

Esteghlal Advance Into 2018 AFC Champions League Quarterfinals

TEHRAN (Press TV) - Iranian professional football club Esteghlal Tehran has found its place in the quarterfinals of the 2018 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Champions League following a victory over fellow Iranian side Zob Ahan Isfahan.

Esteghlal took revenge for its last week's Round of 16 first leg defeat as it lost 0-1 at Foolad Shahr Stadium just outside the central Iranian city of Isfahan, and beat the visitors 3-1 at Azadi Stadium in western Tehran on Tuesday evening.

Esteghlal's 25-year-old Senegalese forward Mame Baba Thiam put the hosts in front from the spot shortly after the 10-minute mark.

Thiam scored a brace only four



The photo shows a view of the 2018 AFC Champions League Round of 16 matches between Iranian football clubs Esteghlal Tehran (players in blue) and Zob Ahan Isfahan at Azadi Stadium, western Tehran, on May 15, 2018.

minutes before the interval when his stunning left-foot effort from distance put his blue-clad team

2-0 in front.

The hosts piled up pressure after the break, and Thiam completed

his hat trick eighteen minutes into the second half as he was teed up by Uzbek teammate Server Djeparov.

The visiting side responded almost immediately, and Ghasem Haddadifar pulled one back.

Zob Ahan had the chance to score one more goal in the dying moments of the game as its Lebanese midfielder Rabih Ataya got a favorable opportunity. He, however, fired over at the back post.

"This is a very good win because we knew that we were better than our opponents, so we are very happy to achieve this victory," Thiam said.

"We know we are a good team and now we have to give our maximum to get to the final," he added.

Guardiola Named Manager of Year in England

LONDON (Dispatches) - Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola has been named the League Managers Association manager of the year.

Spaniard Guardiola led City to the Premier League title with a record 100 points, scoring 106 goals and dropping just 14 points all season.

His side also claimed the League Cup, beating Arsenal 3-0 in the final at Wembley.

Ex-Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss Guardiola beat off competition from five other managers to win the prize.

Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp, Burnley's Sean Dyche, Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santos,



Pep Guardiola's Manchester City dropped just 14 points all season

Cardiff manager Neil Warnock and Accrington Stanley's John Coleman were also on the

shortlist.

Warnock was presented with a special achievement award

after securing his eighth career promotion, while under-pressure Everton manager Sam Allardyce was inducted into the LMA's Hall of Fame.

Guardiola was named Premier League manager of the year, Nuno was named Championship manager of the year, Shrewsbury manager Paul Hurst won the League One prize and Coleman picked up the League Two award.

The Women's Super League 1 manager of the year was Emma Hayes of Chelsea Ladies and Lee Burch of Millwall Lionesses won the Super League 2 prize.

Verstappen Fastest on 1st Day of Mid-Season F1 Tests



Max Verstappen recorded the fastest time through the first day of mid-season Formula One testing on Tuesday.

MONTMELO, Spain (AP) — Max Verstappen has recorded the fastest time through the first day of mid-season Formula One testing.

Verstappen steered his Red Bull to a lap of 1 minute, 17.538 seconds at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, where he finished Sunday's Spanish Grand Prix in third place behind winner Lewis Hamilton and runner-up Valtteri Bottas.

Hamilton had the sixth fastest time and put in the most work of any driver with 151 laps in his Mercedes.

Renault's Carlos Sainz and Sebastian Vettel for Ferrari clocked

the second- and third-quickest laps.

Many teams used junior drivers, defined as a driver who has completed two or fewer races, as required by F1 regulations for in-season testing.

Nicholas Latifi, driving for Force India, was the fastest of the inexperienced drivers with the fifth-best time behind Haas' Romain Grosjean in fourth.

Toro Rosso had to change a power unit and kept reserve driver Sean Gelael to a session-low 50 laps.

Testing in northeastern Spain concludes on Wednesday.

Hamilton leads the standings with 95 points after five races. Vettel is second with 78.

Saudis Suspend World Cup Referee Over Bribery



Saudi referee Fahad al-Mirdasi has been banned for life by the Saudi football federation for offering to take a bribe.

RIYADH (AFP) - The Saudi Football Federation have banned referee Fahad al-Mirdasi for life over bribery and urged FIFA to remove him from the pool of referees for the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Mirdasi was suspended after admitting offering to take a bribe to influence the outcome of a match, the federation's disciplinary and ethics committee said late Tuesday.

The 32-year-old is one of Saudi Arabia's most prominent referees, having earned a FIFA badge in 2011 and officiating at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics in 2016 and the Confederations Cup in Russia in

2017.

In a statement to AFP, FIFA said it was looking at the case and seeking more information.

"FIFA notes the information that referee Fahad Al Mirdasi has allegedly been banned for life from all football-related activities by the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF)," it said.

"FIFA has requested more information from the SAFF before making any further comments."

Mirdasi was chosen to referee Saudi Arabia's Kings Cup final between top clubs Al-Faisaly and Al-Ittihad on Saturday but was pulled from the roster just a few hours before the game.

Celtics Survive 42-Point Night by LeBron, Down Cavs 107-94



BOSTON, MA - MAY 15: Terry Rozier #12 of the Boston Celtics loses the ball as he drives to the basket in the second half against the Cleveland Cavaliers during Game Two of the 2018 NBA Eastern Conference Finals at TD Garden on May 15, 2018 in Boston, Massachusetts.

BOSTON (AP) - The Celtics have punched the Cavaliers first and never looked back in rolling to a Game 1 rout.

LeBron James took a literal shot to the jaw in Game 2 but kept right on scoring.

So did the Celtics.

Jaylen Brown scored 23 points and Boston withstood a 42-point night by James to beat Cleveland 107-94 on Tuesday and take a 2-0 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

Terry Rozier added 18 points, while Al Horford finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds.

Boston improved to 9-0 this postseason at TD Garden. The Celtics have never blown a 2-0 series lead in the playoffs.

James added 12 assists and 10 rebounds. He scored 21 of Cleveland's 27 points in the first quarter, tying his playoff career high for points in a period. His 42 points marked his fifth 40-point game of this postseason. James had just 15 points and missed all five of his 3-point attempts in the Cavs' Game 1 loss.

But he didn't seem to play with the same force after straining his neck in a first-half collision and the Cavaliers wilted in the second half, with the Celtics outscoring them 59-39.

Kevin Love finished with 22 points and 15 rebounds for Cleveland.

As expected, Tristan Thompson started in place of Kyle Korver in the hopes his presence could energize what was a sluggish Cavs offense in Game 1. Thompson got Cleveland's first basket of the night and helped to limit Horford's effectiveness on the inside early on.

Korver added 11 points off the bench for Cleveland. But starters Thompson, JR Smith and George Hill combined for just 11 points on 5-of-17 shooting.

Tempers flared with 3:49 to play with Boston leading 97-89. Marcus Smart got in Smith's face after Smith pushed Horford in the back to prevent a layup. Smith shoved Smart and the pair had to be separated.

Smith was assessed a flagrant foul and both received technical fouls.

Smith said there was no malicious intent on the play.

Boston's balanced attack was effective again, with six players reaching double figures. Cleveland had 15 turnovers leading to 13 Boston points. The Celtics turned it over just six times.

Boston led 84-77 after three quarters and took command late in the fourth with the Cavs getting little offense other than from James. Cleveland's starters were pulled with 1:48 left and the Cavs down 14.

James was on the attack from the opening tip. He turned the ball over the Cavs' first possession. But it was one of his only miscues in the first quarter.

James was also astoundingly efficient, using his dribble to create space, while he knocked down an assortment of jump shots.

He finished the opening quarter 8 of 13 from the field and 4 of 7 from the 3-point line.

His momentum was stunted briefly at the 3:50 mark of the second quarter, when Jayson Tatum was whistled for a foul after catching James jaw with his shoulder as he attempted a steal. James stayed in the game and connected on one of his ensuing free throws, but then exited to the locker room with Cleveland leading 47-36.

The Cavaliers said James had a neck sprain. He returned after missing less than two minutes of game time.

Boston flurried just before the half, getting six points from Morris in the final minute to trim Cleveland's lead to 55-48 at the break.

Tour of California Extends Title Sponsorship Deal With Amgen

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Amgen is renewing its title sponsorship of the Tour of California in a multiyear deal with North America's highest-profile cycling event.

Tour owners AEG didn't disclose the length of the sponsorship deal announced Wednesday.

Amgen, a large biotechnology company headquartered in Thousand Oaks, California, has been a prominent supporter of the Tour since its inaugural edition in 2006.

The extended sponsorship agreement also includes

collaboration on a program teaching elementary school students about healthy lifestyles and bike safety.

The seven-stage Tour of California is currently underway, with Egan Bernal of Team Sky holding the overall lead Wednesday after four stages. The race concludes Saturday in Sacramento after traversing more than 800 miles of California.

Entertainment conglomerate AEG also owns properties including Staples Center and Major League Soccer's LA Galaxy.