

Fury to face Usyk in undisputed title fight in Riyadh



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BBC – A historic undisputed heavyweight fight between champions Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk has been signed and will take place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Additional details, including the fight date, are yet to be announced.

Briton Fury, 35, is the WBC champion and Ukraine's Usyk, 36, holds the WBA, WBO and IBF titles.

"Delighted to finally get this fight signed. This is the biggest fight that could possibly be made in our sport," said Queensberry promoter Frank Warren.

The winner will be crowned the first undisputed heavyweight champion in the four-belt era.

The targeted date is 23 December, although the fight could be pushed back to early next year.

Fury has won 33 fights with one draw since turning professional in 2008. "The Gypsy King" must first come through a non-title bout against MMA star Francis Ngannou uninjured on 28 October in Riyadh.

Usyk – who has won all 21 pro bouts – defended his titles against Londoner Daniel Dubois in August.

"The heavyweights always spark the imagination of the fans, and I have no doubt this will be the biggest boxing event of the century," Warren added.

Fury faced criticism for failing to reach terms with Usyk after a proposed bout at London's Wembley Stadium in April fell through.

"I can't believe that it's happening but it is," Usyk's promoter Alexander Krassyuk said.

There has not been an undisputed heavyweight champion since 1999 when Lennox Lewis beat Evander Holyfield to defend the WBA, WBC and IBF titles.

"Tyson Fury and Oleksandr Usyk are the two greatest heavyweights of their generation, and I can't wait to see what happens when they step into the ring in Riyadh," Fury's co-promoter Bob Arum said.

"They are special talents worthy of competing for the greatest prize in sports."

The fight will form part of 'Riyadh Season' – an entertainment events festival held in Saudi Arabia's capital every winter since its launch in 2019.

A number of high-profile bouts have been held in Saudi in recent years, including Usyk's win over Anthony Joshua in August 2022.

Hangzhou Asian Games:

Alamians' fairy tale continues with a place in doubles last four

➤ Noshad (L) and Nima Alamian celebrate after progressing to the table tennis men's doubles semifinals at the Hangzhou Asian Games in China on September 30, 2023.
● hangzhou2022.cn



Sports Desk

Iranian brothers Nima and Noshad Alamian carried on their impressive form in the table tennis contests of the Hangzhou Asian Games

in China with a last-eight victory over the Japanese duo in the men's doubles event.

The Iranian pair came out on top in straight games (11-6, 11-8, 11-5) against

Taisei Matsushita and Mizuki Oikawa to guarantee a second table tennis medal for the country in Hangzhou.

It has already been a memorable campaign for Nima

and Noshad, who were part of the Iranian trio, alongside Mirhossein Hodaei, that beat Tokyo Olympic bronze medalist Japan before falling to South Korea in the semifinals to

win the men's team bronze – Iran's first table tennis medal in the Asian Games in 65 years.

"It was a really tough match. We were just thinking of securing a second medal before the contest, but now we'll be looking to improve on the team bronze," elder brother Noshad said after the victory.

Standing between them and a place in today's final showdown at the GSP Gymnasium are the host's Fan Zhendong – a team gold medalist and a singles silver winner in Tokyo Olympics – and Wang Chuqin.

Kurash silver

The first day of the kurash competitions in Hangzhou saw Iranian Majid Vahid Barimanlou win a silver medal in the men's -66kg weight class.

Barimanlou overcame opponents from Vietnam and the Chinese Taipei before a semifinal victory over Tajikistan's Murodzoda Khairandeshi, only to suffer a defeat against Uzbekistan's Artyom Shturbabin in the final showdown.

A first medal for the country on Saturday came in the shooting contests, where Haniyeh Rostamian and Amir Joharikou teamed up for a bronze in the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

The Iranian duo defeated Pakistan's Gulfam Joseph and Kishmala Talat 16-14 to share the third place with the South Korean pair.

AFC Champions League:

Persepolis looking to bounce back; Sepahan, Nassaji gearing up for Saudi tests

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis will be chasing first points in the new season of the AFC Champions League against Qatari champion Al Duhail in Doha on Monday.

Elsewhere, Sepahan and Nassaji Mazandaran will come up against star-studded giants of the Saudi Pro League, hosting Al Ittihad and Al Hilal respectively.

Reds eyeing recovery

Runner-up in 2018 and 2020, the Tehran Reds got off to a disappointing start in the Asian elite clubs competition, falling to a 2-0 defeat against Al Nassr on home soil in Group E. What added to the misery for Yahya Golmohammadi's side was a couple of injury setbacks for star players Mahdi Torabi and Vahid Amiri, leaving both Iranian internationals a major doubt for the game in Doha, while midfielder Milad Sarlak is ruled out of the contest after being red carded on Matchday One.

New signing Nabil Bahoui will be available for team selection, though the Swedish striker will likely start from the bench due to lack of match fitness.

Persepolis was last in action on the opening day of the competition, whereas



➤ Persepolis captain Vahid Amiri (red), pictured in a 2-0 defeat against Al Nassr, is a doubt for the game against Al Duhail in the AFC Champions League.
● MEQDAD MADADI/TASNIM

Al Duhail will step onto the pitch at Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium on the back of Thursday's 2-1 away victory over Al Markhiya in the Qatari top flight, where Brazilian superstar Philippe Coutinho, who joined on loan from Aston

Villa in the summer, bagged his first goal for the club.

The former Liverpool and Barcelona player is set to make his debut in the continental event, having missed the goalless stalemate against Istiklol in Dushanbe.

Kenyan striker Michael Oluanga has been in dazzling form this season, scoring five in as many games in the Qatar Stars League. Persepolis supporters have fond memories of the previous encounter between the two sides in the

AFC Champions League, when three second-half goals saw the Reds come from behind to beat Al Duhail 3-1 at the Azadi Stadium – 3-2 on aggregate – and progress to the 2018 semifinals.

Inspiring debut

Nassaji Mazandaran could not have dreamt of a more delightful debut in the Asian showpiece as Ehsan Hosseini and Mohamadreza Azadi netted two unanswered goals to help the northern Iranian club walk away with maximum points against Mumbai City in India.

"From today, opponents will have a different level of respect for us," Rahmati said after the game, and now hopes his side – the surprise leader in Group D – will build on the maiden victory when facing Saudi heavyweight Al Hilal.

Al Hilal sits atop the Saudi league table, yet to concede a defeat after eight rounds of matches, though there has already been rumors of Portuguese manager Jorge Jesus losing control of a star-packed dressing room, which includes Neymar, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic, Malcom, Aleksandar Mitrovic, and Kalidou Koulibaly.

Mitrovic and Koulibaly were both on the score-sheet as Al Hilal beat Al Shabab 2-0 at home in the domestic league on Friday. However, the Saudi giant was lucky to leave the pitch with a single point in a 1-1 draw against Navbahor on the first day in the

group. Georgian Toma Tabatadze netted 10 minutes after the break to silence the crowd at Riyadh's King Fahd International Stadium, only to see his strike canceled out by Saudi center-back Ali al-Bulayhi's header in the 10th minute of stoppage time.

In Group C, Sepahan will be after a first win of the campaign but standing between the Isfahan-based club and the three points is formidable Al Ittihad.

Sepahan thought it had done enough for a victory in the group opener against Iraq's Air Force Club before an Ali Jasim's 89th-minute equalizer saw the two sides share the spoils in a 2-2 draw.

Having spent massively in the summer, Sepahan has enjoyed a perfect run in the Iranian league, though the club was handed a four-point deduction by the Iranian federation for a "budget cap violation" earlier in the month, dropping to fifth in the table.

The good news for Sepahan boss Jose Morais is that Al Ittihad will be without injured French striker Karim Benzema for the visit to Isfahan.

Al Ittihad is second in the Saudi league and played to a goalless draw away to Al Feiha on Saturday.

Haroune Camara's strike was followed by a brace from Brazilian Romarinho to lead Al Ittihad to commanding 3-0 home win against Uzbekistan's AGMK in the Group C opener.