

# FIFA Fines Bahrain for Disrespecting Iranian Anthem



For the Game. For the World.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – FIFA, football's world governing body, has fined Bahrain's football federation 20,000 Swiss francs after its fans disrespected the Iranian national anthem before a World Cup qualifying game last month.

According to the latest announcement of FIFA's Disciplinary Committee, published on Friday, Bahrain has been fined with 20,000 Swiss francs for "Order and security at matches (overcrowded stadium; booing the national anthem)" and also for "Misconduct of players and officials (delayed kick-off)".

National football teams of Iran and Bahrain held a match on Oct.

15 in the Matchday three of Group C of qualifiers for World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup 2023. The match started with a controversial move by Bahraini fans and even a weirder reaction by Bahraini players on the pitch. As soon as Iran's national anthem was played, fans started booing and making a lot of noise while Bahraini players laughed at the fan's action as a sign of approval.

FIFA has also warned Iran for "Offensive behavior and violations of the principles of fair play, misconduct of players and officials (no post-match handshake)" in the same match against Bahrain.

## Zverev Advances to Semis at ATP Finals; Nadal Eliminated

LONDON (AP) — Defending champion Alexander Zverev has secured the last semifinal spot at the ATP Finals, eliminating Rafael Nadal in the process.

Zverev beat already eliminated Daniil Medvedev 6-4, 7-6 (4) at the O2 Arena to finish second behind Stefanos Tsitsipas in the group and set up a semifinal against Dominic Thiem.

Earlier, Nadal stayed in contention by rallying to beat Tsitsipas 6-7 (4), 6-4, 7-5 for his second



Germany's Alexander Zverev celebrates after defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev in their ATP World Tour Finals singles tennis match at the O2 Arena in London, Nov 15, 2019.

win of the round-robin stage.

But Zverev's win left him, Nadal, and Tsitsipas with identical 2-1 records — with the top-ranked Spaniard eliminated based on the tournament's tie-breaker rules.

It means only one of tennis' Big Three made the semifinals as Novak Djokovic was also eliminated on Thursday. Tsitsipas will face six-time champion Roger Federer in the first semifinal on Saturday.

## Superb Spain Destroy Malta 7-0 to Win Group



Soccer Football - Euro 2020 Qualifier - Group F - Spain v Malta - Estadio Ramon de Carranza, Cadiz, Spain - November 15, 2019 Spain's Santi Cazorla celebrates scoring their second goal with teammates

CADIZ, Spain (Reuters) — Spain have clinched top spot in Group F in style by hammering Malta 7-0 at home for their biggest win of their Euro 2020 qualifying campaign as seven players got on the scoresheet.

Spain had sealed their place at next year's tournament last month in unconvincing fashion by drawing 1-1 with both Norway and Sweden but they created a party atmosphere in Cadiz with a superb display of attacking football.

Alvaro Morata put them on their way to a resounding victory by netting midway through the first half, scoring for the seventh consecutive game for club and country.

Santi Cazorla doubled their lead shortly before halftime with his first goal for his country in over four years, a special moment for the much-loved 34-year-old who has staged a remarkable recovery from a career-threatening foot injury.

## Messi Scores on Argentina Return to Sink Brazil

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AFP) — Lionel Messi struck on his return to international duty Friday following a three-month ban as Argentina defeated fierce rivals Brazil 1-0 in a friendly in Riyadh.

The Barcelona forward was suspended by CONMEBOL for accusing South American football's ruling body of "corruption" after he was sent off in July's third-place play-off with Chile at the Copa America.

Messi netted the only goal of the game at the King Saud University Stadium on 13 minutes, tapping home the rebound after his penalty



Lionel Messi scored his 69th Argentina goal to earn his country a narrow win over Brazil

was saved by Brazil goalkeeper Alisson.

His effort came shortly after Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus rolled a spot-kick wide for Brazil, who were playing without the injured Neymar.

However, Brazil were unable to find an equalizer as their winless run since capturing the Copa America title extended to five matches.

"It's important to win and it is always nice to beat Brazil, for the rivalry, which feels a lot of late," said Messi.

## Harden Powers Rockets to Beat Pacers 111-102



James Harden, pictured here playing the Milwaukee Bucks, has helped the Houston Rockets stretch their winning streak to six games

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — James Harden scored 44 points and had eight rebounds as the Houston Rockets beat the Indiana Pacers 111-102 on Friday night to stretch their winning streak to six games.

Harden scored 40-plus points for the fourth time in six games.

When he needed a rest in the third quarter, Ben McLemore picked up the slack, scoring 10 of his season-high 21 points in the third.

In the late game, Anthony Davis made a clutch defensive play at the buzzer just moments after LeBron James hit the go-ahead free throws as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Sacramento Kings 99-97.

Harden scored 12 straight points in the fourth to give Houston a double-digit lead at one point. He also tallied five assists and four steals.

Houston played without Clint Capela (concussion), Eric Gor-

don (right knee surgery) and Daniel House Jr. (sore back).

Russell Westbrook had 17 points but shot just five of 21 from the floor for the Rockets.

Domantas Sabonis finished with 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Pacers, who shot just eight for 33 from beyond the arc.

In Los Angeles, Davis blocked Harrison Barnes' layup with two seconds left, allowing the Lakers to beat the Kings and win their 10th game in the last 11.

James scored 18 of his 29 points in the second half and recorded 11 assists and Davis finished with 17 points. Davis missed the previous game with a sore shoulder.

He has played a lot of minutes for the Lakers this season and Friday was no exception as he finished with 39.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 16 points for Los Angeles, and Kyle Kuzma chipped in 13, all in the first half.

## Italy Beat Bosnia 3-0 for Record 10th Straight Win



Italy's Francesco Acerbi, right, controls the ball during the Euro 2020 group J qualifying soccer match between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Italy at the Bilino polje stadium in Zenica, Bosnia, Friday, Nov. 15, 2019. (AP Photo/Kemal Softic)

ZENICA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Italy set a national record for consecutive wins after beating Bosnia-Herzegovina 3-0 in a European Championship qualifier on Friday.

Italy's 10th successive victory eclipsed the Azzurri's record of nine in 1938-39 under Vittorio Pozzo, who also led the national team to two World Cup trophies.

Francesco Acerbi and Lorenzo Insigne scored in the first half in

Zenica and Andrea Belotti added a delightful third after the break.

Italy, which had already qualified for Euro 2020 as Group J winner, extended its perfect record in the group to nine wins in nine matches. It also beat the United States in a friendly last year.

Bosnia was out of the running following Finland's victory hours earlier, although it could still qualify for next year's tournament through the playoffs.

## Quartararo Quickest Again in Valencia MotoGP Practice

VALENCIA, Spain (AFP) — French rookie Fabio Quartararo was fastest for the third straight practice session at the season-ending Valencia Grand Prix on Saturday, with world champion Marc Marquez second quickest.

The 20-year-old Quartararo is hoping to end an impressive debut top-class season with his maiden MotoGP win, after five pole positions and six podium finishes.

The Yamaha-SRT man will be expected to lock down a place on the front row

in qualifying later on Saturday.

Honda's Marquez, who sealed his sixth MotoGP world championship last month, was 0.224 seconds slower than Quartararo, ahead of third-placed Jack Miller and Italian great Valentino Rossi in fourth.

Marquez's teammate Jorge Lorenzo, who will retire from the sport after Sunday's race, improved slightly on his displays from Friday's practice but was still over a second slower than Quartararo down in 14th on the time-sheets.



Quartararo is hoping to end a 20-year winning drought for French MotoGP riders

## Vettel Top as Kubica Crashes in Brazil Practice

LONDON (Dispatches) — Sebastian Vettel led Charles Leclerc to a Ferrari one-two in an incident-packed second practice session at the Brazilian Grand Prix.

The German was 0.021 seconds ahead of Leclerc with Red Bull's Max Verstappen third, ahead of Mercedes drivers Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton.

Williams driver Robert Kubica began the session with a heavy crash at Turn Three from which he emerged unscathed.

Both Toro Rossos suffered reliability problems, stopping on track.

The session ran in cloudy but grey conditions after the wet weather for the morning session, but Kubica appeared to be caught out by dampness on a painted white line when he spun at the fast Turn Three on his first flying lap of the day.