

FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup: Iran undone by Italy, misses out on quarterfinals



Iranian players are pictured during a Group D defeat against Italy at the FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup in Pasig, Philippines, on November 29, 2025.
● FIFA

Sports Desk

Iran's bid for a last-eight spot at the inaugural FIFA Futsal Women's World Cup came to an end following a 3-1 defeat against Italy in Pasig, Philippines, on Saturday.

The setback saw Shahrzad Mozafar's side finish third in Group D with three points, while Brazil and Italy progressed to the knockout phase with nine and six points, respectively.

Needing a victory to advance to the quarterfinals, Iran almost took the lead in the opening minute after a well-worked buildup from a corner saw Nasimeh Gholami set up Mahtab Banaei, whose shot beat Italy keeper Ana Sestari but drifted just wide of the left post.

Italy responded seconds later, with Sara Boutimah drilling a low shot from just above the arc, forcing keeper Farzaneh Tavassoli into a save, before the European side began to pin Iran in its own half with a high press.

Iran, however, managed to break the deadlock in the 10th minute.

Tavassoli launched the ball from her own half and Fereshteh Khosravi's dummy run inside the box blocked Sestari's line of sight, allowing the ball to sneak through and roll over the line.

Italy came charging forward, with Tavassoli tipping away Gaby Vanelli's effort in the 14th minute, before the Iran captain survived a scare in the 18th when Renata Adamatti's shot took a slight deflection off her fingertips and struck the right post. Adamatti then spotted Tavassoli off her line with a minute remaining in the half but failed to guide her lob from her own half into the unguarded net.

Italy almost drew level two minutes after the restart, Adamatti sidestepping Maral Torkaman at the top of the arc only to miss the left post with her effort, before Tavassoli's timely block denied Vanelli a clear shot on goal.

The end-to-end action continued,

with Iran nearly doubling its lead in the 26th minute when Sara Shirbeigi saw her attempt blocked by a charging Sestari. Moments later, Italy's Adrieli Berte failed to convert Vanelli's low cross as it flashed across the goalmouth.

The European side eventually turned the tables just before the half-hour mark, Berte lifting Adamatti's pass over Tavassoli with a composed lob. Italy kept the momentum and took the lead seconds later from another fast break, with Bruna Borges tapping in Erika Ferrara's pass.

Iran attempted to claw back into the game by switching to a power play, but the strategy backfired. Vanelli punished a loose pass in the 35th minute, sending a long-range effort into the empty net.

Iran had opened its campaign with a 4-1 loss to Brazil before bouncing back to beat Panama 6-2 on Wednesday, keeping its hopes alive heading into the final group match.

Iran's taekwondo girls keen to shine at World U21 Ch'ships as in Riyadh

Sports Desk

Iranian girls will look to build on their impressive run at the Islamic Solidarity Games a fortnight ago when the World Taekwondo Under 21 Championships kicks off in Nairobi, Kenya, on Wednesday.

Just two weeks after a dire World Championships in Wuxi, where Iran finished empty-handed across eight women's categories, head coach Mahrouz Saei took a team of low-profile but promising young talents to the multi-sport event in Riyadh – a gamble that paid off for the under-fire coach. Iran collected five medals in six weight classes in the Saudi capital, and now three of them will vie for glory at the inaugural Under-21 event in Nairobi. Sayna Karimi enters the -46kg draw fresh off a stunning ISG campaign. In only her second senior international outing, the 19-year-old Iranian defeated Turkey's reigning world champion Emine Gögebakan and went on to capture the gold without conceding a single round. Rozhan Goodarzi (-51kg) and Hasti Mohammadi (-57kg) will be looking to take inspiration from their promising performances in Riyadh, where the two teenage prodigies settled for bronze in their weight categories. Meanwhile, Saghar Moradi will fancy her chances in the -57kg division, having already won a world silver and two Asian golds in the junior ranks, while Sara Soufi is aiming for a solid international breakthrough in the -73kg event.

Still, Mobina Nematzadeh remains the Iranian woman to watch when she gets her -53kg campaign underway in the Kenyan capital. A world junior champion in 2022, Nematzadeh stole the headlines when she won a precious -49kg bronze medal on her senior debut at last year's Paris Olympics. The 20-year-old was a hopeful at the World Championships last month, only to see her bid for glory come to an end in the round of 16 against even-

tual champion Merve Dinçel of Türkiye. Nematzadeh will be desperate to bounce back from the Wuxi setback as she has already set her sights on another Olympic success at LA 2028.

Zandi eyeing third gold

In the men's competition, Abolfazl Zandi will spearhead the eight-man Iranian squad, aiming to add the Under-21 -58kg crown to the senior world gold he won in Wuxi, as well as his world junior title from 2022.

Joining Zandi on the Iranian team is Mahdi Razmian (-54kg), who enters the tournament as the reigning world and Asian junior champion, but suffered a second-round exit in Wuxi. Matin Rezaei will compete in the -68kg class, boasting the 2022 world and Asian titles in the junior ranks, plus a bronze medal at last year's senior Asian Championships.

World junior champion Amirmohammad Ashrafi (+87kg) and former world cadet gold medalist Radin Zeinali (-74kg) will also be among the favorites in their respective categories. Amirabbas Rahnama (-63kg), Amirreza Gholami (-80kg), and Mohammad Alizadeh (-87kg) complete the Iranian men's lineup in Nairobi.



Iran's Sayna Karimi (L), pictured at the Islamic Solidarity Games, will compete in the women's -46kg class at the World Taekwondo Under 21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya.
● SNN

6th International Fajr Cup: Hasanpour strikes superheavyweight gold as Iran claims team title

Sports Desk

Iranian weightlifters Reza Hasanpour and Ariya Paydar completed a one-two finish in the +110kg class on the final day of the International Fajr Cup in Tehran, as the host nation lifted the team trophy.

Former world junior silver medalist Hasanpour dominated the super-heavyweight event, tallying 190kg in the snatch and a best clean & jerk of 235kg for a total of 425kg on Friday. He finished 55 kilograms clear of compatriot Paydar, who registered 165kg-205kg-370kg. Afghanistan's Fazal Karim Turkmen took the bronze with 130-175-305.

Earlier in the day, Abolfazl Zare – a winner of three world junior medals in May – had to settle for silver in the 110kg event despite lifting 208kg to top the clean & jerk standings. His 171-208-379 performance saw him finish behind Turkmenistan's Davranbek Hasanbayev, who secured the gold with a 185kg snatch and a 202kg clean & jerk. Tajikistan's Akbarjon Ghafurov claimed the bronze with 125-155-280.

Meanwhile, in the 94kg event, Uzbekistan's Mukhammadkodir Toshtemirov won the gold with 170-200-370. The Iranian duo of Ali Aalipour (161-196-357) and Hamidreza Zarei (149-195-346) finished second and third, respectively.



Iranian weightlifter Reza Hasanpour is seen in action in the +110kg class at the 6th International Fajr Cup in Tehran, Iran, on November 28, 2025.
● MIZAN

Friday's medals came after Iran collected double golds through Hafez Qashqaei and Iliya Salehipour on the opening day of the event. Competing in the men's 65kg division, Qashqaei – the 2019 world clean & jerk silver medalist – lifted 122kg in the snatch and secured a best clean & jerk of 160kg to take the total gold with 282kg.

Meanwhile, Salehipour, coming off a triple-medal run at the Islamic Soli-

darity Games earlier this month, posted 155kg in the snatch and 192kg in the clean & jerk for a 344kg total to win a closely contested 88kg event. Iran finished atop the team standings with 620.8 points, followed by Turkmenistan (486) and Uzbekistan (386). Weightlifters from Iran, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia competed at the sixth edition of the tournament in Tehran.

Asian Youth Chess Championships: Iranians grab double gold in standard event

Sports Desk

Kiasha Mahboobi and Barad Ahmadi claimed two golds as Iran finished with an impressive six medals at the standard competition of the Asian Youth Chess Championships in Bangkok, Thailand. A rapid gold medalist earlier in the competition, Mahboobi tallied seven points from nine rounds to win the boys' under-eight title, edging India's Amudhan Tamizh on superior tie-break. Mahboobi's compatriot Mahdiyar Janbarari settled for bronze with six points, helping Iran top the team standings in the age group.

Ahmadi drew his final match with China's Fuyan Shen to secure the boys' under-14 title with six points.

Ayhan Rahbar (boys' U12), Mahdis Asadi-

kalam (girls' U8), and Asma Hassanpour (girls' U10) added three bronze medals to Iran's haul.

Iran finished fourth in the overall team table while placing runner-up in the girls' under-18 event.

