

World Taekwondo Junior Championships: Iran collects seven medals, finishes men's runner-up

Sports Desk

Iranian men's and women's teams concluded their campaign at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with seven medals, including four golds.

A haul of three golds saw the country claim the runner-up spot in the men's event with 397 points – seven behind host Uzbekistan, which bagged two golds and two silvers, plus one bronze, to become only the third nation, following South Korea and Iran, to lift the men's trophy across 15 editions of the global showpiece.

Russia stood third – courtesy of two golds and a silver – with South Korea and Thailand in the following spots.

In the women's competition, Iran – champion in the previous edition – had to settle for a fourth-place finish behind China,

Croatia, and South Korea.

Three Iranians were in action on the final day of the event at the Martial Arts Sports Complex in Tashkent's Olympic City, finishing empty-handed after last-eight setbacks in their respective categories.

Ali Razmian was knocked out by Kazakhstan's Adilet Sheri in the men's -51kg category, while Rozhan Heidari (-52kg) and Aynaz Mikaeili (-63kg) fell to Spain's Itziar Garcia Godoy and Uzbekistan's Mo Uktamjonova, respectively, in the women's contests on Friday.

Parsa Houshyar secured Iran's third men's gold when he defeated France's Nolhan Rosemond in the -63kg final on the penultimate day of the tournament.

Rosemond led the first round but conceded five Gam-jeoms (penalty points), handing the round to his opponent. Houshyar appeared on course to win the sec-

ond round, only for Rosemond to deliver a stunning late body kick and take it 4-3. But Houshyar was not to be denied, claiming the decisive third round 9-6 to seal gold.

Benyamin Soltanian dominated the men's -73kg event without dropping a single round, capping off with a final victory over South Korea's Seung Min Ahn.

Mohammad-Erfan Khodaei also enjoyed an emphatic campaign in the men's division, defeating Poland's Antoni Sokolowski in the -55kg final – the Iranian's sixth straight-round win of the competition.

Hana Zarrinkamar, meanwhile, headlined the Iranian women's medal hunt in Tashkent by grabbing gold in the +68kg class, thanks to a final victory over Czechia's Alice Bínová, which saw the Iranian girl secure back-to-back titles at the



Parsa Houshyar (L) offers a military salute to the Iranian flag following his victory in the men's -63kg final at the World Taekwondo Junior Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on April 16, 2026.
● IRAN TAEKWONDO FEDERATION

World Junior Championships. Pinar Lotfizadeh (-59kg), Bahar Tahmasbi (-42kg), and Helia Ebrahimian (-49kg) added three women's bronzes to Iran's medal count.

Despite failing to repeat the historic double team title-winning success of 2024, the Iranian

boys and girls will have every reason to be pleased by the final outcome in Tashkent after they were forced to go through exhausting circumstances amid the country's military conflict with the United States and Israel.

The Iranian delegation had to

travel by road for 27 hours to cross the Turkmenistan border, followed by connecting flights to the Uzbek capital in order to attend the championships.

The six-day contests featured 986 competitors from 115 countries.

Iran learns pool fate in AVC Women's Volleyball Cup



● GEORGE WOOD/GETTY IMAGES

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The Iranian national team has been drawn against defending champion Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and Lebanon in Pool B of the upcoming AVC Women's Volleyball Cup, which begins June 6 in Candon, Philippines.

The draw for the seventh edition of the annual tournament, formerly known as the AVC Women's Challenge Cup, took place in Manila on Friday, with 12 teams split into two groups.

Pool A will feature the host Philippines, Chinese Taipei, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Australia, and Uzbekistan.

The event marks Iran's third participation in the tournament, following last year's sixth-place finish in Hanoi, Vietnam, and a fifth-place finish in the 2023 edition in Gresik, Indonesia.

"The AVC Women's Cup continues to establish itself as a premier competition, showcasing the highest level of women's volleyball in Asia. With the strong lineup of teams this year, we are confident that the tournament will deliver exciting matches and further elevate the sport across the region," AVC President Ramon Suzara said during the drawing ceremony.

The preliminary round will feature 30 matches across June 6-9 and June 11-12, with teams competing in a round-robin format within their respective pools. A rest day is scheduled for June 10.

The top teams from each pool will advance to the knockout stage, beginning June 13, which includes the semifinals and classification matches. The tournament will culminate on June 14 with finals for all ranking positions, including the gold medal match.

The participating teams include host Philippines, defending champion Vietnam, and top-ranked teams based on the latest world rankings: Kazakhstan, Chinese Taipei, South Korea, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan booked their places in the showpiece via the latest FIVB World Rankings.

Additional representatives from AVC zones complete the lineup, including Uzbekistan (CAVA), Hong Kong (EAVA), Australia (OZVA), Indonesia (SAVA), and Lebanon (WAVA).

Iran will play in a couple of rematches from last year's edition, which saw the team beat Indonesia in a five-set thriller in the pool phase before falling in four sets in the classification match. South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's side also faced Kazakhstan in Hanoi, suffering a 3-1 loss.

Iran will look to build on a decent run of results under Lee last year, which included a historic title at the CAVA Women's Volleyball Championship – a maiden international gold since the first Iranian national team was established in 1963 – as well as a bronze medal at the Islamic Solidarity Games in November.

World Snooker Championship: Vafaei to open Crucible campaign against Chinese Si

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Iran's Hossein Vafaei will face 15th seed Si Jiahui of China in the opening round of the Halo World Snooker Championship in Sheffield, England, on Wednesday.

The main draw of the prestigious tournament, which began at the iconic Crucible Theatre on Saturday, features 16 top-seeded players and 16 qualifiers.

Vafaei booked his place at the event after back-to-back victories in the qualifiers last week. Entering the competition in the third qualifying round, he defeated Poland's Michał Szubarczyk 10-2 before overcoming China's Gao Yang 10-4 on Tuesday.

The Iranian will resume the match against Si in a best-of-19-frames format on Thursday, with the winner taking on world number one and 2019 champion Judd Trump or his fellow Englishman Gary Wilson on Saturday.

Seven-time champion Ronnie O'Sul-



● GEORGE WOOD/GETTY IMAGES

ivan will open his campaign against Chinese debutant He Guoqiang on Tuesday. The Englishman, whose most recent world title triumph came in 2022, is making his 34th consecutive appearance at the World Championship.

The 50-year-old has not won a ranking title this season but made the sport's highest-ever professional break with a 153 at the World Open in March.

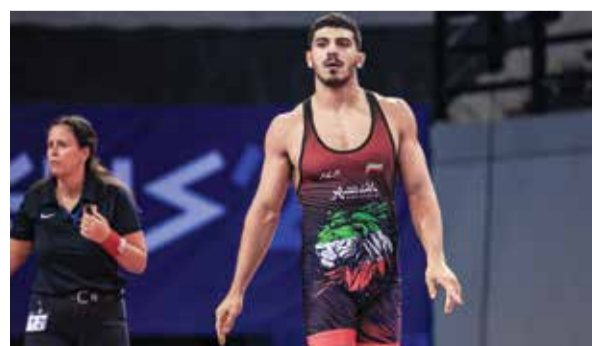
English third seed Kyren Wilson – the 2024 champion – will face his teenage compatriot Stan Moody on Monday.

Iranian wrestlers scoop five medals in Champions tourney

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers grabbed five medals on the opening day of the Champions international tournament in Antalya, Turkey.

Reigning world cadet champion Amirsam Mohammadi spearheaded the country's medal hunt on Friday by claiming the top prize in the Greco-Roman 97kg weight class. There was further glory for Iran in the Greco-Roman division as Mohammadreza Gholami settled for silver in the 67kg class, while Alireza Amiri (55kg) and former world under-17



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Amirsam Mohammadi, pictured in last year's U17 World Championships, won the 97kg gold medal at the Champions international tournament in Antalya, Türkiye.
● IUWW

gold medalist Amir-Mahdi Saeidi-Nava (77kg) added a pair of bronze medals.

Mohammad-Javad Aboutalebi (67kg), Iliya Ilkhani (67kg), and Mohammad Moradi (77kg)

missed out on the podium in the Greco-Roman contests.

Danial Tavakkoli was the only Iranian freestyle medalist on Friday, taking a consolation bronze in the 97kg category, while Erfan Siri (57kg), Sajjad Pirdayeh (70kg), and 79kg competitors Mohammad-Mahdi Mami-vand and Sobhan Esmi all finished empty-handed in their respective events.

The three-day tournament features under-20 wrestlers from global powerhouses of the sport, including Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia.