

Iranians eyeing glory in inaugural Karate World Cup



Sports Desk

Iranian kumite and kata teams will be looking to enjoy a successful campaign at the inaugural Karate World Cup – starting November 22 in Pamplona, Spain.

Fans in the country could be treated to some thrilling bouts when the Iranians are in action against kumite teams from Italy, Australia, Croatia, and North Macedonia in Group A of the men's draw.

Croatia won the men's kumite team bronze in last year's World Championships – the flagship international event of the sport – while the Italians grabbed the gold medal of category in the 2022 edition.

"All teams in the group will vie for success in the event. Iran has a glorious history in the sport and will enter the competition as a top contender," said Iranian head coach Shahram Heravi, whose team is in a training camp in Tabriz, northwest Iran.

"Italy and Croatia are surely in a different level, especially the Italians, who are in top form after winning the European gold [in May]. The coaching staff and I are analyzing the other three teams. We will have the right plan and tactics against each opponent," added the Iranian coach.

Asked about his side's toughest opponent in Pamplona, Heravi said: "I don't really care who we are going to face

in the competition as we will have to overcome any team toward the title." Egypt, Brazil, Spain, Japan, and Turkey are in Group B, with France, the United States, Kosovo, Kazakhstan, and Greece in Group C.

Jordan, Tunisia, Ukraine, Slovakia, and Colombia will square off in Group D. The top two from each group will progress to the quarterfinals.

Heravi said his men will take part in a warmup tournament in Russia before he and his staff announce the final lineup for the World Cup.

Bahman Asgari, Mahdi A'ashouri, Mahdi Khodabakhshi, Mahmoud Ne'mati, Mahdi Ganjzadeh, Mahdi Shahgol, Alireza Heidari, Saleh Abazari, and Morteza Ne'mati are joined by Erfan Asgaripour and Vahab Shahmir from the Iranian under-23 and juniors' teams in the training camp.

Each male team will be represented by seven to eight karatekas in the World Cup.

Meanwhile, the Iranian four-man squad – comprising Sahand Eslami, Yahya Pisheshari, Sadra Shirazi, and Mahdi Shahin – are drawn in Group D of the kata contests alongside Japan, South Africa, Poland, and Montenegro. In the women's draw, the Iranian quadruple of Maria Hosseinia, Mahsa Afsaneh, Parisa Rahmani, and Kowsar Salehi is pitted against Spain, Colombia, Switzerland, and Czechia in Group C.

● IKF

Chegini wins judo bronze, gets Iran off the mark in Gymnasiade

Sports Desk

Iranian judoka Amirhossein Chegini won a first medal for the country in the 2024 Gymnasiade – International School Sports Games – in Bahrain.

Representing Iran in the boys' -50kg contests, Chegini began his campaign with a victory over an Indian opponent but fell to a defeat against the Azerbaijani athlete before beating the Kuwaiti judoka for a consolation bronze.

Hossein Ja'fari was the other Iranian schoolboy in action in Friday's judo competitions, missing out on the -60kg podium after a loss to the Ukrainian opponent in the third-place bout.

Mohammad Qorbani also finished his campaign empty-handed following a first-round defeat against a judoka from Azerbaijan in the -66kg weight class.

Iran is represented by 120 contestants in eight sporting events across the 10 days of action the Persian Gulf kingdom.

Participated by athletes from 71 countries, the 19th edition of the International School Sport Federation's flagship event features 26 sports, including four para sports.

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Iranian duo wins second Asian diving medal

Sports Desk

The Iranian pair of Sam Vajer and Kiumars Aslani grabbed a second bronze medal at the Asian Diving Championship in Jiangmen, China.

A winner of two medals in March's Asian Age Group Aquatics Championships, the duo finished third behind gold winner China and North Korea in the men's 10m synchronized platform final.

They had also teamed up for a third-spot finish in the 3m springboard synchro event earlier in the competition.

Vajer, who was named the best diver of the 15-17 age class in March's event in the Philippines, made history by grabbing a first medal for the country in the Asian diving meet, taking the bronze in the 1m springboard final.

Bayern to learn from heavy Barca loss and victories will come, Kompany says

REUTERS – Bayern Munich will learn from their 4-1 Champions League defeat to Barcelona but the German team's belief in a successful season is intact, coach Vincent Kompany said on Saturday ahead of today's league game against VfL Bochum.

The Bavarians conceded three goals in the first half on Wednesday as they lost the second consecutive match in the Champions League following their 1-0 defeat to Aston Villa earlier in October.

They are however undefeated in the Bundesliga and in top spot on 17 points, ahead of RB Leipzig on goal difference.

"There are games where it is clear what happened. But that was a game with a lot of moments and not everything went wrong," Kompany, in his first season in charge, told a press conference.

"There were also good moments which we did not use or were not too concentrated."

Kompany said his team could have been more effective in the first half and refused to blame his defence for the four goals.

Bayern are desperate to bounce back this season after failing to win any silverware last season, with Bayer Leverkusen winning the domestic league and Cup double.

"We conceded four goals. But I would not just talk about that (defence). It's too easy. The responsibility lies with the entire team," Kompany said.

"We have the quality and players. I understand we lost and we have to accept the criticism. But I do not want to lose sight of what the boys can achieve if they take the next steps.

"The basis is that the team works and that it learns from such moments," he continued. "We are not surprised that not all was perfect. It is normal. After all we did not win a title last season."



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