

## Golmohammadi nearing Tractor deal as Motahari takes interim role



● khabarvarzeshi.com

### Sports Desk

Former Persepolis manager Yahya Golmohammadi is in advanced talks to take over at Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor, according to several sources in the Iranian media.

Golmohammadi, 53, has been without a job since stepping down from the Tehran Reds role in January.

The ex-Iranian international enjoyed a glorious four years with Persepolis, lifting the top-flight trophy on three occasions – including last year's domestic double-winning campaign – while his team reached the AFC Champions League final in 2020, only to miss out on a maiden silverware in the continent's elite clubs' competition after a 2-1 defeat against Ulsan Hyundai.

Should the deal go through in the coming days, it will be a second spell for Golmohammadi, who began his footballing career with the Tabriz-based club in late 80s, on Tractor bench – following a 22-game stint in the 2017/18 season.

Meanwhile, Tractor named Hamid Motahari – a former number two to Golmohammadi in Persepolis and a member of the national team's coaching staff over the past 12 months – as the interim coach on Wednesday.

Motahari takes over from Mohammad Nosrati, who had also been appointed as a caretaker coach following Paco Jemez's departure but had his short spell come to an end after only a game in charge – a 1-0 away defeat against struggling Nassaji Mazandaran last Friday.

Having joined Tractor midway through last season, Spanish tactician Jemez parted ways with the club in the aftermath of a 4-1 home defeat against Zob Ahan on April 12 – a third successive game without a win for Tractor. Tractor is fourth in the Iranian league table with 40 points – 13 adrift of Esteghlal on top – with six games to spare, registering 12 wins and eight defeats in 24 matches.

Tractor will play Zob Ahan at home in the Iranian Hazfi Cup last 16 on Friday, before welcoming Esteghlal for a highly-anticipated league fixture next Wednesday.

## AFC Futsal Asian Cup last eight:

# Iran runs riot against Kyrgyzstan, seals World Cup spot

### Sports Desk

Iran hammered Kyrgyzstan 6-1 on Wednesday to head into the AFC Futsal Asian Cup last four in Bangkok, Thailand – securing a place in September's Futsal World Cup in Uzbekistan. Heading into the quarterfinal on the back of a top-spot finish in Group D, Vahid Shamsaei's men took the lead through Behrouz Azimi with eight minutes into contest at the Bangkok Arena, only to be stunned by Donierbek Amanbaev's equalizer for the Central Asian side, which beat defending champion Japan 3-2 in their group opener, a minute later.

Salar Aqapour restored the advantage for Iran with a sublime freekick in the 10th minute as the Asian powerhouse took a 2-1 lead into halftime. The second half was all about the Iranians' dominance, with Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi bagging his seventh goal in the competition with a composed finish in the 24th minute.

Mahdi Karimi extended Iran's lead two minutes later and then tapped in his second of the afternoon with less than four minutes left on the clock. Iranian skipper Ali-Asghar Hassanzadeh, a four-time champion in the competition, rounded off a dominant performance with a well-taken spot-kick, as Iran continued its bid for a record-extending 13th Asian crown.



Iran's Saeid Ahmad-Abbasi (9) celebrates his goal during a 6-1 victory over Kyrgyzstan in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup last eight in Bangkok, Thailand, on April 24, 2024. ● AFC

## Four Iranians to battle for two Olympic GR slots in Budapest

### Sports Desk

Two Greco-Roman slots for the Paris Olympics will be up for grabs when four Iranian wrestlers take part at the Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial tournament – part of the United World Wrestling's annual Ranking Series event – in Budapest in June, the Iranian governing body of the sport announced.

Iran became the first country to secure a full six-man squad for the Games after Amin Kavianejad and Alireza Mohammadi reached the last four of the 77kg and 87kg weight classes respectively at the Asian qualification tournament in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, earlier in the week.

The two are all but guaranteed a spot in Paris – joining reigning world superheavyweight champion Amin Mirzazadeh and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi – a winner of four successive

major medals in the 97kg contests, including the 2021 world gold, since the Tokyo Olympics.

Mohammadreza Geraei will be looking to bag a second Olympic 67kg gold in a row in Paris but first he will have to see off domestic competition from young prodigy Saeid Esmaeili. Former world junior and cadet champion Esmaeili stole the show at the Asian Championships last week, rounding off an emphatic run with a victory over Kyrgyzstan's Razzak Beishekeev in the final showpiece.

Geraei claimed the Olympic and world golds in the space of two months in 2021, but failed to continue his domination over the next two years, as he fell to Mate Nemeš in the 2022 world final before laboring to a joint-bronze alongside the Serbian in last September's UWW Worlds – suffering a technical fall against even-

tual silver medalist Hasrat Jafarov of Azerbaijan in the quarterfinals.

Meanwhile, Mahdi Mohsennejad and Amir-Reza Dehbozorgi will bid for the Iranian 60kg spot when event gets underway in the Hungarian capital.

Mohsennejad, an ex-world under-23 silver winner, failed to finish on the podium in last year's World Championships but his win against Armenian Gevorg Gharibyan in the fifth-place bout was enough to seal the Olympic quota for the country.

Two-time world age-group champion Dehbozorgi was part of the Iranian team in the recently-finished Asian Championships and bounced back from a technical fall against Kyrgyz sensation Zholaman Sharshenbekov, who edged out Mohsennejad in the world event, to leave Bishkek with a consolation bronze.



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Saeid Esmaeili will be looking to build on the Asian gold-winning campaign to secure a 67kg spot at the Paris Olympics. ● IAWF

## Doncic helps Mavericks level play-off with Clippers

**BBC** – Luka Doncic scored 32 points to help the Dallas Mavericks level their first-round NBA play-off series against the Los Angeles Clippers. After a 109-97 defeat on Sunday, when they trailed by as many as 29 points, the Mavericks rallied to claim a 96-93 victory in game two. Doncic had nine assists, while Kyrie Irving added 23 points. The series moves to Dallas for the third game of the best-of-seven series on Friday. James Harden and Paul

George each scored 22 points for the Clippers, while star player Kawhi Leonard returned from injury to score 15 points in 35 minutes. The Clippers led 73-67 early in the fourth quarter, before the Mavericks scored 14 straight points. Doncic added a three-pointer to open the advantage to 90-81 with 86 seconds remaining and Dallas were able to hold on from there. Elsewhere on Tuesday, the Minnesota Timberwolves took a 2-0 lead in their play-off against the Phoenix Suns.

Jaden McDaniels scored a career-best 25 points, while Mike Conley and Rudy Gobert finished with 18 points each as Minnesota won 105-93. "Twenty-five points in a play-off game, there's nothing more I could ask for," McDaniels said. The Indiana Pacers ended a 10-game post-season losing streak with a 125-108 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks. Pascal Siakam recorded 37 points, 11 rebounds and six assists to help the Pacers level their Eastern Conference play-off at 1-1.



KIYOSHI MIO/USA TODAY SPORTS