

# Mehdi Torabi's Score Nominated for Goal of The Week



Persepolis player Mehdi Torabi

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Persepolis player Mehdi Torabi's goal against Al Sadd of Qatar in Group D of the AFC Champions League has been nominated for this week's Goal of the Week.

Torabi is the kind of player that can win a game on his own and did just that against Al Sadd, opening the scoring from all of 35 yards before laying on a second for Ali Alipour with an enterprising run and through-pass.

The-AFC.com has an-

nounced the nominations for this week's Goal of the Week presented by Allianz for Matchday Six of the 2019 AFC Champions League.

The Iranian player will compete with Shanghai SIPG striker Oscar, Sanfrece Hiroshima forward Yusuke Minagawa and Al Ittihad striker Romarinho for the award.

The winner will be decided by public vote amongst the fans on the AFC's social media networks.

## Raptors Beat Bucks 105-99 for 3-2 Lead

MILWAUKEE (AP) - Kawhi Leonard arrived in Toronto thinking he could pick up another championship to go with the one he already has.

One more victory and he'll play for another ring. And dominant performances like he put up Thursday night are a big reason why.

Leonard scored 35 points and the Raptors beat the Milwaukee Bucks 105-99 to take a 3-2 lead in the Eastern Conference finals.

"I'm not afraid of the moment," Leonard said. "This is what I work out for in the summer. I'm just trying to win. It's a matter of me being aggressive and don't shy away from anything."

Leonard was the NBA Finals MVP when San Antonio won the championship in 2014.



Toronto Raptors' Kawhi Leonard shoots past Milwaukee Bucks' Brook Lopez during the second half of Game 5 of the NBA Eastern Conference basketball playoff finals May 23, 2019, in Milwaukee.

And he's capping off his first season in Toronto after requesting a trade from the Spurs with quite a playoff run.

It includes the first buzzer-beater to win a Game 7 - a shot that took four bounces off the

rim to knock out Philadelphia in the conference semifinals. And he has continued to dominate in the conference finals.

Leonard showed no obvious signs of the leg soreness that bothered him in Toronto's

victories in the previous two games, hitting the 30-point mark for the fourth time in the series. He had a career-high nine assists, made five 3-pointers and grabbed seven rebounds.

Fred VanVleet, whose son was born Monday, scored 21 points, hitting seven 3s. Kyle Lowry added 17 as the Raptors put themselves in position to advance to the NBA Finals for the first time. A victory at home Saturday would set up a matchup with two-time defending champion Golden State.

The Raptors battled out of an early 14-point hole, then got 15 points from Leonard in the fourth quarter to send the top-seeded Bucks to their first three-game losing streak of the season.

## Italy's Lippi Returns as China Coach



HONG KONG (Reuters) - World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi has been reappointed as head coach

of China's national football team, the Chinese Football Association announced on Friday.

The 71-year-old Italian, who stepped down from the post following the country's quarter-final exit from the Asian Cup in January, has returned to guide the team through the qualifying rounds for the 2022 World Cup.

China will be looking to book a place at the World Cup for the first time since 2002, when the country made their one and so far only appearance at the finals.

Lippi, who led his native Italy to World Cup glory in 2006, was previously appointed to the post in November 2016 but, after an initial upswing in fortunes, the former Juventus coach was unable to take China to the World Cup finals in Russia in 2018.

He stood down at the end of his contract following a 3-0 loss at the hands of Iran at the Asian Cup and was replaced on an interim basis by Fabio Cannavaro for March's China Cup matches against Thailand and Uzbekistan.

However, back-to-back defeats in those games were followed by Cannavaro's decision to not take up the role on a permanent basis, with the former defender choosing to remain at the helm of Guangzhou Evergrande.

Lippi's first game back in charge will be a friendly match against the Philippines in Guangzhou on June 7 as the Chinese prepare for Asia's second round of qualifying for Qatar 2022, which kicks off in September.

## Russia to Host 2023 Hockey Worlds in St. Petersburg

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia (AP) - The International Ice Hockey Federation has picked the Russian city of St. Petersburg to host the 2023 world championships.

Russia plans to build a 23,000-seat arena in central St. Petersburg for the event, and also use the city's Ice Palace venue built for the 2000 worlds.

The IIHF says it awarded two more editions at its annual congress. The 2024 tournament will be in the Czech Republic, with games in Prague and Ostrava. The 2025 edition goes to Sweden and Denmark, with two host cities yet to be decided.



Russia's Kirill Kaprizov, center, celebrates scoring his side's third goal during the Ice Hockey World Championships quarterfinal match between Russia and the United States at the Steel Arena in Bratislava, Slovakia, Thursday, May 23, 2019.

## Putin Awards Medal to FIFA President Infantino



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with FIFA President Gianni Infantino during an awarding ceremony in the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, May 23, 2019.

MOSCOW (AP) - Vladimir Putin has given FIFA president Gianni Infantino a medal.

The Russian president awarded Infantino the Order of Friendship at the Kremlin on Thursday.

Infantino has often said last year's World Cup in Russia, where the host nation surprisingly reached the quarterfi-

nals, was the best of the 21 editions of the tournament.

Putin thanked the FIFA leader for "your glowing assessment of our efforts."

Infantino says of Russia's "bonds of friendship" with soccer "is not the end, it is only the beginning of our fruitful cooperation and interaction."

## Halep Back in Paris to Defend Title

PARIS (AP) -- Simona Halep is experiencing something new at the French Open this year.

The Romanian player is back in Paris to defend her title, a situation she's never been in before.

"Much better and much easier, because I have the title already," Halep said Friday at Roland Garros. "Doesn't matter anymore what is going to happen. Everything now comes as a bonus. So I will try just to give my best and to see if I'm able to do it again."

Halep, the second Romanian woman to win a Grand Slam title after Virginia Ruzici in 1978, won the French Open last year by rallying past Sloane Stephens 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 in the final. She had previously lost three Grand Slams finals, including two on the French clay.

Before her win, the former top-ranked player often had the unpleasant tendency to crumble on big occasions. Like two years ago in the French Open final,



Defending champion Romania's Simona Halep smiles as she poses next to the cup during the draw of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris, Thursday, May 23, 2019. The French Open tennis tournament starts Sunday May 26.

when she led Jelena Ostapenko by a set and 3-0 only to fall apart.

She said her defending champion status takes a lot of pressure off.

## Thurman Says Ready to 'Crucify' Pacquiao

BEVERLY HILLS, United States (AFP) - Keith Thurman has vowed to retire Philippine boxing legend Manny Pacquiao as the two fighters traded verbal jabs ahead of the World Boxing Association battle for welterweight supremacy.

The undefeated Thurman, 30, takes on Pacquiao in Las Vegas on July 20 in a contest that pits the WBA's "super world champion" against the body's secondary "world" champion.

Thurman (29-0, with 22 knockouts) returned from a near two-year layoff to retain his title with a 12-round majority decision over Josesito Lopez on January 26.

Eight-division champion Pacquiao, who last fought in a one-sided demolition of Adrien Broner in January, is 10 years older than his American opponent.

And as the two men came face to face at a press conference in Beverly Hills on Wednesday, Thurman vowed to make the age difference count.

"Pacquiao's last fight, Pacquiao's last fight," Thurman said, while pledging to "dismantle" the 40-year-old Filipino icon.

Pacquiao, who mixes a political career as a senator in the Philippines with professional boxing, laughed off Thurman's threats of annihilation.

## Tokyo 2020 Organizers Welcome IOC Boxing Decision

TOKYO (Reuters) - Tokyo 2020 organizers welcomed on Thursday the International Olympic Committee's recommendation to include boxing at next year's Games.

The IOC executive board recommended on Wednesday that boxing should keep its place at the Tokyo Games but recognition of AIBA, the governing body of the sport's amateur version, should be suspended.

The recommendations came as the IOC published a 30-page report following an inquiry into the finances and governance of AIBA which has been in turmoil for years.