

AFC Women's Champions League

Jafari credits Bam Khatoon resilience for historic win



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Head coach Marziyeh Jafari praised Bam Khatoon's resilience after they sealed a 2-1 win over Thailand's College of Asian Scholars in their AFC Women's Champions League 2024/25 Group B tie on Saturday. The Iranian side's triumph was sealed in dramatic fashion with Zahra Ghanbari scoring the winner in the second minute of added time, the AFC reported on Sunday. "It was very difficult for us to play against a motivated

Thai team, especially with the support they had from the fans, but we showed everyone that we can be one of the best teams in Asia," said Jafari. "I want to express my gratitude to our president for his kind support and to the players as well. "We analysed College of Asian Scholars after we conceded that last-minute goal against Kaya FC-Iloilo (on Matchday Two). I spoke to the players, and they were motivated to get the points,

win the game, and create history for Iran women's football." Defeat meant College of Asian Scholars were eliminated with head coach Nuengrutai Srathongvian expressing disappointment. "Our team did our best, but the opponents performed better than us," said Nuengrutai. "We had our chances, but we couldn't capitalise on them. We want to thank the fans for showing their support. Some of the players

are still studying, and we will go back, develop, and come back stronger." "We had our chances, but we couldn't capitalise on them. We want to thank the fans for showing their support. Some of the players

"It was a great performance from us. We started the match well and capitalised on a few early chances, which got us under control. I thought they posed a few problems on the counter-attack," said Matricciani. "We dominated the match in both halves. In the second half, it was a bit difficult to unlock them and create extra chances. "Overall, it was a great effort, though there are still a lot of things to improve. I'm very happy with how

the last three games turned out." Kaya head coach Let Dimzon expressed disappointment after a difficult first half saw her side concede three goals, which ultimately led to their defeat. "It was a heartbreaking first half for us after we conceded three goals from set-pieces. In the second half, we were able to address all the problems in the middle, but I'm still happy we managed to hold on and not concede any

more goals," said Dimzon. "I'm not happy with the result, and there's disappointment, but the adjustments we made after halftime helped keep them at bay. The lessons we've learned today are ones we need to work on and study for future games." Bam Khatoon and Melbourne City will have to wait for the knockout stage draw, set to take place on January 16, to learn their quarter-final opponents.

Persian Wolf close but not cigar

Choopan comes second at Mr. Olympia 2024

Iranian bodybuilder Hadi Choopan placed second at the Mr. Olympia 2024 competition. The bodybuilding world crowned a first-time Mr. Olympia champion Saturday in Las Vegas as Samson Dauda bested one of the most unpredictable fields in recent memory to secure the career-defining victory. The win came after several callouts from officials who wanted to take every possible moment to ensure they had made a final decision and selected the right winner.

The 32-year-old was also named the People's Champion of this year's event, an award reserved for the athlete receiving the most fan votes. Accompanying the first-place medal and people's champion trophy and belt was the largest payday for a winner in event history in the form of an announced \$600,000 check. Hadi Choopan, the runner-up for the second year in a row, received \$250,000. For the Iranian bodybuilder, it was a second disappoint-

ing outing at the event. Realistically, the 2022 champion was one or two judges' decisions away from being a three-time champion and etching his name in the history books as the most decorated champion since the end of Phil Heath's run of dominance. Instead, he continued what has become a career of "close but no cigar" moments that also saw him finish third twice (2019, 2021) and fourth (2020). The 2023 winner, Derek Lunsford, failed to success-

fully defend his title and finished third in this year's event. It marks the third year in a row that the defending champion has not repeated, a testament to the depth of the sport right now and the quality of legitimate contenders to the Mr. Olympia title. Martin Fitzwater, another fan-favorite in the event, finished in fourth place and provided fans with a look at an athlete who may well be a force in the sport in the coming months and years.



Female karateka wins bronze at world championship

Female Iranian karateka Yalda Naqi-Beiranvand claimed the bronze medal at the 13th World Karate Federation (WKF) Junior and Youth World Championship. The under-15 Iranian karateka fought for the bronze medal on Sunday, as with the result of 6-0, she defeated Moroccan karate player Reem Douari and won the bronze medal in this competition, IRNA reported. The 13th World Karate Federation (WKF) Junior and Youth World Championship was held in Venice, Italy. This event took place on October 9-13.



IRNA

Djokovic beats Fritz to set up Shanghai final with Sinner

Novak Djokovic moved a step closer to his 100th ATP title when he beat American seventh seed Taylor Fritz 6-4 7-6 in the Shanghai Masters semi-finals to set up a title decider against top-ranked Jannik Sinner. Earlier on Saturday, Sinner secured the year-end world number one ranking by beating Czech 30th seed Tomas Machac 6-4 7-5 and becoming the first Italian to reach the final, Reuters reported. Djokovic, the 24-times Grand Slam champion, will play his fifth final in the tournament's history, looking to claim his 100th ATP title as well as his fifth Shanghai Masters crown.



REUTERS