

## Perfect Palmer hits four as Chelsea thrash woeful Everton 6-0



Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson scores their fourth goal against Everton in Stamford Bridge, London, Britain on April 15, 2024.  
● REUTERS

Chelsea midfielder Cole Palmer scored four goals, including a hat-trick in the first 30 minutes, as his side hammered Everton 6-0 on Monday evening to maintain their push for a European spot and leave the visitors still hovering above the relegation zone. The 21-year-old Palmer underlined his England credentials with a classic left foot, header, right foot treble and then added a second-half penalty as Chelsea ran riot, Reuters reported. Nicolas Jackson and substitute Alfie Gilchrist were also on target as Chelsea remain ninth on 47 points but with games in hand on all the teams above them.

"When we signed him (Palmer) he was a great talent," Chelsea boss Mauricio Pochettino said. "He is doing fantastic; he is doing really well and he has adapted himself. The impact on the team was amazing from day one."

It was a sobering night for Sean Dyche's visitors, however, as the heavy defeat leaves Everton 16th on 27 points, two places and two points above the relegation zone.

"A horrid night, miles away from where we want to be," said Dyche. "The hard yards, simple tackling, basic principles - all out the window and it was a massive reminder of where we are." Everton actually had the first good chance but Beto blasted over from point-blank range after 10 minutes and it was downhill from then on.

Palmer got things moving after 13 minutes when he nutmegged Jarrad Branthwaite, played a one-two with Jackson and instantly clipped in a shot from the edge of the box.

Five minutes later more intricate passing - albeit alongside tentative Everton defending - set up the second as Jordan Pickford parried a Jackson shot straight to Palmer, who nodded the ball into the empty net.

## Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers win two golds at Asian C'ships

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Naser Alizadeh and Amin Mirzazadeh claimed two gold medals in the 2024 Asian Wrestling Championships on Monday in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Mirzazadeh showed once again how unstoppable he is from par terre, as he rolled Minseok Kim (KOR) two times for all the points he needed in a 5-0 victory in the 130kg final, reported Mehr News Agency.

"I really practiced hard for this and tried a lot to be able to create a significant difference with the other competitors and it makes me happy," Mirzazadeh said.

It was the first time in three matches that the Iranian didn't end it with enough gut wrenches from par terre, but it still got the job done.

Mirzazadeh had beaten Kim previously in the first round of the Tokyo Olympics, where he ended up taking a disappointing fifth by losing to the legendary Riza Kayaalp (TUR) in the bronze-medal match. Mirzazadeh lost to Kayaalp again in the final of the 2022 worlds, but gained his revenge and his

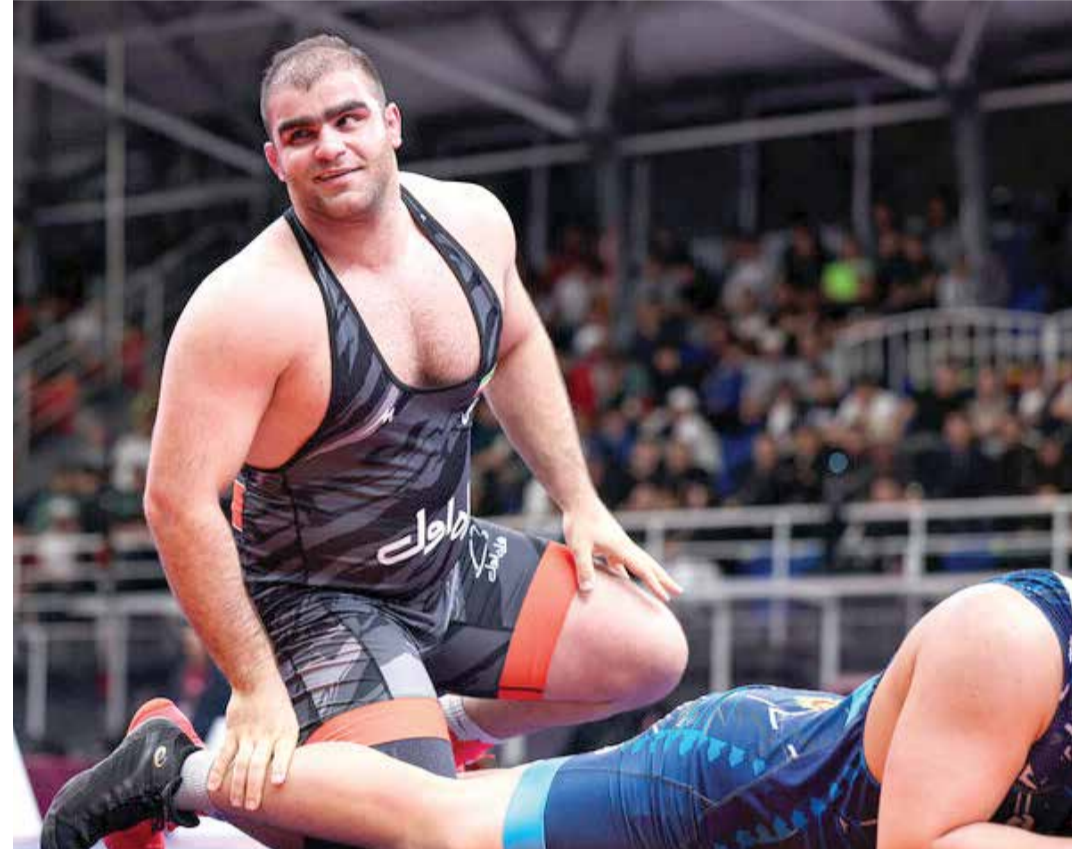
first world title in the gold-medal match last September in Belgrade. That makes him a leading candidate to end the hopes of Mijain Lopez (CUB) for an unprecedented fifth Olympic gold in Paris.

"I think it was a really great start for further preparation for the Olympics," Mirzazadeh said. "From tomorrow, when the competition ends, I have to start training and trying to make my people happy with the title in the Olympics."

At 87kg, Alizadeh maintained his dominance of Nursultan Tursynov (KAZ), beating him at the Asian Championships for the fourth year in a row and in a second consecutive final.

Alizadeh was never really challenged and clinched a 5-0 victory with a 2-point throw from par terre at the edge in the second period.

Alizadeh had beaten Tursynov in the first round in both 2021 and 2022 before defeating him 8-0 in last year's final in Astana. The 33-year-old Tursynov does have an Asian gold medal, won back in 2014.



● MNA

## Paris 2024 Games Flame lit in Ancient Olympia

The sacred flame for the Paris 2024 Olympics was lit Tuesday in Olympia, Greece, the birthplace of the ancient Games, in a ceremony inspired by antiquity and marked by messages of hope amid multiple global crises.

"In ancient times, the Olympic Games brought together the Greek city states, even - and in particular - during times of war and conflict," said International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, reported AFP.

"Today, the Olympic Games are the only event that brings the entire world together in peaceful competition. Then as now, the Olympic athletes are sending this powerful message: yes, it is possible to compete fiercely against each other and at the same time live peacefully together under one roof," he said.

Owing to cloudy weather, Greek actresses in the role of ancient priestesses used a flame lit in a rehearsal Monday in the 2,600-year-old Temple of Hera, near the stadium where the Olympics were born in 776 BC.

Carrying the flame in a pot, Greek actress Mary Mina lit the torch for the first bearer, 2020 Olympic rowing champion Stefanos Ntouskos.

Retired French swimmer Laure Manaudou, who won her first gold medal at the 2004 Athens Olympics, followed as France's first torchbearer in Olympia.

Officials on Tuesday stressed that the Paris Games will set new milestones, following the legacy of the other two prior Olympics held in the French capital.

"The Olympic Flame will shine over the first Olympic Games inspired by our Olympic Agenda reforms from start to

finish," Bach said.

"These Olympic Games will be younger, more inclusive, more urban, more sustainable. These will be the very first Olympic Games with full gender parity, because the IOC allocated exactly 50 percent of the places to female and male athletes," he said.



● AFP

Paris Olympics chief organiser Tony Estanguet noted that women took part for the first time in the Paris 1900 Games, while the first Olympic Village was created for the Paris 2024 Games.

For the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic imposed toned-down events for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and 2022

Beijing Winter Games, the ceremony was back with full regalia and scores of spectators.

Greek President Katerina Sakellariopoulou, French sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera and Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo were present at the ceremony. American mezzo soprano Joyce DiDonato

(3,100 miles) through 41 municipalities.

The Olympic flame will be handed over to Paris 2024 organisers in a ceremony at the all-marble Panathenaic Stadium, site of the first modern Olympic Games of 1896, on April 26.

On April 27, the flame will begin its journey to France on board the 19th-century three-masted barque Belem, which was launched just weeks after the Athens 1896 Games.

A French historical monument, the Belem carried out trade journeys to Brazil, Guyana and the Caribbean for nearly two decades.

France's last surviving three-mast steel-hulled boat, it is expected to arrive in Marseille on May 8.

Ten thousand torchbearers will then carry the flame across 64 French territories.

It will travel through 400 towns and dozens of tourist attractions during its 12,000-kilometre (7,500-mile) journey through mainland France and overseas French territories in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific.

On July 26 it will form the centrepiece of the Paris Olympics opening ceremony.

The ceremony is planned to be held on the river Seine -- the first time it has not been held in the Games' main stadium.

However, French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday said it could be moved to the national stadium in the event of a security threat.

Macron said instead of teams sailing down the Seine on barges, the ceremony could be "limited to the Trocadero" building across the river from the Eiffel Tower or "even moved to the Stade de France".

## Iran, Japan monopolized AFC Futsal Asian Cup: FIFA

Iran and Japan are firmly expected to qualify for Uzbekistan 2024, while it appears wide open in the battle for Asia's other two places.

The top two in each group will reach the quarter-finals of the 2024 AFC Futsal Asian Cup. The four semi-finalists will represent Asia at this year's FIFA Futsal World Cup. Uzbekistan has already qualified for the global finals as host, so if it reaches the Futsal Asian Cup's last four,

play-offs will determine the AFC's final representative, reported Tasnim News Agency.

Iran and Japan have monopolized the AFC Futsal Asian Cup. Team Melli will be without Hossein Tayyebi, the competition's top scorer two years ago, but in Salar Aqapour, Saeid Ahmadabbasi and Moslem Oladghobad boast three outstanding players. Arthur, Rafael Henmi, Kokoro Harada and Kazuya Shimizu are out for the Samurai

Blue, who have struggled of late, FIFA.com reported.

Iran is the overwhelming forerunners to top Group D. Afghanistan will make its Futsal Asian Cup debut, but has made rapid progress under Iranian coach Majid Mortazavi. Moreover, in Mehran Gholami, it has a player capable of unlocking the most brick-like backlines. Kuwait, eyeing a first global finals since 2012, has just handed its reins to David Marin.



● TASNIM