

# Asian U20 Wrestling Championships: Iran targets double team crowns in Bishkek



● IAWFIR

## Sports Desk

Iran will be aiming for yet another clean sweep of the men's team titles when the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships kick off in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Wednesday. Around 300 of young talents in the continent will vie for success at the competition, which will begin with the Greco-Roman event, followed by the women's wrestling, before the freestyle contests close off the championships on Sunday. Iranian boys collected a remarkable 11 golds, three silvers, and four bronze medals across 20 weight classes to beat Kazakhstan to both Greco-Roman and freestyle team trophies in Sriracha, Thailand, last year. Abolfazl Fat'hi will headline the Iranian Greco-Roman squad in the Kyrgyz capital, defending his title in the 130kg contests. Joining Fat'hi in the 10-man squad are Payam Ahmadi (55kg), Seyyed Iman Hosseini (60kg), Mohammad Aboutalebi (63kg), Gholamreza Abdevali (67kg), Amir-Mahdi Saeidi-Nava (72kg), Ahoura Bouveiri (77kg), Alireza Mohammad-Hosseini (82kg), Hamidreza Keshkar (87kg), and Mohammad-Hadi Seydi (97kg). Abolfazl Rahmani (86kg) – a silver

medalist last year – will be the Iranian to watch in the freestyle contests, having won a gold medal in March's Asian Senior Championships after picking up the world U20 bronze last September.

Former world U17 bronze winner Erfan Alizadeh, meanwhile, will be looking to build on an impressive silver medal in February's Ranking Series event, when representing the country in the 97kg weight class.

Reigning world and Asian cadet champion Abolfazl Shamsipour will be the top favorite in the 79kg event. Ebrahim Elahi (70kg) – a world cadet champion in 2022 – will be eager to improve on his Asian U20 silver in 2023, with Tohid Nouri competing in the 92kg contests on the back of a world under-17 bronze in Istanbul two years ago.

With a 2023 world cadet silver under his belt, Sajjad Pirdayeh will be a top contender in the 65kg class, while Mohammadreza Lotfi (125kg) will be looking to add the super-heavyweight glory to his Asian cadet gold.

Arshia Haddadi (57kg) – a bronze medalist at the 2022 U17 Worlds – Abolfazl Bakhshoudeh (61kg), and Mohammad Mamivand (74kg) complete the Iranian freestyle lineup in Bishkek.

## IFSC World Cup Series:

### Iranian climber Alipour misses out on speed podium

#### Sports Desk

Iranian climbing sensation Reza Alipour left the latest IFSC World Cup event empty-handed, finishing fifth in men's speed event in Krakow, Poland, on Sunday.

A winner of a remarkable 14 medals including six golds – at the competition, Alipour registered a 5.168-second qualification time to progress to the round of 16, before clocking 5.16 seconds to knock out China's Jinguo Long (6.00 seconds).

However, the Iranian's campaign came to an end in the quarterfinals, where he scaled the wall in 5.16 seconds against American Zach Hammer – who finished the race in 4.85 seconds – to settle for a fifth-place finish.

Former world champion and two-time Asian Games gold medalist Alipour, 31, was unlucky to miss out on the Olympic podium in Paris last year after falling short against American prodigy

Sam Watson in the bronze medal contest. The setback in Paris, however, did little to dampen Alipour's determination as he sets sights on glory at L.A. 2028.

Meanwhile, an all-Indonesian gold medal race in Krakow saw Raharjati Nursamsa steal the show with a lightning-fast 4.73 seconds for a new men's Asian record and personal best, also securing his second World Cup win after taking the ultimate prize on home soil gold two years ago. Kiromal Katibin slipped early in the final to settle for silver.

The bronze medal went to Omasa Ryo of Japan, who kept his composure with a 5.48-second effort after Hammer slipped near the top of the route. It was Omasa's fourth career World Cup podium, and his second of the season following a silver in Bali, Indonesia. The IFSC World Cup Series 2025 move to Chamonix, France, next where lead and speed competitions are scheduled from July 11-13.



● GETTY IMAGES

## Iran to visit Lebanon, Russia for friendlies ahead of FIBA Asia Cup

#### Sports Desk

The Iranian national basketball will take part in a friendly four-team tournament in Lebanon – also featuring Syria and Egypt – in the coming weeks, according to the Iranian Basketball Federation.

The event will be part of Iran's preparation for August's FIBA Asia Cup in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where Team Melli is drawn in Group B – alongside Japan, Syria, and Guam.

Iran will then head to Russia for a couple warmup games before the flagship continental tournament.

"Originally, a total of 10 preparation matches had been scheduled for the national team, but this number had to be reduced in the aftermath of the 12-day war with Israel and following restrictions," Mohsen Mo'ezifar, the secretary of the sport's national governing body, told



● FIBA

Mehr News Agency, A game against the Philippines in Tehran and a training camp in Belarus, have now been eliminated from the national team's preparation plan, Mo'ezifar added.

Iran will begin its quest for a fourth Asian title with a game against Guam on the opening day of the competition in Jeddah on August 5, before taking on Japan on two days later – 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.

**THE GUARDIAN** – Arsenal are closing in on the signing of Viktor Gyökeres from Sporting after agreeing personal terms with the Sweden striker. Negotiations are continuing over a fee for the 27-year-old, with Arsenal hoping to strike a deal for less than the £68m asking price. Gyökeres has made no secret of his desire for a new challenge, having scored 54 goals for Sporting last season, and is understood to have made clear he wants to join Arsenal despite interest from elsewhere in the Premier League, including Manchester United. Arsenal had identified Gyökeres as one of their two

main targets to add firepower, with strong interest also in RB Leipzig's Benjamin Sesko. With Mikel Arteta keen to bring in reinforcements as soon as possible, Arsenal's sporting director, Andrea Berta, is understood to have stepped up efforts to sign Gyökeres after the arrival of the midfielder Martín Zubimendi was confirmed on Sunday. Gyökeres, who joined Sporting from Coventry in 2023, is believed to have agreed a five-year deal at the Emirates. It is understood that his former club Brighton would be due money under a sell-on clause.

## Arsenal close on Sporting striker Gyökeres



● AFP