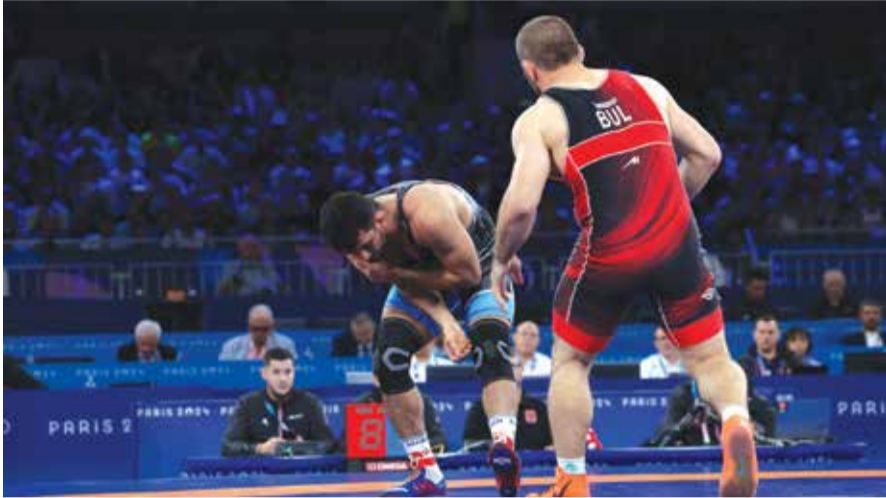


## Yazdani undergoes second surgery on injured shoulder



### Sports Desk

Iranian wrestling sensation Hassan Yazdani, a winner of national-high 10 world and Olympic medals, underwent a second surgery on his right shoulder in the French city of Nice on Tuesday. "Yazdani's surgical operation was a seven-hour procedure, with his shoulder requiring treatment in three different areas," wrote the official website of the Iranian Wrestling Federation. The exact timeline for Yazdani's full recovery is yet to be confirmed by the sport's national governing body, though Dr. Sohrab Kayhani, the head of the federation's medical team, said in late August that the 29-year-old wrestler would be expected to be out of action for "up to 18 months." Tuesday's operation was a second in the same area for Yazdani in less than 12 months.

Having been sidelined for 10 months, Yazdani made his long-awaited return in June's Ranking Series event in Budapest, where his dominant performance convinced the coaching staff of the national team to pick him for the freestyle 86kg contests in the Paris Olympics. Keen to win a second Olympic gold and overtake taekwondo legend Hadi Saei as the most-decorated Iranian in the history of the Games, Yazdani showed no signs of the shoulder problem on his way to the final in the French capital. The injury, however, flared up again in the showdown against Bulgarian Magomed Ramazanov, as the Iranian struggled from the get-go, calling for treatment on several occasions throughout the six minutes of action. He still managed to see out the contest but the 7-1 loss meant he had to settle for a second successive Olymp-



Iranian wrestler Hassan Yazdani (blue) struggles with a shoulder problem during the freestyle 86kg final against Magomed Ramazanov in the Paris Olympics on Aug. 9, 2024. [olympic.ir](#)

pic silver, following his gold-winning campaign in Rio 2016, which saw him emulate legendary Gholamreza Takhti as the most successful Iranian in Olympic wrestling. Asked if it was a wise decision to take him to the Games in the first place, Dr. Kayhani said: "His surgeon had given him to the go-ahead, while his situation had been fully assessed in Budapest to make sure he wouldn't have any problem in Paris." "I'm sure he will be fit and ready to compete again in the World Championships in two years," added Dr. Kayhani.

## Sepahan stunned by Al Wehdat in ACL Two opener

### Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Sepahan fell to a shock 2-1 defeat against Jordan's Al Wehdat in their opening AFC Champions League Two Group C tie at Amman International Stadium.

The leader in the Iranian top-flight table with a perfect run, the Isfahan-based club thought it was on its way to a comfortable victory on the road when Tajikistan international Vahdat Hanonov's long-range effort found the back of the net nine minutes into the game. The home side, however, had other ideas as Ousseynou Gueye drew Al Wehdat level with a cool touch in a one-on-one situation with Sepahan keeper Payam Niazmand midway through the first half. Sepahan's clumsy backline was punished again 10 minutes after the break, with Ibrahim Sabra slotting home for Al Wehdat's second of the night.

Desperate to salvage the game, Sepahan coach Jose Morais made four changes at one go, sending on Steven Nzonzi, Reza Asadi, Hossein Goodarzi and Aboubakar Kamara. However, it was the host which came close to doubling its lead in the closing stages as Sabra forced Niazmand into a good save before his follow-up effort came off the post 18 minutes left on the clock. Defending comfortably in numbers and with Sepahan's Hadi Mohammadi sent off in stoppage time,



Al Wehdat saw off the remainder of the game to claim the win. "Al Wehdat played teamwork football with high spirit, and therefore deserved to achieve the victory," Morais said after the game. "The match was difficult for both sides, and our success in scoring the first goal put additional pressure on us. Al Wehdat players' reaction was very distinctive, and I believe that they presented a performance that reflects their club and fans," added

the Portuguese.

Al Wehdat head coach Rafat Ali couldn't hide his delight after his team produced a stirring comeback, saying: "It was a difficult match that presented its own challenges but we were able to control the opposing team in our own way." "We worked hard for eight consecutive days to achieve this victory, and I believe that Al Wehdat players are showing that they can live up to their responsibilities," Ali added.



Sepahan fullback Aria Yousefi is tackled by Al Wehdat's Alain Akono during an AFC Champions League Two match in Amman, Jordan, on September 17, 2024. [AFC](#)

"The upcoming matches will be difficult, but we will fight to achieve our target in the competition." Sepahan will face FC Istiklol of Tajikistan next at home on October 2 while Al Wehdat will visit UAE's Sharjah FC, which walked away with a 1-0 win at Istiklol.

## Italy's World Cup icon Schillaci dies aged 59

BBC - Italian icon Salvatore Schillaci, the top scorer at the 1990 World Cup, has died aged 59. Schillaci, better known as 'Toto', scored six goals to win the Golden Boot at the 1990 World Cup on home soil. Italy lost in the semi-finals, but Schillaci was also awarded the Golden Ball as the best player and gained hero status. Schillaci was diagnosed with colon cancer in 2022. Capped 16 times for his country, scoring seven goals, he represented Italian giants Juventus and Inter Milan after

beginning his club career at Messina. Juventus, whom Schillaci joined in 1989, said: "We immediately fell in love with Toto. His desire, his story, his being so wonderfully passionate, and it showed in every game he played. "We at Juve were lucky enough to get excited about him before - in that incredible summer of 1990 - the whole of Italy did, captivated by those wonderfully energetic celebrations of his." Schillaci scored his first goal of the 1990 World Cup as a sub-

stitute against Austria, and after another substitute appearance against the United States earned his first start against the Czech Republic. Partnering Baggio up front, Schillaci scored again as Italy's campaign built momentum, and his hero status was confirmed with further goals in the subsequent knockout round matches against Uruguay and the Republic of Ireland in the quarter-finals. Despite opening the scoring in the semi-final against Argentina, Italy lost out on penalties in Naples - but Schillaci sealed

the Golden Boot with his sixth goal of the tournament in the third-place play-off against England. Serie A described Schillaci, runner up to Germany's Lothar Matthaus for the 1990 Ballon d'Or, as "a champion who lit up the magical nights of the 1990 World Cup in Italy". The league added: "His desire to emerge and reach the highest levels of football has been and will continue to be a source of inspiration for the many young people who chase the dream of playing in Serie A."



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## Players close to strike action over congested schedule, says Rodri

REUTERS - Players could be close to strike action over the amount of games they are required to play, Manchester City midfielder Rodri warned on Tuesday on the eve of their Champions League opener against Inter Milan. Expanded Champions League and FIFA Club World Cup formats, alongside enlarged national team competitions, has made for a greater number of games for top teams and players, and Rodri is the latest to say the workload is too great. "I think we're close to that (striking),"

Rodri told reporters. "It's the general opinion of the players, and if it keeps this way, we'll have no other option. I really think it's something that worries us. We are the guys who suffer." The optimal number of games "in which a player can perform at the highest level," the Spaniard said, is between 40 and 50. "After that, you drop because it's impossible to sustain the physical level," he added. "This year, we're going to go until 70, maybe 80 (games), depends on how far you go

into competitions. "I think it's too much. We have to take care of ourselves, because we are the main characters of this sport or business. Not everything is money or marketing, it is also the quality of the show. When I rest, when I'm not tired, I perform better. And if people want to see better football, we need to rest." Last season, the 28-year-old's campaign extended through to Spain's European Championship victory on July 14, along with City teammates Kyle Walker and Phil

Foden, who finished runners-up with England at the tournament in Germany. City defender Manuel Akanji half-joked recently that he may have to retire at 30 because of the gruelling schedule. "It's so tough," the Swiss player said. "You don't just think about this season -- but also next season. Let's say we win the league or cup, then go to the final of the Club World Cup; the Community Shield is three weeks after. So when do we have holidays?"