

# Iran Beat Russia at Slovak Futsal Week 2018



TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Iran national futsal team has defeated Russia 5-4 at the Slovak Futsal Week 2018 three-nation cup.

Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh made a hat-trick and Mehdi Javid and the Russian player (own goal) scored for Team Melli.

Slovakia had already lost to Russia 6-2 in its first match.

Team Melli is participating in the competition as part of preparation for the 2020 AFC Futsal Championship qualification.

# Modric Reveals How Zidane Inspired Him to Ballon d'Or Glory



Words from a World Cup winner and rookie coach in 2016 were key to a Real Madrid star of the present making a surge to the top of world football

MADRID (Goal.com) - Luka Modric has credited Zinedine Zidane with giving him the confidence to fulfil his potential and claim a maiden Ballon d'Or.

Modric was crowned the world's best player on Monday, ending the 10-year stranglehold of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi on the prize.

The Croatia midfielder won three consecutive Champions League titles under Zidane before the 1998 Ballon d'Or winner left in the wake of their most recent triumph in Kiev in May.

But Modric says a meeting with Zidane shortly after his arrival in the job in 2016 was key to his surge to the top of world football.

"Here is something I will never forget: When Zinedine Zidane became

Real Madrid coach, he called me into his office after training," Modric told France Football.

"He told me how he was seeing me as a player and what he was expecting from me.

"He said I was a very important player for him. And he said that he saw me as a Ballon d'Or winner one day.

"When someone like Zidane, with his personality and his career, says that to you, it gives you a lot of confidence.

"I admired him and I respected him a lot when he was a player.

"He saw me as someone like him, calm and a bit shy. He wanted me to open myself more. He made me a very important piece of the team when the team was playing very well.

"These words from Zidane helped me to go further on the pitch."

## Jazz Thrash Spurs 139-105

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Donovan Mitchell has scored 20 points, and the Utah Jazz made a franchise record 20 3-pointers in a 139-105 victory over the visiting San Antonio Spurs.

Rudy Gobert had 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Kyle Korver added 15 points off the bench in his first home game since Utah reacquired the veteran guard in a trade. The Jazz won for the third time in four games since dealing for Korver.

Jakob Poeltl contributed a career-best 20 points and seven rebounds off the bench for San Antonio, which lost for the third time in four games. DeMar DeRozan scored 16 points and dished out seven assists, and LaMarcus Aldridge added 16 points.

The Jazz went 10 of 17 from long distance over the first two quarters and opened up a 63-47 lead by halftime. Overall, Utah hit 20 of 33 3-point attempts.

Buddy Hield had a dunk and a



Dec 4, 2018; Salt Lake City, UT, USA; Utah Jazz guard Donovan Mitchell (45) dribbles the ball as San Antonio Spurs guard DeMar DeRozan (10) defends during the first half at Vivint Smart Home Arena.

pair of 3-pointers in a game-opening 13-2 flurry, and Sacramento went on to lead by as many as 35 points en route to a blowout win at Phoenix.

The Kings held the Suns to one field goal in the first 5 1/2 minutes and a total of nine points in the first quarter, taking a 36-9 lead after one

period. Hield finished with 20 points in 18 minutes to lead seven players in double figures for the Kings, who were opening a four-game trip.

Rookie De'Anthony Melton recorded a season-best 21 points for the Suns, who played without Devin Booker (strained hamstring) and T.J. Warren (sprained ankle).

Rookie Luka Doncic scored 21 points and grabbed nine rebounds as Dallas polished off visiting Portland.

Wesley Matthews added 17 points and DeAndre Jordan contributed 12 points and 17 boards for the Mavericks, who have won eight in a row at home and nine of 11 games overall.

Damian Lillard collected 33 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Trail Blazers, who have lost three in a row and six of their past seven games. CJ McCollum scored 18 points, and Al-Farouq Aminu chipped in 12 points and 13 rebounds for Portland.

## Chelsea's Hazard Must Decide Over New Contract: Sarri



Chelsea are hoping Belgian star Eden Hazard will sign an extension to his present contract

LONDON (AFP) - Belgian playmaker Eden Hazard must make up his mind whether he wishes to commit to Chelsea and extend his

contract worth a rumored £350,000 (\$450,000) a week, the club's manager Maurizio Sarri said.

The 27-year-old -- whose present deal runs till June 2020 -- was linked with a move to Real Madrid after a stunning World Cup in which he inspired Belgium to their best ever finish of third.

However, Sarri said Chelsea's offer was on the table and now the ball lay in Hazard's court.

Hazard, who joined Chelsea for £32 million from Ligue 1 outfit Lille in 2012, has spoken often about the dilemma he faces in re-signing for the Blues or taking his chances at Real.

"The club is available to sign a new contract immediately, but it's up to him if he wants to renew or not," said Sarri.

"I want Eden here, of course, but I want him here if he wants to stay here."

The risk Chelsea run is if no contract extension is agreed by next summer, Hazard may be sold or else the club would risk losing him for nothing at the end of the 2019-20 season.

Spanish international Cesar Azpilicueta, one of the longest-serving players at Chelsea, signed a new four-year contract on Tuesday.

But apart from Hazard, Sarri also risks losing veterans David Luiz and Cesc Fabregas.

Their contracts are up at the end of the campaign and they are locked in a standoff over the length of the new deals being offered.

## Serena Confirmed for Australian Open Return

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - Serena Williams will resume her quest for a record-equaling 24th grand slam title at the Australian Open in January after organizers on Wednesday confirmed her entry to the tournament she won for a seventh time on her last appearance in 2017.

The 37-year-old American achieved her victory over sister Venus in the final two years ago while eight weeks pregnant with her daughter Alexis Olympia, who was born the following September.

Williams reached the Wimbledon and U.S. Open finals

after her return last year but lost both, leaving her one short of Australian Margaret Court's tally of grand slam singles titles.

Her final match last season was the final at Flushing Meadow, where her loss to Naomi Osaka was overshadowed by her row with umpire Carlos Ramos.

Williams is scheduled to play an exhibition tournament in Abu Dhabi in the final week of the year before heading to Australia to warm-up for her assault on the Melbourne Park title at the Hopman Cup in Perth.

Also among the 102 women and 101 men to have confirmed they

## Tokyo 2020 Formally Propose Earlier Marathon Time



TOKYO (Reuters) - Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games organizers have formally proposed moving the start time of the marathon races forward to avoid the worst of the Japanese capital's scorching summer heat.

The marathon events were initially scheduled to start at 7 a.m. local time but now Games organizers have asked the IAAF, athletics' governing body, to approve moving the start time to either 5.30 a.m. or 6.00 a.m. local.

The Tokyo 2020 Games will run from July 24 - Aug. 9.

Temperatures in Tokyo reached a record 41.1 degrees Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) this year, with the July average reaching more than 30 degrees since 1998, according to the Japanese Meteorological Agency.

There were even calls to introduce daylight savings time for the Games but with those plans squashed, an earlier start time is likely to appease athletes and spectators alike worried about the heat.

The times for the rugby and mountain bike events have also been changed after the IOC's Coordination Commission took advice from a team of experts.

"Based on the proposals of the IOC's expert group, we are proceeding to recommended earlier starting times for the men's and women's marathons and the 20 kilometer race walk," said Tokyo 2020 President Yoshiro Mori in Tokyo on Wednesday.

"As it is necessary to receive approval of such changes from the IAAF, we will work closely with them and aim to make a decision by the end of this year."

All the morning rugby sessions will now start at nine a.m., one and a half hours earlier than previously scheduled, with the cross-country cycling push back an hour into the early evening.

## Dakar Rally to Break With Tradition in Peru

LIMA (Xinhua) - More than 500 competitors from 61 countries and regions will participate in a historic edition of the Dakar Rally in Peru next month, race organizers said on Tuesday.

The event will run from January 6-17 and begin and end in the capital Lima and span 5,000km, of which almost 3,000km will be timed. The route includes five days in the Ica desert and a section in which competitors will tackle the world's second highest sand dune - known locally as Duna Grande - which stands 1,700 meters tall.

"It will definitely be an edition unlike any other," Dakar Rally director Etienne Lavigne told

reporters. "The beauty of the dunes and the extreme characteristics of the rally have attracted hundreds of participants. Thanks to Peru we have exceptional and unique geography to put together a great event."

The 334 registered vehicles include 167 motorcycles and quads, 126 cars and 41 trucks. Among those to have confirmed their presence are Spain's Carlos Sainz and Austrian Matthias Walkner, the defending car and motorcycle champions, respectively.

First staged in 1978, the Dakar Rally originally took place between Paris, France, and Dakar, Senegal. It was moved to South America in 2009 because of security concerns.