

## Italian Super Cup final:

## Taremi stars but Inter undone by Milan fightback

Sports Desk

Inter striker Mahdi Taremi excelled with a goal and an assist but a Tammy Abraham's last-gasp winner saw AC Milan pull off a 3-2 comeback win over its archrival in the Italian Super Cup final in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Inter drew first blood right before the interval in Tuesday's Derby della Madonnina, when Taremi teed up Lautaro Martinez with a pass across the box and the Argentine skipper deceived Malick Thiaw before his low effort went through the legs of Theo Hernandez and beat Mike Maignan at his near post. Named in the starting XI to fill in for injured Marcus Thuram, Taremi was on the scoresheet two minutes after the break.

The Iranian controlled Stefan de Vrij's long ball behind Milan backline and drilled his shot into the bottom corner to double Inter's lead – a second goal for Taremi with the Nerazzurri colors since joining the club in July. Hernandez gave Milan a lifeline with a well-taken freekick shortly afterwards, and then Christian Pulisic controlled a cross from the French fullback and steered his shot into the far corner to restore parity 10 minutes from normal time.



Inter's Mahdi Taremi (2nd R) is seen in action against AC Milan in the Italian Super Cup final at Al Awwal Park, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on January 6, 2025.  
● CLAUDIA GRECO/REUTERS

Just when all spectators at Al Awwal Park expected the tie to be decided by a shootout, with no extra time to be played, Portuguese winger Rafael Leao found fellow-substitute Abraham in the six-yard box, before the Englishman's simplest of tap-ins completed the Rossoneri's sensational comeback in the third minute of added time.

The result denied Inter what would have been an unprecedented fourth consecutive Super Cup silverware, while it saw Milan equal the city rival's haul of eight wins in the competition, with new manager Sergio Conceicao, Taremi's former coach in Porto, lifting a trophy in his second game in charge. When questioned on what the Portuguese coach had changed since replacing sacked Paulo Fonseca last week, American Pulisic said: "He told us we need to have more hunger and that that's more important than tactics." After the semifinal victory over Juventus, Conceicao had been



asked if he embraced his players. "I'm not so nice and I'm not

someone who hugs," he said. "I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to win."

after the final showpiece, however, Conceicao was seen dancing with his players and smok-

ing a cigar in the changing room, as Milan celebrated a first title since winning Serie A in 2022.



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## Iranian Geraei to vie in domestic three-way battle at Zagreb Open

Sports Desk

Former world and Olympic champion Mohammadreza Geraei will be part of the Iranian Greco-Roman 72kg trio, alongside Iman Mohammadi and Danial Sohrabi, at the Zagreb Open – starting February 5 – looking to secure a place in March's Asian Championships. Geraei, who was ruled out of the National Championships in late December with an injury, will have to better the results of his two fellow-Iranians in the UWW Ranking Series season opener, according to the selection process of the national team, to be given a shot at Asian glory in Amman.

A world junior and under-23 champion in 2022, Mohammadi, who also has the 2023 Asian senior gold under his belt, edged out Mohammad-Javad Rezaei 4-3 to walk away with the Iranian gold and punch his ticket for the Croatian capital. Sohrabi, meanwhile, was exempt from the national event, thanks to a bronze-winning campaign in last October's U23 Worlds in Tirana, and will begin the new international season on his return to Zagreb, where he suffered a last-16 exit in the 67kg contests last year. Also a former world silver and bronze medalist, Geraei decided to move up to higher weight class after missing

out on defending his Olympic title in Paris, courtesy of a defeat against wrestling prodigy Saeid Esmaili in the Iranian trials for the Games. Geraei, however, had a disappointing start to the new chapter of his career, suffering a first-round 11-3 loss to Benji Peak in last year's World Championships, though many believe some contentious referring decisions cost the Iranian underdog. "This was Geraei's first international event in the 72kg class. There is no doubt he had technical flaws against the American wrestler, but let's not forget that he already has four precious world and Olympic medals

under his belt and remains highly-motivated to succeed in the new category," Iran head coach Hassan Rangraz said after the world event. "It might have been a bit too late, but he still made the right decision to change the weight class and I'm confident he has much more to offer in the future World Championships before gradually moving to the 77kg class for the next Olympic Games." Geraei was also part of the Iranian team in November's Poddubny Wrestling League 7 in Moscow, pulling off a criteria win (1-1) against European bronze medalist Narek Oganian to help the country beat the Russian squad on its home turf.

## Antetokounmpo posts triple-double as Bucks beat Raptors

BBC – Giannis Antetokounmpo registered 11 points, 12 rebounds and a season-high 13 assists as the Milwaukee Bucks beat the Toronto Raptors 128-104 in the NBA.

Damian Lillard added 25 points in Toronto for the Bucks, who had lost four of their previous five games, all to teams with losing records.

Antetokounmpo suffered a cut finger in the first half that required stitches, but was able to continue before being rested in the fourth quarter as the Bucks secured a comfortable win. "He set the whole tone to our team," Bucks coach Doc Rivers said of Antetokounmpo's performance.

"When your best player does that it becomes contagious and the ball just moved."

Zach LaVine notched up 35 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists as the Chicago Bulls fought back from 19 points down in the third quarter to beat the San Antonio Spurs 114-110.

Victor Wembanyama starred in a losing cause for the Spurs, with 23 points, 14 rebounds, four assists and eight blocked shots.

The Dallas Mavericks, who were without Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving, suffered a fifth successive defeat, losing 119-104 to the Memphis Grizzlies.

After winning nine matches in a

row, the New York Knicks have now lost their past three after slipping to a 103-94 defeat by the Orlando Magic.

Bradley Beal came off the bench to score 25 points as the Phoenix Suns beat the Philadelphia 76ers 109-99 to end a run of four straight defeats.

The Sacramento Kings needed double overtime to edge the Miami Heat 123-118, while the Detroit Pistons beat the Portland Trail Blazers 118-115.



Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (C) drives to the basket during an NBA victory over the Raptors in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, on January 6, 2025.  
● NICK TURCHIARO/IMAGN IMAGES

