

# Have wrestling fans seen the last of Yazdani?



By Amirhadi  
Arsalanpour  
Staff writer

Question marks remain over the future of Hassan Yazdani's career after the latest injury setback for the Iranian wrestling sensation at the Paris Olympics.

Yazdani headed to Paris in pursuit of a second Olympic gold, aiming to dethrone taekwondo great Hadi Saei as the most-decorated Iranian in the history of the Games with two golds and a silver.

There were major doubts over Yazdani's form before he got his freestyle 86kg campaign underway last Thursday, as the Iranian had only made his long-awaited return to action in June's Ranking Series event in Budapest, having been sidelined for nine months after a surgery on his injured shoulder.



Iranian wrestler Hassan Yazdani is seen in action against Bulgaria's Magomed Ramazanov in the freestyle 86kg final at the Paris Olympics on August 9, 2024.  
● ALIREZA SOTAKBAR/ISNA

Still, with Yazdani's familiar foe David Taylor – who has a 3-1 record against him in four major finals – absent in Paris, the Iranian was widely regarded as the favorite for the ultimate prize of his weight class.

Despite being far from his emphatic form, he showed no signs of struggles en route to a third successive Olympic final, outmuscling Australian Jayden Lawrence by technical superiority before comfortable victories over Greece's Dauren Kurugliev and Myles Amine of San Marino.

However, the injury resurged at the worst time imaginable; the early seconds of the final show-

piece against Bulgaria's Russian-born Magomed Ramazanov. In clear discomfort from the get-go, Yazdani signaled for a timeout almost immediately after the start, clutching his upper right arm, and had to call for treatment on several occasions throughout the contest.

He showed great resilience and courage to see out the six minutes of action, and even led 1-1 on criteria at one stage in the second period, but the final 7-1 scoreline saw the coveted gold elude the Iranian, though it was still enough to take his medal haul to a remarkable 10, including four golds, in major tournaments – a

feat never accomplished by any Iranian wrestler before.

"He had minor pain before the final which is normal after the surgery, but his shoulder was dislocated four to five times against the Bulgarian," said Yazdani's surgeon Dr. Sohrab Kayhani, who was in the Grand Palais Éphémère to watch the bout. "The first incident was enough to send any athlete to the hospital and he showed true determination to keep going for six minutes."

When Yazdani underwent the surgery, Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, was first to raise doubts

over the wrestler's return to full fitness.

"No Iranian wrestler has ever recovered from a shoulder problem over the past 20 years. That's what happened to me as I had to quit wrestling when I was 25," the Sydney 2000 gold medalist said last October, while Mansour Barzegar, the head coach of the national team in the 90s, shared Dabir's concerns, saying: "From what I've seen over the years, no wrestler has ever been able to wrestle again after this type of injury."

Yazdani had other ideas and his performance in Budapest convinced head coach Mohsen Ka-

veh and his staff to name him in the squad for the Games, despite two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qasempour being eager for a shot at Olympic berth.

The recurring injury in Paris, however, saw the Iranian fans and pundits question the initial decision to send Yazdani to the sporting extravaganza, though he was quick to respond to the criticism via an Instagram post, insisting he wouldn't have accepted the massive challenge "had I not been certain about my form and fitness."

"I fought with my heart and soul since the early days after the surgery till the last seconds of

the final. I was in the peak of my physical and mental form heading to Paris, but the final incident was almost unforeseeable for me and the medical staff," added the Iranian.

"I've never slacked off throughout my career and never will. I'll be looking to continue the treatment on my shoulder and, if needed, undergo a second surgery, though I submit to God's will to see what the future holds for me."

Only time will tell if the Iranians have already seen the finale of Yazdani's glorious career or the 29-year-old will keep chasing the Olympic glory in four-years' time in Los Angeles.

## City's alleged charges hearing due next month: Report

PA MEDIA – Manchester City's hearing into 115 alleged breaches of Premier League financial regulations has reportedly been brought forward to next month. According to a report in the Times, the planned November start of an independent commission has been moved to mid-to-late September. It is scheduled to last 10 weeks, with a verdict therefore likely to be delivered early in 2025. Neither the Premier League nor Manchester City have commented.

The Times' report says the outcome of a separate legal case which City brought against the league's associated party transactions rules – in which clubs strike sponsorship or revenue deals with businesses linked to their owners – is due in the next fortnight.

That, it is claimed, has allowed the hearing into the 115 charges – which City deny – to be brought forward, barring any further legal delays. It is still unknown how heavily City could be punished if found guilty, but points deductions and even relegation are thought to be possibilities.



● PHIL NOBLE/REUTERS

## USA Gymnastics says CAS denied appeal on Chiles' Olympic bronze

REUTERS – USA Gymnastics said on Monday an arbitration panel will not reconsider a decision asking gymnast Jordan Chiles to return the bronze medal she was awarded in the artistic gymnastics floor exercise at the Paris Olympics.

According to the governing body, it was notified earlier on Monday by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) that the rules do not allow for an arbitral award to be reconsidered even when conclusive new evidence is presented.

"We are deeply disappointed by the notification and will continue to pursue every possible avenue and appeal process, including to the Swiss Federal Tribunal, to ensure the just scoring, placement, and medal award for Jordan," USA Gymnastics said in a statement.

USA Gymnastics submitted additional evidence to CAS on Sunday after the Lausanne-based international body ruled in favour of an appeal by Romania's Ana Barbosu, who will move up to third place in the event.



● JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY SPORTS

Barbosu and her team had appealed to CAS that an inquiry by Chiles' coach filed over the results in the event was made after the one-minute deadline and that the American should not be awarded the score of 13.766 that lifted her to third place.

But USA Gymnastics then provided CAS with time-stamped video that it said shows the coach first stated a request to

file an inquiry 47 seconds after the score was posted, followed by a second statement 55 seconds after the score was posted. Chiles had initially been awarded a score of 13.666, while Barbosu scored 13.700.

The decision by CAS does not affect either winner Rebeca Andrade of Brazil or silver medalist Simone Biles of the United States, who scored 14.166 and 14.133 respectively.