

FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League:

Iran eases past Argentina, opens account in preliminaries



Iranian players celebrate a point during a 3-0 win against Argentina at the Volleyball Nations League in Brasilia, Brazil, on June 12, 2026.

● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

Sports Desk

Iran defeated Argentina in straight sets (25-23, 25-19, 25-23) on Friday to get off the mark in Week 1 of the FIVB Men's Volleyball Nations League in Brasilia, Brazil.

Opposite spiker Ali Hajipour topped the scoring for Iran with 22 points, including three aces, while outside hitter Pouria Hosseinkhanzadeh added 19. Middle blocker Mohammad Valizadeh also made a valuable contribution with eight points.

Outside hitter Fausto Díaz was Argentina's top scorer with 12

points, while opposite Germán Alfredo Gómez (11 points) and Luciano Vicentin (10) also finished in double figures.

The victory, Iran's first in three matches, lifted Roberto Piazza's side to 13th in the 18-team preliminary standings. Argentina, meanwhile, sits second from bottom after suffering its second defeat in as many matches.

"The players showed they could perform better than they had in the previous two matches," Iran head coach Roberto Piazza said after the game, while acknowledging there was still room for improvement.

Iran began its preliminary-round campaign with a 3-1 defeat (25-21, 23-25, 25-15, 25-23) to South American powerhouse Brazil on Wednesday before a below-par performance saw Piazza's side fall in straight sets (25-23, 25-19, 25-21) to Bulgaria the following day at the Nilson Nelson Gymnasium. Asked what contributed to his team's improvement from the previous two games, the Italian said: "Nothing special happened. We simply talked a little because the players need to believe that they are truly strong. But you can only be strong when you play together and perform as a team."

"It was not a perfect performance, but we accepted certain mistakes. Yesterday and the day before, there were moments when we were genuinely ridiculous because we made errors that should never have happened, and that is not acceptable. Volleyball is part of life, and making mistakes is also part of life." Commenting on the performance of Iranian setter Arshia Behnejad, Piazza said: "Arshia was excellent today. He was excellent yesterday, and he was excellent two days ago as well. There is no problem — he just needs to keep going."

"Tomorrow we will rest, and on Sunday we have a tough opponent and a difficult match against Belgium. It will be a challenging game."

Belgium also heads into the final day of Week 1 action with a 1-2 record, having beaten Bulgaria 3-1 in its opener before suffering back-to-back defeats to Brazil and Serbia, both in four sets.

Iran will travel to Orléans, France, for the second week of competition, beginning with a daunting test against the host nation and reigning Olympic champion France at the CO'Met Arena on June 24. That will be followed

by matches against the United States (June 25), Japan (June 26) and Cuba (June 28).

The third and final week of the preliminary phase will see Iran — chasing its first VNL Finals appearance in four years — face Ukraine in Belgrade on July 15, followed by matches against Germany (July 16), Slovenia (July 17) and Türkiye (July 19).

The top eight teams in the 18-team standings will advance to the VNL Finals, which begin in Ningbo Beilun, China, on July 29. China has already secured a place in the quarterfinals as the host nation.

FISU World University Championship Combat Sports:

Greco-Roman glory as Iran completes men's title double

Sports Desk

Iranian wrestlers dominated the Greco-Roman competition with nine medals, including five golds, as the country completed a men's team title double at the FISU World University Championship Combat Sports in Brasilia, Brazil. Morteza Alghosi capped Iran's Greco-Roman campaign in style on Friday, defeating Russian wrestler Aleksandr Melekhov — competing as a neutral athlete — in the 130kg final to claim the gold medal.

Amirreza Dehbozorgi opened Iran's gold account on the final day by beating Daniel Tebloev — also competing as a neutral athlete — in the 60kg final, before Mohammad Kamali outmuscled Türkiye's Servet Angi to take gold in the 67kg division. Mohammad Naghousi suffered defeat to Moldova's Alexandru Solovei in the 77kg final and had to settle for silver.

Friday's results came after Mahdi Kamali had secured gold in the 55kg category a day earlier, thanks to back-to-back victories

over French and Brazilian opponents in a three-man Nordic-format bracket, while Hojjat Rezaei finished atop the podium in the 72kg division.

Reza Bahmani, meanwhile, settled for silver in the 63kg class after losing to Russian wrestler Ruslan Mamedov in the final, while Reza Azarshab (82kg) and Shayan Habibzareh (97kg) added two bronze medals to Iran's haul. A remarkable tally of 10 medals, including seven golds, in as many weight classes had already helped Iran dominate the freestyle com-

petition earlier in the Brazilian capital.

Mahdi Veisi (57kg), Mahdi Rahimi (61kg), Mohammadreza Hosseini (65kg), Mohammad Bakhshi (70kg), Adel Panahian (79kg), Mohammad-Javad Salehi (92kg), and Erfan Alizadeh (97kg) were the gold medalists for Iran in the freestyle event.

Mohammad-Hossein Norouzian (86kg) and Morteza Janmohammadzadeh (125kg) claimed silver medals in their respective categories, while Mahdi Abbaspour took bronze in the 74kg division.



● FISU

IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships:

Iran drawn against Canada, Germany, Morocco in group phase

Iran's men's team has been drawn alongside host Canada, Germany and Morocco in Group D of the upcoming IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships, which will begin on September 9 in Ottawa, Ontario.

The draw for the tournament, which will serve as the first qualification event for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympic Games, saw the 16 participating teams divided into four groups following the conclusion of the IWBF Men's Repechage in Suphan Buri, Thailand, where Iran, Poland, the Netherlands and Brazil secured the remaining berths for the world championships.

Defending champion USA has been drawn in Group A alongside Italy, Brazil and the Netherlands, while two-time champion Australia will face Great Britain, Türkiye and Argentina in Group B. Spain, Japan, Poland and Colombia

make up Group C.

Iran completed a clean sweep of three victories in Suphan Buri. The Iranian side opened its campaign with an emphatic 77-24 victory over Senegal before defeating Brazil 75-63 the following day at the Suphan Buri Indoor Stadium. An 81-59 win over Poland then saw Iran finish atop the Group B standings. Under the tournament

format, the top team in each group was scheduled to face the bottom-placed team from the opposite group, while the runners-up were to meet the third-placed team from the other pool. The winners of the four crossover matches would qualify for the World Championships. However, Iran was awarded direct qualification after Venezuela's late withdrawal from the tournament left Group A without a fourth-placed team.

Iran achieved its best result in three appearances at the world championships in the previous edition in Dubai, claiming the bronze medal with a 72-54 victory over the Netherlands in the third-place playoff.

The 14th edition of the World Championships, held every four years, will bring together 336 athletes from 28 teams — including 12 women's teams — from around the world in Ottawa.



● IWBF

Iranian gymnastics team heads to China for Asian Championships

Sports Desk

Iran's five-man squad departed for China on Friday ahead of the AGU Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships, which will begin on Thursday in the Chinese city of Zunyi.

Mahdi Olfati — winner of a historic Asian vault gold medal last year — will headline the Iranian roster at the competition, which also serves as a qualification pathway for September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Japan.

A men's vault finalist at the Paris 2024 Olympics, Olfati will be joined by Mahdi Ahmadkohani, Hooman Jafari, Amirabbas Mojahed and Mohammadreza Hamidi.

Hamidi was a late addition to the squad after Mohammad Khosrownejad sustained a ligament injury ear-

lier this month and was ruled out of the continental event.

Ahmadkohani, meanwhile, will be looking to make a strong return to international competition after serving a 24-month suspension imposed by the International Testing Agency (ITA). The ban, which expired on February 21, was handed down after the Iranian gymnast — a two-time rings silver medalist in the 2023 FIG World Cup series — accrued three whereabouts failures within a 12-month period. Ahmadkohani has denied any wrongdoing, insisting that he "had not entered the necessary information on the anti-doping website regarding my residence and training location, which led to my suspension."

The Iranian team will be coached by Reza Kheirkhah at the Asian Championships.



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