

Iran Weightlifter Runner-Up in Turkish Tournament



TEHRAN - A young Iranian weightlifter Emad Bagheri has finished runner-up in Naim Süleymanoğlu Tournament in Turkey.

Bagheri won the silver medal in the 109-kilogram category in the event, said the Iranian sports ministry's local branch in the western province of Kermanshah on Wednesday.

Bagheri lifted 163 kg in snatch, 185 kg in clean and jerk and 348 kg in total to finish second in all three categories, said the department.

Masoud Chatrayi, the other Iranian weightlifter participating in the prestigious tournament, finished fourth in the 96-kilogram category with a total lift of 320 kilos, said the department.

Late Japan Comeback Sends Germany to Shock Defeat



DOHA (BBC) - A stunning late comeback from Japan saw four-time winners Germany fall to a shock defeat in their opening World Cup game in Qatar.

Germany dominated a frenetic match for large spells but failed to capitalize on their pressure - before Japan caused the Khalifa International Stadium to erupt into a mix of celebration and surprise.

Substitute Takuma Asano squeezed in a thumping strike from a tight angle to make it 2-1 to Japan and ran over to the photographers in the corner of the stadium in sheer delight.

There was a collective pause in the arena as the ball rolled down from the roof of the net before supporters realized it had gone in.

Manchester City's Ilkay Gundogan had given Germany the lead from the penalty spot in the first half, before Japan substitute Ritsu Doan equalized in the 75th minute.

The equalizer came after a string of stunning saves at each end - Japan's Shuichi Gonda pulling off a double stop to deny Serge Gnabry and Jonas Hofmann, before Germany's Manuel Neuer got his fingertips to Junya Ito's effort.

Germany, who finished bottom of their group in Russia in 2018, had missed several chances to extend their lead when the score was 1-0.

They face stiff opposition in Group E with 2010 winners Spain to come on Sunday, then a final group game against Costa Rica.

Morocco Hold Croatia 0-0 at World Cup

AL KHOR, Qatar (AP) — Morocco held 2018 finalist Croatia to a 0-0 draw at the World Cup on Wednesday in another strong performance by a team from an Arab country.

Morocco's promising performance came 24 hours after Saudi Arabia sparked the first World Cup in the Middle East into life by beating Lionel Messi's Argentina in one of the biggest upsets in the tournament's history.

Tunisia followed that up with a scoreless draw against European Championship semifinalist Denmark.

Morocco managed to stifle Croatia captain Luka Modric, who won the best player award at the last World Cup when he led his country to the final before losing to



Croatia's Marcelo Brozovic, left, Morocco's Selim Amallah, Croatia's Dejan Lovren, vie for the ball during the World Cup group F soccer match between Morocco and Croatia at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor, Qatar, Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2022.

France.

Modric was announced as player of the match, a decision that was greeted by boos from Morocco fans

who chanted and whirled scarves as they jumped up and down in the final minutes.

Paris Saint-Germain star Achraf

Hakimi had the best chance for Morocco with a thumping second-half shot punched away with both fists by goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic.

The 37-year-old Modric is playing in his fourth and final World Cup, where he's looking to add a Croatia title to his trophy-laden career with Real Madrid.

Modric had one of the best chances of the game when he blasted a shot just over the crossbar in first-half stoppage time. Croatia also went close when Dejan Lovren got a shot off at a corner and Sofyan Amrabat cleared off the line for Morocco.

In a tough Group F, Morocco faces No. 2-ranked Belgium next. Croatia plays Canada.

Ronaldo Seeks New Club After Man Utd Exit



Cristiano Ronaldo

LONODN (AFP) - Cristiano Ronaldo is searching for a new team after a tumultuous few hours at Manchester United, during which they announced the superstar forward was leaving and the club could be sold.

The veteran Portugal forward

set the stage for his Old Trafford exit last week with an outspoken interview on TalkTV, in which he said he felt "betrayed" by the club and had no respect for new manager Erik ten Hag.

There was clearly no way back for Ronaldo and United issued a

statement on Tuesday confirming they were parting ways with one of the greatest players in their history by "mutual agreement, with immediate effect".

Ronaldo, currently at the World Cup in Qatar, issued a statement of his own, declaring his love for the club and saying it "feels like the right time" to seek a new challenge.

As well as lashing out against United and Ten Hag, the 37-year-old was scathing about the club's unpopular U.S. owners in his interview with Piers Morgan.

Ronaldo said the Glazer family, who loaded the club with huge debts when they bought it in 2005, cared more about the money-making potential of United than results.

Hours after the statement confirming Ronaldo was exiting the

club, United issued another bulletin saying the Americans were considering selling up.

Former Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand, who played alongside Ronaldo at United, said both parties had got what they wanted.

The problem for Ronaldo is that leading English and European clubs opted against moving for him in the summer transfer window despite his desire to leave Old Trafford.

They will likely be even more wary now, having witnessed his erratic behaviour.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who recently scored his 700th club goal, is a fading force yet still commanded a huge reported weekly pay packet at United of around £500,000 (\$595,000).

Suns Trounce Lakers 115-105

PHOENIX (AP) — Mikal Bridges and Devin Booker each scored 25 points to lead the Phoenix Suns to a 115-105 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

The Suns, playing without point guard Chris Paul for the seventh straight game, have beaten the Lakers five straight times in regular season play — eight counting the last three games of their 2020-21 playoff series. Anthony Davis had 37 points, 21 rebounds and five blocked shots for the Lakers, playing without LeBron James (left adductor strain) for the fifth straight game. They had won their previous three games without him.

Things got chippy in the fourth quarter. With 3:55 left in the game, the Lakers' Patrick Bever-

ley was ejected for shoving Phoenix's Deandre Ayton following a foul called on Booker against Austin Reaves that was assessed a flagrant-1 after review. Booker later fouled out.

Davis was 15 of 16 from the free-throw line, where Los Angeles held a big advantage (29-3) in points. But Phoenix hit 16 3-point attempts, five by Bridges. The Lakers were just 4 of 22 from behind the arc.

Davis was down after a collision with Booker in the second quarter, but eventually got up during a timeout and shot free throws.

"I guess I hit my funny bone and just lost feeling in my arm," Davis said. "It is still a little numb right now."

Ayton had 14 points and 15 re-



Phoenix Suns' Devin Booker shoots a three pointer against Los Angeles Lakers' Austin Reaves (15) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Phoenix, Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2022.

bounds for Phoenix (11-6), which won consecutive games for the first time since a five-game win-

ning streak ended Nov. 4. Reserve Duane Washington Jr. scored 15 for the Suns.

Giroud Equals Record as Holders France Beat Australia 4-1



Olivier Giroud (2ndL) celebrates with his France teammates after scoring in Tuesday's 4-1 win over Australia for the World Cup holders.

DOHA (AFP) - Olivier Giroud joined Thierry Henry as France's all-time leading goalscorer with a brace as holders France recovered to beat Australia 4-1 and get their defense of the World Cup off to a winning start Tuesday.

Australia took a shock lead at Al Janoub Stadium with the game just nine minutes old when Craig Goodwin scored.

France, whose build-up to the tournament was marred by injuries, saw left-back Lucas Hernandez come off hurt in the move that led to that goal.

However, they recovered to equalize through Adrien Rabiot before Giroud put them ahead with an easy finish in the 32nd minute for his 50th international goal.

Kylian Mbappe got his name on the scoresheet in the second half and Giroud sealed the win to equal Henry's record tally of 51 goals for France.

The win leaves them top of Group D after rivals Denmark and Tunisia drew 0-0 in Doha earlier.

At the age of 36, veteran AC Milan striker Giroud, who has 115 caps, is the oldest player to score for France at a World Cup.

Yet he almost certainly would not have

been playing here had Karim Benzema been fit.

Instead, the withdrawal of the Ballon d'Or winner with a thigh injury on the eve of the tournament has played into the hands of Giroud, who was a key player for coach Didier Deschamps in France's triumphant 2018 World Cup campaign but didn't score in Russia.

It is not just Benzema who is missing for Les Bleus, with Paul Pogba and N'Golo Kante — their starting midfield duo four years ago — also out of the tournament.

Centre-back Raphael Varane was not risked having not played since suffering a leg injury playing for Manchester United a month ago.

That meant Dayot Upamecano and Ibrahima Konate — with nine caps between them — played together in central defence while Rabiot joined Aurelien Tchouameni in midfield.

Australia stunned the world champions by scoring an early opener.

Mathew Leckie controlled the ball on the right and escaped Lucas Hernandez before delivering a low ball across the face of goal for Goodwin to finish into the roof of the net.

Guardiola Extends Man City Contract Until 2025

MANCHESTER (AFP) - Pep Guardiola has signed a new contract with Manchester City that will keep him at the Premier League club until 2025.

The Spanish manager's current deal was set to expire at the end of the season, but he has committed to a further two years at the Etihad Stadium.

Guardiola joined City in 2016 and has overseen the most successful period in club history, winning four league titles and nine major trophies in total. But he has so far failed to win the Champions League with City.

The extension will take his time with the reigning Premier League champion to nine years, which far exceeds any of his previous coaching jobs.

Guardiola spent four seasons at Barcelona and three with Bayern Munich.

Guardiola has taken charge of 374 games at City, which is second only to Les Mc-



Pep Guardiola's Manchester City won the Premier League by one point last season

Dowall (587) on the list of the club's post-war managers.