

# Gholamreza Takhti; Iran's wrestling legend acclaimed on 57th death anniversary



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A ceremony commemorating the 57th anniversary of the death of Gholamreza Takhti, the legendary Iranian wrestler, was held Monday at his gravesite in Ebn Bebvayh Cemetery in Shah-r-e Rey. The event was attended by athletes, sports veterans, officials, Takhti's family, and members of the public.

The titles of Pahlavan (champion) and Jahan Pahlavan (world champion) are often heard today, but they signify more than just athletic achievement or Olympic success. These titles are deeply rooted in Iranian and Islamic culture, requiring a unique code of conduct and character that sets a Pahlavan apart from others.

During the ceremony, officials, veterans, wrestling champions, and admirers of Takhti's legacy gathered at his gravesite, as they have in previous years.

They recited prayers, laid flowers, and honored the memory of Iran's celebrated champion. Takhti's enduring popularity stemmed from his connection to the people, as he fought for them in the wrestling arena.

Whether he won or lost, the public celebrated and mourned with him. Though he was unmatched against great rivals, he remained humble and grounded among the people.

Takhti was a respected figure for both friends and foes alike. His popularity is undeniable, as many of his contemporaries define fame by his name. His widespread admiration became even more evi-



dent after his passing. Gholamreza Takhti was born on August 27, 1930, into a religious, middle-class family in Tehran's Khaniabad neighborhood. His father, Rajab Khan, had two sons and two daughters, all older than Takhti. He began wrestling at the age of 20 at Poulad Club. From 1950 to 1959, Takhti won eight national championships and earned the title of Pahlavan three times. He made his international debut at the 1951 World Championships in Helsinki, winning a silver medal in the 79 kg

weight class. At the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, he claimed another silver medal after losing to a Soviet wrestler.

His accolades continued at the 1959, 1961, and 1962 World Championships in Tehran, Yokohama, and Toledo, where he won two gold medals and one silver. He also earned a gold and a silver medal at the 1956 and 1960 Olympics in Melbourne and Rome, respectively, and a gold medal at the 1958 Asian Games in Tokyo. Takhti last competed for the national team at the 1966 World Championships.

Takhti was the first Iranian wrestler to win medals in three weight classes and remains Iran's most decorated Olympic wrestler.

Throughout his 14-year international career, Takhti faced formidable opponents, including Sweden's Viking Palm, Turkey's Adil Atan, Russia's Boris Kulayev, the US's Peter Blair, Germany's Dietrich, Russia's Vakhtang Balavdze, Turkey's İsmet Atlı, Turkey's Hasan Güngör, Belarus's Alexander Medved, and Turkey's Ahmet Ayık.

Takhti ranks 13th on the International Wrestling Hall of Fame's

list of the greatest wrestlers of the century and was honored as one of the sport's legends at the 2007 World Championships in Baku. Alexander Medved, a renowned wrestler, once described Takhti as a kind and lovable person. "He was so strong that it was impossible to plan against him. You couldn't gain an advantage over him with any specific technique," Medved said.

During the 1962 World Championships in the US, Medved suffered a knee injury, and Takhti, upon learning of it, avoided targeting the injured area during

their match. Medved later called it the cleanest fight of his career.

Takhti married in November 1966, and his son Babak is his only surviving legacy. Born on August 27, 1930, in Tehran, Takhti passed away on January 7, 1968, at the former Atlantic Hotel when Babak was just four months old. Gholamreza Takhti embodied the aspirations of a nation—a man who lived among the people, died among them, and now rests in Ebn Bebvayh Cemetery in Shah-r-e Rey.



## Bafq handball team wins postponed match in Women's Premier League

### Sports Desk

The Bafq handball team secured a victory against Ghadir Malayer in a postponed match from the first week of the Women's Handball Premier League.

According to IRNA, the match, part of the 20th season of the league, was held Monday in Malayer.

With this win, Bafq increased its points tally to 10. The team defeated Ghadir Malayer 34-20, marking its fifth victory of the season. Meanwhile, Ghadir Malayer suffered its seventh consecutive loss in the first half of the league.

With this result, Bafq solidified its position in third place in the league standings

at the end of the first half of the season. Ghadir Malayer remains at the bottom of the table as Shahid Chamran Larestan, with 14 points, and Naft o Gas Gachsaran, with 11 points, currently hold the top two spots in the league standings.

The Women's Handball Premier League is one of Iran's most competitive sports leagues, featuring teams from across the country. The league has grown significantly in recent years, with increased participation and viewership, reflecting the rising popularity of women's sports in Iran.

Bafq's handball team, known as Sang Ahan Bafq, has been a consistent performer in the league, often finishing in the top tiers of the standings. The team's success is attributed to its strong roster and strategic gameplay, making it a formidable contender in the league.

Ghadir Malayer, on the other hand, has struggled this season, failing to secure a win in its first seven matches. The team's performance highlights the challenges faced by some clubs in maintaining competitiveness, particularly in a league with a growing level of talent and intensity.



## Man City's Grealish must fight for spot, says Guardiola

Jack Grealish must fight for his place in Manchester City's starting line-up and rediscover the level he showcased during the club's treble-winning season, manager Pep Guardiola said.

The 29-year-old made 50 appearances in City's 2022-23 campaign, scoring five goals and registering 11 assists to help his side win the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup, Reuters reported on Monday.

However, the England international has failed to impress this season and was dropped to the bench in Saturday's 4-1 league win over

West Ham United, with Brazilian Savinho starting instead.

"Savinho is in better shape and everything than Jack, and that's why I played Savinho," Guardiola told reporters.

"Do I want the Jack that won the treble? Yeah, I want it, but I try to be honest with myself for that. They have to fight. You can say it's unfair: 'If you think that, then it's fine, but you have to prove (to me), 'Okay, I'm going to fight with Savinho, to deserve to play in that position', every single day, every single week and every single month."

Grealish, who also

spent a spell on the sidelines this season due to injury, has made just six starts for City in the league.

"Two weeks ago, he was injured and he needs rhythm, and to play, but players need training," Guardiola said.

"I don't have any doubt about the quality of Jack or any of these players. They would not be here (otherwise).

"I know that he can do it because I saw him. I saw his level and I want that, every single training session and every single game."

City next host fourth-tier side Salford City in the FA Cup on Jan. 11.

