

Iran Coach Mahdavia Names Squad for AFC U23 Asian Cup



TEHRAN – Iran's head coach Mehdi Mahdavia has named the 24-man squad ahead of the upcoming AFC U23 Asian Cup. The players will start a four-day training camp in Tehran today before heading to Iraq to take on the Asian rival in a couple of friendlies on May 24 and 27. Iran will then leave Iraq for Uzbekistan to get its campaign underway at the U23 Asian Cup, starting June 1 in the cities of Tashkent and Qarshi.

Iranian skipper Yassin Salmani bagged a sensational hat-trick to lead his side to a 3-2 victory over Tajikistan as Iran finished atop the qualification group last November for a place in the final showdown. Mahdavia's men have been pitted against the host, Qatar, and Turkmenistan in Group A of the 16-team tournament.

Iran and Qatar will open the competition at Tashkent's Pakhtakor Stadium.

Iran will then square off against Turkmenistan on June 4, before going head-to-head with Uzbekistan – winner of the competition in 2018 – in a repeat of a group stage 1-1 draw two years.

Despite being among the Asian powerhouses at the senior level, Iran has only managed to progress beyond the group phase once in its previous three campaigns – a quarterfinal finish in Qatar in 2016 which saw Iran fail to qualify for the Rio Olympics.

Highly admired as one of the greatest in recent history of Iranian football, Mahdavia will be looking to bring an end to the country's wait for an Olympic berth by steering his side into the Paris 2024 Games.

Following his retirement in 2013, ex-Iranian international fullback dedicated his career to youth-level football, working as a coach with

German side Hamburg, where he is considered a club legend, while founding the KIA Football Academy in Iran in 2015.

The following is Iran's 24-man squad for the AFC U23 Asian Cup: Alireza Rezaei, Amir-Ali Sadeqi, Sina Sa'edifar (Esteghlal); Yassin Salmani, Arya Yousefi (Sepahan); Alireza Bavieh, Muhammad-Amin Hazbavi (Foolad Khuzestan), Erfan Shahriari, Saman Fallah (Paykan); Milad Kor, Muhammad-Hussein Eslami, Muhammad Khodabandelou (Zob Ahan); Payam Parsa, Ahmad Shariatzadeh, Muhammad-Hossein Zavvari (San'at Naft Abadan); Muhammad Qorbani (Nassaji Mazandaran); Muhammad-Mehdi Ahmadi, Mehdi Hashem-Nejad (Naft Masjed Soleyman); Amir Ja'fari (Shahr Khodro); Yadegar Rostami (Pogoń Szczecin); Balal Arazi, Ali Pilaram (Pars Jonoubi Jam); Alireza Khodaei (Saipa); Ali-Javad Kalmarzi (Dutch league).

Liverpool Beat Southampton to Take Title Race to Final Day



Liverpool's Takumi Minamino (right) challenges for the ball with Southampton's Nathan Redmond during the English Premier League soccer match between Southampton and Liverpool at St. Mary's Stadium in Southampton, England, May 17, 2022.

SOUTHAMPTON (Reuters) - Joel Matip's stooping header gave Liverpool a 2-1 win at Southampton on Tuesday to keep the Premier League title race alive until the final day of the season.

The result leaves Liverpool a point behind leaders Manchester City ahead of Sunday's final round of games when City are at home to Aston Villa and Liverpool host Wolverhampton Wanderers at Anfield.

City have 90 points with Liverpool on 89, meaning that victory for Pep Guardiola's side against Villa, managed by former Reds captain Steven Gerrard, would secure their fourth league title in five seasons.

Juergen Klopp changed nine of the team who beat Chelsea on penalties in the FA Cup final on Saturday with Virgil van Dijk and Mohamed Salah injured but several others rested.

Klopp's choice was looking questionable when Southampton took a 13th-minute lead through a wonderful Nathan Redmond strike after the winger had cut in from the left flank.

Roberto Firmino, who led the line

in the absence of Sadio Mane, had a header ruled out for offside as the visitors sought a quick way back into the game.

Liverpool, who face Real Madrid in the Champions League final on May 28, drew level in the 27th minute with Takumi Minamino, who spent a loan spell with Southampton last season, firing a fierce shot in at the near post.

Defender Joe Gomez, whose Liverpool career has been hampered by injuries, had to be substituted at the interval after suffering what appeared to be an ankle injury just before the break.

The goal had taken the wind out of Southampton's sails and it was no surprise when Liverpool secured the three points after Kostas Tsimikas's corner was headed in by Matip in the 67th minute.

It was a weak effort by Southampton and Liverpool had little trouble seeing out the rest of the game and setting up what could be a tense final day.

James Milner, the 36-year-old utility player who was given a rare start, praised the back-up players for the way they took on the game.

Gasquet Spoils Medvedev's Return to Action in Geneva

GENEVA (Reuters) - World number two Daniil Medvedev fell to a 6-2 7-6(5) defeat by Frenchman Richard Gasquet at the Geneva Open on his return to the ATP tour, having spent six weeks recovering from a hernia operation.

Russia's Medvedev, the U.S. Open champion had been out of action after undergoing surgery following the Miami Open quarterfinals.

The 26-year-old looked rusty in his first match back and Gasquet was in inspired form as he maintained constant pressure to outmaneuver the Russian in the opening set before taking a 3-1 lead in the second.



Daniil Medvedev of Russia returns a ball to Richard Gasquet of France during their second round match, at the ATP 250 Geneva Open tournament in Geneva, Switzerland, May 17, 2022.

Medvedev found his rhythm with his powerful forehand and serve, winning the

next three games on the bounce as he began to show signs of his pre-surgery form and looked to push for the decider but Gasquet prevailed 7-5 in the tie-break.

The result earned the 35-year-old Gasquet his first win over a top-two player since 2005 and a place in the quarter-finals, where he will meet either Marco Cecchinato of Italy or Kamil Majchrzak of Poland.

Medvedev, who reached the quarterfinals of the French Open for the first time last year, will head into this year's tournament woefully short of match practice when the Grand Slam begins on Sunday.

5 German Soccer Fans Detained in Spain Following Clashes



SEVILLE, Spain (AP) — Five German soccer fans have been detained following clashes ahead of the Europa League final between Eintracht Frankfurt and Rangers, Spanish authorities said Wednesday.

Spanish police said the Frankfurt fans were taken into custody after fighting with Scottish supporters and officers at about midnight in the center of the city.

Police said the Frankfurt supporters threw bricks and tables from bars, and fired flares at Rangers fans and at police officers.

There were no reports of significant injuries.

More than 5,000 security personnel are on alert in the southern Spanish city as authorities expected up to 150,000 fans to arrive for Wednesday's match in Europe's second-tier club competition. Most were without tickets for the final.

Frankfurt fans had already caused problems in the city ahead of the team's game against Seville club Real Betis in the round of 16.

Butler Leads Heat to Comeback Win Over Celtics

WASHINGTON (Sky Sports) - Jimmy Butler's 41-point haul powered the Miami Heat to a 118-107 comeback win over the Boston Celtics in the Eastern Conference finals opener.

The Heat trailed by eight points at half-time, but roared into a 76-64 lead, scoring 22 points for the concession of just two in a period of third-quarter dominance.

Butler scored 17 of his points in the third quarter.

"MVP Jimmy did his thing. He put us on his back," Heat guard Tyler Herro said.

The second contest in the seven-game series is on Thursday in Miami. The Golden State Warriors and the Dallas Mavericks



Butler won the first skirmish in his duel with Boston's Jayson Tatum

contest their Western Conference finals opener on Wednesday, with the winners of

the respective series meeting in June's finals.

The 40-point effort was But-

ler's fifth in the postseason during his three-season stint with the Heat. The only player with more is franchise icon Dwyane Wade with seven.

"I know what I'm capable of, I don't do this to score 40 points," Butler said

"I play the way I play to win by all means necessary and it just so happened that I score 40. If I score 40 and lose, I'll be pretty [ticked] off."

Boston's star Jayson Tatum had a quieter night. He picked up 29 points, eight rebounds, six assists and four steals but also gave up seven turnovers.

"I have to be better in those situations. I've got to take care of the ball better," he

Girmay Takes Giro d'Italia Stage



Biniam Girmay

JESI, Italy (AP) — It's been a season of firsts for Biniam Girmay, and the Eritrean rider added a stage victory in the Giro d'Italia in his first Grand Tour to raise the profile of African cycling.

The 22-year-old Girmay outsprinted none other than Mathieu van der Poel — one of the top riders in the sport — to win the 10th stage.

"I realize I'm making history but it's thanks to my team and my family," Girmay said. "I'm really grateful to them."

Girmay was then taken to a local hospital after getting injured when he popped a champagne cork into his eye during the podium celebration.

Spanish rider Juan Pedro López of the Trek-Segafredo team maintained his 12-second lead over João Almeida in the overall standings as the three-week race approached the half-way stage. Romain Bardet is 14 seconds back.

In March, Girmay became the first rider from a sub-Saharan country to win a single-day classic when he triumphed in the Gent-Wevelgem race.

The first half of the 122-mile leg

from Pescara to Jesi was mainly flat along the Adriatic coast before three fourth-category climbs later in the day.

Several riders attacked without success on the final climb to Monsano and the ensuing descent.

Girmay nearly missed a turn on the descent but was able to recover in time to rejoin the leaders for the finale.

Girmay started his sprint early and Van der Poel pulled even with him at one point. Then Girmay stepped up the pace and Van der Poel — realizing he had no answer — flashed a thumbs up toward Girmay before the pair crossed the line. The Dutchman was also the first rider to give Girmay a congratulatory hug.

Girmay, who rides for the Intermarché-Wanty-Gobert Matériaux team, completed the stage in slightly more than 4 1/2 hours. Van der Poel and Vincenzo Albanese crossed second and third, respectively, both with the same time as Girmay.

Stage 11 on Wednesday is an entirely flat 126-mile leg from Santarcangelo Di Romagna to Reggio Emilia that is linked to the production of parmesan cheese in the area.