

Iranian Wrestlers Win Two Gold Medals at UWW U-20 Championships



TEHRAN – Iranian freestyle wrestlers Muhammadreza Shakeri and Abolfazl Babaloo have won two gold medals at the U-20

World Championships.

Shakeri claimed a gold in the final bout of 65kg after defeating Jesse Mendez from the U.S. 5-2. He had already improved on his ninth-place finish from last year by reaching the final.

Babaloo also won a gold in the 97kg, overcoming Ivan Prymachenko from Ukraine 5-0 in the final.

A month ago, Babaloo lost two bouts in Amman to finish fifth at the U-20 Asian Championships. However, he avenged his loss to Kamil Kurugliyevk (KAZ) 6-1 before beating Camden Mc Danel (U.S.) 5-1 in the

semifinals.

Iran's Ali Rezaei also won a silver medal after being defeated by American wrestler Meyer Shapiro 11-6 in the final match of 70kg.

The 2023 U-20 World Championships started in Amman, Jordan on Aug.14 and will run until Aug. 20.

The event was originally scheduled to be held in Warsaw, Poland from August 14-20. Due to Poland's refusal to issue visas to Russian and Belarusian wrestlers, United World Wrestling moved the tournament from Poland to Jordan.

England Beat Australia to Set Up World Cup Final With Spain



England's Alessia Russo celebrates scoring their third goal against Australia in Sydney on August 16, 2023.

SYDNEY (AFP) - Lauren Hemp and Alessia Russo did the damage late on in Sydney as England shattered Australian dreams Wednesday with a clinical 3-1 win to set up a Women's World Cup final against Spain.

The Lionesses had stumbled at the same stage twice before but the European champions made no mistake this time to reach the final for the first time.

They took the lead nine minutes before the break with Manchester United's Ella Toone unleashing a rocket just inside the box with the outside of her boot.

A fit-again Sam Kerr, starting for the first time this tournament, hit back for the home side in the second half with a world-class goal that set the game on fire, picking up the ball and letting fly from 30 yards after a weaving run.

It sparked ecstatic scenes from the 75,784-strong partisan crowd.

But they were silenced eight minutes later when Hemp muscled her way into the box and stabbed into the corner before Russo put the icing on the cake with four minutes left.

England now face a blockbuster final on Sunday at the same Stadium Australia against a dangerous Spanish side that beat Sweden 2-1 in the last four, with a new name to be engraved on the trophy.

England had been in this position before, in 2015 and 2019, losing 2-1 on both occasions, with a third-place finish their best World Cup before now.

But coach Sarina Wiegman led them to the European title last year on home soil and captain Millie Bright said before the match they were now better-placed to handle big-pressure games.

They demonstrated their resilience at a pumping and partisan

Stadium Australia, successfully blanking out the noise to silence an expectant home nation.

Victory was all the sweeter against an opponent who had beaten them 2-0 in an April friendly -- the only side to do so in 38 games since Wiegman took over.

Despite losing Australia have enjoyed their best World Cup ever, with a third-placed playoff against Sweden on Saturday still to play.

With Kerr fit again, Australian coach Tony Gustavsson moved Emily van Egmond to the bench in one of two changes with defender Clare Polkinghorne in for an ill Alanna Kennedy.

England stuck to the same XI that beat Colombia 2-1 with striker Lauren James serving the second of a two-match ban.

Both sides were nervy in the opening exchanges but Australia settled and a lofted ball through the middle from Katrina Gorry left Kerr with just goalkeeper Mary Earps to beat.

But the Manchester United stopper repelled the shot, with the offside flag later raised.

At the other end, fellow keeper MacKenzie Arnold rescued Australia minutes later, deflecting Georgia Stanway's strike with her legs as the game opened up.

Kerr was in the thick of the early action and England ruthlessly looked to close her down with some heavy challenges, one of them earning Alex Greenwood a yellow card.

But as England grew in confidence they began controlling the midfield battle.

The breakthrough came in the 36th minute with Toone, in the side for James, arrowing her shot into the top right corner after Hemp pulled the ball back from the touch line.

Neymar Joins Saudi Club Al-Hilal From PSG in Two-Year Deal

PARIS (Reuters) - Neymar has signed a two-year contract at Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal after six years with Paris St Germain in which the Brazil forward won several domestic trophies but not the Champions League the club craves.

No financial details were disclosed on Tuesday but the fee was reported to be about 90 million euros (\$98.24 million) plus add-ons and subject to a medical for the 31-year-old.

French newspaper L'Equipe said the deal could net Neymar 160 million euros.

Saudi Professional League (SPL) club Al-Hilal announced that Neymar had signed a contract until 2025, with the Brazilian saying, "I am here in Saudi Arabia, I am Hilali" in a video on the team's social media accounts.

"I have achieved a lot in Europe and enjoyed special times, but I have always wanted to be a global player and test myself with new challenges and opportunities in new places," Neymar said after signing the contract on Tuesday in Paris.

"I want to write new sporting history, and the Saudi Pro League has tremendous energy and quality players at the moment.

"I have heard a lot and learned that I am following a long list of Brazilian players who have played in Saudi Arabia over the years, so I believe it is the desired place.

"I love winning and scoring goals, and I plan to continue doing that in Saudi Arabia and with Al-Hilal."

Neymar joined PSG in 2017 from Barcelona for a world re-



In this handout picture released by the Saudi Al-Hilal football club on Aug 15, 2023, Brazilian forward Neymar (left) poses for a picture with Hilal President Fahad bin Nafel at the Al-Hilal stadium in Riyadh.

cord fee of 222 million euros. He scored 118 goals in 173 appearances for the Paris club and won numerous trophies, including five Ligue 1 titles.

Neymar won the Champions League with Barcelona in 2015 but had to settle for a runners-up medal in the 2020 final, which PSG lost to Bayern Munich.

Alcaraz Battles Through Rain, Holder Garcia Out



Carlos Alcaraz celebrates during his gruelling Cincinnati Open win over Australia's Jordan Thompson

CINCINNATI (AFP) - Carlos Alcaraz battled through a rain interruption to claim his 50th win of the season, defeating Jordan Thompson

7-5, 4-6, 6-3 on Wednesday at the Cincinnati Open.

The top-seeded Spaniard is bidding for his seventh trophy of 2023

as he prepares for a U.S. Open title defense in less than a fortnight.

His victory took three hours, with the world number one breaking open the third set as he delivered two love games and moved through on a second match point.

"I had never played him and the start/stop was not easy," Alcaraz said. "It was not easy to wait for the rain.

"He played aggressive, I'm glad to get through. It was a long day waiting to play and then find rain in the first set.

"I had to play my best level at the end; I'm hoping for better conditions in the next round."

Alcaraz was tested by number 55 Thompson who now stands 2-16 against Top-10 opponents.

The Spaniard had 32 winners and 41 unforced errors in the marathon.

Including a 15-minute pause for rain and subsequent warmup, the first set took nearly 90 minutes, with Thompson saving 10 of a dozen break points only to lose on the first Alcaraz set point.

Alcaraz came back from a break down in the second set and ran away with the third as Thompson complained to the chair umpire about an incorrectly strung racquet which he only discovered at a late stage in the epic.

Messi Magic Continues as Inter Miami Reach Leagues Cup Final

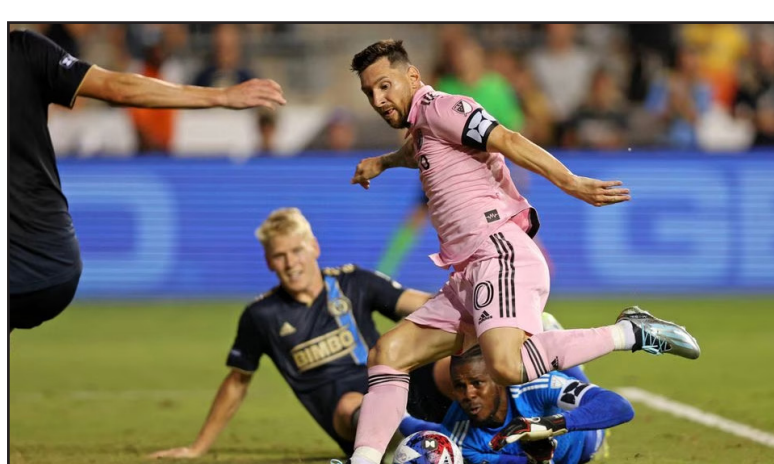
MIAMI (Reuters) - Lionel Messi notched his ninth goal in six matches as Inter Miami crushed Philadelphia Union 4-1 to reach the Leagues Cup final on Tuesday.

Philadelphia, who made the MLS Cup final last year and have a dominant record at home, were poised to be Miami's biggest test since the latter added the Argentinean striker to their roster last month.

But the visiting Miami once again got off to a quick start when a running Josef Martinez scored three minutes into the game on a pass from Serhiy Kryvtsov.

Messi was somehow left unguarded just past midfield where he caught a pass from Martinez and dribbled forward before firing a shot from distance in the 20th minute that rolled past Union goalkeeper Andre Blake, who was slow to react.

Jordi Alba further demoralized the



Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi (left) scores a goal past Orlando City midfielder Wilder Cartagena (center) and goalkeeper Pedro Gallese during the second half of a Leagues Cup soccer match on Aug 2, 2023, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Union with a goal just before half-time for a 3-0 lead as fans booed the home team as they headed into the locker room.

Philadelphia got one back through

Alejandro Bedoya in the 73rd minute but David Ruiz found the net in the 84th minute for Miami, who have scored 21 goals in their last six matches.

UEFA's Ceferin Calls on Europe to End 'Cancer' of Soccer Violence

ATHENS (Reuters) - UEFA president Alexander Ceferin urged Europe on Wednesday to help eliminate hooliganism, which he called "the cancer of football", days after a man was killed in clashes before a match between AEK Athens and Dinamo Zagreb in Greece.

Ceferin was speaking in Athens in the wake of last week's fatal stabbing of a fan ahead of a Champions League qualifier.

"The problem of violence and hooliganism is not just Greek, it is European," he told a joint press conference with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

"I call on everyone at a European level to eliminate this cancer", he

added.

AEK Athens fan Michalis Katsouris, 29, died after being stabbed during violent clashes on the eve of Croatian club Dinamo Zagreb's qualifier at AEK near the Greek club's stadium in Nea Filadelfia, a western suburb of Athens.

Last Tuesday's match was then postponed by UEFA until 19 August.

"We will do everything in our power to ensure that such a tragedy never happens again," said Ceferin.

On Sunday, the Greek courts charged 105 people with involvement in the incidents and remanded them in custody. The accused in-

clude 102 Croatians, suspected of being linked to the Bad Blue Boys, a Dinamo Zagreb ultra group.

"The guilty parties will be found and punished for this murder," said the Greek prime minister, who also called for a "European mechanism to tackle violence in stadiums and punish it effectively."

Mitsotakis also emphasized that he had agreed with the four chairmen of the main Greek clubs that "the police should operate in the stadiums and be able to control entry".

"But violence is not just in the stadiums, it is also on the streets, and we need to fight it collectively", he added.