

Iranian girls seal place in world junior handball meet



Sports Desk

Iran secured a place in next year's IHF Women's Junior Handball World Championship thanks to a fifth-spot finish in the

Asian U20 Championship in Hong Kong. Iranian girls defeated Kazakhstan 27-24 on Saturday to celebrate a second successive qualification for the world event - host-

ed by North Macedonia next summer. Fatemeh Merikhi bagged a game-high eight goals for Iran, followed by Ma'edeh Oshaqi and Nastaran Koudzari-Farahani, who

scored seven and five respectively. Kuandykova Zhanerke and Berenda Yelena topped the scoring for Kazakhstan with six goals apiece. However, the star of the

show was definitely Iranian goalkeeper Elnaz Yarmohammadi, whose heroics inspired her team to a 15-12 lead in the first half. "We played against a formidable Kazakhstan team



Iranian goalkeeper Elnaz Yarmohammadi (12) celebrates with her teammates after winning the Match MVP award in a victory over Kazakhstan in the Asian Women's Junior (U20) Handball Championship in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong, on July 8, 2023.

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with some experienced players. Thank God we came out victorious and I'm so pleased with my performance today. The qualification for the World Championship was truly a result of teamwork and solidarity among all members of the squad," Yarmohammadi said after picking up her third Match MVP award in the competition.

Iran kicked off its campaign in Hong Kong with a 29-23 defeat against China but bounced back to edge Uzbekistan 37-36.

Iran was then beaten 28-18 by the Chinese Taipei before a 39-31 victory over India saw Fatemeh Mohammadkhani's side finish third in Group B.

Iranian girls outclassed the host 45-16 for a place in the fifth-place match. South Korea, China, the Chinese Taipei, and Japan had already booked a berth for the World Championship by reaching the semifinals in Hong Kong.

Reds reunion: Persepolis signs Iranian Kan'anizadegan



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Iranian international center-back Mohamad-Hossein Kan'anizadegan rejoined Iranian league and cup champion Persepolis as a free agent. This will be a third spell in the Tehran Reds' shirt for the 29-year-old defender, who lifted two top-flight trophies with the club before signing for Qatar Stars League side Al Ahli in 2021.

The Iranian scored seven goals in 41 outings for Al Ahli, which finished eighth in the Qatari league's 12-team table last season. "I'm so thrilled to be back home. I had offers from the Saudi league and the UAE but Persepolis was always my top priority," said the Iranian after signing a two-year contract.

Kan'ani is the third summer signing for head coach Yahya Golmohammadi after striker Shahab Zahedi and ex-Sepahan midfielder Masoud Rigi.

Kan'ani, who has 37 international caps under his belt and was part of the team in the last two World Cups as well as the 2019 Asian Cup, will compete with Iran teammate Morteza Pouraliganji and Georgian Giorgi Gvelesiani - two integral parts to the Reds' domestic double winning campaign - for a place in the starting XI.



Carlos Alcaraz plays a shot through his legs during his Wimbledon third-round victory over Nicolas Jarry in London, Britain, on July 8, 2023.

● TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS

ing Jarry led 3-0 and 4-2, although Alcaraz fought back to seal a memorable win against the 27-year-old.

Third seed Medvedev is most comfortable on hard courts but said after the second round that, while not totally at home on the grass, he is "knocking on the door".

Medvedev will face Jiri Lehecka in the last 16 after the Czech Republic player eliminated American 16th seed Tommy Paul, winning a five-set encounter that lasted four hours, four minutes.

Wimbledon: Alcaraz wins thriller to battle through to last 16

BBC - World number one Carlos Alcaraz held off a spirited challenge from 25th seed Nicolas Jarry to move into the last 16 - and match his best Wimbledon run.

The 20-year-old Spaniard won a four-set thriller 6-3 6-7 (6-8) 6-3 7-5 on Centre Court in an absorbing third-round tie that took almost four hours.

Alcaraz will play 2021 runner-up Matteo Berrettini of Italy after he beat German 19th seed Alexander Zverev. Elsewhere, third seed Daniil Medvedev defeated Hungary's Marton Fucsovics 4-6 6-3 6-4-4.

Fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, playing for the fifth successive day after beating Andy Murray on Friday in a match that began on Thursday, beat Serbia's Laslo Djere.

Tsitsipas won 6-4 7-6 (7-5) 6-4 and will meet unseeded American Chris Eubanks, who won three tie-breaks to overcome Australia's Chris O'Connell.

Berrettini beat Zverev 6-3 7-6 (7-2) 7-6 (7-5), despite a rain delay on Court One as they had to wait for the roof to be closed during the second set after it had been opened before the match started.

Humid indoor conditions

Alcaraz broke Jarry's serve in the seventh game to take the opening set, but lost the second on a tie-break.

The match began under the roof and tournament rules meant it had to stay closed despite the hot and sweaty conditions, with a number of



spectators repeatedly using handheld fans in an attempt to keep cool. Alcaraz instantly got back

on track in the third set, producing some excellent passing shots and delicate drop shots as he broke in the

fourth game to go two sets to one ahead. But the fourth did not go entirely to plan as the big-serve

NBA's winningest coach Popovich signs five-year extension with Spurs

AP - Gregg Popovich evidently doesn't plan to leave the San Antonio Spurs anytime soon.

The NBA's winningest coach has signed a five-year contract to remain coach and president of the team, the Spurs announced Saturday. There has often been speculation about the 74-year-old Popovich's future, though after the team

landed the chance to draft Victor Wembanyama last month it was presumed that the five-time champion would continue coaching.

And now, it's official. The Spurs announced the move in a two-sentence release, not detailing any of the terms, without any quotes from Popovich or team personnel. Popovich took over as

coach of the Spurs in December 1996. He's won 1,366 games - 31 more than Don Nelson, who was the career wins leader before Popovich caught him. He's also third in playoff wins with 170, behind only Phil Jackson (229) and Pat Riley (171). And Popovich is one of only five coaches with at least five championships; Jackson won 11, Red Auerbach won nine

and Popovich is in a group with Riley and John Kundla as winners of five. He'll enter the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame next month. "His ability to connect and spend time and bounce between the really detailed development of basketball players and the bigger picture of developing people is just so impressive," Spurs man-

aging partner Peter J. Holt said in May.

"I think no matter what Pop does, he's going to find a way to do that because that's in his heart. And I'm excited to see whatever the next phase is in that journey."

Popovich, along with all the wins and the five titles, also won an Olympic gold medal at the Tokyo Games that were played in 2021.

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