

# Iran to Host Asian Handball Championship



TEHRAN (Dispatches) - Asian Handball Federation (AHF) on Tuesday announced Iran host Asian Men's Handball tournament in January 2022.

The Islamic Republic of Iran Handball Federation (IRIHF) sent a letter to AHF and announced its readiness to host the 20th Asian Men's Handball Championship officially.

The AHF announced formally Iran as the host of the 20th Asian Men's Handball Championship and the 2023 Swedish-Poland World Championship qualifiers.

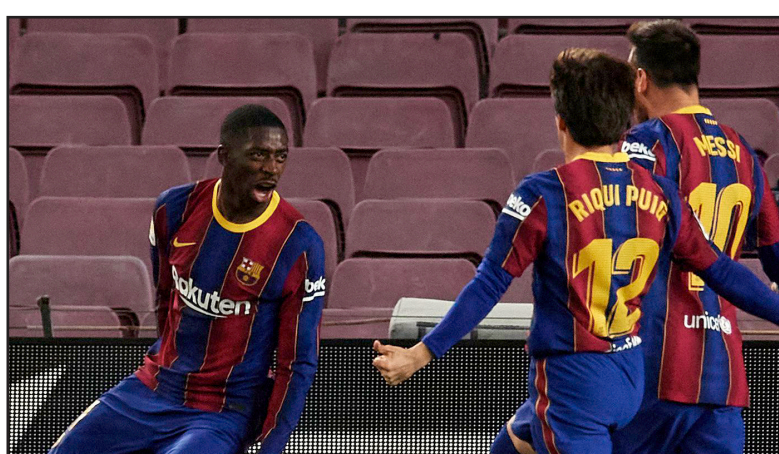
According to the announced schedule, the competition will be held in January 2022.

## Barcelona Go Second in Late Win Over Valladolid

BARCELONA (Dispatches) - Ousmane Dembele scored a dramatic late winner to give Barcelona victory over Real Valladolid and a huge boost in their La Liga title challenge.

Barcelona move up to second, one point behind leaders Atletico Madrid, thanks to a sixth La Liga win in a row.

Barca looked as if they were going to be frustrated but the turning point was Oscar Plano's straight red card for a dangerous foul on Dembele.



Dembele volleyed home in the last minute from Ronald Araujo's flick-on.

Both sides hit the woodwork in the first half - Kenan Kodro's header for Valladolid and Pedri's low drive for Barcelona being tipped on to the post.

Barcelona's title hopes are in their hands now after Atletico lost to Sevilla at the weekend. Barca visit Real Madrid in El Clasico this Saturday and host Atletico next month.

## Irving Scores 40 Points as Nets Beat Knicks



Kyrie Irving's three-pointer in the final minute secured victory for the Brooklyn Nets

NEW YORK (Dispatches) - Kyrie Irving scored 40 points including a final-minute three-pointer to help the Brooklyn Nets fight back to beat the New York Knicks 114-112.

Brooklyn lost key player James Harden after only four minutes with a hamstring problem and trailed by 10 points at half-time.

However, Irving's late three-pointer secured victory for the Nets.

"A lot of guys stepped up, especially our bench. They came in and made a difference," Irving said.

Harden was making his return on

Monday after missing two games with tightness in his right hamstring and appeared to suffer the same problem against the Knicks.

The Nets are top of the Eastern Conference with 35 wins and 16 defeats.

Elsewhere, the Dallas Mavericks extended their winning streak to five matches with a 111-103 victory over the Utah Jazz.

Devin Booker scored a game-high 36 points to help the Phoenix Suns beat the Houston Rockets 133-130, while the Toronto Raptors claimed a 103-101 win over the Washington Wizards.

## Yates Sixth as Roglic Wins Basques Time Trial

LONDON (Dispatches) - Adam Yates has finished sixth in the Itzulia Basque Country's opening time trial, as Primoz Roglic took victory.

Jumbo-Visma's Roglic finished 28 seconds ahead of Ineos Grenadiers' Yates after the 14km stage in Bilbao.

Hugh Carty of EF Education-Nippo was one minute six seconds down, with Yates' British teammate Tao Geoghegan Hart a further two seconds back.

Last year's Tour de France winner Tadej Pogacar of UAE-Team Emirates was also 28 seconds down in fifth.



Pogacar's team-mate Brandon McNulty was second, two seconds behind Roglic.

Last year's Giro d'Italia winner Geoghegan Hart was the first of the main British contenders to take

on the challenging course in glorious sunshine in northern Spain.

But it was in-form Yates - winner of last month's Volta a Catalunya - who more effectively tackled the largely high-speed downhill course into the city, which was bookended by two technical climbs.

As Ineos dominated the race in Catalunya, taking the top three places in the general classification, it was Jumbo-Visma who are showing immense strength here, with Roglic first and the in-form Jonas Vingegaard of Denmark third, with Norway's Tobias Foss fourth.

## North Korea to Skip Tokyo Olympic Due to Virus Concerns



SEOUL (Dispatches) - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) sports ministry said on Tuesday that it will not participate in the Tokyo Olympics this year to protect its athletes amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision was made at a meeting of DPRK's Olympic committee on March 25 including its sports minister Kim Il-guk, the ministry said on its website called

Joseon Sports.

"The committee decided not to join the 32nd Olympics Games to protect athletes from the global health crisis caused by the coronavirus," it said.

The meeting also discussed ways to develop professional sports technologies, earn medals at international competitions and promote public sports activities over the next five years, the ministry said.

## Tokyo Organizers to Cancel Water Polo Test Event



TOKYO (Reuters) - Tokyo Olympic organizers are expected to cancel a water polo test event scheduled for this weekend, according to a report on Tuesday, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt preparations less than four months before the start of the Games.

A cancellation would be another blow for organizers just days after they restarted test events, which had been on hold due to the pandemic, for the first time in more

than a year.

The International Swimming Federation (FINA) has cancelled Olympic qualifiers including one doubling as a test event this month, meaning two of the first three test events would not be held if the water polo event is scrapped.

The water polo test event will be cancelled because overseas officials are unable to come to Japan amid strict COVID-19 countermeasures, public broadcaster NHK reported.

## Andreescu Climbs to Sixth as Barty Holds On to Top Ranking



MIAMI (AFP) - Bianca Andreescu has climbed three places to sixth in the WTA rankings, following her run to the final where she lost to Ashleigh Barty, who remains the world number one.

Andreescu, a 20-year-old Canadian who was forced to retire in the second set in Miami after turning her ankle, is approaching her best ranking since winning the 2019 U.S. Open when she reached fourth.

Barty, who retained her title in Florida, shrugged off criticism of her continued presence at number one on Saturday, saying "I thoroughly deserve my spot at the top of the rankings".

The Australian has benefited from a tweak into the way rankings are calculated which takes into account the disruption caused by last year's pan-

demic shutdown. Barty skipped last year's rescheduled U.S. and French Opens to remain at home.

In spite of Barty's victory, her nearest challenger Naomi Osaka closed the gap by 150 points although the Japanese player remains more than 1,000 points behind.

The best progression of the week came from the Greek Maria Sakkari who reached the semifinals in Florida after knocking out Osaka. The 25-year-old Athenian moves up six places to 19th, her highest ranking yet.

Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, who made it to the last eight in Miami, climbed one step to seventh place with Serena Williams dropping down to eighth and Karolina Pliskova going down three places to ninth.

## German FA Says Loew to Remain Germany Boss at Euro 2020

BERLIN (AFP) - Joachim Loew will remain Germany coach at Euro 2020 despite last week's latest humiliating defeat, the president of the German FA (DFB) said in an interview on Tuesday.

Loew is under pressure after Germany crashed to a 2-1 home loss to North Macedonia in a World Cup qualifier, four months after a 6-0 drubbing by Spain in the Nations League.

The latest defeat was Germany's first loss in World Cup qualifying for 20 years.

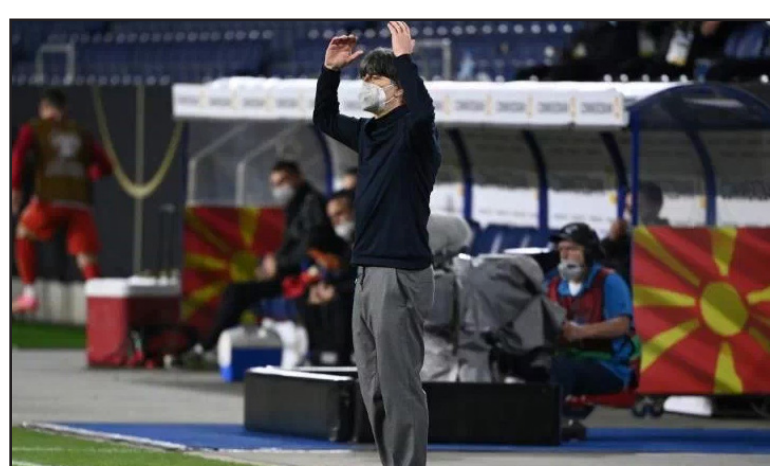
Germany have struggled for consistent form since finishing bottom of their group at the 2018 World

Cup under Loew, when they were defending champions.

The 61-year-old is set to step down after 15 years in charge following the delayed European Championship from June 11-July 11.

"The disappointing game (against North Macedonia) has not changed anything with regards to our plans," DFB president Fritz Keller told daily Bild.

The defeat left Germany third in their World Cup qualifying group, trailing leaders Armenia by three points and behind North Macedonia on goal difference and led to calls for Loew to be replaced before the Euros.



There have been calls to replace Joachim Loew as head coach of Germany since last week's shock home defeat to North Macedonia