

# FIVB Men's U21 World Championship: Iran defeats Poland to progress as group winner



Iranian outside-hitter Ariyan Mahmoudinejad (17) spikes the ball during a 3-1 victory over Poland at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Jiangmen, China, on August 26, 2025.  
● FIVB

## Sports Desk

Iran defeated Poland 3-1 (25-18, 19-25, 25-17, 25-19) to advance to the round of 16 as the Pool B winner at the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship in Jiangmen, China. Outside-hitter Matin Hosseini chipped in a game-high 17 points – including four aces – while Pouya Aryakhah (14), Ariyan Mahmoudinejad (12), and Armin Ghelichniazi (12) also finished in double figures as Iran completed a clean sweep of five victories in the preliminary round. “Thank God we had a very good game today, and I am absolutely satisfied with all of my players’ performance. That’s what I expected to see from them after five

months of hard training,” Iran head coach Gholamreza Mo’menimoqaddam said after the game. “Poland is a very good team and had not conceded a single set until today, but we were better than them in every aspect of the game. The Iranian players were exceptional in defense and executed everything I told them during the analysis sessions,” added Mo’menimoqaddam, who is on a remarkable 24-game unbeaten run with his team, during which Iran claimed back-to-back Asian under-20 titles either side of the world U21 crown in 2023 in Manama. “Beyond all the tactics and techniques, I believe the solidarity and friendship between our players were best

demonstrated in today’s game,” said the Iranian. Iran began its title defense in Jiangmen with a 3-1 win against Kazakhstan and then eased past Puerto Rico in straight sets, and edged out South Korea in a five-set thriller – in a repeat of last year’s Asian under-20 final, which Iran had won in straight sets – before beating Canada 3-0 on Monday. Iran will resume action on Thursday against the fourth team in Pool D, which will be either Argentina or Ukraine. “I just hope we can carry this momentum forward and be at our mental and tactical best when knockout phase gets underway. We’re taking it one game at a time,” said Mo’menimoqaddam.

## Persian Gulf Pro League:

# Alipour on target as Persepolis ends drought in ‘Iranian Clasico’

## Sports Desk

Persepolis celebrated a first top-flight victory in the ‘Iranian Clasico’ in 1,335 days, securing a hard-fought 1-0 away win against Sepahan in the Persian Gulf Pro League on Monday. Ali Alipour made the difference at Isfahan’s Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, as the prolific striker rounded off a textbook counter-attack with a composed finish from the edge of the box in the 44th minute. This was a relieving, and yet statement, victory for new Persepolis boss Vahid Hashemian, who replaced Turkish Ismail Kartal in the summer, after his team had suffered four successive defeats against its familiar foe last season and was held to a 1-1 stalemate against Fajr Sepasi on the opening day

of the new campaign last week. Despite the victory, Hashemian acknowledged in the post-match press conference that his team is far from a finished article. “It was a really tough game, as I expected. We had to hold off their pressure in the opening 15 minutes and then managed to control the game. It’s a massive result, but that doesn’t mean there’s no more room for improvement. We will enjoy the three points today and then keep working hard for our future games,” Hashemian said. Meanwhile, Sepahan head coach Moharram Navidkia, who was also appointed to the role in the summer, must have felt unlucky to finish the game empty-handed, after his team enjoyed 62-percent pos-

session and registered 26 shots compared to the visitors’ seven. The home side, which was reduced to 10 men after a straight red for Mohammad Daneshgar, was still fortunate not to concede a second goal late in the game. Persepolis winger Oston Urunov hit the crossbar from close range, before Milad Mohammadi missed an absolute sitter on the counter. “I think I just have to praise my players for their exceptional performance. They dominated the possession and created numerous chances,” Navidkia said. “My players lost their composure in the final 15 minutes, and were pulled out of position, which led to a couple of chances for Persepolis. “We all due respect to our



Persepolis striker Ali Alipour (red) scores during a 1-0 victory over Sepahan in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Naqsh-e Jahan Stadium, Isfahan, Iran, on August 25, 2025.  
● FOOTBALL 360

opponent, I think this was one of the best performances by any of my teams throughout my managerial career. I still can’t believe

we lost the game,” added Navidkia. Sepahan, which shared the spoils in a 1-1 draw at Malavan last week, will

chase a first win of the campaign when visiting Golgozar Sirjan next, while Persepolis will welcome Foolad Khuzestan and for-

mer Reds head coach Yahya Golmohammadi to the Shahr-e Qods Stadium after the upcoming international break. Elsewhere on Monday, Khaybar continued its impressive start to the new season with a 1-0 win at Iravco. Mehrdad Qanbari sent goalkeeper Mohammad Khalifeh the wrong way from the spot in the 63rd minute to lead the visitors to a second win in a row. Newly-promoted Paykan and Esteghlal Khuzestan shared the points in a 1-1 draw in Tehran. Iran under-20 striker Kasra Taheri bagged his second goal in as many games for Paykan midway through the first half, only to see his strike canceled out by Maysam Taymouri’s own goal three minutes later.

## US Open:

# Alcaraz eases into second round as Venus makes emotional exit



● MIKE FREY/IMAGN IMAGES

REUTERS – Carlos Alcaraz cruised into the second round of the US Open with a straight-sets mauling of big-serving American Reilly Opelka on Monday, while veteran Venus Williams made an emotional

exit at the hands of 11th seed Karolina Muchova. Alcaraz, sporting a new buzz cut that has sparked plenty of chatter on social media, dismantled Opelka 6-4 7-5 6-4 under the bright lights of Arthur

Ashe Stadium to set up a second-round encounter with Italian Mattia Bellucci. Williams, back at Flushing Meadows at the age of 45 after a year’s hiatus, fought bravely against Muchova, forcing a deciding set before bowing out 6-3 2-6 6-1. “I’m very proud of how I played,” said Williams, who was beaten 6-1 6-1 on her last US Open appearance in 2023. “I think for me getting back on the court was about giving myself a chance to play more healthy,” added Williams, who disclosed in 2011 that she had been diag-

nosed Sjogren’s, an autoimmune disease that causes fatigue and joint pain. “When you play unhealthy, it’s in your mind. It’s not just how you feel. You get stuck in your mind too. So it was nice to be freer.” Talented teen Mirra Andreeva crushed Alycia Parks 6-0 6-1 with a near-flawless performance on Louis Armstrong Stadium but an error-strewn showing from Madison Keys saw the Australian Open champion upset 6-7(10) 7-6(3) 7-5 by Renata Zarazua in the first match on Arthur Ashe. At number six, Keys is the highest seed to fall so far.

# Four Iranian skaters into top 10 in inline freestyle world ranking

## Sports Desk

Four Iranian skaters made their way into top 10 in the latest Inline Freestyle World Rankings – released by the international governing body of the sport. A Hero Battle Cup champion in June, Amirmohammad Savari, previously ranked 27th, made a significant leap of 23 places to claim the fourth position in the men’s ranking. Meanwhile, Reza Lasani, who finished runner-up to Savari in June’s event in Milan before claiming back-to-back bronzes at the Asian Championships and The World Games, climbed from 41st place to fifth in the new rankings. The top three positions in this category were taken



Iranian skaters Taraneh Ahmadi (R) and Romina Salek stood sixth and seventh, respectively, at the latest Inline Freestyle World Rankings.  
● IRINA

by skaters from Spain, Chinese Taipei, and France. In the women’s division, Taraneh Ahmadi and Romina Salek, two accomplished Iranian skaters previously ranked 29th and 44th respectively, advanced to sixth and seventh place in the world rankings. An athlete from Chinese Taipei currently leads the women’s ranking.

Ahmadi, 23, won a precious speed slalom silver medal at the 20th Asian Roller Skating Championship in Jecheon, South Korea, while 20-year-old Salek, – a former world speed slalom record holder, who won the gold at the Hero Battle Cup but was unlucky to miss out on the podium at the Asian showpiece, finishing fourth.