

Iran Win Championships at International Wushu Invitational Tournament



TEHRAN – A total of 20 medals were bagged by the Iranina wushu players and claimed the Championships title

at the International Wushu Invitational Tournament 2024, held in Jiangyin, China, from April 21 to 26.

The International 2024 Wushu Cup qualifiers started on Wednesday with the presence of more than 300 participants from 38 countries, hosted by Jiangyin, China, and.

Iran's wushu athletes, won 6 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze medals on the first day, continued to shine on the second day and won 7 gold and 4 silver medals.

Nadal Outclasses Blanch in Madrid First Round

MADRID (Reuters) - Rafael Nadal thrashed 16-year-old wild card Darwin Blanch 6-1 6-0 in the first round of the Madrid Open on Thursday and will face Australian 10th seed Alex de Minaur next.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion broke the American at the first opportunity in the second game before grabbing the first set in just 28 minutes.

Nadal, who last claimed the title on Madrid's clay in 2017, broke again to take the lead in the second set and kept up the pace, giving a tennis masterclass to Blanch who is still seeking his first tour win.

The age gap between the



Spain's Rafael Nadal returns the ball to US' Darwin Blanch during the 2024 ATP Tour Madrid Open tennis tournament singles match at Caja Magica in Madrid on April 25, 2024.

pair was 21 years and 117 days, the biggest between two op-

ponents at ATP Masters 1000 level.

The American teen committed 27 unforced errors in what was his second ATP tour match after he had made his debut last month in Miami.

The win was Nadal's record-extending 57th victory in Madrid, a tournament that he has won five times.

He will play world number 11 De Minaur in the second round on Saturday.

The Australian defeated Nadal 7-5 6-1 in the second round of the Barcelona Open last week when the Spaniard was playing his first tournament since January.

Stephen Curry Named NBA's Clutch Player of Year



WASHINGTON (AP) - Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry is the second recipient of the NBA Clutch Player of the Year Award, the league announced Thursday.

Introduced last year, when Sacramento Kings guard De'Aaron

Fox took home the Jerry West Trophy, the award honors the player "who best comes through for his teammates in the clutch", according to the NBA.

Curry edged out Chicago Bulls forward DeMar DeRozan for the

honor. Curry received 45 first-place votes (five points each), 18 second-place votes (three points) and 19 third-place votes (one point) for a total of 298 total points from a media voting panel. DeRozan finished with 272 points, including 34 first-place votes.

Oklahoma City Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander came in third with 160 points, including 11 first-place votes.

Curry led the league with 189 points in "clutch situations," defined by the league as possessions in the final five minutes of the fourth quarter or overtime when the margin is five points or fewer. Curry shot 49.6 percent overall, 45.7 percent from

3-point range and 95.1 percent from the free-throw line in clutch situations.

The future Hall of Famer and two-time league MVP just completed his 15th NBA season having averaged 26.4 points, 4.5 rebounds and 5.1 assists per game while shooting 40.8 percent from deep. But the Warriors did not manage to advance out of the Western Conference play-in round.

Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry (right) drives the lane as Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic (front left) and guard Julian Strawther defend in the second half of an NBA basketball game on Dec 25, 2023, in Denver.

Paris to Face Major Disruption Ahead of Games Opening Ceremony, Says Police Chief

PARIS (Reuters) - Paris will face major disruption ahead of the Olympics opening ceremony along the Seine on July 26, as organizers ramp up security measures to safeguard the event, the city's police chief said on Thursday.

Organizers hope the opening ceremony, in which 160 boats carrying athletes from around the world will travel a 6 kilometer route along the Seine river towards the Eiffel tower, will deliver a jaw-dropping spectacle. Some 300,000 spectators will watch from the banks of the Seine as a global audience tunes in on TV.

But the ceremony is also a major security headache, taking place against a backdrop of conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza. French President Emmanuel Macron has already floated the possibility of scrapping the river ceremony and reverting to at least two back-up plans if the security risks become untenable.

Paris residents with a view of the Seine can invite friends to watch the opening of the 2024 Summer Games from their

balconies, but should prepare for heavy traffic and limited movement, Paris police chief Laurent Nunez said at a press conference.

Adjacent metro stations, most river crossings and all water traffic will be halted in the week before the open-air ceremony, Nunez said, adding that some bridges will remain open "in order not to cut Paris in two halves."

Everyone who wants to access the immediate surroundings of the Seine in the week before the Games will need to sign up on an online platform, Nunez said. Local residents hoping to access their homes, which are among the most prestigious addresses in France, will need to do the same.

Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, who also spoke at the event said the disruption would impact around 20,000 residents and business owners.

Asked about Macron's comments earlier this month, Nunez said his teams were still working on the "Plan A" of the river ceremony.

Man City Humble Brighton to Keep Pressure on Arsenal



Manchester City's Brazilian goalkeeper #31 Ederson jumps to save from a corner kick during the English Premier League football match between Brighton and Hove Albion and Manchester City at the American Express Community Stadium in Brighton, southern England on April 25, 2024.

BRIGHTON (Reuters) - Phil Foden struck twice as Manchester City stepped up their bid for a fourth Premier League crown in a row with a ruthless 4-0 victory at Brighton & Hove Albion on Thursday.

A day after Liverpool's title challenge suffered a huge blow with a 2-0 defeat at Everton, City kept up the pressure on leaders Arsenal with a dominant display that left them one point behind the London club with a game in hand.

"The statement is three points," City manager Pep Guardiola told Sky Sports. "There are five games left, we know the margins are so tight. We have to win every one. Each game we are closer."

He added that it remains very much a three-team race.

"What happened to Liverpool, two defeats in a row, it can happen to Arsenal, it can happen to us," Guardiola said. "What is important is that still we are there. There is a lot of games to play."

Kevin De Bruyne's superb diving header put City, missing top scorer Erling Haaland due to injury, ahead in the 17th minute.

Foden scored his first with a deflected free kick and Brighton defensive errors allowed Bernardo Silva to win the ball and set up the England midfielder to sweep

a shot into the bottom corner before halftime.

Foden, whose hat-trick led City to a 4-1 win over Aston Villa three weeks ago, became only the third player to score 50 top-flight goals under manager Pep Guardiola aged 23 or younger, after Lionel Messi and Haaland.

Julian Alvarez completed the rout midway through the second half and Brighton, who remained 11th in the table, never looked capable of launching a fightback.

Manchester City are unbeaten in 30 games in all competitions with 24 wins and six draws, making them the third English top-flight side to reach that landmark after Nottingham Forest (40 in 1978) and Manchester United (34 in 1993-94 and 33 in 1998-99).

Their last loss excluding penalty shootouts was against Aston Villa in early December.

Brighton's best chance came when City keeper Ederson gifted them a late opportunity when he raced out of his box, only to fire the ball straight at Odeluga Offiah who failed to take advantage.

City head to relegation-threatened Nottingham Forest on Sunday. They close out the season with matches against Wolverhampton Wanderers, Fulham, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United.

Xavi to Remain as Barcelona Coach

MADRID (Xinhua) - FC Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez has reversed his decision to step down as first team coach at the end of the current season and will now see out his contract until the end of June 2025.

Barcelona vice-president Rafa Yuste confirmed the news late on Wednesday night outside the home of the club's president Joan Laporta following a meeting with Xavi.

"Xavi will stay, he's really happy and excited," Yuste told waiting journalists, before insisting the club had "never opened talks with any other coach."

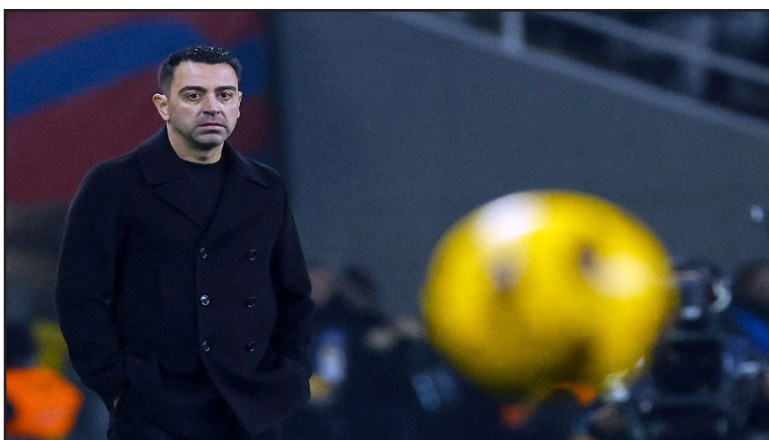
Earlier on Wednesday, Xavi held face-to-face talks with Laporta and Barcelona's sporting director Deco in which he indicated he had changed his mind

from the decision he made in January.

Xavi stunned Barcelona when he commented after a 5-3 defeat at home to Villarreal that he would step down at the end of this season. He said one reason for his decision was to try and spark a reaction in his squad, while also talking about the pressures of the job at FC Barcelona.

Xavi said the club needs a "change of direction", and said he felt there was "a lack of respect, you feel that your work is not appreciated".

The coach's announcement saw a slight upturn in form, with the club moving into second place in La Liga and reaching the quarterfinals in the UEFA Champions League, before being knocked out by Paris Saint-



Barcelona's head coach Xavi Hernandez reacts during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Villarreal at the Olympic Lluís Companys stadium in Barcelona, Spain, Jan 27, 2024.

Germain. Although the 4-1 defeat in the second leg was a big disappointment, the team did fulfill the club's budget requirements by reaching the last eight. Barcelona reportedly had

several candidates to replace Xavi, including B-team coach Rafael Marquez, who has helped nurture young talents such as Lamine Yamal and Pau Cubarsi.