

Asian U20 Wrestling Championships: Iran wins nine medals to secure Greco-Roman title

Sports Desk

Iran dominated the Greco-Roman competition at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships, collecting nine medals – including five golds – across the 10 weight classes to claim the team title in Pattaya, Thailand.

It would have been an even more emphatic campaign for the Iranian team had Amir-Mahdi Saeidi-Nava not been disqualified for unsportsmanlike conduct following his 7-3 semifinal victory over Kazakhstan's Bakdaulet Tursynbek in the 77kg division.

The medal haul still saw Iran fin-

ish atop the standings with 190 points, 22 clear of runner-up Uzbekistan, while Kyrgyzstan placed third with 166.

Amirsam Mohammadi brought the curtain down on a glorious campaign for Iran on Thursday by defeating India's Akshay Rana by technical superiority (8-0) in the 97kg final, outscoring his opponents 30-0 across four bouts.

Alireza Mohammad-Hosseini claimed Iran's fourth gold medal earlier on Thursday, cruising past Kazakhstan's Yerkebulan Anapiya 10-1 in the 82kg final. Mohammad Kazemi, meanwhile, had to settle for silver in the

72kg division after suffering a technical fall while trailing 4-1 against Kyrgyzstan's Yrlybek Khamdamov in the final.

Thursday's results came after Iran had claimed three gold medals through Armin Shamsipour, Ali Gharibi, and Amirhossein Abdevali on the opening day of the competition.

Shamsipour thrashed Uzbekistan's Otabek Tursanov 8-0 in the 55kg final, while Gharibi defeated China's Zhaojian Wang 8-1 to take the title in the 63kg category.

Abdevali, meanwhile, maintained Iran's traditional dominance in the super heavyweight



Iran's Ali Gharibi (red) is seen in action during his Greco-Roman 63kg final victory against China's Zhaojian Wang at the Asian U20 Wrestling Championships in Pattaya, Thailand, on July 1, 2026.

● IAWFIR

division by defeating Turkmenistan's Aslan Agadadayev 7-1 in the 130kg final.

Elsewhere, Amirali Heidari (60kg), Mohammadreza Gholami (67kg), and Amirhossein Nematzadeh (87kg) added three bronze medals to Iran's tally.

Heidari bounced back from a 6-3 quarterfinal defeat to Kyrgyzstan's Alkham Abdirasulov to edge China's Lijun Bi 2-1, while Gholami – who had suffered a 9-1 semifinal defeat to Uzbekistan's Ogabek Mukimov – beat Mongolia's Otgonnasan Tseren-

puntsag 5-2 in the bronze-medal bout.

Nematzadeh recovered from a 6-3 semifinal loss to Kazakhstan's Alikhan Tagayev to defeat China's Qiangle Wang by technical superiority (8-0) and secure the bronze medal.



Iran captain Arsalan Kazemi (14) goes up for a basket during a victory over Jordan in the FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan, on July 2, 2026.

● FIBA

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Iran avenged its February defeat to Jordan with a commanding 67-49 victory at Prince Hamza Arena in Amman, leading for more than 37 minutes and never allowing the hosts to mount a serious challenge after the opening exchanges.

The victory lifted Iran to the top of Group C with a 4-1 record in the first round of the FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers.

The turning point came early in the opening quarter. With 7:07 remaining, forward Arsalan Kazemi finished a fast-break layup to tie the game at 2-2. Just over a minute later, with 6:05 left,

Seyyed Mahdi Jafari drove baseline and converted a reverse layup to give Iran a 5-2 lead – an advantage it would never surrender.

During a decisive stretch from 8:36 to 5:30 of the first quarter, Iran outscored Jordan 7-2, controlled the boards with five rebounds, and committed no turn-

FIBA World Cup Asian Qualifiers:

Iran avenges Jordan loss in style to go top in Group C

overs. Jordan managed just one field goal from five attempts and failed to record either an assist or a turnover during that span, as Iran's composure set the tone for the remainder of the contest. Kazemi anchored Iran's effort at both ends of the floor, finishing with seven points, 11 rebounds, and seven assists in 32:04. His 20 efficiency rating and +11 plus/minus reflected his influence whenever he was on the court. Guard Mohammad Mahdi Heydari led all Iranian scorers with 17 points, adding two rebounds and four assists in 28:41 while shooting 7-of-11 from two-point range. Mobin Sheikhi contributed 13 points, four rebounds, one assist, and three steals in 26:14, knocking down four of his nine three-point attempts. Off the bench, Salar Monji chipped in five points and seven rebounds, posting an efficiency rating of 11 and a game-best +20 in just 15:41.

For Jordan, Ahmad Al Dwairi recorded a double-double with 17 points and 11 rebounds in 34:44, while also adding one assist, one block, and a 20 efficiency rating. However, his efforts were not enough to ignite a comeback. Iran's biggest run came in the first quarter, when it reeled off seven unanswered points in just 1:37 to overturn a 2-0 deficit into a 7-2 lead. Kazemi sparked the surge with five points on perfect 2-of-2 shooting while grabbing a rebound. Jordan's only lead was 2-0 with 8:36 remaining in the opening quarter. Iran's largest advantage reached 25-16 with 4:37 left in the second period before the visitors steadily extended the margin. Iran led for 37:07, while Jordan was in front for only 1:29. The game was tied for 1:24. Iran held a 17-11 advantage after the opening quarter before extending its lead to 29-22 at halftime. The visitors effectively

put the game away in the third quarter by stretching the margin into double digits, and although Jordan edged the final period, the outcome was never in doubt. Iran will conclude the first round of qualifying against Syria in Amman on Sunday.

In a rescheduled second-window fixture, Iran defeated Syria 72-68 in Amman last Monday to secure a top-two finish in the group and book its place in the second round.

Under the qualification format, the top three teams from each of the four first-round groups advance to the second round. The 12 qualifiers will be divided into two groups, with Group A paired with Group C and Group B with Group D, while carrying over results against fellow qualifiers. The top three teams from each second-round group, along with the best fourth-placed team, will qualify for the 2027 FIBA Basketball World Cup in Qatar.

Bam Khatoon to face Al Nassr in AWCL preliminaries

Sports Desk

Iranian top-flight champion Bam Khatoon has been drawn alongside Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr Club, Tajikistan's FC CSKA Dushanbe and Jordan's Etihad Club in Group E of the preliminary round of the upcoming AFC Women's Champions League.

The draw for the new season of Asia's premier women's club competition took place at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Thursday, with 24 teams divided into six preliminary groups. All Group E matches will be played in Hisor, Tajikistan.

Khatoon will open its campaign against CSKA on Aug. 17 before facing Al Nassr three days later at Hisor Central Stadium, followed by its final group match against Etihad on Aug. 23. The six group winners will join the

six clubs that qualified directly for the competition: defending champion Naegohyang Women's FC (PRK) and the five highest-ranked teams—Melbourne City FC (AUS), Hwacheon KSPO WFC (KOR), INAC Kobe Leonessa (JPN), Beijing Jingtan Football Club (CHN) and Ho Chi Minh City Women's FC (VIE). Khatoon, the dominant force in Iran's domestic league with a record 11 titles, is set for a new era following the departure of AFC Women's Coach of the Year Marziyeh Jafari.

Under Jafari, Khatoon reached the quarterfinals of the inaugural edition of the competition in the 2024-25 season before suffering a 1-0 defeat to South Korea's Incheon Red Angels. Last season, however, the Iranian champion fell to an early exit after finishing bottom of Group B with three points. Elsewhere, Group A, to be host-

ed by Malaysia's Sabah FA, also features India's East Bengal FC, Guam's Rovers FC and Bangladesh's Rajshahi Stars FC, while Kyrgyz Republic's FC Ilbirs will host Group B, which includes the Philippines' Kaya FC-Iloilo, Hong Kong's TSL FC and Cambodia's Phnom Penh Crown FC. Group C will see the UAE's Banaat FC, hosts PFC Nasaf of Uzbekistan, Laos' Master FC and Bhutan's Royal Thimphu College FC compete for the lone qualifying berth, while hosts College of Asian Scholars of Thailand, DPR Korea's 4.25 SC, Mongolia's Kharaatsai FC and Timor-Leste's S'Amuser FC make up Group D.

Group F consists of Chinese Taipei's New Taipei City Hang Yuan FC, hosts Ayeyawady FC Women of Myanmar, Singapore's FC Jurong and Lebanon's No Limits FC, with only the group winner advancing.



● AFC