

# Iranian Para Weightlifters Scoop Gold Medals in 12th Dubai 2022 World Cup



DUBAI – The Iranian weightlifters have claimed gold medals in Fazza 12th at the 12th Dubai 2022 Para Powerlifting World Cup on Friday.

Mohsen Bakhtiar of Iran won a gold medal at the event.

He lifted 184kg weight in its first set. After lifting 187kg weight in the second set, he could not lift the 188 kg weight.

Due to El Salvadorian rival failure, Bakhtiar could lift 187 kg weight in the 4th set and stood on the first position.

Bakhtiar defeated a powerlifter from El Salvador in the Up to 59kg class to win the gold medal.

He lifted 187kg. Amir Jafari also claimed a gold medal at the event on Friday.

Jafari, who had won a silver medal in the 2020 Paralympic Games, claimed a gold medal in the Men's Up to 65kg weight category by lifting 198kg.

The silver and bronze medals went to Algerian and Chilean powerlifters,

respectively.

Iran's Rouhollah Rostami in the Men's Up to 80 kg in the competition.

Around 200 powerlifters from 40 countries are competing in the final Dubai Para Powerlifting World Cup of the season over a four-day competition.

Moreover, the event, which runs until Sunday, provides vital world ranking points in the qualification pathway for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

On Day 1, Iran's Rouhollah Rostami won the gold by lifting 218 kg in the Men's Up to 80 kg weight category.

Around 200 powerlifters from 40 nations are competing in the final World Para Powerlifting World Cup of the season in Dubai, the UAE.

## Karatekas Bag 7 Medals for Iran in Asian Championship



TASHKENT, Uzbekistan – The Iranian national karatekas won one gold, two silvers and four bronze medals on the 1st day of 2022 Asian Karate Championship in Uzbekistan.

On Friday, December 16th, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Iran's 1st gold medal was won by girls' junior kata team, comprised of Yekta Davari, Tina Fattahi, and Melika Soltani. The team snatched 22.9 points to go to the final where they beat Indonesia by grabbing 23.74 points and won the gold medal.

In single kata of girls' junior category, Sajedah Jahanshahi snatched 38.02 points and ranked second in her group before she beat a karateka from the host country to win the bronze medal of the competition.

In minus 54kg weight category, Iran's

Zahra Reza-Zadeh beat another Kazakh fighter 8-0, lost the match versus the representative from Singapore, and then beat wont Tang from Taiwan to win the bronze medal.

In 54kg, Iran's Mahla Sedaqat beat karatekas from Thailand and Saudi Arabia but lost the semifinal 1-0 to a member of the Japanese team and snatched a bronze after beating a karateka from the United Arab Emirates 2-0.

In 57kg category of juniors' level, Mohammad-Amin Eslami beat a karateka from Turkmenistan in his first match and then won his game against a Kuwait fighter 4-1. In his 3rd match, he beat Saudi Arabia's representative 1-0 before he was beaten in the final by a fighter from Kazakhstan 5-3 to win the silver.

## Messi Seeks Glory, Argentina Meet France in World Cup Final

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — It is now or never for Lionel Messi.

The Argentina superstar's once-in-a-generation career will be defined — for many — by whether he leads his country to the World Cup title on Sunday.

Can he finally, at the age of 35, win soccer's biggest prize to secure his place alongside Pelé and Diego Maradona in the pantheon of the game's greatest ever players?

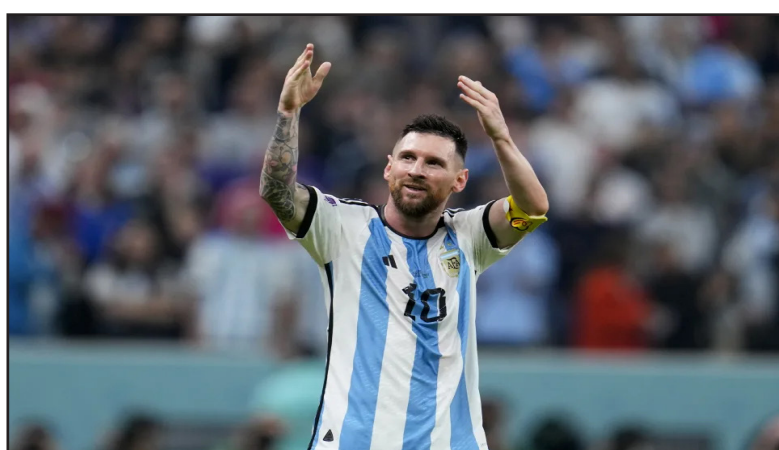
Standing in his way is France, the defending champion, and Kylian Mbappé, the player best positioned to take over from Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo as soccer's marquee name.

That's if he hasn't already.

Mbappé also is standing on the cusp of history heading into the match at the 80,000-seat Lusail Stadium, a title

decider that is filled with storylines. The 23-year-old France forward is looking to emulate Pelé by being a champion at his first two World Cups and set up the prospect of a third title, a feat only ever achieved by the Brazil great who has been hospitalized during this year's tournament because of a respiratory infection.

Mbappé was 19 when he led France to its second World Cup title in 2018, becoming the youngest scorer in a



Argentina's Lionel Messi celebrates after his teammate Julian Alvarez scored his side's third goal during the World Cup semifinal soccer match between Argentina and Croatia at the Lusail Stadium in Lusail, Qatar, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022.

final since a 17-year-old Pelé did so in 1958. While Pelé ended up being a peripheral figure in Brazil's 1962 triumph — he didn't play in the knockout stage because of injury — Mbappé has been France's go-to player in the team's bid to repeat.

Indeed, Mbappé enters the final tied as the tournament's leading scorer with five goals. The player alongside him? Messi, of course.

Who wins the Golden Boot — the award for the top scorer — is just one

of the many other narratives around the final.

There's France, the dominant national team of this generation, looking to become the first to win back-to-back World Cups since Brazil in 1962. The country that produced Michel Platini, Zinedine Zidane, Thierry Henry and now Mbappé will be playing in the final for the fourth time in the last seven World Cups, more than anyone else.

Then there's Didier Deschamps, a World Cup winner as a player in 1998

and now bidding to win it two times as a coach. Vittorio Pozzo was the only other man to coach two world champion teams, with Italy in 1934 and 1938.

Like France, Argentina is seeking a third World Cup title — after 1978 and 1986 — to move into outright fourth place in the all-time list. It would end a 36-year wait for soccer's biggest prize, since Maradona's string of virtuoso performances in Mexico in 1986.

That made Maradona forever a hero in Argentina, and an icon around the soccer world. Messi now appears to be at that level — win or lose on Sunday when he'll play in a record 26th World Cup match.

Messi has evoked comparisons with Maradona in the way he has pushed Argentina to the final, scoring five goals, setting up three more and thrilling his team's legion of fans, who have poured into Qatar throughout the World Cup in numbers only really matched by those from Morocco.

In that sense, it will seem like a home game for Argentina, with France's supporters sure to be heavily outnumbered amid a sea of blue-and-white jerseys — many of which will have "MESSI 10" written on them.

## Batistuta Does Not Mind Losing Goal Record to Messi

DOHA (Reuters) - Former Argentina international Gabriel Batistuta said he was happy to see Lionel Messi overtake him as the country's top scorer at the World Cup in Qatar, where the South Americans are preparing to fight for the title against France on Sunday.

Messi reached 11 World Cup goals in his career after scoring a penalty against Croatia in their 3-0 semi-final win.

"(Messi breaking the record) didn't hurt me at all because I enjoyed it while I had it," Batistuta, 53, said in an interview with Argentine newspaper Clarin published on Friday.

"Leo deserves this. If there's one person who has to be up there, it's

him. "Messi is not an alien, he is a human being who plays better football than anyone else. When that person exceeds you, you can't suffer, he just gives you pleasure."

Batistuta, who scored 10 goals in three World Cup editions between 1994 and 2002, added that Messi has exceeded his expectations at the tournament in Qatar with his five goals, three assists and brilliant all-round play.

"I expected him to be much calmer, but he is playing like a 20-year-old," he said. "And that's because he's hungry, he's here to win the Cup. That's what football needs, that's what Leo is spreading to the whole team."



Argentina forward Gabriel Batistuta flies through the air in celebration after scoring a goal on a free penalty kick during the World Cup soccer championship second-round game against Romania at the Rose Bowl, July 3, 1994 in Pasadena, California.

## Magic Cruise Past NBA-Leading Celtics 117-109

BOSTON (AP) — Moritz Wagner scored 25 points and Paolo Banchero added 20 as the Orlando Magic beat the NBA-leading Boston Celtics 117-109 on Friday night.

Franz Wagner scored 19 points as Orlando won its fifth straight game — the first four coming at home. The Magic outrebounded the Celtics 53-38 and held the lead for the final 37 minutes of the game.

Jayson Tatum scored 31 points and Jaylen Brown 26 as Boston (22-8) lost for the third time in four games. The Celtics attempted 46 3-pointers and made 11.

"We had good looks. Even when they're not going in, you have to keep

moving the ball and shooting it," Celtics interim head coach Joe Mazzulla said.

Boston's Robert Williams played in his first game since the NBA Finals after undergoing surgery on his left knee during the preseason and finished with nine points and five rebounds in 18 minutes.

Helped by two 3-pointers in the opening minutes from Al Horford, the Celtics jumped out to a 14-5 lead against a team with the third-worst record in the Eastern Conference. The Magic surged back, closing the opening quarter with a 15-4 run that was capped with a buzzer-beating 3-pointer by Banchero.

Orlando kept the pressure on Boston, leading 62-54 at halftime and extending

the lead to 19 points early in the third quarter. The Celtics cut their deficit to single digits on a few occasions, but the Magic remained comfortably ahead.

Markelle Fultz scored five straight, including jumper that gave the Magic a 108-96 lead with 3:55 remaining. Fultz had 12 points and four assists before fouling out.

Williams' surgery in the offseason was his second procedure on the same knee in a six-month span. The 25-year-old was upgraded to questionable on Thursday, with Mazzulla confirming before Friday's game that "there isn't a minutes restriction" concerning Williams, who came off the bench against the Magic.

## Melbourne Soccer Match Abandoned After Goalkeeper Attacked

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) - An A-League soccer match between rivals Melbourne City and Melbourne Victory was abandoned Saturday after fans invaded the field and attacked City goalkeeper Tom Glover.

Video on social media shows a fan throwing a metal bucket with a white substance at Glover, who was taken off the field dazed and bleeding.

Fans from the Melbourne Victory area of the stadium rushed the pitch just after the 20-min-

ute mark of the game at AAMI Stadium. City led 1-0 when the match was stopped.

"Following shocking scenes during the first half of the A-League men's match between Melbourne Victory and Melbourne City ... where fans from the Melbourne Victory FC end entered the field of play, Football Australia match officials have abandoned the match ... in order to protect the integrity of the match," a Football Australia statement said.

Both sets of fans had been throwing flares on the field but the situation escalated when a flare appeared to hit a television cameraman. Glover later picked up another flare off the ground and threw it back into the stands.

Fans then rushed the pitch and Glover was struck by the metal bucket, which is used to dispose of flares. Glover started bleeding from a head wound and was taken from the field, along with players from both teams.