

Davoudi, Yousefi locked in battle for Iran's superheavyweight spot

Sports Desk

Iranian superheavyweight lifters Ali Davoudi and Alireza Yousefi are engaged in an intriguing battle at the national team camp as they look to improve their records ahead of a busy international schedule.

After several years of struggles in the superheavyweight category, coupled with Georgian great Lasha Talakhadze's global dominance, Iran's prospects appear brighter, with both weightlifters continuing to raise their performances.

September's Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games and the World Weightlifting Championships, which begin Oct. 27 in Ningbo, China, are both on the horizon, with the presence of the two strong contenders at the national camp making the competition for a place on the team increasingly intense.

An Olympic silver medalist at Tokyo 2020, Davoudi is eager to bounce back from a quiet couple

of years in his career, which have yielded just a snatch bronze at the 2025 World Championships. Yousefi, meanwhile, is looking to build on his statement comeback from injury at May's Asian Championships, where he collected three medals.

Making his first international appearance in 18 months after recovering from knee surgery, the 22-year-old prodigy, who impressed on his senior debut at the 2024 World Championships by winning clean and jerk gold, claimed the Asian snatch bronze and total silver. But the pinnacle of his campaign came in the clean and jerk, where he set a new world record of 261 kilograms to win gold ahead of high-profile Bahraini Gor Minasyan.

Davoudi has produced better snatch numbers than Yousefi in recent testing sessions and appears to have the edge in the race to represent Iran at the Asian Games. With only the combined total

counting for medals at the continental multi-sport event, Davoudi's stronger snatch gives him an advantage in the selection battle. Yousefi, meanwhile, has been lifting around the 260-kilogram mark in the clean and jerk and is working with head coach and former Olympic superheavyweight champion Behdad Salimi to improve his snatch as he targets a place on the podium in all three disciplines at the World Championships.

The two in-form weightlifters have been pushing each other at the national camp, with their rivalry serving as a positive force as both seek to establish themselves as Iran's leading contender in the category. Whoever comes out on top in the battle will be among the favorites, along with Minasyan, reigning Armenian world champion Varazdat Lalayan and South Korea's Song Yeong-hwan, to reach the podium at the upcoming events as the race for heavyweight supremacy in the post-Talakhadze era continues.



Iranian weightlifters Alireza Yousefi (R) and Ali Davoudi are seen in a training session in Tehran, Iran, on August 8, 2026.



Iranian beach volleyball duo set sights on historic Olympic berth



Iranian beach volleyball duo Alireza Aqajani (L) and Abbas Pourasgari deliver their acceptance speech at the AVC Gala Awards in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 8, 2026.



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Iranian beach volleyball duo Alireza Aqajani and Abbas Pourasgari have set their sights on securing the country's first Olympic berth in the sport after being named among the winners at the inaugural AVC Gala Awards.

The Iranian pair won the Fans' Choice Men's Beach Volleyball Players award through a public vote in July, but had to wait until Saturday's awards ceremony in Bangkok, attended by FIVB President Fabio Azevedo, AVC President Ramon Suzara and Milad Taqavi, head of the Iranian Volleyball Federation, to receive their prizes.

The recognition comes as the Iranian pair prepare for two major targets on the road to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics: the Asian Beach Volleyball Championships, which begin Sept. 2 in Shanghai, China, and serve as an Olympic qualifier, and the subsequent

Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Aqajani said the award was a sign that Iranian beach volleyball was moving in the right direction, crediting the federation for its support.

"This valuable trophy shows that beach volleyball is on the right path and that the federation is providing good support for the sport," said Aqajani, who teamed up with Pourasgari to win the men's title at the CAVA Championships last month.

The Iranian added that the pair's ultimate goal was to make history by earning the country's first Olympic qualification in beach volleyball at Los Angeles 2028.

"We have gone through many competitions, and I would like to dedicate this award to the people of Iran, the volleyball community and my family," he said. "I hope we can successfully get through the stages ahead, one by one, so that beach volleyball can qualify for the Olympics

for the first time and win the gold medal at the Asian Championship and the Asian Games."

Aqajani also wished "peace for everyone around the world."

Pourasgari, meanwhile, said the award was the product of years of hard work and competition.

"I am very happy that Abbas and I were among the best at the first Asian gala," he said. "Since 2023, with the federation's support, we have competed in various events and achieved many good results. The result of those efforts and training has brought us to this point, among the best players in Asia."

"We have two very important events ahead of us – the Asian Championships and the Asian Games. I hope we can perform successfully at these competitions and win the best possible medals to make the people of Iran happy and repay the efforts of our families and everyone who works for Iranian beach volleyball."

Javan faces World Championships omission over weight concerns

Sports Desk

Iranian freestyle wrestler Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan has been given a final deadline to resolve his weight issues or risk being dropped from the national team camp ahead of the upcoming World Championships, which will kick off Oct. 24 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Javan, who was selected for the 61kg spot through the national team selection cycle after winning a second successive bronze at the Asian Championships in April, was reportedly found to weigh 68.5 kilograms at the latest

weigh-in at the national camp – around 7.5kg above the category limit.

The former world junior and U23 bronze medalist impressed on his senior Worlds debut last year by winning silver, falling short

against Russian sensation Zavur Uguev in the final, and has been considered one of Iran's leading medal contenders for this year's global event. His weight, however, has now cast doubt over his participation.

"Our intention is not to dismiss Javan," Iran head coach Pejman Dorostkar said on Sunday. "In the previous camp, he was not in suitable condition for a 61kg wrestler. We held a meeting with his personal coach and the team's nutritionist and discussed training and sports nutrition with him."

"We expected Javan to reach his ideal weight in this camp, but unfortunately, he did not follow the recommendations."

Dorostkar added that Javan had effectively received a final warning and would be given until the end of the current camp to improve his condition.

Alireza Dabir, chairman of the Iranian Wrestling Federation, subsequently confirmed that the wrestler had not yet been removed but said the situation was serious.

"He has not been cut yet, but I saw that the national team coaching staff and Pejman Dorostkar took a commitment from him yesterday," Dabir told reporters. "Yes, his weight is high. Even when he wrestled at 57kg, I would not allow him into the camp because of his weight."

Dabir said Javan had been given approximately one week to make significant progress.

"He has given a commitment, and if he does not reduce his weight quickly, he will be dismissed from the national team camp within a week," Dabir said. "We will make no exceptions in this regard, and we already have a replacement for Javan."



YASIN BAHRAMI/IWFFIR

Taremi dropped from Olympiacos squad for UCL qualifier

Sports Desk

Iranian international striker Mahdi Taremi has been omitted from Olympiacos' matchday squad for today's away game against NEC Nijmegen in the third qualifying round of the UEFA Champions League, raising further questions about his immediate future with the Greek giants.

Taremi was also left out of the squad when the two sides played to a goalless draw in the first leg last week in Piraeus, Greece.

Having joined as a free agent from Internazionale last summer, Taremi, 34, struggled to establish himself as a regular starter in an Olympiacos shirt, though he still registered 16 goals – including two Cham-

pions League strikes against Bayer Leverkusen and Real Madrid – and six assists in 39 appearances across all competitions.

With prolific Ayoub El Kaabi serving as the first-choice striker and Ukrainian international Roman Yaremchuk, Clayton and Gelson Martins providing further depth in attack, Taremi's time at Olympiacos could come to a premature end. The Iranian is reportedly said to have informed head coach José Luis Mendilibar that he is unwilling to accept a backup role amid stiff competition for places in the squad.

Ligue 1 club LOSC Lille is considering a move for the Iranian talisman, according to French football news website Foot Mercato.



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