

AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup:

Iran edge Philippines
in unconvincing opener

Sports Desk

AFC – A late goal from the Islamic Republic of Iran secured a 1-0 victory in their opening match of the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup in China as they saw off the Philippines on Wednesday morning.

Making their tournament debut, the Philippines came within a whisker of pulling off one of the biggest upsets in the competition's history against the defending champions, who won every one of their 10 matches en-route to claiming the title in both previous editions in 2015 and 2018.

In the end, IR Iran found a way through in the dying stages as Maral Torkaman broke Philippines' hearts to take all three points in the Group B encounter at the Hohhot Sports Centre.

Far from being overawed, the Philippines took the game to their opponents from the start and Isabella Bandoja nearly gave them the lead in the third minute as Farzaneh Tavasoli denied her in a one-on-one situation before the rebound was chipped just over by Isabella Flanigan.

Iran then found their stride and saw efforts from Mahtab Banaei, Nasimeh



Iran's Maral Torkaman (14) celebrates after scoring the winner during a 1-0 victory over the Philippines in Hohhot, China, on May 7, 2025.

● AFC

Gholami and Torkaman saved by Samantha Hughes, while Elham Anafjeh and Fereshteh Karimi put their chances wide.

That sort of profligacy characterised the Central Asians' first-half showing as Karimi and Torkaman blasted the ball over from good positions, while Hughes - the youngest player at this tournament who turns 17 in two weeks' time - stymied Iran's other shots, in particular pulling off an outstanding double save on Torkaman and Banaei.

It was Tavasoli's turn to shine shortly after the break as she somehow clawed away Dionesa Tolentin's point-blank shot before then repelling another fierce strike from the same player.

The teams continued to trade blows but Iran, ranked ninth by FIFA - 46 places above the Philippines - struggled to find the breakthrough thanks to tenacious defending and strong goalkeeping.



But just when it looked like the match would end in only the second-ever goalless result, Torkaman came up with

the goods for Iran.

Having spurned several chances already, Torkaman made no mistake with

three minutes left after being set up by Sara Shirbeigi to sidefoot into an empty net and seal a hard-fought win.

'Incredible feeling': Inter's Taremi says after reaching UCL final



Sports Desk

Inter striker Mahdi Taremi reveled in the "incredible feeling" of securing a place in the UEFA Champions League final after his side claimed a dramatic 4-3 extra-time victory over Barcelona at home on Tuesday, winning the last-

four tie 7-6 on aggregate.

Introduced as a second-half substitute for Argentine skipper Lautaro Martinez, Taremi teed up Davide Frattesi in the box for the all-important winner in the ninth minute of extra time as the Nerazzurri progressed to the final showpiece of the European



Inter striker Mahdi Taremi (99) is seen in action during a 4-3 victory over Barcelona in the UEFA Champions League semifinal second leg at San Siro, Milan, Italy, on May 6, 2025.

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elite clubs' competition for the second time in three seasons, looking to lift the trophy in Munich's Allianz Arena on May 31.

"It's an incredible feeling. Our approach was good, and we played very well. We have great respect for Barcelona, which is an amazing club," Taremi, who will be the second Iranian to be part of the Champions League final following legendary striker Ali Daei, told Inter TV.

Daei was an unused substitute for Bayern Munich in the classic 1999 final in Camp Nou, where the Bavarians conceded two stoppage-time goals to lose 2-1 to Manchester United.

"It was wonderful because every player dreams of playing in a Champions League semifinal, especially in a game

of this magnitude. When I arrived, I immediately saw a strong and united group, a great family. Our goal has always been to reach the Champions League final," added Taremi, who joined Inter as a free agent from Porto last summer.

Following a breathtaking first leg in Barcelona that had everything from early drama, late chaos, and dazzling moments from 17-year-old Lamine Yamal, the return encounter in Milan was even more dramatic, a roller-coaster ride that will live long in the memory.

It was a tale of two halves as Inter dominated the first 45 minutes and opened a two-goal lead thanks to a Martinez goal on the counter in the 21st minute before Hakan Calhanoglu extended their advantage with a penalty right before the break.

However, Barca woke up in the second half with Eric Garcia and Dani Olmo netting within six minutes to level the scoring and, even though Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer worked

his magic to help keep the host alive, the Catalans thought they had scored the winner through Raphinha, who struck from close range in the 87th minute.

But as Inter made a desperate run for an equalizer, Denzel Dumfries found 37-year-old Francesco Acerbi inside the box and he fired a first-time effort into the net in third minute of added time to take the game to extra time.

"It took a super Inter, applause for these guys, two monstrous performances were put on the pitch. I'm happy to be their coach, they gave me everything they had. It is only right that they enjoy the success in this stadium," Inter boss Simone Inzaghi told Sky Sport.

"We had some problems, but with our hearts we went beyond every obstacle," added the Italian.

"We tried to play for it, with the weapons and the qualities we have. After the first leg we had the match plan in mind, but without sacrifice and help all together you can't do it."

Curry injured in Warriors win as Pacers stun Cavs

BBC – The Golden State Warriors' win against the Minnesota Timberwolves in the second round of the NBA play-offs was soured by a hamstring injury to Stephen Curry.

The 37-year-old came off before half-time in game one of the series after pulling up during the Warriors' 99-88 win in Minneapolis.

The two-time MVP clutched the back of his left leg after a defensive play and initially tried to carry on before signalling to the bench that he needed to be replaced.

Buddy Hield, Jimmy Butler and Draymond Green shared the scoring burden in Curry's absence, hitting 62 points between them.

Curry is likely to miss Friday's game two at least, as the Warriors wait on

the results of the scan.

"We're definitely game-planning for him to not be available for game two but we don't know yet," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr.

"With a hamstring, it's hard to imagine that he would play.

"I talked to him at half-time, he's obviously crushed. The guys picked him up and played a great game but we're all concerned about Steph.

"It's part of the game. Guys get hurt, you move on."

Elsewhere, Tyrese Haliburton hit a game-winning three-pointer as the Indiana Pacers shocked top seeds the Cleveland Cavaliers in game two of their second-round play-off.

The Pacers had been trailing throughout the match until a sensa-



Warriors' Stephen Curry (30) shoots during a victory over the Timberwolves in Minneapolis, MN, US, on May 6, 2025.

● DAVID BERDING/GETTY IMAGES

tional fourth quarter, when they outscored the Cavaliers 36-21.

The Cavaliers, winners of the Eastern Conference, had a 20-point lead at one stage.

But, after a spirited fightback in the final minutes, Haliburton produced a stunning step-back three-pointer to give his side a 2-0 lead in the series. Aaron Nesmith and Myles Turner both top scored for the Pacers with 23 points each while Haliburton produced 20 of his own.

