

# AFC Champions League Elite: Beiranvand hails defensive masterclass after Tractor edges Al Shorta



Tractor goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand is seen in action during a 1-0 victory over Al Shorta in the AFC Champions League Elite at the Yadegar-e Imam Stadium, Tabriz, Iran, on November 3, 2025.

● VARZESH3

## Sports Desk

Tractor goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand praised his side's defensive resilience after the Iranian top-flight champion secured a 1-0 home victory over Iraq's Al Shorta on Matchday Four of the AFC Champions League Elite in Tabriz on Monday. Mahdi Torabi scored the only goal of the game in the 26th minute, finishing off a superb passage of one-touch football between Tibor Halilović and Tomislav Strkalj to slot the ball past Ahmed Basil. The home side still had a solid backline and Beiranvand, who delivered a man-of-the-match performance with a string of decisive saves, to thank for claiming a second successive win in the new season of the Asian elite clubs' competition. Beiranvand's third clean sheet in four outings helped Tractor sit third in the West Zone's 12-team table with eight points – well on course for a spot in the round of 16 – while the visiting side was left languishing in 11th with a single point. "I congratulate the Tractor team, the technical staff, the players and the fans," the Iranian international keeper said after the game. "If it weren't for their support and efforts today, we would have had a hard time. "Before the game, Mr. [Dragan] Skocic spoke to us and emphasized that Al Shorta is of a high level and its current position in the table is not the team's true right. If they had been

a little luckier, they could have had nine points. We knew we were facing a quality team. Reflecting on his contribution to Tractor's decent run in the competition, Beiranvand said, "In these three clean sheets, all members of the team, from the striker to the goalkeeper, played a role. This is the result of the effort of the entire team. "Not conceding a goal gives the team character. I only think about Tractor's success and I believe that if we all set the team's success as our goal and move forward step by step, good things will happen." Despite the victory, Skocic said he still expects his side to be more creative and clinical in the final third. "When we cannot create many opportunities, we will not get a satisfactory win," said the Croatian. "The first half was like that, we did not have many opportunities. "Sometimes you have to win with a lot of effort. We had to do without [left-back Mohammed] Naderi and Igor [Postonjski]. The guys who came back from injuries and those who joined us are gradually getting used to it. "Anyway, it was an important win. Congratulations to everyone who loves Tractor. I know it wasn't a pretty win, but sometimes you have to win tooth and nail." Tractor will next visit Uzbekistan's PFC Nasaf, which sits rock bottom in the table with no points on November 24, while Al Shorta will travel to Riyadh to play Al Hilal a day later.

# Azarpira, Tazhudinov set to renew wrestling rivalry in Riyadh

## Sports Desk

Wrestling fans may be treated to another chapter in the rivalry between Iran's Amirali Azarpira and Bahrain's Akhmed Tazhudinov when the freestyle wrestling event at the Islamic Solidarity Games gets underway on November 20 in Riyadh.

A potential 97kg showdown in the Saudi capital would mark the third meeting between the two since last year's Olympic Games in Paris.

Russian-born Tazhudinov – the 2023 world champion – rallied from behind to edge Azarpira 4-3 in the first round before going all the way to grab the gold in Paris, while the Iranian bounced back to secure a consolation bronze.

Two-time world U23 champion Azarpira, however, made up for the Paris setback at September's World Championships in Zagreb, defeating Tazhudinov 5-2 in the semi-finals, though he ultimately had to settle for silver after a 4-2 loss to American Kyle



Iran's Amirali Azarpira (blue) is seen in action against Bahrain's Akhmed Tazhudinov at the Wrestling World Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, on September 15, 2025.

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Snyder in the final. Iran has named a full-strength freestyle squad across six weight classes in Riyadh. Joining Azarpira in the squad are Olympic silver medalists Rahman Amouzad (65kg) and

Amirhossein Zare' (125kg), both of whom captured gold in their respective weight classes in Zagreb.

Two-time world champion Kamran Qasempour will headline the 86kg event, while

Younes Emami – winner of two world bronzes – and Ali Mo'meni – a bronze winner in last year's U23 Worlds – will be among the favorites in the 57kg and 74kg divisions, respectively.

# Iran names futsal roster for Women's World Cup

## Sports Desk

Head coach Shahrzad Mozaffar named Iran's 14-player squad for the upcoming FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup – starting November 21 in the Philippines.

Iran will be joined by futsal heavyweights Brazil and Italy, as well as Panama, in Group D of the inaugural showpiece. Young pivot Maral Torkaman – the top scorer at May's Asian Cup – will spearhead the Iranian team in the Philippines – alongside five veterans: Farzaneh Tavassoli, Fereshteh Karimi, Nasimeh Gholami, Sara Shirbeigi and Tahereh Mahdipour, who were all part of the team when Iran won back-to-back Asian titles in 2015 and 2018. Iranian girls will get their campaign underway against eight-time Copa America champion Brazil – the top team in the latest FIFA World Ranking – on



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November 23, before facing Panama three days later.

Iran will hope to be in contention for a top-two finish in the group and a place in the round of 16, when it squares off against world No. 7 Italy on November 29.

Mozaffar's side will leave for

the host country on Nov. 13 to play Poland and New Zealand (Nov. 16-17) in a couple of warmup friendlies before its opening game in the group phase.

The following is the full Iranian futsal squad for the Women's World Cup:

Farzaneh Tavassoli, Fatemeh Rahmati, Nastaran Moqimi, Elham Anafcheh, Mahtab Banaei, Shirin Saffar, Maral Torkaman, Fereshteh Karimi, Zahra Lotfabadi, Sara Shirbeigi, Nasimeh Gholami, Mahsa Kamali, Fereshteh Khosravi, and Tahereh Mahdipour.

# Jahanbakhsh joins Dender in Belgian top flight

## Sports Desk

Iranian midfielder Alireza Jahanbakhsh has joined FCV Dender EH in the Jupiler Pro League on a season-long deal with an option for a one-year extension, the Belgian top-flight club announced on Tuesday.

Jahanbakhsh, 32, had been without a club since parting ways with Dutch side Heerenveen at the end of last season and was eager to secure his future in Europe in the lead-up to the 2026 World Cup. The Iranian registered three goals and assists apiece in 20 games in his one-season spell with Heerenveen.

First introduced to the European club football with NEC Nijmegen in 2013, Jahanbakhsh enjoyed his most prolific spell with AZ Alkmaar between 2015 and 2018, contributing with 37 goals and 31 assists in 111 outings. The Iranian enjoyed his most successful campaign in the 2017/18 season, finishing as the Dutch league's leading marksman with 21 strikes, which convinced Brighton & Hove Albion to pay a then-club record €22.5 million to sign him. His contribution for the Premier League outfit, however, was limited to four goals and two assists in 61 games,

with 31 of those appearances coming in the starting XI. Capped 95 times for the national team, Jahanbakhsh has 17 international goals under his belt and was part of Iran's World Cup squad in the previous three editions. Dender sits rock bottom of the Belgian league table with four points, and has yet to win a game after 13 rounds of matches.

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