

U20 Wrestling World Championships

Shamsipour saves Iran's Greco-Roman campaign with 55kg gold

Sports Desk

Armin Shamsipour ensured Iran's Greco-Roman squad would finish with a gold medal at the U20 Wrestling World Championships after securing the 55kg title in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Tuesday.

Iran had also settled for a single gold across 10 weight classes last year, which proved enough for a fourth successive Greco-Roman team title. This time, however, the country was left all but out of the title race after Amirali Heidari (60kg) and Alireza Hosseini (82kg) fell short in the semifinals of their respective divisions earlier in the day.

Two years after capturing the imagination of Iranian wrestling with a gold medal at the U17 Worlds, 18-year-old Shamsipour cruised to the top of the podium in the Slovakian capital in style, winning three of his four bouts by technical superiority, while



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Armin Shamsipour celebrates after winning the 55kg gold medal at the U20 World Championships in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Aug. 18, 2026.
● UWW

his semifinal was a close 3-1 affair.

In the final, Shamsipour outclassed Koba Karumidze 12-2, never allowing the Georgian to come close to pulling off an upset.

Shamsipour was on the attack from the outset, lifting Karumidze in par terre and scoring a beautiful four-point throw to take a 5-0 lead into the break.

Karumidze appeared

drained as he engaged more with Shamsipour, who scored an easy go-behind. As he tried to lift and throw the Georgian, however, Shamsipour landed on his own back to con-

cede two points.

Shamsipour did not take his foot off the gas despite leading 7-2 and scored another takedown with 1:22 remaining. Ten seconds later, he added another easy takedown to make it 11-2. Georgia challenged the call but lost the challenge, giving Shamsipour one more point.

"I was in good shape," Shamsipour said. "Based on the coaches' analysis, the plan was for me to start working on his arms from the first period and try to force the first passivity warning. Once I started doing that, I could see that he was really struggling, so I just kept going with the same strategy," added the teen prodigy, who also won gold at the U20 Asian Championships in June.

Among his bouts, the Khuzestan-based wrestler singled out his semifinal against Uzbekistan's Khojakhbar Kuchkarov as his toughest test. Kuchkarov

had beaten Shamsipour 8-0 in the bronze-medal bout at last year's U23 Worlds.

"My toughest opponent was the wrestler from Uzbekistan because I had wrestled him before," he said. "I couldn't afford to take any risks. At the U23 Worlds, I was really upset. But here, I got my revenge."

At the 2024 U17 World Championships, Shamsipour went berserk with his celebrations, but on Tuesday he kept it simple.

"I was younger, I made a lot more noise and showed a lot more excitement after that competition," he said. "This time it was different. I knew I had to stay calm, take it one match at a time, and move forward step by step. Physically, the wrestlers at this level are stronger. Age and weight are both very important factors."

While he is yet to make his senior debut, Shamsipour said his ultimate goal is to qualify for the Los Angeles Olympic Games in two years.

"I hope I can always make my parents proud like this and achieve my dream of winning an Olympic gold medal. The 2028 Olympics is my goal, and that's what I'm focused on right now."

Elsewhere, Asian U20 bronze medalist Heidari claimed three comprehensive victories en route to the semifinals but was edged 4-3 by Azerbaijan's Aykhan Javadov.

Hosseini, meanwhile, also enjoyed an emphatic run to the semifinals before falling 5-1 to Russia's Ramazan Nekhal.

Tuesday's results came after Iran had won three bronze medals through Ali Gharibi (63kg), Mahdi Saeidi-Nava (77kg) and Amirhossein Nematzadeh (87kg) on the preceding day.

Iliya Alikhani fell short in the bronze-medal bout at 67kg, while Ahmadreza Mohammadian (72kg), Amir-sam Mohammadi (97kg) and Amirhossein Abdevali (130kg) suffered early exits.

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Iran's women's team may hardly be among the title favorites at the Asian Volleyball Championship, but will still have much to prove when it gets its Pool A campaign underway against Chinese Taipei in Tianjin, China, on Friday.

The Asian showpiece marks the end of a hectic international season for the Iranian women, who, despite wartime conditions hampering their preparations, claimed a second successive CAVA Championship title in June – only the second gold medal for the national team since it was established in 1963 – but endured a disappointing campaign at the AVC Women's Nations Cup.

Iran suffered three defeats in six outings to finish seventh in the 12-team tournament in Candon, Philippines – the country's lowest finish in four appearances.

The poor result ultimately convinced Iran's sports authorities to leave the team out of the equation for the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya

Asian Games, leaving the young squad desperate for a decent run in Tianjin to prove that the Iranian women's volleyball program remains on the right track following South Korean head coach Lee Do-hee's appointment two years ago.

With an average age of 23.8, Iran possesses one of the youngest rosters at the Asian Championship, though Alireza Toloukian, the team's technical director, believes the youth-oriented rebuilding was a risk worth taking. "Since we have so many young players in the squad, we have also added a few experienced players to create a proper balance, so we are not concerned about that," Toloukian told reporters during the team's final training session in Tehran before departing for the tournament earlier this week.

"Youth development has to be gradual. This has happened as part of the federation's policy for the women's team."

"Considering the level of expectations the federation and the public have developed for

AVC Women's Volleyball Continental Championship:

Young Iranian squad eager to showcase upward trajectory



● MOHAMMAD-JAVAD AMINI/volleyball.ir

Iranian volleyball, rebuilding the women's team with young players was a major gamble. But this had to happen," he said.

"Many years of hard work have gone into women's volleyball, with foreign and Iranian coaches working together and planning for this team.

everything in the short term." Toloukian said the team's immediate goal at the Asian Championship would be to improve on its 10th-place finish in the previous edition, though he acknowledged that closing the gap with Asia's leading teams – including Volleyball Nations League trio Japan and Thailand, as well as record 13-time Asian champion China, which is also in Pool A – would require sustained progress rather than immediate results.

"This will not happen quickly. We have to participate in different competitions, improve our ranking and gradually win more matches," he said.

"We may not be able to catch China, Japan and South Korea at the moment, but first we have to beat teams such as Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Indonesia and Kazakhstan." Iran's opener against Chinese Taipei – runner-up to South Korea at the Nations Cup – will be a repeat of their encounter in the 2023 edition, when the East Asian side won in straight sets in the final classification match.

"We have analyzed Chinese Taipei in detail," Iran captain Shabnam Alikhani said on Tuesday. "They competed in an East Asian event before coming to the Asian Championship and have a high level of cohesion and readiness."

"We also have a very good understanding of them and are following our training program based on that knowledge and analysis."

"In general, East Asian teams are very good in terms of speed and ball reception. Chinese Taipei has been on a good run. They reached the final of the Nations Cup, and because their players have played together for years, they have a good understanding of one another."

Iran will face China in its second game on Monday before concluding the pool phase against debutant Iraq the following day.

The top two teams from each of the three groups will be joined by the best two third-placed teams – based on the AVC's Combined Team Ranking System – in the quarter-finals.

WT President's Cup:

Iran dominates with five kyorugi golds, three bronzes

Sports Desk

Iranian athletes stole the show on the first day of kyorugi competition at the World Taekwondo President's Cup – Asia 2026 in Lahore, Pakistan, collecting a remarkable five gold medals across six men's and women's categories.

There was further success for Iran, as Amir-sina Bakhtiari (men's -74kg), Yalda Valinejad (women's -62kg) and Fatemeh Ahmadi (women's +73kg) added three bronze medals

to the country's haul on Tuesday. Reigning two-time world junior champion Hana Zarrinkamar carried the momentum from her gold-winning run at July's Korea Open to secure the top prize in the women's +73kg division.

Having beaten Ahmadi in an all-Iranian semifinal, the teen prodigy came out on top in straight rounds, 9-6, 4-2, against Uzbekistan's Svetlana Saidova in the final.

Nastaran Valizadeh was the

other Iranian gold medalist in the women's competition, defeating Uzbekistan's Diyorakhon Azizova, who had beaten Valinejad in the semifinals, in straight rounds, 0-0, 12-0, in the -62kg final.

In the men's competition, Abolfazl Zandi lived up to expectations as the reigning senior and U23 world champion, defeating South Korea's An Hyang-sik in straight rounds, 11-6, 12-3, in the -58kg final. The victory added to his gold medal from May's Asian

Championships and his Korea Open triumph. Representing Iran in the -74kg class, Radin Zeinali also claimed gold at the expense of a South Korean opponent in the final, while Olympic champion Arian Salimi rounded out a glorious day for the country with the top prize in the +87kg division.

Salimi began his campaign with a win over host representative Muhammad Farrukh before defeating compatriot Ali Najafi in the semifinals. He then outclassed

South Korea's Park Chan-hui 12-3, 10-1 in the final.

Tuesday's results came after Iranian athletes collected seven medals, including one gold, in the poomsae competition on the opening day in Lahore.

Yasaman Limouchi headlined the medal haul with gold in the recognized category and silver in freestyle in the women's competition, while Mobina Sharifimaher, Yassin Akbari and Morteza Zendedel added three silver and three bronze medals.



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