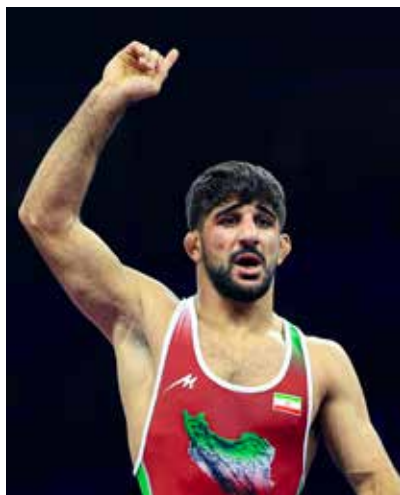


Five Iranians shortlisted for 2025 Most Dominant Wrestler



● L-R: Iranian wrestlers Rahman Amouzad, Amirhossein Zare', Saeid Esmaili, Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, and Gholamreza Farrokhi have been shortlisted by the UWW for the Most Dominant Wrestler in 2025.
● UWW

Sports Desk

Five Iranians are among the nominees for the UWW Most Dominant Wrestler of 2025. United World Wrestling has unveiled the 10-man shortlist for the year's most successful wrestlers across two divisions, with Rahman Amouzad and Amirhossein Zare' listed in freestyle, while Saeid Esmaili, Mohammad-Hadi Saravi, and Gholamreza Farrokhi are named in Greco-Roman. A silver medalist at the Paris Olympics last year, Amouzad made amends for his final setback in the French capital against Kotaro Kiyooka by defeating the Japanese wrestler in emphatic fashion, securing a superiority victory in the first period of the 65kg showdown at September's World Championships in Zagreb

– Amouzad's second world title after his 2022 triumph. Ruthless Rahman then picked up where he had left off in Croatia, cruising to the final of November's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh without conceding a single point, before demolishing Tajikistan's Abdulmazhid Kudiev (12-2) to claim his second major gold of the international season.

Zare', meanwhile, bounced back from his Olympic final heartbreak against his familiar Georgian foe Geno Petriashvili to reestablish his dominance in the superheavyweight division. Chasing his third world 125kg gold in four years, Zare – a Ranking Series champion in February – overpowered Olympic bronze medalist Giorgi Meshvildishvili of Azerbaijan 5-0 in the final to cap-

ture the ultimate prize in Zagreb. He was also in a league of his own in Riyadh, capping his run with a 10-0 victory over Bahrain's Russian-born Shamil Sharipov in the final. Joining the two Iranians in the five-man freestyle list are American duo Zahid Valencia and Kyle Snyder – world champions in the 86kg and 97kg classes, respectively – as well as Russian 61kg stand-out Zaur Uguev, who claimed the gold in Zagreb as a neutral athlete with an 11-2 win over Iran's Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan in the final. Meanwhile, reigning Olympic champions Esmaili and Saravi also received recognition for their continued success in 2025, while Farrokhi introduced himself as one of the brightest rising stars in Greco-Roman wrestling.

Esmaili began the international season with a gold-winning campaign at March's Asian Championships in Amman, and then marked his World Championships debut in style by edging Azerbaijan's Hasrat Jafarov 1-0 in the 67kg final. The pair met again for gold in Riyadh two months later, where Esmaili came within two seconds of suffering only the second defeat of his senior international career – and his first since June 2024 – before producing a trademark four-pointer to defeat Jafarov 8-3 in a thrilling showdown. Saravi proved to be the wrestler to beat in the 97kg division, securing his third Asian gold and second world title before rounding out the season with a comfortable title run at the Islamic Solidarity Games, courtesy of a

5-1 win over world bronze medalist Murad Ahmadiyev of Azerbaijan in the final. Farrokhi, who won the 82kg gold at February's Ranking Series curtain-raiser, also enjoyed a dominant debut at the World Championships on his return to the Croatian capital, defeating Georgian Gela Bolkvadze 4-0 in the final. He then moved up to the 87kg class for October's U23 World Championships in Novi Sad, Serbia, where the 22-year-old prodigy secured five superiority victories on his way to the gold medal, including a 10-0 demolition of Ukraine's Ivan Chmyr in the final. Farrokhi took his 2025 tally to four golds in Riyadh after beating Kazakhstan's Islam Yevloyev 6-0 in the 87kg final. Armenia's Malkhas Amoyan was

also nominated in Greco-Roman after winning the European and world titles in the 77kg class, with Uzbekistan's Aytjan Khalmakhanov completing the list. Khalmakhanov dominated the 63kg weight class in 2025, claiming the world senior and under-20 titles as well as the Asian gold, though he was clearly second-best against Esmaili when the two met at the Islamic Solidarity Games, suffering a 9-0 defeat in the semifinals before finishing with a consolation 67kg bronze. The 2025 season was certainly one to remember for Iranian wrestling, as the country completed a historic clean sweep of the team titles at the World Championships, while also lifting the Greco-Roman trophies at the U17, U20, and U23 Worlds.

ISF U15 World School Volleyball Championship: Iranian girls defeat Chile to win Pool D



● volleyballLir

Sports Desk

Iran continued its perfect run in the girls' competition of the ISF U15 World School Volleyball Championship in Shangluo, China, defeating Chile in straight sets in Pool D on Monday. The Iranian girls prevailed 25-12 and 25-19 in the best-of-two-sets contest to top the group with four victories and 12 points, setting up a knockout clash with Brazil on Wednesday. Brazil overcame Uganda 1 in two sets later in the day to finish runner-up to Chinese Taipei in Pool C. Iran began its campaign with successive 2-0 victories over India 1 and Uganda 2 on Saturday, before defeating Bulgaria by the same scoreline on Sunday. India 1 overcame Chile 2-0 later on Monday to secure second place in Pool D. Elsewhere, Thailand beat Serbia in back-to-back sets to finish atop the Pool B standings with a clean sweep of three wins,

while China 2 also recorded a straight-sets victory against Quebec to claim the runner-up spot. Chinese Taipei sealed the top position in Pool C thanks to a 2-0 win over India 2, while Bulgaria defeated Uganda 2 by the same score in Pool D.

Iranian boys through

Iran also enjoyed an emphatic group phase in the boys' event, seeing off Saudi Arabia in two sets to win Pool B with seven points and advance to the knockout stage. Iran opened its title defense with a 2-0 win against Nigeria on Saturday and then edged China 2 on Sunday. Nigeria also booked a knockout berth after defeating China 2 to finish second in the group with five points. The eight-day tournament has brought together 30 teams from 17 nations. Launched in 1972, the ISF World School Volleyball Championship is the highest-level school volleyball event worldwide.

Iran coach Hosseini pleased with 'proper test' for female weightlifters in Riyadh

Sports Desk

Head coach Elham Hosseini said she "expected more" from the Iranian women's weightlifting team at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, though she was pleased that the event provided "a proper test for the young squad to reach world-class level."

Represented by five weightlifters at the November event, Iran collected six medals across three women's divisions in Riyadh, with 16-year-old prodigy Mahsa Beheshti headlining the haul with a clean and jerk gold, as well as snatch and total bronzes in the -86kg class. Reihaneh Karimi bagged the C&J and total bronze medals in the -69kg category, while Alma Hosseini settled for bronze in the -77kg snatch contest. "We had five contestants in Riyadh, three of whom had participated in the Asian Youth Games in Bahrain in late October, which made it somewhat tougher for them as they did not have much time to recover," Hosseini told IRNA. "The level of the ISG competition was similar to that of the Asian Championships, albeit without Chinese and North Korean weightlifters, though some top-notch



● IRNA

participants from African countries like Nigeria and Egypt were present in Riyadh," added the 37-year-old coach, who made history by winning triple gold at the 2022 Asian Championships – the first senior international gold medals for Iranian women's weightlifting. "There were also world and Olympic medalists taking part in the event, which was a privilege for our young weightlifters, who were able to compete at this level and succeeded in winning medals. Mahsa Beheshti delivered a sensational campaign despite being only 16." "She had just participated in a tough competition in Bahrain but still managed to match her training records to win three medals. Mahsa's snatch and total

results were equal to those of the second-place finisher, but in this tournament, the athlete who achieves the result earlier wins the medal, and in the end, Uzbekistan took the silver in both the snatch and total." "Alma, who had competed in the -69kg class in Bahrain, moved up to the -77kg category in Riyadh. Our main goal for her was simply to have a decent finish, and she ultimately succeeded in winning a bronze in the snatch." "Reihaneh, having won medals in the senior class in recent years, was someone we hoped would secure the top prize in Riyadh. However, she was under a lot of stress. Had she overcome her anxiety, she could have achieved some excellent results." "Riyadh was Sara Safa-

vardi's second international competition. She had competed for the first time in the Asian junior super-heavyweight category and performed relatively well at the senior level. However, we still expect higher numbers from our weightlifters. These competitions are a proper test for our athletes to raise their performance to world standards." "Three years ago, junior weightlifters were added to the national team, and now they have reached a level where they can compete with seniors. However, we must separate the junior, youth, and senior categories. We need to maintain this medal-winning trend by building a strong foundation. Currently, we are in a situation where we are using juniors in the senior category, but we must work hard to preserve our talent across all these levels." Regarding upcoming events, Hosseini said: "The national team training camp will get underway in late December. Our first competition will be the Asian Championships in April, followed by the World Junior Championships in Egypt in May. We will compete in four major tournaments before taking part in September's Asian Games."