Qatar coach Felix Sanchez shrugged off comparisons to Pep Guardiola yesterday after masterminding a breathtaking Asian Cup victory just three years before the 2022 World Cup on home turf.

Almoez Ali scored a tournament-record nine goals and the Maroons conceded only once as they swept to the first continental title in their history, beating Japan 3-1 in the final.

Ali said he saw shades of Manchester City's Guardiola in Sanchez, who coached Barcelona's youth players before joining Qatar's Aspire Academy in 2006 and working his way through the ranks.

"I've been working with him for nine years, he's highly intelligent," said the 21-year-old striker. "I compare him to Guardiola because he has the same ideas."

But Sanchez told AFP that Ali only made the comment "because I’m there (listening) and he wants to keep playing".

"I’ve worked with Almoez for a very long time and we have good relationships," the Spaniard said. "It’s easy to coach because he’s a hard worker and he doesn’t want to rest. It’s a great support for me in this tournament."

Qatar upset former champions Saudi Arabia, Iraq and South Korea on their march to the final, but those weren’t the only challenges they faced.

The Qataris were pelted with shoes and plastic bottles by a hostile home crowd as they beat the United Arab Emirates 4-0 in the semi-finals.

"I’m very proud to be the Qatar national team coach. Today we made history. I’m only thinking about today. It’s a great day for me and the players and the country," Sanchez said.

"There’s always news about this person and that person but we’re focused on our work and we have the full support of the QFA."

"No concern about the World Cup, it’s in 2022 and you don’t even know what’s going to happen in two weeks."

From left: FIFA president Gianni Infantino, AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim al-Khalifa, Qatar’s forward Almoez Ali, who was adjudged Most Valuable Player of the 2019 AFC Asian Cup, QFA president Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa bin Ahmed al-Thani, and AFC and QFA vice-president Saud al-Mohannadi on the podium in Abu Dhabi yesterday. (AFP)
Minister of Culture and Sports says national team's achievement down to the Amir's support

Qatar has won the 2022 FIFA World Cup in style. This is a great achievement by the football team and its manager. Qatar is being highlighted in the media as a rising football nation, with its football team winning the World Cup. This has come as a surprise to many, as Qatar was not considered a major football power before. However, with the support of the Amir and the Minister of Culture and Sports, Qatar has been able to achieve this great feat. The Amir has always been a great supporter of the national football team, and his support has been instrumental in the team's success. Qatar has also been able to prepare for the World Cup with the help of experienced football coaches, who have guided the team to victory. The Amir has congratulated the national football team on their historic victory, and has expressed his joy at the team's achievement. Qatar has been able to reach the final of the World Cup with the support of the Amir and the Minister of Culture and Sports, and has made Qatar a great place for football.
Qatar’s young guns prove they are phenomenal

In 2014, Sanchez’s Qatar U19 team won the Asia title with a squad that would also go on to make history at the senior level.

Qatar coach Faisal Alkhalid is flanked by his players after their AFC Asian Cup win. (Reuters)

By Sahan Bidappa

If you were to ask Qatar coach Wilfried Sanche’s opinion on his young squad and the progress they have made over the years, he would be quick to point out their achievements and the potential they have to achieve even more.

Sanchez’s Qatar U19 team won the 2014 AFC Asian Cup, which was a significant moment for the squad and the nation. The team went on to make history at the senior level by reaching the World Cup in 2014 and the Asian Cup in 2019.

Sanchez has often spoken about the importance of building a strong culture within the national team, focusing on development and the players’ hunger for success. He has emphasized the need to develop under pressure, and the importance of the players supporting each other.

Sanchez believes the improvement in the team’s performance is due to the development of new talent and the improvement of existing players. He has praised the efforts of every single player and has expressed his pride in the team’s achievements.

Sanchez’s approach has been instrumental in the team’s success, and his work has been recognized both within and outside of Qatar. The team’s performance in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup was a testament to Sanchez’s strategy and highlights the support for athletes.

With the team’s success, Sanchez has been given a glimpse into what lies in store for the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosts. He believes the improvement will continue and that Qatar will be a force to be reckoned with in the years to come.

Sanchez has also given a sneak peek into what the 2022 FIFA World Cup might look like, and he has expressed his confidence in the team’s ability to compete on the highest level.

Sanchez’s words have been echoed by others in the football world, who have praised Qatar’s progress and the potential of the team.

AFC ASIAN CUP

In a press statement yesterday, the federation said that the team’s achievement was a result of the visionary leadership and focus on building generations of talented athletes.

The team’s triumph is the result of Qatar’s wise and strategic investment in football. The team’s success has not only helped earn his country a place among the elites of Asian football, but has also given a glimpse into what lies in store for the 2022 FIFA World Cup hosts.

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SIGHTS FROM QATAR’S HISTORIC VICTORY
**PREVIEW**

Patriots and Rams collide in Super Bowl generation game

*It's just part of who I am, part of my DNA. Those motivations run deep.*

Los Angeles Rams quarterback Jared Goff and New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady during opening night for Super Bowl LIII at State Farm Arena.

**BOTTOMLINE**

Players, fans embrace touchdown celebrations as NFL softens stance
Knicks send Latvian Porzingis to Mavericks in multi-player trade

The New York Knicks and Dallas Mavericks have completed a multi-player trade that sends Kristaps Porzingis to Dallas in exchange for Dennis Smith Jr., Wesley Matthews, and DeAndre Jordan.

The Knicks also receive forward Tim Hardaway Jr. from the Mavericks in the deal. The move comes after the Knicks traded Porzingis to the Dallas Mavericks on Thursday.

Bucks beat Raptors in OT

The Milwaukee Bucks defeated the Toronto Raptors 105-92 in a pivotal game in the Eastern Conference play-in tournament.

Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo recorded 36 points, 14 rebounds, and eight assists, leading his team to victory.

The win puts the Bucks one step closer to securing a playoff spot in the NBA.

NBA 2019-2020 regular season

The NBA regular season is in full swing with teams competing for playoff berths and conference championships.

The Milwaukee Bucks, led by Giannis Antetokounmpo, are currently sitting at the top of the Eastern Conference standings.

Westbrook, Lowry named NBA all-star reserves

The All-Star reserves for the NBA have been announced, with Russell Westbrook and Kyle Lowry being named as the reserves for the Eastern Conference.

Both players have had standout seasons, with Westbrook averaging 27.7 points, 7.9 rebounds, and 7.0 assists per game, and Lowry averaging 19.5 points, 4.2 rebounds, and 7.5 assists per game.

Connor's late go-ahead sends Jets past Panthers

The Winnipeg Jets defeated the Carolina Panthers 2-1 in overtime on Saturday, with Patrik Laine scoring the game-winning goal.

The win moves the Jets into second place in the Central Division and keeps them in the playoff hunt.

James returns to Lakers to spark search for win

Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James returned to the court on Thursday night against the Minnesota Timberwolves, sparking a late push in the game and leading the Lakers to a come-from-behind victory.

James, who missed 17 games due to a groin injury, scored 16 points and delivered three assists in his return to the court.

The Lakers needed a win to keep their playoff hopes alive, and James delivered with a clutch three-pointer and a game-winning shot in overtime.

It was the toughest stretch of my career not being out on the floor

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With his return to the court, James said: "It's the toughest stretch of my career not being out on the floor." He was referring to the 36-day absence due to a groin injury.

James has missed 17 games due to a groin injury, but returned to the court on Thursday night against the Minnesota Timberwolves, sparking a late push in the game and leading the Lakers to a come-from-behind victory.

"It was the toughest stretch of my career not being out on the floor," James said. "But I'm here now, and I'm going to make the most of this opportunity."
Scotland in search of historic feat this Six Nations

Last year we felt our game was in a good position but we did not deliver in our first game.

Vonn to retire after world championships

Families fare best in a variety of ways days of my life – and with their quarter-finales of the European rugby's premier club tournament.

Vonn pulled out of last week's World Cup in Lake Louise, in Canada, with knee problems.

"Left everything out on the pitch". "I don't regret it."

Schmidt and Jones bid to teach other Six Nations lesson

After many sleepless nights, Mark carried his four-year-old daughter, Madi in the carrier, and his wife, Emily, back to the hotel. "We're worn out," Mark said. "I think we're done.

Families fare best in a variety of ways
Burns, Head tons put Australia in control in 2nd Test

Head fell for 161 after a 308-run stand with Burns, who was unbeaten on 172

South Africa beat Pakistan

Scotland were off to the perfect start after David Wilkie and Calum MacLeod plundered 68 runs for the first wicket. Scotland then added 52 runs for the second wicket as Michael Leask and David Wilkie put on 71 runs for the third wicket. Scotland then declared their innings at 227 for 6, setting a target of 293 for Sri Lanka to chase.

Sri Lanka were bowled out for 75, with Dinesh Chandimal scoring a valiant 29. The Sri Lankan innings was bowled out in 58 overs, with the first four overs of the innings taken by Scotland's bowlers.

 Pregnancy was confirmed in February 2019

AFP Gulf Times

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