

Azmoun Among Top IFFHS World Best International Goalscorer 2024



TEHRAN - Iranian forward Sardar Azmoun is among those in the International Federation of Football History & Statistics (IFFHS) top goalscorer list.

A stubborn battle for the trophy of best international goalscorer 2024 at the end of the year between two Moroccans ended in victory for Soufiane Rahimi.

In December, 28-year-old Rahimi managed to score for Al Ain in the Asian Champions League, a goal that sealed his win in the contest with the total of 20.

His rival Ayoub El Kaabi failed to find the net for Olympiacos in the last Europa League match-day of the year; so, he finished the second with 19 goals.

Erling Haaland completed the podium (17 goals).

Azmoun is 15th in the list with 12 goals. His compatriot Mehdi Taremi is 25th with 10 goals.

Dumfries Double Fires Inter to Super Cup Semifinal Win Over Atalanta

RIYADH (Reuters) - A second-half double from Denzel Dumfries earned Inter Milan a 2-0 win over Atalanta in Riyadh to reach the Italian Super Cup final, where the Serie A champions will aim to win the trophy for the fourth successive time.

While Inter manager Simone Inzaghi went with his strongest available 11, Atalanta's Gian Piero Gasperini, already without top scorer Mateo Retegui through injury, surprisingly left both Ademola Lookman and Charles De Ketelaere on the bench.

The opening half ended scoreless, mostly thanks to Atalanta



Inter Milan's Dutch defender #02 Denzel Dumfries shoots to score his team's first goal in Riyadh on Jan 2, 2025.

keeper Marco Carnesecchi, who first denied Lautaro Martinez with a reflex save from close range.

Carnesecchi then pulled off a double save, parrying away a powerful Martinez shot, then quickly getting back on his feet to stop Federico Dimarco's effort from the rebound.

Atalanta had one decent chance in the first half, thanks to a poor headed clearance attempt from Inter defender Alessandro Bastoni which left Giorgio Scalvini with a header from close range that he sent straight at keeper Yann Sommer.

Bam Khatoun in Pot 2 of AFC Women's Champions League



TEHRAN - The inaugural AFC Women's Champions League season will mark another milestone on Wednesday, January 8 when the official draw ceremony for the Knock-out Stage takes place at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur.

Eight teams are still standing in the 2024-25 campaign, which kicked off last August with the Preliminary Stage and subsequently concluded the Group Stage in October.

The cast, which comprises the top two finishers from each of the three groups in the Group Stage and the two best third-placed teams, will continue their journey to glory in the single-leg Quarter-finals.

The three group winners and the best-ranked runner-up have been allocated to Pot 1 for the draw, with the remaining quartet in Pot 2, as below:

Pot 1: Hyundai Steel Red Angels Women's FC (KOR), Melbourne City FC (AUS), Urawa Red Diamonds Ladies (JPN), Ho Chi Minh City Women's FC (VIE)

Pot 2: Abu Dhabi Country Club (UAE), Bam Khatoun FC (IRN), Wuhan Jiangda Women's FC (CHN), Taichung Blue Whale Women's Football Team (TPE)

Alipour Hits Hat-Trick to Go Top of IPL Goal-Scorers Table



TEHRAN - Persepolis football team forward Ali Alipour scored a hat-trick in the match against struggling Havadar to go to the top of the goal-scorers table.

Persepolis defeated Havadar 5-0 in the 2024-25 Iran Professional League (IPL) thanks to a hat-trick from Alipour.

Issa Aleksaeir and Oston Urunov were also on target.

Alipour has scored seven goals in Persepolis and moved to the top of the league's goalscorers table.

Sepahan forward Mehdi Limouchi and Aluminum striker Amin Kazemian have scored six goals each.

Curry Makes History as Warriors Rout 76ers



Steph Curry scored 30 points as the Warriors thrashed the 76ers

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Stephen Curry set a new NBA three-point record as the Golden State Warriors defeated the Philadelphia 76ers 139-105 in San Francisco.

Curry, 36, made all eight of his

three-point attempts for the first time in his career as he finished with 30 points and 10 assists.

And it meant the two-time NBA Most Valuable Player became the first person in league history to go

at least eight-for-eight on three-pointers and reach double-digit assists in the same game.

The NBA record of nine-for-nine was set in 2003 by Latrell Sprewell, before it was matched by Ben Gordon - both in 2006 and 2012 - and by Jalen Brunson in 2023.

Jonathan Kuminga chipped in 20 points off the bench, while Draymond Green, Andrew Wiggins and Dennis Schroder scored 15 apiece.

Victory improved the Warriors' season record to 17-16 while the 76ers fell to 13-19.

Elsewhere, defending NBA champions the Boston Celtics sneaked past the Minnesota Timberwolves with a 118-115 win.

LeBron James scored 38 points with eight assists and Max Christie added a career-high 28 as the

Los Angeles Lakers overcame the Portland Trail Blazers 114-106.

The Oklahoma City Thunder extended their lead at the top of the Western Conference with a 116-98 home victory against the LA Clippers, while the Brooklyn Nets won 113-110 at the Milwaukee Bucks and the Indiana Pacers triumphed 128-115 at the Miami Heat.

Meanwhile, Detroit Pistons guard Jaden Ivey has had successful surgery on a broken fibula in his left leg.

Ivey, the fifth overall pick in the 2022 draft, suffered the injury during the fourth quarter of the Pistons' 105-96 victory against the Orlando Magic on Wednesday.

Ivey will be reassessed in four weeks' time, the Pistons said, although he is likely to miss most of the rest of the season.

Djokovic, Sabalenka Through to Brisbane Quarters, China's Yuan Yue Out

SYDNEY - Top seeds Novak Djokovic and Aryna Sabalenka won through to the quarterfinals at the Brisbane International on Thursday, while China's Yuan Yue was knocked out of the tournament.

Djokovic extended his career unbeaten streak against French veteran Gael Monfils to 20 matches with a 6-3, 6-3 win in one hour and 12 minutes on Thursday night at the key warm-up event for the Australian Open.

The victory takes Djokovic one step closer to his 100th career singles title. "I've never won the Brisbane International. Hopefully this is the year, that's why I'm here," he said on court after the match.

The 10-time Australian Open champion converted all three of his break point opportunities against Monfils and saved the only opportunity he conceded with an ace.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a backhand during his match against France's Gael Monfils at the Brisbane International in Brisbane, Australia, on Jan 2, 2025.

Sabalenka, the world number one and two-time reigning Australian Open champion, had a tougher challenge against 15th seed Yulia Putintseva, but prevailed 7-6 (2), 6-4 in one hour and 49 minutes.

Since the start of 2023, Sabalenka

has won 24 matches in Australia and lost only once, in the Brisbane International final in 2024.

Earlier on Thursday, Yuan Yue was beaten by Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina 6-1, 6-4 in one hour and 41 minutes.

Toyota Edges Out Ford, Dacia as Lategan Wins Prologue in Dakar Rally

PARIS (AFP) - Factory Toyota driver Henk Lategan beat Ford rival Mattias Ekstrom to take victory in Prologue at the start of the 2025 Dakar Rally.

The 47th edition of the world's biggest cross-country rally kicked off with a short 29km special in Bisha in the south west region of Saudi Arabia, with a total of 64 cars lining up in the Ultimate category.

While all eyes were on Ford and Dacia as they made their full-fledged debuts in Dakar, incumbent Toyota stole the limelight by scoring a narrow win with its proven Hilux T1+.

Representing the South African division of Toyota Gazoo Racing, Lategan completed the prologue in 15m28.06s on his return to Dakar after a one-year hiatus, beating the Ford Raptor of former DTM and



World Rallycross champion Mattias Ekstrom by just 1.3s.

Both drivers eclipsed the early benchmark set by Dacia newcomer Nasser Al-Attiyah, who was first to take the starting line and set a time of 15m48.4s in the lead Sandrider.

Debutant Rokas Baciуска put in a solid effort in a customer Toyota en-

tered by Overdrive, finishing fourth and just a second adrift of Al-Attiyah after a test that featured a mix of dirt track, gravel and sand.

Brian Baragwanath rounded up the top five for Century Racing, while nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb finished sixth for Dacia.