

Neville critical of United's handling of Greenwood investigation



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BBC – Gary Neville says Manchester United's handling of the Mason Greenwood investigation has been "pretty horrible" and lacked strong leadership. Greenwood, 21, will leave the club by mutual agreement after a six-month internal investigation.

It came after charges against the player, including attempted rape and assault, were dropped in February.

"It was clear from day one that he wouldn't play for Manchester United again," said former defender Neville.

Speaking on Sky Sports Monday Night Football, Neville, 48, who made 602 appearances for United, added: "The process in getting there has been pretty horrible. When you have significant situations, and difficult situations like this, it requires strong authoritative leadership. And that comes from the very top. Manchester United don't have that."

Fellow pundit and former England midfielder Karen Carney said the matter was "handled poorly" and it was a "really uneasy situation for me".

England international Greenwood was arrested in January 2022 following allegations surrounding material which was published online.

In a statement, Greenwood accepted he had "made mistakes" and took his "share of responsibility", but added: "I did not do the things I was accused of."

United have said "based on the evidence available to us, we have concluded that the material posted online did not provide a full picture and that Mason did not commit the offences in respect of which he was originally charged", adding: "All those involved, including Mason, recognise the difficulties with him recommencing his career at Manchester United."

An announcement of the investigation's results was expected before United's opening Premier League game of the season against Wolves on 14 August, but the decision was delayed amid fierce debate about Greenwood's potential reintegration at Old Trafford.

The club said they wanted to consult with their women's team, some of whom were part of England's World Cup squad playing in Australia, before announcing a decision about Greenwood's future.

Asian Volleyball Championship: Iran survives early scare against Iraq, will face Pakistan in knockouts

Sports Desk

Iran had to rally from a first-set upset to defeat Iraq 3-1 (19-25, 25-12, 25-15, 25-14) in Urmia's Ghadir Arena and win Pool A of the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship.

The defending champion, which eased past Hong Kong in straight sets in its opening game, will take on Pakistan in the first round of the knockout stage – comprising 12 teams – today.

Pakistan was beaten in four sets (26-28, 25-20, 32-30, 25-22) by South Korea earlier on Monday but still managed to progress from Pool F, thanks to a three-set victory over Bangladesh on the preceding night.

Prolific opposite-spiker Amin Esmaeilnejad chipped in a game-high 16 points for Iran against the western neighbor, with middle-blocker Mohammad Valizadeh finishing on 11.

"We underestimated Iraq in the first set, which is a weak spot for us. We can't afford to repeat those mistakes in the future games," said Iran head coach Behrouz Ataei, whose team is chasing a fifth title at the competition. "Our tactics didn't really change in the following sets. We just played with more intensity and won by a high margin. We need to keep delivering our routine performance in every game till the very last point," added Ataei, who led his side to the 2021 Asian crown with a final vic-



Iranian middle-blocker Mohammad Valizadeh (27) goes up for a spike during a 3-1 victory over Iraq at the Asian Men's Volleyball Championship in Ghadir Arena, Urmia, Iran, on August 21, 2023.

● PAYAM SANI/volleyball.ir

tory over host Japan on his debut on Iran's bench.

"The Iraqi players gave it their all today and that's why we were caught off guard in the first set," Iranian setter Mohammad-Taher Vadi said, while praising the "superb" home support in the packed Ghadir Arena. Having stepped into the event on the back of a disastrous campaign in July's

Volleyball Nations League – finishing third from bottom in the 16-team table of the preliminary round – Ataei's men will be looking to bounce back with the Asian trophy on home soil ahead of late September's Olympic qualifiers in Rio de Janeiro. Japan, which beat the reigning world champion Italy to the bronze medal in the VNL Finals, remains the favorite

to walk away with the ultimate prize next Sunday.

The outcome of the tournament will contribute to the teams' status in the FIVB World Ranking – a decisive factor in the qualification process for next year's Games in Paris – which convinced Japan to name a full-strength squad, including the formidable trio of Yuki Ishikawa, Ran Takahashi,

and Yuji Nishida, for the visit to Urmia.

Japan overcame Thailand and Uzbekistan without conceding a single set to top Pool B and is expected to come out victorious against Bahrain today.

Iran and Japan will not go head-to-head before the final showdown.

Elsewhere in the knockout phase, China will play India,

with South Korea facing Indonesia.

The winner of the two games will meet on Thursday for a last-four place against Iran or Pakistan.

In the other half of the draw, Iraq and Qatar will square off against the Chinese Taipei and Thailand respectively, with one of the four teams playing Japan or Bahrain in the semifinals.

World Athletics Championships: Sweden's Stahl takes discus gold with dramatic final throw

REUTERS – Olympic champion Daniel Stahl won a dramatic World Athletics Championships discus gold with the final throw on Monday just minutes after Kristjan Ceh thought he had done enough to retain his title when his final throw edged him in front of the Swede.

"I thought, what the hell, now I'm going to answer directly," Stahl told reporters. "It was just to dig in for king and country. I'm very proud of how I handled it. This was my best throw ever. It's very cool. "It's like I got a bit of 'sisu' in me," he added, using a Finnish word for fighting spirit. "I'm not going to give up, instead I'm going to get bigger in the moments."

Five men had gone beyond 70 metres this year but none of the field looked able to threaten it for most of Monday's contest.

On a hot, sultry night Slovenian Ceh led with 69.27 in the second round before Stahl went 10cm further in the fourth.

With only two throw-

ers left to go, Ceh finally crossed the 70 mark with 70.02 but showed only a muted celebration, knowing just what a competitor his big rival is.

Sure enough, Stahl launched the disc 71.46 – the second-longest throw of the year and a championship record – to take gold and add it to the world title he won in 2019 in Doha.

"The competition was so strong – we have five guys (who have thrown over) 70 and eight with 68 so you could never have predicted it," 30-year-old Stahl added. Lithuania's 20-year-old Mykolas Alekna, whose father won the world title twice, took bronze with 68.85.

Third in a row

Elsewhere, American Grant Holloway raced to his third consecutive world 110m hurdles gold medal in dominant fashion.

The 25-year-old, who won in 2019 in Doha and last year in Eugene, led by the first hurdle and was in a virtual race of his own by

the third, cruising to victory in a season's best 12.96 seconds.

Holloway held up three fingers after crossing the finish line, hollering "One-two-three!" to the delighted crowd at the National Athletics Centre in Budapest.

"I'm speechless right now," he said. "Nothing feels like the first one, but this one I'm definitely going to cherish in my heart."

Hansle Parchment of Jamaica closed well to take the silver in 13.07, while Daniel Roberts of the United States crossed in 13.09 for bronze.

The final was missing the world's fastest man this season, Rasheed Broadbell of Jamaica (12.94) who crashed out in the preliminary round.

Holloway, the second-fastest hurdler in history, finished second at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 and said he was using the sour taste of silver as motivation to go one better next year in Paris.

Meanwhile, Burkina Faso's Hugues Fabrice Zango soared to victory in the



Sweden's Daniel Stahl is in action during the men's discus throw final at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary, on August 21, 2023.

● PAWEŁ KOPCZYŃSKI/REUTERS

men's triple jump for the country's first-ever World Athletics Championships gold, while 18-year-old title favourite Jaydon Hibbert of Jamaica pulled out injured.

Zango, ranked No. 2 in the world, jumped 17.64 metres on his fifth of six attempts to overtake Cuba's Lazaro Martinez, who won silver with 17.41 after fouling on three of his

attempts. Martinez edged team mate Cristian Napoleos who jumped 17.40. The world gold was the first in triple jump for any African nation, Zango pointed out.