

# World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships: Iran's Gholami grabs gold, Mohammadi settles for bronze on Day 2

## Sports Desk

The second day of the inaugural World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, saw Amirreza Gholami capture Iran's second gold medal in the men's competition on Thursday.

Hasti Mohammadi, meanwhile, secured her second international bronze in less than a month, finishing joint third in the women's -57kg event.

Gholami capped off his impressive campaign with a thrilling 3-2, 8-8, 7-6 victory over Spanish

top seed Mikel Fernandez Garcia in the -80kg final.

The Iranian prodigy began the day with a win against Türkiye's Idris Atay Sulu, then defeated Morocco's Haitam Zarhouthi – a gold medalist at last month's Islamic Solidarity Games – to reach the quarterfinals, where he beat Jordan's Mohammad Aladarbi in straight rounds.

Gholami continued his strong form by overcoming Belarusian second seed Raman Turavinau – competing as a neutral athlete – in back-to-back rounds to book his place in the final.

Earlier in the day, Mohammadi, who captured an impressive bronze at the Islamic Solidarity Games, suffered a semifinal setback against reigning world under-18 champion Amina Dehaoui of Morocco, finishing with a consolation bronze.

Mohammadi defeated Germany's Roja Rezaie (2-0) and Jessica Lynn Lee (2-1), before mounting a comeback to beat Greece's Athanasia Repoulia 2-1 and advance to the semifinals.

Amirabbas Rahanama was the other Iranian in action on Thursday but was unlucky to finish

empty-handed in the men's -63kg division. He suffered a controversial quarterfinal loss to Türkiye's Hamza Osmay Aydogan, with the Iranian coaching staff believing poor refereeing decisions cost Rahanama a place in the last four.

Thursday's results followed Iran's double medal haul in the men's competition on the opening day.

Abolfazl Zandi – a world senior champion in late October – capped off a brilliant five-week stretch by winning gold in the men's -58kg category, defeating

Russian neutral athlete Mago-medg Magomedov 2-0 in the final. Zandi delivered an emphatic run in the Kenyan capital, outclassing India's Shaury Chakravarti, Ecuador's Iker Josue Rojas, Mexico's Carlos Cortes, and Brazil's Gabriel Fonseca without dropping a single round en route to the title match. Meanwhile, world junior champion Amirmohammad Ashrafi claimed joint bronze alongside Tunisia's Motaz Ifaoui in the men's +87kg division after a 2-1 semifinal defeat against Kazakhstan's Beibarys Kablan, who went on to beat South Korea's Yang

Jun-young in the final.

Ashrafi had earlier defeated Lebanon's Charbel Raad 2-0 before overcoming Russian athlete Kirill Lisitsin in straight rounds to reach the semifinals.

In the women's competition, Sara Soufi opened her +73kg campaign with a 2-0 win over Australia's Kim Soohyeon but exited in the round of 16 after a loss to American top seed Naomi Alade. ISG bronze medalist Rojan Goodarzi saw her -49kg campaign end without a bout after she refused to compete against an Israeli opponent in the first round.



Iran's Amirreza Gholami poses with his gold medal at the World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on December 4, 2025.

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Iran's Hasti Mohammadi poses with her bronze medal at the World Taekwondo Under-21 Championships in Nairobi, Kenya, on December 4, 2025.

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## Iran enjoys six top-10 spots in latest WKF Rankings

### Sports Desk

Six Iranian karatekas ranked among the top 10 in their respective categories in the latest WKF World Rankings – released on Thursday – following an impressive run of results at last week's World Championships in Cairo, Egypt.

Atousa Golshadnejad, who made history by claiming Iran's first-ever women's gold at the global showpiece, earned 4,995 points to overtake Kazakhstan's Assel Kanay at the top of the female kumite -61kg rankings. Saleh Abazari, a silver medalist in Cairo, climbed to third in the male kumite +84kg category with 3,810 points, while Egypt's Taha Tarek Mahmoud and Italy's Matteo Avanzini – who defeated the Iranian in the world final – remained

first and second respectively.

In the women's -50kg rankings, Iranian Sara Bahmanyar, who followed her Islamic Solidarity Games gold with a second world bronze in Cairo, stood second behind Kazakhstan's Moldir Zhangbyrbay with 4,150 points.

Meanwhile, Fatemeh Sa'adati tallied 3,460 points to rise to fourth in the female -55kg rankings, thanks to her quarterfinal finish at the World Championships, while Ali Meskini placed fifth in the male kumite -60kg category after his last-eight run in Cairo.

Fatemeh Sadeqi – a gold medalist at the World Games and the Islamic Solidarity Games earlier this year – surged to sixth in the women's kata rankings, despite a setback against Greece's Georgia-Archontia Xenou in the opening round of the knockout phase at the World Championships.

## Iranians eyeing glory at Asian Youth Para Games

### Sports Desk

Iranian athletes will set their sights on another medal-laden campaign as the Asian Youth Para Games kick off in Dubai today.

Named "Children of Iran, Ambassadors of Victory," the Iranian delegation will feature 194 athletes, including 74 female competitors, at the fifth edition of the multi-sport event.

Iranians will compete in 11 disciplines: para athletics, para archery, para badminton, bocia, goalball, para powerlifting, para swimming, para table tennis, para taekwondo, and 3x3

wheelchair basketball.

The National Paralympic Committee – recognized as the leading organization in the development of women's Paralympic sports – has placed special emphasis on female participation at this event. With the exception of swimming, the delegation includes female athletes across all other 10 disciplines.

"Our effort is to maximize the participation of our female athletes and facilitate their attendance at the Games. In line with the National Paralympic Committee's new vision, which emphasizes a strong presence of girls and women in sporting



events as cultural ambassadors, we have placed special focus on this area," said Maryam Ka-

zemipour, Iran's chef de mission in Dubai.

"We will have female representation in 10 disciplines, with a higher number of girls in some events and an equal number in others," added the official, who noted that Iranian competitors at the Games are aged between 12 and 24.

Iran has participated in all four previous editions of the Asian Youth Para Games, finishing runner-up in the first three – Tokyo 2009, Kuala Lumpur 2013, and Dubai 2017 – before claiming the top spot in Manama 2021.

Across these four editions, Iran has collected 144 gold, 139 silver, and 107 bronze medals.

## Esteghlal Qom crowned Iranian GR Premier League champion

### Sports Desk

Esteghlal Qom claimed the title at the Iranian Greco-Roman Premier League, thanks to an emphatic 8-2 victory over Naft-o Gaz Zagros-e Jonoubi in the final showpiece in Tehran on Thursday.

Hossein Bijani got Esteghlal off the mark with a superiority win (8-0) over Alireza Amiri in the 55kg contest, before Alireza Nejati made it 2-0 by defeating Hossein Javidi 3-1 in their 60kg clash.

Mohammad-Javad Aboutalebi then stunned former world champion Meisam Dalkhani 7-2 in the 63kg showdown to extend Esteghlal's advantage.

World U23 bronze medalist Ahmadreza Mohsennejad (67kg) outmuscled Mohammad Kamali 9-0, and Iman Mohammadi – the 72kg champion at October's U23 Worlds – made quick work of Iman Bahmani (10-1) to put Esteghlal within a single win of the team triumph.



Esteghlal Qom's wrestlers and coaching staff pose with the champion's trophy at the Iranian Greco-Roman Premier League champion in Tehran, Iran, on December 4, 2025.

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However, Esteghlal's Amir Abdi – silver medalist at last month's Islamic Solidarity Games – suffered a 2-1 defeat to former Asian champion Amin Kavianinejad in the 77kg bout, before Mohammad

Mokhtari's 3-1 win over reigning continental gold medalist Mohammad Naqousi in the 82kg match gave Naft-o Gaz a lifeline.

Naft-o Gaz's hopes for a comeback were ultimately dashed

in the 87kg bout, where Jamal Esmaeili defeated Mohammadhossein Ostadmohammad 8-2 to secure the title for Esteghlal. Four-time Asian champion Nasser Alizadeh (97 kg) and Morteza Alghousi (130kg) capped off Esteghlal's title run with comfortable victories over Mahdi Bali (7-1) and Mohammad Kazemi (8-0), respectively, in the two dead rubbers. Earlier in the day, Ra'ad Padasand Artesh edged Azad University of Khuzestan 48-46 – with both teams claiming five victories – to finish third.

Mohammad Hosseinvand Panahi (55kg), Pouya Nassrpour (60kg), Hossein Asadi (67kg), Hojjat Rezaei (72kg), and Rasoul Garmsiri (87kg) secured wins for Ra'ad, while Mohammad Janqoli (63kg), Aliasghar Samdaliri (77kg), Seyyed Mohammad-Mahdi Miri (82kg), Mohammad-Sadeq Abdollahi (97kg), and Seyyed Abolfazl Mirzadeh (130kg) earned Azad University's victories.



Iranian world champion Atousa Golshadnejad topped the female kumite -61kg category at the latest WKF World Rankings.

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