

Volleyball yielded most team-sport success for Iran in 2025: *IRIVF* chief



Iranian players celebrate after defeating Italy in the FIVB Men's U21 World Championship final in Jiangmen, China, on August 31, 2025.
● FIVB



Members of the Iranian women's volleyball national team pose for photo after winning the bronze at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 13, 2025.
● IRIVF

Sports Desk

Volleyball brought Iran "more international success in 2025 than any other team sport," insists Milad Taqavi, chairman of the country's Volleyball Federation (IRIVF). "It was an exceptionally hectic international season for us. We fielded Iranian teams in 37 tournaments across the globe, involving roughly 750 athletes," the head of the sport's national governing body told Mehr News Agency. "Our competition schedule spanned over the entire year – 377 days of matches against 476 different teams – which is remarkable in itself. Securing even a single medal in team sports is a formidable challenge, yet this year we won 10 gold, two silver, and three bronze medals across

various age and gender categories," Taqavi added. The standout achievement for Iran on the global stage came in August at the Men's U21 World Championship, where the defending champions rallied to beat Italy 3-1 in the final, claiming their third title in four editions. Five members of head coach Gholamreza Mo'menimoqaddam's squad – including MVP and Best Outside Hitter Seyyed Martin Hosseini – earned individual awards in Jiangmen, China. The year also marked a new chapter for the senior men's national team under Italian head coach Roberto Piazza. Iran recorded six wins in 12 outings to finish eighth in the 16-team table of the Volleyball Nations League – a major improvement on the previous two editions, where the

Asian powerhouse finished in the bottom three. Iran ultimately missed out on the VNL Finals after China secured the last quarterfinal berth as host, but Piazza's men carried their momentum into September's World Championship in the Philippines, where they reached the last eight before falling 3-1 to Czechia. The country also reached the semifinals of the Boys' U19 World Championship in July, though the two-time champion had to settle for fourth place in Tashkent after back-to-back defeats to France and Spain. "Volleyball was the only Iranian team sport represented in both the Asian Youth Games in Bahrain in October and the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh a month later," Taqavi said. "Of the

four indoor teams we sent, three returned with gold and one with bronze. I believe no other team sport has matched this record. The national teams' performance is entirely commendable and defensible, though we can't afford to get carried away by these results." The 2025 season produced mixed results for Iranian women's volleyball. South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's senior team finished sixth at the AVC Nations Cup in Hanoi in June, failing to qualify for next year's Asian Championship. Still, Lee's squad secured a milestone title at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship – featuring four Central Asian nations – with a straight-sets win over hosts Uzbekistan in October, marking Iran's first women's international

gold since the program launched in 1963. The team later added an ISG bronze in Riyadh. The Iranian women's U18 team, meanwhile, stole the spotlight by winning gold at the Asian Youth Games under Lee, conceding only two sets across six victories before rallying past Indonesia in a five-set final thriller. Regarding the women's performance at the Islamic Solidarity Games – where they slipped one place on the podium compared to the previous edition – Taqavi said: "Had our team opened its campaign against Türkiye instead of Azerbaijan, the outcome might have been different. I believe there isn't a significant difference between silver and bronze, though the gap between gold and silver is considerable. The fact that our women re-

turned with a medal is commendable in itself." "The women's national team is young and developing. They face a demanding year ahead, including the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in late summer – a landmark occasion, as it will be the first time since the 1979 Islamic Revolution that the women's volleyball team joins Iran's delegation at the continental showpiece. I am truly optimistic about their prospects next year," he added. "Next year will be critical and challenging for both the women's and men's teams, and we hope to achieve even better results. The average age of our senior national squads is under 25, and we expect improvements as the players gain more experience."

Asian Youth Para Games: Powerlifting, swimming glory headline Iran's medal sweep on Day 3

Sports Desk

Iranian athletes continued their medal-laden campaign on the third day of the Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, achieving success in powerlifting and swimming events on Friday. Reza Enayatollahi and Amirali Es'haqnia delivered record-breaking performances, adding double golds to Iran's para powerlifting medal haul, while the Iranian boys collected an impressive 61 medals across various swimming categories. Enayatollahi posted a new world junior record of 205kg to claim the ultimate prize in the boys' 107kg category, while Es'haqnia shattered the world cadet record in the boys' +107kg class, lifting 175kg with his fourth attempt en route to gold. The two golds capped off a remarkable powerlifting run for Iran, which finished with 20 medals, including nine golds, in Dubai – among them three women's golds won by Zahra Pouladi, Mahdiyeh Ehsani, and Atiyeh Hosseini. Elsewhere, Sepanta Navidi, Sepehr Seifi, Ali Houshmandi, Ali Hassan-zadeh, Taha Azizi, Seyyed Erfan Ja'fari, Abolfazl Zarifpour, and Mo-



Iran's Amirali Es'haqnia celebrates after posting a successful effort en route to the powerlifting gold at the Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai, UAE, on December 12, 2025.
● IRNA

hammad-Taha Baqeri continued Iran's flying start in para swimming, claiming 14 golds across different categories. Friday's results came after Iranians had collected 41 medals on the preceding day of competition. The highlight of Iran's second-day success came in para armwrestling, where the country bagged 32 medals, including eight golds. Iranian girls Vida Jabbarzadeh and Kowsar Qaraei, who each won two golds, along with Reihaneh Roustaei and Fatemeh Hazbian, were joined by male teammate Ali

Nozhati – who also grabbed two gold medals – in securing top honors in their respective categories. In 3x3 wheelchair basketball, the Iranian men's team – comprising Mohammad-Taha Yarmohammadi, Fo'ad Mozaffari Afkham, Abolfazl Jalaei, and Amirmahdi Yousefi – defeated Japan 15-9 in the final to win gold. The Iranian female team – represented by Zahra Nasri, Roqayeh Salehi, Roqayeh Amiri, and Fatemeh Molaei – settled for silver after a 13-7 final loss to Thailand.

Iran remains fifth in Futsal Men's World Ranking, drops to 10th in women's division

Sports Desk

Iran retained the fifth spot in the latest FIFA Futsal Men's World Ranking, released by the sport's international governing body on Friday. Having won a sensational gold medal at November's Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh, the Asian powerhouse collected 1,484.23 points to remain the top team in the continent. Vahid Shamsaei's team defeated Morocco 5-0 in the final in the Saudi capital, making amends for last year's quarterfinal exit against the African champion at the Futsal World Cup in Uzbekistan. Iran is now preparing for the upcoming AFC Futsal Asian Cup, starting January 26 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The record 13-time champion will begin its title defense in Group D against Malaysia on January 28, before facing Saudi Arabia two days later. The final group fixture will see Shamsaei's men take on Afghanistan on February 1 – a rematch of their 2-2 draw in Riyadh. The top seven of the Men's

Ranking remained unchanged, with world No. 1 Brazil followed by Portugal, Spain, and Argentina. Morocco and Russia stand immediately behind Iran. In the Women's Ranking, meanwhile, Iran dropped one spot to 10th with 1,157.19 points – third in Asia behind Japan, which is sixth, and eighth-placed Thailand. Iran participated in the recently concluded Women's World Cup in the Philippines but failed to advance beyond the group stage. Shahrzad

Mozaffar's team suffered a 4-1 defeat to Brazil in their Group D opener but bounced back to defeat Panama 6-2 in their second game in Pasig. A 3-1 loss to Italy, however, left Iran behind the European side in the group standings, allowing Brazil and Italy to advance to the quarterfinals. Brazil, which went on to defeat Portugal in the final last week, topped the Women's Ranking, followed by Spain, Portugal, Argentina, Italy, Japan, Colombia, Thailand, and Russia.

