

Yazdani to wrestle in 97kg class on return to action, Dorostkar confirms

Sports Desk

Wrestling sensation Hassan Yazdani will move up to the 97kg weight category on return from a shoulder injury, Iranian freestyle team coach Pejman Dorostkar confirmed.

A winner of a national-high 10 world and Olympic medals, Yazdani had to undergo a second surgery on his injured shoulder in September last year – following an 86kg final loss at the Paris Olympics – before starting his rehabilitation program five months later in Tehran.

“Given his current weight condition and the two surgeries he’s had on his shoulder, I don’t think it would be wise for him to cut weight when he returns to action in one or two months. So, he will most likely compete in the 97kg division in the future. God willing, we’ll have the same strong and energetic wrestler that Iranian fans want to see,” Dorostkar said of Yazdani in an interview with the official website of the Iranian Wrestling Federation.

September’s World Championships in Zagreb, however, will come a bit too soon for Yazdani, which means the three-time world champion will miss the flagship global event of the sport for the first time in a decade.

When asked about Iran’s chances of winning the team title in Zagreb, Dorostkar said: “We will



definitely have a tough job on our hands. Russia and the United States have dominated the world event in recent years, not to mention, Japan, Georgia, and

Azerbaijan will also be among the contenders, while there are individual stars from Bahrain, India, and Hungary in certain weight classes. We still have a

solid, decent squad, and will be focused on our own strengths.” Eight wrestlers have already secured a spot in the Iranian freestyle squad for the Wrestling

Worlds.

Olympic bronze medalist Amir-Ali Azarpira defeated Ahmad Bazri 3-0 in a domestic 97kg decider on Friday to punch his



Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani (blue singlet) is seen in action in the 86kg contests at the Paris Olympics on Aug. 8, 2024.

● olympic.ir

Zagreb ticket.

Joining Azarpira in the Iranian team are reigning world champion Amirhossein Zare’ (125kg), Olympic silver medalist Rahman Amouzad (65kg), and two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour (86kg), as well as Ali Mo’meni (57kg), Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan (61kg), Younes Emami (74kg), and Amirhossein Firouzpour (92kg).

The 70kg and 79kg slots remain up for grabs and will be decided after the final Ranking Series event of the season – starting next Thursday in Budapest – where Abbas Ebrahimzadeh and Sina Khalili (70kg) plus Mahdi Yousefi and Fariborz Babaei (79kg) will have to walk away with the ultimate prize in their respective divisions to stand a chance of a spot at the World Championships.

“Mohammad Nokhodi has entered the 79kg mix, despite being out of action with an injury since his bronze-winning campaign in last October’s World Championships. We also have decent wrestlers competing for the national team spot in the 70kg class,” the Iranian head coach added.

AFC Women’s Asian Cup qualifiers:

Iranian girls to open campaign against Singapore

AFC – Iran will be seeking a winning start when they take on Singapore in a Group A tie at the AFC Women’s Asian Cup Australia 2026 qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, today.

Aiming to reach a second successive finals, Iran will aim to hit the ground running against a Singapore side who are under pressure following their 3-2 defeat to Bhutan on Monday. Head coach Marziyeh Jafari left her 13-year trophy-laden stint at Bam Khatoon FC to lead the Iranian team and has the core of the club

side at her disposal.

Goalkeeper Raha Yazdani, defender Atefeh Ramezani, midfielder Melika Motevalli and forward Zahra Ghanbari form the spine of the team as they look to transfer their understanding built at the club level to the international stage. Singapore, however, cannot be taken lightly – especially as a second defeat will be detrimental to their hopes of qualifying for the continental showpiece.

There are, however, injury concerns for Lionesses head coach Karim Bencher-

ifa with Ardhra Arul, Farah Nurzahirah, Syazwani Ruzi and Nurhidayu Naszri all forced off early in the Bhutan match.

Today’s other tie will see Bhutan aiming to build on their opening day success against a Lebanon side who fell 4-0 to Jordan on Monday.

Kim Tae-in’s side showed their quality against Singapore with three players – Yeshey Bidha, Dorji Edon and Sunita Rai – getting on the scoresheet with the South Asian side bidding to reach the Finals for the first time.

Iranian teen Dehqan joins Al Wahda

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Iranian teenage midfielder Mobin Dehqan joined Emirati top-flight side Al Wahda SC on a three-year contract on Tuesday.

Dehqan, 19, impressed as a deep-lying midfielder in 17 appearances for Kheybar FC in all competitions last season as the Iranian club finished 11th in the Persian Gulf Pro League table.

“I’m thrilled to join such a big club in the early stages of my professional career. This move is a big step forward in my life. I am grateful to the club to the club for trusting me and promise to put in all my efforts to help Al Wahda succeed next season,” Dehqan told Al Wahda of-



● alwahda-sc.com

ficial website.

Having made his international debut in July 2024, Dehqan has three goals under his belt in 14

matches for the Iranian under-20 side.

He will join fellow-Iranians Ahamad Nourollahi and Mohammad Qorbani

in his new team.

Al Wahda finished third to Shabab Al Ahli and Sharjah in the Emirati ADNOC Pro League last season.

Maresca ‘proud’ as Chelsea reach Club World Cup final

THE GUARDIAN – Enzo Maresca did not hide his pride after Chelsea defeated Fluminense with two brilliant goals from João Pedro to reach the FIFA Club World Cup final.

Maresca’s team encountered few problems as they maintained their push for Club World Cup glory after producing an impressive performance to defeat the last non-European team left in the competition.

Chelsea took huge satisfaction from seeing João Pedro mark his full debut by scoring twice

against his boyhood club. The forward joined from Brighton for £60m last week and was pivotal in his new team moving to within one win from being crowned club world

champions.

“We are very happy, very proud to play the final on Sunday,” Maresca said. “The reason why is because this is the first edition of the Club World

Cup. The best clubs in the world are here. For us to be in the final is something to be proud of.

“I know how difficult it is with all the games. Premier League top four, we won the Conference League and now a final here – it is fantastic.”

Maresca was delighted with João Pedro’s impressive display after coming in for the suspended Liam Delap. “I am very happy for João,” the head coach said. “He has quality to decide the game like today. We know he is a good player against teams that defend deep.”



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