

Iran's Weightlifting Team Wins World Title in U.S.



TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran's men weightlifting national team has clinched its first ever world champion title, after collecting a total of 509 points at the 2017 World Weightlifting Championships in the United States.

The competitions were held in Anaheim, California, from November 28 to December 5.

On Monday, Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi broke two world records and clinched the whole 3 gold medals of the 94kg category. The Rio Olympic Champion

set a new world record of 417 kilograms for the combined total on Monday. The 30-year-old successfully lifted 184 kilograms in the snatch before hoisting 233 kilograms in the clean and jerk which smashed the 17-year record of 232 kilograms set by a Polish athlete.

In the same division, another Iranian weightlifter Seyyed Ayub Mousavi grabbed bronze both in the total and the clean and jerk.

Ali Hashemi won the men's 105 kilogram class after he finished

on 404kg. The 26-year-old athlete earned two gold medals and a bronze in the category.

In the 85kg category, Iran's Kianoush Rostami showed immense physical courage to claim the snatch silver, despite a serious knee injury. The Rio Olympic gold medalist managed to lift 174 kilograms for the precious medal but failed in all his clean and jerk attempts.

At the 105 kilogram category, Behdad Salimi earned a silver and a bronze medal while Seyyed Ali

Hosseini won two silver medals and a bronze.

Leader Praises Iranian Weightlifters, Wrestler

In a message released on Wednesday, Ayatollah Khamenei warmly praised the Iranian national weightlifting team for bringing joy to the country by achieving the first world title in the 2017 International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships in the U.S.

The Leader also lauded Alireza Karimi "from the bottom of heart" for "becoming the symbol of Iranians' dignity" in the recent U23 World Senior Wrestling Championship in Poland.

Karimi, 23, intentionally lost a match to a Russian rival to avoid facing an Israeli opponent in the next round.

And also, President Hassan Rouhani congratulated the Iranian nation over the victory and expressed gratitude to the weightlifting team for their achievements.

Iran's weightlifting team had ranked third twice at the world championship competitions in France in 2011 and in Poland in 2013.

IOC Bars Russia From 2018 Winter Games Over Doping

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia's Olympic team has been barred from the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea as punishment for alleged state-backed doping at the 2014 Sochi Games, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced Tuesday.

The IOC will allow individual athletes from Russia to compete as neutrals "under strict conditions" at the PyeongChang Games, with uniforms bearing the name "Olympic Athlete from Russia."

"This was an unprecedented attack on the integrity of the Olympic Games and sport," IOC president Thomas Bach said in a statement. "The IOC [executive board] after following due process, has issued proportional sanctions for this systemic manipulation while protecting the clean athletes. This should draw a line under this damaging episode and serve as a catalyst for a more effective anti-doping system."

The decision, announced just several months before the games kick off in PyeongChang, was based on the findings of the two commissions led by IOC member Denis Oswald and the former president of Switzerland, Samuel Schmid.

The panel led by Oswald is prosecuting Russian athletes who are suspected of doping violations

in Sochi. The panel chaired by Schmid is studying whether Russian state agencies — including the sports ministry and FSB security service — were involved in the doping program.

Russia has repeatedly denied that a state-sponsored doping program ever existed.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said last month that the flurry of Russian sports doping allegations could be an American attempt to interfere in next year's Russian presidential election.

The IOC announced it had banned Russian government officials from the games. It also imposed a fine of \$15 million on the Russian Olympic committee to pay for investigations and future anti-doping efforts.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in a conference call Tuesday that Russian officials were not pondering their options should the Russian team be banned from the Olympics, preferring to "keep silent" before any decision was announced.

However, Peskov also said they intended to defend the interests of the Russian athletes and maintain all ties with the IOC.

Peskov also said on Monday that Russia was not planning to boycott the Olympics if the IOC imposed restrictions on the country's participation.

Bayern End PSG's Perfect Euro Record With 3-1 Win

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Bayern Munich overcame Paris Saint-Germain 3-1 on the brace from Corentin Tolisso at the last game in Group B of Champions League on Tuesday.

The German giants needed a four-goal margin victory to snatch the top spot in Group B. Despite a powerful performance against the visitors from Paris, the Bundesliga champions were unable to establish a four-goal advantage on home soil.

However, the Bundesliga record champions grabbed a fairy tale start as Robert Lewandowski capitalized on a cross from James Rodriguez and a flicked on header from Kingsley Coman to slot home from very close range with only three minutes into the game.

The visitors needed some time to recover from the setback as Neymar unleashed the first dangerous shot on target following a build up play from Kylian Mbappe in the 33rd minute. Nevertheless, Bayern goalkeeper Sven Ulreich was on guard and tipped Neymar's effort around the far post.

Bayern continued on the front foot



Corentin Tolisso (C) celebrates scoring with Robert Lewandowski(L) and Franck Ribery of Bayern Munich during a UEFA Champions League group B match between Bayern Munich and Paris Saint-Germain in Munich, Germany, Dec. 5, 2017.

and doubled the lead before the break when James Rodriguez' pinpoint cross into the box met Corentin Tolisso,

who nodded the ball past custodian Alphonse Areola with 37 minutes played.

The hosts needed another two goals to oust the French outfit from the top spot, but the visitors showed a vital sign after the restart as Edinson Cavani's cross allowed Kylian Mbappe to reduce the arrears inside the box in the 50th minute.

It looked like the "PSG" goal would take the wind out of Bayern's sails but the hosts were not done with the scoring. Corentin Tolisso wrapped up his brace in the 69th minute after tapping home Kingsley Coman's square pass.

The "Bavarians" pressed frenetically for another goal whereas Paris Saint-Germain remained dangerous on fast break yet both sides lacked in accuracy in the closing period.

Despite the defeat, "PSG" complete the group stage atop Group B followed by Bayern Munich, Celtic and RSC Anderlecht.

"The entire team staged a smart and clever performance. Paris is always a threat as we saw a couple of times. We nevertheless implemented our plan and played a good game," Bayern head coach Jupp Heynckes said.

FIFA Ends Kuwait's Suspension for Political Meddling

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) - World football governing body FIFA announced on Wednesday it was lifting its suspension of Kuwait, after the Persian Gulf state's parliament adopted a law meant to end government interference in the sport.

"The suspension of the Kuwait football association is lifted," FIFA's president Gianni Infantino announced alongside a Kuwaiti official in a short video shared widely on Twitter.

Infantino was visiting Kuwait to announce the eagerly anticipated decision.

World sports bodies led by FIFA

and the International Olympic Committee suspended Kuwait in October 2015 for the second time since 2010 over alleged government meddling in sports.

The suspensions meant Kuwait missed out on the qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup and the 2019 Asian Cup, and before that the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

On Sunday, the Kuwaiti parliament passed a new law in line with FIFA's requirements and on Tuesday, Kuwaiti clubs elected the head of a new football federation.

Analysts say the crisis in Kuwaiti sports was the result of a power struggle within the ruling elite.

Vitali Klitschko, Erik Morales Win Election to Boxing HOF

CANASTOTA, N.Y. (AP) - Three years after he threw his hat back into the political ring for good, former heavyweight champion Vitali Klitschko achieved the ultimate honor for his time in that other ring - selection to the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

"It's a dream of many boxers to be a member of the Hall of Fame family," Klitschko, now the mayor of Kiev, Ukraine, said in a statement from the Hall of Fame. "I've thought about the Hall of Fame, but I never expected one day that I would be among the legends who were always examples for me. It's a big honor."

Klitschko was one of nine people selected for induction next June. Other boxers in the class of 2018 announced Tuesday were four-

division world champion Erik Morales and light middleweight champion Ronald "Winky" Wright, while Sid Terris was elected posthumously in the old-timer category.

Morales won titles in four weight divisions. Nicknamed "El Terrible," the native of Mexico followed his father into the ring and won the NABF and WBC super bantamweight titles. He also defeated Guty Espadas Jr. for the WBC featherweight title in 2001, captured the WBC and IBF super featherweight titles in 2004, and in 2011 defeated Pablo Cano for the WBC light welterweight title. He retired a year later after back-to-back losses to Danny Garcia, finishing with a pro record of 52-9 (36 KOs).

Westbrook Triple Double as Thunder Down Jazz

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Russell Westbrook bagged a second consecutive triple double as the Oklahoma City Thunder staged a late rally to sink the Utah Jazz on Tuesday.

Westbrook, who had guided the Thunder to a victory over San Antonio on Sunday with his seventh triple of the season, bagged his eighth of the campaign in a 100-94 win at the Chesapeake Energy Arena.

The reigning NBA MVP finished with 34 points, 13 rebounds and 14 assists as OKC improved to 11-12 in the Western Conference standings.

Paul George had 21 points and New Zealand center Steven Adams 20 while Carmelo Anthony added 14 for the home side.

Donovan Mitchell led the scoring

for Utah with 31 points while Joe Ingles had 16 points.

Westbrook's virtuoso performance helped dig the Thunder out of a hole after Utah raced into a 28-19 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Utah led 47-39 at half-time and jumped out to an 80-68 lead heading into the final quarter.

But with Utah seemingly poised for victory, the Thunder exploded in the fourth quarter, outscoring the Jazz 32-14 to win.

Elsewhere on Tuesday, Devin Booker's scintillating run of recent form came to an unhappy end as the Phoenix Suns prodigy was carried off the court in his team's defeat to the Toronto Raptors.

Booker, who had scored 46 points on

Monday and 38 points on Saturday, was helped away at the end of the fourth quarter after bagging 19 points.

Toronto claimed a 126-113 win to improve to 15-7 as Phoenix fell to 9-17.

Kyle Lowry was the key figure for the Raptors, finishing with 20 points, 10 assists and six rebounds.

The Raptors were in control throughout, leading by 18 points heading into the fourth quarter.

Phoenix rallied to cut the lead to 10 with 8min 44sec to play, but Lowry pushed Toronto back in front by 14 with a three-pointer with just over five minutes left.

Phoenix team officials meanwhile later said Booker appeared to have suffered an adductor strain.

In Tuesday's other game, the



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Washington Wizards (13-11) defeated the Portland Trail Blazers 106-92 after a dazzling 51-point display from Bradley Beal.