

Taremi says Inter move was a no-brainer

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Mahdi Taremi says he "didn't have to think twice" about signing for Internazionale once the Serie A champion approached him.

Having moved to the Italian giant on a two-year contract – with the option of an additional season – as a free agent from Porto, the 31-year-old Iranian will embark on a new chapter in his career when joining Nerazzurri's preseason on July 13.

Speaking to Iranian state television on Monday night, Taremi said: "I had offers

from clubs in the Persian Gulf countries but had no intention of going back to the Asian football at this stage of my career as I am still looking to improve and move forward."

"There were also talks about several teams in England, Italy, and Spain, though none of them made an official request for me," said the Iranian.

"But when Inter made an approach I didn't have to think twice about the offer. I had a short conversation with [head coach] Simone Inzaghi and he had wonderful ideas about my future at the club," added the former Persepolis

striker.

However, the Iranian international is aware of the scale of the task ahead of him as he will have to compete with Argentine captain Lautaro Martínez – the leading marksman in the Italian top flight last season – and French international Marcus Thuram for a place in the starting XI.

"I will have to be at my best in Inter. When you are playing alongside some great players in a team of Inter magnitude, you will have to give it your all to succeed," Taremi said.

Taremi spent four glorious seasons with Porto, helping

the club lift seven domestic trophies – including a Portuguese league and couple double in the 2021/22 campaign – while he bagged 91 strikes in 182 appearances to become the Dragons' third all-time top scorer behind retired Brazilian Mario Jardel and Colombian Jackson Martínez.

"Portugal is like a second home to me and I never felt like a stranger in that country. The Porto fans' love and support truly made an impact in my personal life there. I told them that I will stay a member of the Super Dragões for the rest of my life."



Wrestling U17 Asian Championships: Iranians Shamsipour, Afshar cruise to freestyle golds

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The first day of the freestyle contests at the Wrestling U17 Asian Championships saw Iranians walk away with two gold medals across three weight classes in Amman, Jordan.

Representing the country in the 71kg contests, Abolfazl Shamsipour overcame opponents from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan before defeating Indian Nishant Ruhil 4-1 in the final.

Reza Afshar, meanwhile, dominated the 80kg class as he marched to the final showpiece without conceding a single

point and then outmuscled Bunyod Rufatov 4-0 for the gold.

Amir-Ali Valipour was the only Iranian to end his campaign empty-handed after a last-eight defeat against Kazakhstan's Bakdaulet Akimzhan in the 65kg event. Monday's results came after the Iranian Greco-Roman squad had made a clean sweep of 10 medals but settled for a runner-up finish behind Uzbekistan in the team table.

Abolfazl Karami (51kg), Emadreza Mohsennejad (80kg), and Danial Izadi (92kg) grabbed three gold medals, with Ahmad Badraddin (45kg), Ali-

reza Amiri (48kg), Amir-Mahdi Saeidi Nava (67kg), and Mohammad Kazemi (71kg) adding four silvers to Iran's medal haul.

Amir-Ali Heidari (55kg), Abolfazl Shirri (60kg), and Ayoub Hosseinvand (110kg) left the Jordanian capital with three consolation bronzes as Iran tallied 200 points.

Uzbekistan notched up 215 points, thanks to a remarkable five golds, as well as three silvers and double bronzes, while third-place Kazakhstan finished on 148 points with a single gold, two silvers, and three bronze medals.



Iranian wrestlers Abolfazl Shamsipour (L) and Reza Afshar won two freestyle golds at the U17 Asian Championships in Amman, Jordan. **ADIB MOHMADI/AIAW**

Spanish Garrido unveiled as new Persepolis coach

Sports Desk

Spanish Juan Carlos Garrido has been named as the new head coach of the Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis.

"Welcome to the Red Army Juan Carlos Garrido," the club wrote on X on Tuesday as the 55-year-old Spaniard is to arrive in Tehran in the coming days to sign his contract.

A former manager of La Liga sides Villarreal and Real Betis, as well as Club Brugge in Belgium, Garrido replaces Brazilian interim coach Osmar Loss Vieira, who refused to take the Reds' permanent role despite leading the club to a seventh top-flight crown in eight years earlier in the month as he decided to move back to his home country to be close to his family.

Garrido's appointment ends weeks of rumors and speculation swirling around the Persepolis bench, during which several names were brought up in the media for the job – including ex-Napoli boss Walter Mazzarri, Dutch coach John van 't Schip, and Croatian Dragan Skocic. Garrido led USM Alger to the



fourth place in the Algerian top division in the newly-finished campaign and is no stranger to working in the Middle East as Persepolis will be his 10th club in the MENA region over the past decade. Having started his professional career as a manager with CD Onda in the Spanish fourth-tier league, the

Valencia-born guided Villarreal to a fourth-spot finish in La Liga and a Champions League qualification in his first full season in charge in 2011, while lifting the CAF Confederation Cup trophy on a couple of occasions with Egyptian giant Al Ahly (2014) and Moroccan side Raja Casablanca (2018).



Spalletti seeks improvement ahead of Switzerland last-16 clash



LEE SMITH/REUTERS

REUTERS – Italy coach Luciano Spalletti praised the never-say-die attitude of his players in rescuing a point with a 98th-minute equaliser against Croatia on Monday to book a European Championship last-16 place, but said there was much room for improvement. Substitute Mattia Zaccagni earned the 1-1 draw in Group B as holders Italy set up a clash with Switzerland in Berlin on Saturday but Spalletti seemed to take offence at several questions in the post-match press conference in a fiery display. "We deserved to go through

tonight in terms of what we produced out there. We were a bit soft at times during the game, we did not necessarily play our best football," he said. "But it was hard to make it through this group. Spain are brilliant, Croatia are excellent. When you drop below the minimum standards like we did in the first half, it is because we feel the pressure of how important the game is. "Because otherwise it is not possible (to play so poorly). But thus far everything they (the players) have done (at the Euros) has been getting better from my perspective."

He suggested his players needed to improve physically ahead of the knockout rounds. "Whenever there is a challenge or a 50-50, we don't win any. It is not a technical question, it comes down to experience, getting into these physical challenges and being willing to do the dirty work. We need to improve on that score." Spalletti was, however, pleased his side were able to keep their shape as they ended the game with six attacking players in a desperate search for an equaliser. "The players who came off the

bench were immense, those that played for the last 10 minutes were crucial. They kept that shape despite the fact we were ultra offensive. We knew we could not concede a second or third goal, but we also had to attack." He challenged his team to cut out the individual errors that have proved costly in recent games. "Today we were timid, but we need to do more," Spalletti said. "We have players who have the quality to play these games on an equal footing, but sometimes we make trivial mistakes."