

Iranian Athletes Shine at 2018 Asian Para Games



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Iranian athletes have gained more than 15 more medals so far, at 2018 Asian Para Games, currently underway in Indonesia. Mohammadreza Ahmadi's throw of 9.92m broke the record in Asia and earned him the men's Shot Put F33 gold medal

In men's shot put F33, Ahmadi broke the Asian record with a throw of 9.92m and won the gold medal. He claimed an Asian record which was previously set by Saudi Arabia's Hani Alnakhli with a 9.48m throw. Also in the same category, Alnakhli from Saudi Arabia won the silver

medal with a 9.37m record and Iran's Mehdi Alizadeh won the bronze medal of the category with a 9.34m throw.

The silver and bronze medals of this category went to Alnakhli and Iran's Mehdi Alizadeh with 9.37m and 9.34m respectively.

Iranian women shooter Sareh Javanmardi gained her second gold medal in the shooting event of 2018 Asian Para Games, in Indonesia.

In P2 women's 10M air pistol (SH1), Javanmardi scored a high of 237.6 and claimed the gold medal. The other Iranian shooter Samira Eram won the silver and the bronze went to Iraq's Sahar Alshabani.

Javanmardi, the world and Paralympics champion, had earlier snatched the gold medal of P450m free pistol.

On Monday and in women's 1500M T12/13, Ozra Mahdaviqiya earned the

gold medal with a time of 00:05:16.65. India's Venkatesh Radha claimed silver and Japan's Mitsuyo Matsumoto won the bronze with 00:05:17.65 and 00:05:17.98 respectively.

The 2018 Asian Para Games kicked off on Saturday in Jakarta and will continue through October 13. Some 2,831 athletes from 43 countries have participated in the event. A total of 209 athletes, consisting of 137 men and 73 women, represent Iran in the 2018 Asian Para Games in 13 sports.

Near 3,000 para-athletes from 43 countries of Asia are competing in the event. A total of 209 athletes, consisting of 137 men and 73 women, represent Iran in the 2018 Games in 13 sports.

The competitions feature 18 sports, including track and field, swimming, badminton, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair volleyball, and chess.

Nominees for Ballon d'Or Released



PARIS (Dispatches) - The nominees for the Ballon d'Or have been announced in a staggered format and 11 of the 30 players shortlisted play in the Premier League.

Mohamed Salah, Sergio Aguero, Alisson Becker, Roberto Firmino, Sadio Mane, Kevin De Bruyne, Harry Kane, Hugo Lloris, N'Golo Kante, Paul Pogba and Eden Hazard all have a chance of winning the most prestigious individual award in the game.

Lionel Messi, Neymar, Ivan Rakitic, Luis Suarez, Luka Modric, Jan Oblak, Raphael Varane, Marcelo, Karim Benzema, Gareth Bale, Edinson Cavani, Diego Godin, Kylian Mbappe, Thibaut Courtois, Mario Mandzukic, Cristiano Ronaldo, Isco and Antoine Griezmann have also been shortlisted, with the full list of 30 announced throughout Monday (in batches of five) by France Football.

Current Ballon d'Or holder Ronaldo is aiming to win the award for a sixth time, while Messi (another five-time winner) will no doubt also be among the contenders but the likes of Griezmann, Mbappe and Modric will be the favorites.

With regards to the confirmed contenders for the award this year, over the past 12 months Aguero has become Man City's all-time leading goalscorer and has also moved into the top 10 of the PL's all-time goalscorers. His City teammate, De Bruyne, was pipped by Mohamed Salah to all of the top individual awards last season despite leading City to their record-breaking title.

Liverpool's Firmino gets the nod after his 27-goal season for the Reds which saw him become a regular with the Brazilian national team, while his teammate for club and country, Alisson, is also honored for his fine displays for AS Roma at the World Cup. Mane is also included in the shortlist, while Chelsea stars Hazard and Kante are in and Tottenham's main man Kane is up for the award after his heroics for Spurs and England, along with Lloris.

Real Madrid had an incredible eight players shortlisted, with

Ramos, Marcelo, Isco, Varane, Benzema, Modric and Bale winning the UEFA Champions League for a third-straight season, with the latter scoring twice in the final including an amazing overhead kick. Modric is among the favorites after his heroics leading Croatia to the World Cup final and already winning FIFA's The Best award as the top player on the planet.

Barcelona had three players included, with Messi joined by Luis Suarez and Ivan Rakitic.

PSG's Neymar got the nod despite his injury hit season, while Cavani's goals led PSG to another Ligue 1 title and he also starred for Uruguay in the World Cup before getting injured. Godin was at the heart of a fine campaign for Atletico Madrid and Uruguay and his Atleti teammates Oblak and Griezmann were also included, as the latter needs no introduction after he helped France to World Cup glory. Thibaut Courtois also had a fine World Cup with the Belgium star named the best goalkeeper on the planet as sealed a move from Chelsea to Real Madrid.

Below is a list of the top 30 players on the planet.

- Nominees for Ballon d'Or
- Sergio Aguero (ARG / Manchester City)
- Alisson (BRA / Liverpool)
- Gareth Bale (WAL / Real Madrid)
- Karim Benzema (FRA / Real Madrid)
- Edinson Cavani (URU / PSG)
- Thibaut Courtois (BEL / Real Madrid)
- Cristiano Ronaldo (POR / Juventus)
- Kevin De Bruyne (BEL / Manchester City)
- Roberto Firmino (BRA / Liverpool)
- Diego Godin (URU / Atletico Madrid)
- Antoine Griezmann (FRA / Atletico Madrid)
- Eden Hazard (BEL / Chelsea)
- Isco (ESP / Real Madrid)
- Harry Kane (ENG / Tottenham)
- N'Golo Kante (FRA / Chelsea)
- Marcelo (BRA / Real Madrid)
- Kylian Mbappe (FRA / PSG)
- Hugo Lloris (FRA / Tottenham)
- Mario Mandzukic (CRO / Juventus)
- Sadio Mane (SEN / Liverpool)
- Paul Pogba (FRA / Manchester United)
- Neymar (BRA / PSG)
- Lionel Messi (ARG / Barcelona)
- Luka Modric (CRO / Real Madrid)
- Jan Oblak (SVK / Atletico Madrid)
- Sergio Ramos (SPA / Real Madrid)
- Ivan Rakitic (CROA / Barcelona)
- Mohamed Salah (EGY / Liverpool)
- Raphael Varane (FRA / Real Madrid)
- Luis Suarez (URU / Barcelona)

Hamilton Stepping Into Schumacher Territory

LONDON (Reuters) - When Michael Schumacher won his seventh Formula One world championship with Ferrari in 2004 it looked like a record for the ages, but Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes are forcing a rethink already.

The Briton stands on the brink of becoming only the third man to win at least five titles, with his team's stranglehold on both championships tighter than ever after he won Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix.

The 33-year-old has a contract until the end of 2020 and a team mate in Valtteri Bottas who has proved more beatable and acquiescent than predecessor and 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg.

A change of engine rules that might shake things up is not due until 2021, at the earliest.

"Let's say you win this championship... Lewis wins another title, can he go to seven?" 1996 world champion Damon Hill asked Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff on Sky Sports television on Sunday, voicing the thoughts of many.

The Austrian's reply, while



emphasizing that nothing was being taken for granted, was revealing.

Hamilton's record already bears comparison to Schumacher's, and in some areas exceeds the great German's achievements.

Saturday brought the Briton a record-extending 80th pole from 225 starts, compared to Schumacher's 68 in 307 races.

Sunday was Hamilton's 71st win, 20 short of the former Ferrari great's 91.

Hamilton has won nine races so far this season and looks likely to end the

year in double figures. His 2014-17 average was 10 wins a year -- 11 in 2014, 10 in 2015 and 2016 and then nine last year.

Britain's most successful driver has 131 podium places since his debut in 2007, compared to Schumacher's

155. Schumacher won 72 races with Ferrari between 1996 and 2006. Hamilton has won 50 with Mercedes in less than six seasons.

A more meaningful point of comparison, however, would be the years of dominance -- 2000-04 for Ferrari and 2014-18 for Mercedes.

There, the win figures are 49 for Hamilton (so far) and 48 for Schumacher but the percentage rate remains in the German's favor since there are now more races on the calendar. On podiums, Hamilton is ahead 77-66.

Hamilton has also matched or beaten Schumacher at key stages of his career, the German taking his first title with Benetton aged 25 whereas the Briton opened his account at McLaren as a 23-year-old.

Lopetegui Under Pressure Amid Real Madrid Scoring Drought

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) - It looked like a no-brainer at the time. Which coach wouldn't jump at the chance to lead star-packed and wealthy Real Madrid?

But four months later Julen Lopetegui may be rueing the day the club's president Florentino Perez made him an offer that he just couldn't refuse.

Not only did his decision in June to sign for Madrid get him fired as Spain's manager two days before the start of the World Cup, but the juggernaut Lopetegui inherited from Zinedine Zidane is now a team in apparent disarray.

Madrid has lost three times and drawn once in its last four matches. The team that boasts stars such as Luka Modric, Gareth Bale and Sergio Ramos hasn't been able to score a goal in that span.

Even the departure of Cristiano Ronaldo, who left Madrid this summer as its all-time top scorer, can't shield Lopetegui from being blamed for the team's longest scoring drought since

1985. Lopetegui has tried to take a team that for nine seasons was built around putting Ronaldo in position to score and mold it into a side that deploys a collective attack. In Lopetegui's own words, "it doesn't matter who scores, the goals are scored by the team."

Madrid had already lost 3-0 at Sevilla, drawn 0-0 with Atletico Madrid, and lost 1-0 at CSKA Moscow before a humiliating 1-0 defeat at Alaves on Saturday.

Even though Alaves is exceeding expectations and Madrid was playing without three of its first-choice players, Madrid hadn't lost at the Basque club's ground since the 1930-31 season.

Lopetegui seemed helpless to stop his players from being outmuscled in most of the individual match-ups and was unable to find a way to break Alaves' pressure and spring Bale on the counterattack.

Germany Facing Striker Problems Ahead of Nations League



Germany's forward Thomas Mueller (left) vies with France's defender Samuel Umtiti during the UEFA Nations League football match Germany against France on Sept 6, 2018 at the Allianz Arena in Munich, southern Germany.

BERLIN (Dispatches) - Times couldn't be more challenging for German national coach Joachim Loew. The 58-year-old must feel like a desperate builder having to fix several problems at his construction site while the deadline looms large on the horizon.

With his Germany side set to face the Netherlands this Saturday and world champions France next Thursday in the newly-formed Nations League, Loew finds himself

in a precarious position. Looking to bounce back from a disastrous group stage exit at the World Cup in Russia, Loew is running out of attacking options just when he needs them most.

The head coach will be without the services of attacking players such as Ilkay Gundogan (Manchester City), Kai Havertz (Bayer Leverkusen), Nils Petersen (SC Freiburg) and Dortmund star Marco Reus, all of whom are sidelined with injury.

Costs Hit Tokyo Olympics Almost \$25bn, May Go Higher

TOKYO (Dispatches) — The price tag keeps soaring for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics despite local organizers and the International Olympic Committee saying that spending is being cut.

A report just released by the national government's Board of Audit shows Japan is likely to spend \$25 billion to prepare the games, and the final number could go even higher.

This is nearly a four-fold increase over Tokyo's winning bid in 2013, which the report read projected

costs of 829 billion yen, or \$7.3 billion at the current exchange rate of 113 yen to the dollar.

Tracking Tokyo costs is getting more difficult as work speeds up, deadlines near, and disputes arise about what are — and what are not — Olympic expenses. Complicated accounting also makes it difficult to figure out who pays for what, and who profits.

Flyvberg said the study failed to "find even one" Olympics that came in on or below budget.