

Iran's Qassempour given injury boost ahead of world wrestling meet

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestling sensation Kamran Qassempour said he would be fit in time to take part in September's Wrestling World Championships after a groin injury saw him limp off a training session last week.

The dominant force of the freestyle 92kg class for the past two years, the Iranian has already been ruled out of the upcoming Ranking Series event, starting July 13 in Budapest, making way for young prodigy Amir-Ali Azarpira.

Speaking to Tasnim News Agency, Qassempour said he is receiving the proper treatment and would be back to training sooner than initially feared.

"I'm in good physical and mental conditions right now. This is not the first time I suffer an injury as I have a history of participating in several tournaments even with a torn meniscus or ligament," said Qassempour.

The Iranian missed the Kaba Uulu

ing part in the 72kg contests.

Mohammad Nokhodi and Ali Savadkouhi will also decide who will wear the Iranian 79kg singlet in September.

Nokhodi had to settle for a world silver in the past two years after back-to-back defeats against legendary American Jordan Burroughs, before Savadkouhi claimed a first victory in 15 attempts for the Iranians against the seven-time world and Olympic champion at the FS World Cup last December.

Reza Atri (61kg) – a world silver winner last year – reigning world champion Rahman Amouzad (65kg),

Younes Emami (74kg), eight-time

world and Olympic medalist

Hassan Yazdani (86kg), Mo-

jtaba Goleij (97kg), and

Amirhossein Zare' (125kg)

– a Tokyo Olympic bronze

winner and world cham-

pion in 2021, who took

the world bronze last year

– have already secured

their spots in

the Iranian

squad for

the World

Champi-

onships.



Kozhomkul

& Raatbek Sanatbaev

Ranking Series tournament in

Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, earlier in June with the

same problem.

"I'm sure I can overcome the injury again and will give my all to compete at the World Championships in my best form," added the Iranian, who will be chasing a third successive world gold in Belgrade.

Azarpira, meanwhile, will be joined by six other Iranians in the Hungarian capital, with three national team places at the world event up for grabs.

Ahmad Mohammad-Javan and Milad Valizadeh will represent the country in the 57kg category, with Amir-Mohammad Yazdani – a world silver winner in 2021 – and Mohammad Bakhshi tak-

Iran in flying form for U21 World Championship



Iranian under-21 players are seen in a training session in Tehran, Iran, on June 28, 2023. volleyball.ir

Sports Desk

Iran will be looking to build on its impressive form when getting its campaign underway at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Manama on Friday.

Gholam-Reza Momeni Moqaddam's 12-man squad entered the Bahraini capital on Tuesday on the back of fine performances in a couple of friendlies in Bulgaria.

The Asian powerhouse came out on top in four sets against USA before defeating the home side 3-2 (17-25, 25-20, 25-22, 19-25, 15-13) on Monday.

Iran also played Brazil in Sofia but the game, tied at

one set apiece, came to an immature end midway through the third set after a horrible injury for Iranian Yousef Kazemi, who returned to Tehran for treatment on his injured leg.

Having missed out on a place in the quarterfinals in 2021, Iran will be chasing a second world title in Bahrain in four years in after a victory over Italy in a five-set thriller in Riffa sealed a maiden trophy for the country in 2019 under Behrouz Ataei – now in charge of the seniors' team at the Volleyball Nations League.

Erfan Norouzi, Arshia Behnejad, Sajjad Jelodarian, Shayan Sepehrifard, Mobin Nasri, Pendar Momeni Moqaddam, Younes Javan, Amirmohammad Golza-

deh, Ali Haqparast, Amirhossein Sadati, Pouria Hosseinpour, and Mehdi Bayati will be the Iranian players in Manama, who will open their Pool A campaign against Thailand.

Iran will take on Tunisia before squaring off against the host in the final round of the group fixtures on Sunday.

The top two of each group will progress to the last-eight round. Defending champion Italy and four-time winner Brazil are in Pool B – also featuring Egypt and Mexico – with Poland, Bulgaria, Canada, and India in Pool C.

Argentina, Belgium, the Czech Republic and USA complete the lineup in Pool D.

Wimbledon:

Rublev speaks out as Russian players return after ban



THE GUARDIAN – Russian players are back at Wimbledon after the All England Club stood alone in banning them from competition in 2022, achieved nothing much for its efforts and this year backed down.

On day one of the tournament there was not much enthusiasm on anyone's part to engage with the issue but Andrey Rublev, the men's No 7 seed, did offer his thoughts.

The Russian said: "I think

obviously there was better

options. Not just to ban.

Because in the end, there

was no difference. [Wim-

bledon] did only worse to

themselves."

Rublev beat the Australian

Max Purcell in straight

sets, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4, to pro-

gress to the second round.

Meanwhile, Novak

Djokovic, the second seed

and seven-time champi-

on, was reduced to drying

Centre Court's grass with

his own towel as a mishan-

dled rain delay meant that

he and his opponent, Pe-

dro Cachin, had to wait for

nearly an hour and a half

until the grass was suffi-

ciently dry.

Despite many potential

distractions in his first

match of the grass-court

season, Djokovic began an-

other Wimbledon title run

with a solid performance

as he defeated Cachin 6-3,

6-3, 7-6(4) to reach the sec-

ond round.

"Probably, but in a good

way," Djokovic said when

asked if the match was

the strangest Wimbledon

opener of his career.

"It was definitely frus-

trating of course for all

the crowd waiting for us

to come out on the court.

And us players; we both

wanted to play but the con-

ditions were not great. Still

slippery under the roof.

"Once the roof was open, it

was a different story. After

five, 10 minutes we were

out and about.

"This is the holy grail and

the temple of tennis, so

to say. This court is really

something special. Every

time I come out, I normally

come out with rackets not

towels."

In his post-match press

conference, Djokovic said

he did not have any issues

with the umpire opting to

see out the set before clos-

ing the roof. "I don't think

it has gotten too much wet

from that maybe extra

minute and a half or some-

thing," he said.

"I just feel it has something

to do with something

else. That's probably not a

question for me. We were

lucky that rain stopped so

we could resume play with

an open roof."

Brazilian star Neymar fined \$3.5m for environmental offense

REUTERS – Brazilian authorities said on Monday that soccer star Neymar was fined 16 million reais (\$3.33 million) for breaching environmental rules during the construction of his coastal man-

sion in southeastern Brazil.

The luxury project violated rules regarding the use and movement of freshwater sources, rock and sand, local authorities first alleged late last month and

confirmed on Monday. A spokesperson for Neymar declined to comment on the matter.

His residence is located in the town of Mangaratiba on the southern coast of Brazil's Rio

de Janeiro state. Mangaratiba's environmental body said in a statement on Monday that environmental infractions were made "in the construction of an artificial lake at the mansion."

Besides the fine, the case will be probed by the local attorney general's office, the state civil police and environmental protection office, among other environmental control bodies.



STEPHANE MAHE/REUTERS