

# Iran Edge Kyrgyzstan in World Cup Qualifier



TEHRAN – Iran had to dig deep to overcome Kyrgyzstan 3-2 in the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 Group A clash on Tuesday to move

closer to a place in the FIFA World Cup 26 Finals.

Leading 2-0 at the break, Iran had to withstand a Kyrgyzstan

fightback in the second half before Sardar Azmoun struck the winner to take them to 16 points as Team Melli stayed three clear at the top.

Iran took the lead after only 12 minutes when Saied Ezatolahi's header from a corner kick was saved by Erzhan Tokotaev, only for the rebound to fall kindly for Mehdi Taremi to slam home.

The visitors turned a defensive situation to their advantage in the 33rd minute when they broke after a Kyrgyzstan corner kick with Azmoun releasing Saleh Hardani, with the experienced defender coolly slotting home past Tokotaev.

Almazbekov's cross cum shot in the 50th minute had Alireza Bei-

ranvand tracking back to tip over and from the ensuing corner kick, the home side pulled a goal back through Kojo's header.

Lifted by the goal, Kyrgyzstan poured men forward and drew level in the 64th minute when Odilzhon Abdurakhmanov was fouled in the box with Kojo stepping up to send his penalty past Beiranvand.

The moment of quality Iran were seeking finally came in the 76th minute from a Milad Mohammadi cross that was met with a thumping header by Azmoun to secure Iran's fifth win.

Iran will meet the United Arab Emirates when the AFC Asian Qualifiers resume in March with Kyrgyzstan to take on Uzbekistan.

## U-23 Wheelchair Basketballers Beat Saudi Arabia at Asian Championship



TEHRAN – Iran defeated Saudi Arabia 76-24 at the 2024 International Wheelchair Basketball Federation (IWBF) U-23 Asia Oceania Championship.

Iran started the competition on Monday, defeating the Philippines 80-28 but lost to Australia 71-48 later in the day.

Iran also lost to Japan 65-58 in their third match.

The Iranian team will play Thailand and India in the following days.

The championship has brought together seven nations – Iran, Australia, India, Japan, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and Thailand—to compete for the coveted title and the spots in the 2025 IWBF Men's U-23 World Championship.

The top three teams will qualify for the 2025 IWBF Men's U-23 World Championship.

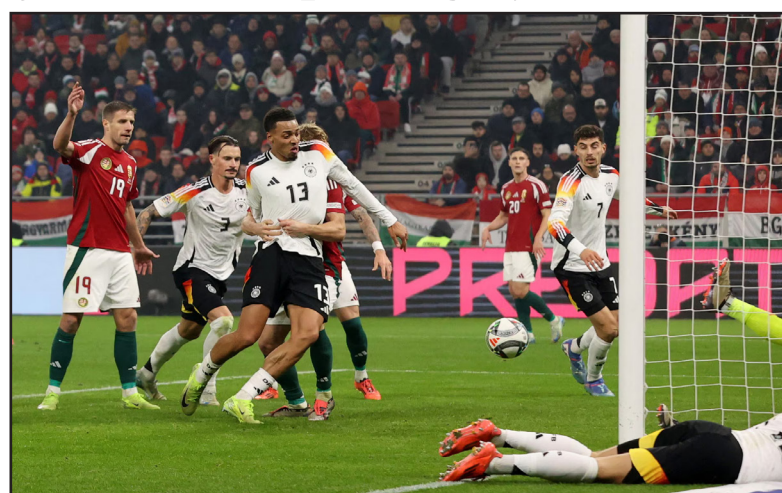
The 2024 IWBF U-23 AOZ Championship is being held in Bangkok, Thailand from Nov. 17 to 22.

## Germany Held After Last-Gasp Hungary Goal in Final Group Match

BUDAPEST (Reuters) - Already-qualified Germany conceded a stoppage-time equalizer after conceding a penalty and had to settle for a 1-1 draw away to Hungary in their final Nations League group match on Tuesday.

Hungary's Dominik Szoboszlai scored from the spot with the last kick of the game to cancel out Felix Nmecha's 76th minute goal. The hosts already had a place in the League A/B playoffs.

Germany had sealed top spot in Group A3 with Saturday's 7-0 demolition of Bosnia and Herzegovina so coach Julian Nagelsmann rotated heavily with nine changes to his lineup in Hungary.



"I don't really don't want to talk too much about today's game. We did some things right and some other things not," said Nagelsmann.

"After winning 7-0 (against Bosnia) and with nine changes, we took some time to get organized. But you have to look at the big picture. If you

see how Hungary celebrated the equalizer then it is a compliment to our team," he added.

Germany, who finished top on 14 points and advance to the quarter-finals with the Netherlands, who also drew 1-1 away to Bosnia and Herzegovina, lacked the explosiveness of the previous match and did not easily find spaces against the Hungarians.

Instead it was the hosts, without assistant coach Adam Szalai who is recovering after collapsing during Saturday's match against the Netherlands, who set the pace and tested Alexander Nuebel with shots from Andras Schaefer and Zsolt Nagy.

## Clippers Hold Off Warriors 102-99



Los Angeles Clippers guard James Harden, right, tries to get past Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Nov. 18, 2024, in Inglewood, Calif.

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Norman Powell scored 23 points and the Los Angeles Clippers held off the Golden State Warriors 102-99 on Monday night to win their fifth in a row at home.

James Harden added 12 points and 16 assists for the Clippers, who had lost their first four games at their new arena. Ivica Zubac had 17 rebounds.

Stephen Curry led the Warriors with 26 points and An-

drew Wiggins added 22. Their only lead came on a 3-pointer by Lindy Waters III to start the game, but they closed within three points in the game's final minutes. Their three-game winning streak ended.

The Warriors nearly caught the Clippers, who were on the second night of a back-to-back, in the closing seconds. But Curry missed a potential tying 3 and Gary Payton II also missed on the Warriors' final shot of the game.

## Reports: Manchester City Manager Guardiola Signs Contract Extension

LONDON (Reuters) - Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has signed a new contract to extend his stay at the Premier League champions until 2026, British media reports said on Tuesday.

Guardiola's current deal, signed in 2022, was due to expire at the end of this season. The new contract reportedly includes an option for a further year, according to The Athletic.

The 53-year-old, who joined the club in 2016, has led City to six league titles, two FA Cups and a Champions League triumph as part of their treble win in 2023, along with a FIFA Club World Cup and four League Cups.



Manchester City's head coach Pep Guardiola

The Spaniard managed youth club Barcelona from 2008-12 and spent three years in charge of German giants Bayern Munich, winning three

league titles at each club, before joining City.

City are second in the Premier League table, five points behind Liverpool after 11 games.

## Gyokeres Scores Four as Sweden Crush Azerbaijan

STOCKHOLM (The Guardian) - The Sweden forward Viktor Gyokeres netted four goals on Tuesday to overtake Erling Haaland as the top scorer in the Nations League.

Gyokeres started the evening with five goals from five Nations League games. His third goal in the 6-0 win against Azerbaijan, in the 58th minute, took the Sporting forward to eight in this edition of the competition. Gyokeres, one of the most in-demand players in the world, did not stop after overtaking Haaland and added his fourth goal on 70 minutes.

Azerbaijan, already guaranteed to finish bottom of the group and be relegated, instantly lost possession from the restart and that allowed Gyokeres to complete his hat-trick before he grabbed his fourth in the 70th minute.

Gyokeres, who played in the



Sweden's Viktor Gyokeres after his fourth goal in Tuesday evening's 6-0 win against Azerbaijan.

English Championship with Swansea City and Coventry City before moving to Portugal, has scored 23 club goals for Sporting this season and nine goals for Sweden in 2024-25.

He netted a hat-trick in Sporting's 4-1 win over Manchester City in the Champions League

this month in Ruben Amorim's penultimate match in charge before joining Manchester United.

Gyokeres, 26, has been linked with a move following Amorim to Old Trafford in the summer and has an £83mn release clause in his contract.

Argentina's Lautaro Martinez scores his side's opening goal against Peru during a FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifying soccer match at La Bombonera stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on Nov 19, 2024.

BUENOS AIRES (Reuters) - A second-half strike from Lautaro Martinez gave Argentina a 1-0 home win over Peru in South American qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup on Tuesday, with the striker's goal moving him into a tie with Diego Maradona as the country's fifth all-time scorer.

Martinez notched his 32nd international goal 10 minutes after the break, capitalizing on a fine cross from Lionel Messi to fire home a half-volley into the top-right corner.

"I'm happy because my whole family came and I always want to

give my best. This year was very positive and luckily we closed it with a victory," Martinez told local TV.

The World Cup holders lead the CONMEBOL standings with 25 points, five clear of Uruguay. Peru are bottom of the 10-team table with seven points after 12 games.

The top six qualify automatically for the World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada.

"We are Copa America champions, we are first in the qualifiers. We have to be proud," Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez said.