

Iran's Women Team Improves in FIFA Rankings



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran have moved up one place in the FIFA Women's World Ranking released.

Team Melli has moved up one place to 70th in the ranking.

Australia are the highest-ranked Asian football team and sits 7th in the world.

Japan and Korea DPR are second and third Asian teams in the ranking.

World Champion USA hold on to the top spot with Germany, Netherlands, France and Sweden making up the World's top Five Women's football senior national teams.

The next FIFA Women's World Ranking will be published on 27 March 2020.

First Defeat for Iran at 2019 FINA World Junior Water Polo



The Iranian team conceded a 27-4 defeat against the United States in the 2019 edition of FINA World Men's Junior Water Polo Championships on Friday.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iran was defeated against USA 27-4 at Group C of the 20th FINA World Men's Junior Water Polo Championships on Friday.

Iran beat Kuwait 15-7 at the Al-Nasar Sport Club in Kuwait City on Thursday.

The Persians will meet Italy on Saturday.

The groups are composed as follows:

GROUP A: Serbia, Japan,

South Africa, Croatia, China

GROUP B: Russia, Canada,

Spain, Hungary, Egypt

GROUP C: Montenegro, Ku-

wait, USA, Italy, Iran

GROUP D: Brazil, Uzbeki-

stan, Greece, Australia, New

Zealand

In the last edition of the cham-

pionships, held in 2017 in Bel-

grade (SRB), the medalists were

Greece (gold), Croatia (silver)

and Serbia (bronze).

Knicks Come Back From 16 Down to Beat Kings 103-101

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) -- Nearly eight weeks into the season, the New York Knicks finally have back-to-back wins.

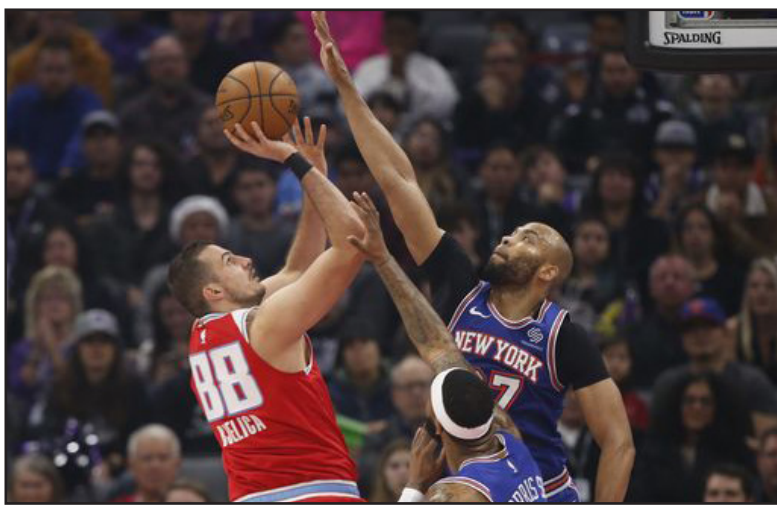
They did it after falling behind by 16 points, too, 48 hours after taking Golden State to overtime and winning.

Elfrid Payton had seven of his 16 points in the fourth quarter, Marcus Morris scored off an offensive rebound with 9.1 seconds left and the Knicks rallied to beat the Sacramento Kings 103-101 on Friday night.

"It's a good feeling," forward Julius Randle said. "We just turned up our intensity and our aggressiveness. The bench did a great job coming in and playing well. We just kept fighting, locked into the details, and came out with a win."

Julius Randle had 24 points and nine rebounds, Mitchell Robinson added 14 points and nine boards, and Damyean Dotson scored 11 points.

The Knicks (6-20) hadn't won consecutive games since beating Washington and Chicago in April in their 80th and 81st games last season.



Sacramento Kings forward Nemanja Bjelica, left, goes up to shoot against New York Knicks forward Taj Gibson, right, during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., Friday, Dec. 13, 2019.

This season, victories have been hard enough to come by, let alone stacking them back-to-back.

"We were in positions where we bent a few times but we didn't break," New York interim coach Mike Miller said. "Terrific effort, so many good performances, and showing character to keep coming back when you get down."

Two nights after beating Golden State 124-122 in overtime to

snap a 10-game losing streak, the Knicks fell behind 77-61 in the third quarter.

New York closed within 80-72 entering the fourth then got on roll behind Payton.

Payton made a 4-footer to give the Knicks a 95-93 lead. After Buddy Hield tied it with a long jumper, Payton responded with a 20-foot jumper to put New York ahead for good.

Cory Joseph missed a tying

3-pointer for the Kings, and Morris tipped in a miss by RJ Barrett.

"We started locking into detail and then we started getting some stops," Payton said. "We all were out there making plays. Everybody was rolling."

Hield scored 34 points and had a career-high 11 rebounds for Sacramento. Harrison Barnes had 18 points and Nemanja Bjelica added 12 points and seven assists. The Kings had won their previous three.

"We've had some nice emotional wins lately, and in the past that has caused us to have a letdown," Kings coach Luke Walton said. "We built up a nice lead and we didn't maintain it. We fell off. The Knicks imposed their will on us."

The Kings' top 3-point threat, Hield made nine of his first 10 shots and had a pair of dunks on offensive rebounds in the first half.

After New York trimmed a 15-point deficit to 52-45, Hield threw a lob pass to Richaun Holmes for a dunk that put Sacramento up by nine at half-time.

FIFA to Consider Four Bids to Host 2023 Women's World Cup



Reigning Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia

ZURICH (Dispatches) -FIFA has received bids from Brazil, Japan, Colombia and a joint bid from Australia and New Zealand to host the 2023 Women's World Cup.

Soccer's international governing body will now assess the bids, which will include visiting each country. Evaluations will be submitted to the FIFA Council and a vote on the host will be held at the organization's meeting in Ethiopia next June.

Anticipated bids from South Korea and South Africa were withdrawn before Friday's deadline.

The 2023 World Cup will feature 32 teams, up from the 24 that competed this summer at the tournament in France. The United States won its second straight World Cup title and fourth overall this year, and the event enjoyed unprecedented television viewership of 1.12 billion worldwide.

Real Madrid not Thinking About Clasico, Says Zidane

MADRID (AFP) - Zinedine Zidane has brushed off suggestions Real Madrid could be distracted by the upcoming Clasico when they play in-form Valencia in La Liga on Sunday.

Madrid face a difficult game at Mestalla, just three days before taking on Barcelona at Camp Nou in a match that could decide who goes top of the table.

But Zidane's team cannot afford to underestimate Valencia, who have registered three consecutive victories, including one away at Ajax on Tuesday that secured qualification for the Champions League last 16 as group winners. Valencia sit eighth, while Barcelona



Zinedine Zidane insists Real Madrid will not have one eye on the Clasico when they face Valencia in La Liga on Sunday.

and Madrid are level on points in first and second respectively.

Asked about the Clasico, Zidane said in a press conference on Saturday: "I'm not thinking about that at all and I include everyone who works here at the club in that."

"Our only concern is tomorrow's game. The rest may be close but at the same time it's far away. Tomorrow's game has all my energy and about Wednesday, I'm not interested."

After Barcelona, Real Madrid play at home to Athletic Bilbao, to complete a tough week before La Liga's Christmas break.

Goggia Leads Italian Teammate 1-2 in St Moritz Super-G, Shiffrin Third



ST. MORITZ, Switzerland (AFP) - Reigning Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia pipped Italian teammate Federica Brignone by the smallest of margins to claim victory in the women's World Cup super-G at St Moritz on Saturday.

Goggia overcame losing one of her poles to clock 1min 12.96sec to edge Brignone by one-hundredth of a second, with American Mikaela Shiffrin rounding out the podium a further 0.12sec off the pace.

"I knew every line and said to myself 'ski, focus on my feet and let it go'," said Goggia, saying she had not been distracted by the loss of her pole.

"I jumped too long and too

high... When I landed I lost the pole. Tomorrow is parallel (slalom), so better if I don't lose it then!"

The result will consolidate Shiffrin's place atop the overall World Cup standings, but the 24-year-old -- with six podium finishes in eight events -- is yet to win a speed event this season, having also netted a second place in the Lake Louise downhill.

Shiffrin, who won the world super-G title ahead of Goggia in Are in February, will have another chance to nail a 63rd World Cup victory and move into second place for individual race wins behind compatriot Lindsey Vonn in Sunday's parallel slalom.

Australia Take Huge Lead Against New Zealand in First Test

PERTH, Australia (AFP) - Australia was in a commanding position despite a late batting collapse on the third day of the first Test against New Zealand at Perth Stadium on Saturday.

Having led by 250 runs on the first innings, the home side were 167 for six at stumps, with Matthew Head on eight and Pat Cummins on one -- an overall lead of 417.

Cruising at 131 for one when Marnus Labuschagne (50) and Joe Burns (53) were at the crease, the Australians lost five for 29 under lights later in the day against some spirited short-pitched bowling from the Kiwis, with Tim Southee claiming 4-63.

Burns said the Australians were not too concerned by losing the late wickets. "Really happy with where we are at, although it was disappointing to lose a few wickets tonight," he said.

"In the grand scheme of the game we're in a good position and in control of the game."

New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor said the fightback late in the day could prove important, regardless of the result of this match.

"There is a still a fair way to go in this Test match," he said. "But the fight we showed bodes well for the rest of the series."

Labuschagne, dropped on four by Colin de Grandhomme from the bowling of Neil Wagner (2-40), missed the chance to join elite company when he pulled a short ball straight to Mitchell Santner at mid-wicket from the same bowler.

Without a Test century only a month ago, he was on track to become just the second Australian batsman, and fifth overall, to score four Test centuries in succession.