

# World Taekwondo Championships: Iran finishes second in men's event but women fall short

## Sports Desk

Iran had a mixed campaign at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China, securing its best run in the men's competition in a decade, while all seven Iranian girls finished without a medal.

Amirsina Bakhtiari settled for a joint third-place finish in the -74kg weight class on Thursday to help the Iranian men's squad stand runner-up to South Korea in team table with one gold, one silver, and one bronze medal.

While the result marked the best for Iran since the 2015 title-winning campaign, it ended the country's eight-year team podium drought at the sport's flagship international tournament.

Former world junior champion Bakhtiari began the final day with a victory over Thailand's Krittayot Phrompatju and went on to defeat former world bronze medalist Javad Aghayev of Azerbaijan and Italian Angelo Mangione – world champion in 2022 – to reach the quarterfinals.



Abolfazl Zandi celebrates with the Iranian flag after winning the gold medal in the men's -58kg class at the World Taekwondo Championships in Wuxi, China, on Oct. 29, 2025.  
● WORLD TAEKWONDO

Bakhtiari then came out victorious in straight rounds against Kazakhstan's Yergesh Bekassyl before suffering a last-four setback against Brazilian Edival Pontes – an Olympic

bronze medalist last year – to share the third podium with Russian Magomed Abdusalomov, who competed as a neutral athlete. Bakhtiari's bronze came after Abolfazl Zandi had

ended Iran's decade-long wait for a gold at the world showpiece by capturing the ultimate prize in the men's -58kg category on the preceding night.

The Iranian sensation produced an emphatic run in Wuxi, not conceding a single round across five bouts en route to the final before defeating 2023 silver medalist Georgii Gurtsiev of Belarus – also a neutral contestant – in straight rounds (7-3, 12-8) to add the senior glory to his 2022 world junior gold.

Mahdi Hajimousaei, meanwhile, finished with silver in the -63kg category in controversial fashion after a punch to his neck forced him to withdraw midway through the final against Tunisia's Mohamed Khalil Jendoubi last Saturday.

Mahdi Razmian (-54kg), Mohammad-Sadeq Dehqani (-68kg), and Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani (-87kg) as well as Arian Salimi (+87kg) and Mehran Barkhordari (-80kg) – last year's Olympic gold and silver medalists respectively – all missed out on the podium in Wuxi.

South Korea claimed a 25th men's title in 27 editions – thanks to two gold medals, one silver, and double bronzes – with Brazil, Uzbekistan, and Egypt

finishing third to fifth respectively.

## Women's woe

Elsewhere on the final day, Mobina Nematzadeh capped a dreadful campaign for the Iranian women's team with a last-16 exit in the -53kg division.

Given a bye in the first round, the 20-year-old Iranian, who won an impressive bronze medal at the Paris Olympics, got off to winning start to her World Championships debut, beating Lebanon's Mariella Bou Habib 2-0 (8-0, 7-0) but fell in straight rounds (4-3, 2-0) against Turkey's Merve Dinçel, who went on to secure back-to-back world golds.

Earlier in Wuxi, Kowsar Asaseh (-62kg) and former world silver medalist Mahla Momenzadeh (-49kg) had their campaigns ended after two bouts, while Saeideh Nasiri (-46kg), Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani (-57kg), and Melika Mirhosseini (-73kg) failed to go beyond last 16 in their respective classes. Nastaran Valizadeh, meanwhile, suffered a first-round exit in the -67kg division.

## Asian Youth Games: Record medal haul sees Iran stand fourth in overall table

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Iran enjoyed its best medal count in three editions of the Asian Youth Games, capturing 24 golds, 29 silvers, and 40 bronzes in Bahrain 2025. The impressive haul saw the Iranian delegation finish fourth in the overall standings of the multi-sport event. Iran had bagged six medals – including a single gold – at the inaugural edition in Singapore 2009, before settling for six silvers and double bronzes four years later in Nanjing, China.

China dominated the table in Bahrain with 147 medals, including a remarkable 63 golds, followed by Uzbekistan (37 golds) and Kazakhstan (24 golds), with Thailand in fifth place on 15 gold medals.

Iranian weightlifter Hossein Yazdani rounded off the country's decent campaign by grabbing the gold in the boys' +94kg division on Thursday.

A world youth champion in May, Yazdani posted a 201kg effort to claim the



Iranian under-17 futsal players celebrate after winning the girls' gold medal at the Asian Youth Games in Isa Town, Bahrain, on October 30, 2025.  
● FFIRI

ultimate prize in the clean & jerk, having won the snatch bronze with a 151kg lift. There was further success for Iran's 'Ambassadors of Hope' on the final day of the Games.

Mohammad-Mahdi Gholami collected his second swimming gold at Khalifa Sports City, clocking 2:01.75 minutes in the final to beat India's Tirthank Pegu (+0.81)

and Wang Yi Shun of Hong Kong (+1.70) to the top spot in the boys' 200m butterfly showdown. In beach wrestling, meanwhile, Sina Shokouhi (70kg) and Touraj Khodaei (80kg) claimed gold in their respective weight classes, alongside silver medals for Amir-Ali Domirkolaei (60kg) and Mohammad-Mahdi Fotouhi (90kg).

The pinnacle of the final day for the Iranians perhaps came in the girls' futsal showdown, where the country's under-17 team defeated China 3-2 in the shootout to win a sensational gold medal. The two sides played to a goalless stalemate at the Khalifa Sports City Hall, before Iranian goalkeeper Fatemeh Shokrani denied

Lian Yutong in the penalties, while Ren Yunuo and Tong Wenjing also missed their efforts.

The Iranian boys' team, however, had to settle for silver after being stunned 2-1 by Afghanistan in the final later on Thursday.

Abbas Heidari and Ali Ahmadi found the net for Afghanistan either side of halftime before Hossein-Reza Yousefi

pulled one back for Ali Sanei's side three minutes after the break.

A chaotic ending to the game saw four players – including Yousefi and his teammates Mohammad-Ali Shekarchi and Amirhossein Abdolrazzaqi – receive their marching orders for being involved in a physical altercation with five minutes left on the clock.

## Glittering girls

Female contestants were instrumental to Iran's medal-laden run at the Games, securing 29 of the country's medals through history-making achievements across different sporting events.

While the Iranian girls' team walked away with the ultimate prize in the volleyball, handball, and futsal competitions, Zeinab Shahriari bagged a couple of golds in the individual and mixed pair recognized poomsae events.

Baran Jani and Rozhan Behnami added double girls' combat golds to Iran's medal count in muaythai, with Vania Fathalipour and Tiam Dehpahlevan striking in mixed martial arts.

Mahsa Shakibai, meanwhile, made history by winning a maiden women's gold for Iran at an international judo event – thanks to a victory over Kazakhstan's Alua Baltabay in the -48kg final.

Iranian girls also collected five silvers and 15 bronze medals.



Iranian judoka Mahsa Shakibai (blue) celebrates after winning the girls' -48kg gold at the Asian Youth Games in Sakhr, Bahrain, on October 29, 2025.  
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## WSPS World Cup: Iranian women collect air pistol gold, bronze

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Iran's Nasrin Shahi claimed the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol SH1 event at the World Shooting Para Sport World Cup in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, on Thursday. Shahi scored 239 points to beat India's Bhakti Sharma

(236.8) to the top spot with Iran's Faezeh Ahmadi settling for bronze with 215.6 points. Elsewhere on the third day of the competition, Iranian men's and women's squads finished with silver medals in the 10m air pistol contests. The traditional WSPS World Cup wraps up the 2025 sea-

son of major shooting para sport.

The Zayed Higher Organisation Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting & Golf Club will host 213 athletes from 39 nations, who compete across 40 individual and team events in rifle, pistol and shot gun disciplines, until Wednesday.

