



## Iranian shooter Javanmardi pockets gold in Paris Paralympics

Iranian shooter Sareh Javanmardi has staged a stunning performance by winning a gold medal in women's 10 air pistol SH1 at the Paris Paralympics 2024.

Javanmardi scored 236.8 points and climbed to the first podium on Saturday, leaving behind Turkey's Aysel Ozgan with 231.1 points and Indian shooter Rubina Francis with 211.1. The 39-year-old athlete's medal was the first gold and fourth medal for Iran at the marquee sports event in

the French capital. Taekwondo practitioner Zahra Rahimi, club thrower Parastoo Habibi and shot putter Zafar Zaker bagged three silver medals.

It was Javanmardi's fifth medal in Paralympics as she had won a bronze medal in 2012 London in the 10m air pistol SH1 and two gold medals in Rio 2016 in the mixed 50m pistol SH1 and 10m air pistol SH1. She also claimed a gold medal in the 10m air pistol SH1 in 2020 Tokyo.

# Iran's Habibi, Zaker collect athletics silvers

### Sports Desk

Iran's Parastoo Habibi and Zafar Zaker won a couple of silver medals in the athletics event of the Paris Paralympics on Friday to take the country's medal haul to three silvers by the end of the second day of the Games.

Zahra Rahimi, 15, had bagged a first medal for Iran in Paris on Day 1 when she suffered a final defeat in the women's taekwondo -52kg K44 contests. Representing Iran in the women's club throw F32 event, Habibi, 21, set a new Asian record of 26.29m in her third attempt to finish behind Tunisian Marou Ibrahim, who shattered the world record with 29.00m for the ultimate prize.

Giovanna Boscolo Goncalv of Brazil took the bronze medal with 26.01m. The Iranian girl had initially finished third in the table but her medal was upgraded after Poland's Roza Kozakowska, who had broken her own world record with a 31.30m throw,

was stripped of the gold due to improper equipment parameters.

Elsewhere in the Stade de France, Zaker thought he had finished his men's shot put F55 campaign empty-handed as his best throw of 11.88m was two centimeters adrift of third-place Polish Lech Stoltman.

However, the Iranian delegation lodged a protest to the Organizing Committee over the attempts by Stoltman and Serbia's gold winner Nebojsa Duric, and, as a result, the Serbian was disqualified while Stoltman's bronze-winning throw was declared invalid, meaning Zaker, a double silver winner in last year's Asian Games, moved up to the second podium.

Bulgarian Ruzhdi Ruzhdi's 12.40m throw brought him the gold medal with Stoltman still walking away with the bronze with 11.81m. Meanwhile, Zaker's fellow-Iranian Hamed Amiri – a silver medalist in Rio 2016 – settled for the six-place finish with 11.36m.



Parastoo Habibi (L) and Zafar Zaker are seen in action in the athletics competitions of the Paris Paralympics on Aug. 30, 2024.

## Iran names 26-man squad for World Cup qualifiers



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### Sports Desk

Head coach Amir Qalenoee named Iran's 26-man squad for the upcoming double header at the World Cup Asian qualifiers.

The Asian powerhouse will begin its Group A campaign with a home game against Kyrgyzstan in Isfahan's Fooladshahr Stadium on September 5.

Qalenoee's side will then visit Al Ain five days later to take on the United Arab Emirates in the third-round qualifying group – also featuring Asian Cup winner Qatar, Uzbekistan, and North Korea.

The top two of the three groups will qualify for the 2026 finals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, with the third and fourth sides heading into the fourth-round qualifiers, where six teams will be divided into two groups, with the winners progressing to the World Cup.

Esteghlal fullback Ramin Rezaeian has again been overlooked by Qalenoee despite an impressive start to the new Persian Gulf Pro League season – bagging two goals and an assist in three outings.

Midfielders Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Saman Qoddous, yet to sign for a new club after parting ways with Feyenoord and Brentford in the summer respectively, have received a callup by the Iranian manager.

The following is the full Iran's squad: Goalkeepers: Alireza Beiranvand (Tractor), Payam Niazmansand (Sepahan), Seyyed Hossein Hosseini (Esteghlal), Arsha Shakouri (Havadar)

Defenders: Shoja Khalilzadeh (Tractor), Hossein Kan'anizadegan (Persepolis), Mohammad-Amin Hazbavi (Sepahan), Ali Ne'mati (Foolad Khuzestan), Arya Yousefi (Sepahan), Saleh Hardani (Sepahan), Abolfazl Jalali (Esteghlal), Milad Mohammadi (Persepolis)

Midfielders: Saeid Ezzatollahi (Shabab Al Ahli), Saman Qoddous (-), Omid Nourafkan (Malavan), Mohammad Karimi (Sepahan), Mohammad Qorbani (FC Orenburg), Mahdi Qayedi (Ittihad Kalba), Mahdi Torabi (Tractor), Alireza Jahanbakhsh (-), Ali Qolizadeh (Lech Poznan), Allahyar Sayyadmanesh (KVC Westerlo) Strikers: Mahdi Taremi (Internazionale), Javad Aqaepour (Sepahan), Shahriar Moghanlou (Ittihad Kalba), Sardar Azmoun (Shabab Al Ahli).

## Iran beaten by Kazakhstan in pre-World Cup friendly

### Sports Desk

Iran and head coach Vahid Shamsaei were given a wake up ahead of the upcoming Futsal World Cup following a 4-1 friendly defeat against Kazakhstan in Astana on Friday.

Zhakhangir Rashit opened the score for the home side before Akzhol Daribay doubled Kazakhstan's lead.

Hossein Tayyebi pulled one back for the visitors as it finished 2-1 in the first half but Douglas Junior restored the two-goal cushion after the break and Chingiz Yesenamanov also found the net as Brazilian Ricardo Kaka's repeated the 2021 World Cup last-eight win against the Asian powerhouse.

The host also had Brazilian-born goalkeeper Leo Higuita to thank for produc-

ing brilliant saves to keep Shamsaei's side at bay on numerous occasions.

Prolific Tayyebi was joined by Baqer Mohammadi, Mohammad-Hossein Derakhshani, Asian player of the year Salar Aqapour, and Mahdi Karimi in starting the first of the double header for Iran. The two sides will again square off today in the Kazakh capital.

Iran will play Venezuela, Guatemala, and France in Group F of the World Cup – starting September 14 in Uzbekistan.

Venezuela will be making only a second World Cup appearance after reaching the last 16 in Lithuania three years ago, while Guatemala, beaten by Iran in all six previous meetings between the two sides, has failed to go beyond the group stage in five attempts. France, meanwhile, will be a debutant



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in Uzbekistan courtesy of an elite-round group win in the European qualifiers. Iran's best World Cup finish came in 2016, courtesy of a shootout victory over Portugal in the third-place match-up.

## Olympic exhaustion played a role in early U.S. Open exit, says Djokovic

REUTERS – Novak Djokovic said the pursuit of Olympic gold left him without much in the tank for his U.S. Open title defence, as he crashed out of the Grand Slam in a shock third-round defeat to Australian Alexei Popyrin on

Friday.

The Serb closed out his trophy case with the Olympic title weeks ago in what he described as the biggest achievement of his career, beating young rival Carlos Alcaraz in the Paris finale.

But from that highest of highs came a crushing low in New York as Djokovic suffered his earliest exit from the year's final major since 2006. He will finish

the season without a Grand Slam title for the first time since 2017.

"I spent a lot of energy winning the gold and I did arrive to New York just not feeling fresh," he said. "I didn't have any physical issues. I just felt out of gas, you know, and you could see that with the way I played."

"From the first match, I just didn't find myself at all on this court. It's all I can say," Djokovic told reporters.

On Friday, he produced an astonishing 14 double faults and lost his way trying to slow down the fine performance by Popyrin, losing 6-4 6-4 2-6 6-4 a night after Alcaraz suffered a shock exit of his own in the second round.

It will be the first time since 2002 that none of tennis' "Big Three" – Djokovic, Rafa Nadal and the retired Roger Federer – have picked up a major in a season, the latest sign of a changing of the guard in the men's game.



EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS