

Iran's Taftian Ranks 1st in French Indoor Athletics Championships



TEHRAN (Dispatches) – Iranian sprinter Hassan Taftian managed to win first place in the French Indoor Athletics Championships.

Hitting the record of 6.68 seconds, Hasan Taftian, the Iranian sprinter won the championship in the French Indoor Athletics Championships and stood at the first place.

After Taftian, Ryan Zahzeh and Marvin René, both from the host country, came in second and third with a time of 6.70 seconds.

The Olympic runner has been training in France for a few days to prepare for the Asian Championships and the Tokyo Olympics.

In last September, Taftian, led by his French sprint coach Ontanon Guy, competed in the Paris Diamond League and won the quota to participate in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games with a time of 10.3.

Clippers Dominate, Beat Thunder 120-106



Los Angeles Clippers guard Paul George (13) shoots between Oklahoma City Thunder players, including forward Luguentz Dort (5), during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game Friday, Jan. 22, 2021, in Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Kawhi Leonard scored 31 points, Paul George added 29 and the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 120-106 on Friday night for their sixth straight win.

Serge Ibaka had 17 points and 11 rebounds to help the Clippers improve to 12-4, tying the Lakers for the NBA's best record.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander led the Thunder with 30 points and eight assists against his former team. Lu Dort added 19 points.

"He was amazing. He had some great moves, great finishes around the basket as always," teammate Mike Muscala said of Gilgeous-Alexander. "He makes the game easier for everybody on the court."

The Thunder were in catch-up mode most of the way before dropping their second straight and fourth in five games. They were just 14 of 42 from 3-point range and only got to the free throw line 13 times.

The Clippers grabbed control in the first half, scoring

36 points in the first quarter and 34 in the second on 63% shooting. They had scoring runs of 21-2 and 11-4 in the first.

They opened the second quarter with a 19-10 spurt, including George's steal and dunk followed by his consecutive 3-pointers, for their largest lead of 27 points.

From there, the Thunder put together a 25-15 surge, hitting five 3-pointers, to trail 70-53 at halftime.

The Thunder worked to reduce a 23-point deficit to 10 points in the third. They outscored the Clippers 15-2 during one stretch, helped by eight points from Dort and Muscala's first 3-pointer after he missed four attempts in the first half.

But Leonard quickly put the Clippers ahead 91-75, running off six in a row. Muscala hit another 3-pointer that left the Thunder trailing by 13 going into the fourth.

George scored 11 points in the fourth against his old team, when Gilgeous-Alexander had 10 for the Thunder.

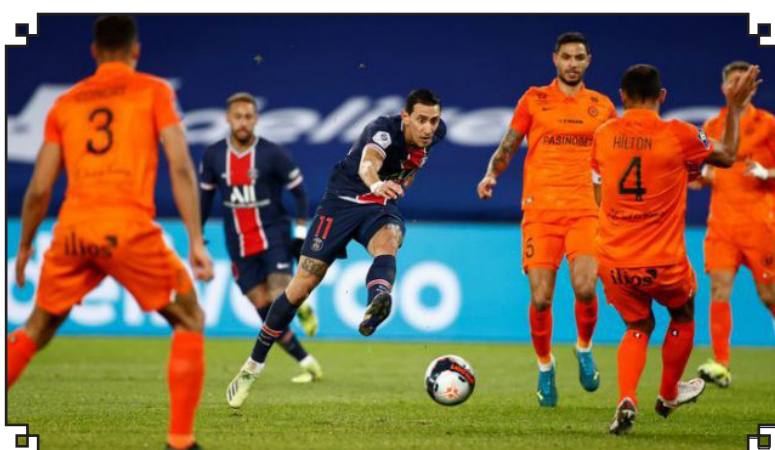
PSG Thrash Montpellier to Open Three-Point Lead in Ligue 1

PARIS (Reuters) - Paris Saint-Germain scored three goals in a four-minute blitz in the second half as they demolished 10-man Montpellier 4-0 on Friday to go three points clear at the top of Ligue 1.

Kylian Mbappe bagged a double for his first goals of the year with Neymar and Mauro Icardi also find-

ing the back of the net after Montpellier keeper Jonas Omlin was sent off early in the opening half.

The win put PSG, who welcomed coach Mauricio Pochettino back on the bench after he was forced to spend a week in isolation following a positive COVID-19 test, on 45 points from 21 games.



Goggia Wins 4th Straight World Cup Downhill to Match Vonn



Italy's Sofia Goggia speeds down the course during an alpine ski, women's World Cup downhill, in Crans Montana, Switzerland, Saturday, Jan. 23, 2021.

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland (AP) -- Olympic champion Sofia Goggia is dominating the World Cup downhill season like no woman since ski great Lindsey Vonn.

Goggia won her fourth straight downhill on Saturday to tie a World Cup streak by Vonn in

2018. They are the only women to achieve the feat in the last 25 years.

The Italian star finished 0.27 seconds faster than Lara Gut-Behrami as both thrived on icy snow slicker than in Friday's race at Crans-Montana also won by Goggia.

Goggia's teammate Elena Curtoni was third, 0.60 back, ending Breezy Johnson's streak of four third-place finishes in downhill.

Johnson was fifth, 0.89 behind Goggia, giving the United States its most consistent threat in downhill since Vonn's stellar career ended two years ago.

Vonn's best streak in World Cup downhill was six straight wins in 2009-10, according to the ski-db.com database. That matched her childhood idol Picabo Street's run in 1995.

Vonn won four straight World Cup downhills from January to March 2018. They were the last of Vonn's 82 career World Cup victories, more than any other woman on the circuit that began in 1967.

During Vonn's winning run,

Goggia was runner-up three times and also topped the season-long downhill standings. Goggia also won the Pyeongchang Olympics downhill in February 2018 when Vonn took bronze in South Korea.

Goggia is one of the sport's most flamboyant skiers and personalities though her reaction to an impressive run Saturday was quiet satisfaction in the finish area.

She blew kisses to the camera and raised both arms in the air with just a little smile. Goggia's 11th career World Cup win was her eighth in downhill.

Runner-up to Goggia on Friday, Ester Ledecka was on course for a fast time when her run was ended by a nasty-looking crash that sent her spinning down the hill in the safety net.

Qatar to Host Group B Matches for FIBA Asia Cup 2021 Qualifiers

BEIJING (Dispatches) - The FIBA Asia Cup 2021 qualifiers will be changed to Doha, Qatar for Group B games in the upcoming February window, the FIBA Regional Office Asia confirmed on Saturday.

Tokyo was previously announced as hosts for the group games. But due to restrictions imposed by the Japanese authorities, the location is now moved to Doha.

Group B includes China, Japan, Chinese Taipei and Malaysia.

Doha will also play host to matches of Group E, which comprises of Qatar, Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia.

Top two teams in each of the six groups at the end of the qualifications will qualify directly for the tournament.

The FIBA Regional Office Asia added that the third and last window will also be organized as protected environment tournaments in order to ensure health and safety of all participants.

FIBA
ASIA CUP
2021 QUALIFIERS

British Tennis Star Murray to Miss Australian Open



LONDON (Xinhua) -- Three-time Grand Slam winner Andy Murray has withdrawn from this year's Australian Open after failing to find a "workable quarantine" due to a positive test for COVID-19 earlier this month.

Murray, 33, planned to take a chartered flight to Melbourne last week but had to go into quarantine instead after receiving a positive test result for COVID-19 ahead of his trip.

Despite the setback, Murray

had expected to make his journey on a later date while the Australian Open starts on February 8.

Due to a lingering pelvic injury, Murray missed several competitions in the past two years and the former world number one is currently 123rd in the latest ATP world ranking.

As a five-time runner-up of the Australian Open, Murray was awarded a wildcard for this year's competition.