

Basketballers Defeat India at Asia Cup Qualifier



TEHRAN – Iran defeated India 86-53 at the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 Qualifiers Window 1 on Monday at the K.D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi.

Five players finished in double figures in the lopsided win, with lead swingman Behnam Yakhchali leading the way with a game-high 15 points.

Salar Monji and 18-year-old forward Muhammad Amini produced identical numbers of 14 points and 9 rebounds, with the

former netting a game-best efficiency of 23.

Sajjad Mashayekhi, the hero in their overtime escape of Qatar last game, supplied 11 points. Meisam Mirzaei flirted with a double-double with 10 points and 9 boards.

Team Melli was holding a slim three-point lead late in the second period until Mirzaei led a 9-2 run that gave it a 42-32 lead heading into halftime.

Iran had defeated Qatar 76-74 in Tehran on Friday.

Iranian Table Tennis Players Advance in ITTF Ranking

TEHRAN – Iranian table tennis players have advanced in the latest ranking of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF).

The ranking released on Tuesday showed that all three top Iranian table tennis players in the men's and women's categories have improved their positions among international table tennis players following their success in the 2024 ITTF World Team Table Tennis Championships Finals held in Busan, South Korea.

In the men's category, Noshad

Alamian has improved by one place, now ranking 50th in the world, while Amir-Hussein Hodaei has advanced three places to reach the 119th position. Nima Alamian has also experienced a significant 59-level growth, now standing in the 181st place.

Among the Iranian female table tennis players, Neda Shahsavari, Mahshid Ashtari, and Shima Safaei have each improved their ranking by 321, 263, and 265 places respectively.

Heat Down Kings 121-110 for 4th Straight Win



Miami Heat guard Jaime Jaquez Jr. (11) starts a fast break with forward Haywood Highsmith (24) in the first quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings in Sacramento, Calif., Monday, Feb. 26, 2024.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Bam Adebayo scored 28 points, Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 26 and the short-handed Miami Heat beat the Sacramento Kings 121-110 on Monday night for their fourth straight win.

Kevin Love provided a big spark with 19 points off the bench and Caleb Martin scored 16 for the Heat, who were missing three starters because of injuries or suspensions — including star Jimmy Butler.

Sacramento's Domantas Sabonis had 14 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists for his NBA-high 21st triple-double of the season. Sabonis also became the 10th player in league history with 40 straight double-doubles in a season.

Keegan Murray scored 28 points and De'Aaron Fox added 27 for Sacramento, but the Kings were unable to build on a big road win against the Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday and had their three-game winning streak snapped.

"They came here and they played well both offensively and defensively," Fox said. "We have to be better. I can't turn the ball over like I did. But it's not like they didn't come in here and make tough

shots."

The key absences led to Miami's 30th different starting lineup in the 57th game of the season. Butler, Nikola Jovic and Thomas Bryant served suspensions for their role in a fight Friday night at New Orleans. Tyler Herro (left knee), Terry Rozier (right knee), Josh Richardson (right shoulder) and Orlando Robinson (back) were out with injuries.

But that didn't derail the Heat, who got plenty of contributions from unheralded players like Delon Wright, who scored 13 points in his Miami debut, and reserve Haywood Highsmith, who scored all 15 of his points in the first half.

Love scored 10 points during a 17-2 run to end the third quarter with Miami ahead 101-81.

The Kings tried to mount a comeback, getting one 3-pointer from Kevin Huerter and two from Murray in less than a minute to spark a 14-1 run that cut the deficit to six midway through the fourth on floater by Fox.

Sacramento got as close as two points on a layup by Fox with 3:41 left, but back-to-back baskets from Jaquez helped hold off the Kings.

Dybala's Hat Trick Helps Roma Win Torino

ROME (AP) — Paulo Dybala scored his first hat trick for Roma as the home side beat Torino 3-2 in Serie A on Monday.

On a day that Chris Smalling started for Roma for the first time since September, Dybala took all the plaudits.

It was Dybala's first club hat trick since October 2018, when he was with Juventus.

Roma stayed sixth, while Fiorentina rose to seventh after beating Lazio 2-1.

Lazio dropped to eighth, and Torino remained 10th.

Dybala got the opener from the penalty spot three minutes before halftime and Duvan Zapata equalized for the visitors two minutes later when he headed home a corner kick from the left.

Dybala score a splendid second goal after 58 minutes,



Roma's Paulo Dybala scores his side's third goal during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Roma and Torino at Rome's Olympic stadium, Italy, Monday, Feb. 26, 2024.

swerving a 30-yard shot low past goalkeeper Vanja Milinkovic-Savic.

The Argentine striker capped a fine performance when he worked a neat one-two with

substitute Romelo Lukaku and slotted home from a tight angle.

Smalling's substitute, Dean Huijsen, conceded an own goal at the end.

Later, Fiorentina hit the woodwork four times and missed a penalty but still managed to win from a goal down against Lazio in Florence.

Lazio took the lead seconds before halftime when Luis Alberto took Matteo Guendouz's pass and shot low into the net to end a flowing move.

The 19-year-old Michael Kayode equalized for Fiorentina 16 minutes into the second half with his first goal of the season.

Nicolas Gonzalez saw his penalty come back off the post midway through the second half but one minute later the home side went ahead. Lazio keeper Ivan Provedel could only parry a shot from Andrea Belotti and Giacomo Bonaventura followed up to give Fiorentina the lead.

South Korea Replaces Klinsmann With Asian Games-Winning Coach Hwang



U-23 Korean national team head coach Hwang Sun-hong speaks at the Incheon International Airport in Incheon, South Korea on Oct. 8, 2023. Hwang will take temporary charge of the team for at least two 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Thailand in March, the Korea Football Association said on Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2024.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Jurgen Klinsmann's successor as South Korea coach is former international Hwang Sun-hong.

Hwang will take temporary charge of the team for at least two 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Thailand in March, the Korea Football Association said on Tuesday.

He led the under-23 team to gold at the Asian Games last October and has also coached in the domestic league with Seoul, Busan IPark and Pohang Steelers. The former international scored 50 goals for South Korea.

"Hwang has recently demonstrated his achievements with his

team's victory at the Hangzhou Asian Games," said Jung Hae-sung, the new chief of the KFA national team committee. "He also has experience in international competitions and an understanding of Asian soccer."

The KFA is expected to name a full-time coach before World Cup qualification continues in June with games against Singapore and China.

Klinsmann was dismissed on Feb. 16, 10 days after Korea lost to Jordan in the semifinals of the Asian Cup. He was widely criticized for his strategy on the field and working methods off it.

West Ham's Poor Run Ends With 4-2 Win Over Brentford

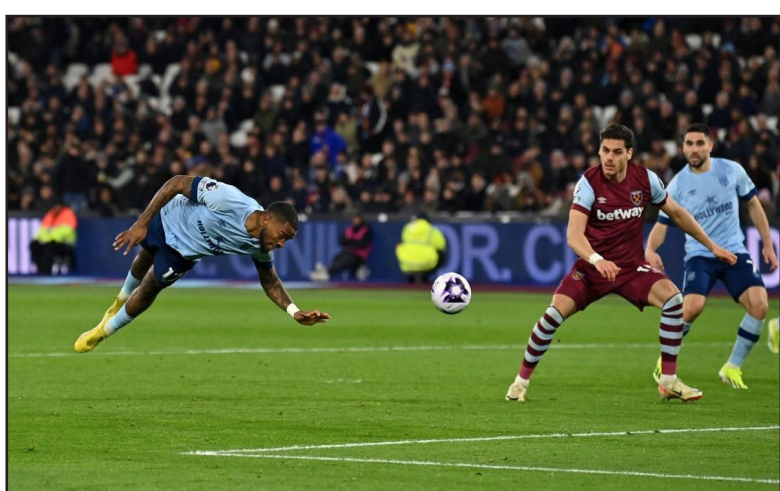
LONDON (Reuters) - A hat-trick from Jarrod Bowen helped West Ham United to snap a six-match winless run in the Premier League as they secured their first victory of 2024 with a thrilling 4-2 home win over Brentford on Monday.

David Moyes' side moved up to eighth with 39 points, level with seventh-placed Brighton and five adrift of sixth-placed Manchester United. Brentford remain 16th with 25 points, five clear of the relegation zone.

"I'd hoped it was coming. It was needed. Our form in six weeks has been poor. It's good to score four goals and get a win at home," Moyes told the BBC.

"(Eighth place) is not bad at this time of the season. We're always getting a level of criticism but we're up there challenging.

"There's a lot of teams with a lot of money and experience. It was only three years ago we were battling to avoid relegation most seasons."



Brentford's English striker #17 Ivan Toney attempts a diving header during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Brentford at the London Stadium, in London on Feb 26, 2024.

The hosts grabbed the lead five minutes into the game as Bowen collected Emerson's pass from the left to slam home a fierce low shot before doubling the lead with a half-volley from close range two minutes later.

Neal Maupay pulled one back for the visitors in the 13th minute following a pass from Keane Lewis-Potter, sliding through the center of the box to lob the ball over French compatriot keeper Alphonse Areola.

Murray Drops Retirement Hint After 500th Hardcourt Win in Dubai

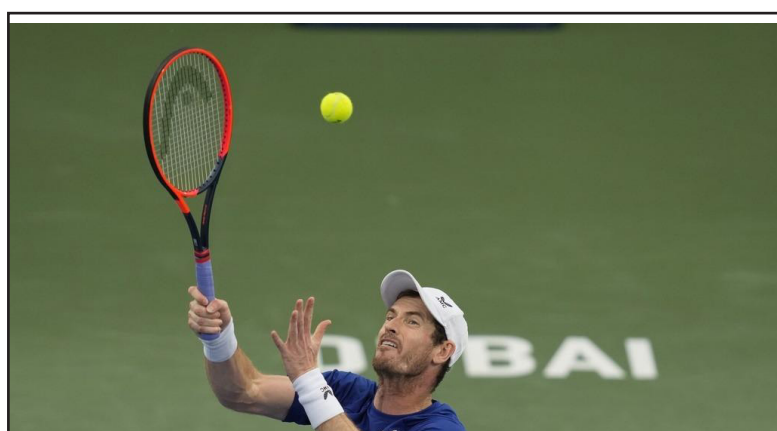
LONDON (AFP) - Andy Murray hinted that this could be his last season after he recorded his 500th hardcourt win with a 4-6 7-6(5) 6-3 victory over Canada's Denis Shapovalov in the first round of the Dubai Tennis Championships on Monday.

Murray joined Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, Andre Agassi and Rafa Nadal as the only players to reach the 500th tour-level win milestone on the surface in the professional era.

"Obviously hardcourt has been a great surface for me over the years and 500 is a lot of matches so I'm very proud of that," Murray said.

"There aren't many players that have done that, so, great to get to 500 before I'm done."

It was just the second win this year for the 36-year-old who suffered a first round exit at the recent



Andy Murray of Great Britain returns the ball to Denis Shapovalov of Canada during a match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on Feb 26, 2024.

Australian Open, and Murray has failed to go beyond the third round of a Grand Slam since reaching the Wimbledon quarters in 2017.

Murray, former world number one and winner of three Grand

Slam singles titles, lost his second round match in Qatar last week to 18-year-old Jakub Mensik, and during the defeat he appeared to shout "this game is not for me anymore".