

Sitting Volleyball World Championships: Iran claims record-extending ninth men's title



Sports Desk

Iran's men's team defeated Bosnia & Herzegovina 3-1 (25-21, 25-20, 20-25, 25-16) on Friday to win the Sitting Volleyball World Championships in Hangzhou, China, cementing its status as the most decorated team in the history of the Iranian sport.

The victory also secured Iran's qualification for the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics, where it will chase a record-extending ninth gold medal.

Meisam Alipour spearheaded Iran's attack with a match-high 24 points, including an impressive seven aces, while Morteza Mehrzad added 23 as Iran retained its dominance by claiming a record-extending ninth men's world title – its third in a row – in the 14 editions of the global showpiece. Sadeq Bigdeli and Hossein Go-

lestani contributed nine points apiece for Iran, while Mirzet Duran led Bosnia & Herzegovina with 17 points. Safet Alibasic (14) and Ermin Jusufovic (10) also reached double figures for the European side.

Friday's victory was Iran's second over its familiar rival in Hangzhou, following a 3-1 win in the pool stage. It also marked Iran's fourth consecutive victory over Bosnia & Herzegovina in a major final, having also prevailed in the title showdowns in 2018 and 2022, as well as the gold-medal contest at the Paris 2024 Paralympics.

Iran was in a league of its own throughout the tournament, conceding only three sets in seven matches.

Iran began its Pool D campaign with a comeback 3-1 victory over Poland before defeating Bosnia & Herzegovina. A comfortable

straight-set win against Japan then secured top spot in the group and a place in the round of 16 for head coach Hadi Rezaei's side.

Iran went on to sweep Croatia before defeating the United States and Kazakhstan in straight sets to book another final meeting with Bosnia & Herzegovina.

Meisam Hajbabaie, Hamidreza Abbasi, Mahdi Babadi, Ali Akbari, Davoud Alipourian, Masoud Emami, Mohammad Nemati and Jamal Nazari were the other members of Iran's squad at the World Championships.



Iranian players and coaching staff celebrate after winning the men's title at the Sitting Volleyball World Championships in Hangzhou, China, on July 17, 2026.

● FLICKR

WT World Cup Team Championships: Iran crushes Russia to secure mixed crown

Sports Desk

Iran capped off the World Taekwondo World Cup Team Championships on a high by securing the mixed team title in Chuncheon, South Korea, thanks to an emphatic straight-round victory over Russia on Thursday.

Mohammad Hossein Yazdani, Amirina Bakhtiari, Hasti Mohammadi, Amirreza Sadeqian, Abbasali Keshi, Yalda Valinejad and Baran Nemati all featured for Iran, which had begun its campaign with a comeback victory over Morocco before defeating Thai-

land in successive rounds to book a place in the final.

Iran took control from the outset of the final and never relinquished its advantage. The opening round was closely contested early on, but the Iranians gradually established their superiority through disciplined performances and timely substitutions by coaching duo Mehrouz Saei and Payam Khanlarkhani. Maintaining the initiative throughout the round, Iran secured a 75-60 victory to move within one round of the title.

The second round was even more one-sided as Iran raced into an early lead and gave Russia little opportunity to respond. Launching a series of relentless attacks while displaying clear technical superiority, the Iranian team widened the gap throughout the contest before cruising to a commanding 115-25 victory.

The triumph marked a second medal for the female members of the Iranian squad, who had claimed a bronze medal in the women's event on the previous day of the competition in

Chuncheon.

After opening with a victory over India, the Iranian women rebounded from a semifinal defeat to Russia by beating Thailand in straight rounds in the bronze-medal contest.

The opening day of the tournament, however, proved disappointing for Iran, as the men's team suffered a shock first-round defeat to Thailand, missing out on a record-extending seventh title. The three-day tournament will be followed by the Korea Open G1, which gets underway on Friday in Chuncheon.



Iranian mixed team members offer a military salute on the podium after winning the gold medal at the World Taekwondo World Cup Team Championships in Chuncheon, South Korea, on July 16, 2026.

● WORLD TAEKWONDO

Asian Cadet Judo Championships: Historic feat as Shakibaei wins women's gold

Sports Desk

Iran's Mahsa Shakibaei made history by winning the country's first-ever gold medal at the Asian Cadet Judo Championships on Thursday. The teenage judoka achieved the milestone with a victory

over Chinese Taipei's Lin Pei-Hsin in the women's -52kg final in Amman, Jordan.

Shakibaei produced a series of commanding performances to stand atop the podium, opening her campaign with a victory over Uzbekistan's

Kumushbibi Ergasheva to advance to the semifinals. She then defeated Syria's Sham Almawardi to book her place in the gold-medal contest.

The triumph adds to an already impressive résumé for Shakibaei, who also won gold at last year's Asian Youth Games in Bahrain, further underlining her status as one of the country's brightest young prospects. Elsewhere, Iran's Reza Nejadkachiani finished empty-handed in the men's -55kg division.

The Iranian opened with a victory over Kuwait's Hussain Mumen before defeating Kyrgyzstan's Ramis Asilbekov to reach the quarterfinals.

His run was halted by another Kyrgyz opponent, Baiel Ismailov, who prevailed in the last-eight contest and sent the Iranian into the repechage.

Nejadkachiani kept his medal hopes alive by defeating Jordan's Wissam Eiealslman in his opening repechage bout. However, he fell to Saudi Arabia's Mutaz Hebah in his next contest, ending his campaign just short of the bronze-medal bout.



Iran's Mahsa Shakibaei (c) poses with her women's -52kg gold medal at the Asian Cadet Judo Championships in Amman, Jordan, on July 16, 2026.

● IRIJF

Asian Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship: Iran edges host China in five-set thriller to advance to final

Sports Desk

Iran came from behind to beat host China 3-2 (18-25, 25-14, 25-21, 23-25, 15-11) on Friday and secure a place in Saturday's final at the AVC Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship in Haikou. Abolfazl Pasha-Amiri led the scoring for Iran with 20 points as the team finished the match with 106

points, including 52 from attacks, 11 blocks and six aces, while capitalizing on 37 points from Chinese errors to avenge its five-set defeat to the host in the 2024 final in Manama. Playing in front of a vocal home crowd at the Haikou Wuyuan River Gymnasium, head coach Abdolreza Alizadeh's youthful side—most of whom are

competing in their first international tournament—overcame a hostile atmosphere to extend its unbeaten run and remain on course for a record-extending eighth continental title, which would be its first since 2014.

Iran has also claimed three silver medals (2003, 2022 and 2024) and one bronze (2018) in the pre-

vious 14 editions of the tournament.

Iran completed a clean sweep in Pool B, defeating the Philippines and India in straight sets on either side of a 3-1 victory over Bahrain to progress to the quarterfinals.

Alizadeh's side then defeated South Korea 3-1 (25-19, 25-19, 11-25, 25-18) on Thursday to reach the semifinals and secure qualification for next year's FIVB Boys' U19 World Championship, alongside China, Japan and Chinese Taipei. Iran will be looking to add to its two world titles, won in 2007 and 2017, after finishing fourth at the previous edition in Tashkent in 2025.

Kamyab Abdollahifar, Amir Ali Shams, Milad Salari, Ali Sheikhzadeh, Abolfazl Pasha-Amiri and Pedram Heydarisefat started for Iran, while Nima Piri, Sajjad Asadi, Amir Mohammad Hemmati, Amirreza Hosseinzadeh, Arash Qahremani, Alireza Valaei, Benyamin Olfat and Aydin Choudar also featured during the semifinal victory.



Iranian players celebrate a point during a semifinal victory over China at the Asian Boys' U18 Volleyball Championship in Haikou, China, on July 17, 2026.

● AVC