

Iran to Face UAE in Group Winner Match at Asian Cup



TEHRAN — The United Arab Emirates will need a result when they face Iran in Group C of the

2023 AFC Asian Cup Qatar on Tuesday while Team Melli has already qualified for the knockout stage but

wants to win the group.

The match will be held in Al Rayyan's Education City Stadium in Group C of the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.

A draw will confirm UAE's knockout stage spot while a win will see them finishing above Iran, who have already confirmed their Round of 16 berth.

Iran are undefeated against the UAE in the AFC Asian Cup with four wins and a draw, having not conceded once in the meetings. No team has played more games without conceding against an opponent in the competition's history.

Iran have won 10 of their last 11 AFC Asian Cup group stage games since the 2011 edition, outscoring

their opponents 22-2.

The UAE have not conceded more than one goal in their last eight AFC Asian Cup group stage games since the 2015 edition, though they kept just one clean sheet in that period. They conceded multiple goals in five of their previous nine such ties from 2004 to 2011.

Uzbekistan's Ilgiz Tantashev is appointed as the referee of the match between the two teams.

The 39-year-old official has been active as a professional referee since 2012.

Tantashev has officiated football matches in the Uzbekistan League, Asian Champions League and AFC World Cup qualifiers.

Bayern Suffer Home Loss to Werder to Drop 7 Points Behind



Bayern's Harry Kane (center) is in action during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Bayern Munich and Werder Bremen at the Allianz Arena stadium in Munich, Germany, Jan 21, 2024.

MUNICH (Reuters) - Bayern Munich slumped to a 1-0 home loss to Werder Bremen after a Mitchell Weiser goal to stay seven points adrift of leaders Bayer Leverkusen in the Bundesliga title race.

It was Werder's first victory in Munich since 2008 and the champions' second league loss of the campaign.

Bayern have now failed to score in a home league game for the first time since February 2020, ending a run of 65 consecutive home games with at least one goal.

The result leaves them on 41 points in second place with a game in hand. Leverkusen are on 48 following their last-gasp 3-2 win over RB Leipzig on Saturday. VfB Stuttgart are in third place on 34, while Werder are 12th with 20 points.

The hosts, who face Union Berlin in their postponed league game on Wednesday, looked far from fresh following a short training camp in Portugal earlier this week.

"It was a deserved win for Werder", said Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel.

"For 70 minutes we did not play as a team that wants to win, to battle for the title".

"We only did it for 20 minutes. We allowed too many counter attacks, we allowed too much space, we were sloppy. For us it is a big setback and we need to make it better on Wednesday (against Union)", he said.

"This is not enough to reach our goals. When you sign for Bayern you sign for 100 percent. That's true for the players and the coach and we did not deliver that today".

Bayern had possession but struggled throughout to break down a disciplined Werder backline.

The visitors also put the ball in the net with a quick 25th-minute break only for Justin Njinmah's effort to be disallowed for a foul at the start of the move.

Former Bayern player Weiser, however, did open the scoring in the 59th minute, charging into the box, then shaking off Alphonso Davies and firing an unstoppable shot past keeper Manuel Neuer.

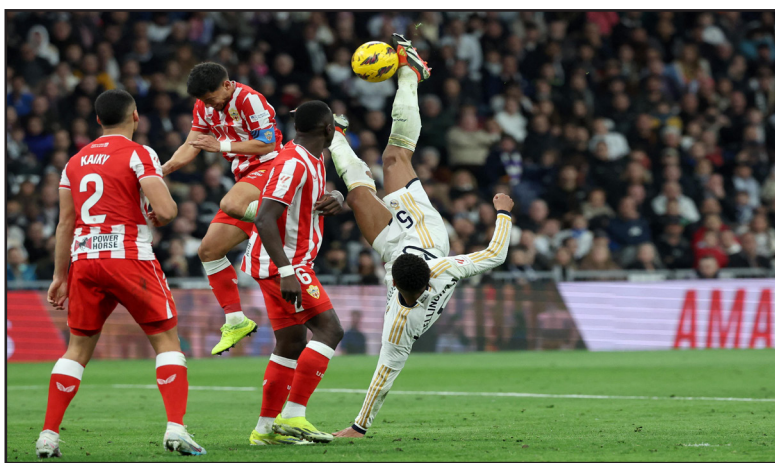
Real Madrid Recover to Beat Almeria 3-2 After VAR Dispute

MADRID (Reuters) - A Dani Carvajal strike in the ninth-minute of stoppage time rescued Real Madrid, earning them a 3-2 comeback win at home against bottom side Almeria on Sunday in a frantic LaLiga tussle that was marked by VAR controversy.

Real climbed to the top of the LaLiga standings on 51 points, two ahead Girona who host Sevilla later on Sunday.

Lowly Almeria, who remained winless after 21 LaLiga matches this season, grabbed a two-goal lead with a quick strike from Largie Ramazani inside the first minute and a brilliant volley from distance by Edgar Gonzalez in a dismal first half for Real Madrid who didn't record a single shot on target.

A visibly frustrated Real manager Carlo Ancelotti didn't return with his players to the changing room during the break and made three changes to start the second half that added



Real Madrid's English midfielder #5 Jude Bellingham (right) kicks the ball during the Spanish League football match between Real Madrid CF and UD Almeria at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Jan 21, 2024.

impetus to his side.

With Vinicius Jr and Jude Bellingham applying the pressure, Real reduced the deficit in the 56th minute with a Bellingham penalty awarded for a debatable handball after a lengthy VAR check.

However, Almeria had a Sergio Arribas effort from a counter-attack ruled out a little later after another long VAR check.

Referee Francisco Maeso ruled there was an infringement in the build-up when Almeria midfielder Dion Lopy was

harshly adjudged to have fouled Bellingham when he caught him in the face as he attempted to get his balance.

Five minutes later, Maeso first ruled out Real Madrid's equalizer for a Vinicius Jr handball before awarding the goal after deciding it was off the shoulder following another VAR review. The decision left Almeria's players and manager Asier Garitano fuming.

Bellingham also had a goal ruled out for a controversial offside in the build up and he almost scored a little later with an acrobatic scissor kick that went just wide of Almeria's goal as Real made a late push.

Nine minutes into added time, after a few near misses and a red card for manager Garitano for complaining to the referee, Bellingham worked his magic inside a crowded box to lift a cross to Carvajal who tapped in the winner at the far post.

Saudi Arabia Progress, Thailand Hope to Advance at Asia Cup

DOHA (AFP) - Saudi Arabia marched into the round of 16 after registering a 2-0 victory over nine-men Kyrgyzstan at the AFC Asian Cup on Sunday.

In front of 39,557 fans at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, Saudi Arabia, the three-time champion, grabbed their second win in a row to lead Group F with six points.

Earlier on Sunday, Thailand battled to a goalless draw with Oman

and sat second with four points in the group, boosting their hopes of advancing to the knockout stage.

Playing with courage and intensity, Kyrgyzstan opened the match strongly but was reduced to 10 men after just nine minutes when Aizar Akmatov was shown a red card for a challenge on Sami Al Najj.

Saudi Arabia broke the deadlock in the 35th minute when Saud Abdulhamid reacted fast to cross a

rebound for Mohamed Kanno to convert it at the far post.

Kyrgyzstan's woes were compounded six minutes into the second half when Kimi Merk was also shown a red card after a challenge on Hassan Al Tambakti.

With dominance in ball control and the numerical advantage, Saudi Arabia had many chances but found it difficult to score against the resolute defense from Kyrgyz-

stan.

The second goal came six minutes before the end of normal time. Saudi substitute Faisal Al Ghamdi fired a long shot from the edge of the box, and goalkeeper Erzhan Tokotaev failed to punch it away, leaving the ball bouncing in the back of the net.

Kyrgyzstan, with no points from two games, will play Oman in their concluding tie in the group stage.

Suns Hold Off Pacers 117-110 for 5th Straight Victory

PHOENIX (AP) — Kevin Durant scored 40 points, Devin Booker had 26 and the Suns beat the Indiana Pacers 117-110 on Sunday night for their fifth straight victory.

Bradley Beal added 25 points on 11-of-16 shooting for Phoenix, which led for most of the night and took a 91-83 advantage into the fourth quarter. It's the second straight game that the All-Star trio of Durant, Booker and Beal has combined for 91 points.

The Pacers made a few runs early in the final period, but Durant seemed to thwart every rally with another mid-range basket. The 35-year-old star made his first five shots of the fourth quarter.

Indiana has lost four of five. Buddy Hield led the Pacers with 18 points, and Pascal Siakam — acquired this week from Toronto — had 15 points and seven assists. All-Star guard Tyrese Haliburton sat out for the sixth time in seven

games because of a left hamstring strain.

Indiana used an 11-0 run to take a 105-103 lead on Hield's 3-pointer with 3:20 left, but Durant responded again, this time with a 3-pointer, and the Suns wouldn't trail again. Durant made 18 of 25 shots, including 4 of 7 from 3-point range, putting together a big scoring night without taking a free throw.

Beal hit three baskets in the final 2:11 that were crucial in helping Phoenix keep the lead. Booker shot just 9 of 24 from the field, including 1 of 7 from 3-point range, but had a crucial steal with about 25 seconds remaining to seal it.

The Durant-Booker-Beal trio had a rough start to the season, mainly because of injuries. Beal missed most of the first few months with back and ankle injuries while Booker and Durant have also missed a handful of games.

But for the past few weeks, the



Phoenix Suns center Jusuf Nurkic (20) fouls Indiana Pacers forward Jalen Smith during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024, in Phoenix

roster has been whole. It's no coincidence that the team's in the midst of a five-game winning streak.

The Suns jumped out to a 33-25 lead after one quarter, shooting 62% from the field, and held a 65-61 advantage at halftime. Durant

had 20 points on 9-of-12 shooting.

Indiana's Jalen Smith — who was drafted by the Suns in 2021 and part of the roster that made it to the NBA Finals — had 15 points and four rebounds against his former team.

Medvedev Sees Off Borges to Reach Australian Open Quarterfinals



Russia's Daniil Medvedev celebrates after winning his fourth round match against Portugal's Nuno Borges

MELBOURNE (Reuters) - World number three Daniil Medvedev struggled to contain the power of Portugal's Nuno Borges at the Australian Open on Monday but the Russian emerged with a 6-3 7-6(4) 5-7 6-1 victory to reach quarterfinals.

Twice a runner-up at Melbourne Park, Medvedev squandered a big lead in the third set but got back on track in the fourth to set up a last eight meeting with Pole Hubert Hurkacz, who beat French wild card Arthur Cazaux.

"Third set was tough physically because he was playing very aggressive," said Medvedev.

"Like, as I soon as I would hit one shot in a rally that was not aggressive or deep enough, he would go full power. It was pretty impressive.

"I didn't play long enough or good enough, missed too much, some double faults."

The 27-year-old, who reached the final in 2021 and 2022, was rock solid in the first set, where he did not face a single break point, and pulled away from Borges after building a 4-2 lead to seal the set in 35 minutes.

World number 69 Borges, who

reached the fourth round by stunning 13th seed Grigor Dimitrov, came out fighting in the second set, mixing up his game with delicate drop shots and traded breaks with his opponent before fading in the tiebreak.

The Portuguese 26-year-old looked on course for a straight sets defeat as former U.S. Open champion Medvedev edged ahead in the third after recovering from a break but things began to fall apart for the Russian.

After saving four break points to hold for 5-2 he wasted two match points as the double faults began to pile up.

Borges continued to serve and volley with devastating effect and claimed five successive games to pull a set back.

Fans hoping for an upset were left disappointed, however, as Medvedev steadied the ship and sailed through the fourth set, which he claimed when Borges went long with a forehand.

"I hoped it wouldn't be five sets. I'm happy it wasn't," said Medvedev, who was taken the distance by Emil Ruusuvuori earlier in the tournament.