

# FIVB Men’s Volleyball World Championship: Iran stunned by Egypt in Pool A opener



Egyptian outside-hitter Abdelrahman Elhossiny (8) hits a spike during a 3-1 victory over Iran at the FIVB Men’s World Championship in Pasay City, Philippines, on September 14, 2025.

● FIVB

### Sports Desk

Iran and Italian head coach Roberto Piazza were given a reality check in their opening game at the FIVB Men’s Volleyball World Championship, suffering a 3-1 loss (17-25, 25-16, 23-25, 20-25) to Egypt in Pool A in Pasay City, Philippines, on Sunday. Egyptian outside hitter Ahmed Shafik chipped in a game-high 18 points, with Abdelrahman Elhossiny (17 points) and Seif Abed (12) also finishing in double figures, as the African champion celebrated only its fifth win in 15 competitive meetings with the Asian powerhouse. Prolific opposite-spiker Ali Hajipour topped the scoring chart for Iran with 17 points, followed by outside-hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh, who scored 12, while star outside-hitter and captain Morteza Sharifi had a quiet day at the SM Mall of Asia Arena with eight points. “I really don’t know what to say. We lost today and we are

very upset. We didn’t expect the result to turn out this way. We need to realize where we are; this tournament is the second-most important volleyball event in the world after the Olympics,” Sharifi said after the game. We all need to wake up and understand what must be done from now on. I can only apologize to the dear people of Iran; I have nothing more to say except to ask for their forgiveness. We are all ashamed of today’s performance. “Egypt started very well and without mistakes, while we were poor with our serves. We only realized where we were in the final set, which was too little too late. I hope we can make up for it in the upcoming games and not let the Iranian people down,” added the Iranian captain. Asked if Iran still fancies its chances of advancing to the knockout phase, Sharifi said, “Nothing is certain yet, and we can still turn things around.

Many top teams have also lost their opening game. God willing, we will be able to recover, though we won’t stand a chance if we keep playing the way we did today.” Iran, which produced a decent run of performances under Piazza at the Volleyball Nations League preliminaries earlier in the summer – despite failing to progress to the quarterfinals – was widely regarded as the favorite to win the group, also featuring the Philippines and Tunisia, ahead of the World Championships. However, Piazza’s men will now have to bounce back from the first-day setback in their next two outings if they are to advance to the round of 16 as one of the top two in the group table. Iran will be back in action on Tuesday against Tunisia, before taking on the host on Thursday. Tunisia came out on top in straight sets (25-13, 25-17, 25-23) in the tournament’s curtain riser on Saturday.

## Taremi on debut double in Olympiacos win

### Sports Desk

Iranian striker Mahdi Taremi got off to a dream start to life in the Olympiacos shirt as he scored twice on his Greek Super League to inspire his team to a 5-0 home victory over Panserraikos.

Introduced as a 69th-minute substitute for Moroccan Ayoub El Kaabi, Taremi, who joined Olympiacos from Inter Milan before the international break, made an instant impact by winning a penalty 13 minutes later, only to see Turkish Yusuf Yazichi denied from the spot by Uruguayan

goalkeeper Tinagli. However, Taremi opened his Olympiacos account with two minutes left on the clock. Released behind the backline by Daniel Podence, the Iranian striker rolled the ball past goalkeeper Francisco Tinagli from the edge of the six-yard box for the home side’s fourth goal of the night at the Karaiskakis Stadium. Taremi sealed his brace in third minute of stoppage time, heading home Yazichi’s cross into the roof of the net. El Kaabi, Francisco Ortega, and Po-

dence were also on the scoresheet as Jose Luis Mendilibar’s side moved atop the top-flight table with a perfect record after three rounds of matches. “This was a fantastic night for me, and I’m delighted that I was able to make our fans happy. That’s what matters most to every player here. I always give my absolute all for the team; I fight for the shirt in every game. Sometimes I score, sometimes I don’t, but I will never stop giving everything until the final whistle,” the Iranian striker said after the game. The last time Taremi scored more than once in a competitive club game was in May 2023, when he netted four for Porto in a league victory over Famalicão. Having bagged 91 goals and provided 56 assists in 182 appearances to become Porto’s third all-time top scorer, the 33-year-old Iranian signed for Inter as a free agent last summer but endured a below-par first season in Nerazzurri colors. Taremi managed only three goals – including double spot-kicks – and nine assists in 43 appearances across all competitions last term, with his sole strike from open play coming in a 3-2 loss to archrival Milan at the Supercoppa Italiana final in January. Next for Taremi and Olympiacos is a home game against Cypriot champion Pafos in their UEFA Champions League opener on Wednesday.



Iranian striker Mahdi Taremi celebrates his first goal for Olympiacos during a 5-0 victory over Panserraikos in the Greek Super League at the Karaiskakis Stadium, Piraeus, Greece, on September 13, 2025.

● OLYMPIACOS FC

## Iran international Torkaman joins Esteghlal futsal team

### Sports Desk

Iran national team player Maral Torkaman joined Esteghlal women’s futsal team ahead of the new Iranian Pro League season. Torkaman, 22, was an integral part of the Women’s Team Melli during May’s AFC Asian Cup in China, where she found the net on six occasions to finish as the tournament’s top scorer. Two-time champion

Iran had to settle for a third-place finish in the competition, following a last-four setback against Japan, but still managed to secure a place in the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women’s World Cup – starting November 21 in the Philippines. Torkaman, who joins from Palayesh Naft Abadan, is the second national team player to sign a contract with the Tehran Blues in recent days following Nas-taran Moqimi.

The new season of the Women’s Futsal Pro League will get underway

on Thursday with Esteghlal taking on Iranzamin Malard at home.



● AFC

## Persian Gulf Pro League: Persepolis, Foolad share the spoils



Persepolis striker Thievy Bifouma (23) is seen in action against Foolad Khuzestan skipper Sasan Ansari during a 1-1 draw in the Persian Gulf Pro League at the Shahr-e Qods Stadium, Tehran, Iran, on September 13, 2025.

● ALI SHARIFZADEH/IRNA

### Sports Desk

Persepolis and Foolad Khuzestan played to 1-1 stalemate in the third round of matches at the Persian Gulf Pro League at Tehran’s Shahr-e Qods Stadium on Saturday. Ali Alipour gave Persepolis the lead in the 43rd minute, playing a one-two with Thievy Bifouma before his low effort from the edge of the box found the bottom corner – a third league goal in as many games in the new season for the Capital Reds’ striker. The Reds’ advantage, however, was short-lived as Foolad winger Mohammadreza Soleimani bagged the equalizer with a point-blank header from an Abolfazl Razzapour set-piece three minutes after the break. The result took Persepolis to third in the Iranian top-flight table with five points, while it secured the first point of the campaign for Yahya Golmohammadi’s Foolad. Persepolis will play away to Chadormalou, which leads the Reds in the table on goal difference, on Friday, while Foolad will host Khaybar – the surprise leader in the table – in Ahvaz. Elsewhere on Sunday, Chadormalou played to a goalless home draw against Malavan. Shams Azar came from behind to salvage a

point in a 1-1 draw against Paykan at home. Afshin Sadeqi put the visitors in front midway through the first half, only to see Housman Rabizadeh draw the home side level with 20 minutes left on the clock. In Isfahan, Omid Latifi found the net in the 35th minute before Hassan Shoshtari doubled the lead from the spot in the 67th minute as Zob Ahan defeated Mes Rafsanjan 2-0 at the Fooladshahr Stadium. Sunday’s results came after defending champion Tractor had routed Iralco 4-1 – thanks to Domagoj Drozdek’s first-half hat-trick – on the preceding night to get off the mark in the new season, following a first-day 1-0 loss to Esteghlal and a goalless draw at Mes Rafsanjan. In Ahvaz, Mohammad Sharifi scored the only goal of the game as Esteghlal was stunned at Esteghlal Khuzestan by a 1-0 scoreline – the Tehran Blues’ first defeat of the league campaign. Khaybar and newly-promoted Fajr Sepasi remained unbeaten in their impressive start to the season, sharing the points in a 1-1 draw at Khorramabad’s Takhti Stadium – the same result played out between Golgozar and Sepahan in Sirjan. French signing Enzo Crivelli opened his account for Sepahan by converting a VAR-awarded penalty in the 60th minute to cancel out Omid Hamedifar’s 12th-minute strike for the home side.