

WTT Youth Contender Tunis 2025:

Iranian prodigies star
with triple boys' singles golds

Iranian table tennis player Faraz Shakiba won the boys' singles under-15 title at the WTT Youth Contender Tunis.
● IRNA

Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis young guns stole the show at the WTT Youth Contender Tunis, bagging three singles gold medals across different boys' age classes.

On Thursday, Faraz Shakiba, having beaten opponents from Bulgaria, Sweden, and France en route to the final, capped off a glittering campaign for the country in the Tunisian capital by defeating Italian Francesco Trevisan 3-1 (11-6, 10-12, 11-6, 11-7) for the under-15 prize.

World No. 17 Benyamin Faraji, a world youth bronze medalist last November, got off to a slow start in the U17 final against Austrian Julian Rzihauschek, suffering a 11-3 loss in the first game, but fought hard to win 13-11 and restore parity before 11-6 and 11-7 wins in the third and fourth games secured yet another international medal for the Iranian.

Nikan Shirvani, the youngest of the Iranian trio, also had to come from behind to beat Andya Mohammed of Iraq – number seven in the latest ITTF World Ranking of the age category – 3-1 (11-5, 12-10, 11-6, 11-9) in the final showpiece of the under-11 contests at El Menzah Sport Palace.

Australian Open:

Alcaraz slaps down Borges to reach second week



● TINGSHU WANG/REUTERS

REUTERS – Third seed Carlos Alcaraz dropped his first set of the tournament but still safely secured his passage into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-2 6-4 6-7(3) 6-3 victory over Nuno Borges on Friday. Two conversions from four break

points were enough for 21-year-old Spaniard to take the first set, one from one handed him the second, before the experienced Portuguese number one snatched the momentum back at the end of the third. Borges blew one set point at 6-5 by

going along with a return but made no mistake in the tiebreak to claim the set and leave Alcaraz seething in his chair. The four-times Grand Slam champion came out in the fourth set like a man on a mission, breaking at the first opportunity for 2-0 with a spectacular over-the-shoulder pass from the back of the court.

A huge roar of "Vamos!" echoed over the sunbathed Rod Laver Arena and from that point Alcaraz's place in the fourth round for the 11th time in 16 Grand Slam campaigns looked assured.

The remainder of the set from Alcaraz was venomous serving, a few sumptuous drop shots and the customary barrage of forehand winners, the 35th of which brought up match point after just under three hours on court.

"I'm just really happy to be able to play here once again and show my best tennis here. It's been a pleasure whenever I step on this court, it's a beautiful court. The last time I played here, I lost so I really wanted a win here," Alcaraz said.

He already has two Wimbledon crowns and one title each at the U.S. and French Open so the Australian Open, where his best result was his quarter-final appearance last year, would count as his least successful Grand Slam.

BBC – Manchester City striker Erling Haaland has signed a new long-term deal with the club that will keep him at the Etihad until 2034.

The Norwegian joined City from Dortmund in 2022 and has scored 111 goals in 126 games for the club since. The striker's previous deal, which reportedly included a release clause, had been due to expire in 2027.

Haaland's new deal would see the striker remain with City until his 34th birthday should he stay at the club until its

expiry in nine-and-a-half years' time.

Haaland's contract renewal comes two months after manager Pep Guardiola's decision to sign a new two-year deal of his own.

The length of Haaland's deal is the longest in the Premier League, eclipsing the nine-year deal Cole Palmer signed with Chelsea last August.

Since moving to the club from Germany, the Norway forward has won two Premier League titles, the FA Cup, the Champions League and the Super Cup.

Haaland signs 10-year extension with Man City



● MCFC

Azmoun strike leads
Shabab Al Ahli to
Challenge Shield

Shabab Al Ahli striker Sardar Azmoun (top left) is seen in action against Al Rayyan in the UAE-Qatar Challenge Shield in Al Rayyan, Qatar, on January 16, 2025.
● QATAR NEWS AGENCY

Sports Desk

Sardar Azmoun continued his prolific form for the season as Shabab Al Ahli defeated Al Rayyan 3-1 to win the Challenge Shield on Thursday.

Brazilian-born Emirati midfielder Yuri Cesar gave Shabab Al Ahli the lead right before the half-hour mark at the Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, before a Renan's own goal drew the home side level in the 42nd minute.

Azmoun restored the lead for the Emirati outfit seven minutes after the

break, finishing off a diagonal cross from Guilherme Bala in the 18-yard box with a simple tap-in.

This was a 17th goal in 19 games across all competitions for the Iranian international, who has contributed with four assists in his debut season in the Asian club football. Bala found the net himself in the seventh minute of added time as Shabab Al Ahli won a second title in as many years in the Qatar-UAE Super Cup, having beaten Al Duhail 2-1 to win the Super Shield in Dubai in the inaugural bilateral tournament last year.