

Iran Beat Syria 3-0 in Friendly



TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iran football team has beaten Syria 3-0 in a friendly match at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran.

The match was held as part of preparations for the resumption of the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

Mohammad Hussein Kanaanizadegan gave Dragan Skocic's team a lead in the 2nd minute with a header. Sardar Azmoun doubled Iran's advantage in the 38th minute and Karim Ansarifard made it 3-0 in the 81st minute.

Iran is preparing for the World Cup qualifiers, where it sits third behind Iraq and Bahrain in Group C.

Team Melli will play Hong Kong, Cambodia, Bahrain and Iraq, respectively at the Qualifications in Bahrain.

Iranian National Football Team defeated Syria 3-0 in a friendly match, at Azadi Stadium.

North Macedonia Shock Germany as France, England Grind Out Wins



Elmas scored with five minutes remaining to secure a famous win

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Germany have suffered a stunning 2-1 home loss to North Macedonia in World Cup qualifying, while defending champions France edged Bosnia and Herzegovina 1-0 and England beat a Poland side missing the injured Robert Lewandowski.

Napoli midfielder Eljif Elmas secured a famous victory for North Macedonia in Duisburg, scoring five minutes from time to give his country a second win from three Group J matches.

Veteran striker Goran Pandev, 37, put the visitors in front just before half-time but Ilkay Gundogan levelled from the spot after Leroy Sane was fouled in the area.

Timo Werner missed a glorious chance after coming off the bench, and Elmas condemned the four-time world champions to a first defeat in qualifying for the global showpiece since 2001 when he steered in a cut-back from Arijan Ademi.

"I don't know how to explain it. It's not easy to do. We knew that we couldn't underestimate the opponent and I don't think we did that. We just weren't good enough," said Gundogan.

Germany are level alongside North Macedonia in a section led surprisingly by Armenia, who won for the third time in as many games thanks to two late goals in a 3-2 victory over Romania.

Antoine Griezmann scored the only goal of the game in Sarajevo as France recorded a second away win in four days over Bosnia following their 2-0 success in Kazakhstan at the weekend.

After being held 1-1 at home by Ukraine in their opening game on the road to the 2022 finals in Qatar, France are now in a strong position at the top of Group D.

Manchester United defender Harry Maguire struck a late winner for England as the 2018 World Cup semi-finalists overcame Poland 2-1 at Wembley.

Harry Kane put England ahead with a first-half penalty after a

foul on Raheem Sterling, but a mistake by John Stones allowed Poland to level through Jakub Moder.

England regained the lead with five minutes left when Maguire smashed home after central defensive partner Stones headed a corner back across goal.

The nervy win means England top Group I with nine points after wins earlier in the international window against San Marino and Albania.

Goals from Dani Olmo, Ferran Torres and second-half substitute Gerard Moreno lifted Spain to a 3-1 victory over Kosovo and top of Group B.

However the qualifier in Seville was overshadowed by a pre-match diplomatic dispute, stemming from the description of Kosovo as a "territory" by the Spanish Football Federation when it published Spain's group fixtures.

Stefano Sensi scored just after his introduction as a half-time substitute to help Italy, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, register a third successive win in Group C.

Roberto Mancini's team defeated Lithuania 2-0 in Vilnius with Ciro Immobile adding a stoppage-time penalty for the Azzurri.

Andreas Olsen netted twice as Denmark thrashed Austria 4-0 to take charge of Group F, with Joakim Maehle and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg also on target in Vienna.

Scotland are second in the group after easing to a 4-0 win over the Faroe Islands. John McGinn bagged two goals while Che Adams and Ryan Fraser completed the scoring.

Iceland, in the same group as Germany, picked up their first qualifying points with a 4-1 win away to Liechtenstein.

Northern Ireland drew 0-0 at home to Bulgaria while Ukraine were held 1-1 by Kazakhstan in Kiev, a third consecutive draw for the side coached by former national team star Andriy Shevchenko.

Nuggets Cruise Past Clippers 101-94

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Jamal Murray scored 23 points and the Denver Nuggets led all the way in beating the Los Angeles Clippers 101-94 on Thursday night for their fourth straight victory.

The Nuggets dominated the first three quarters on a night when Nikola Jokic didn't reach double figures until hitting a 3-pointer with 5:20 left in the game. He finished with 14 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Jokic's supporting cast came through. Michael Porter Jr. added 20 points and Will Barton had 19 points. Aaron Gordon added 14 points as Denver improved to 3-0 since

Gordon arrived last week via a trade from Orlando.

Kawhi Leonard led the Clippers with 24 points and 12 rebounds. Paul George had 17 points and eight rebounds in his return after missing two games with a sore right foot. Terance Mann added 18 points off the bench.

George said the soreness and swelling in his foot is related to the bone edema issue that sidelined him earlier.

"It's a day-to-day process, but I'm doing better," he said. "Some days it's more sore than others."

The Clippers made a run in the fourth, opening with a 13-3 spurt that left them trail-



Denver Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. (1) shoots against Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard (2) during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game Thursday, April 1, 2021, in Los Angeles.

ing 84-83.

But Denver outscored them the rest of the way. Jokic's 3-pointer extended the Nuggets' lead to six and Murray's

3 made it 96-88.

The Clippers, who lead the NBA in 3-point shooting, were 10 of 34 from long-range.

Osaka's Winning Streak Ended by Sakkari



MIAMI (AP) — As Naomi Osaka's 23-match winning streak neared an end, she paused before serving to crane her neck and study the sky, as if seeking intervention from above.

Then she carried on, and so did No. 23-seeded Maria Sakkari, who upset Osaka 6-0, 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the Miami

Open.

"The more stuff like this happens, the more I'll learn from it," the No. 2-ranked Osaka said.

The defeat was her first since February 2020, and it ended any chance of reclaiming the No. 1 ranking this week from Ash Barty, who is in the semifinals.

Sakkari will next play No. 8-seeded Bianca Andreescu of Canada, who dropped serve eight times but still outlasted unseeded Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-4, 3-6, 6-3.

"I'm superproud of how I handled it tonight, because it wasn't easy," Andreescu said. "My body was giving out, and then my mind gave out at one point, because I was just thinking about how tired I was."

The other women's semifinal Thursday will pit No. 1-seeded Ash Barty against No. 5 Elina Svitolina.

Osaka won her fourth Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in February, but in five Miami appearances she has never advanced beyond the quarterfinals. She said couldn't

get comfortable on the tournament's hard-court surface.

Against Sakkari, the only Greek woman ranked in the top 250, Osaka lost 15 consecutive points on her serve to fall behind and blew a 4-1 lead in the second set. She faced a break point on seven of her eight service games.

Sakkari earned her sixth career win over a top-five opponent. She's still in the tournament only because she saved six match points in the previous round before beating American Jessica Pegula.

In men's play, 19-year-old Italian Jannik Sinner earned his first semifinal berth in an ATP Tour top-level event by beating No. 32-seeded Alexander Bublik 7-6 (5), 6-4.

Italian Cycling Team Faces Ban Because of Doping Cases

AIGLE, Switzerland (AP) — Italian team Vini Zabu faces a suspension from racing after a second rider tested positive for doping, the International Cycling Union said.

Teams with two doping cases in a 12-month period can be

banned from racing for 15 to 45 days, possibly ruling the team out of the Giro d'Italia. The three-week Italian race starts on May 8.

The UCI said Matteo De Bonis has been provisionally suspended pending a disciplinary

case after testing positive for the blood-boosting hormone EPO in a sample taken on Feb. 16.

De Bonis was targeted for testing during training by the Lausanne-based International Testing Agency, the UCI said.

Vini Zabu also had rider Matteo Spreafico test positive twice for the trial drug ostarine at last year's Giro d'Italia in October.

The UCI said it will "shortly refer the matter to the disciplinary commission which will render a decision in due course."

