

Taremi on target to help Inter hammer Red Star

Sports Desk

Iran international striker Mahdi Taremi bagged his first goal in Nerazzurri colors as Inter Milan swept aside Red Star Belgrade 4-0 at the San Siro to claim a first victory in the new UEFA Champions League season.

Taremi, who also provided Marko Arnautovic and Lautaro Martinez with a couple of assists, scored from the spot with nine minutes left on the clock to walk away with the Player of the Match prize in his only third start for the Serie A champion since joining as a free agent from Porto in the summer.

Turkish midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu put Inter in front with a stunning free kick in the 11th minute but the home crowd had to wait until the hour mark for a second goal, when Taremi stole the ball behind the opposition box before teeing up Arnautovic,

who tapped in from 10 yards out.

Taremi's contribution to the third goal came in similar fashion 11 minutes later as the Iranian dispossessed Uros Spajic of the ball and, despite being tripped by the Serbian defender, managed to get up and send Martinez through.

Martinez returned the favor shortly afterwards, with the Argentine skipper winning a penalty and then handing the ball to the Iranian to take the spot kick.

Taremi had to wait long before taking his penalty amid problems with the VAR communication system, but sent Red Star keeper Omri Glazer the wrong way with a cool touch. "I am happy to have scored tonight, I managed to play well thanks to my teammates who helped me," Taremi told Sky after the game.

"I am really excited, it took me a while to score but I have always done my best



Inter striker Mahdi Taremi celebrates after scoring from the spot during a 4-0 victory over Red Star Belgrade in the UEFA Champions League at the San Siro, Milan, Italy, on October 1, 2024.

● CLAUDIA GRECO/REUTERS

in training, I fought hard for this and finally managed to score. I thank Lautaro for leaving me the pen-

alty. He is the captain and a team player. We are a family and I am very happy to play for such an important

club," added the Iranian, who was also part of the starting XI when Inter played to a goalless stalemate away to

Manchester City on the opening night of the European elite clubs' competition. Taremi said he expects

another deep run from his club, which made it to the 2022/23 final, in the revamped tournament.

"Our goal as a big club is to reach the final, as Inter must try to win every game. We'll take it step by step."



Iran's Amirmohammad Ashrafi (red) is seen in action against Australian Aiden Stilley in the men's +78kg final at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, on October 2, 2024.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO

World Taekwondo Junior Championships:

Ashrafi wins third gold for Iran

Sports Desk

The second day of the World Taekwondo Junior Championships saw Amirmohammad Ashrafi claim a third gold medal for Iran in Chuncheon, South Korea.

Ashrafi came out on top against Australian Aiden Stilley in straight rounds to walk away with the ultimate prize in the men's +78kg contests.

The Iranian used his height and leg length to maximum effect

in both rounds, winning the first 11-2 and the second by technical superiority as his 15-point lead secured a richly-deserved triumph for him.

The final victory capped off a dominant run in Chuncheon for the Iranian, who did not concede a single round throughout his campaign, enjoying knockout victories over Canadian Ronan Sinclair and Italian last-four opponent Matteo De Angelis

– courtesy of a powerful spinning head kick just over 30 seconds into the contest. Ashrafi's glory came after Iranian girls Parnian Nouri and Aynaz Nasiri had won a couple of golds on the preceding night. Nouri overcame China's Yinuo Xu in back-to-back rounds (4-1, 15-8) in an intriguing -52kg final, while Nasiri defeated Kazakhstan's Nuray Kaznabek 4-0 and 5-4 in the -59kg showdown. Mahdi Rahmati and

Saina Alipour were the other Iranians in action on Wednesday but finished their campaign empty-handed.

Rahmati fell to a first-round exit in the men's -45kg event after a loss to Wu Yejie of China.

Representing the country in the women's -46kg class, Alipour defeated opponents from Canada, Portugal, and Turkey, before suffering a last-eight loss to Violeta Diaz Arribas of Spain.

Bakhtiarzadeh takes interim role as Esteghlal pursues new coach

Sports Desk

Former Iranian international center-back Sohrab Bakhtiarzadeh was named as the interim coach of Esteghlal as the Tehran Blues seek to appoint "a high-profile foreign manager" in the coming days, the Persian Gulf Pro League club said on Tuesday.

Bakhtiarzadeh, 51, replaces Javad Nekounam, who stepped down from his role after a 2-0 loss to Al Sadd in the AFC Champions League Elite on Monday.

The defeat in Doha was Esteghlal's third in seven outings

in all competitions this season – more than the club conceded across the entire previous campaign (2).

Having seen a significant portion of the Blues faithful turn against him for his defensive approach in the derby defeat against Persepolis last week as well as his never-ending feud with the club hierarchy, Nekounam handed first his resignation last Thursday, only to see his decision rejected with the Al Sadd game looming.

An ex-Esteghlal player in the early 2000s, Bakhtiarzadeh was last in charge of a top-flight team in February, when

he took the role at San'at Naft Abadan but parted ways with the southern Iranian side after just seven games.

The interim coach's first game on the Blues bench will come on Saturday against Havadar, which is yet to win a game in the league this season and sits rock bottom of the table with three points.

Without a league victory since the opening-day win at Shams Azar, Esteghlal will head into the international break after the Saturday game, with tricky tests against Zob Ahan and Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr coming Blues' way in late Oc-

tober.

Rumors keep swirling around the Esteghlal job, with Portuguese Ricardo Sá Pinto headlining a list of candidates in the Iranian media.

In a statement published right after Nekounam's departure on Monday night, Sa Pinto, who has been without a team since leaving APOEL Nicosia in June, expressed his desire to return to Esteghlal for a second spell, having steered the club to a third-place finish in the league as well as the domestic cup final in his previous season-long stint in the 2022/23 campaign.



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