



Beach Soccer World Cup UAE 2024: Iran salvages Tahiti triumph to face host in knockouts

Iranian players celebrate a 5-3 victory over Tahiti in the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup in Dubai, UAE, on February 19, 2024.
● FIFA

Sports Desk

A thrilling comeback victory saw Iran defeat Tahiti 5-3 to finish atop the Group B table at the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup in Dubai and get a showdown with the host in an all-Asian quarterfinal.

The Iranian goalkeepers were the heroes of day for the country at the Dubai Design District Stadium on Monday, scoring three goals between them to inspire the fightback.

The Tahitians – two-time runners-up in the tournament – looked to be on their way to a repeat of the 2017 last-four win against the Asian champion when Tearii Labaste and Roonui Tinirauarii gave them a two-goal lead in the second period, before Hamid Behzadpour bagged a brace either side of a superb strike by fellow-Iranian keeper Mahdi Mirjalili.

A Teaanui Tehau's own goal doubled Iran's advantage but Patrick Tapa reduced the deficit to one, before Mohammad Mokhtari guaranteed a clean sweep of group victories for Ali Naderi's men, taking his tally in Dubai to six with 90 seconds left on the clock.

"We knew before the game that there would be space for our goalkeepers to have a go at goal, given the way they play, and our coach encouraged us to do so," Behzadpour said following his Player-of-the-Match performance, adding: "Iran is never finished. We will never, ever give up."

Iran will be looking to celebrate a second victory over the United Arab Emirates in less than a year on Thursday to head into the semifinals for only the second time in the history of the competition.

Naderi's men walked away with a commanding 7-2 triumph when the two sides met in the Asian Cup group phase in Thailand last March.

Following a goalless stalemate on Monday, the UAE came out on top against Italy in the shootout but still had to settle for the second spot behind the European powerhouse in Group A.

Asian Indoor Athletics Championships:

Girls shine as Iran scoops 16 medals on home soil

Sports Desk

Iranian girls took credit for nine of the country's 16 medals at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Tehran.

The three-day event in the capital's Aftab-e Enghelab Sports Complex was one to remember for sprinter Farzaneh Fasihi, who retained her 60m crown thanks to a championship record-equaling time of 7.20 seconds – also a new national high – in the final.

Meanwhile, Iranians Toktam Dastarbandan and Negin Azari Edalat posted a one-two in the women's 800m final, with the former shattering the national record with 2:09.17 minutes.

Fatemeh Mohitizadeh scored 3970 points to grab the women's pentathlon silver, while Nazanin Eidian finished second to Japanese

Nanako Matsumoto in the women's 400m final – followed by fellow-Iranian Kazhan Rostami, who took the bronze.

Eidian and Rostami then collected their second medals when they teamed up with Shahla Mahmoudi and Maryam Mohebi for the 4×400m relay silver.

Mahsa Mirzatabibi's new national record of 4.10m sealed the pole vault bronze for the Iranian girl, with Elham Hashemi finishing on the third podium in the women's shot put contest.

In the men's competitions, teenage sensation Sajjad Aqaei was the only Iranian to walk away with the ultimate prize of his respective event, clocking 47.95 seconds in the 400m final.

Sobhan Ahmadi (800m) Amir Zamanpour (3000m) were the Iranian silver medalists,

with Ali Amirian (1500m), Mahdi Saberi (shot put), and Amir-Mahdi Hanifeh (heptathlon) adding three bronzes to Iran's medal haul.

The country's 4×400m relay team – comprising Aqaei, Amirian, Arash Sayyari, and Mohammadreza Talei – also won a bronze behind Kazakhstan and Iraq.

The results saw Iran settle for the fourth spot in the medal table, though it still went down as a massive improvement on last year's edition in Astana, where the country left the event with a single medal through Fasihi's gold.

China dominated the table with eight golds, six silvers, and one bronze.

Japan and Kazakhstan collected four golds apiece, but the former finished as the runner-up with four silvers against the Central Asian country's two.



● ALIREZA MASOUMI/ISNA



● FIFA

German World Cup winner Brehme dies aged 63

BBC – Former Germany defender Andreas Brehme, who scored the winning goal in the 1990 World Cup final, died aged 63.

Brehme converted a late penalty in the final of the 1990 tournament to secure victory against Argentina in Rome. He earned 86 caps, including eight goals, for his country and won league titles while at Kaiserslautern, Bayern Munich and Inter Milan.

"FC Bayern is deeply shocked by the sudden death of Andreas Brehme," said the German club.

"We will always keep Andreas Brehme in our hearts – as a world champion and even more so as a very special person."

"He will always be part of the FC Bayern family. Rest in peace, dear Andi." Brehme played for Kaiserslautern from 1981-86 and 1993-98.

He won the Bundesliga title in 1998 and German Cup in 1996 during his time at the club, with whom he also had a spell as manager from 2000-02.

"The FCK mourns the loss of Andreas Brehme," said a Kaiserslautern state-

ment.

"He wore the Red Devils jersey for a total of 10 years and became German champion and cup winner with FCK."

"In 1990, he shot the German national team to the World Cup title with his penalty and finally became a football legend."

Germany were managed by Franz Beckenbauer, who died aged 78 in January, at the 1990 World Cup.

Brehme also scored when his country beat England on penalties in the tournament's semi-finals.