

World Wushu Championships: Moradi wins sanda gold, four Iranians progress to women's finals



Sports Desk

Iranian Mahdi Moradi grabbed a sanda gold to secure a second medal for the country at the World Wushu Championships in Brasilia, Brazil, on Friday. Moradi made quick work of Cruz Pérez, knocking out the Mexican in the first round, to walk away with the ultimate prize in the men's 90kg division, which was held in a round-robin format. Shahin Banitalebi had won a first medal for Iran in the Brazilian capital, settling for a bronze in the men's taolu competitions on Thursday. A gold medalist at The World Games in August, Banitalebi scored 9.733 points to finish third in the nandao event,

with Hong Kong's Lau Chi Lung (9.763) and his compatriot Deng Longteng (9.740) collecting the gold and silver, respectively. There were further victories for the country on the third day of the competitions as three Iranian girls progressed to the final showpiece of their respective categories. Sediqeh Daryaei defeated a Mexican opponent in the first round to book a place in the 65kg showdown, while Soheila Mansourian knocked out Tunisian Chaima Naoui to reach the 70kg final. Mansourian's elder sister, Shahrbanou, outclassed American Sydney Carr in the first round of the 75kg semifinal to remain on course for her sixth gold medal at the flagship inter-

national event of the sport. In women's taolu, Zahra Kiani delivered a 9.736 performance to finish second among 23 contestants in qualification to advance to final showpiece of the changquan contest. Meanwhile, Helia Asadian was unfortunate to miss out on the podium by .004 points in the women's nanquan form, while Abolfazl Qarehbaghi stood seventh in the men's jianshu event. The 17th edition of the World Championships concludes today.



Iranian Mahdi Moradi won the men's sanda 90kg gold medal at the World Wushu Championships in Brasilia, Brazil.
● MAHDI MARIZAD/FARS

AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships: Iranian karatekas enjoy medal-laden opening day

Sports Desk

Iranian young guns collected eight cadet medals – including double women's kumite golds – on the first day of the AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships in Shaoguan, China. Setayesh Qaneiefard defeated Malaysian Lalitaanjali Ravindran 3-0 in the final to walk away with the ultimate prize in the -54kg contests. Iran's second gold medal came in the +61kg class, where Setayesh Afshar came out on top against Thailand's Chonlada Nisangkak 4-2 in the final. Meanwhile, Arshia Mo'alemi and Faryar Bahadori settled for a couple of silver medals in the boys' kumite competitions. Mo'alemi fell to a 6-3 defeat

against the host's Shi Enxi in the -63kg final, while Bahadori suffered a 3-0 loss to Ukko Kaneko of Japan in the -70kg showdown. There were further medals for the Iranian girls in the kumite contests as Ava Farmani and Dina Karimi finished their campaigns with two consolation bronzes. Farmani bounced back from a first-round setback (2-0) against ultimate champion Hana Yamamoto of Japan to beat Yemen's Muaadh Mahyoub 5-0 in repechage before defeating Kazakhstan's Nurinissa Dairkhan 4-0 for a joint-third place alongside Saudi girl Hessah Al Rasheed. Karimi also suffered a defeat against a Japanese opponent in Wakana Karikomi (4-0) but

still managed to outclass the host's Chi Siying 10-0 and share the third podium with Yen Chiao-yun of the Chinese Taipei. Iran also bagged two team kata bronzes in the combined cadet and junior event. Amirreza Chamani, Amirali Mirzazadeh, Matin Farimand, and Ata Farimand teamed up to beat China but fell to a 36.8-36.1 loss to Japan in the semifinals, before recovering to score 38.5 points against Uzbekistan's 36.1 in the boys' third-place contest. The Iranian quadruple of Dina Safari, Fatemeh Sehatbakhsh, Hannaneh Nourollahzadeh, and Kowsar Ranjbar took the bronze in the girls' event following a semifinal loss to Japan.



Iranian girls Setayesh Qaneiefard (L) and Setayesh Afshar won two cadet kumite golds at the AKF Cadet, Junior & U21 Championships in Shaoguan, China.
● IKF

Iran placed in Pot 3 for Women's Futsal World Cup draw



● AFC

Sports Desk

The Iranian national team will be placed in Pot 3 for the draw of the inaugural FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup, which will take place in Taguig, Philippines, on September 15. The flagship international event in women's futsal will kick off on November 21 in the Southeast Asian country, where 16 teams will compete for glory across four groups. Joining Iran in the third pot are Colombia, Poland, and New Zealand. Brazil, Spain, and Portugal – the top three in the latest FIFA World Ranking – and the host country are in Pot 1, with Thailand and Japan – finalists in May's Asian Cup in China – as well as Argentina and Italy in Pot 2. Morocco, Canada, Panama, and Tanzania are in Pot 4. Iran secured a place in the competition thanks to a third-place finish at the Asian Cup earlier in the year. A two-time continental champion,

Iranian women's team suffered a first defeat in 15 games across three Asian Cup editions, when it fell to a 3-2 last-four setback against ultimate champion Japan, but still managed to bounce back with a 3-1 victory over China in the third-place decider. However, a run of unconvincing results and performances in China saw the national governing body of the sport part ways with head coach Forouzan Soleimani after the tournament, replacing her with Shahrzad Mozaffar. "The seeding shows the incredibly high level of competition and we are likely to be drawn into a tough group. There are obviously no easy games at a World Cup and our focus will be to perform to our absolute best under difficult circumstances," Mozaffar said after the seeding for the draw was unveiled on Saturday. "The draw is as tough as it gets. Powerhouses like Brazil, Spain, and Portugal are in Pot 1, and

teams like Japan, Argentina, and Italy are in Pot 2. All of them are global futsal giants. "We knew this was a possibility, so we've built our entire preparation plan around this high-level challenge. We wouldn't be in such a difficult position if we had made it to the Asian Cup final. Even being in Pot 2 would have made a significant difference. "Now, with the way the draw works, the odds are very high that we'll end up in the same group as two world-class teams. With only two teams from each group advancing, our path to the knockout stage becomes extremely difficult. But we are ready for the fight. We know what we're up against, and we will be prepared." "We are working to secure high-level friendly matches to properly simulate the intensity of the real tournament. Our goal is to enter this competition with full confidence and a clear plan, taking it step by step to achieve success."

Tractor closing in on ex-Espanyol keeper Pacheco: Report

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Tractor is in advanced talks to sign former Espanyol Spanish goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco as a free agent, IRNA reported on Saturday. The Iranian top-flight champion is desperately looking for a new signing between the posts after Iranian international goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand was handed a four-month ban in August by the Iranian Football Federation's

Appeal Committee due to a year-long contract dispute with his former club Persepolis. Adib Zarei, 22, has served as Tractor's number one in the first three games of the new campaign. Tractor came from behind to beat Esteghlal 2-1 and win the Iranian Super Cup trophy in August, but got off to a losing start to its league title defense, suffering a 1-0 home defeat against the Tehran Blues, and then shared the spoils with Mes Rafsanjan in

a goalless away game before the international break. Pacheco, 33, has been without the team since parting ways La Liga club Espanyol in July. Pacheco, who joined the Catalan team midway through the 2022/23 season, registered 13 clean sheets – conceding 68 goals – in 46 appearances for the club across all competition. Having joined Real Madrid as a 14-year-old youth keeper in 2006, Pacheco was a member

of the Los Blancos until 2015, though his first-team contribution was limited to only a couple of Copa del Rey appearances. Pacheco left Real Madrid for Deportivo Alavés, where he kept 76 clean sheets in 253 games across six seasons, before joining Almería on a four-year contract in August 2022. However, he parted ways with the club the following January after serving as the second-choice keeper during the first half of the campaign.



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