certainly helped, too, especially following three weeks of inconsistencies and a handful of surprising losses.

Thompson scored 21 of his 29 points in the first quarter and the Golden State cruised past the Orlando Magic 122-92 on Thursday night.

"To have a game like that always helps, not confidence-wise but just to kind of try and get back in a rhythm," said Green, who had nine points and 11 rebounds. "I don't think this game really just puts us back in a rhythm, but it was a carryover from the last game's fourth quarter. It was just using that momentum and letting it carry over."

Stephen Curry added 25 points and nine assists after appearing to injure his right foot in the opening minutes, Andre Iguodala scored 14 and Zaza Pachulia had 10 points and 10 rebounds to help the Warriors improve to an NBA-best 54-14 and clinch their third straight Pacific Division title for the first time in franchise history.

Thompson, who owns the NBA record for most points in one quarter with 37 against Sacramento on Jan. 23, 2015, was almost perfect in the opening period against Orlando. The three-time All-Star made his first five shots beyond the arc and shot 8 of 11 overall while helping the Warriors to an early double-digit lead.

By comparison, the entire Magic team made only nine buckets in the first quarter.

"We were able to get out in transition just from our stops," Thompson said. "It definitely helps when you make four or five in a row. You feel like every shot's going to go in."

It's the seventh time in his career that Thompson has scored 20 or more in a single quarter and the third time this season. The other two came when Thompson had 23 points in the second and 20 in the third on his way to an NBA season-high 60 points against Indiana on Dec. 5.

"The defense really was kind of setting up some of those shots, too, in transition," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "When you can make stops it solves a lot of problems. We've struggled to score the last couple of weeks. Tonight, we broke through."

Thompson's fast start began not long after Curry limped off the court and into the Warriors' locker room early in the first quarter after he stepped on the foot of Elfrid Payton.

The reigning two-time MVP returned a short time later and was greeted by a rousing ovation from the Oracle crowd. Curry then promptly threw an inbounds pass to Thompson for an easy bucket that put the Warriors up by double digits.

"Tweaked his ankle," Kerr said. "He's fine."

Payton and Jeff Green scored 13 points apiece for Orlando.



Real Madrid's James Rodriguez, second right, celebrates after scoring his team's third goal of the game during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Eibar, at Ipurua stadium, in Eibar, northern Spain.

match will be played in Madrid six days later.

"Matches against Real are obviously special for me," Ancelotti said. "It'll be exciting for me to go back to Madrid."

Also in Friday's draw, Barcelona will meet Juventus in a rematch of the 2015 final, Champions League newcomer Leicester will face Atletico Madrid, and Borussia Dortmund will take on Monaco.

The first legs will be played on April 11-12, with the return matches on April 18-19.

Madrid and Bayern have combined to win 16 European titles and both currently lead their national leagues. One club, however, will end its recent streak of reaching the Champions League semi-finals for five straight years.

Former Madrid players now with Ancelotti include Xabi Alonso from the 2014 champions. One-time Bayern midfielder Toni Kroos now lines up alongside Madrid forwards Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale.

"By the quarterfinal stage all the teams are well-known. There are no secrets

quarterfinals in 2003, en route to one of its competition-record six losing finals -- against a Milan team coached by Ancelotti 14 years ago.

Leicester is making its debut in the competition, and is the only team in the draw which has never played in a Champions League final. But Leicester and Atletico have played before. The Spanish club eliminated Leicester in the first round of the UEFA Cup in 1997.

"We know very well the problem Sevilla had with Leicester," Atletico director Clemente Villaverde said.

Monaco has become a feared team, and the highest scorers in any top European league this season, after starting among the lowest-ranked clubs in the group-stage draw in August.

Neither Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim nor Dortmund's Thomas Tuchel has ever led a team to the Champions League semifinals.

"A very exciting, very difficult lot," Tuchel said, describing Monaco as a team "with great individual talent and an outstanding coach. We need to show our absolute best performance twice."