

Saman Ghoddos' Goal Nominated for EPL Award



TEHRAN - Brentford's Saman Ghoddos and Bryan Mbeumo have been recognized by the English Premier League (EPL) for their contributions in October.

Ghoddos and Mbeumo are both in the running for Goal of the Month, while the latter has also been nominated for Player of the Month.

Ghoddos's nomination comes for his strike against Burnley at Gtech Community Stadium.

Three minutes after his introduction, with the Bees leading 2-0, a headed clearance dropped towards Ghoddos 25 yards out.

The attacker took one touch to control the ball before arrowing a fierce half-volley beyond James Trafford.

It was a fitting way to wrap up an impressive first home win of the campaign.

Sepahan Penalized Over Cancelled ACL Match



TEHRAN - The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Disciplinary and Ethics Committee has penalized the Iranian football club Sepahan while it was Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad football club that refused to play the match in Iran.

The AFC Disciplinary and Ethics Committee decided on Wednesday by announcing the result of the undone match 3-0 for the Saudi club. The Iranian club will also be required to pay a fine of \$200,000. Meanwhile, the Iranian squad has been banned from playing three matches at the AFC Champions League.

The AFC Champions League 2023/24 Group C match was slated

to take place at the city's Naghsh-e-Jahan Stadium on Monday Oct. 2. However, the game was called off by the referee when the Saudi Al-Ittihad refused to play.

Sepahan Sport Club then issued a statement, saying they have prepared an official complaint, which will be filed with the AFC.

They added that the pitch had been inspected time and again by the AFC, the Iranian Football Federation and other relevant authorities, and had received their approval.

The AFC also issued a statement on the development, saying the match was canceled due to "unanticipated and unforeseen circumstances."

Djokovic Battles Back to Advance to Paris Quarterfinals

PARIS (Reuters) - World number one Novak Djokovic fought back to beat Tallon Griekspoor 4-6 7-6(2) 6-4 on Thursday and reach the Paris Masters quarter-finals.

The Serb, unlike in his slick second-round win, looked rusty in only his second singles match since playing in the Davis Cup six weeks ago, losing a 4-1 lead in the first set and squandering three break opportunities early in the second.

The 24-times Grand Slam winner mounted a comeback, however, as he convincingly won the tiebreak and took the decider to continue his quest for a record-extending seventh title in Paris.

"I run out of steam, I've been struggling the last couple of days with my stomach, I didn't feel myself at all on court," the 36-year-old Djokovic said.

"It could've run easily on



Serbia's Novak Djokovic serves to Netherlands' Tallon Griekspoor (not in photograph) during their men's singles match on day four of the Paris ATP Masters 1000 tennis tournament at the Accor Arena - Palais Omnisports de Paris-Bercy - in Paris on Nov 2, 2023.

his way, but I played a good tiebreak and started to feel better on the third. I'm really happy I overcame this challenge."

Fourth seed Jannik Sinner withdrew from the tournament, citing health reasons after his second-round clash

against Mackenzie McDonald ended at 2:37 am on Thursday.

The Italian was due to play Australia's Alex de Minaur, who will now face in-form Andrey Rublev, the fifth-seed Russian who earned his 20th Masters 1000 win of the sea-

son by beating qualifier Botić Van de Zandschulp 6-3 6-3.

Seventh seed Stefanos Tsitsipas secured his spot at the ATP Finals with a 7-6(2) 6-4 win over German 10th seed Alexander Zverev. The Greek will play Karen Khachanov in the quarter-finals after the 16th seed beat fellow Russian Roman Safiullin 4-6 6-4 6-2.

Poland's Hubert Hurkacz, the 11th seed, remained in contention for a spot at the tournament in Turin by beating Argentine Francisco Cerundolo 6-4 6-3.

He will meet Grigor Dimitrov for a place in the semi-finals after the Bulgarian routed Alexander Bublik 6-2 6-2.

In the last act of the evening, defending champion and sixth seed Holger Rune claimed a comfortable 6-3 6-3 win over Daniel Altmaier. The Dane will face Djokovic in a rematch of last year's final.

Victor Wembanyama Stars as San Antonio Spurs Beat Phoenix Suns



Wembanyama has scored 103 points in his first five NBA games

WASHINGTON (AP) - Teenage sensation Victor Wembanyama scored 38 points - his most in an NBA game - to help the San Antonio Spurs beat the Phoenix Suns 132-121.

The 19-year-old, who was the league's top draft pick this year and stands at 7ft 4in tall, also grabbed 10 rebounds in his fifth NBA game.

The Suns erased a 27-point deficit to level at 116-116 in the fourth quarter. Frenchman Wembanyama then scored 10 points as the Spurs went on a 12-0 run on the way to securing victory.

"Somebody's got to do it," said Wembanyama. "Tomorrow it's going to be one of my team-mates. This is how we work - as a group, as a team."

"The NBA's got the greatest athletes on Earth but, so far, it's working out pretty well."

Overall, Wembanyama has scored 103 points in his five NBA outings.

"He is a multi-faceted player," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich.

"He'll pass to the open guy but he's got confidence in himself. He made some plays that were un-

believable so that combination is pretty good if you have that skill and you're still willing to pass."

Devin Booker scored 31 points and registered 13 assists for the Suns on his return from an ankle injury, while team-mate Kevin Durant scored 28 points.

"I know we are both skinny and I'm sure he said he watched me growing up but he's his own player," said Durant when asked about Wembanyama after the game.

"He is going to create his own lane. He's much different than anybody who's ever played."

Elsewhere, Paolo Banchero found the basket with 14 seconds remaining and scored a season-high 30 points to help the Orlando Magic to a thrilling 115-113 win against the Utah Jazz.

UEFA to Co-Organize Ballon d'Or From 2024

PARIS (Reuters) - UEFA has partnered with Groupe Amaury to co-organize the prestigious Ballon d'Or awards from 2024, Europe's soccer governing body said on Friday.

Groupe Amaury, through its media companies France Football and L'Equipe, will remain the owner of the Ballon d'Or brand and will continue to oversee the voting system so it remains independent.

UEFA said it will be organizing the annual gala and marketing its global commercial rights while adding two new awards for the best men's and women's coach of the year.

The partnership means UEFA's



awards for the best player and best coach will cease to exist. But

UEFA will continue to present the President's Award as well as prizes

for the best player in each of their competitions.

"For almost 70 years, the Ballon d'Or has stood as the most prestigious individual accolade in the world of football and is a testament to the extraordinary skill, dedication, and impact of the game's legends and their enduring mark on the sport's history," UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said.

"UEFA club and national team competitions... are regarded as the highest global stages for elite players, often playing a critical role in a players' candidacy for major honors and their place in the football pantheon."

Smashed Records Bring New Focus to Marathon Ahead of New York

NEW YORK (AFP) - As athletes gear up for Sunday's New York City Marathon, falling world records have brought new attention to the distance event after a blockbuster year.

Ethiopian Tigst Assefa shattered the women's marathon record in Berlin in September, lopping more than two minutes from the previous best, with a time of two hours 11 minutes and 53 seconds.

Days later Kenyan Kelvin Kiptum beat compatriot Eliud Kipchoge's world record mark on the men's side with a stunning win in two hours and 35 seconds in Chicago.

While another benchmark is unlikely to be surpassed on Sunday - New York's hills stand in contrast to the flatter courses of Berlin and the Windy City - the falling records have brought an extra buzz.

SAO PAULO (Reuters) - Brazil's Formula One grand prix at Sao Paulo's Interlagos circuit will stay on the calendar until at least 2030 after securing a five-year contract extension, the sport announced on Friday.

The current contract, for a race now known as the Sao Paulo Grand Prix, was due to expire in 2025.

Interlagos had looked set to lose the grand prix in 2019 when former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said a new circuit would be built to host it in Rio de Janeiro.

The city's bid failed and the proposed circuit was never constructed.

The chief executive of the Sao Paulo Grand Prix, Alan Adler, credited F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali with keeping the race at Interlagos.

In 2019 Sao Paulo was very far from signing a new contract

with Formula One, but in 2020 Stefano arrived and his first decision was to reconnect with Sao Paulo," Adler told a press conference.

Interlagos, officially named the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace after Brazil's 1975 race winner, first hosted a world championship grand prix in 1973.

The atmospheric circuit has witnessed some major milestones in the sport's history, including the late triple champion Ayrton Senna's emotional home win in 1991 and Kimi Raikkonen winning the 2007 title for Ferrari.

Lewis Hamilton secured his first title there in 2008 with McLaren, after a crucial overtake at the last corner of the final lap, while Jenson Button secured his 2009 title with Brawn G.