

Wilder, Joshua in talks to fight on same card

BBC – Heavyweights Deontay Wilder and Anthony Joshua are in talks to fight on the same card in Saudi Arabia on 23 December. Wilder's team are "hopeful" a deal can be finalised as organisers aim to fill a gap on the card.

Tyson Fury v Oleksandr Usyk was set to headline, but Fury's difficult encounter with Francis Ngannou last month derailed those plans.

Organisers are very confident a deal is close with Joshua and Wilder.

Queensberry promoter Frank Warren said this week that 23 December would be a "historic" night for boxing.

Turki Alalshikh, of Saudi Arabia's General Entertainment Authority, is leading discussions with Joshua and Wilder alongside Queensberry Promotions.



TALKSPORT

Briton Joshua, 34, is promoted by Matchroom Boxing and Eddie Hearn, while American Wilder has spent most of his career with Premier Boxing Champions and adviser Al Haymon, as well as being managed by Shelly Finkel.

Hopes are high that a deal will be done for Joshua and Wilder to fight separate opponents and could be announced shortly as 23 December is only six weeks away.

The deal could pave the way for Joshua and Wilder to fight each other in 2024, although the possibility of Joshua-Wilder appearing on the same card as Usyk-Fury is unlikely.

WBC champion Fury and IBF, WBO and WBA belt holder Usyk are expected to fight in a long-awaited undisputed heavyweight bout by February in Saudi Arabia.

Earlier this year Joshua and 38-year-old Wilder were in talks with Saudi Arabia-based Skills Challenge about fighting before discussions collapsed. Alalshikh's outfit has now emerged as the power broker for boxing in the country.

Joshua and Wilder are former world champions but are on the comeback trail since losing their world titles to Usyk and Fury respectively.

Fury, 35, is unbeaten in 35 fights, while former undisputed cruiserweight champion Usyk is undefeated in 21 bouts.

FIFA U-17 World Cup:

Incredible Iran shows fighting spirit to salvage victory over Brazil



Head coach Hossein Abdi (2nd R) celebrates Iran's first goal with Yaghoob Barajeh during a 3-2 victory over Brazil in the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia, on November 11, 2023. GETTY IMAGES

Sports Desk

When asked what his half-time message to the Iranian players was after conceding two goals against Brazil in their FIFA U-17 World Cup opener, head coach Hossein Abdi's answer was simple: "Fight, fight and fight again." His young guns responded in style, scoring three inside 19 minutes to beat the defending champion 3-2 at the Jakarta International Stadium in what will surely go down as one of the biggest

upsets in the history of the competition.

Best remembered for being an aggressive player in the middle of the park during his Persepolis career in the 90s, Abdi must have thought that would be the type of football his boys need to deliver, if they were to bounce back against the Brazilians.

The Selecao looked to have put the game to bed when an Abolfazl Zamani's own goal in the added time doubled their lead, hav-

ing found the net through Rayan's sublime strike before the half-hour mark.

However, Abdi and the Iranian players, who made it to the Asian Cup last-four in July to book a place in Indonesia, had other ideas after the restart.

Yaghoob Barajeh's tame effort from inside the box went past Brazilian keeper Philippe Gabriel to pull one back for Abdi's side with nine minutes into the second period, and then Gabriel's opposite number Arsha

Shakouri found Kasra Taheri behind the opposition backline with a long ball, before the substitute striker's low drive nutmegged the keeper to draw Iran level.

"In the first half, playing the Brazilians had too much influence on the players," said Abdi.

"They were maybe thinking: 'They are Brazil, we are not...'. At half-time, we spoke with them, we made two changes to the line-up [bringing on Taheri and

Alireza Homaeifard], we pushed them and gave them hope and inspiration. After that, you see what happened."

"In our program from last month until now, we have been training every day for this match. We know Brazil very well."

The sensational comeback was complete in the 73rd minute, with Taheri the provider as his well-placed pass released Esmaeil Qolizadeh, whose composed finish rounded off a superb

counterattack.

Qolizadeh gave credit to the Iranian coach for his pep talk at the break, saying: "In the second half, we came back thanks to a lot of motivation the head coach gave to us."

"He motivated us to fight. I also thank a lot the fans who gave us a lot of support, too. They helped us to come back in the game and achieve this result," added the Iranian match winner.

Iran still had to hold off the South American giant's pressure in the closing stages, with Shakouri making a couple of late saves.

"We analyzed Brazil and this specific training helped us score the second goal," revealed Shakouri, who was awarded with the Man of the Match prize.

"Brazil is the biggest team in the world but every player gave their biggest effort and performed to our best," he added.

"I'm so glad to help my team with a great performance. It is an amazing feeling to do this at the biggest competition in the world for our age group. It is a great honor."

Next for Iran in Group C is a game on Tuesday against another heavyweight of the age group in England, champion in 2017, which demolished New Caledonia 10-0 earlier in the day to go top of the table on goal difference.

The top two of the six groups will be joined by four third-placed teams in the round of 16.

Magic's balanced attack too strong for Bucks

REUTERS – Paolo Banchero scored 26 points, Franz Wagner added 24 and the Orlando Magic weathered a 35-point, 10-rebound effort from Giannis Antetokounmpo to beat the visiting Milwaukee Bucks 112-97 in NBA on Saturday night.

Orlando took the lead late in the first quarter and never looked back, building an advantage of as many as 21 points behind a balanced offensive attack. Antetokounmpo carried the load for Milwaukee, which was playing a second straight game without Damian Lillard, who was out due to right calf soreness.

Jalen Suggs supplied 20 points as five Orlando scorers finished in double figures, including Moritz Wagner, who had 19 points off the bench. Moritz Wagner scored 12 points in the first half to help ignite the pivotal, second-quarter surge that gave Orlando the lead for the rest of the game.

Jonathan Isaac chipped in 10 points off the bench

and grabbed three of his five rebounds on the offensive glass – part of an overall theme for Orlando on the night. The Magic enjoyed an emphatic 22-4 advantage in second-chance points, a by-product of their 15 offensive rebounds to just five for the Bucks.

Elsewhere, Caris LeVert came off the bench to lead a balanced attack with 22 points, Dean Wade buried a pair of key 3-pointers to open the fourth quarter and the Cleveland Cavaliers completed a season-series sweep over the Golden State Warriors 118-110 with a win in San Francisco.

Donovan Mitchell (21 points), Darius Garland (19) and Evan Mobley (19) led all five starters in double figures for the Cavaliers, who had lost 12 straight regular-season games to the Warriors before a 115-104 home win last Sunday. The sweep was Cleveland's first over Golden State since 2010. Stephen Curry led all scorers with 30 points but shot just 4-for-14 on



Magic's Paolo Banchero (5) goes up for a basket during an NBA victory over the Bucks at Amway Center, Orlando, FL, US, on Nov. 11, 2023. NBA

3-pointers. Jaylen Brown scored a game-high 29 points and Jayson Tatum finished with 27 as Boston Celtics improved its home record to 4-0 by beating visiting Toronto Raptors 117-94. Pascal Siakam tossed in a team-high 17 points and

was one of five Raptors who scored in double figures.

Bam Adebayo collected 26 points and 17 rebounds, and rookie Jaime Jaquez Jr. added a season-high 20 points to lift visiting Miami Heat to a 117-109 victory over Atlanta Hawks.

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