

Iranian Trio to Officiate 2018 AFF Cup Final



TEHRAN (dispatches) - Iranian international referees have been chosen to officiate at the second leg of the AFF Suzuki Cup final match on December 15.

The first leg will be held in Kuala Lumpur's Bukit Jalil National Stadium between Malaysia and Vietnam.

The second leg will be held in Hanoi's Mỹ Đình National Stadium four days later.

Alireza Faghani will be assisted by countrymen Mohammad Reza Mansouri and Reza Sokhandan.

The 2018 AFF Championship is the 12th edition of the AFF Championship, the football championship of nations affiliated to the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF), and the 6th under the name AFF Suzuki Cup.

AFC Names Iranian Player Among Asia's Top 10

TEHRAN (Dispatches) - The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has announced that Iranian soccer player Sardar Azmoun is in its list of top-10 Asian strikers, referring to him as "the Iranian Golden Boy".

Less than a month before the 20-19 Asian Cup in the UAE, the Asian Football Confederation has released the list of 10 target men, as the most threatening strikers in Asia, whose nations rely on their goal scoring skills.

Sardar Azmoun of Iran has been included in the list. The Russia-based forward who netted 2 goals for Team Melli in the Asian Cup Australia 2015 will turn 24 just before the tournament and is in good shape to boost his record for The Cheetahs.

Football is a very popular sport in Iran and Iranian fans of this sport watch not only the national events of the AFC Champions League (ACL) between Iran's Persepolis and the Japanese representative Kashima Antlers in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.



Iranian football player, Sardar Azmoun.

Juventus Beat Inter 1-0 to Open Up 11-Point Lead in Serie A

TURIN, Italy (AP) — Mario Mandzukic often scores important goals and he did so again as he helped Juventus to a 1-0 win over title rival Inter Milan in the Derby d'Italia.

The imposing Croatia striker headed home in the 66th minute after Inter had missed a couple of golden opportunities as Juventus continued their seemingly unstoppable march to an eighth successive Serie A title.

"Mario is a great forward. It's no coincidence he was the Bayern's striker when it won the treble," Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said, referring to Mandzukic's spell with Bayern Munich from 2012-14. "He's a player who always has an impact."

Juventus have an 11-point lead over second-placed Napoli, which hosted lowly Frosinone on Saturday. Third-place Inter are now 14 points behind Juventus.



Juventus' Mario Mandzukic, right, celebrates with teammate Mattia De Sciglio, left, and Paulo Dybala after scoring his side's opening goal during the Serie A soccer match between Juventus and Inter Milan at the Turin Allianz stadium, Italy, Dec 7, 2018.

"Inter put us in difficult situations after we lost the ball," the first half, creating dangerous Allegri said. "In the second half

we were more solid, ordered and compact ... (Paulo) Dybala played better, (Joao) Cancelo had a great game, Mandzukic scored, (Cristiano) Ronaldo worked a lot."

Inter must pick themselves up for Tuesday's Champions League match against PSV Eindhoven, where they need to do better than Tottenham do at Barcelona in order to qualify for the knockout stages.

"We weren't consistent enough and we made too many mistakes in reading some situations, an aspect in which Juventus never make mistakes," Inter coach Luciano Spalletti said. "We can never let our concentration slip, because when we did so we conceded."

Juventus are already qualified for the last 16 of the Champions League but travel to Switzerland to face Young Boys on Wednesday with the group lead on the line.

Warriors Thrash Bucks 105-95



Golden State Warriors' Stephen Curry drives past Milwaukee Bucks' Eric Bledsoe and Brook Lopez during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, Dec. 7, 2018, in Milwaukee.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - Klay Thompson and Stephen Curry each have scored 20 points as the Golden State Warrior wrapped up their third straight win by beating the Milwaukee Bucks 105-95 in NBA action.

Andre Iguodala had a season-high 15 points for Golden State, who shot 41 percent (19 of

46) from downtown. Giannis Antetokounmpo had 22 points and 15 rebounds for the Bucks, who were just 7 of 39 (18 percent) from beyond the arc. Malcolm Brogdon added 15 points.

The Warriors led 57-51 at the break and pulled away in the third quarter by Curry's 3 with 3 minutes left to usurp an 11-point lead.

Man City Will Not Be Banned From Europe

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says he has been assured by senior figures at the club that they

will not be banned from European competition for Financial Fair Play irregularities.

A series of allegations were made in Der Spiegel last month after what City said were "leaks" and an "organized attempt" to smear the club were passed on by the Football Leaks organization.

Reports this week suggested the claims could lead to City being banned should UEFA decide to take action, and a senior figure in European football told the media the entire credibility of FFP is at risk if Europe's governing body and the Premier League do not fully investigate the allegations.

However, after speaking to City chairman Khaldoon al-Mubarak and chief executive Ferran Soriano, Guardiola does not think the club have anything to fear.

Libertadores Fan Violence Has Damaged Argentina, Says Boca Coach

MADRID (Reuters) - Fan violence surrounding the Copa Libertadores final has damaged Argentina and South America and overshadowed the achievements of Argentine football, Boca Juniors coach Guillermo Barros Schelotto said on Friday.

Boca and fierce Argentine rivals River Plate will play each other in Madrid on Sunday in the second leg of the final of the Libertadores, South America's equivalent of the Champions League.

River drew 2-2 with arch-rivals Boca in the first leg on Nov. 11 but the return has been moved from Buenos Aires to Spain after Boca players were injured when fans attacked their team coach shortly before the match at River's Monumental stadium on Nov. 24.

With Madrid police mounting the biggest ever security operation for a football game in the city, attention has turned to the risk of violence



between the two bitter Argentine rivals, with the match itself taking a back seat.

The attack on Boca's bus last month was far from an isolated incident in Argentine football, and recalled events from a 2015 Libertadores game between the two sides when River players were attacked with pepper spray.

Argentine campaign group "Salvamos Al

Futbol' (Save Football) says that a total of 328 people have died at football matches and 92 of those deaths have occurred in the last decade.

Schelotto said the fact that the game had to be moved to Europe should serve as a turning point in the fight to halt football violence.

"What happened two weeks ago happens a lot in Argentina and South America but I think it will have to change because if you cannot play Boca versus River in Argentina it's very worrying," said Schelotto, who won four Libertadores titles with Boca as a player.

"It's the right time to take measures and start to show an example. We need time, we need games of this quality to be played in Argentina or South America and to show that we have matured. It's the time to take measures and start to show an example."

WBC Sanctions Wilder-Fury Rematch

LONDON (Dispatches) - The WBC has sanctioned a "direct rematch" between heavyweight champion Deontay Wilder and Tyson Fury.

Britain's Fury and American Wilder shared a controversial and thrilling draw in Los Angeles on Saturday.

Both fighters have said they want a rematch, while Fury is pushing for it to be in the UK.

The WBC said in a statement there was a "unanimous agreement" to sanction a rematch in a meeting of the board of governors.

"Wilder and Fury gave boxing one of the best fights in the heavyweight division in a long time, which has created tremendous popular demand for the fans to see a rematch," it said.

"The WBC is happy to confirm a direct rematch has been approved."

Wilder's mandatory challenger is Dominic Breazeale but this decision by the WBC clears the way for him to fight Fury again next without being stripped of his belt.

Although Fury was knocked down in the ninth and 12th rounds, many observers thought the 30-year-old Briton should have



A rematch between Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder is a step closer

won the bout, which was scored 115-111 for Wilder, 114-112 for Fury and 113-113.

Fury's promoter Frank Warren said he and the British Boxing Board of Control would write to the WBC demanding another bout and asking for an explanation of the scoring, with Mexican judge Alejandro Rochin having awarded Wilder seven of the 12 rounds.

Fury said he had "never seen a worse decision in my life" and described it as a "gift" for his opponent.

In an Instagram post in response, Wilder, 33, said: "You saw the best Fury but you did not get the best Wilder and I still managed to get the job done."