

Ronaldo to sit out Al Nassr's game against Persepolis: Report



Sports Desk

Al Nassr head coach Stefano Pioli is expected to give rest to Cristiano Ronaldo for Monday's dead rubber against Persepolis in Tehran at the AFC Champions League Elite, according to Saudi newspaper Arriyadiyah.

Ronaldo, who turned 40 last week, has bagged six goals in five appearances in the competition as Al Nassr sits third in the west zone's 12-team table with 16 points – three behind fellow-Saudi Pro League heavyweights Al Hilal and Al Ahli, and four points above Al Sadd of Qatar.

With Al Nassr already secured a last-16 spot, the Italian boss wants to make several changes to his first-choice lineup for the final game of the league phase to "give game time to all members of the squad," Arriyadiyah has been told by sources in the club.

Also standing third in the Saudi top flight – trailing league leader Al Ittihad by eight points – Pioli's side will visit Jeddah to face Al Ahli in domestic action on Thursday before leaving for the Iranian capital.

The report means Iranian fans

will again miss the chance to watch the Portuguese superstar from the stands at the Azadi Stadium, after the previous meeting between the two sides in September 2023 took place behind closed doors at the same venue, due to an AFC punishment for Persepolis.

It will, however, be a major boost for the Tehran Reds, for whom even a draw on the final day could prove not enough to finish in the top eight and, thus, progress to the round of 16.

Last week's 4-1 humiliation at Al Hilal saw Persepolis drop to ninth in the table with six points – equal with eight-placed city rival Esteghlal.

the battle for three knock-out spots in the west will go down to the wire between Al Rayyan (eight points), Al Gharafa (seven points), Esteghlal, Persepolis, and Pakhtakor (four points) on Monday and Tuesday. Pakhtakor will face Al Sadd in Tashkent on Monday, with Al Gharafa playing away to Al Ahli. Esteghlal will visit Al Rayyan on Tuesday, with a single point – if other results on the preceding night go its way – likely to be enough to send the Tehran Blues through.

Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championship: Iranian girls steal the show with 11 medals

Sports Desk

Iran collected 11 medals, including four golds, to win the women's team title at the 12th Fujairah Open International Taekwondo Championship in the United Arab Emirates.

Hasti Valinejad came out on top against Sogand Shiri in an all-Iranian final in the -46kg contests.

Former world silver medalist Mahla Mo'menzadeh also defeated her compatriot Saeideh Nasiri in the -49kg final, while Sogol Shiri took a consolation bronze after a last-four setback against Mo'menzadeh.

Nastaran Valizadeh beat reigning Olympic champion and world No. 1 Viviana Marton of Hungary to the

-62kg title, with Melika Mirhosseini beating Jordanian Rama Abu Al-Rub for the -73kg crown.

Elsewhere, Mobina Ne'matzadeh, an Olympic bronze medalist last summer, had to settle for a silver medal in the -53kg contests after a defeat against Saudi Arabia's Dunya Abutaleb, who made up for her loss to the Iranian girl in the third-place bout at the Paris Games.

Saghar Moradi also finished her campaign with a silver medal in the -67kg event, with Tina Madanlou (-57kg) and Zahra Pour-Esmaeil (+73kg) adding a couple of bronzes to Iran's medal haul.

Monday's results came after the Iranian men's squad had bagged 12

medals, including double golds, on the preceding night at the Sheikh Zayed Sport City.

Abolfazl Zandi grabbed the -58kg gold, thanks to a final victory over fellow-Iranian Alireza Hosseinpour, while the other all-Iranian showdown saw Matin Rezaei come out victorious against Mahdi Hajmoussaei for the -63kg gold.

Mohammad-Hassan Palang-Afkan (-68kg), Ali Ahmadi (-87kg) and Amirmohammad Rahmani (+87kg) were also among the Iranian silver medalists, with Yassin Valizadeh (-54kg), Saman Ziyaei (-54kg), Ali-Asghar Alimoradian (-63kg), Amirsina Bakhtiari (-74kg), and Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani (-87kg) collecting five bronze medals.



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Doncic makes debut as Lakers sail past Jazz



AP – Luka Doncic had 14 points, five rebounds and four assists in his Lakers debut as Los Angeles beat the Utah Jazz 132-113 on Monday night.

LeBron James finished with 24 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, Austin Reaves scored 22 and the Lakers got their sixth straight win.

Doncic, acquired in a shocking trade from the Dallas Mavericks on Feb. 2, played for the first time since sustaining a calf strain on Christmas. He was limited to just under 24 minutes as a precaution and was able to sit out the fourth quarter with his new team in complete control, but still had several standout moments to help the surging Lakers get

their 12th victory in 14 games. Buoyed by its new superstar, Los Angeles had seven players reach double figures, shot a blistering 54.3% from the floor and led by as many as 34.

Lauri Markkanen and John Collins each scored 17 points for the Jazz, who have dropped nine in a row on the road.

Elsewhere, Nikola Jokic scored 40 points, Christian Braun had 26 points, and the surging Denver Nuggets beat the Portland Trail Blazers 146-117 for their seventh straight win.

Jamal Murray added 17 points and eight assists before picking up his second technical foul and Julian Strawther finished with 18 for Denver.

The seven-game winning streak is the longest of the season for the Nuggets, who played without Michael Porter Jr. for the second straight game due to hamstring tightness.

Donovan Clingan scored a career-high 21 points and Da-

lano Banton added 22 for the Blazers, who lost their second straight after winning 10 of 11. Stephen Curry scored a season-high 38 points and the Golden State Warriors pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat the Milwaukee Bucks 125-111 on Monday night.

Jimmy Butler had 20 points, nine rebounds and six assists in his second game with the Warriors. Buddy Hield added 16 points, while Quinten Post and Moses Moody added 13 each.

The Bucks were playing for a second straight day after beating the Philadelphia 76ers 135-127 at home on Sunday.

Milwaukee also was playing a sixth straight game without two-time MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, who will be out through the All-Star break as he deals with a left calf strain. Damian Lillard scored 38 points for the Bucks after collecting 43 on Sunday. Kyle Kuz-



Lakers guard Luka Doncic (77) scores during an NBA win against the Jazz at Crypto.com Arena, Los Angeles, CA, US, on Feb. 10, 2025.

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