

FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship: Iran remains in contention for knockout spot after comeback win against Tunisia



Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to beat Tunisia 3-1 (23-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-16) in Pool A and celebrate its first victory at 2025 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Championship in the Philippines. Iranian outside-hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh chipped in a game-high 21 points, with three teammates, Morteza Sharifi (18pts), Ali Hajipour (14) and Mohammad Valizadeh (12) also finishing in double figures, as Iran bounced back from a shock 3-1 defeat against Egypt on Sunday. Outside-hitter Oussama Ben Romdhane and opposite-spiker Ali Bongui were the joint-top scorers for Tunisia – which had beaten the host country in straight sets in the tournament's curtain riser – with 14 points, while middle-blocker Ahmed Kadhi scored 10.

Outside-hitter and captain Sharifi, who had a quiet day against Egypt with eight points, delivered five of the team's 10 aces in the match. In comparison, Tunisia scored only two. The Asian side also outdid its opponent in attack by 55-46 in spike kills. Sharifi also showed high quality in offense, swinging at a 56% success rate, and on the block, with three stuffs to his name. Another three aces came from the serves of his cross-court teammate, Hosseinkhanzadeh. Hajipour also put up three kill blocks, one of them for the match winner in set four. "First, I would like to thank all the guys who helped me to show a good level. Second, I want to thank the Iranian fans, who support us and gave us a good feeling to have more power on the court," Sharifi told

VBTV.

Tunisia managed to match Iran in blocking with nine stuffs and did slightly better in avoiding unforced errors – 24 against 27. Tunisia and Iran occupy second and third place, respectively, in the group on a 1-1 win-loss record and three points each, with the African side edging ahead on set ratios. However, Iran will still hope to progress to the round of 16 as one of the top two in the pool standings with a likely victory over the Philippines on Thursday.



Iranian outside-hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh (9) hits a spike during a 3-1 victory over Tunisia at the FIVB Men's Volleyball World Championship in Pasay City, Philippines, on September 16, 2025.

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FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup: Iranian girls handed Brazil, Italy tests in group stage

Sports Desk

Iran was handed a tough draw at the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup, pitted against Brazil, Italy, and Panama in Group D of the competition, which will start November 21 in the Philippines. The draw for the flagship international event in women's futsal took place in the Filipino city of Taguig on Monday, where 16 teams were divided into four groups. Iranian girls will get their campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion Brazil – the top team in the latest FIFA World Ranking – on November 23, before taking on Panama three days later. Shahrzad Mozaffar's side will hope to be in contention for a top-two finish in the group and a place in

the round of 16, when squaring off against world No. 7 Italy on the final day of the group stage on November 29. Brazil vs. Italy (Nov. 26) is arguably the most intriguing fixture of the group phase. Multiple Azzurre players were born in Brazil, including Renata Adamatti, who is widely regarded as one of the best players on the planet, while several Seleção stars have played in Italy. The sport's poster girl, eight-time Best Women's Player Amandinha, will use her otherworldly skills to aid Brazil's title tilt. Camila, Debora Vanin and Emily are also part of Wilson Saboia's star-stacked squad. Two-time Asian champion Iran secured a place in the finals after finishing third in May's Asian Cup in China.



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Meanwhile, host Philippines was drawn against Poland, Morocco, and Argentina in Group A. The race for a top-two finish in the group will be wide open. Luciana Natta, Becha Nunez and Argentina will be the favorites, but they know it won't be easy. Dionesa Tolentin and Philippines will begin their quest to reach the knockout phase against thrill machine Agata Bala and Poland, while the Jasmine Demraoui-inspired Morocco have made huge strides. Spain, Thailand, Colombia and Canada will complete in an engrossing Group B. Spain, Thailand and Colombia are ranked second, fourth and eighth in the world. Spanish selector Claudia Pons has magnificent players like the Cordoba twins, Peque and Irene Samper at her disposal, while Thai coach Thanatorn Santanaprasit counts of the great Nattamon Artkla. Twenty-year-old phenomenon Nicole Mancilla will be central to the Colombians' challenge, with Canadian hopes resting on Esther Brossard's genius. Portugal, Tanzania, Japan, and New Zealand are in Group C. Portugal and Japan are the firm favorites to progress. Luis Conceicao can count on elite performers Ana Catarina Pereira, Fifo and Janice Silva, while Takehiro Suga has the brilliant Ryo Egawa at his disposal. New Zealand and Tanzania will look to upset the odds.

Wrestling World Championships: Iranians bag double bronzes, Azarpira stuns Tazhudinov

Sports Desk

Iran's Mohammad Nokhodi and Amirhossein Firouzpour finished with consolation bronzes at the Wrestling World Championships, taking the country's freestyle medal count to five by the end of the Day 3 of the competition in Zagreb Croatia. However, the pinnacle of Monday's action for Iran came in the 97kg semifinals, where Amirali Azarpira out-muscled reigning world and Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov, 5-2, ending the Russian-born Bahraini wrestler's two-year unbeaten streak. Tazhudinov burst on to the wrestling scene with stunning victories over Kyle Snyder and Abdulrashid Sadulaev to grab the world gold in 2023, and followed that up with the ultimate prize at the Paris Olympics last summer. During this two-year reign, Azarpira was the only wrestler who came close to beating Tazhudinov. The two squared off in Paris, with the Iranian giving up a three-point lead in the second period to lose 4-3. There was no such comeback in the second period on Monday. Azarpira took a 2-0 lead with two stepouts but Tazhudinov took criteria lead with a takedown, before Azarpira kept his calm and scored a stepout to make it 3-2. Tazhudinov tried reaching for Azarpira's legs with his long reach but the Iranian seemed in no trouble at all defending his advantage. After one of Tazhudinov's attack, he scored a go-behind and won the bout 5-2. Meanwhile, Rahman Amouzad – a silver medalist at the Paris Games – stayed on



Iran's Amirali Azarpira (blue) celebrates his last-four victory over Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov in the freestyle 97kg class at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 15, 2025.

● IAWF

course for a second world gold after defeating Iranian-born Canadian wrestler Peyman Biabani 5-0 in the 65kg last four, setting up a final date with Japanese Kotaro Kiyooka in a repeat of last year's gold medal bout at the Olympics. Monday's results were enough to secure Iran's first freestyle team title in 12 years with one day of action to spare – regardless of the final outcomes for Azarpira and Amouzad in their respective final bouts. Later on Monday, Nokhodi recovered from a last-four setback (8-3) against Greece's Georgios Kougioumtsidis on the preceding night to beat Azerbaijan's Dzhabrail Gadzhiev 4-2 and win a joint-bronze in the 79kg event – Iranian's fifth medal in as many years at the Wrestling Worlds. Firouzpour – a five-time world champion across different age groups – managed to finish with something to cheer about on his debut at

the Senior World Championships. Having suffered a 11-6 loss to Russian Amanula Gadzhimagomedov, competing as a neutral athlete, in the 92kg semifinals, the 23-year-old Iranian bounced back to make quick work of Kazakhstan's Kamil Kurugliyev, securing a fall victory in less than two minutes in the bronze-medal contest. The double bronzes came after Amirhossein Zare' had beaten Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan 5-0 in defend his 125kg world title on Sunday, walking away with his third gold medal in four editions of the Wrestling Worlds. Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan finished with an impressive silver medal on his debut at the World Championships following a superiority loss to Russian Zaur Uguev in the 61kg final, while Kamran Qasempour eased to a 10-0 win against Indian Mukul Dahiya to win a bronze in the 86kg division.

AFC Champions League Two: Esteghlal to visit Al Wasl in Group A opener

Sports Desk

Persian Gulf Pro League club Esteghlal will play away to Emirati outfit Al Wasl in their opening game in Group A of the new AFC Champions League Two season today at Dubai's Zabeel Stadium. Esteghlal secured a place in the Asian second-tier club competition after lifting a record eighth Irani-

an Hazfi Cup trophy in May, while eight-time Emirati top-flight champion Al Wasl qualified thanks to a fourth-place finish in the UAE Pro League last term. Both sides are eighth in their respective domestic league tables with four points from three games. The Tehran Blues will head into the game on the back of a shock

1-0 loss to Esteghlal Khuzestan in Ahvaz on Friday, while Al Wasl shared the spoils with Al Ain in a 1-1 draw at home last time out in the Emirati league on Saturday. Bahraini domestic double champion Al Muharraq and Jordanian FA Cup winner Al Wehdat are the other two teams in the group, squaring off at the Al Muharraq Stadium in Arad later today.