

Iran Still Top ASIA Team In AMF Rankings



Iranian men's national futsal team (file photo)

TEHRAN (Press TV) - Iran men's national futsal team has preserved its position as Asia's best in the latest Asociación Mundial de Futsal (AMF) rankings, and climbs one spot in the

world's overall standings to sit in the fifth place.

According to the latest classification published by the AMF, which is the governing body of futsal, the Ira-

nian squad earned 1,626 points.

Japan dropped to the 11th slot in the latest AMF rankings with 1,379 points. The East Asians are followed by Thais and Uzbeks, who have

claimed the 15th and 20th places respectively with 1,361 and 1,251 points.

Brazil is the top-ranked futsal team in the world with 1,919 points. Spaniards notched up 1,910 points to sit in the second position, while third-placed Russians kept their position with 1,743 points. Italy collected 1,661 points to stand fourth.

On February 21, the national Iranian men's futsal team was crowned the champion of the 2016 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal Championship in Uzbekistan.

The team, which had already registered a stellar record at the continental sports event, edged past the hosts Uzbekistan 2-1 at Uzbekistan Stadium in the Uzbek capital city of Tashkent.

Dilshod Irsaliyev netted the opener for the hosts in the fifth minute, only for Ghodrath Bahadori to neutralize the lead four minutes later.

Captain Mohammad Keshavarz then put Iran in the lead six minutes before halftime, prompting his teammates to successfully preserve the claim throughout the rest of the final showdown.

Female Taekwondo Team En Route to Philippines

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's two-member female taekwondo squad will leave Tehran for Manila on April 12 to attend Asian Qualification Tournament for Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

The last stage of the five Continental Qualification Tournaments for taekwondo pertains

to Asian qualifiers to be held in Philippines.

Taekwondo at the 2016 Summer Olympics which will be attended by 128 taekwondo practitioners in four men's and four women's weight categories.

So far, participation of a total of 108 athletes at the 2016 Summer

Olympics has become finalized while 16 quota places will be offered at the Asian Qualification Tournament for Rio 2016 Olympic Games to be convened in Manila of Philippines on April 20-21.

Iranian men's taekwondo team has snared three Olympic berths while the country's women out-

fit comprising of Kimia Alizadeh and Akram Khodabandeh will depart for Philippines aiming to secure places at Rio Olympics.

Accordingly, Khodabandeh in +67kg weight category will meet rivals on April 20 while Alizadeh is scheduled to appear on the mat on April 21.

AFC Champions League:

Zobahan Trounces Bunyodkor



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As part of the competitions in the fourth week of 2016 AFC Champions, Iran's Zobahan faced Uzbekistan's Bunyodkor on Tuesday evening at Foolad Shahr Stadium where the hosts managed to defeat the Uzbek team 5-2.

Danial Esmaeilifar and Vahid Mohammadzadeh found the net for the Iranian team in the first half while Mahdi Rajabzadeh and Kaveh Rezaei scored more goals for Zobahan to bag all three points.

Meanwhile, Minori Sato and Shakhzodbek Murmatov of Bunyodkor scored goals late into the second half of the match.

Given Al Nassr's 4-0 loss at the hands of Lekhwiya in Doha, the 5-2 victory moved Zobahan three points clear at the top of Group B with just two games remaining in the group stages while Bunyodkor dropped to the bottom of the standings and remain on two points.

"We started the match very well, with plenty of motivation," said Zobahan coach Golmohammadi adding "we were focused and scored early and continued the game without stress."

Timberwolves Shock Warriors 124-117 in Overtime

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Coach Steve Kerr knows just what his players are going through down the stretch of a potentially record-setting season. Having stumbled to the finish of a 72-win season as a player with the Chicago Bulls two decades ago, Kerr is watching his Golden State Warriors do the same.

Stephen Curry had an uncharacteristic off-shooting night, Golden State committed 24 turnovers to squander an early 17-point lead and the Warriors hit an unexpected obstacle on their quest for 73 wins by losing 124-117 in overtime to the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

"You have so much media attention and everybody talking about breaking the record and you lose focus a little bit," Kerr said. "The same thing happened 20 years ago. We didn't play well down the stretch. This doesn't surprise me. It's easy to get lost in all this stuff. We haven't been very dialed in of late."

The Warriors (69-9) have lost twice at home in the past five nights. Their

record 54-game home winning streak in the regular season was snapped Friday by Boston and they lost again to the Timberwolves, failing in their first attempt to join the Bulls as the only teams to win 70 games in a season.

Chicago also lost two late home games that season before ending up with the record 72 wins. The Warriors now must sweep their final four games to break that mark.

"We put ourselves in a position where it's a realistic goal," said Curry, who missed 18 of 25 shots. "We have to embrace the challenge. Obviously it's not easy to get it done. We're proving that right now."

Shabazz Muhammad scored a career-high 35 points, Andrew Wiggins had 32 and Karl-Anthony Towns added 20 points, 12 rebounds and stellar defense for the Timberwolves.

"It wasn't even about being a part of history," Towns said. "You want to go out there and win. Every game, you want to go out there and you want to be a very competitive team that goes

out there and wins."

Klay Thompson scored 28 points, while Curry had 21 points and 15 assists for the Warriors, who lost for the third time this season against a team currently in last place. Golden State also fell in Milwaukee in December and at the Los Angeles Lakers last month, but this one came at home. Wiggins scored Minnesota's first six points of the extra session to give the Timberwolves their first lead since the first quarter. Muhammad drew the sixth foul on Draymond Green and made both foul shots to make it 114-109.

Curry and Thompson then both missed late 3-pointers and the Timberwolves won the game at the foul line, shocking the sellout crowd that came to celebrate a milestone victory.

"Focus was the number one thing," Green said. "We lost our focus and when you lose your focus, that's when turnovers happen. That's when bad defense happens, that's when problems happen."

Golden State got a big break late in

regulation when a potential three-point play by Towns was overturned to an offensive foul when replay showed Curry was outside the restricted area when he drew contact from the rookie center.

But Minnesota still managed to tie the game on a spinning drive by Wiggins with less than 20 seconds to go and didn't allow the Warriors to get a shot off before the end of regulation.

It was a strange first half with Curry missing all eight shots he took from the field and not scoring a single point until making a pair of free throws with 27.8 seconds remaining. Curry didn't make his first shot from the field until hitting a 3-pointer with just over 9 minutes left in the third quarter.

Curry then made three more from long range in a span of less than two minutes late in the quarter before going 3 for 11 in the fourth quarter and overtime.

"I was able to bounce back from that crazy, weird shooting in the first half and have some impact on the game," Curry said. "Down the stretch I have to slow down a bit."

FIFA Records Iran's Bid to Host Futsal World Cup

TEHRAN (MNA) - Iran's request to hold 2020 Futsal World Cup has been registered while May 6 marks the deadline for the 13 candidates to solidify their commitment.

A record of 13 Member Associations, from five continents, have stepped forward registering their interest in bringing the FIFA Futsal World Cup 2020 to their country in four years' time.

The full list published by FIFA includes Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Netherlands, New

Zealand, the United Arab Emirates and USA.

Candidates can now expect to receive bid packs which include further information regarding the bidding process and the requirements to host the event, with the next step being their solidifying their commitment, with formal declarations of interest needed by 6 May.

The 2020 tournament will be the ninth edition of futsal's premier competition, which has thus far been played on four of the six confederations, since beginning life at Netherlands 1989.

Iranian Swimmers Shine in Dubai Tourney

TEHRAN(Press TV) - Iranian swimmers have put in outstanding performances at Dubai International Aquatic Championships (DIAC) 2016 in the United Arab Emirates, and managed to pocket six medals, including three gold, and establish two records at the tournament.

On Monday, Erfan Moghaddam stole the show in the boy's 50 meters freestyle (the 12-13 age category) at Hamdan Sports Complex in Dubai, and picked up the gold medal.

Alireza Amin Zomorodi won another gold medal for Iran in the same discipline, but in the 14-15 age group.

Arshia Moradi participated in the boy's 200-meter butterfly (the 12-13 age category), and snatched the third gold medal for the Iranian outfit.

Benyamin Gharreh-Hassanlou clocked 23.99 in the preliminary round of boy's 50 meters freestyle,

and set a new record in the 15-17 age category.

The junior Iranian swimmer repeated his praiseworthy display in the final session of the stroke, and turned in a time of 23.91 to establish his second record. He received a silver medal at last.

Mehran Ghasemzadeh also finished runner-up in the boy's 200-meter butterfly (the 12-13 age category).

Additionally, Ali Fathi finished third in the final of boy's 200-meter backstroke (the 14-15 age group), and bagged a bronze medal.

Dubai International Aquatic Championships (DIAC) 2016 opened in the United Arab Emirates on March 29, and will finish on April 7.

The event is organized by the UAE Swimming Federation with the support of Dubai Sports Council and Hamdan Sports Complex.

Barcelona Protected, Fumes Torres After Red Card

BARCELONA (AFP) - Fernando Torres raged that Atletico Madrid are not treated equally to Barcelona by referees after his early red card turned their Champions League quarter-final, first leg around.

Torres had put Atletico in front at the Camp Nou before seeing two quick-fire yellow cards to leave the visitors a man light for over an hour.

Luis Suarez finally converted Barca's relentless second-half pressure into a 2-1 lead as he struck twice in 12 minutes.

However, Atletico were enraged as unlike Torres, Suarez escaped punishment for a kick out at Juanfran and an off-the-ball incident with Filipe Luis.

"They shouldn't have been cards. If it had been the other way around then they wouldn't have been given," Torres told Spanish radio station Cadena Cope.

"With 11 (men) we would have won without any doubt."

And the former Liverpool and Chelsea striker claimed UEFA have their priorities wrong after making both sides play in their away kits to avoid a colour clash.

"UEFA worry about making us change shirts, but they didn't appoint a referee that is up to the level of the Champions League quarter-finals."

Luis went even further by implying UEFA are scared of Barcelona not reaching the final. "I don't know what Barca players have to do to get sent off just like us," Luis told Spanish TV station MEGA.

"You can tell there is fear that Barca will be eliminated."

Atletico's players' choice of words could prove costly should UEFA feel the need to impose bans on those that have launched attacks on German referee Felix Brych.

Coach Diego Simeone was more measured in his criticism and was happy to escape Catalonia with the tie still in the balance.

"There were more than two incidents involving Suarez," said Atletico boss Diego Simeone.

"I can't say what I think, but I am not angry with Fernando (Torres) for sure."

"We had a great first-half, in the second we tried to limit the damage as much as possible for the game that is still to come."

Barca boss Luis Enrique was understandably less sympathetic towards Torres. "Both of Torres's two yellow cards are clear," he said. "They may have been unintentional, but they are clear."

Barca saw a 39-game unbeaten run come to an end with defeat to Real Madrid and their bid to become the first side to retain the Champions League looked under serious threat before Torres's dismissal changed the course of the game.

However, Enrique dismissed suggestions his side are beginning to pay physically for the demands of playing in six competitions this season.

"Watching the second half there is no physical problem," he added. "We played with enthusiasm, but also a cool head because if you only play with the heart it is dangerous."

"I think we did enough to have won by one more goal."