

# Asian Karate Championship: Golshadnejad wins kumite gold as Iran finishes with seven medals



Iran's Atousa Golshadnejad (R) won the women's kumite -61kg gold at the Asian Karate Championship in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. ● IJF

## Sports Desk

Iranian girl Atousa Golshadnejad won her third individual medal in as many years at the Asian Karate Championship, grabbing the gold in the kumite contests in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on Sunday. Having beaten opponents from India, China, and Japan en route to the final showpiece, Golshadnejad – Asian champion in 2023 – came out victorious against the host's Sevinch Otaboyeva to walk away with the ultimate prize of the -61kg weight class. This was a second medal in Tashkent for Golshadnejad, who was part of the Iranian bronze-winning kumite team. The Iranian team suffered a last-four setback against Kazakhstan, but bounced back to defeat the Chinese Taipei 2-1 in the third-place bout, with Golshadnejad and Ma'soumeh Mohsenian victorious against their opponents. Meanwhile, Fatemeh Sa'adati set-

tled for a silver medal in the women's -55kg event after a 5-0 loss to defending champion Hoang Thi My Tam of Vietnam – a second Asian medal for the Iranian girl following her bronze in 2023. Sara Bahmanyar (-50kg) had won a first female kumite medal for Iran in the Uzbek capital, beating Chan Hsin-Yu of the Chinese Taipei 4-3 in the third-place bout to take her personal tally to three Asian bronzes since 2022. The men's event, meanwhile, was one to forget for Iran as the country could only manage to collect a couple of silver medals, plus a team kata bronze, across nine categories. Morteza Ne'mati enjoyed an impressive run to reach the -75kg final, only to suffer a 5-3 loss to Kazakhstan's Nurkanat Azhikanov and take the silver. The Iranian kumite team – five-time Asian champion over the past eight years – also finished its campaign with a silver medal fol-

lowing a 3-2 defeat against Jordan. Ne'mati and Esmaeil Mo'tamedi came out on top against their Jordanian opponents, but Mahdi A'ashouri, Saleh Abazari, and Mahmoud Ne'mati lost their bouts. The Iranian trio of Abolfazl Shahrjerdi, Milad Farazmehr, and Ali Zand had won a joint bronze – alongside Hong Kong – in the team kata event thanks to a victory over Vietnam in the third-place playoff. A haul of one gold, as well as three silver and bronze medals apiece, saw Iran finish fifth in the overall team standings. Kazakhstan collected four golds, one silver, and five bronze medals to top the table, with Japan (three golds), Vietnam (three), and Jordan (two) in the following spots. Meanwhile, the Iranian para karate squad claimed the team title in Tashkent, thanks to a remarkable seven medals – including double golds Ma'soumeh Iji and Farzad Safari.

## Iranian Hazfi Cup: Esteghlal beats San'at to set final date with Malavan

### Sports Desk

Bijan Koushki and Masoud Juma scored in each half as Esteghlal defeated San'at Naft Abadan 2-0 at Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Saturday to progress to the Iranian Hazfi Cup final.

Desperate to end a dreadful campaign with a piece the silverware, the Capital Blues started right on the front foot against their second-tier opponent but had to wait until the 44th minute to break the deadlock, when Koushki's bouncing header found the far corner of the net.

Kenyan Juma headed home Ramin Rezaeian's corner-kick at the near post just before the hour mark to put clear daylight between the Blues and the visitors, who missed out on a top-flight place last week after finishing fourth in the Iranian second division table.

Interim coach Mojtaba Jabbari, the sixth coach in charge of the Esteghlal bench this season, was thrilled to see his players "enjoy their football again, while the fans were pleased by their team's performance."

"We have skilled and talented players in the final third, which is why we are good with creating

chances. The players remained patient throughout the first half, as they knew that if they scored the first goal, more opportunities would come their way," added the former Blues midfielder.

Standing between Esteghlal and a record eighth domestic cup crown in Thursday's final is three-time champion Malavan FC.

Malavan booked a place in the showdown on the preceding night, thanks to a 1-0 victory at Golgozar Sirjan – courtesy of a

Reza Ja'fari's strike 15 minutes from normal time.

As if Malavan and Esteghlal – seventh and ninth in the newly-finished Persian Gulf Pro League season, respectively – needed more reason to go all out for glory on Thursday, the winner of the game will secure a spot at next season's AFC Champions League Two.

Last time the two sides met in the final showpiece, Malavan came out victorious in the shootout to lift the trophy in March 1991.



Esteghlal striker Masoud Juma (C) celebrates his goal with teammates during a 2-0 victory over San'at Naft Abadan in the Iranian Hazfi Cup semifinals at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on May 24, 2025. ● MOJTABA SALEH/MIZAN

## Asian Belt Wrestling Alysh Championships: Iran grabs six FS medals to claim women's team title



● IAWF

### Sports Desk

Iranian girls finished their campaign at the Asian Belt Wrestling Alysh Championships on a high, grabbing six freestyle medals on Saturday to claim the team title in New Delhi.

Mobina Mirzapour (70kg), and Sahar Ghanizadeh (75kg) walked away with the ultimate prize of their respective freestyle classes on the penultimate day of the event to make

a clean sweep of double golds in the Indian capital.

Roqayeh Mahmoudabadi – a classic champion on the preceding night – had to settle for a runner-up finish in the 65kg contests, while Marzieh Khandan collected her second silver medal in the 55kg weight class. Fatemeh Fattahi (60kg) and Ez-zat Qorbani-Sani (+75kg), who won a silver and bronze medal in the classic competitions, respectively, added a couple bronzes to Iran's medal haul as

the country tallied 120 points to finish runner-up to Kyrgyzstan (130 points) in the women's freestyle standings, with Kazakhstan (107pts) and India (75) in the following spots.

However, Iranian girls still managed to win the overall team crown with 250 points, having lifted the classic trophy on Friday.

Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan followed Iran in the table with 235 and 217 points, respectively.

## Timberwolves thrash Thunder to cut deficit in West finals

**BBC** – The Minnesota Timberwolves thrashed the Oklahoma City Thunder 143-101 to claim their first win of the NBA Western Conference play-off finals.

Anthony Edwards scored 30 points and Julius Randle 24 at Target Center in Minneapolis as the Timberwolves set a club record for points scored in a play-off game.

They trail 2-1 in the best-of-seven series, which continues at the same venue on Tuesday at 01:30 BST.

"I was super happy about the physicality and energy we brought," Edwards said. "Being down 2-0, it's all about bringing energy, and we brought high energy."

Oklahoma's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, who was this week

named the NBA's Most Valuable Player (MVP) and who scored a combined 69 points in the first two games, managed only 14.

"We got punched in the mouth," he said.

"We just didn't have it. They had the sense of urgency knowing if they go down 3-0 it's going to be pretty tough. "It's about getting back up; it's about responding. That's

what the next challenge is." The Timberwolves have lost only one of their past 11 games at Target Center.



Timberwolves guard Anthony Edwards (5) shoots during a win against the Oklahoma City Thunder in the NBA Western Conference play-off finals in Minneapolis, MN, US, on May 24, 2025. ● ABBIE PARR/AP

