

‘We won’t be just tourists’: Iran’s Torkaman aiming high at Futsal World Cup

Sports Desk

Iran’s Maral Torkaman insisted the national team will not go the upcoming Futsal Women’s World Cup “just to be tourists” despite some tough fixtures awaiting the country in the group stage. The inaugural edition of the flagship international event will kick off on November 21 in Pasig, the Philippines, with Team Melli pitted against Brazil, Italy, and Panama in Group D.

A third-place finish at May’s Asian Cup in China secured Iran’s spot at the World Cup, alongside finalists Japan and Thailand. However, failure to reach the continental final meant that the two-time Asian champion was seeded in Pot 3 of the World Cup draw, and hence, handed a tricky group-stage test. “Our group at the World

Cup is a tough one, but we will still give our all to return home with a decent result. We are not going to the Philippines just to be tourists,” Torkaman told IRNA. The 22-year-old pivot played an essential part in Iran qualifying for the World Cup, finishing as the top scorer at the Asian Cup with six goals – including a double in the 3-1 victory over the host nation in the decisive third-place contest. Iran, which was ranked ninth in the latest FIFA World Ranking in August, will get its World Cup campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion and world No. 1 Brazil 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 at the PhilSports Arena on November 29.

“Personally, I’m thrilled to have the chance to play against top teams like Brazil, Italy, and Panama. I will leave everything on the court to be at my best in all matches. I hope we can make our people proud,” added Torkaman.

As part of the World Cup preparation, Iran will take on Russia in a couple of friendlies in the Russian city of Tula on October 16 and 18, before heading to the Islamic Solidarity Games – starting November 7 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

“The level of competition at the Islamic Solidarity Games is in stark contrast to what we will have to come up

against at the World Cup. However, the game against a powerful opponent like Russia is a huge help. Right now, pre-World Cup friendlies are crucial for our preparation,” Torkaman said.

Iran head coach Mozaffar, who took over from Forouzan Soleimani following an under-par Asian Cup campaign, has named a 17-woman squad for the visit to Russia.

Joining Torkaman in the Iranian training camp will be goalkeeper and captain Farzaneh Tavassoli, Nastaran Moqimi, Mahtab Banaei, Nasimeh Sadat Gholami, Fereshteh Karimi, Fereshteh Khosravi, Fatemeh Rahmati, Elham Anafcheh, Zahra Kianimesh, Atefeh Barqi, Shirin Saffar, Zahra Lotfabadi, Sara Shirbeigi, Mahsa Kamali, Mahdiah Mahmoudinia, and Tahereh Mahdipour.



● AFC

IWF World Championships: Beiranvand rues injury after missing out on medal



Iranian weightlifter Abodollah Beiranvand is seen in action in the men’s 79kg contests at the IWF World Championships in Forde, Norway, on October 6, 2025.

● IWF

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifter Abodollah Beiranvand said a lengthy injury in the buildup to the IWF World Championships ultimately cost him a podium finish on the fifth day of the competition in Forde, Norway.

Representing the country in the men’s 79kg event, Beiranvand completed a clean sweep of six successful efforts in the Group B competition, posting 156-185-340 to settle for a ninth-place finish.

His final snatch lift of 156kg bettered the national record by one kilogram.

“It was a very exciting competition. I was in good form and managed to successfully complete all six of my lifts. I gave it my all, and the coaching staff was also pleased with my performance,” Beiranvand said after his campaign.

“I was just one kilogram short of a snatch bronze medal. I’m sure I would have finished on the podium had it not been for

the injury setback, but it wasn’t meant to be. I will work harder to be successful in future competitions,” added the Iranian. On breaking the national record, Beiranvand stated, “The injury caused my performance level to drop. I had to struggle with the injury for the past two months, which is why I couldn’t lift more than 150kg in training. But I managed to post 156kg here. In the clean & jerk, I was also able to better my personal best.”

“The atmosphere at the competition was fantastic and very competitive; thank God, I was able to finish my work by setting a new record.”

Iran head coach Behdad Salimi was full of praise for Beiranvand despite finishing empty-handed, saying, “Abdollah did well and fought brilliantly. He received an injection in his hamstring two months ago which caused him significant trouble and hampered his preparation. But he showed real heart and determination today.”

“He had six successful lifts,

which is very important. Furthermore, the weights he lifted today were heavier than what he had been managing in training over recent months. Personally, I am very satisfied with his performance,” added the former world and Olympic champion.

“Beiranvand is young and has a great future ahead of him. I am confident that next year he has the potential to return from the World Championships with a strong result.” Meanwhile, Indonesian Rizki Juniansyah stole the show in the 79kg contest and double golds and the snatch bronze, breaking the C&J world record on his way to a 157-204-361 tally.

North Korea’s Ri Chong-song claimed the snatch gold and then settled for the total silver. Egyptian Mohamed Younes also finished with two medals (snatch silver and total bronze), while Indonesia’s Rahmat Erwin Abdullah and Son Hyeon-ho of South Korea won the C&J silver and bronze medals respectively.

Shahbakhsh to headline Iran’s boxing trio at Islamic Solidarity Games

Sports Desk

History-making boxer Danial Shahbakhsh will spearhead the Iranian three-man squad at the upcoming Islamic Solidarity Games, the national governing body of the sport confirmed on Tuesday.

The sixth edition of the multi-sport event will kick off on November 7 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Shahbakhsh claimed a first, and to date only, world medal – a lightweight bronze – for the country in 2021, but was not part of the Iranian squad at September’s World Championships in Liverpool.

The 25-year-old boxer had competing in various professional boxing events in Thailand in recent months before joining the national team training camp two weeks ago.

“From the outset, I never had any intention of parting ways with the national team. Our team went to the World Championships, and due to certain circumstances, I was not part

of the roster. However, my primary goal from the start was to compete at the Islamic Solidarity Games. I believe our focus should now be on these Games. I know there is talk and speculation, but I prefer to focus more on the future and the upcoming competitions,” Shahbakhsh – also a 2021 Asian silver medalist – recently said. On working with Iran head coach Homayoun Amiri, Shahbakhsh said, “I have worked

with him before. He coached me to my World and Asian medals and was in my corner at the Olympic qualification event. I know his training methods well, and God willing, we can once again deliver brilliant results for Iranian boxing.” Shahbakhsh will vie for glory in the 60kg weight class in Riyadh, with Ali Habibinejad and Mohammad Nourani competing in the 65kg and 80kg contests respectively.



● TASNIM

Hardani ruled out of friendlies with back injury

Sports Desk

Esteghlal fullback Saleh Hardani is expected to be sidelined for a month after suffering a back injury during a 1-1 draw against Chador-malou in the Persian Gulf Pro

League on Sunday.

The 26-year-old right back managed to stay in the game until the final whistle but was omitted from Iran’s upcoming friendly games against Russia and Tanzania.

Tractor fullback Danial Es-



● MOHAMMADREZA BOLANDI/ISNA

maeilifar received a first international callout by head coach Amir Qalenoee to replace Hardani in the Iranian squad.

Iran will play Russia in Volgograd on Friday, before facing Tanzania – No. 107 in the latest FIFA Men’s World Ranking – in Dubai four days later. The double header will be part of Iran’s preparation for next summer’s World Cup finals in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Shabab Al Ahli striker Sardar Azmoun will also be unavailable for the double header after sustaining a fractured metatarsal in his foot as well as a torn ankle ligament during a training session on Saturday, which could keep him out of action for up to fourth months.