

Persian Gulf Pro League:

Tractor on course, Sepahan wins Iranian Clasico to remain in contention

Sports Desk

The Persian Gulf Pro League title race has effectively narrowed to two horses after the latest round of fixtures in the Iranian top flight on Friday. Tractor tightened its grip on the top spot with a 3-0 home win over Malavan, while second-placed Sepahan stayed within touching distance of the summit by defeating nearest rival Persepolis 2-0 in the so-called 'Iranian Clasico.'

Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh sent the home crowd at the packed Yadegar-e Imam Stadium into raptures with his 10th league goal of the season deep into first-half stoppage time, and Croatian Domagoj Drozdek scored twice in the second half as Tractor edged closer to a maiden domestic league crown. Having a game in hand, Tractor is on top of the table with 58 points – two points clear of Sepahan – though Dragan Skocic's men could extend their lead to five when they visit fourth-placed Foolad Khuzestan next Friday in a rescheduled fixture from matchday 22. Tractor will also play away to Shams Azar and Esteghlal Khuzestan either side of a home game against Nassaji Mazandaran until the end of the season. Sepahan, meanwhile, capitalized on a front-foot start at Tehran's Azadi Stadium later on Friday to keep alive

its slim hopes of lifting a first league trophy in a decade. Mohammad-Mahdi Mohebbi put Sepahan in front inside two minutes, tapping in a Milad Zakipour's corner-kick on the near post, before Georgian center-back Giorgi Gvelesiani headed the ball into his own net on a Mohammad Karimi's cross nine minutes later. A fourth successive win against their familiar foes this campaign saw Sepahan move five points clear of Persepolis and build crucial momentum in the battle for an AFC Champions League spot with three games remaining. Sepahan will welcome Golgozar Sirjan next in the league before facing bottom-club Havadar (away)



Tractor players celebrate a goal during a 3-0 victory over Malavan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Yadegar-e Imam Stadium, Tabriz, Iran, on April 18, 2025. tractor-club.com

and Esteghlal (home). Persepolis, the dominant force in the Iranian club football with seven league titles in eight years, will finish a below-par season with games against Mes Rafsanjan (A), Khaybar (A), and Havadar (H). Elsewhere in the league, Ramin Rezaeian scored from the spot in the second

minute of added time to cancel out a Mohammadreza Azadi's ninth-minute own goal and help Esteghlal salvage a point at Golgozar Sirjan on Wednesday. In Tehran, Reza Jabireh scored a brace with Ali Shojaei – from the spot – and Hossein Karimzadeh also on the scoresheet as Mes hammered Havadar

4-0 to move six points clear of the relegation zone. Nassaji Mazandaran – second from bottom – was dealt a massive blow in its bid to stay in the top-tier league after suffering a 1-0 loss at Khaybar – courtesy of Mohammad-Javad Mohammadi's spot-kick late in the first half. Iralco and Chadormalou

shared the points in a goalless game in Arak, while Pedram Qazipour's strike led Zob Ahan to a 1-0 win against Esteghlal Khuzestan at home on Thursday. In Ahvaz's Foolad Arena, Hooman Rabizadeh's first-half OG helped Foolad edge Shams Azar 1-0 and close the gap on Persepolis to three points with a game in hand.



Asian U18 Athletics Championships:

Kamareh grabs 3000m gold as Iran finishes with three medals

Sports Desk

The final day of the Asian U18 Athletics Championships saw Iran's Mohammad-Saleh Kamareh walk away with the ultimate prize of the boys' 3000m event in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. The Iranian boy clocked 8:37.55 minutes in Friday's final to set a new national cadet record and beat Uz-

bek duo Timur Nasimov (8:51.27) and Asilbek Tukhtamurodov (9:01.95) to the top podium. This was a third, and most colorful, medal for the Iranian nine-athlete squad in Dammam. Amirreza Ahanin-Maram won a bronze in the boys' hammer throw event on Day 1 of the competitions in the Saudi coastal city. Ahanin-Maram began the

final showpiece with a 67.74m effort, and then registered 69.88m, before his final attempt of 70.83m saw the Iranian finish behind the host's Mohammed Siraj Alzayer (79.11m) and Chinese Wang Ankang (74.81m). A second bronze medal for Iran came in the girls' 3000m event on the penultimate day, when Samia Shahpari finished the cross-line in a new national-re-

cord of 10:09.07 minutes – following Uzbekistan's Anastasiya Silchenkova (9:45.17) and Suolang Zhuoma (10:00.44) of China.

Mohammad-Saleh Kamareh (L) poses with the Iranian flag after winning the boys' 3000m gold medal at the Asian U18 Athletics Championships in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, on April 18, 2025. iranathletics.ir

Central Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships:

Iranian girls rout Uzbekistan to close in on title

Sports Desk

Iranian girls continued their winning run at the Central Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with a 3-0 victory over Uzbekistan on Friday. Vania Yavari claimed a first win for the Iranian team with a 3-1 triumph against Arujan Kamalova, before Setayesh Iloukhani came out victorious in straight game against Asel Erkebaeva.

Yekta Larkian rounded off the victory for the Iranian under-19 team when she defeated Adelina Khasanova in a five-game thriller. This is was a second win in as many matchups for the Iranian girls, who secured qualification for the 29th Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships – starting June 26 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Sitting atop the four-team table with four points, Iran had begun its campaign with a 3-2

victory over the host on Friday. Kazakhstan bounced back from the first-day setback to beat Kyrgyzstan 3-0 on Saturday. The Iranian girls will take on Kyrgyzstan in their final outing in Almaty today. In the men's draw, however, the Iranian team got off to a losing start on Friday, suffering a 3-2 defeat against Uzbekistan. Iranian Samran Karimi fell short in four games

against Shokhrukh Iskandarov, before world No. 6 Benyamin Faraji came from behind to beat Diyorbek Dilshodov in five games and level the scoreline at 1-1. Mohammad Habibi gave Iran the lead when he defeated Khurshid Akhmedov 3-0, but Uzbekistan rallied from behind through Iskandarov and Dilshodov, as both came out on top against Faraji and Karimi, respectively, in five games.

