

Nasirshalal to continue as Iran weightlifting coach despite Olympic setback

Sports Desk

Navvab Nasirshalal will stay on in his role as the head coach of the Iranian weightlifting national team despite a disappointing campaign at the Paris Olympics earlier in August.

The national governing body of the sport announced the news on Monday, with Hossein Reza-zadeh, the head of the federation's Technical Committee, saying Nasirshalal and his coaching staff will stay in charge of the men's team until the 2025 World Championships in Førde, Norway.

"His team's performance and results in the world event will then be assessed for further co-operation," added the legendary weightlifter, a winner of two Olympic superheavyweight golds in 2000 and 2004.

Represented by Mirmostafa Javadi and Ali Davoudi in Paris, Iran left the Olympic weightlifting event empty-handed for the first time since Beijing 2008.

The result was widely deemed as an absolute failure for Iranian weightlifting, which takes credit for the second highest number of medals for the country – following wrestling – in the 128-year history of the Games with nine golds, six silvers, and five bronzes.



Stepping onto the stage in Paris as the reigning world champion, Javadi registered a best snatch lift of 168kg before a successful 204kg attempt in the clean & jerk saw the Iranian finish fifth in the

-89kg class with 372kg – 22 kilograms adrift of Bulgarian gold medalist Karlos Nasar, who set a new C&J and total world record in the process. A silver winner at the Tokyo

Olympics three years ago, Davoudi managed 205kg in the snatch event and then failed to go beyond 242kg in clean & jerk, settling for the fourth place in the +102kg table.

Despite being far from his dominant form, Georgian great Lasha Talakhadze did enough to grab a third successive superheavyweight gold with a total 470kg tally, with Armenian Varazdat

Iranian weightlifter Ali Davoudi walks off the stage during the men's +102kg contests at the Paris Olympics on August 10, 2024.
● GETTY IMAGES

Lalayan (467kg) and Bahrain's Gor Minasyan (461kg) taking the silver and bronze medals respectively.

The result in Paris was the latest episode in a series of below-par campaigns for Iran at major tournaments over the past 12 months.

The Iranian squad could only win three medals – double golds for Javadi as well as Davoudi's C&J bronze – in last year's World Championships and again had Davoudi to thank for the sole silver medal at the Asian Games. However, Nasirshalal remains optimistic about what the future holds for the national team as he vowed to "restore the good old days for Iranian weightlifting."

Next for the Iranian coach and his team is December's World Championships in Manama, Bahrain.

Asked if his team is likely to enjoy a change of fortunes in the Bahraini capital, Nasirshalal told ISNA: "All I can expect is for all members of the squad to enter the event in their best shape and improve their personal records."

Defending champions Djokovic, Gauff off to blazing starts at U.S. Open



REUTERS – Defending champions Novak Djokovic and Coco Gauff enjoyed comfortable wins in the first round of the U.S. Open on Monday while Dominic Thiem bid a final farewell to the Grand Slam where he enjoyed his greatest triumph.

Djokovic, looking to become the first player to capture 25 Grand Slam titles, capped the evening session under the lights of Arthur Ashe Stadium with a 6-2 6-2 6-4 victory over Moldovan qualifier Radu Albot.

The Serbian world number two had not competed since winning the Olympic gold medal in Paris and shook off the rust to cruise past Albot in his bid to become the first man to retain the New York title since Roger Federer in 2008.

He also set a record for most victories by a male player at the

main showcourt with his 78th win.

"I wasn't aware of it to be honest," Djokovic said.

"It's the biggest stadium. Definitely the loudest we have in the history of our sport. The night sessions are the best in the world on Arthur Ashe.

"Ever since the roof was introduced it became even louder. Electric atmosphere ... we're clocking midnight now. I love night sessions, maybe not this late but it was great fun."

Gauff cruised past France's Varvara Gracheva 6-2 6-0 on Ashe as the American shrugged off disappointing performances in Toronto and Cincinnati to make a fast start at the year's final major.

"The last couple of weeks were tough and I was like, 'I have to do this and do that' but I don't have to prove anything to any-

one except myself," Gauff said. "This whole week or two weeks are just about proving all the expectations that I have on myself."

It was the end of the road for Thiem, who is retiring at the end of the season due to a wrist issue that derailed his career, as the 2020 champion fell 6-4 6-2 6-2 to American Ben Shelton.

Fourth seed Alexander Zverev, who lost the final to Thiem four years ago, began his latest bid to lift a first major title with a 6-2 6-7(5) 6-3 6-2 win over fellow German Maximilian Marterer.

Novak Djokovic is in action against Radu Albot at the U.S. Open first round in Flushing Meadows, NY, US, on Aug. 26, 2024.
● SHANNON STAPLETON/REUTERS

Man Utd agree £42m deal to sign Ugarte from PSG

BBC – Manchester United have agreed a 50m euros (£42.29m) fee with Paris St-Germain for Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte.

The deal also includes a potential for 10m euros (£8.46m) in additional payments.

The move comes at the same time as midfielder Scott McTominay's proposed 30m euros (£25.37m) switch to Napoli. Ugarte has been linked with United throughout the summer and is now poised to sign for the Old Trafford club, just one year after joining PSG from Sporting Lisbon for a reported 60m euros.

The 23-year-old made 37 appearances for Luis Enrique's side, including 25 in the league as PSG won their 12th Ligue 1 title.

It is understood PSG have also negotiated a 10% sell-on clause for Ugarte, with both clubs privately claiming they are happy with the deal.

The Ugarte deal is contingent on McTominay completing his switch to Napoli, although there is confidence at Old Trafford that transfer will be done. United sources accept the structure of the Premier League's Profit and Sustainability regulations incentivise selling home-grown players.

Manager Erik ten Hag could not guarantee McTominay a regular start and United first accepted offers for the 27-year-old 12 months ago.

Despite that the Scotland midfielder, who first attended a United soccer school when he was five, ended up making 32 Premier League appear-

ances and scoring seven goals for United last season.

He also started the FA Cup final victory against Manchester City.

United sources say they identified Ugarte early in the transfer window and were patient in their negotiations over a player who made the Copa America team of the tournament squad following Uruguay's run to the final, where they were eventually beaten by Argentina.

Should the transfer go through as expected, Ugarte will become United's fifth signing of the summer and take their overall spending to in excess of £190m.

United have spent nearly £600m on new players since Ten Hag was appointed in 2022.

