

U17 Wrestling World Championships:

Ferasati wins gold as Iran gains early momentum in FS title race

Sports Desk

Iran's bid for a first freestyle team title in three years at the U17 Wrestling World Championships got off to a strong start in Baku as the country collected four medals, including one gold, across five weight classes on Saturday. The medal haul gave Iran an early lead in the team standings with 75 points, four ahead of Russia and five clear of Uzbekistan, at the end of the penultimate day of competition in the Azerbaijani capital. Amirali Ferasati headlined Iran's medal haul in the evening session by claiming gold in the 80kg class. The U17 Asian champion from May capped a dominant campaign, in which he outscored his opponents

33-2 across four bouts, with a 10-0 superiority victory over Hungary's Zeteny Tugyi in the final. Amirhossein Esmali was the other Iranian finalist of the day, settling for silver after a 7-4 defeat to Russia's Magomed Omarov in a thrilling 110kg final, adding to the superheavyweight silver medal he won at the U17 Asian Championships in Da Nang, Vietnam. Elsewhere, Arman Elahi (55kg) and Sam Arshad (65kg) claimed bronze medals in their respective divisions through the repechage. Elahi, who also entered the competition as the reigning Asian champion, suffered a 5-1 quarterfinal defeat to Jakhongir Tulkunov but was handed a second chance at a podium finish after the Uzbekistani

advanced to the final. The Iranian outclassed Hungary's Kyryl Shumeiko 7-0 in his first repechage bout before defeating Armenia's Davit Baleyan 5-2 in the bronze-medal match to finish joint third alongside India's Prathmesh Suryakant Patil. Colombia's Jovanni Fernando Tovar emerged as the surprise gold medalist in the 55kg class after a commanding 11-0 victory over Tulkunov in the final. Arshad, meanwhile, powered into the semifinals with three successive superiority wins but fell 5-4 to Uzbekistan's Shokhiddin Aliev. The Iranian bounced back with a 9-0 victory over Kazakhstan's Zamir Daniyar in the bronze-medal bout. Puerto Rico's Jovani Isa-

ias Solis claimed the other bronze medal, while Russia's Magomed Ibragimov defeated Aliev 12-6 to secure his country's second gold medal of the day. Amirali Ragheb was the other Iranian wrestler in action across the opening five weight classes, finishing empty-handed in the 48kg division after back-to-back defeats to India's Aaryan (10-0) and Azerbaijan's Huseyn Rzazade. The freestyle competition follows a disappointing Greco-Roman campaign for Iran in Baku last week, with the traditional powerhouse missing out on the team title for the first time in five editions. Amirreza Tahmasbpour and Alireza Rezaei won gold in the 60kg and 80kg

classes, respectively, while Amirreza Mehri (92kg) and Ali-Akbar Akou (110kg) added bronze medals as Iran finished third in the team standings with 96 points. Russia, eligible for team points for the first time since the 2021 edition, claimed the title with 127 points, while host Azerbaijan finished runner-up with 107 despite failing to win a single gold medal across the 10 weight classes.



Amirali Ferasati celebrates with the Iranian flag after claiming the freestyle 80kg gold medal at the U17 Wrestling World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan, on August 1, 2026.
● IAWFIR

Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships:

Iran names 26-member squad for Tashkent event

Sports Desk

Iran will be represented by 12 male and 14 female lifters across the two age groups at the upcoming Asian Youth & Junior Weightlifting Championships, which will kick off on Friday in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, the Iranian Weightlifting Federation has confirmed. Iran will return to the competition after missing last year's event in Astana due to wartime circumstances in the country. In the women's competition, Yalda Sharifi and Hajar Moeini will compete in the youth 61kg event, while Maryam Keshtkar is set to contest the junior category



of the weight class. Mehraneh Mokhtari and Mehresa Safavardi have

been selected for the youth 69kg division, while Hanieh Sharifi and Hasti Sedighi

will compete in the junior event. Dina Taqizadeh (junior),

Nasim Qassemi (youth) and Anahita Zarei will compete in the 77kg division, with Zarei entered in both age categories. Mahsa Beheshti will lift in the junior 86kg and youth +77kg categories, looking to build on her impressive international breakthrough at the Islamic Solidarity Games, where she won a clean & jerk gold and two bronze medals. Ava Farhadi will also compete in the youth +77kg event. Hosna Amiri and Roya Nourinejad complete Iran's women's lineup in the junior +86kg class. The men's competition, meanwhile, will see Reza Zamani (youth) and Mehrab Davasari (junior) represent

Iran in the 70kg category. Kian Valipour (youth) and Mohammadamin Dadvand (youth and junior) have been selected for the 85kg division, while Mohammadjavad Beiranvand will compete in both the youth and junior 75kg events. Amirmohammad Rahmati, Hamidreza Zarei, who won two medals at the IWF World Junior Championships in Cairo in May, and Mahdi Asgari will contest the 95kg class, with Rahmati and Zarei entered in the junior competition and Asgari in the youth event. In the heavyweight divisions, Pouria Abbaspourian will compete in the youth +95kg category, while Taha

Nojavan is entered in both the youth +95kg and junior +110kg events. Farhad Qolizadeh, winner of three silver medals in Cairo, will lift in the junior 110kg class, while Taha Nemati Moqaddam – also a three-time silver medalist in the Egyptian capital – will represent Iran in the junior +110kg division. Iran will be aiming for another strong showing at the continental championships after producing a string of medal-winning performances in recent Asian age-group competitions, having won the men's junior team title in its previous appearance at the event in 2024.

Iran saber coach unfazed by poor World Ch'ships run, eyes Asian Games glory

Sports Desk

Iran's men's saber head coach, Mohammad Rahbari, downplayed his team's disappointing campaign at the World Fencing Championships in Hong Kong, insisting his ultimate goal is to deliver a strong performance at September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games. Ali Pakdaman's last-16 finish in the men's individual saber competition stood as Iran's best result in Hong Kong, as Mohammad Fotouhi, Nima Zahedi, and Taha Kargarpour failed to advance beyond the round of 64. Zahedi was beaten 15-13 by Uzbekistan's Sardor Abdurkarimbekov in his second knockout bout, while Kargarpour defeated Ukraine's Oleksiy Statsenko 15-13 before losing 15-11 to Russia's Kamil Ibragimov. Fotouhi suffered a 15-10 de-

feat to Saudi Arabia's Adel Almutairi in the opening knockout round. A 45-35 defeat to Japan for the Iranian quartet of Pakdaman, Fotouhi, Zahedi, and Kargarpour in the opening round of the team event on Thursday summed up the country's dismal campaign in Hong Kong. Pakdaman scored 24 of Iran's 35 points in the contest, while his three teammates combined for the remaining 11. "The results were not good at all and they need to be reviewed," Rahbari told ISNA after the championships. "We will give the fencers a few days of rest and then hold a video conference with our foreign coach, the technical committee, and the coaching staff to make decisions regarding the Asian Games." Rahbari said it was too early to determine whether chang-

es would involve personnel, training methods, or both, adding that a final decision would be made after discussions within the federation's technical committee. Asked about the team's biggest challenge, the former Olympian said Iran was going through a transitional period as it sought to balance the use of experienced athletes with the development of younger talent. "Unfortunately, we are going through a difficult period in saber fencing," he said. "We are in the middle of a generational transition, but at the same time we need experienced fencers for the Asian Games. "Our main target is the Asian Games, and we want to improve our level so that we can win a medal in Nagoya. After the Games, the transition process will be completed and we will rely more on

younger athletes." Rahbari noted that similar rebuilding phases had affected many leading nations, citing Romania as an example. "Romania won Olympic silver in 2012 and then went through a long transition period without major results before claiming a bronze medal at this year's World Championships," he said. "A transition takes time, but with the efforts of our athletes we hope to shorten that process and build a strong team for the Olympics while introducing more talented fencers to senior international competitions." Rahbari won the men's individual saber bronze medal at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games and was also part of the Iranian quartet, alongside Pakdaman and Fotouhi, that claimed bronze in the team event.

