

Iran's Mohammadi, Wushu Sanda Rising Star of Year



TEHRAN – Iran's Amir Hesam Mohammadi was recognized as the IWUF Wushu Sanda Rising Star of the Year. He has been practicing wushu and competing for nine years in sanda events. In 2023 he won the sanda gold medal at the 11th Asian Junior Wushu Championships, and in 2024 he won

the gold medal at the 9th World Junior Wushu Championships. Amir Hesam has an exceptional talent in Wushu Sanda, having participated in two Asian Junior Wushu Championships, where he held gold medals in both events. Furthermore, at the 9th World Junior Wushu Championships

in 2024, he demonstrated remarkable skill by completing one of his competitions in a single round and overcoming all professional competitors within two rounds.

He was recognized as the IWUF Wushu Sanda Rising Star of the Year and gained popularity with a global audience.

"I am absolutely thrilled to receive this title. It is a great honor to be recognized as a rising star by wushu enthusiasts worldwide, and I deeply appreciate the support and encouragement from fans across the globe," he told the International Wushu Federation (IWUF).

"Winning the gold medal was an incredibly meaningful achievement for me, as I dedicated a great deal of effort to it. This victory holds immense value in my journey as an athlete. I have no doubt that this success played a key role in my selection for the Rising Star award, as it demonstrated my commit-

ment to the sport and resonated with my supporters," he added.

"My primary goal for 2025 is to compete in the Asian Championships, where I aim to defend my title and secure another championship victory. I am fully committed to giving my best performance and achieving this important milestone.

Asked how he hopes to inspire your generation and future generations of wushu practitioners, Mohammadi answered, "I want young athletes—both in my generation and the ones to come—to understand that with dedication, perseverance, and hard work, anything is possible. Success does not come overnight, but those who remain committed to their goals will eventually see the rewards of their efforts. I hope my journey serves as a source of motivation for many to keep pushing forward, no matter the challenges they face."

Yousefi's Throw-Ins Among AFC U-17 Extraordinary Action



TEHRAN – Muhammad Reza Yousefi's throw-ins in the AFC U-17 Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2025 have been introduced among the extraordinary actions in the event by the-AFC.com.

Iranian fans have seen it before. Nader Mohammadi and Milad Mohammadi have both previously captured the imagi-

nation with somersault throw-ins, and Yousefi is following in their footsteps.

The defender thrilled with a series of acrobatic throw-ins that gave a fresh dimension to his side's game as he not only turned routine throw-ins into serious threats but also made it a spectacle to watch.

Newcastle Go Third With 2-0 Win Over 10-Man Chelsea



Newcastle United's Sandro Tonali scores their first goal

NEWCASTLE (Reuters) - An early goal from Sandro Tonali and a late Bruno Guimaraes effort gave Newcastle United a 2-0 home win over Chelsea on Sunday that moves the Magpies a step closer to Champions League football next season, with Blues striker Nicholas Jackson denting his side's hopes by being sent off in the first half.

The win leaves Newcastle in third spot on 66 points, three ahead of Chelsea, who hold the fifth and final Champions League spot with two games to play.

Aston Villa are level with Chelsea on points, with Nottingham Forest, who were playing already-relegated Leicester City later on Sunday, two points further back.

Newcastle were good value for their win but it was Jackson's moment of madness that robbed Chelsea of their best goal-scoring option in a game the Conference League finalists could not afford to lose if they wanted to be at Eu-

rope's top table next season.

The Blues got off to a bad start when midfielder Tonali ghosted in at the far post to steer home a pass from Jacob Murphy in the second minute, delighting the home crowd as they basked in the bright sunshine.

Newcastle's task appeared to get easier when Jackson had his initial yellow card upgraded to a red in the 35th minute after a long VAR review, with the replay showing that the Senegalese striker had looked in the direction of Newcastle's Dan Burn before leading with his elbow towards the defender's face.

Despite going down to 10 men, Chelsea dominated for much of the second half, forcing Eddie Howe to make a number of changes to bolster his side's defense and, after withstanding Chelsea's onslaught, Guimaraes finally sealed the three points with a deflected shot from outside the box in the 90th minute.

Foolad Sirjan Volleyballers Defeat Nakhon Ratchasima Qmin

TEHRAN – Foolad Sirjan Iranian defeated Nakhon Ratchasima Qmin C VC of Thailand in dramatic five-setter 25-17, 22-25, 25-17, 19-25, 15-11 in Pool C in the inaugural AVC Men's Champions League on Sunday.

In the match, held in Osaka's at Panasonic Arena, Amir Hossein Esfandiar scored a match-high 25 points including 21 kills, one block and 3 aces for Foolad Sirjan, while Ali Hijipour added another 24 points for the team.



khon Ratchasima Qmin C VC with 21 points from 19 attacks,

one block and one ace. "It was the first game of the

competition, so, very important to win. It was not easy due to the timing. Playing at 10am is not easy for us, but although we won in five sets, it's still important. Our next match remains the same as we have to play at 10am again. However, we have to win," Foolad Sirjan's Earvin Ngapeth said.

Nakhon Ratchasima Qmin C VC will next face Chinese Taipei's Taichung Bank on Monday, while Foolad Sirjan will wrap up the pool play campaign against the same opponent on Tuesday.

Celtics Rout Knicks 115-93 in Eastern Conference



New York Knicks' Cameron Payne, right, shoots over Boston Celtics' Luke Kornet, center, during an NBA basketball second-round playoff series, in New York.

NEW YORK (AP) — The Celtics' 3-point touch came back in Game 3, so

the Knicks didn't.

Jayson Tatum had 22 points, nine rebounds and seven assists, Payton Pritchard scored 23 points and Boston easily got its first win in the Eastern Conference semifinals by routing New York 115-93 on Saturday.

The Celtics went 20 for 40 from 3-point range after going just 25 for 100 in their two losses in Boston, when they blew 20-point leads in the second half of both games. The defending NBA champions went ahead by 31 in this one and there was never anything resembling a comeback for the Knicks.

"You've got to beat us four times. That's what it comes down to. Not twice, not once, not three," Celtics

forward Jaylen Brown said. "You've got to win four games, so there's a lot of basketball to be played."

Tatum, an All-Star who shot just 12 for 42 overall in Boston, and Pritchard, the NBA Sixth Man of the Year, both made five 3s.

Brown scored 19 points and Derrick White had 17 for the Celtics, who will try to tie the series Monday night in Game 4 before returning to Boston for Game 5 on Wednesday.

Jalen Brunson scored 27 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 21 points and 15 rebounds for the Knicks, who blew a 2-0 lead in this round last year and are still seeking their first conference finals appearance since 2000.

Sabalenka Battles Past Kenin, Into Rome Last 16

ROME (AFP) – Aryna Sabalenka reached the last 16 of the Italian Open on Sunday after battling back from a set down to beat Sofia Kenin 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

World number one Sabalenka came through a tough match with former Australian Open winner Kenin to set up a clash with Marta Kostyuk, who beat Leylah Fernandez 6-4, 6-2.

The Belarusian has a great opportunity to claim her first Rome title, and third 1000 series crown of the season, after three-time winner Iga Swiatek was dumped out by Danielle Collins on Saturday.

Sabalenka has reached the final of her last four tournaments, winning in both Miami and Madrid, and is now hot favorite at the Foro Italico

even after Sunday's below-par display.

Last year's losing finalist was not at the races in the first set, consistently misplacing her backhands before appearing to complain about the surface on centre court.

And she continued to lament her game even as she slowly turned the match around, breaking Kenin at the seventh time of asking in the second game of the third set before immediately being broken back to love.

But in the end Sabalenka had too much for Kenin, showing her fighting spirit even while battling against her own performance.

Carlos Alcaraz will continue his bid for a first Rome title when he takes to centre court to face Laslo

Djere in the last match of the day.

Men's third seed Alcaraz could face Jannik Sinner in the final with the Italian sweeping aside Mariano Navone on Saturday in his first match since the end of his three-month doping ban.

Arthur Fils came back from a set down to beat former Rome finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 in a thrilling match in the Grand Stand Arena.

Frenchman Fils set up potential a clash with reigning champion Alexander Zverev, who takes on Lithuanian qualifier Vilius Gaubas.

Daniil Medvedev swept past Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-1 and next could face home hope Lorenzo Musetti who follows Sabalenka on Centre court against Brandon Nakashima.

Zarco Wins Chaotic French Grand Prix

LE MANS (Reuters) - Johann Zarco became the first Frenchman in 71 years to win the French Grand Prix after the LCR Honda rider's decision to start with wet tyres paid off handsomely on Sunday in front of a sellout crowd of more than 120,000 fans at Le Mans.

In a chaotic race where riders swapped bikes multiple times due to rain, Zarco won by a huge margin of nearly 20 seconds ahead of Ducati's Marc Marquez while Gresini Racing's Fermin Aldeguer came third for his first MotoGP podium.

Zarco was 17th on lap one when he narrowly avoided a collision and lost places as he went off track. But as confusion and chaos reigned in the rain, the Frenchman slowly made his way through the grid before taking the lead and never looking back.

Zarco is the first Frenchman to win at the iconic circuit since Pierre Monneret in 1954 and the 34-year-old celebrated by performing a back-flip off



Johann Zarco in action during the MotoGP race

the barrier in front of the grandstand as the fans chanted his name.

The local fans had come hoping to see another Frenchman, polesitter and 2021 world champion Fabio Quartararo, potentially win from pole position but it was the veteran Honda rider who gave them a reason to celebrate.

His victory also ended Ducati's

winning streak in MotoGP at 22 races as Honda took a rare win.

"Hard to believe, I still don't understand what is happening," Zarco said.

"The last laps, they were quite long. I think I need a bit of time but it's just magic because with the rain tyres at the beginning, we had to control."