

# Qassempour to continue in 86kg class in quest of Olympic glory



## Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Kamran Qassempour has ended speculation about his competitive future, declaring his intention to remain in the 86kg class and take a shot at Olympic glory in three years.

In his first major event in the new weight division, the 28-year-old Iranian won a consolation bronze medal at the World Championships in Zagreb last month.

Qassempour claimed comfortable wins in his first two bouts in the Croatian capital and then came out victorious (5-4) against Russian Ibragim Kadiev in a thrilling quarterfinal.

Qassempour suffered a comprehensive 7-0 defeat against American Zahid Valencia in the semifinals, but bounced back and made quick work of Indian Mukul Dahiya (10-0) to collect his third world medal in four years. Despite Qassempour falling short of a third world gold medal, Iran head coach Pejman Dorostkar still praised him for "making a sacrifice to compete", revealing the wrestler had been

"infected with suspected Brucellosis two weeks before the World Championships."

On his illness before the Wrestling Worlds, Qassempour said, "Thank God, the tests showed that I did not have Brucellosis. I had an infection, and had to be visited by a doctor, who prescribed antibiotics, on several occasions. I have another week or two to finish the treatment. I'm feeling much better now, and God willing, this infection will completely leave my body soon." Still, a significant portion of wrestling fans and pundits in the country believe Qassempour's recent dip in form was down to the Iranian Wrestling Federation forcing him to switch weight class multiple times over the past three years.

Once the dominant force of the 92kg class with successive world titles in 2021 and 2022, Qassempour moved to the 97kg division in a bid to secure a place at the Paris Olympics. He returned to his favorite 92kg territory for last year's World Championships but missed the podium after back-to-back defeats to wrestling greats Abdulrashid Sadulaev and David Taylor.

He was then moved to the 86kg category for this year's World Championships after Iranian sensation Hassan Yazdani was ruled out of action with a shoulder injury.

"To be honest, I thought it would

be really difficult [to switch division] at first, because it had been so long since I'd had to cut weight. But when I joined the training camp and my weight condition became clear, it wasn't hard at all, and I made weight very easily. The fear of cutting weight left me – It was nothing like I had imagined," Qassempour said of the challenge to wrestle in the 86kg class.

Qassempour still considers all that he has been through as a blessing in disguise.

"Now that I look back on what happened, I'm happy I moved to the 86kg class. Of course, changing weight divisions has its own difficulties because the conditions in each class are different.

"However, it allowed me to wrestle my direct rivals in an Olympic weight class. Next time, I'll be much better prepared and know all about what it takes to wrestle them, especially the American opponent," added the Iranian. When asked about his decision regarding his weight in the future, Qassempour confirmed he will remain in the 86kg division "all the way to the Olympics."

"People may say whatever they want about me being forced to move to this weight class, but all I know is that it has definitely been to my advantage. I have now done what I wanted to do a year before the Olympics and that is to get to know my rivals better."



Iran's freestyle 86kg wrestler Kamran Qassempour (red) executes a takedown during a victory over Mongolia's Naadambatyn Batbilgüün at the UWW World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 13, 2025.

● IAWFIR

## IWF World Championships: Salimi laments lack of experience as Iran's Salehipour finishes empty-handed

### Sports Desk

Head coach Behdad Salimi said young Iranian weightlifters "need to compete in more international events to mature" after Iliya Salehipour finished without a medal at the IWF World Championships in Forde, Norway.

Competing in Tuesday's 88kg contest, Salehipour failed with the 157kg lift on his first attempt but succeeded with his second try, and then posted a 163kg effort to finish fourth in the snatch event. Salehipour went on to open the clean & jerk with a successful 193kg lift. However, this proved to be his

only successful effort, as he subsequently failed two attempts at 202kg to stand sixth in the category.

An overall tally of 356kg saw the 19-year-old Iranian settle for a sixth-place finish in the total standings. Colombian Yeison López stole the show with double golds and a C&J silver.

North Korea's Ro Kwang-ryol collected the clean & jerk gold and total silver, with Chile's Arley Méndez finishing runner-up in snatch, while Moldova's Marin Robu bagged triple bronze medals. "As you saw, Iliya really had a chance to win a C&J medal. Our strategy was for him to find his way into the table

with his first lift, and then we would look at a medal," Salimi said of Salehipour's campaign.

"It was a strange competition today as many lifts were missed. There were far more red lights than expected, and we were also caught off guard," added the former world and Olympic champion.

"South Korean lifters failed with their 201kg attempts in quick succession, which is why we lost 5-6 minutes of our planned rest. Had the circumstances been smoother, Iliya would have lifted 202kg with more confidence. "This was Salehipour's first time competing at the Se-

nior World Championships. These young athletes need to gain experience so that they can mature and win medals for the country over the next seven or eight years.

"Iliya lacks some self-belief. I've told him many times that he has the ability to win a medal, but he didn't fully believe it himself until today. I hope this competition becomes a major learning experience for him."

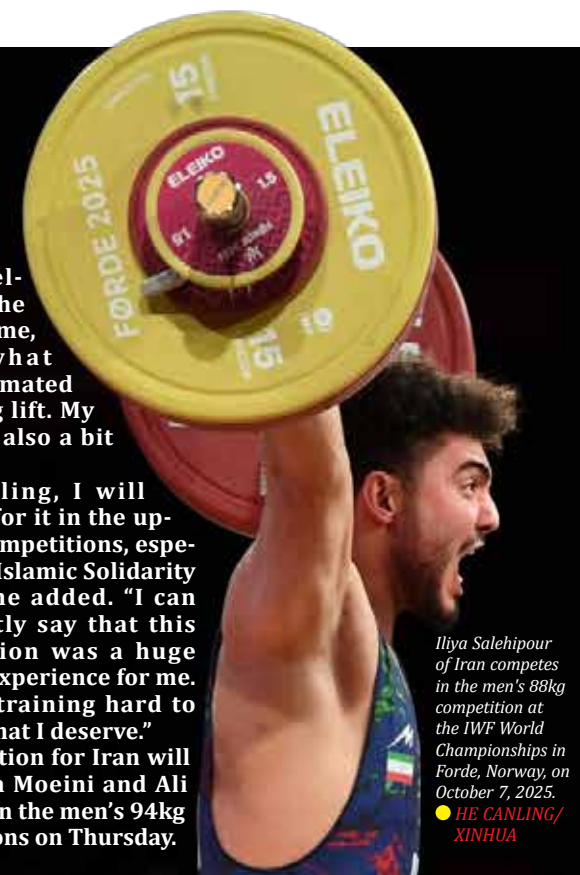
Unlike his coach, Salehipour thought a bit of over-confidence cost him a medal in Forde.

"I could have won a C&J medal, but with the long wait between my attempts and the favorable situation

that developed on the board for me, I somewhat underestimated the 202kg lift. My body was also a bit fatigued.

"God willing, I will make up for it in the upcoming competitions, especially the Islamic Solidarity Games," he added. "I can confidently say that this competition was a huge learning experience for me. I'll keep training hard to achieve what I deserve."

Next in action for Iran will be Alireza Moeini and Ali A'alipour in the men's 94kg competitions on Thursday.



Iliya Salehipour of Iran competes in the men's 88kg competition at the IWF World Championships in Forde, Norway, on October 7, 2025.

● HE CANLING/XINHUA

## Iran's Pordel wins historic silver at Asian Heyball Championships

### Sports Desk

Iran's Mohammad-Ali Pordel claimed a maiden medal for the country at the Asian Heyball Championships, winning the men's silver in Amman, Jordan on Tuesday. Having beaten opponents from the host country, Iraq

and Mongolia, the Iranian suffered a 7-2 loss to India's Sundeep Gulati in the final showpiece.

Pordel began his campaign with back-to-back wins against the host players and then defeated Jordanian Reza Mohd bin Hassan (7-3) and an Iraqi player to

reach the quarterfinals.

A 7-3 win against Mongolia's Dorjjantsan Damdin-jamts was followed by a last-four triumph (7-2) over the host nation's Ahmed Aloqaili for the Iranian.

Heyball is the Chinese version of eight-ball which features rules that are essentially the same as standard WPA rules. However, the tables are constructed similarly to snooker tables, with rounded pocket openings, napped cloth and flat-faced rail cushions.



Iranian Mohammad-Ali Pordel (r) poses with his silver medal at the Asian Heyball Championships in Amman, Jordan, on October 7, 2025.

● IRNA

## Yavari seals spot at ITTF World Youth Championships

### Sports Desk

Iranian table tennis player Vania Yavari secured a quota for the upcoming

ITTF World Youth Championships, the international governing body of the sport.

Yavari will part of the un-

der-15 girls' singles draw at the world event – starting November 23 in Cluj Napoca, Romania – thanks to her 50th spot at the lat-

est World Youth Rankings, released on Tuesday.

The Iranian girl will compete fresh off an impressive run of results at the international events in recent months, including two runner-up trophy-winning campaigns at the WTT Youth Contender event in Cappadocia, Türkiye, in February.

The Iranian under-15 team and Benjamin Faraji had already punched their tickets for the competition. Faraji etched his name into history books of the Iranian sport by winning the U15 boys' singles bronze in last year's competition in Helsingborg, Sweden – the country's first-ever table tennis medal at an international tournament.



● IRTTF

