

Hassan Yazdani Claims Most Popular Athlete Title in FILA



TEHRAN – Iranian world and Olympics gold medal holder in freestyle wrestling Hassan Yazdani has ranked the most popular athlete in FILA international opinion poll.

'Hasan Yazdani received 27,271 first-place fan votes and

claimed UWW's Olympic Champions Fantasy Wrestling Tournament title,' the United World Wrestling wrote in its official Twitter account.

According to the UWW, under such conditions that due to the Corona pandemic ever since over a year ago the world wrestling federation, UWW, has launched a number of international opinion polls aimed at warming up the world wrestling fans, and a few days ago the results of its most popular Olympics freestyle wrestling athletes were published in UWW Instagram page.

In that reputable international opinion poll in which 16 athletes, including another Iranian wrestler, Rasool Khadem, Georgian athlete Vladimer Khinche-gashvili, American athlete Jordan Baros, Turkish champion Taha Akgul, Azerbaijan Republic's champ Toghrul Asgarov, American freestyle athlete Kyle Frederick Snyder, American athlete John William Smith, Russian athlete John Smith and some other world top wrestlers participated Iran's athlete Hossein Yazdani ranked first from the world nations' viewpoint, according to UWW.

Hamilton Racially Abused on Social Media Over British GP Win



LONDON (AFP) - Lewis Hamilton was the victim of "multiple instances of racist abuse on social media" during and after his controversial win in the British Grand Prix, according to a joint statement by Formula One, the FIA and his Mercedes team.

The seven-time world champion was involved early on in an incident that saw championship leader Max Verstappen plough his Red Bull into a wall and out of the race.

Hamilton was hit by a 10 second penalty but went on to win the race and close the gap in the title race to just eight points.

"During, and after, British Grand Prix, Lewis Hamilton was subjected to multiple instances of racist abuse on social media following an in-race collision," they said in a joint statement condemning the behavior "in the strongest possible terms".

"These people have no place in our sport and we urge that those responsible should be held accountable for their ac-

tions. "Formula 1, the FIA, the drivers and the teams are working to build a more diverse and inclusive sport, and such unacceptable instances of online abuse must be highlighted and eliminated."

Verstappen, who was taken to hospital for checks after the race, later accused Hamilton of "disrespectful and unsportsmanlike behavior".

A public supporter of the Black Lives Matter movement, Hamilton gave his support a week ago to the England footballers Bukayo Saka, Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho who were also abused after they missed penalties in the Euro 2020 final.

"I hope this opens a conversation around acceptance," he wrote on Instagram at the time.

"We must work towards a society that doesn't require Black players to prove their value or place in society only through victory."

Gauff Positive for COVID, Out of Olympics

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - American tennis star Coco Gauff will not compete at the Tokyo Olympics after testing positive for COVID-19, the American tennis star tweeted.

Gauff, 17, was to play in her first Olympic games, becoming the youngest Olympic tennis player since 2000. With Serena Williams opting not to play, she was arguably the biggest name in the U.S. talent pool for the tournament.

Team USA consists of 15th-ranked Jennifer Brady, Jessica Pegula and 35th-ranked Alison Riske in singles. Pegula, currently ranked 27th in the world,



is the daughter of Buffalo Bills owners Terry and Kim Pegula. Nicole Melichar and Bethanie Mattek-Sands are the discretionary, doubles-only selections.

There are a maximum of four

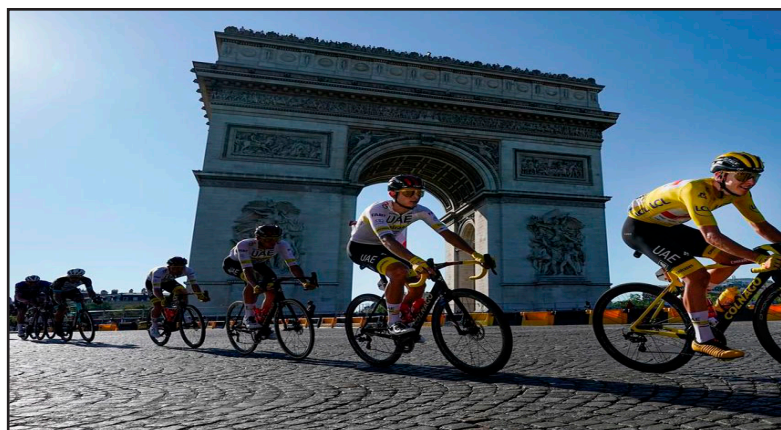
spots for each country based on the world rankings after the French Open. Williams and Sofia Kenin qualified, but declined spots. Venus Williams, the most decorated Olympic tennis player

in history, did not qualify in singles.

Athletes and media members are arriving in Tokyo for the rescheduled Olympics, which are set to begin Friday. There are safety protocols in place to help slow and/or stop the spread of COVID-19 in a country that is largely unvaccinated.

Cases of COVID-19 in Tokyo were up 55 percent on Friday from one week prior. It was the 27th consecutive day of week-over-week increases as the Delta variant takes hold in places around the world. They were at a six-month high earlier in the week.

Pogacar Wins 2nd Straight Tour de France Title



Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar, wearing the overall leader's yellow jersey, passes the Arc de Triomphe during the twenty-first and last stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 108.4 kilometers (67.4 miles) with start in Chatou and finish on the Champs Elysees in Paris, France, Sunday, July 18, 2021.

PARIS (Dispatches) - Tadej Pogacar took the yellow jersey to Paris to win his second straight Tour de France after a grueling three-week odyssey that at times he made look like a recreational ride.

Pogacar's repeat success at cycling's biggest event was a tale of

total dominance, prompting one question: At age 22, how many more Tours can the Slovenian win?

Pogacar won his first title last September when he became the Tour's youngest champion in 116 years. He is now the youngest double winner of the race.

In sharp contrast to last year — when as a rookie he had to wait until the penultimate stage to seize the overall lead — Pogacar has been untouchable in this race.

His team was better equipped and better prepared, and Pogacar assumed the favorite's mantle with the ease of a seasoned veteran. His supremacy was such that, in addition to his overall win, he also claimed the King of the Mountains and best young rider jerseys.

The UAE Team Emirates leader successfully defended his huge lead of 5 minutes, 20 seconds over second-place Jonas Vingegaard in the mostly ceremonial final stage to the Champs-Elysees on Sunday. Richard Carapaz finished third overall, 7:03 off the pace.

Vingegaard and Carapaz were the only riders to finish within 10 minutes of the two-time champion.

"I did my best, maximum, like I

always do, and that was enough," Pogacar said.

Wout van Aert won the 21st stage in a mass sprint. That prevented Mark Cavendish from beating Belgian great Eddy Merckx's record of 34 stage wins which the British sprinter equaled earlier in the race.

The mostly flat 108-kilometer (67-mile) leg began in Chatou just outside Paris and concluded with eight laps up and down the famed avenue.

Pogacar and his teammates rode together at the front of the pack as they reached the Champs-Elysees, and the Slovenia champion raised his fist in the air in celebration.

Pogacar's gesture acted as a signal for those fighting for a prestigious stage win as the first accelerations took place. But the attackers' efforts did not pay off and the stage ended in a mass sprint.

Benfica to Face Spartak Moscow in Champions League Qualifying

LISBON (Dispatches) - Two-time former European champions Benfica were paired with Spartak Moscow in the third qualifying round for this year's Champions League, in the draw in Nyon, Switzerland on Monday.

Scottish champions Rangers will face Malmo or HJK Helsinki while their Glasgow rivals Celtic will play PSV Eindhoven or Galatasaray if they beat Midtjylland in the second quali-



fying round.

In other fixtures Genk meet Shakhtar Donetsk while 2004 runners-up Monaco take on either Rapid Vienna or Sparta Prague.

Sides that win at the third qualifying round stage progress to the play-off round, the draw for which takes place on August 2.

Losing sides at the third qualifying round stage drop into the Europa League play-off round.

U.S. Rally to Beat Spain in Final Tune-Up Before Olympics



U.S. Damian Lillard, left, shoots against Spain's Pau Gasol during a pre-Olympic exhibition game in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS (Dispatches) - U.S. got back on track as they came from behind to beat reigning world champion Spain 83-76, in their final exhibition game before heading to Tokyo for the Olympic men's basketball tournament.

Damian Lillard scored a team-high 19 points and Kevin Durant finished with 14 for the U.S., who lost their first two exhibition games to Nigeria and Australia before beating Argentina on Tuesday.

The Americans also had a game against Australia cancelled on Friday after Washington Wizards' Bradley Beal was ruled out of the Olympics due to health and safety protocols connected to the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Jerami Grant of the Detroit Pistons was also put in health and safety protocols and Kevin Love was lost to an injury.

Just when it appeared the U.S. might be running out of time to develop chemistry for a run at an Olympic medal, the team reversed its fortunes by rallying to beat Spain behind a balanced scoring attack.

Keldon Johnson shot seven-of-

nine from the field and had 15 points and Zach LaVine chipped in 13 in the victory at the Arena in Las Vegas.

Minnesota Timberwolves guard Ricky Rubio scored a game-high 23 points for Spain.

The U.S. got off to a quick start, going on a 7-0 run in the first few minutes of the game.

But Spain roared back with a run of their own to take an 18-14 lead after the opening quarter. Spain kept the pressure on and led 38-36 at the half.

Johnson scored 10 of his points in the third, with Lillard draining a three-pointer with just over three minutes left to give them their first lead since the opening moments of the game -- and they would go on to extend that to double digits.

The U.S. picked up where they left off at the start of the fourth, as LaVine had a huge quarter, scoring all 13 of his points, including a couple of highlight-reel dunks.

The U.S. will travel to Tokyo on Monday and have a week to get ready for their first game of the men's tournament against France, set for next Sunday.