

# Farrokhi, Hedayati cruise to Greco-Roman glory at U23 Worlds



Iran's Gholamreza Farrokhi celebrates after winning the Greco-Roman 87kg gold at the U23 Wrestling World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, on Oct. 21, 2025.  
● UWW



Greco-Roman wrestler Fardin Hedayati celebrates with the Iranian flag after claiming the 130kg gold medal at the U23 Wrestling World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, on Oct. 21, 2025.  
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## Sports Desk

There seems to be no slowing down to Iran's global dominance in Greco-Roman wrestling, as the country looks poised to complete a clean sweep of world team titles across all age groups. Having already lifted the U17, U20, and senior trophies earlier in 2025, Iran began its title defense at the U23 World Championships with double gold med-

als across four weight classes in Novi Sad, Serbia, on Tuesday. Gholamreza Farrokhi – a gold medalist on his debut at the Senior Worlds in September – and defending world under-23 champion Fardin Hedayati who celebrated his birthday as well on Tuesday, claimed the ultimate prize in emphatic fashion at 87kg and 130kg respectively. "I was able to win two back-to-back tough matches at the World

Championships and bring home two gold medals," Farrokhi said. "These were high-level competitions." Farrokhi, a gold medalist at 82kg in Zagreb, moved up to 87kg for Novi Sad but had no troubles in switching weights. As he did in Zagreb, Farrokhi brought his best game in par terre and rolled to his second gold in one month after a 9-0 victory in the final against Ukraine's Ivan Chmyr,

his fifth technical superiority victory. After being put on top in par terre, Farrokhi launched a trap-arm gut and turned Chmyr four times for the win. Ukraine threw one of those ever-increasing challenges for no reason but lost it to add one more point to Farrokhi's score. "When you move up a weight class, the opponents are definitely stronger and tougher,"

Farrokhi said. "It was a good experience, and it gave me a better sense of how I can perform at the Olympic 87 kg class," added the Iranian, who scored 44 points, conceding only one, across five bouts. Hedayati, who has not lost an international bout since his final loss at the U20 Worlds in 2022, was again in a league of his own in the superheavyweight event, outscoring his opponents 30-0

across four bouts. Up against Armenian Razmik Kurdyan in the final, Hedayati began with takedown on the edge for two points. Kurdyan was put in par terre and from there Hedayati turned him twice to extend his lead to 7-0. With just 23 seconds left before the break, Hedayati scored a stepout to finish the final 8-0 and claim his second straight U23 world title.

## Jafari hails Iran's 'dedication' as Didar double sinks India



Iran's Sara Didar (20) celebrates after scoring during a 2-0 win against India in Shillong, India, on Oct. 21, 2025.  
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## Sports Desk

Iran women's head coach Marziyeh Jafari said her players deserve credit for putting in "a dedicated performance" after Sara Didar's second-half brace sealed a 2-0 victory over host India at the Tri-Nation Women's International Friendlies in Shillong on Tuesday. Iran was composed, physically superior on the ball, and dictated the rhythm of the game almost from the outset. Jafari's girls, who stepped onto the pitch at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on the back of an exhausting 29 hours of flight, grew in confidence, stringing together flowing moves, while India struggled to build anything meaningful in the final third. Still, Iran had to wait until the second half to break the

deadlock, with Didar coming off the bench to make the difference with double strikes in the space of 10 minutes. An unmarked Zahra Qanbari rose to head against the crossbar Didar acrobatically smashed home the rebound in the 64th minute. India's Nongmaithem Ratanbala Devi then misjudged the bounce of a routine clearance at the top of the box, allowing Didar to snatch the ball and rifle a low strike past the goalkeeper. "Thank God, we got through that game well. The players took to the pitch with immense focus and motivation and gave their heart and soul. This victory is a testament to girls' hard work and passion," Jafari said after the game. "India is a strong side, both technically and physically, and playing against them is always

tough. However, my players stuck to the gameplan to dictate the tempo and their decision-making was exceptional when it mattered most," added the newly-crowned Asian Women's Coach of the Year. On how the long trip affected her team in the buildup to the game, Jafari said: "It definitely took a physical toll on the squad. An extra day for recovery and preparation would have made for a more ideal start to the competition. But credit to the players – they fought through the fatigue and delivered a dedicated performance, which speaks volumes about their character." Next up for Jafari and her team in the tournament is a game against Nepal on Friday. "Our objective here goes beyond just results; we also want to improve the cohesion between our lines and enhance the players' international experience. These games are a valuable opportunity for a tactical assessment of the team, and fortunately, our performance is on an upward trajectory and I just hope the players can keep up the momentum against Nepal," Jafari said. Iran is preparing for next March's AFC Women's Asian Cup in Australia, where Jafari's girls will face the host, South Korea and the Philippines in Group A.

## Asian Men's Handball Championship: Iran coach Guijosa confident despite 'toughest group'

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Rafael Guijosa Castillo remains confident despite his team being drawn into "the toughest group" at the Asian Men's Handball Championship. The 22nd edition of the sport's flagship continental event will get underway on January 15 in Kuwait, with Iran – bronze medalist in 2014 – set to take on Japan, Saudi Arabia, and Australia in Group D.



● ALI ARSHADI/IRIHF

Japan, a two-time Asian champion, was beaten by Qatar in the 2024 final, while four-time bronze medalist Saudi Arabia has reached the semifinals six times in the past nine editions. "There's no doubt we've been placed in the toughest group, though we must respect every team in this tournament. Still,

everyone on the team genuinely believes we can achieve a positive result in Kuwait," Guijosa told the official website of the Iranian Handball Federation. On assessing Iran's opponents in the group stage, the Spaniard said: "We don't have much specific information on Australia. All I know is that, like Qatar, they utilize multinational players. Japan is now considered a title contender, just like Qatar, and their ulti-

"Both we and Saudi Arabia are determined to advance from this group. That's why I'm saying we are competing in the toughest group of the tournament," added the former IHF Player of the Year, who took over the Iran job for a second spell last year, replacing Montenegrin Veselin Vujovic. When asked about his team's preparation for the continental showpiece, Guijosa replied: "We began our preparation process a long time ago. We also have an excellent opportunity at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh [starting November 7] where we will face some strong teams. Furthermore, we will be participating in a top-notch tournament in Tunisia in the coming days. "The tournament in Tunisia is highly important as it allows me to assess the players. It will also be a crucial opportunity to gather information on Kuwait, which will be one of our main rivals in the Asian Championship. "We have time to get into our best form before the Asian Championship. With the solid planning we will have in place, we are going to Kuwait to achieve the best possible results," Guijosa added. The 15-team tournament will also serve as the Asian qualifiers for the 2027 IHF Men's World Championship, with the four semifinalists securing a spot in the global showpiece in Germany.

## Iran names futsal squad for Islamic Solidarity Games

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Vahid Shamsaei named a provisional 17-man squad for the men's futsal event at the upcoming Islamic Solidarity Games – starting November

7 in Riyadh. Three players will be omitted from the provisional list before the team heads to the Saudi capital. Recently-crowned AFC Player of the Year Salar Aqapour and fellow nominee Mos-

lem Oladqobad will be back to spearhead the Iranian roster – along with prolific pivots Hossein Tayyebi and Saeid Ahmadabbasi – at the sixth edition of the multi-sport event, after the duo missed last week's friendly

doubleheader against Russia due to participation at the AFC Awards. Iran played to a 1-1 draw against Russia last Tuesday before suffering a 5-2 defeat in the second game in the Russian city of Tula two days

later. The men's futsal event will be among the most highly anticipated in Riyadh, as six of the eight participating teams – Iran, Morocco, Libya, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan – featured at last year's Futsal World Cup.

The following is Iran's provisional list for Riyadh 2025: Baqer Mohammadi, Behzad Rasouli, Mahdi Rostamiha, Hossein Sabzi, Mohammadhossein Derakhshani, Mahdi Asadshir, Amirhossein

Gholami, Salar Aqapour, Mohammadhossein Bazayr, Ali Khalilvand, Moslem Oladqobad, Mahdi Karimi, Sajjad Yousefkhah, Masoud Yousef, Hossein Tayyebi, Saeid Ahamadabbasi, Behrouz Azimi.