

Paralympian Rostami bags double world powerlifting golds

Sports Desk

Iran's Rouhollah Rostami finished his campaign at the World Para Powerlifting Championships on a high note, making a clean sweep of two golds in the men's 80kg event in Dubai, the UAE. A Paralympic champion in Tokyo two years ago, Rostami walked away with the ultimate prize thanks to a best lift of 232kg – one kilogram clear of Chinese silver winner Gu Xiaofei – before an overall tally of 686kg secured

the total gold for the Iranian – also a silver medalist in London 2012 – on Tuesday. Gu, who had finished behind Rostami in Tokyo, also settled for the total silver, while Rasool Mohsin of Iraq grabbed a brace of bronzes. Rostami's triumphs took the country's gold count to four in Dubai, after superheavyweights Ali-Akbar Gharibshahi and Ahmad Aminzadeh had come out on top in their respective weight classes. Representing Iran in the men's 107kg contest, Ghar-

ibshahi finished on the top podium with a best lift of 248kg, while Saman Razi registered 455kg for the total bronze.

The +107kg competition, meanwhile, saw Aminzadeh lift 255kg to beat fellow Iranian Mahdi Sayyadi to the top spot.

Elsewhere in the men's competitions, Amir Ja'fari (best) and Ali Seifi (total) notched up a couple of silvers in the 65kg event, while Hamed Solhipour picked up the 97kg bronze.



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Persian Gulf Pro League:

10-man Sepahan salvages victory at Paykan, keeps perfect run



● Sepahan players celebrate a goal during a 3-1 victory over Paykan in the Persian Gulf Pro League in Tehran, Iran, on August 29, 2023.
● PAYAM SANI/IRNA

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Sepahan again proved to be the real deal in the new Persian Gulf Pro League season after coming from behind to beat Paykan 3-1 on Tuesday and maintain a perfect start to the Iranian top-flight campaign.

An ill-fated back pass by Sepahan defender Nilson Júnior fell into the path of Hamed Pakdel, who went past goalkeeper Payam Niazmand before Reza Qandipour found the empty net from close range to give the home side a surprise lead on the half-hour mark. Summer signing Reza Asadi drew the visitors level with a thumping header 10 minutes later but Sepahan went down to 10 men right before the interval when Mohammad Daneshgar

received his marching orders for bringing goal-bound Ebrahim Salehi down behind the box.

Ramin Rezaeian's strike from the edge of the area went in off Paykan's Iman Akbari midway through the second half and substitute Arya Yousefi's sizzling effort found the top corner with one minute left on the clock to secure all three points for Jose Morais's men. A fourth successive victory the season kept Sepahan atop the table before September's international break.

Elsewhere, Golgozar and Malavan played to 1-1 draw in Sirjan.

Saeed Saharkhizan equalized for the home side with 20 minutes remaining to cancel out Reza Ja'fari's 57th-minute opener for Malavan.

Nassaji Mazandaran celebrated a first

victory of the season, defeating San'at Naft Abadan 3-1 at home.

Mohammadreza Abbasi, Iraqi Alaa Abbas, and Farshid Esmaeili scored for the host, with Taleb Rikani bagging a consolation for Abdollah Vei-si's side.

Tuesday's results came after Esteghlal edged out Esteghlal Khuzestan 1-0 at the Azadi Stadium on the preceding night, thanks to a Mehrdad Mohammadi's second-half header – the 1,000th goal in the history of the Iranian Pro League for the Tehran Blues.

In Tabriz, a late strike by Mehdi Abdi, who joined on loan from Persepolis last week, saw Tractor notch up the first points of the campaign with a 1-0 home win against Mes Rafsanjan.

Alcaraz gets easy start to US Open title defence, Medvedev advances

REUTERS – Carlos Alcaraz has surrendered the number one world ranking but got his US Open title defence off to an easy start as injured German Dominik Koepfer retired against the 20-year-old top seed on Tuesday. The season's final Grand Slam began on Monday with a change at the top after Novak Djokovic demolished Frenchman Alexandre Muller to ease into the second round – a result that meant the Serb will replace Alcaraz as world number one when the rankings are updated on Sept. 11. But Alcaraz will have the number one attached to his name for the duration of the Flushing Meadows fortnight and advanced to the second round after Koepfer twisted his ankle minutes into the match and later retired with the Spaniard up 6-2 3-2.

Alcaraz, bidding to become the first man to retain his US Open crown since Roger Federer won five straight from 2004 to 2008, appeared unsteady at times on the North American hardcourts ahead of the season's final Grand Slam but kept his composure on Tuesday with few errors.

"I'm not thinking about defending the title. I was not thinking about I was the champion last year," he told reporters.

"I just focus on play my best level, to recover the level that I played last year, try to do same things that I did last year. That's the only thing that I'm thinking right now." With Alcaraz and Djokovic hogging the spotlight, Daniil Medvedev had been the forgotten man but the third seeded Russian remains a threat to claim his second US Open title in three years.

He got everyone's attention when he dispatched Hungarian Attila Balazs 6-1 6-1 6-0 in a speedy affair to kick off the action on Arthur Ashe Stadium, firing off 41 winners to set up a second round meeting with Australian Christopher O'Connell. Andy Murray, the 2012 US Open champion, recorded a landmark 200th Grand Slam match win as he turned back the clock to beat young Frenchman Corentin Moutet 6-2 7-5 6-3.

The 36-year-old Scotsman said he was playing some of the best tennis on a consistent level since 2017. He faces Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov in the second round. Italian sixth seed Jannik Sinner handily beat German Yannick Hanfmann 6-3 6-1 6-1 and will play compatriot Lorenzo Sonego next.



● SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS

Man City's Haaland wins PFA men's player of the year award

BBC – Manchester City's Erling Haaland won the PFA men's players' player of the year award, with Arsenal's Bukayo Saka named young player of the year. Norway forward Haaland, 23, scored 52 goals in all competitions in his debut season with Pep Guardiola's side.

Haaland beat team-mates Kevin de Bruyne and John Stones, Arsenal's Saka and Martin Odegaard and Tottenham's Harry Kane, now at Bayern Munich.

"It's an honour to win this prestigious award," said Haaland. "To be recognised by your competitors is a great feeling and I would like to thank everyone who voted for me."

"It was an unforgettable season for the team and for me personally. Winning the Treble was something I never imagined, so to achieve that with such a special group of players was an amazing feeling."

"We created some incredible memories last season, but now we want to do the same again this year. We have started the season well and we need to keep going."

Haaland joined City from Borussia Dortmund in a deal worth £51.2m in June 2022. He was also nominated for the young player prize, which was awarded to England winger Saka after he scored 14 goals and contributed 11 assists in his finest season for the Gunners.

The 21-year-old beat fellow nominees Moises Caicedo, who recently joined Chelsea from Brighton, Aston Villa midfielder Jacob Ramsey, Arsenal forward Gabriel Martinelli and Brighton striker Evan Ferguson.

Meanwhile, both winners of the individual prizes were also included in the PFA Team of the Year.

PFA team of the year: Aaron Ramsdale (Arsenal), William Saliba (Arsenal), Ruben Dias (Man City), John Stones (Man City), Kieran Trippier (Newcastle), Rodri (Man City), Martin Odegaard (Arsenal), Kevin de Bruyne (Man City), Bukayo Saka (Arsenal), Harry Kane (Tottenham), Erling Haaland (Man City).



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