

Iranian wrestlers to chase Senior Worlds spots at Ulaanbaatar Open

Sports Desk

Two World Championships spots on the Iranian Greco-Roman national team will be up for grabs when the country's wrestlers compete at the upcoming Ulaanbaatar Open.

The third UWW Ranking Series event of the season will kick off on Thursday at Buyant Ukhua Sport Palace in the Mongolian capital.

The 72kg spot will be on the line between Danial Sohrabi and Mohammad-Javad Rezaei, who will go head-to-head in a best-of-three series. Sohrabi needs just one victory to secure his place at the World Championships, which begin on October 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

A gold medalist in Ulaanbaatar last year, Sohrabi will be eager to earn another shot at the world stage after last September's heartbreak in Zagreb, where he suffered a controversial quarterfinal defeat to French wrestler Ibrahim Ghanem before rebounding to claim bronze



● FARSHAD BANDANI/IAWFIR

through the repechage. Rezaei, an Asian silver medalist in April, will look to build on his strong form after winning gold at February's Muhamet Malo

Ranking Series tournament in Tirana, Albania. Meanwhile, Mohammad-Mahdi Keshtkar and Erfan Jarkani will battle it out for the 63kg berth.

Keshtkar also needs only one win to punch his ticket to Astana after capturing an impressive bronze medal on his Senior World Championships debut in

Zagreb. Jarkani enjoyed Ranking Series success at the Zagreb Open in February, but a defeat in the final to Kyrgyzstan's Aftandil Taa-

laibek Uulu forced the former world junior and under-23 bronze medalist to settle for silver at the Asian Championships.

Elsewhere in Ulaanbaatar, Payam Ahmadi and Ali Ahmadi-Vafa, both already guaranteed spots in Astana, will compete in the 55kg and 60kg divisions, respectively.

The highly touted Ahmadi enjoyed a prolific international campaign last year, winning world and Asian under-20 titles before claiming silver at the Senior World Championships. Asian bronze medalist Ahmadi-Vafa, who suffered a first-round exit on his World Championships debut last year, will be eager to add a senior international medal to his collection of three world titles across different age groups.

Reigning world and Olympic champions Saeid Esmaili (67kg) and Mohammad-Hadi Saravi (97kg) will headline Iran's Greco-Roman squad for Astana. The lineup also includes Asian

silver medalist Ali Oskou (77kg), world champion Gholamreza Farrokhi (82kg), and Alireza Mohmadi (87kg), who has won consecutive world silver medals on either side of his Olympic silver at Paris 2024.

The remaining national team spot will be decided in a highly anticipated 130kg showdown at the International Takhti Cup, which begins on June 15 in Kerman.

Two-time world champion and Olympic bronze medalist Amin Mirzazadeh will need a victory in a best-of-three contest against Fardin Hedayati, who is aiming for a breakthrough at senior level after already collecting three world age-group titles.

The Greco-Roman competition in Ulaanbaatar will be followed by the freestyle event, with Ahoura Khatari (61kg), world champion Rahman Amouzad (65kg), Mohammad Nokhodi (79kg), and Abolfazl Rahmani (92kg) representing Iran across various weight classes.

'Pistol Queen' Javanmardi ends retirement, targets Asian Para Games glory

Sports Desk

Iranian shooting great Sareh Javanmardi is set to come out of retirement and target glory at October's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games in Japan. Nicknamed the "Pistol Queen," the 41-year-old star appeared to bring the curtain down on her illustrious career after winning the women's 10m air pistol title at the Paris 2024 Paralympics – her fourth gold medal in as many appearances at the Games.

In an interview with Mehr News Agency last year, Javanmardi insisted she had no plans to compete again, citing "personal reasons as well as certain circumstances within the Iranian sports structure" behind her decision. However, the decorated shooter appears to have had a change of heart. She has resumed training with the national team in recent weeks and is set for her first international appearance in 22 months when she competes

at the upcoming WSPS Grand Prix, which begins on June 16 in Novi Sad, Serbia. The tournament, featuring various pistol and rifle events, also serves as a qualification pathway for the Asian Para Games. Javanmardi, who also won a Paralympic bronze medal at London 2012, will be aiming to secure a place at the continental showpiece and challenge for a fourth Asian Para Games medal. Javanmardi claimed gold in the 10m air pistol and silver

in the 50m pistol event at Jakarta 2018 before settling for silver behind fellow Iranian Faezeh Ahmadi in her favored 10m air pistol discipline at Hangzhou 2022. Ahmadi is also included in the Iranian squad for Novi Sad. She will be joined by Nasrin Shahi – the 10m air pistol champion at last year's WSPS World Cup – as well as Mohammadreza Mirshafiei, Mostafa Khadem, Mobina Moslemi, Zahra Jafari, and Mahsa Haji-Mohammadi.



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Iran's table tennis trials confirmed for Aichi-Nagoya 2026

Sports Desk

Iran's Table Tennis Federation will hold selection trials to determine the remaining members of the men's and women's national teams for September's Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.

The men's squad for the continental event will consist of four players, while the women's team will feature two athletes.

According to the federation's selection criteria, 16 players in each category will compete in the trials. The field will comprise the top four Iranian players in the world rankings and 12 players from the country's premier domestic division, based on last year's results.

In the men's competition, veteran star Noshad Alamiyan has already secured an automatic place on the Asian Games roster as Iran's highest-ranked player in the world standings. His younger brother, Nima, has with-



● Neda Shahsavari will compete in the Iranian women's trials for the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games. ● ISNA

drawn from contention due to personal reasons. The Alamiyan brothers were part of the Iranian trio – alongside Amirhossein Hodaei – that won the men's team bronze at the Hangzhou Asian Games three years ago – the country's first table tennis medal at the multi-sport showpiece in 65 years – and then teamed up to repeat the success in the doubles event. The women's team, however, will have no automatic selections, as Iran's top-ranked fe-

male player, Neda Shahsavari, will be required to compete in the trials for a place at the Asian Games. Shahsavari will look to build on a glorious Islamic Solidarity Games campaign in Riyadh last year, where she won singles and doubles gold, as well as team bronze along with Shima Safaei and Setayesh Illoukhani. Safaei, who also paired with Shahsavari for the doubles gold in Riyadh, will also miss the trials after announcing her unavailability

for "personal reasons." Teenage prodigy Benyamin Faraji will be among the players to watch in the men's competition, which also features Hodaei, Navid Shams, Amirmahdi Keshavarzi, Amin Ahmadian, Mohammad-Javad Sohrabi, Seyyed Mahmoud Mousavi, Arian Ghafari, Hamidreza Taherkhani, Soroush Amirmia, Mohammad-Hassan Habibi, Amirabbas Hodaei, Afshin Norouzi, Arshia Lorestani, Mobin Alipour, and Samran Karimi.

In the women's event, Shahsavari and Illoukhani will compete alongside Mahshid Eshtrati, Elina Rahimi, Helia Asghari, Zeinab Shams, Kimia Rostami, Parinaz Hajipour, Fatemeh Yari, Saba Seraji, Elina Monsef, Melika Karimi, Melika Abbasi, Fatemeh Jamalifar, Effat Ranjbar, and Elina Ebrahimi.

The men's selection tournament will take place from June 17 to 19, while the dates for the women's trials have yet to be finalized.

Iran volleyball prospect Hosseini on verge of Perugia move: Report

Sports Desk

Iranian volleyball prodigy Seyyed Matin Hosseini is closing in on a high-profile move to Italian powerhouse Umbria Volley Perugia, Varzesh3 reported on Sunday. The outside hitter, who played for Iranian club Paykan last season, is expected to have the transfer officially confirmed in the coming days.

If finalized, the move would rank among the most significant overseas transfers involving an Iranian

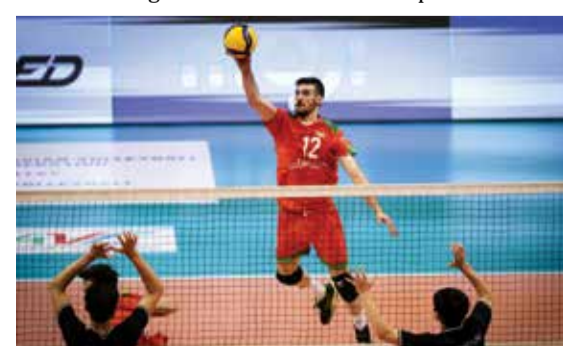
volleyball player in recent years, joining the likes of Amir Ghafour and Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh at Lube Civitanova, Amin Esmailnejad at Verona, Milad Ebadi-pour at Allianz Milano, and legendary setter Saeid Marouf at Zenit Kazan.

Hosseini first rose to international prominence two years ago when he helped Iran win the FIVB Boys' U21 World Championship and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. The young star produced a standout performance in

the final against Italy, particularly with his serving, and reports suggest Perugia's scouts may have begun tracking him during that tournament. Perugia has established itself as one of the world's leading volleyball clubs, winning 10 major titles across domestic, European, and international competitions over the past three seasons, including success at the FIVB Club World Championship last year.

A move to the Italian heavyweights would see Hosseini work under renowned head coach Angelo Lorenzetti – a development that could accelerate the youngster's progress and ultimately benefit the Iranian national team.

According to reports, Hosseini is being lined up as a replacement for Japanese international Yuki Ishikawa, who is expected to leave Perugia for Turkish side Ziraat Bankasi ahead of next season.



● FIVB