

Wrestling U17 Asian Championships: Iranian young guns crowned freestyle champion



Iranian wrestlers and coaching staff celebrate with the freestyle team trophy at the U17 Asian Championships in Amman, Jordan, on June 25, 2024. UWW

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers claimed the freestyle title at the U17 Asian Championships in Amman, Jordan. The Iranian 10-man squad collected five gold medals and double bronzes to stand atop the team table with 183 points, followed by Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which tallied 156 and 151 respectively. Sam Arshad, Aryan Mehr-Alizadeh, and Amir-Reza Alipour brought the curtain down on a glorious campaign for the country on Tuesday, walking away with the ultimate prize of their respective weight classes. Representing Iran in the 51kg event, Arshad overcame opponents from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan before defeating Nurtilek Zamirbekov of Kyrgyzstan 4-1 in the final showpiece. A second final featuring Iranian and Kyrgyz wrestlers saw Mehr-Alizadeh beat Kursantbek Isakov 3-1 for the 55kg gold, while Alipour rounded off a dominant 92kg run with a technical-superiority victory (10-0) over Zhenyu Yang of China for the gold.

Elsewhere, Amirabbas Ramezani and Amirabbas Alizadeh managed to leave the Jordanian capital with a couple of consolation bronzes. Beaten by Uzbekistan's Jurabek Rakhmonov in a 45kg quarter-final, Ramezani outmuscled Japanese Kenta Sakakihara 10-0 in the repechage battled and then defeated the host's Omar Ishaq Musleh with the same scoreline to share the third podium with Bekzat Amangeldy of Kazakhstan. Alizadeh, meanwhile, bounced back from a semifinal 8-6 setback against Indian Vishal Shilimkar to hammer Mongolian Budsai Khan Yandag 10-0 in the third-place bout of the 48kg contests. The final-day results came after Abolfazl Shamsipour and Reza Afshar had bagged a couple of golds for the Iranian squad on the preceding night. Shamsipour beat Indian Nishant Ruhil 4-1 for the 71kg gold, with Afshar defeating Uzbek Bunyod Rufatov 4-0 for the 80kg gold. Yasin Khosro Tayyebi (60kg), Amir-Ali Valipour (65kg), and Abolfazl Mohammadnejad (110kg) were the other mem-

bers of the team, who were unlucky to finish their campaigns empty-handed, though they still contributed to the team title with a combined 28 points. Earlier in the under-17 championships, the Iranian Greco-Roman squad had made a clean sweep of 10 medals but settled for a runner-up finish behind Uzbekistan in the team table. Abolfazl Karami (51kg), Emadreza Mohsennejad (80kg), and Danial Izadi (92kg) grabbed three gold medals, with Ahmad Badraddini (45kg), Alireza Amiri (48kg), Amir-Mahdi Saeidi Nava (67kg), and Mohammad Kazemi (71kg) adding four silvers to Iran's medal haul. Amir-Ali Heidari (55kg), Abolfazl Shiri (60kg), and Ayoub Hosseinvand (110kg) left the Jordanian capital with three consolation bronzes as Iran tallied 200 points. Uzbekistan notched up 215 points, thanks to a remarkable five golds, as well as three silvers and double bronzes, while third-place Kazakhstan finished on 148 points with a single gold, two silvers, and three bronze medals.

England fans creating 'unusual environment', Southgate claims



BBC - Some England fans' reactions to the team's performances at Euro 2024 are "creating an unusual environment" which is "causing an issue for the group" says manager Gareth Southgate. His side finished top of Group C on Tuesday after a goalless draw against Slovenia followed a 1-1 stalemate with Denmark in their previous group-stage game. Southgate's side were booed off, and some empty cups were thrown at the Three Lions boss following another below-par display against a team ranked 57th in the world, 52 places lower than England. "I'm not going to back away from it," he said. "The most important thing is the supporters stay with the team." Southgate said he "understands" why fans have expressed their displeasure at disappointing performances and results, which included a 1-0 success over 32nd-ranked Serbia in their opening match of the tournament. Fans jeered England at half-time in Cologne and Southgate was met by another negative

response as he went to applaud supporters at full-time, with a handful of plastic pint cups thrown in his direction. "I understand the narrative towards me and that's better for the team than it being towards them," he added. "But it is creating an unusual environment to operate in. I've not seen any other team qualify and receive similar. I understand it, I'm not going to back away from it, but I'm very proud of the players for how they're operating within it." England's performance against Denmark in their second group game was widely criticised by pundits, with captain Harry Kane calling for more positivity from the media in the build-up to Slovenia, and saying ex-players should remember how "tough" tournament football is. Social media video from inside Cologne Stadium appeared to show some England fans swearing towards Southgate, then arguing with other supporters who felt they should be getting behind the team and the manager. Southgate gave several post-

match interviews to individual broadcasters before holding a news conference. He told beIN Sports that "the reaction to everything" was creating "an incredible environment" and the "players are feeling that". "I've lived in this environment for 20 years as a player and coach. We've got to keep ourselves on track and make sure the dressing room is tight." In his news conference later, Southgate added: "We have made England over the last three or four years fun again. I think it has been enjoyable for the players and we have got to be very, very careful that it stays that way." Southgate also revealed the responses from some supporters are "causing an issue for the group" and urged them to back the players. He told BBC Radio 5 Live: "I was not going to back away from going over to thank people for coming and giving the support that they did, but I know that this is causing an issue for the group. "I can deal with that but I need them to support the players."



WOLFGANG RATTAY/REUTERS

Asian Fencing Championships: Iran settles for saber team silver

Sports Desk

Iran grabbed the men's team saber medal at the Asian Fencing Championships in Kuwait. The Iranian trio of Mohammad Rahbari, Farzad Baher, and Ali Pakdaman defeated India and Kazakhstan for a place in Tuesday's final showdown but fell to a 45-26 loss to fencing powerhouse South Korea. Rahbari got Iran off to a winning start, beating Park Sangwon 5-4 in the first of the nine clashes in the final. However, Oh Sanguk and Gu Bongil - members of the gold-winning team in the Tokyo Olympics - came out on top against Baher (6-3) and Pakdaman (5-4) respectively and the South Korean side



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never looked back, claiming five more wins - with Rahbari and Gu sharing the spoils - for a second men's saber gold in Kuwait - following Oh's individual triumph. Iranian Rahbari, meanwhile,

took his personal haul at this year's competitions to two medals, having won the individual joint bronze - alongside the host's Yousef Alshamlan - after a 15-5 setback against Oh in the semifinals.

World Para Powerlifting World Cup: Aminzadeh wins double golds as Iran bags six medals

Sports Desk

Ahmad Aminzadeh rounded off a decent campaign for Iran at the World Para Powerlifting World Cup with double super-heavyweight golds in Tbilisi, Georgia. A gold medalist in last year's Asian Para Games, the Iranian registered a best lift of 250kg for the ultimate prize in the men's +107kg event, while an overall tally of 741kg handed him the total gold of the weight class. Ali-Akbar Gharibshahi had collected double golds for Iran in the 107kg contest, while Paralympic silver medalist Amir Ja'fari claimed the total gold in the men's 65kg class. Mohsen Bakhtiar, meanwhile,



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took the 59kg bronze. More than 320 athletes from 71 countries took part at the competition in the Georgian

capital, which also served as the final round of qualifiers for the Paris Paralympics later in the summer.