

## Hangzhou Asian Games:

# Rasouli wins discus throw gold in fitting farewell for Haddadi

## Sports Desk

Iranian discus throw sensation Ehsan Haddadi saw his 16-year reign at the Asian Games come to an end on Monday as his fellow countryman Hossein Rasouli walked away with the ultimate prize of the event in Hangzhou.

Having announced that the showdown at the HOC Stadium would be his final appearance at the Asian Games, Haddadi thought his season-best throw of 61.82m in a second attempt had been enough to secure a fifth successive gold in the competitions for the 2012 Olympic silver winner, before the 23-year-old Rasouli registered 62.04m on his fourth throw as Iran still enjoyed a remarkable one-two in the athletics competition.

"I knew the 62m throw would seal the gold, though I could have done better but I was struggling with a chest injury during the event," Rasouli said.

China's Abuduaini Tuergong – a gold medalist in July's Asian Championships – settled for the bronze with 61.19m.

"I was a bit unlucky today as I had a severe back pain before the contest. I think I could have exceeded the 64m-mark had it not been for the physical condition. I'm still happy the discus throw gold remains in Iran," said Haddadi, who was reduced to tears after the event while being surrounded by his opponents for the day.

Asked if Monday's contest would mark his retirement from the sport, Haddadi said: "I'll make the final decision when I return to Tehran. I can still qualify for the Paris Olympics, so I may continue



Iran's discus throw gold medalist Hossein Rasouli (R) and silver medalist Ehsan Haddadi shake hands on the podium at the Hangzhou Asian Games in China on October 2, 2023.  
● [hangzhou2022.cn](http://hangzhou2022.cn)

until next year's Games."

"It's been a tough 22 years in competitive sport. My body has been through a lot as I have gone under seven or eight surgeries over these years," added the Iranian, 38, who also has six Asian golds as well as a 2011 world bronze under his belt.

## Kurash glory

Elsewhere in Hangzhou, Iran's Sadeq Azarang grabbed a gold medal in the kurash competitions, thanks to a final victory over South Korean Kim Ming-yu in the men's -90kg weight class.

Zahra Baqeri won a silver following a defeat against the host's Liu

Yi in the women's -87kg final, with Melika Omidvand – beaten by the Chinese in the semifinals – taking the joint-bronze of the class.

In canoe sprint events, Iran's Peyman Qavidel and Sepehr Sa'atchi teamed up for a third-place finish behind the Chinese and South Ko-

rean pairs in the men's kayak double 500m final, while Iranian duo Adel Mojallalimoqadam and Kia Estandani also finished their campaign with a bronze in the men's canoe double 500m final.

Hediyeh Kazemi clocked 2:00.635 to win a bronze in the women's kayak single 500m contest.

## Iranian equestrians eyeing 'decent finish' in Asian Games



By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

The Iranian equestrians will be chasing a "decent finish" in the jumping event of the Hangzhou Asian Games in China, said Mohsen Zakeri, the head of the country's horse-riding team.

"I hope we'll collect the required points for a medal in the Games or at least finish in the top five of the competition," Zakeri told Iran Daily of the Iranian contestants, who will be involved in the team jumping contest today, before being in action in Friday's individual event. Naghmeh Khanjani, Omid Ghariabi, and Masoud Mokarinejad are the three Iranian horse riders in Hangzhou.

Strict quarantine rules had kept the Iranians from participating with their own horses in the Games since Doha 2006, Zakeri said, adding: "Since Iran is regarded a country with high veterinary risks, it is necessary to quarantine horses for a certain period before the Games. That's why we had to come up with a list of our riders who had horses abroad and selected the top ones for the event so that our representatives would ride their own horses in Hangzhou." "Two of the horses were in the



The Iranian equestrian team and coaching staff for the Hangzhou Asian Games  
● IRAN DAILY

Netherlands and the other one was in the United Arab Emirates. We staged three training camps in the Netherlands under Iran coach Esfandiar Houshmand and the equestrians took part in several jumping CSI tournaments," said the Iranian.

It has been nearly three decades since Iran last won an equestrian medal at the Asian Games – a team jumping bronze in Hiroshima 1994 for the country's four-man side, comprising Shahrokh Moqaddam, Kazem and Ezzatol-

lah Vojdani, and Davoud Bahrami. "The team has worked a lot to prepare for this year's event, not to mention the Iranian contestants will have the chance to ride their own horses at the TL Equestrian Centre, which is why I believe we can hope for a decent finish in the Games," said Zakeri, who added that proper measures – including serum therapy – have been taken in recent days to make sure the horses would recover from the exhaustion caused by the 16-hour flight to China.

## AFC Champions League:

## Sepahan vs. Al Ittihad called off after Saudi side refuses to play

## Sports Desk

An AFC Champions League match between Iranian club Sepahan and Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad was canceled on Monday after the Saudi side refused to take to the pitch at Isfahan's Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium.

The Group C game was called off "due to unanticipated and unforeseen circumstances," the Asian Football Confederation said in a statement later on Monday.

"The AFC reiterates its commitment towards ensuring the safety and security of the players, match officials, spectators, and all stakeholders involved," read the statement, adding: "This matter will now be referred to the relevant committees."

Al Ittihad is yet to officially announce the reason behind the controversial decision but wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the club was informed by the AFC's organizing official that "the game would not take place on the scheduled date and the team is allowed to leave the venue." Al Ittihad flew back to Saudi Arabia on Monday night. Several sources, including



Sepahan fans are seen in the stands at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on October 2, 2023.  
● RASOUL SHOJAEI/IRNA

the Iranian Fars and Tasnim new agencies, reported that the players of the Saudi side refused to leave the dressing room due to a bust of Iranian Quds Force General Qassem Soleimani, who was assassinated in a US drone strike near the Baghdad airport in January 2020, being placed at the entrance to the pitch. "Everything was in place for a proper game of football but Al Ittihad came up with demands that were not sport-related at all," Sepahan CEO Mohammadreza Saket

said afterwards. "I can assure all Sepahan supporters that the club will lodge a complaint to the AFC against Al Ittihad's behavior," Saket added. Sepahan shared the points with Iraq's Air Force Club in a 2-2 draw in Erbil on Matchday One of the Asian elite clubs competition, while Al Ittihad defeated Uzbekistan's AGMK FC 3-0 at home. Elsewhere on Monday, Air Force Club walked away with a 2-1 victory at AGMK to move atop the group.