

Jahanbakhsh ruled out of Uzbekistan game with injury



Iranian midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh is injured during a 4-0 victory over Hong Kong, China at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on November 16, 2023.
● HADI ZAND/ISNA

Sports Desk

Alireza Jahanbakhsh was left out of the Iranian squad for the visit to Tashkent ahead of Tuesday's World Cup qualifier against Uzbekistan after suffering a "minor hamstring injury" against Hong Kong, Iran team doctor Parhan Khanlari said. The Feyenoord winger was replaced by Reza Asadi with 15 minutes left on the clock in Thursday's 4-0 victory at Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Roma striker Sardar Azmoun scored an early double with Mahdi Taremi and Ramin Rezaeian finding the net late in the game as Amir Qalenoee's men got off to a winning start in Group E of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 showdown in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

Jahanbakhsh, who left the Iranian camp for the Netherlands to receive treatment on his injury, will be sidelined for "two weeks", according to Dr. Khanlari, meaning he will also miss the Eredivisie game against Excelsior on his return to club duty, as well as the Champions League clash with Atletico on Nov. 28 in Rotterdam. Meanwhile, Ahmad Nourollahi, who was not even on the bench on Thursday, was omitted by Qalenoee from the squad for what was described as "unprofessional behavior" by the Al Wahda midfielder.

Golgozar striker Saeed Sahrakhizan as well as Sepahan duo Arya Yousefi and Mohammad Qorbani were also left out of the squad for the game in Tashkent - a final outing for Iran before January's AFC Asian Cup in Qatar.

FIFA U-17 World Cup: Iran to face Morocco in last-16 round



Iranian midfielder Amirmohammad Razaqinia (8) celebrates with teammates after scoring the first of his two goals in a 5-0 victory over New Caledonia at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Bandung, Indonesia, on November 17, 2023.
● PAKAWICH DAMRONGKIATTISAK/GETTY IMAGES



Sports Desk

Iran's fairy tale run at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in Indonesia will continue with a last-16 game against Morocco in Surabaya on Tuesday.

Hossein Abdi's boys routed New Caledonia 5-0 on Friday to finish third in Group C - equal on six points with the two previous champions of the competition in England and Brazil.

Amirmohammad Razaqinia scored twice in the first half, while Esmail Qolizadeh hit the post from the spot in the 25th minute.

Reza Ghandipour added a third 14 minutes from normal time before substitutes Amirhossein Askari and Kasra Taheri were on the score-sheet in the stoppage time to seal a second victory for Iran, which had won a berth in the event after making it to the last four of the U17 Asian Cup in June.

Iran pulled off one of the biggest upsets in the history of the tournament by coming from two goals down at halftime to stun defending champion Brazil 3-2 on the opening day of the group.

Abdi's side, however, was left heartbroken in its second outing in Jakarta after Manchester City product Joel Ndala bagged a 90th-minute winner to lead

England to a 2-1 comeback triumph against Iran.

Elsewhere on Friday, Brazil defeated 2-1 but still had to settle for the runner-up spot behind the 2017 champion on goal difference.

"I'm so happy," Abdi said of his team's progress to the next round, adding: "It was a daunting task but we managed to accomplish it."

"I believe the Iranian players even deserved to qualify as the group winner but we missed too many chances today." Former Persepolis midfielder was also thrilled to see all of his players avoid injuries in their final group game.

"That was a top priority for us today. We're now going to have everyone fit and ready for the Morocco game."

Runner-up to Senegal in May's Africa Cup of Nations, Morocco won Group A in Indonesia - also featuring the host country, Ecuador, and Panama - with six points, thanks to double victories over Panama (2-0) and Indonesia (3-1) while suffering a 2-0 defeat against Ecuador, which will face Brazil on Monday.

"Morocco is a great team and it is going to be a tough match against them, but we will give it our best shot to make sure a year and a half of hard work will pay off. We've set sights on going as far as possible in the tournament," said the Iranian head coach.

James stars to help Lakers beat Trail Blazers

BBC - LeBron James equalled his season-high score of 35 points as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Portland Trail Blazers 107-95 in the NBA in-season tournament. James also registered nine assists for the Lakers, who lead their group with three wins from three games. Victor Wembanyama's San Antonio Spurs lost 129-120 to the Sacramento Kings and, having lost all three group games so far, cannot make the knockout stage.

De'Aaron Fox scored a season-high 43 points for the Kings. Each team play four games in their group, and games in the in-season tournament count towards a team's 82-game regular-season schedule. Spurs' defeat was their seventh in a row overall - but 19-year-old French sensation Wembanyama, who scored 27 points against the Kings, believes they will recover. "All of us, we know we're on a good path," he said.

"Of course it's hard to be patient sometimes, but it's an everyday fight. I know that the end of the season will not look like the beginning of the season."

Charlotte Hornets' Miles Bridges played his first NBA game since April 2022 as they were defeated 130-99 by the Milwaukee Bucks. Bridges missed the whole of the 2022-23 season, having not signed an NBA contract after being arrested and charged over a domestic violence incident, to which he subsequently entered a 'no contest' plea - where a defendant does not admit guilt, but accepts punishment as if they had. The NBA suspended him for 30 games without pay as a result of the incident, but it was deemed that he had served 20 games of the ban by sitting out last season. That left him with a 10-game ban to serve at the start of this season.

Bridges came off the bench to score 17 points in 33 minutes for the Hor-

nets in defeat.

Elsewhere, Kevin Durant scored 38 points, including a three-pointer with 18.8 seconds left, to help the Phoenix Suns beat the Utah Jazz 131-128.

The Boston Celtics were 108-105 winners against the Toronto Raptors, while Orlando Magic beat the Chicago Bulls 103-97.

Joel Embiid registered 32 points, eight assists and seven rebounds to help Philadelphia 76ers to a 126-116 win against the Atlanta Hawks. The new in-season tournament involves a group stage in which 30 teams have been randomly split into six groups of five.

Teams in each group will play each other once before a knockout stage of eight sides.

The quarter-finals will be made up of the six group winners and two teams from each conference who have the best group records in second place.



Lakers' LeBron James (23) drives to the basket during a victory over the Trail Blazers in the NBA in-season tournament at the Moda Center, Portland, OR, US, on Nov. 17, 2023.
● NAJI SAKER/oregonlive.com

Everton fuming after shock 10-point deduction for finance breaches



● JASON CAIRN/REUTERS

REUTERS - Everton became the first Premier League club to be deducted points for breaching profitability and sustainability rules (PSR) on Friday, when the league docked the Merseyside club 10 points over their finances in the 2020-21 season.

An independent commission imposed an immediate deduction which will see Everton drop from 14th in the standings into the relegation zone with four points, above bottom side Burnley on goal difference. The club described the decision as unjust and said it

would appeal.

The Premier League said it had issued a complaint against the Merseyside club and referred the case to the independent commission earlier this year.

"During the proceedings, the club admitted it was in breach of the PSRs for the period ending season 2021/22 but the extent of the breach remained in dispute," the league said in a statement.

"The Commission determined that Everton FC's PSR Calculation for the relevant period resulted in a loss of 124.5 million

pounds, as contended by the Premier League, which exceeded the threshold of 105 million pounds permitted under the PSRs."

Everton's most recent figures showed a fifth straight year of losses, with their total loss over that period amounting to over 430 million pounds (\$534 million). The club said they had posted a loss of 44.7 million pounds for the 2021-22 season earlier this year.

The Premier League said one of the factors that aggravated Everton's default was over-spending on players despite repeated

warnings.

Everton invested nearly 750 million euros in transfers to build the squad since the 2016-17 season. The club was taken over by British-Iranian billionaire Farhad Moshiri in 2016.

"The commission considers that it was unwise for Everton not to have curtailed player purchases," it added. "It was aware of potential PSR difficulties but pressed ahead in the hope that it would make sales of players that would enable it to achieve PSR compliance. Events have proved that to be a poor judgment."

Everton said the sanction was "wholly disproportionate and unjust" and announced its intention to appeal the decision to the Premier League.

"Everton maintains that it has been open and transparent in the information it has provided to the Premier League and that it has always respected the integrity of the process," it said.

"Both the harshness and severity of the sanction imposed by the Commission are neither a fair nor a reasonable reflection of the evidence submitted."

Everton were sold to 777 Partners in September in a deal reports said was worth more than 550 million pounds, with the company acquiring Moshiri's 94.1% stake in the club. The deal is expected to be closed by the end of the year.

Earlier this year, Manchester City were also referred to an independent commission over more than 100 alleged breaches of finance rules since the club were acquired by the Abu Dhabi-based City Football Group. No verdict has been reached in that case.