

# Vahid Shamsaei Nominated for Best Futsal Coach in 2024



TEHRAN - head coach of Iran's national futsal team Vahid Shamsaei is among the top ten nominees for the Best Coach in the World in 2024.

The recognition comes from the reputable futsal website, Futsal Planet.

Shamsaei, celebrated as the best coach in Asia and the champion of the AFC Futsal Asian Cup, led Iran to the Asian championship and qualification for the 2024 World Cup with three wins and a single loss to Morocco, in the 2023 world

champion. Futsal Planet has listed ten candidates for the 2024 Best Coach of the Year award in the national category.

The list includes notable names like Marquinhos Xavier from Brazil (World Cup and

Copa America champion), Hicham Dguig from Morocco (African champion), and Ricardo Kaka from Kazakhstan.

The Best Coach of the Year award is named in memory of Dimitris Nikolaou, a significant figure in Greek and world futsal.

Nominees for the Best Men's National Team Coach in the World include:

- Hicham Dguig (Morocco)
- Paulo Ricardo Figueiroa Silva "Kaka" (Kazakhstan)
- Oleksandr Kosenko (Ukraine)
- Marcos "Marquinhos" Xavier Andrade (Brazil)
- Matías Raúl Lucuix (Argentina)
- Miguel José Rodrigo Conde-Salazar (Thailand, since February 29, 2024)
- Raphaël Reynaud (France)
- Vahid Shamsaei (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Héctor Souto (Indonesia, since August 15, 2024)
- Damián Stazzone Alvarez (Argentina U-20 National Team)

## Azmoun, Ezatolahi Score as Shabab Al Ahli Beat Al Nasr



TEHRAN - The Shabab Al Ahli football team has defeated Al Nasr 2-0 in Matchweek 10 of the UAE Pro League.

In the match, held at the Al Rashid Stadium, Sardar Azmoun was on target for Shabab Al Ahli in the 76th minute from the penalty spot and Saïd

Ezatolahi doubled the advantage four minutes later.

Shabab Al Ahli sit second one point behind leader Sharjah.

The 2024-25 UAE Pro League is the 50th edition of the UAE Pro League. Al Wasl is the defending champion.

## Las Palmas, Valladolid Crash Out of Copa del Rey



Barcelona's Pau Victor (left) controls a ball at the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium in Barcelona, Spain, Nov 30, 2024.

MADRID (Reuters) - The third round of the Copa del Rey saw two more upsets on Sunday with La Liga sides crashing out against lower-league opposition.

Second-division Elche claimed an emphatic 4-0 win at home to top-flight Las Palmas, with the home side dominating from start to finish and moving into the last-16 with Rodrigo Mendoza's goal on the stroke of halftime.

Elche then ran riot after the break with goals from David Affengruber, Jose Salinas and Nicolas Fernandez sealing a resounding win.

Third-tier Ourense twice came back from behind before dumping out La Liga's bottom club Valladolid 3-2.

Raul Moro and Selim Amallah twice put Valladolid ahead in the first half, but the visitor was quickly pegged back by Jairo Noriega and

Jerin Ramos, before Angel Sanchez scored the winner for the home side seven minutes after the break.

Celta Vigo was close to being knocked out as well, as it trailed 2-1 away to Racing Santander with just four minutes of normal time on the clock, before an own goal and a 92nd-minute finish from Alfon saw it through.

Racing opened the scoring after just eight minutes when Andres Martin kept calm after being slipped through on goal, although Alfon's first goal of the game soon leveled the score.

The second-division side was down to 10 men before halftime when defender Alvaro Mantilla was sent off for bringing down Alfon when the striker was through on goal, but it dug deep and retook the lead when Javi Rodriguez deflected a shot into his own net.

## Diallo Earns Man Utd Deserved Draw at Liverpool

LIVERPOOL (AFP) - Amad Diallo struck a late equalizer as Manchester United made a mockery of their recent form to hold Premier League leaders Liverpool to a thrilling 2-2 draw at Anfield on Sunday.

It looked as though Ruben Amorim's United would go home empty-handed despite a vastly-improved display but Diallo swept in a shot in the 80th minute to earn his side a draw and prevent Liverpool from opening an eight-point lead at the top.

United went ahead in the 52nd minute when Lisandro Martinez powered home a ferocious shot from a tight



Liverpool's Cody Gakpo (top) and Manchester United's Noussair Mazraoui battle for the ball at the Anfield stadium in Liverpool, England, Jan 5, 2025.

angle.

But an off-key Liverpool responded seven minutes later with Cody Gakpo curling

home a stunning equalizer before Mohamed Salah put the hosts ahead from the penalty spot.

After Diallo's leveler both sides had chances to win in a frantic finale with United's Harry Maguire spooning a glorious chance over the crossbar with the last kick of the game.

As the fans made for the exits on a freezing afternoon it was United's who were happiest after watching a display that offered hope of better things to come in 2025.

Liverpool remain in control of the title race with 46 points from 19 games, six ahead of Arsenal with a game in hand as they seek to equal United's 20 English crowns.

United moved up a place to 13th with 23 points.

## Nuggets Beat Spurs 122-111 in Overtime

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Nikola Jokic had 46 points and 10 rebounds and the Denver Nuggets spoiled Victor Wembanyama's 21st birthday on Saturday, beating the San Antonio Spurs 122-111 in overtime.

Wembanyama finished with 20 points and 23 rebounds for San Antonio, but was scoreless and without a rebound in OT. Wembanyama has 57 double-doubles in 101 career games.

The teams split the home-and-home series on consecutive nights. The Spurs won Friday's game 113-110 when Wembanyama stole the ball from Jokic with four seconds

remaining and Vassell scored on a fastbreak layup.

Jokic made sure there were no such heroics Saturday, scoring nine points in the extra period.

Michael Porter Jr. added 28 points and 10 rebounds for Denver.

Harrison Barnes scored 22 points and Devin Vassell 19 for San Antonio, which had won two straight.

Vassell missed a contested layup, but tipped in the rebound, to tie the game at 108 with 14 seconds remaining in regulation. Jokic missed a 19-footer over Wembanyama with two



seconds remaining to close regulation.

Zach Collins and Russell Westbrook each received a

technical foul in the first quarter after taunting one another, with Westbrook doing so from the bench.

## Indonesia Fires Head Coach Ahead of Vital World Cup Qualifiers

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesia has dismissed Shin Tae-yong as head coach of its national team, the country's federation announced on Monday.

"This decision was made based on long and mature considerations and evaluations carried out by as a whole regarding the team's performance and the long-

term goals that the Indonesian National Football Team wants to achieve" the Indonesian federation, known locally as PSSI, said in a statement.

Appointed in 2020, the South Korean boss had led Indonesia to the third round of qualification for the 2026 World Cup for the first time. In November, the team de-

feated Saudi Arabia 2-0 to move into third place in the six-team group with four games remaining.

At a press conference in Jakarta, PSSI chairman Erick Thohir, who handed Shin a contract extension to 2027 last June, explained the decision.

"The dynamics of the na-

tional team need special attention from us," Thohir said. "We see the need for a leader who can better implement strategies agreed upon by the players, good communication and better implementation."

There was no announcement of a replacement, though there is speculation that the new boss could be European.



Indonesian national team Head coach Shin Tae Yong