

Iran beats Uzbekistan for Asian U16 volleyball crown



Iranian players and the coaching staff celebrate after a 3-1 victory over Uzbekistan in the final of the Asian Men's U16 Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on July 29, 2023. [volleyball.ir](#)

Saudi league has 'changed transfer market', Guardiola says



MICHAEL REGAN/
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BBC - The Saudi Pro League's financial clout has "changed the market" for transfers and elite clubs "need to be aware of what is happening", says Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola. After luring Portugal star Cristiano Ronaldo to Saudi Arabia in December, the league has attracted several big-name players this summer.

That group includes Algeria's Riyad Mahez, who left City to join Al-Ahli.

"Saudi Arabia has changed the market," said Guardiola.

"A few months ago when Cristiano [Ronaldo] was the only one to go, no-one thought this many top, top players would play in the Saudi league.

"In the future there will be more and that's why clubs need to be aware of what is happening.

"Riyad got an incredible offer and that's why we could not say 'don't do it'."

City agreed to sell Mahrez in a deal worth up to £30m while Allan Saint-Maximin is set to become the next player to leave the Premier League for Saudi Arabia when he joins Mahrez at Al-Ahli.

Bayern Munich's Sadio Mane is in talks over a potential move, having received an offer from Al-Nassr; while reigning Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema has already followed former Real Madrid team-mate Ronaldo to Saudi Arabia.

Earlier this week, Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said he "wouldn't be too concerned at the moment" about Saudi Arabia's growing influence in football.

"It is not about the threat, it is a reality," Guardiola added during City's pre-season tour of Asia.

"They want to create a strong league and so far they are the league who can do it.

"The Premier League spent more than the others because the organisation of the Premier League is better and the broadcasts and the sponsors are higher than the other leagues, so the clubs can spend what they have.

"Right now, the Saudi league, I don't know how long they will sustain it, but the feeling is that they will stay. The players want to take this experience to play in that league and they are able to do it."

Guardiola added that City "are not looking for a replacement for Riyad in terms of skill because every player is different."

"We will see what happens with loan players, and which players stay here. A few things are going to happen."

Sports Desk

Iran made a clean sweep of seven wins with a victory over Uzbekistan to lift the trophy in the first Asian Men's U16 Championship in Tashkent.

A day after an epic comeback against the Chinese Taipei in the semifinals secured a place at next year's U17 World Championship for Iran, Arash Sadeqiani's

boys came from behind to beat the host 3-1 (19-25, 25-22, 25-16, 25-22) in the inaugural final showdown at the Universal Sports Complex - a repeat of the result when the two sides met in the last-eight pool stage.

The triumph rounded off a glorious 14 days for the Iranian age-group volleyball, after the country's under-21 team had defeated Italy in a five-set thriller in

Manama, Bahrain, for a second world title in four years. Mostafa Sedaqat delivered 16 points from 13 attacks and three aces for Iran, while Mohammad-Raouf Khoshhal and Kamyab Abdollahi contributed with 13 and 11 points respectively. There was further joy in the awarding ceremony for Iranian Khoshhal, who was named the Most Valuable Player of the event,

while sharing the Best Outside Hitter award with the host's Ogabek Haydarov, who scored a match-high 19 points - including 18 attacks - in the final.

Khoshhal was joined by two Iranian teammates in the Dream Team, as Taha Mohseni was picked as the Best Middle Blocker - alongside Liou Guan-peng of the Chinese Taipei - with Masoud Eimeri tak-

ing home the Best Libero award.

Chinese Taipei's Huang Pin-Yen (Best Opposite Spiker) and Uzbekistan's Shohruhxon Halimov (Best Setter) were also rewarded with a place in the Dream Team.

"Thank God all of Iranian players' efforts paid off," Iran coach Sadeqiani said after the match, adding: "My players worked hard for five months and had a winning

mentality throughout the competition."

"The next generation of the Iranian volleyball is truly blessed with brave and diligent players."

Earlier in the day, the Chinese Taipei walked away with a 3-1 (25-13, 18-25, 25-23, 25-22) victory over Pakistan to finish third - joining Iran and Uzbekistan in next year's U17 World Championship.

Iran U17 to begin GR title defense at World Championships

Sports Desk

Iran will be chasing a second successive Greco-Roman crown when the Wrestling U17 World Championships get underway in Istanbul, Turkey, today.

The defending champion will be represented by four reigning Asian gold medalists in Mohammad-Meraj Mohmadi (51kg), Mohammadreza Gholami (55kg),

and Aliakbar Asghari (92kg), as well as Amirhossein Abdevali, who will be the biggest threat to home-favorite Cemal Bakir's title defense in the 110kg weight class.

Gholami will also be among the favorites for the 55kg gold, though he will be challenged by Uzbekistan's Aytjan Khalmakhanov, the 51kg gold medalist in 2022.

Payam Ahmadi, meanwhile, will be looking to build on his bronze-winning campaign in Rome last year when taking part at the 48kg contests.

Alireza Amiri (45kg), Ali Dezfulinejad (60kg), Amir-Mehdi Saeedinava (65kg), Ahmadreza Mohammadian (71kg), and Alireza Abbasi (80kg) are the other wrestlers in the Iranian squad in Istanbul.



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Crawford wins undisputed welterweight title with beatdown of Spence



THE GUARDIAN - Terence Crawford delivered a shocking beatdown of Errol Spence Jr. in their long-awaited unification bout on Saturday night, becoming the first undisputed welterweight champion in nearly four decades and staking a credible claim as the world's best boxer regardless of weight. Crawford dropped Spence in the second round and twice more in the seventh before referee Harvey Dock intervened at the 2:32 mark of round nine.

The matchup between undefeated American stars more than five years in the

making was billed as the best fight that boxing could deliver. But after an opening round that unfolded on even terms, Crawford stamped his name into history with an extraordinary performance of power, precision and ring generalship that made an elite opponent look like a novice.

Crawford (40-0, 31 KOs) became the first fighter to hold all of the recognized world titles at welterweight since 1986, when Lloyd Honeyghan stopped Donald Curry at Caesars Atlantic City to capture the WBA, WBC and IBF titles in one of

the great upsets in British boxing history.

"I only dreamed of being a world champion," Crawford said. "I'm an overachiever. Nobody believed in me when I was coming up, but I made everybody a believer. I want to thank Spence and his team because without him none of this would have been possible."

Terence Crawford (L) punches Errol Spence Jr. during round five of the World Welterweight Championship bout at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, NV, US, on July 29, 2023. [JOHN LOCHER/AP](#)