

FIVB Men's Club World Championship: No all-Iranian semifinal as Shahdab undone by Ciudad

Sports Desk

Iran's Shahdab Yazd failed to progress to the FIVB Men's Club World Championship semifinals after a defeat against Argentine club Ciudad Voley in Uberlândia, Brazil.

Shahdab needed to avoid conceding more than a set to finish as the Pool B runner-up and book a last-four date with Foolad Sirjan. However, an all-Iranian semifinal was scrapped when Ciudad took the first two sets and went on to win 3-1 (25-23, 25-23, 17-25, 25-18) at Sabiazinho Arena. The result helped the host's Sada Cruzeiro, which had defeated Italian pool winner Trentino Itas in five sets on the preceding night, go through despite a 3-1 loss to Shahdab earlier in the competition.

Opposite Jonas Ponzio contributed with a game-high 21 points (18 kills and three blocks) for Ciudad, with mid-

dle-blocker Gustavo Maciel and outside-hitter Mauro Zelayeta adding 10 apiece. Veteran opposite Amir Ghafour chipped in 18 points, including 14 attacks, for Shahdab, while Pakistani outside-hitter Usman Faryad Ali finished on 14 points.

Shahdab got off to losing start in Uberlândia, suffering a straight-set defeat against Trentino Itas, before bouncing back to beat Sada Cruzeiro.

Three-time semifinalist Paykan is the most successful Iranian club in the last 18 editions of the flagship international club competition, having won a bronze medal in 2010.



Shahdab Yazd's Amir Ghafour (R) is seen in action against Ciudad Voley in the FIVB Men's Club World Championship in Uberlândia, Brazil, on December 13, 2024.



Iran coach tips weightlifting duo for Olympic glory



Iranian weightlifters Alireza Moeini (L) and Ali A'alipour pose with their medals in the men's 96kg event at the IWF World Championships in Manama, Bahrain, on Dec. 12, 2024.

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifting head coach Navab Nasirshah said the duo bagged three medals at the IWF World Championships in Manama, Bahrain.

A successful first lift of 176kg was enough for Moeini to win the snatch silver in the men's 96kg contest on Thursday, while A'alipour took the bronze medal in a tight clean & jerk competition, where the top three finished level at 214kg. A winner of three Asian medals in February, A'alipour, 20, went on to collect a second bronze of the afternoon, thanks to a total tally of 387kg, standing behind Kazakhstan's gold medalist Nurgissa Adiletuly (388kg) and Georgian Revaz Davitadze (387kg).

"Moeini and A'alipour worked really hard over the past year

and a half, dedicating a great deal to overcome their shortcomings for the world event," Nasirshah said of the two weightlifters.

"They're both young and inexperienced weightlifters and were competing in their first World Championships, which is why they couldn't fully deliver their potential," added the Iranian coach. Nasirshah was still pleased with the final outcome for the two Iranians, given "this was a first international event for Moeini in two-and-a-half years, while A'alipour had only participated in an Asian competition during that period."

"Any weightlifter familiar with the World Championships knows that the mental burden of the occasion can be overwhelming for all contestants. I'm still thrilled they had a decent performance and managed to finish their campaigns with medals.

"They are halfway through the

path to glory, which began 18 months ago, and I'm confident there is more to come for both of them, if they receive the right support in the future," said Nasirshah.

Nasirshah said the new generation of Iranian weightlifting is far from a finished article, adding: "They still need to take part in more international events to learn their trade and thrive."

"I've been with this group of young talents for quite some time and have seen how hard they try in training. I'm sure weightlifters like Moeini and A'alipour are capable of bringing glory to the country in the Olympics and Asian Games," added Nasirshah, a 105kg bronze medalist in the 2012 London Games, who was awarded the gold medal six years later after the original top two, Oleksiy Torokhtiy of Ukraine and Uzbek Ruslan Nurudinov, tested positive for doping.

Kane to remain England captain, all players have clean slate under Tuchel

Harry Kane will remain England captain when Thomas Tuchel takes charge in January, the German said on Friday, signalling that all the players can count on a clean slate when the 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign starts under his management.

England were pitted against Serbia, Albania, Latvia and Andorra in Group K during the draw in Zurich, which was Tuchel's first engagement as England boss.

He was announced as head coach in October but will begin work on Jan. 1 ahead of the World Cup qualifying competition.

"There is at the moment no need to think about change," Tuchel told the reporters. "Harry was always a top captain for England. So why do you even think about it at the moment?" "You cross the river when you cross the river. First, come January, we will be in touch with everyone and get the feeling for St George's Park and also the players.

"And until March, there's still a lot of football to be played and then we will try to find the best group for the games that await."

Tuchel, 51, suggested he would act independently of former manager Gareth Southgate's choices, building a team of his own with all players able to count on a clean slate.

One of the players who can expect a chat is Arsenal defender Ben White, who did not want to be considered for selection after surprisingly leaving the squad during the 2022 World Cup for personal reasons.

"I will reach out to him," Tuchel said. "It should be a clean start and a clear narrative."

White, who so far only made four friendly appearances for England, was rumoured to have personal issues with Southgate and his assistant Steve Holland, which the former manager later denied.

"It starts from January. I will be in the stadiums from January. I will also not distract the players and they should just

know, 'okay, the boss is there from January,'" Tuchel added.

"Then I will of course try to speak to them but also be respectful to the schedule that they have, because the schedule is busy in January, especially in the Premier League."

England were placed in a five-team group, meaning qualifiers will begin in late March and continue in June, as opposed to a September start for groups of four.

That signifies a fast start for Tuchel, who will embark on his England journey less than three months before the qualifying begins and make his managerial debut for the Three Lions just 15 months ahead of the 2026 tournament.

"I like the framework, the narrative. I like it to start when the World Cup qualification starts, to have it as you kick off and to go from there," he said.

"It gives clarity in the (selection process) and clarity in ... how we speak to each other and where we want to go. No distractions. We will be ready."

