

Azmoun, Qayedí shortlisted for UAE league’s Player of the Season



● football360.ir

Iranian international strikers Sardar Azmoun and Mahdi Qayedí have been named in the 10-man shortlist for the Emirati ADNOC Pro League Player of the Season. The 2024-25 UAE Pro League season concluded with Shabab Al Ahli securing a dominant title victory, while Sharjah and Al Wahda claimed second and third

place, respectively, earning spots in the AFC Champions League Elite. Al Wasl secured a place in the AFC Champions League Two, while Dibba Al Hisn and Al Urooba were relegated. As the league prepares for the new season, the UAE football association is set to announce the best performers of the past campaign.

Iranian duo among contenders

Ten players have been shortlisted for the Player of the Season award, with two Iranians making the list: Qayedí, the former Ittihad Kalba winger now with Al Nasr, and Azmoun, Shabab Al Ahli’s striker. They will compete against Federico Cartabia (Shabab Al Ahli), Kod-

jo Laba (Al Ain), Omar Khribin (Al Wahda), Firas Ben Larbi (Sharjah), Nabil Fekir (Al Jazira), Fabio Lima (Al Wasl), Alejandro Romero (Al Ain), and Caio Lucas (Sharjah).

Second most influential player

Qayedí enjoyed his best season yet, finishing as Kalba’s standout player with 16

goals and seven assists, directly contributing to 24 goals — the second-highest in the league, just behind Laba. The Iranian international was also the third-highest scorer and fourth-best assist provider, earning a move to Al Nasr Dubai. His presence in both the top scorers and assist charts strengthens his case

for the award.

Key figure for champions

Azmoun, who left European football to join Shabab Al Ahli last season, scored 11 goals and provided six assists in the league. Despite his contributions, his penalty misses prevented a higher tally. His teammate

Cartabia is also nominated but had fewer goal contributions, slightly improving Azmoun’s chances. However, given the competition, Azmoun remains an outside contender for the award. The winner will be announced ahead of the new season, with Qayedí emerging as a strong favorite.

Iran national football team plans friendlies ahead of 2026 World Cup

Sport Desk

With less than a year remaining until the kickoff of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Mehdi Taj, president of the Football Federation of Iran, unveiled the national team’s prospective preparation schedule aimed at sharpening their competitive edge for the global tournament. Taj revealed that several friendly matches for Iran’s national team prior to the World Cup have been tentatively finalized. The federation initially proposed friendlies against international squads including Chile, Japan, Costa Rica, South Korea, Australia, Ghana, and Cameroon. However, all these teams have declined Iran’s invita-



● IRNA

tions, ISNA wrote. In light of this, if no alternative friendlies are arranged during the Iranian month of Shahrivar (late August to late September), Iran’s team is expected to participate in the Central Asian Football Championship

(KAFA) 2025 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, from August 29 to September 5. Iran is drawn into Group B, where it will face Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Malaysia. Should Iran manage to schedule a friendly match during Shahrivar, the feder-

ation intends for the Iranian under-23 national team to compete in the KAFA Championship instead. Looking ahead, Iran is confirmed to play a friendly against Russia on October 14, with another friendly slated for October 6, al-

though the opposing team for that date remains undecided. In November, the Iranian team is expected to participate in a tournament in Ivory Coast, pending final confirmation. While no friendlies have been arranged for March,

the federation continues to actively pursue suitable opponents. Finally, Taj announced that in June, Iran will face one of the World Cup participants in a match planned to take place in the United States. The 2026 FIFA World Cup

is set to be a landmark event as it will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico — the first time the tournament is hosted by three nations. This edition will also feature an expanded format, increasing the number of teams from 32 to 48. Iran has a history of consistent World Cup appearances and is eager to build on its reputation in the 2026 tournament. The extended format provides an excellent opportunity for the team to achieve historic milestones. With diverse and potentially stronger competition in the expanded field, thorough preparation through friendlies and tournaments is crucial for Iran to adapt tactics, analyze rivals, and build team cohesion.

Rashidi shines as Iran U16 beats Syria in WABA qualifiers

Sport Desk

The Iranian under-16 boys’ basketball team secured a victory against Syria in their second match of the FIBA U16 Asia Cup WABA Qualifiers in Jordan on Monday, winning 86-81. Iranian players dominated the first and third quarters with scores of 17-7 and 38-25, respectively, but were defeated in the other two quarters with scores of 11-26 and 20-23, mehrnews.com wrote. This win comes after their opening game, where the Iranian team faced Lebanon



● iribfir

and was defeated with a score of 84-70. Alireza Rashidi was named the best player of the match against

Syria, scoring 33 points along with 4 rebounds, 3 assists, 3 steals, and an efficiency rating of 29.

The FIBA U16 Asia Cup WABA Qualifiers are a critical sub-regional tournament within the West Asian

Basketball Association (WABA) zone, designed to determine which Under-16 teams from West Asia advance to the main FIBA U16 Asia Cup. These qualifiers provide a platform for youth teams in the region to showcase emerging talent, gain international experience, and compete for a place in the continental championship. The 2025 edition of the FIBA U16 Asia Cup serves as a major youth basketball event in Asia, continuing the tradition of fostering basketball development across the continent.

Iranian players excel as VNL preliminary phase wraps up

Sport Desk

The Preliminary Phase of the Volleyball Nations League (VNL) 2025 has drawn to a close, with Brazil, Poland, Italy, France, Japan, Cuba, and Slovenia securing their spots in the tournament’s Finals. The Iranian national team, under the guidance of coach, displayed a significantly improved performance compared to previous years. They secured six victories, ultimately finishing in eighth place overall in the preliminary standings. Beyond the team’s overall standing, several Iranian players



● varzesh3.com

delivered impressive individual statistics throughout the preliminary round. Arshia Behnejad, a pivotal player for Iran, distinguished himself by ranking fourth among the best set-

ters. Another top player was Morteza Sharifi who showcased his all-around talent, securing the third position among the best servers and also placing eighth among the best receivers.