

Iran Beat Thailand, Advance to Futsal Tournament Final



TEHRAN – Iran's futsal team has defeated Thailand 5-1 to book its place at the NSDF Futsal Championship 2023 final.

Salar Aghapour (two goals), Saeid Ahmad Abbasi (two goals) and Mehdi Karimi were on target for Team Melli.

Iran had previously defeated Saudi Arabia 11-0 and Egypt 3-1 in the competition.

Iran will play Japan and Saudi Arabia winner in the final match, slated for Tuesday.

The competition is being held in Pattaya city from March 1 to 7.

Team Melli has participated at the Thailand's tournament as part of preparation for the 2024 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Clippers Beat Grizzlies 135-129

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It had been a rough week for the Los Angeles Clippers. A five-game losing streak. The team plane got struck by lightning. They gave up 51 points in the third quarter against Memphis.

Paul George scored 42 points and led a fourth-quarter comeback to help the Clippers beat the Grizzlies 135-129 on Sunday night.

Kawhi Leonard added 34 points and 10 rebounds to give the Clippers their first win since the All-Star break.

After getting thrashed in the third when the Grizzlies scored 51 points, the Clippers responded in the fourth.

George and Leonard scored every point in a 17-0 spurt in which the Clippers erased a 10-point deficit and took a 124-121 lead.

George had the first eight

points and Leonard finished it off with the last nine, hitting a 3-pointer and dunking.

Desmond Bane scored 30 points, Tyus Jones added 25 and Jaren Jackson Jr. had 24 points for the Grizzlies, who were without star Ja Morant. He's away from the team indefinitely while the NBA investigates his social media post in which the All-Star guard appears to be holding a gun.

Trailing 84-79, the Grizzlies caught fire over the final minutes of the third. Jones scored 20 points in the period and drew awe from the crowd as he hit three 3-pointers and canned jumper after jumper.

Jones had one of his 12 assists on a pass to Santi Aldama, who scored and then dunked on the next possession. Bane closed the period with back-to-back 3s that



Los Angeles Clippers forward Paul George, left, shoots as Memphis Grizzlies guard Desmond Bane, second from left, defends while guard Russell Westbrook, second from right, and guard Luke Kennard watch during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, March 5, 2023, in Los Angeles.

sent the Grizzlies into the fourth leading 112-97.

The Grizzlies opened their run with 12 straight points, with Jones

scoring six points and Jackson hitting a 3-pointer that pulled them into an 84-all tie. They outscored the Clippers 51-30 in the third.

Raphinha Header Gives 10-Man Barcelona Win Over Valencia



Barcelona's Dutch midfielder Frenkie de Jong kicks the ball during the Spanish League football match between FC Barcelona and Valencia CF at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on March 5, 2023.

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Brazilian winger Raphinha's first-half header was enough to give La Liga leaders Barcelona a narrow win over struggling Valencia on Sunday despite being

reduced to 10 men for the last half hour.

Barca, recovering from a disappointing loss last weekend at lowly Almeria, earned three hard-fought points even though

they looked the weaker side for long stretches at Camp Nou.

They top LaLiga on 62 points, 10 clear of second-placed Real Madrid who play at Betis later on Sunday. Valencia, who have won only one of their last 10 league matches, are second to last on 23 points.

The locals started strongly, led by Raphinha, who had a couple of early chances before nodding a header over the goalkeeper after a brilliant long pass by midfielder Sergio Busquets in the 15th minute.

Raphinha and Ansu Fati had opportunities to extend Barca's lead but Valencia recovered from the early blow to dominate proceedings and could have levelled the game with Thierry Correia, Samuel Lino and Ilaix Moriba all missing clear chances.

Valencia came back from the

half-time break in control but a handball by Hugo Guillamon inside the box gave Barcelona a golden opportunity to extend their lead in the 55th minute. It was wasted when Ferran Torres shot the penalty wide of the goal.

Five minutes later, however, they lost defender Ronald Araujo to a straight red card for a last-man foul on Hugo Duro and Barcelona struggled to hold their lead in the last 30 minutes.

Fran Perez, Jesus Vazquez and Yunus Musah had clear chances to equalise and Valencia players protested in vain over what they thought was a clear foul by Franck Kessie on Perez inside the penalty area in the 85th minute.

"We have suffered too much today," Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez told Movistar Plus.

"We have defended well (after the red card) but we should have scored the second before that.

Roma Strike From Distance to Beat Juventus

ROME (Reuters) - A long-range strike by defender Gianluca Mancini earned AS Roma a 1-0 home win over Juventus in Serie A on Sunday, ending the visitors' unbeaten run of seven games in all competitions.

Roma, who became the first Serie A side to be beaten by lowly Cremonese on Tuesday, have now won five home games in a row without conceding a goal.

They moved back into fourth in the standings on 47 points, one point behind third-placed Lazio and level with AC Milan in fifth, in their bid to secure a first top-four finish in five years.



Juventus' French midfielder Paul Pogba (top right) goes for a header during the Italian Serie A football match between AS Roma and Juventus on March 5, 2023 at the Olympic stadium in Rome.

Juventus had their first attempt on target in the fourth

minute when forward Dusan Vlahovic latched on to Angel

Lethal Liverpool Smash Man United for Seven in Record Win



Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold controls the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Liverpool and Manchester United at Anfield in Liverpool, England, on March 5, 2023.

LIVERPOOL (Reuters) - Liverpool brought Manchester United's bandwagon to a shuddering halt as Cody Gakpo, Darwin Nunez and Mohamed Salah all scored twice in a record 7-0 hammering of their arch-rivals to boost their Premier League top-four hopes at Anfield on Sunday.

A week after a resurgent United claimed their first trophy since 2017 by winning the League Cup and amid talk of a late title push they were blown away either side of halftime as Liverpool recorded their biggest ever victory in the fixture.

Third-placed United had looked marginally the better side for 43 minutes but it turned into an Anfield horror show for Erik ten Hag's side as they suffered the club's worst defeat since a 7-0 loss to Wolverhampton Wanderers in 1931.

Gakpo's superb finish from Liverpool's first attempt on target gave the hosts the halftime lead.

Within five minutes of the restart it was over as a contest with Nunez's header making it 2-0 after some comical defending allowed Harvey Elliott to cross and a lightning counter-attack led by Salah ended with Gakpo finishing in style for 3-0.

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Roberto Firmino then came off the bench to send Jurgen Klopp's side into seventh heaven with an angled shot after more good work by Egyptian Salah, although by that stage most of United's army of followers had headed for the exits.

It was the first time since 1999 that three players had scored two goals for the same club in the Premier League - the last time being when Andy Cole, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Dwight Yorke all scored twice for United against Nottingham Forest.

Liverpool had thrashed United 4-0 at Anfield last April but considering the reversal of fortunes for the two clubs since, with United on the rise and Liverpool off the pace, this result was a major surprise.

Djokovic Withdraws From Indian Wells Amid U.S. Visa Row



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Netherland's Tallon Griekspoor (not in photograph) during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on March 1, 2023.

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Novak Djokovic has formally withdrawn from the draw for the Indian Wells tournament, organizers said in an indication that the world number one's application for a COVID-19 vaccine waiver to enter the U.S. might have failed.

The Serbian, who is one of the most high-profile athletes unvaccinated against the virus, applied to the U.S. government last month for special permission to play at ATP Masters events at Indian Wells and Miami.

The U.S. currently bars unvaccinated foreigners from entry into the

country, a policy that is expected to be lifted when the government ends its COVID-19 emergency declarations on May 11.

Djokovic has not competed at the back-to-back ATP Masters events in Indian Wells and Miami, two of the biggest tournaments on the ATP calendar and known as the "Sunshine Double", since 2019.

No one from Djokovic's team was immediately available to comment on the withdrawal.

Last Friday, Florida Senators Rick Scott and Marco Rubio wrote a letter to US President Joe Biden urging him to grant the waiver request.