

Ma'soumi attends Azerbaijan training despite IAWF warning



Iranian wrestler Amirreza Ma'soumi (L) faces Amirhossein Zare' in the freestyle 125kg final at the International Takhti Cup in Isfahan, Iran, on May 9, 2025.
● FARSHAD RANDANI/LAWFIR

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Amirreza Ma'soumi has shared a photo of himself alongside his father and personal coach, Fardin Ma'soumi, in a training session with Azerbaijan's national team in Baku – hinting at plans to continue his international career overseas. The controversial photo emerged just days after Alireza Dabir, the chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, had warned the 20-year-old sensation against further absence in the Iranian training camp. “Every wrestler must know his place. If Ma'soumi skips the next national camp, he will be axed from the under-23 squad as well. The national team interests come first. I like him like my own son, and I just hope he is given the right advice,” Dabir said in an in-

terview on Tuesday. Ma'soumi has been the dominant force of the superheavyweight class across different age groups in recent years, grabbing six world gold medals – including last year's junior and U23 titles. He was also part of the Iranian seniors' team in February's Ranking Series event in Zagreb and then represented the country at the Asian Championships in March, cruising to the 125kg gold on both occasions. However, Ma'soumi, who fell short against compatriot Amirhossein Zare' in the Iranian Olympic trials last year, saw his hopes of a place in September's World Championships dashed after a second setback against the reigning world champion in May's International Takhti Cup final in Isfahan. Dejected by some referring decisions in the 8-2 defeat, Ma'soumi

visited Yerevan in June for talks with the Armenian wrestling officials, including national team head coach Abetnak Kurginyan, about the prospect of representing the European country at international competitions. Under the United World Wrestling rules, Ma'soumi would require a letter of consent from the Iranian federation before switching citizenship – a request that has been firmly rejected by Dabir. “We've always granted approval for lower-ranked wrestlers [to represent other countries], but Ma'soumi is a top-notch asset for us, and already a favorite for world and Olympic golds. He has just been unlucky to have Zare' as a domestic opponent, though I believe the rivalry will push both wrestlers to new heights. I'm sure they are by far the world's top two in their weight class,” Dabir said.

Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship: Iran rallies past Indonesia in opener

Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to beat Indonesia in four sets and get off to winning start at the Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship in Thailand.

Having arrived at the host city of Nakhon Pathom on the eve of their Pool B opener, Iranian boys suffered a 25-21 defeat in the first set before coming out victorious in the following sets by 25-21, 25-19, and 26-24 scorelines, respectively.

“Lack of preparation and the long trip clearly had an impact on our team, and the players could only unleash 20 percent of their true potential today,” Iran head coach Arash Sadeqiani said after the game. “We're here to defend our title, and we will work hard to accomplish that despite all the problems we've had to deal with,” added the Iranian.

Elsewhere in the group Kazakhstan



Iranian boys celebrate a point during a 3-1 victory over Indonesia at the Asian Men's U16 Volleyball Championship in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, on July 12, 2025.
● VOLLEYBALL.IR

defeated Hong Kong in straight sets (25-16, 25-17, 25-22) to sit above Iran on top of the group table. Iran will be back in action today against Hong Kong, before taking on Kazakhstan on Monday in what promises to decide the top spot of the pool.

The top two teams in each of the

four groups will progress to the next round, where eight teams will be split into two groups, with the top two advancing to the semifinals.

The top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2026 FIVB Boys' U17 World Championship in Doha, Qatar.

Iranian Ghandipour signs for Emirati champion Shabab Al Ahli

Sports Desk

Iranian teenage striker Reza Ghandipour joined UAE Pro League champion Shabab Al Ahli on a four-year contract on Friday.

Ghandipour, 19, spent last season at Malavan FC on loan from Paykan, bagging eight goals and four assists in 23 top-flight appearances to help the northern Iranian club finish seventh in the league.

He also has a remarkable 20 goals under his belt in 22 age-group caps, including two in February's AFC U20 Asian Cup in China, as Iran was knocked out in the quarterfinals after a shootout defeat against Japan.

Ghandipour was heavily linked with a move to Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal but decided to continue his career overseas, where he will team up with fellow-Iranians Sardar Azmoun and Saeid Ezzatollahi at Shabab Al Ahli.



● AFC

Ghandipour is the second Iranian teenager to move to the Emirati ADNOC Pro League in recent days, following 19-year-old midfielder Mobin Dehqan who left Khaybar to sign a three-year deal with Al Wahda SC on Tuesday.

Alcaraz expects wiser Sinner in Wimbledon final

REUTERS – Carlos Alcaraz resumes his fast-growing Grand Slam rivalry with Jannik Sinner in the Wimbledon final but the second seed said on Friday that his epic win over the Italian in the French Open title clash last month did not give him the mental edge.

Defending champion Alcaraz quelled the challenge of American fifth seed Taylor Fritz 6-4 5-7 6-3 7-6(6) to secure his spot in a third consecutive title clash at the All England Club, before Sinner humbled seven-times winner Novak Djokovic 6-3 6-3 6-4.

Alcaraz saved three match points to beat Sinner in a shade under 5-1/2 hours at Roland Garros in one of the most memorable finals of all time, but the Spaniard expected his opponent to be a lot wiser after that heart-breaking defeat.

“Whatever Jannik has, (it is) because he has learned from everything as a huge champion, from the losses, from the matches he's playing, he just gets better after every match, every day,” Alcaraz told reporters.

“I'm pretty sure he's going to take a lot of things from the French Open final, he's going to be better physically, be better mentally. He's going to be prepared on Sunday to give 100%.”

“I'm not thinking I have an advantage mentally on Sunday because of that match.”

Alcaraz, who will be eyeing his third successive title at Wimbledon to match the feat of Bjorn Borg, Pete Sampras, Roger Federer and Djokovic, said he had not

revisited his big battle with Sinner on the red dirt of Paris.

“But I still think about that moment, sometimes. Yeah, it was probably the best... I mean, not ‘probably’ no, it was the best match that I have ever played so far.”

“I just hope it's not to be 5-1/2 hours on court again,” he smiled. “If I have to, I will. I think it's going to be great.”



● REUTERS



● FIVB

Iranian outside-hitter Efsandiar joins InPost ChKS in Polish PlusLiga

Sports Desk

Iranian international volleyball player Amirhossein Efsandiar left Foolad Sirjan to sign for newly-promoted InPost ChKS Chełm in the Polish PlusLiga. The 26-year-old outside-hitter is part of the national team at the ongoing Volleyball Nations League, where he has contributed 34 points in six games – including 19 in the 3-1 defeat

against Germany in the second week of the preliminary round in Belgrade, Serbia.

Sitting 10th in the 18-team table of the preliminary phase, Iran will be back in action against Poland for the start of Week 3 in Gdansk, Poland, on Wednesday before taking on China, France, and Bulgaria.

A former player of Kaleyh Mazandaran and Chinese club Tianjin Food Group, as well as Belgian

side Greenyard Maaseik and Ural Ufa in Russia, Efsandiar is a two-time Asian champion with the national team and picked up the gold medal with the country at the rescheduled Hangzhou Asian Games in 2023.

Efsandiar was also named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament when he captained Iran to the title at the FIVB U21 World Championship in Riffa, Bahrain, in 2019.