

Four Iranian Players at AFC Fans' Best XI



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - After weeks of voting to choose the best ever AFC Asian Cup XI, it is time to announce the winners. The four players in the AFC Asian Cup XI are Iranian as well as the Team's coach who is an Iranian.

Over the years, the AFC Asian Cup has produced some brilliant footballers and coaches. The-afc.com gave fans the opportunity to vote for who they considered as the greatest 11 players in the competition's history.

After 2.6 million votes on the AFC.com over the past few weeks, it is now time to announce the players who made the final XI alongside six substitutes who narrowly missed out on a starting XI place.

Coach:

Heshmat Mohajerani (Overall Vote Winner)

Mohajerani was named the coach of the AFC Asian Cup XI by the fans.

He is the last Team Melli coach to win the AFC Asian Cup, leading Iran to win the title in 1976. Mohajerani cemented his status as an all-time great by taking the team into its first ever FIFA World Cup two years later. His impact was not limited to his home country, as he led the UAE to its AFC Asian Cup debut.

Goalkeeper:

Nasser Hejazi (Overall Vote Winner)

Nasser Hejazi, the Iconic Iranian goalkeeper, led his country to win back-to-back AFC Asian Cup titles in 1972 and 1976. He was also their number one in the 1972 Olympic Games and was a key member of the first Team Melli squad to qualify to the FIFA World

Cup in 1978.

At club level, Hejazi led Esteghlal (then known as Taj) to become the first Iranian side to win the Asian Club Championship in 1970.

Defenders:

Mehdi Mahdavia (Overall Vote Winner)

Team Melli's fourth most capped player with 110 appearances, Mahdavia appeared in two FIFA World Cups and helped IR Iran reach the semi-finals of the AFC Asian Cup in 1996 and 2004. He spent the majority of his club career playing in Germany, where he was most synonymous with Hamburg.

Saudi Arabian Saleh Al Nuaimah, the only captain in the history of the AFC Asian Cup to lift back-to-back trophies, and Zheng Zhi, China PR's fourth most capped player with 102 appearances, are

the other two defenders in the AFC Fans' Best XI.

Midfielders:

Ali Karimi (Overall Vote Winner)

The 2004 AFC Asian Cup joint top scorer and Asian Player of the Year in the same year, Ali Karimi helped Iran finish fourth in that edition of the competition, and is widely recognized as one of the best Iranian players of all time.

Nashat Akram, another member of Iraq's golden generation of the mid 2000s, who was named in the Team of the Tournament in Iraq's historic 2007 AFC Asian Cup winning campaign, along with Chinese Shao Jiayi and two-time Asian Player of the Year Server Djeparov from Uzbekistan as well as Japan's Keisuke Honda, one of the most globally recognizable Asian players, who was the tournament's MVP as Japan lifted the AFC Asian Cup trophy in 2011, are three other midfielders in the list.

Forwards:

Ali Daei (Overall Vote Winner)

The AFC Asian Cup's all-time top goal scorer, Daei was the top scorer in 1996 with eight goals, and he went on to score in the 2000 and 2004 editions. Iran legend bagged 109 goals in 149 caps as the highest scoring player in international football.

Yasser Al Qahtani is another forward in the list. The 2007 AFC Asian Cup top scorer helped Saudi Arabia reach the final with his four goals, before the Green Falcons lost to Iraq. Al Qahtani's performances won him that year's Asian Player of the Year.

German Coach Schrodinger Linked With Iran's Esteghlal



Gerhard Schrodinger

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - German coach Gerhard Schrodinger has been linked with a move to Esteghlal football team as assistant of Winfried Schaefer.

Schaefer has reportedly demanded Esteghlal's officials to hire his compatriot as his assistant.

Schrodinger has worked as goalkeeping coach of TSG Pfeddersheim.

Schrodinger has already coached the Esteghlal keepers in March.

The appointment of the German coach will be assessed by Esteghlal technical committee.

Esteghlal sits eight in Iran Professional League (IPL) table, 11 points adrift of leader Padideh.

Irving Nets 43, Leads Celtics Past Raptors



Boston's Kyrie Irving drives to the basket in overtime of the Celtics' 123-116 NBA victory over the Toronto Raptors.

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Kyrie Irving has scored a season-best 43 points, including four in overtime, and added 11 assists as the Boston Celtics came back to defeat the visiting Toronto Raptors 123-116.

The Celtics, who had lost four of their previous six games, handed the Raptors their third straight loss after a 12-1 start. The teams have split their first two games this season. Jayson Tatum added 21 points, Gordon Hayward had 15 and Marcus Morris and Al Horford had 11 each for the Celtics.

Kawhi Leonard led the

Raptors with 31 points and 15 rebounds. Serge Ibaka added 21 points, Pascal Siakam 16, Kyle Lowry 14 while Jonas Valanciunas and Danny Green each had 11 for the Raptors.

The Raptors, who led by as many as 10 points in the third quarter, took a four-point edge into the fourth before Irving took over, scoring 19 in the period to help the Celtics take the game into overtime.

Gasol set the franchise record when he pulled down his 15th rebound with 1:12 left in the fourth quarter.

Zverev Sets Up Tasty Federer Clash at ATP Finals

LONDON (Reuters) - Alexander Zverev's long-predicted arrival at the summit of men's tennis is taking too long for some impatient observers but he took another significant step forward by beating John Isner to reach the last four at the ATP Finals.

His 7-6(5) 6-3 victory over the American meant the 21-year-old became the first German since Rainer Schuettler in 2003 to reach the semi-finals of the prestigious year-ending tournament and the youngest since Argentine Juan Martin del Potro in 2009.

Zverev's second group victory earned him the runner-up spot behind world number one Novak Djokovic.

"It's obviously great getting



Germany's Alexander Zverev in action during his group stage match against John Isner of the U.S

to the semi-finals. But the tournament isn't over," Zverev, 21, said. "There's only good opponents left. There's only the best in the world.

The other semi-final will be between five-times champion Djokovic, who beat Zverev comfortably earlier this week, and South African debutant Kevin Anderson.

Djokovic completed group play later on Friday when he beat Marin Cilic 7-6(7) 6-2 in a dead rubber to stay on course for the \$2.7 million on offer for an undefeated champion.

Not easing up despite having sealed top spot in the group, Djokovic won 31 consecutive points on serve during the match.

Neymar Scores From Spot as Brazil Beat Uruguay 1-0

LONDON (AP) - Brazil extended their winning streak since the World Cup to five after Neymar scored a controversial penalty to beat Uruguay 1-0 in a friendly at Emirates Stadium.

After defender Danilo fouled Uruguay defender Diego Laxalt, Neymar calmly placed his 76th-minute spot kick to the right side of the Uruguay goal as goalkeeper Martin Campana dived the wrong way.

The Uruguay players were furious at the decision and accused Danilo

of diving. Referee Craig Pawson took a while before pointing to the spot and did so only on the advice of one of his linesman.

"It's a shame that it comes down to a bit of a controversial situation," Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez said. "It was the linesman that flagged for it."

Though the five-time world champion enjoyed a lot of possession, Brazil failed to create many chances after Neymar had a close-range goal disallowed as early as the 11th minute.



Brazil's Neymar scores a penalty during the international friendly soccer match between Brazil and Uruguay at the Emirates Stadium, London, Nov 16, 2018.

Salah Scores Last-Minute Winner Against Tunisia



Egypt's Mohamed Salah scores the winning goal during the match against Tunisia

CAIRO (Dispatches) - Mohamed Salah has scored a last-minute winner as Egypt beat Tunisia 3-2 in Africa Cup of Nations qualifying.

The Liverpool forward played a one-two with Salah Mohsen before clipping the ball over keeper Farouk Ben Mustapha for his 39th international goal.

He has now scored in each of his

past eight international matches.

Naim Sliiti scored twice for Tunisia, either side of goals from Trezeguet and Baher El Mohamady. Both sides have already qualified for Afcon 2019.

The tournament will be hosted in Cameroon from 15 June to 13 July, a change from the usual January/February schedule.