

Iran Paralympic Committee receives IPC recognition on Int'l Women's Day

Sports Desk

The National Paralympic Committee of Iran (NPC) was among the three winners of the International Paralympic Committee's 2025 International Women's Day Recognition Awards.

The NPC Iran received the IPC recognition for "initiating leadership, impact and effective change to promote and support equality and inclusion of women in sport."

"NPC I.R. Iran not only believes in gender equality but also provides enhanced privileges, services, and support tailored for women with disabilities. Through this vision and diligent oversight of its implementation, it has created a supportive and empowering environment for women with disabilities," NPC President Gafour Kargari said on the recognition of the Iranian governing body in the Membership category of the annual awards.

The winners were chosen by members of the IPC Governing Board following nominations by IPC member organizations.

"Since its establishment in 2000, women have been at the core of the NPC's strategic plans and decision-making processes, with a



focus on enhancing participation in key areas such as national and international competitions, leadership roles, and educational programs," read the IPC statement.

"Iranian women made their

Paralympic debut at the Barcelona 1992, with four athletes competing in a single sport. At Paris 2024, the number of female athletes had increased to 12 across five sports, with seven medals won (an increase of 33.3

per cent in participation). Today, over 60,000 athletes are supported by the NPC in sports for all, with more than a third of them being women.

"Well-known Iranian Paralympians who inspire other women

in the country include four-time Paralympic champion Sareh Javanmardi, and three-time Paralympic champion Zahra Nemati who serves as a UN ambassador.

"NPC Iran has one female vice president and 40 percent representation of women in board meetings, including two athlete representatives. In 2002, the NPC initiated activities to promote the development of female athletes, coaches, and officials. By 2024, a total of 44 workshops had been held, benefiting over 205 participants."

Joining the NPC Iran on the winners' list are Afghan taekwondo Paralympian Zakia Khudadadi and the director of sport at the British Paralympic Association, Penny Briscoe CBE.

Khudadadi won the Emerging Leadership category for "advocating for women's rights in Afghanistan, particularly the right to participate in sports."

Briscoe, chef de mission for ParalympicsGB at Paris 2024, won the Leadership prize, which recognizes her "sustained and consistent leadership over a period of time, advocacy, overall contributions, and impact promoting and supporting women in sport."

"The quality of nominations this year was exceptional, and I congratulate Penny, Zakia and NPC Iran. It is my pleasure and honor to know you and work with you," IPC President Andrew Parsons said.

"Leaders like Penny, rising stars like Zakia and committed members like NPC Iran show us that anything is possible in the Paralympic Movement, reminding us that greatness knows no limits and that representation is key in shaping a more inclusive and equal future."

"Change starts with sport, and we believe that sport has the power to break down barriers and foster inclusion, creating opportunities for all. For women with disabilities, sport is not only about competing on the global stage; it's about empowerment, visibility, and equal access. Through sport, we honor strength, resilience, and the fundamental truth that every individual, regardless of their abilities, has the right to participate, excel, and inspire others." The Awards, which have been running since 2013, recognize women in the Paralympic Movement who inspire and emulate the Paralympic ideals and serve as positive role models.

Persian Gulf Pro League:

Dursun on target to lead Persepolis to hard-fought win at Chadormalou

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Turkish striker Serdar Dursun bagged his second goal in four top-flight games to help Persepolis come away with a massive 1-0 win at Chadormalou in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Friday. Flying high after last week's derby triumph over Esteghlal, the Tehran Reds started right on the front foot at the Shahid Nasiri Stadium and took the lead 15 minutes into the game, with Dursun tapping in Mohammad Khodabandelou's low cross on the near post.

The home side was awarded a spot kick right before the half-hour mark when Ecuadorian fullback Segundo Portocarrero was brought down in the box by Ayoub El Amloud, but the refer-

ee's decision was overturned by the VAR.

Beaten only once in 10 home games prior to Friday's fixture, Chadormalou pushed forward for an equalizer in the second half, but it was the visiting side which created the better of the chances, with the host's Brazilian goalkeeper Edson Mardden producing fine saves to deny Ali Alipour, Omid Aalishah, and Am-loud.

The hard-fought win saw Persepolis - chasing an eighth league crown in nine seasons - close the gap on Tractor and Sepahan to a single point on top of the table, with Chadormalou dropping to ninth on 24 points.

While Tractor had its trip to Foolad Khuzestan postponed due to engagement in the AFC Cham-

pions League Two quarterfinals, Sepahan was held to a 1-1 draw at home by Esteghlal Khuzestan on Thursday.

Sepahan skipper Mohammad Karimi broke the deadlock from the spot in the 52nd minute, only to see French striker Thievy Bifouma draw the visitors level 13 minutes later.

Es. Khuzestan had to finish the game with 10 men after midfielder Mohammad Abshak was shown his marching order for a second booking in the 90th minute.

The stalemate was still enough to send Sepahan level on 45 points with league leader Tractor, while Esteghlal Khuzestan is 11th with 24 points.

The bad news for Sepahan was a knee injury for Mahdi Limouchi six minutes into the game, which

saw the league's joint leading marksman substituted and could keep him out of action for several weeks, if not the rest of the campaign.

Elsewhere on Thursday, Mahdi Tikdari scored in the 14th minute and Amirmohammad Razaqinia found the net deep into stoppage time as Golgozar Sirjan defeated Khaybar FC 2-0 at home to remain fifth in the table with 35 points.

In the battle of two relegation-threatened clubs, Shams Azar came out on top against Mes Rafsanjan 3-1 in Qazvin.

Ehsan Mahrouqi scored twice either side of a Jalaloddin Alimohammadi's equalizer before a Houman Rabizadeh's 89th-minute strike sealed all points for Shams Azar.



Persepolis striker Serdar Dursun (R) celebrates his goal with Ali Alipour during a 1-0 win against Chadormalou SC at the Persian Gulf Pro League in Yazd, Iran, on March 7, 2025.

A first win in seven games lifted Shams Azar to 14th in table with 21 points - two clear of Nassaji Mazandaran, which dropped into the relegation zone after a 1-0 loss at Malavan.

A Qaem Eslamikhah's 93rd-minute spot kick secured a fourth

win in a row for the home side ahead of next week's visit to the Tehran for an encounter with Persepolis at the Azadi Stadium. In Arak, Amin Kazemian and Rahman Jafari scored in each half to steer Iralco to a 2-0 victory over Zob Ahan at home.



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World Grand Prix:

Iran's Vafaei beaten by world No. 1 Trump in quarterfinals

Sports Desk

Iranian snooker sensation Hossein Vafaei missed out on a place in the World Grand Prix last four after suffering a comprehensive 5-0 loss to English world number one Judd Trump in Hong Kong on Friday.

Trump started the last-eight contest with a break of 145 then added efforts of 108 and 115 before knocking in a 146 in the final frame. A 146 is not seen very often at all, as per TNT Sports commentator Dave Hendon it was only the 37th in professional snooker history and the

first Trump has made.

Vafaei - 33rd in the Johnstone's Paint One-Year Rankings - was only given a place in the 32-man draw on the eve of the competition, after seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan pulled out of the event for medical reasons.

The 2022 Shoot Out champion had come out victorious over Chinese duo Si Jiahui and Xu Si to set up a quarterfinal with Trump, but had revealed prior to Friday's game that he had been struggling with an excruciating pain at the prestigious event due to a slipped disc in his

upper spine.

"I am playing with one hand, I am in so much pain with my neck and shoulder, but I am always fighting for my fans and I'm delighted for them to win," the Iranian told World Snooker Tour official website.

"If I pull out, what would I do, sit and watch the others? I want to try. When I sit in my chair, my hand is shaking, my left arm is completely numb and I don't have any feeling on the shot. Last week I was in Chengdu and I went to hospital there but I didn't have time for an MRI scan."