

Nouri, Nasiri aim to capitalise on world junior taekwondo success

WORLD TAEKWONDO – It was a golden opening night of the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Chuncheon, Korea for Parnian Nouri and Aynaz Nasiri, who are the latest athletes hoping to make the most of the pathway to senior success provided by this event.

Iranian athletes Nouri and Nasiri triumphed in the women's -52kg and women's -59kg categories respectively on the first day of competition.

Both impressed throughout their competitions, and for Nasiri her emotions at standing on top of the podium were clear. "I had a very good feeling because I had very hard exercise in our national team, so I got a very good result. I was very happy and had a wonderful feeling about," she said.

That was especially the case having followed on from her compatriot Nouri.

"We had a very wonderful feeling about that, because on the first day we had two golds and our flag was at the top. We hope we can get more medals in our team," Nasiri added.

Nasiri had to recover from losing the first round in both her quarter-final and semi-final, and explained how she masterminded her turnaround in the two matches as her determination to win shone through.

"In the first round I had some problems, but I fixed it for the second round. So when I got to the second round I had more energy, and all that mattered was I won, it doesn't matter how you win," she said.

For Nouri, her attention immediately turned to the future and her ambitions for when she enters senior competition. "We have to focus more on the future because we go to the senior teams. From now, we are going to make a plan and prepare the training to go to the senior national team," she insisted.

Eight of the medallists at the Olympic Games Paris 2024 had previously medalled at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships, which has proven its importance in providing experience of high-quality competition for top young athletes against opponents from around the world.

Nasiri highlighted the benefits of competing in such an environment.

"This has been a very nice experience because we had different opponents from many countries. The organisation was different from other competitions, with more than 900 athletes," she said.

Nouri underlined her ambitions to compete at the Olympic Games, and hopes the World Taekwondo Junior Championships can be the start of accumulating the ranking points she needs.

"Yes of course we have goals for the Olympic Games, that is very important for us. We start from now to get ranking points to qualify for the Olympics," she said.

The World Taekwondo Junior Championships will continue to provide a global stage which serves as a springboard for athletes to succeed in major senior competitions.



Iranian girls Parnian Nouri (L) and Aynaz Nasiri pose with their gold medals at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, on October 1, 2024.
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Esteghlal is in talks with Spanish coach Javi Gracia (L) and Portuguese José Peseiro for the managerial role.

Esteghlal in talks with Gracia, Peseiro for managerial role: Report

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal is in talks with Spanish coach Javi Gracia and Portuguese José Peseiro to take charge of the Tehran Blues' bench, according to Mehr News Agency. Former head coach Javad Nekounam stepped down from his role after Monday's 2-0 away loss to Al Sadd in the AFC Champions League Elite.

The defeat in Doha was the Blues' third in seven outings in all competitions this season – more than the club conceded across the entire previous campaign (2).

Ex-Esteghlal and Iran international defender Sohrab Bakhtiarizadeh was named as the interim coach for today's visit to Havadar in the Iranian top flight,

with the club hierarchy hoping to find a permanent replacement for Nekounam before Esteghlal is back in action against Zob Ahan in the league and Saudi giant Al Nassr after October's international break.

A former head coach of La Liga outfits Osasuna and Valencia, Gracia, 52, was last in charge of Leeds United.

His tenure in the English Premier League club came to an end after only 12 games in charge in February last year after his team won three and lost seven.

Gracia, who led Watford to the FA Cup final in 2019, also enjoyed a successful spell with Al Sadd, steering the Doha-based giant to the Qatar Stars League crown in the 2021/22 campaign. Meanwhile, 64-year-old Peseiro, an assistant to former Iran head

coach Carlos Queiroz during his time in Real Madrid in the 2003/04 season, has been without a job since his Nigeria team suffered a 2-1 defeat against Côte d'Ivoire in the Africa Cup of Nations final in February.

Peseiro is no stranger to Middle East football, working as a manager with Saudi giant Al Hilal as well as Emirati clubs Al Wahda and Sharjah FC.

The Portuguese was also the head coach of Saudi Arabia national team between 2009 and 2011.

Esteghlal is 11th in the Iranian league table with five points – eight adrift of Tractor on top with a game in hand – while sitting fifth in the West Zone's 12-team table after two rounds of matches in the revamped Asian elite clubs' competition.

FIFA defers decision on appeal to ban Israel

AL JAZEERA – FIFA has once again postponed a decision on the Palestinian call to ban Israel from football amid its ongoing war on Gaza.

Following a meeting at its headquarters in Zurich on Thursday, the Federation Internationale de Football Association – FIFA, football's world governing body – said its disciplinary committee will review the allegations of discrimination that have been raised by the Palestinian Football Association (PFA).

"The FIFA Disciplinary Committee will be mandated to initiate an investigation into the alleged offence of discrimination raised by the Palestine Football Association," FIFA said in a statement.

"The FIFA Governance, Audit and Compliance Committee will be entrusted with the mission to investi-

gate – and subsequently advise the FIFA Council on – the participation in Israeli competitions of Israeli football teams allegedly based in the territory of Palestine."

FIFA President Gianni Infantino said the council had implemented "due diligence" on the matter and followed the advice of independent experts.

In May, the PFA presented arguments accusing the Israel Football Association (IFA) of violating FIFA statutes with its war on Gaza and its inclusion of teams located in illegal settlements on Palestinian territory in its domestic league.

The PFA wanted FIFA to adopt "appropriate sanctions" against Israel's national side and club teams, including an international ban.

FIFA had passed the issue to independent legal advisers who carried out an

evaluation and compiled a response. This is not the first time that FIFA has deferred a ruling. It had promised to address the issue at an extraordinary meeting of its council in July, but deferred the decision until its last council on August 31. It then moved its decision to its October meeting.

Katarina Pijetlovic, head of the PFA's legal department, termed FIFA's decision "purely political".

"FIFA allowed Israel FA to continue using the Palestinian territory [occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem] as their own territory, and to use football under its umbrella as an instrument of colonial expansion," she wrote in a post on X.

"Will we wait two yrs again, as in 2015-17, for the committee to suggest the obvious and then have their suggestion rejected again?"

