

# Iran to dispatch 282 athletes to Asian Games

## Sports Desk

Iran will be represented by 282 athletes at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games, the country's National Olympic Committee (NOC) announced on Tuesday.

The figure was confirmed "following a thorough technical review, an assessment of the national federations' performance, the athletes' state of preparedness, and their prospects for success," the Iranian NOC said. Named "Angels of Minab" in memory of the 168 victims, including 120 schoolchildren, killed in a U.S.-Israeli airstrike on Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School in Minab, southern

Iran, on February 28, the Iranian delegation will comprise 191 men and 91 women competing across 39 sports.

The 20th edition of the continental multi-sport event will open at Paloma Mizuho Stadium on September 19.

Wrestling, Iran's most successful discipline at the Asian Games with 155 medals, including 74 gold medals, will feature 12 Iranian men competing in freestyle and Greco-Roman events. Other leading medal hopes include taekwondo (10 athletes), karate (9), wushu (12), and weightlifting (8). Iran will also look to build on strong recent performances and surprise podium finishes in table tennis, sport climbing,

kurash, rowing, chess, fencing, athletics, canoeing, gymnastics, and beach volleyball.

The men's volleyball team will spearhead Iran's medal challenge in the team events, although it faces a daunting task in its bid for a fourth consecutive gold medal, with hosts Japan entering the tournament as favorites.

Iran will also compete for medals in the team events of kabad, basketball, football, and water polo.

At the previous Asian Games in China, Iran fielded 289 athletes – 211 men and 78 women – and finished seventh in the medals table with 13 gold, 21 silver, and 20 bronze medals, its lowest placing



in five editions of the Games. The country's most successful campaign came at Tehran 1974, where it won a record 81 medals, including an all-time high of 36 gold medals, to finish runner-up to Japan in the overall

standings.

In more recent editions of the Games, Iran's best finish came at Guangzhou 2010, where it placed fourth with a haul of 20 gold, 15 silver, and 24 bronze medals.



Paloma Mizuho Stadium will host the opening ceremony of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games on September 19.  
● YUICHI YAMAZAKI/AFP

## FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers:

### Iran captain Kazemi hails Syria win, confident ahead of Jordan clash



Iran captain Arsalan Kazemi (14) is seen in action during a victory over Syria in the FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, on June 29, 2026.  
● FIBA

## Sports Desk

Iran captain Arsalan Kazemi praised the national basketball team for overcoming a series of setbacks to secure a hard-fought victory over Syria in the FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers, while expressing confidence ahead of today's top-of-the-table Group C clash against Jordan in Amman.

In a rescheduled meeting from the second qualifying window, Iran survived a third-quarter scare to beat Syria 72-68 in the Jordanian capital on Monday, improving to 3-1 and joining Jordan, which routed Iraq 108-59 to maintain its perfect record, in advancing to the second round.

Iran led by 11 points in the first half before the tables turned after the break, as Syria outscored the Iranians 25-12 in the third quarter. Iran responded by finishing strongly in the final 10 minutes to stave off a major upset.

Shooting guard Piter Girgoorian led Iran with 18 points, while Matin Aqajpour added 17. Syria's American-born guard Donte McGill led all scorers with 19.

"It was a very tough game.

Many of our national team players had not played a competitive match for nearly four months, and that made our preparations difficult," Kazemi, who finished with three points and 12 rebounds, said, describing Iran's disrupted buildup amid the wartime conditions at home.

"When we reached Jordan, a number of players came down with food poisoning," said the 36-year-old power forward, adding: "At one point, we were worried we might not even have 12 players available for the game against Syria, but thanks to the efforts of the players and the medical staff, we managed to field a full roster."

He added that Syria had strengthened its squad by naturalizing a foreign-born player, while lamenting Iran's poor start to the third quarter, which made the contest even more challenging.

"The players' efforts ultimately paid off in the closing stages and we managed to come away with the victory. Every World Cup qualifying game is extremely important." Looking ahead to the meeting with Jordan, Kazemi acknowl-

edged the hosts' quality but backed Iran to emerge victorious and make amends for the 73-60 defeat when the two sides met in February.

"Jordan has some very good players, but we have a strong team as well. If our players perform anywhere near their true level, we can beat them," Kazemi said.

"The last time we played them, the players were on the court, but because of the situation in our country, their minds were elsewhere. I hope we can execute the coaching staff's game plan perfectly on Thursday and make our people happy by beating Jordan in front of its home fans."

Under the qualification format, the top three teams from each of the four first-round groups will progress to the second round. The 12 advancing teams will be divided into two groups – with Group A paired with Group C, and Group B with Group D – carrying forward results against fellow qualifiers. The top three teams from each second-round group, along with the best fourth-placed side, will secure spots at the 2027 World Cup in Qatar.

## Asian Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship:

### Iran coach Qahremani rues 'individual errors' in Philippines defeat

## Sports Desk

Iran head coach Akram Qahremani attributed her side's opening defeat at the Asian Girls' U18 Volleyball Championship to "individual errors," saying the Iranian team lacks experience in official international competition. Iran opened its Pool C campaign in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, with a 3-1 defeat (25-19, 19-25, 25-23, 25-18) to the Philippines on Wednesday.

"Our biggest problem was the players' individual mistakes, and we also had difficulties with our serving. The team committed too many service errors," Qahremani said after the match. The Iranian coach noted that the Philippines entered the tournament with a competitive advantage after taking part in the Princess Cup in Thailand, which was held ahead of the Asian Championship.

"The Philippines had already played several matches at the competition venue, whereas our team had only one hour of training in the hall. That made them more cohesive and better organized than us

during the match," she said. Qahremani added that her team had not had enough warm-up matches ahead of the tournament and said the coaching staff would focus on reducing individual errors before today's fixture against Indonesia. "Unfortunately, we did not have many preparation matches. We will work on minimizing the players' individual mistakes and, based on our analysis of

Indonesia, prepare the team for tomorrow's match."

Iran will conclude the preliminary round against record nine-time champion Japan on Friday. The top two teams from each of the four pools will advance to the quarterfinals, while the remaining sides will compete in the 9th-16th place classification matches. Iran recorded its best finish in eight appearances at the previous edition, placing sixth in 2024.



Iranian players are seen in action during a Pool C game against the Philippines at the Asian U18 Girls' Volleyball Championship in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand, on July 1, 2026.  
● SEPIDEH ABDOLHAY/volleyball.ir

## Polyak Imre, Varga Janos & Kozma Istvan Memorial:

### Iran names freestyle quartet for Ranking Series event

## Sports Desk

Iran has entered four freestyle wrestlers for the fourth and final United World Wrestling (UWW) Ranking Series event of the 2026 season, with the tournament in Budapest offering the last opportunity to earn ranking points ahead of October's World Championships.

The Polyak Imre, Varga Janos & Kozma Istvan Memorial—named after three Hungarian wrestling greats—will be held in the Hungarian capital from July 15 to 19, although UWW has said the entry lists remain

subject to change until 72 hours before the start of each Greco-Roman and freestyle competition.

Iran's preliminary squad features two wrestlers in the 65kg division—former world U23 bronze medalist Abbas Ebrahimzadeh and 2024 world U20 champion Ali Khorramdel—alongside Ebrahim Elahi at 70kg and Ali Savadkouhi at 86kg.

The 65kg category is expected to be among the most competitive of the tournament. In addition to the two Iranians, the field includes American stars Vitali Arujau and Beau Bartlett,

Bulgaria's Shamil Mamedov, Kazakhstan's Nachyn Kuular and Canada's Iran-born Peiman Biabani, raising the possibility of an all-Iranian showdown should both progress deep into the draw.

Elahi also faces a daunting challenge in the 70kg class, where the leading contenders include Islam Dudaev, Ismail Musukaev, Ridge Lovett and Alec Pantaleo. At 86kg, Savadkouhi could come up against four-time world champion Kyle Dake, fellow American Zahid Valencia and Azerbaijan's Arseniy Dzhoiev in one of the tournament's strongest weight classes.