

Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre wrestling tournament: Saravi, Dadmarz grab golds as Iran claims seven medals



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (L) and Pouya Dadmarz win the gold medals of their respective weight classes in the Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre tournament in Antalya, Turkey. **UWW**

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers Mohammad-Hadi Saravi and Pouya Dadmarz bagged a couple of golds at the Yasar Dogu & Vehbi Emre wrestling tournament as the country collected seven medals at the Greco-Roman contests in Antalya, Turkey. An all-Iranian final on Thursday saw three-time world medalist Saravi

come out on top against reigning Asian champion Mahdi Bali by a 5-1 scoreline to walk away with the ultimate prize of the 97kg weight class. A gold medalist at the 2021 Wrestling Worlds, Saravi will be looking to improve on his Olympic bronze three years ago when taking part in the Paris Games in the summer. Meanwhile, Dadmarz – A

bronze medalist in last September's World Championships – defeated opponents from Japan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan before a 5-2 victory over Giorgi Tokhadze of Georgia in the final showdown. Mohammad-Hadi Sha'bani was the other Iranian in the 55kg competitions but finished his campaign empty-handed after a second-round loss to Russian

Vitalii Kabloev. In the 130kg event, world champion Amin Mirzazadeh came out victorious against Russian wrestlers either side of a 10-0 win against the host's Burak Cakirca but pulled out of the final encounter against Matti Elias Kuosmanen with a knee problem as the Finnish wrestler was handed the gold, while young Iranian Fardin He-

dayati – beaten by Kuosmanen in the semifinals – went on to win a consolation bronze. The outcome in Antalya secured the Paris ticket for Mirzazadeh with Hedayati representing the country in April's Asian Championship in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Elsewhere, one of the 82kg semifinals featured two fellow-Iranians in Rasoul

Garmsiri and Abbas Mahdizadeh, with the former claiming a thrilling 8-5 triumph to head into the final, though he eventually settled for a silver following a 5-3 defeat against Belarusian Stanislau Shafarenka. Mahdizadeh, meanwhile, left Antalya with a consolation bronze, thanks to a walkover victory over Yunus Emre Basar.

Iranian saber team on the verge of Olympic berth

Sports Desk

Iranian fencing is inches away from beating Japan to the Asian slot at the saber team contests in the Paris Olympics. Comprising Ali Pakdaman, Mohammad Rahbari, Farzad Baher, and Mohammad Fotouhi, the Iranian four-man team is currently seventh in the FIE Men's Team Ranking with 217.00 points – 13 clear of eighth-place Japan. A decent run in the upcoming one-day Fencing World Cup event in Budapest on

March 24 will all but guarantee the Olympic berth for Iran, while Japan will have to finish on the podium to overtake Iran in the global governing body of the sport's ranking. A team silver in last June's Asian Championships as well as the World Cup third-place finish in Madrid made massive contributions to Iran's tally in the FIE Ranking with 52 and 40 points respectively. Iran had to settle for the ninth spot in the World Championships in Milan last year but the result

was still enough to earn 50 ranking points for the country. As it stands, South Korea, Hungary, USA, and France will be part of the event in Paris as the top four teams in the ranking, with Italy (fifth), Egypt (ninth), Canada (11th) likely to secure the continental slots. Iranian captain Pakdaman, meanwhile, is on course for an Olympic quota in the individual saber competitions after standing fifth in the latest world rankings. The 33-year-old Iranian collected 155,000 points to

move up by two spots, with Georgian Sandro Bazadze, Aron Szilagyi of Hungary – a silver medalist in the Tokyo Olympics – Egyptian Ziad Elsisy, and South Korea's Oh Sang-uk standing first to fourth respectively. The reigning Asian champion grabbed a first individual medal in five years for the country at the Fencing World Cup in mid-February, when he beat Bazadze to reach the final showdown in Tbilisi, only to settle for the silver after a 15-7 defeat against Szilagyi.



MASOUD SHAHRESTANI/TASNIM

Zahedi seals loan move to J1 League club Avispa

Sports Desk

Iranian striker Shahab Zahedi joined Japanese club Avispa Fukuoka on a loan deal – valid until June 30 – from Ukrainian side Zorya Lugansk, the J1 League team announced on Thursday. The 28-year-old forward, capped once for the national team, is to be introduced to the Avispa supporters at the Best Denki Stadium ahead of today's

encounter with Shonan Bellmare in the Japanese top flight. Avispa is eighth in the Japanese table with four points after two rounds of matches in the new season. Zahedi, who will be the first Iranian to play in the J1 League, spent the first half of the 2023/24 campaign on loan with the Persian Gulf Pro League champion Persepolis. The Iranian bagged seven goals and two assists

in 22 outings across all competitions but barely won the fans' heart and decided to part ways with the club in the winter transfer window after former Persepolis striker Issa Alekasir re-joined the Tehran Reds from Sepahan.



Boxing legend Tyson to return to ring against YouTuber Paul

THE GUARDIAN – Former heavyweight world champion Mike Tyson will return to the ring against YouTuber turned fighter Jake Paul as the thirst for crossover boxing matchups shows no sign of slowing. The two are scheduled to face each other at the 80,000-capacity AT&T Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys, on 20 July. Paul is 30 years the junior of the 57-year-old Tyson, and the fight will be the subject of criticism from those who believe such fights degrade boxing's standing.

MARK J TERRILL/AP

