

Marc Wilmots Quits as Iran Coach



Marc Wilmots

TEHRAN (Tasnim) - Marc Wilmots left his role as coach of Iran national football team, just

seven months after replacing Carlos Queiroz at the helm of the three-time Asian champion.

He was appointed as Team Melli coach in May to lead Iran in their quest for a sixth World Cup ap-

pearance.

The former Belgium and Ivory Coast coach confirmed he has terminated his contract with the Iranian federation, but he denied a resolution had been reached.

"Contrary to the information apparently published in the Iranian press, no amicable agreement was reached between the Iranian Football Federation and me and my staff," Wilmots said on Twitter.

"We are negotiating to find an amicable solution following the non-respect of the contractual obligations by the Iranian Football Federation and following my justified termination of the contract."

"The file being in the hands of my lawyers, I will not make any other comment."

United Spoil Mourinho's Return to Old Trafford



Manchester United's Welsh midfielder Daniel James (2nd L) collides with Tottenham Hotspur's Portuguese head coach Jose Mourinho (L) on the touchline after a challenge with Tottenham Hotspur's English midfielder Harry Winks (R) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on Dec 4, 2019.

MANCHESTER (Dispatches) - Former Manchester United manager José Mourinho's homecoming at Old Trafford was spoiled when the Red Devils triumphed over his new side Tottenham Hotspur.

Goals in the first and second half from Marcus Rashford helped United defeat their Big Six foes.

With another contentious match this weekend, this victory adds a lovely bit of confidence for the home team and puts them within reach of the top four. Here are three things we learned from United's 2-1 win against Spurs.

Marcus Rashford is having a hell of a season, and that's putting it lightly. The 22-year-old has found the back of the net for

United nine times in domestic play and 12 times across all competitions this year, with several of those goals coming against difficult sides. The Englishman could have easily bagged a hat trick against his former manager on Wednesday, but saves from Paulo Gazzaniga prevented that from coming to fruition.

Nonetheless, it was obvious Rashford was itching to get one over his old boss. The academy graduate's brace on Wednesday brings his total to 16 strikes in 34 games under Solskjaer, compared to 15 goals in 81 contests during the Mourinho era. In just the Spurs match alone, Rashford managed as many shots on target as he accomplished in his first 14 league matches for Mourinho last year.

Nuggets Beat Knicks 129-92 in NBA

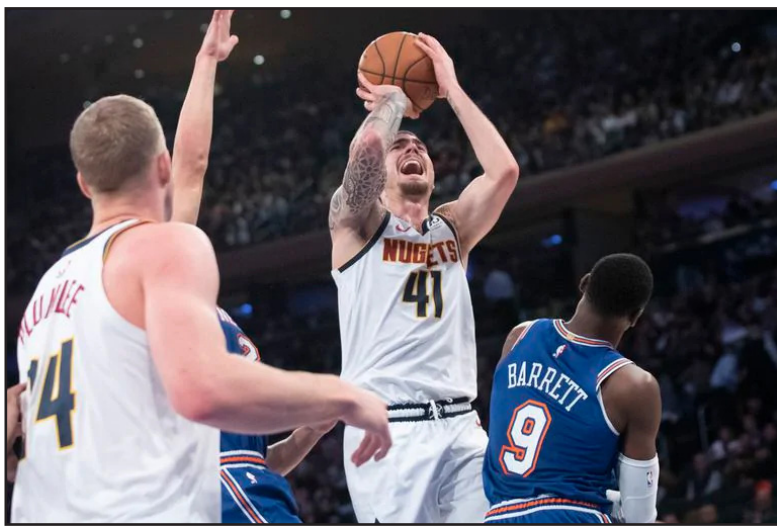
NEW YORK (AP) -- The Denver Nuggets have used a balanced scoring attack to crush the New York Knicks.

Will Barton scored 17 points to help the Nuggets beat the Knicks 129-92 on Thursday night.

Jerami Grant added 16 and Monte Morris had 15. The Nuggets shot 56% from the field, had eight players reach double-figures and snapped a two-game losing streak.

Denver's backups scored 74 points, with five double-digit scorers.

"We know our second unit is huge for us," Nuggets reserve Juancho Hernangomez said. "We know what we can do. Our energy has to be at a high level every time. We don't know



Denver Nuggets forward Juan Hernangomez (41) goes to the basket past New York Knicks forward RJ Barrett (9) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Thursday, Dec. 5, 2019, at Madison Square Garden in New York.

if we're going to make shots or not, we just have to defend, have fun and play with energy. That's our identity and that's what we're trying to do every single night."

"I thought the key to tonight was that we went to our bench," Nuggets coach Mike Malone added. "I thought that group as great. Everyone contributed. Everyone stepped up. So, it's a

good way to start off the road trip."

The Nuggets used a 17-1 run to take a 67-45 halftime lead.

Mitchell Robinson had 17 points and Marcus Morris and Bobby Portis each added 10 for New York. The Knicks have lost eighth straight.

Denver led by 43 points in the fourth quarter.

Knicks coach David Fizdale called the team's effort "sickening" after losing by 44 to Milwaukee on Monday and Thursday's lopsided loss to Denver.

Fizdale was asked if he's worried New York's struggles will be blamed on him.

"I don't care about all of that, I don't even think about that really," Fizdale replied.

Former World Number One Wozniacki to Retire After Australian Open



Caroline Wozniacki won the Australian Open in 2018

LONDON (Dispatches) - Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki has announced she will retire after the Australian Open in January.

The 29-year-old is currently ranked 37th in the world and last competed in the China Open in October.

Wozniacki, who enrolled at Harvard Business School in September, was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in 2018.

However, the Dane says her retirement has "nothing to do with my health and this isn't a goodbye".

In a lengthy post on Instagram, the 2018 Australian Open champion says she plans to focus on her life away from tennis.

Wozniacki's career includes 30 WTA singles titles, reaching world number one in 2010, a WTA Finals victory and competing in three Olympics.

Pele's Last Brazil Jersey Sells for 30,000 Euros in Italy



The last Brazil jersey won by football legend Pele sold at the Bolaffi auction house in Turin

MILAN (AFP) - The jersey worn by Brazilian football legend Pele during his final match for the five-time world champions has sold for 30,000 euros (\$33,000) in an auction in Italy.

The three-time World Cup winner wore the jersey in a friendly against Yugoslavia at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro in July 1971, the last time he played for Brazil.

Pele, 79, regarded as among the greatest footballers of all-time, scored 77 goals for Brazil in 92 appearances.

The shirt was the highlight of objects which went under the hammer at the Bolaffi auction house in Turin on Thursday.

Other sporting memorabilia included the yellow jersey won by Italian cycling star Fausto Coppi on his way to victory in the 1952 Tour de France, which sold for 25,000 euros.

A rare blue Juventus jersey worn by Italian defender Luciano Spinosi in the final of the 1971 UEFA Cup sold for 9,400 euros.

Another shirt worn by Argentina legend Diego Maradona during his time playing for Napoli in the 1989-90 season sold for 7,500 euros.

A bat used by U.S. basketball great Michael Jordan during his brief foray into baseball fetched 425 euros

Germany Confirm Friendlies Against Spain, Italy Before Euro 2020

BERLIN (AFP) - Germany will play friendlies against fellow European powerhouses Spain and Italy next March in the build-up to Euro 2020, the German Football Association (DFB) has confirmed. Joachim Loew's side face Spain in Madrid on March 26 and Italy on March 31 in Nuremberg before the European Championship finals, which start on June 12.

"With Spain and Italy, we will face two exceptional teams in the run-up to the tournament, which will be highly valuable,"



Germany are three-time European champions

said Germany team director Oliver Bierhoff.

Germany have been drawn in

Group F for the finals, which will be played in 12 cities across Europe, alongside holders Por-

tugal and world champions France, with the fourth nation to be decided by a play-off.

Germany play France in Munich on June 16, before hosting Portugal four days later at the Allianz Arena with their final pool game scheduled for June 24, also in Munich.

Spain take on play Sweden, Poland and a fourth team yet to qualify in Group E, while Italy are in Group A alongside Wales, Switzerland and Turkey, who they play in the opening game in Rome.