

Iranian Wrestling Federation unveils selection path for UWW Worlds

Sports Desk

Seven freestyle spots remain up for grabs in the coming months as Iranian wrestlers will be looking to book a place in the national team for mid-September's World Championships in Zagreb. This week, the Iranian Wrestling Federation unveiled the new pathway for the freestyle team trials, starting with the annual Takhti Cup on May 8-9 in Isfahan.

The national governing body also confirmed that Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan, Rahman Amouzad, and Amirhossein Firouzpour have already been secured a spot at the UWW Worlds.

Mohammadnejad-Javan will be the Iranian 61kg wrestler in the Croatian capital, thanks to a gold-winning run in February's Zagreb Open and an Asian bronze in Amman, Jordan, in March.

Amouzad, an Olympic silver medalist last year, has been given a shot at a second world 65kg gold after domestic rivals Yassin Rezaei and Ali Khorramdel had below-par runs at the Ranking Series season-opener in the Croatian capital.

Meanwhile, Firouzpour's impressive run of results in recent months, which has seen him win the Asian and Zagreb Open titles, convinced the Iranian coaching staff to pick him for the



Iranian wrestler Rahman Amouzad, pictured during a training session in March, will take part at the freestyle 65kg contests in September's World Championships in Zagreb.
● LAWFF

world 92kg contests.

Should Ali Mo'meni – a gold medalist in Zagreb – win the 57kg title in Isfahan, he will secure the Iranian berth; otherwise, he will have to face the Takhti Cup champion for a place at the world event.

Former world under-20 champion Mohammadreza Shakeri

and Asian bronze medalist Sina Khalili are the frontrunners in the 70kg class, but will still have to win the Takhti Cup gold to punch the ticket for Zagreb.

Younes Emami will also have to walk away with the ultimate prize in Isfahan to seal the world spot, or a showdown between him and the Takhti Cup gold

medalist will decide the Iranian 74kg slot for the visit to Zagreb. Fresh off an Asian title, Mahdi Yousefi will be chasing the 79kg gold in Isfahan to set up a best-of-three showdown with reigning world bronze winner Mohammad Nokhodi, who will need a single victory to head to Zagreb.

Two-time world 92kg champion Kamran Qasempour will begin his bid for a place at the Los Angeles Games with participation at the 86kg Olympic class in Isfahan, where a top-podium finish will be enough to send him to the World Championships. The 97kg gold medalist at the Takhti Cup will face a tough job

to secure a world spot as he will have to succeed in a Ranking Series event in May or July to get a head-to-head with Amir-Ali Azarpira, who has been sidelined with a knee injury since winning an Olympic bronze last summer, for a place in Zagreb.

All eyes will be on the 125kg contests at the Takhti Cup, where two of the world's best superheavyweights in Amirhossein Zare' and Amirreza Ma'soumi are likely to lock horns in a highly-anticipated final.

A gold medal in Isfahan will guarantee a world spot for Zare', who is desperate to make up for his Olympic final loss with a third world gold in four years.

The path to the World Championships, however, will be tougher for Ma'soumi – a six-time world champion across different age groups since 2021, who also marched to the Asian senior gold in Amman.

The wrestling prodigy must first win the Takhti Cup gold and then square off against Zare' in a domestic head-to-head or an international tournament to clinch a spot in the Iranian squad.



● IKF

Iranian female squad confirmed for Asian karate meet

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Five Iranian girls secured their place at the kumite contests of the Asian Karate Championships – starting May 23 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan – after coming out on top in their respective weight classes at the national team trials in Tehran on Monday.

Former world bronze medalist Sara Bahmanyar claimed three victories in the -50kg contests to get a shot at a third Asian medal in four editions – following back-to-back third places in 2022 and 2023.

Fatemeh Sa'adati – an Asian bronze winner in 2023 – won three bouts and lost one to finish atop the -55kg event and punch her ticket for the Uzbek capital, while four successive victories secured the -61kg slot for Atou-

sa Golshadnejad – a gold medalist at the Karate 1 Premier League series in Hangzhou, China, in March.

Mobina Kaviani and Hannaneh Salehi won the -68kg and +68kg divisions, respectively, to complete the Iranian kumite lineup.

A gold medalist in January's Karate 1-Series A event in Tbilisi, Fatemeh Sadeqi continued her impressive form of late to win the individual kata contest and will be chasing a fifth Asian medal in Tashkent.

Meanwhile, the trio of Sepideh Amini, Melika Ezzati, Zeinab Hosseini won the team kata event and will be looking to improve on their Asian bronze in Hangzhou last year.

The female trials came after the men's competitions took place in Tehran on the preceding day, where Behnam De-

hqanzadeh (-55kg), Ali Meskini (-60kg), Reza Besharatikia (-67kg), Morteza Ne'mati (-75kg), and Mahmoud Ne'mati (+84kg) came out victorious across different classes.

The -84kg slot will be decided after reigning world silver medalist Mahdi Khodabakhshi recovers from an injury he suffered at the Karate 1 PL tournament in March.

Elsewhere, Ali Zand won the individual kata competition for a place in the Asian Championships, and was then joined by Abolfazl Shahrjerdi and Milad Farazmehr in a title-winning run in the team event.

The trio will be among the favorites for a podium finish in Tashkent, having teamed up for double silver and bronze medals apiece at the Asian Championships since 2017.

FIBA Asia Cup 2025:

Iran to face Japan, Syria, Guam in group phase

Sports Desk

The Iranian national basketball team was drawn against Japan, Syria, and Guam in Group B of the FIBA Asia Cup, starting August 5 in Saudi Arabia.

The draw for the flagship continental event took place in Jeddah on Tuesday, where 16 teams were split into four groups.

Iran will begin its quest for a fourth Asian title with a game against Guam on the opening day of the competition in Jeddah, before taking on Japan on Aug. 7 – in

a repeat of a group encounter between the two teams in the 2022 edition, which Iran won 88-76.

The final round of the group fixtures will see Greek head coach Sotirios Manolopoulos's men play Syria on Aug. 9.

A 5-1 record saw Iran win Group E of the qualifiers – thanks to back-to-back wins over India and Kazakhstan in the final window in February.

Team Melli's lone defeat came against Qatar, and former Iran coach Hakan Demir, last November.

Elsewhere in the draw, two-time reigning champion Australia was placed in Group A, alongside Qatar, South Korea, and Lebanon, which was beaten by the Aussies in the 2022 final.

Saudi Arabia, 16-time champion China, Jordan, and India are in Group C, with the Chinese Taipei, New Zealand, Iraq, and the Philippines in Group D.

The four group winners in Jeddah will progress to the last eight, with second and third teams in each group playing in a qualification round for to quarterfinals.



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