



Yazdani heading to Budapest in pursuit of Paris ticket

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Iranian wrestling sensation Hassan Yazdani will participate in the Polyák Imre & Varga János Memorial tournament – starting June

6 in Budapest – to have his fitness assessed for the Paris Olympics, the country's Wrestling Federation announced. The Ranking Series event will come nine months af-

ter the Iranian made his last international appearance at the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, where he cruised to the freestyle 86kg gold. Having won the Olympic

quota thanks to a silver medal in last year's World Championships, Yazdani had to undergo a surgery on his injured shoulder right after the Asian Games and only made his

long-awaited return to the mat last week. A winner of a national-high nine world and Olympic medals, Yazdani posted a video on his Instagram account on Thursday, show-

ing him in action with his sparring partner. Yazdani will be the sole Iranian 86kg wrestler in Budapest, the federation said, adding: "If his health and fitness levels are approved

of by the national team coaching staff, he will be a part of the freestyle squad at the Paris Olympics."

The Iranian wrestling body still said a domestic trial remains on the cards, should Yazdani fail to be fully fit for the Budapest event – which will begin 50 days before the opening ceremony of the Games in the French capital – meaning two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qassem-pour could still fancy his chances for the 86kg place in Paris.

Qassem-pour, who had to deal with his own injury woes – which ruled him out of the world title defense in Belgrade last September – moved up to the Olympic 97kg weight class for the start of the new year.

However, his below-par results in January's Zagreb Open, including a comprehensive defeat against American great Kyle Snyder, saw Iranian prodigy Amir-Ali Azarpira – gold medalist in the Croatian capital – emerge as the frontrunner for the Iranian 97kg slot in the Olympics.

Yazdani will be eager to seek a third successive Olympic medal in August after his familiar foe David Taylor, who enjoys a 5-1 head-to-head record against the Iranian, was stunned by fellow-American Aaron Brooks in the U.S. Olympic trials earlier in April.

A second Olympic gold will see Yazdani overtake Iranian taekwondo legend Hadi Saei as the country's most-decorated athlete in the history of the Games.

Masoud Oskouei, veteran Iranian sportscaster, dies at 85



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Veteran Iranian sportscaster and journalist Masoud Oskouei passed away at the age of 85 in Tehran on Wednesday. Oskouei, who had been hospitalized with a broken hip and leg since early April while also suffering from cancer, will be laid to rest in the Iranian capital's Behesht-e Zahra Cemetery today. Best remembered for his unique voice, Oskouei joined the National Television of Iran in 1966 and made his commentating debut in a friendly football game featuring Persepolis and Kuwait national team five years later, though he went on to serve as a volleyball, equestrian, and motorsport pundit and commentator over the best part of his six-decade career. In recent years, Oskouei was the host of several radio programs for the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

Ancelotti unhappy with Real's attitude in draw at Bayern

REUTERS – Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti was disappointed with his players' attitude, calling them "soft" for defending too deep in their 2-2 draw at Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-final, first leg on Tuesday.

Ancelotti was critical of his team's commitment after Vinicius Jr's first-half goal gave them the lead as Bayern struck twice in four minutes early in the second half to turn the game around before Vinicius equalised from the penalty spot.

"The result is good but on a level of play we could have done better. Bayern showed their best version and we didn't. We have to improve for next week," an introspective Ancelotti told Movistar Plus+.

"In the first half we defended but with little intensity, in the second half when they took the lead we started to press a bit more, but not enough.

"The feeling was that we were comfortable, but we lacked intensity. We gave them too many chances to take control of the game. We didn't want to play in a low block and we went on doing that. We were soft."

Ancelotti defended his decision to substitute midfielder Toni Kroos, who set up Vinicius' opener with a brilliant pass and was arguably Real's best player.

The Italian said that he made four substitutions in an effort to shake his team up and was relieved that they ended up scoring the equaliser that he believes "left the tie open" for the return leg in Madrid next week.

"Jude Bellingham had a cramp, Toni Kroos played a spectacular game but the plan was to try to recover the control of the game by putting fresh legs in," Ancelotti told a press conference.

"As always, at this point in the season we have a great opportunity to play in another final. It's an even tie against a great team. It will be another 90 minutes of suffering but in an atmosphere

that we know quite well. The fans are going to help us."

Meanwhile, Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel said his team were victims of Real's lethal efficiency but the Germans are ready to beat them in next week's return leg

"The result is what it is and it's not worth spending any time thinking about it," Tuchel, who will leave Bayern at the end of the season after a disappointing domestic campaign, told a press conference.

"Real have done it before, to score twice with two chances.

We are not the first team to suffer that. They have the finish, they have the quality to do that. "We had a strong start then we lost a bit our rhythm. We should have scored a third but we were not efficient enough, not cold enough to add a third. Then we gifted them a penalty.

"The situation is now very clear," Tuchel added. "We go to Madrid and the winner takes it all. We are ready to fight. It is important to believe that.

"It is still possible. It is 50-50. It is one of the toughest places to win but that is also what makes this challenge exciting."

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti reacts during his side's 2-2 draw against Bayern Munich in the Champions League semi-final, first leg in Allianz Arena, Munich, Germany, on April 30, 2024.

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