

U17 World Wrestling Championships:

Iran unimpressive but pips Uzbekistan to Greco-Roman title

Sports Desk

Iran had only two finalists across 10 weight classes but still managed to lift the Greco-Roman team trophy at the U17 World Wrestling Championships in Athens, Greece.

A medal haul of one gold, one silver, and four bronzes saw Iran – represented by nine wrestlers in the Greco-Roman event – stand atop the team table with 125 points.

Uzbekistan impressed with four gold medals but had to settle for a runner-up finish with 118 points, after four of its wrestlers did not contribute points to the team title race.

Kazakhstan finished third with 113 points, with Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan – tied on 100 points – in fourth and fifth, respectively.

A 60kg bronze-medal contest on the final day, featuring Iran's Abolfazl Zare' and Humoyun Erkinov of Uzbekistan, proved crucial in the title race.

A victory for Erkinov would have seen Uzbekistan win the title, but Zare' came out victorious 7-5 to keep Iran in contention with a fourth successive Greco-Roman trophy at the U17 Worlds.

Later on Wednesday, Amir-sam Mohammadi made a quick work of Belarusian Kanstantsin Kasyan, who competed as a neutral athlete, to walk away with the ultimate prize in the 92kg class and help Iran jump from fourth to the top spot in the team table.

Mohammadi started the show-



● IAWF

down right on the front foot and scored with three stepouts. Kasyan was then called passive and put in par terre as Mohammadi turned him twice and won the final 8-0 in one minute and 12 seconds.

Mohammadhossein Kazemi, meanwhile, bounced back from a 2-1 loss to Uzbekistan's Behruzbeq Valiev in the quarter-finals to rout Finland's Matias

Onnenlehto 9-0 in repechage before defeating Azerbaijan's Yusif Ahmadli 4-3 for a joint-bronze in the 71kg event.

Elsewhere, Benjamin Khezli missed out on the podium in the 45kg contests after an 8-3 defeat against Vadim Tarelunga of Moldova in a third-place playoff.

Wednesday's results came after Iran had collected one silver medal, through Yazdan Delrouz

in the 110kg division, and two bronzes on the preceding night in the Greek capital.

Delrouz enjoyed an emphatic run to the final showpiece, not conceding a single point in three bouts, but was unfortunate to give away a three-point lead at the break and lose on criteria (3-3) to Indian Yardeep Yardeep.

Amirmohammad Hajivand re-

covered from a first-round 4-3 defeat against Uzbekistan's Bunyod Hasanov, to finish his campaign with a consolation bronze in the 48kg contests, courtesy of superiority win (12-3) against Turkish wrestler Baris Soyulu. Amirreza Tahmasbpour also bounced back from a setback in his first outing – a 5-3 loss to Kyrgyzstan's Alkham Abdirasulov – to finish his 55kg

campaign with something to cheer about, hammering Indian Aditya Gupta 10-1 in a bronze-medal bout.

Meanwhile, Taha Nouri (80kg) and Amirmahdi Hajivand (51kg) finished their campaigns empty-handed, while Abolfazl Shiri was ruled out of the 65kg event after the host country refused to issue an entry visa for the young Iranian.

Despite a somewhat underwhelming campaign, Iran head coach Mohsen Sourian was thrilled to see his squad "display true Iranian fighting spirit" to defend the Greco-Roman title in Athens.

"Our nation was caught up in the imposed war with Israel, forcing us to cancel our training camp. We also missed out on the U17 Asian Championships [in June], which was a major setback to our preparations for the world event," Sourian said.

"Abolfazl Shiri was unlucky to miss the competitions. I'm sure he would have been a favorite for the gold medal, given his experience and track record in the previous events as well as a favorable draw in Athens," added the Iranian.

"I'm fully satisfied with all my members of the squad – even Amirmahdi Hajivand who was eliminated. They all gave their absolute best and displayed true Iranian fighting spirit on the mat. We could have won multiple gold medals, but inexperience in the final seconds and our wrestlers' physical exhaustion eventually cost us dearly."

Ex-Iran international Ansarifard on Esteghlal radar: *Report*

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal is weighing up a move for former Iran international striker Karim Ansarifard, Varzesh3 reported on Friday.

Ansarifard, 35, has been without a team since parting ways with Aris Thessaloniki in July 2024 – after registering one goal and assist apiece in 14 appearances for the Greek top-flight side.

A former player of Iranian clubs Saipa, Persepolis, and Tractor, Ansarifard was first introduced to European club football with

LaLiga Osasuna side in 2014.

The Iranian spent the best part of his club career in Europe at the Greek Super League 1, where he scored 58 goals and provided 16 assists in 195 outings across all competitions for AEK Athens, Panionios Athens, Aris, and Olympiacos, helping the latter lift league trophy in the 2016/17 season.

He also had stints at then-Championship outfit Nottingham Forest, Qatari club Al Sailiya, as well as Omonia Nicosia in the Cypriot First Division.

Ansarifard has 30 goals in 104 international caps, with his last

appearance for the national team coming as a substitute in a last-eight win against Japan at the AFC Asian Cup in Qatar in February 2024.

Should the Iranian striker join Esteghlal, he will be the sixth summer signing for the Tehran Blues, who finished ninth in the 16-team table of the Iranian league last season but managed to win the Hazfi Cup trophy in May and secure a place in the AFC Champions League Two for the upcoming season, before bringing back Portuguese Ricardo Sa Pinto as the head coach last month.



● ARIS FC



● taekwondo.ir

Asian Para Taekwondo Championships:

Iranians complete clean sweep of 12 medals

Sports Desk

Iranians enjoyed a prolific day at the Asian Para Taekwondo Championships, completing a clean sweep of 12 medals, including triple golds, in Kuching, Malaysia on Friday.

Alireza Bakht (-80kg) and Hamed Haqshenas (+80kg) – two Paralympic bronze medalists last year in Paris – bagged a

couple of golds in men's competitions, while Marzieh Nasrollahi walked away with the ultimate prize in the women's +65kg class.

Amirmohammad Haqiqatshenas (-70kg) and Saeid Sadeqianpour (-63kg) were the Iranian silver medalists in the men's draw, with Maryam Abdollahpour settling for a runner-up spot in the women's -57kg event.

Zahra Rahimi, who won a Paralympic silver in Paris, took the bronze in the -57kg class after a loss to Abdollahpour in an all-Iranian semifinal.

Elsewhere, Mahdi Pour-Rahnama (men's -80kg), Taha Hassanpour (men's -58kg), Leila Mirzaei (women's -65kg), Aylar Jami (women's -47kg), and Roza Ebrahimi (women's -52kg) added five bronzes to Iran's medal haul.