

# Iran Stun Turkmenistan 7-0 at CAFA U-18 Women's Championship



TEHRAN – Iran national U-18 women's football team beat the team of Turkmenistan 7-0 at the 2024 CAFA Championship on Monday.

Maryam Dini (two goals), Somayeh Esmacili (two goals), Tania Jahanshahi, Zahra Khanlarzadeh and Nazanin Mansouri scored for the Iranian team against Turkmenistan at the event.

The Persian girls, who had defeated Uzbekistan 4-2 in their opening match, are slated to play Tajikistan (Friday) and Kyrgyzstan (Sunday), respectively.

The tournament plays an important role and aims to support the general popularization of the Women's game in the region

and provide platform to prepare the teams of Central Asian member associations for the Continental competition AFC U-20 Women's Championship as well as showcasing their skills and talents through all CAFA media channels.

CAFA contributes their regional football development initiatives which is further supporting the vision of FIFA making the game truly global and vision of AFC to making football the number one sport in the continent.

The tournament takes place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan from April 19 to 28.

A total of five teams compete in an exciting single round-robin format.

## Ruud Defeats Tsitsipas to Win Barcelona Open

BARCELONA (Reuters) - Casper Ruud gained sweet revenge over Stefanos Tsitsipas as he beat the Greek fifth seed 7-5 6-3 to win the Barcelona Open on Sunday.

Just seven days after Tsitsipas thumped Ruud in straight sets to win the Monte Carlo Masters, it was the Norwegian third seed who came out on top in the latest battle between the two 25-year-olds as he secured a 10th ATP title on clay.

"Honestly, this has been worth the wait," Ruud said after capturing the biggest title his career, with all his previous triumphs being in ATP 250 tournaments.

After seven failed attempts to win a final above the ATP 250 level, Ruud was relieved to finally get over that hurdle.



Casper Ruud of Norway lifts the trophy after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece, 2nd right, 7-5, 6-3 during the final of the Barcelona Open tennis tournament in Barcelona, Spain, on April 21, 2024.

"A lot of finals that I've lost have been tough, a bit disappointing, of course," he said. "Any time you reach a final,

it's nonetheless a good week, so you can't be too hard on yourself but this one has been a long time coming."

Ruud also halted Tsitsipas' 10-match winning streak.

The Greek gained an early break but Ruud soon got into his groove and from then on he frustrated Tsitsipas with his baseline tactics.

Ruud maintained the upper hand throughout the second set, during which he did not face a break point.

"In the final in Monte Carlo I was always on the back foot, too far behind, and he had too much time to control the game," said Ruud.

The world number six will hope the win will boost his chances of finally winning the biggest prize in claycourt tennis, following his runner-up finishes to Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic at the French Open over the past two years.

## PSG Close In on League Title With 4-1 Victory Over Lyon



Lyon's Jake O'Brien (right) challenges PSG's Goncalo Ramos during the French League One soccer match between Paris Saint-Germain and Lyon at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris on April 21, 2024.

PARIS, France (Reuters) - Paris St Germain continued their march towards the Ligue 1 title with a 4-1 win at home against Olympique Lyonnais on Sunday with all the goals coming in an explosive first half.

Runaway leaders PSG moved to 66 points, 11 ahead of second-placed AS Monaco with five matches left, while Lyon are eighth with 41 points.

PSG struck twice within six minutes with Lyon's Nemanja Matic deflecting a cross into his own net after three minutes, before Lucas Beraldo doubled the hosts' lead.

Goncalo Ramos headed in the

third goal for PSG after 32 minutes before Ernest Nuamah pulled one back for Lyon five minutes later with a well-placed shot into the corner from just outside the box.

Ramos scored his second three minutes before the break when he ran into the box unmarked to slide in a low cross.

Both sides produced chances in the second half, but neither managed to add more goals.

Lyon will have a chance for revenge when the two sides face each other in the French Cup final on May 25.

## Liverpool Beat Fulham 3-1 to Climb Level With Arsenal

LONDON (Reuters) - Liverpool climbed level on points with Arsenal at the top of the Premier League table with a 3-1 victory over Fulham at Craven Cottage on Sunday, thanks to goals from Trent Alexander-Arnold, Ryan Gravenberch and Diogo Jota.

Liverpool trail Arsenal on goal difference with both on 74 points with five games remaining, however holders Manchester City, who are third on 73 points, have a game in hand.

A week after Crystal Palace had dealt Liverpool's title hopes a crushing blow with a 1-0 defeat, Sunday's victory infused Juergen Klopp's men with renewed hope.

Alexander-Arnold, in his first league start since Feb 10, curled a stunning free kick into the top corner in the 32nd minute that keeper Bernd Leno had little chance of stopping.

It was the England interna-

tional's sixth direct free-kick goal.

In a title fight with no room for error, Alexander-Arnold called the victory "huge".

"At this point of the season, you don't (always) get the results you want. It was a very important result for us. We need five big ones, five finals," he said.

Timothy Castagne, however, drew Fulham level when he fired home just before the break with a side-footed shot past keeper Alisson.

Gravenberch, a summer signing, put the Reds back on top in the 53rd minute, when Harvey Elliott pounced on a loose Fulham pass across the centre of the pitch. He rolled it to Gravenberch, who curled a shot inside the far post for his first league goal.

Jota sealed the win in the 72nd minute with his 100th English club career goal across all



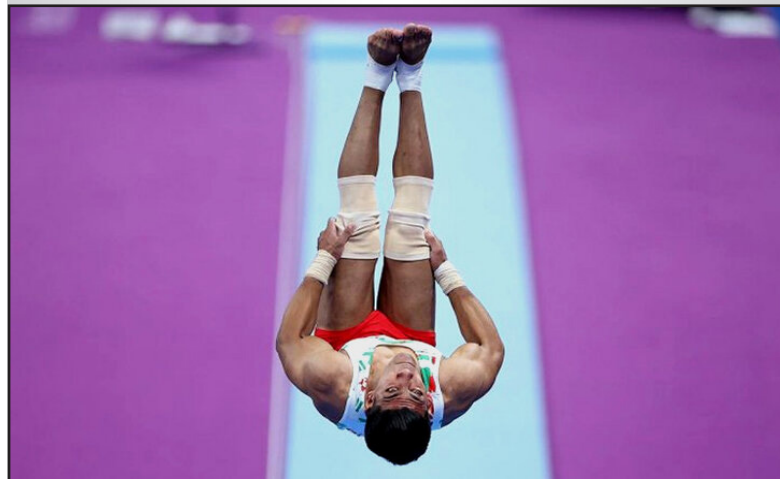
competitions with a low strike inside the far post after a pass from Cody Gakpo.

The match was three days after Liverpool were eliminated from the Europa League by Atalanta in the quarterfinals, and Klopp started with talisman Mohamed Salah, Darwin Nunez and Alexis Mac Allister on the bench until they came on as 74th-minute substitutes.

Liverpool play two more away games in the next six days, against Everton in the Merseyside derby on Wednesday and at West Ham United on Saturday.

With Manchester City not playing until Thursday when they visit Brighton, Liverpool could move four points ahead of their rivals albeit having played two games more.

## Mahdi Olfati Secures Olympics Games Berth in Gymnastic



TEHRAN – Iranian artistic gymnast Mahdi Olfati secured a berth at the 2024 Olympic Games.

Olfati will be the first Iranian gymnast to compete at the Games in 60 years, Tehran Times reported.

Though the gymnast failed to compete in the Doha final, Olfati had done enough at the first three World Cups to remain as the two atop the men's Vault leader board, guaranteeing him a trip to the Games.

The 2024 Summer Olympics will bring a total of 318 gymnasts (192 in artistic, 94 in rhythmic and 32 in trampoline) together.

The 2024 Olympics will be held from July 26 to Aug. 11 in Paris.

## Top-Seeded Thunder Edge Pelicans 94-92



Oklahoma City Thunder guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (2) drives past New Orleans Pelicans center Jonas Valanciunas, left, and forward Herbert Jones (5) in the first half of Game 1 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series, Sunday, April 21, 2024, in Oklahoma City.

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Gilgeous-Alexander scored 28 points, including the go-ahead basket in the final minute, and the top-seeded Thunder edged the New Orleans Pelicans 94-92 in Game 1 of their first-round Western Conference playoff series Sunday night.

New Orleans' CJ McCollum missed a leaning 3-pointer in the closing seconds and the Thunder held on to win their first home playoff game since 2019.

Jalen Williams scored 19 points and Chet Holmgren added 15 points, 11 rebounds and five blocks for the Thunder, who will host Game 2 on Wednesday night.

Trey Murphy III scored 21 points, McCollum had 20 and Jonas Valanciunas added 13 points and 20 rebounds for the Pelicans. Zion Williamson, New Orleans' leading scorer in the regular season, sat out with a strained left hamstring.

Gilgeous-Alexander made an off-balance jumper in the paint with 32.5 seconds left to break a 90-all tie and was fouled on the play. With the crowd chanting "M-V-P!" Gilgeous-Alexander made the free throw to put Oklahoma City ahead 93-90.

McCollum's mid-range jumper made it 93-92.

Holmgren was fouled with 14 seconds left. He missed the first free throw and made the second

to put the Thunder ahead 94-92 and set up McCollum's final shot. Thunder rookie Cason Wallace forced him to scramble and take a difficult shot.

The energy from the Oklahoma City fans — most wearing white Thunder T-shirts — was off the charts, and Holmgren brought them to a fever pitch by opening the scoring with a 3-pointer.

"It was amazing," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "They were exactly what I expected. ... They were perfect."

The game was tied at 17 at the end of the first quarter and tied at 43 at halftime. The Thunder held New Orleans to 34% shooting in the first half, but missed a lot of open shots. Gilgeous-Alexander scored 11 points before the break.

New Orleans led 50-48 in the third quarter before the Thunder went on an 11-0 run over a three-minute span that put them up 59-50.

New Orleans recovered to briefly take the lead, but Oklahoma City closed the third quarter strong. Isaiah Joe hit a 3-pointer with 6.6 seconds left in the quarter to put the Thunder up 74-68 heading into the fourth.

New Orleans missed several opportunities to seize control in the final quarter.

It was a defensive battle between teams that both averaged more than 115 points in the regular season.