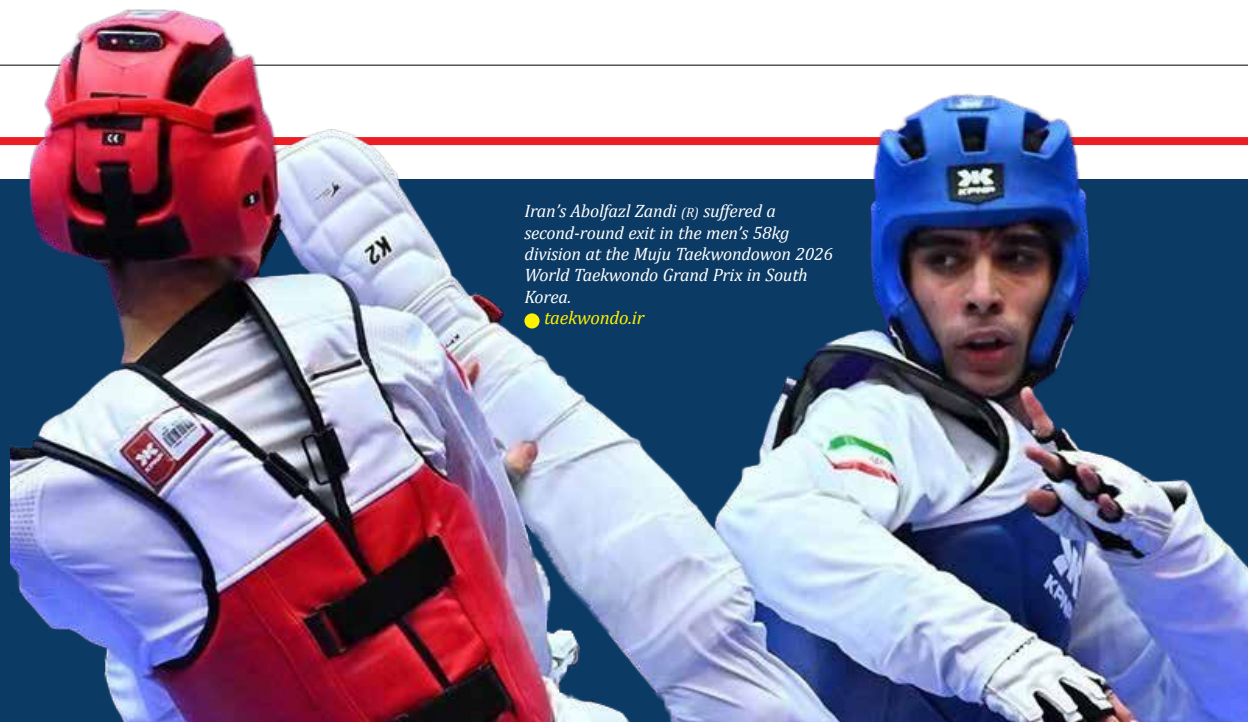


World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series: Zandi, Razmian crash out in second round



Iran's Abolfazl Zandi (R) suffered a second-round exit in the men's 58kg division at the Muju Taekwondowon 2026 World Taekwondo Grand Prix in South Korea.
● taekwondo.ir

Sports Desk

Iran's Abolfazl Zandi and Mahdi Razmian suffered second-round exits in the men's -58kg category on the opening day of the World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series event at Taekwondowon in Muju, South Korea, on Saturday. Reigning world and Olympic champion Zandi opened his campaign with a straight-round victory over Saudi Arabia's Riad Nasser Hamdi before suffering a 2-1 defeat to two-time world champion Bae Jun-seo of South Korea. Razmian, meanwhile, defeated Chinese Taipei's Pan Kuei-en 2-1 in his first outing but was undone by Croatia's Josip Teskera by the same scoreline.

Mehran Barkhordari and Asian champion Amirsina Bakhtiari are the other Iranians in the men's competition in Muju and will get their campaigns underway on Sunday. Olympic silver medalist Nahid Kiani will also be in action on Day 2, looking to bounce back from a shock first-round defeat at the WT Women's Open Championships last week in Taiyuan, China. She will compete in the women's -57kg event. Saturday's results came after Iranians had bagged one gold and two bronze medals at the World Para Taekwondo Grand Prix Series on the preceding day in the South Korean city. Five-time world champion and former Paralympic silver

medalist Mahdi Pourrahnama rounded out his men's K44 -80kg campaign with a final victory over Kazakhstan's Nurlan Dombayev, while Alireza Bakht - beaten by Pourrahnama in an all-Iranian semifinal - settled for bronze. Amirmohammad Haqiqatshenas also finished with a consolation bronze in the men's competition after losing to Italian fourth seed Antonino Bossolo in the K44 -70kg class. The women's competition, however, was one to forget for Iran as Roza Ebrahimi (-52kg), Paralympic silver medalist Zahra Rahimi (-57kg), Parimah Tourani (-65kg) and Marziyeh Nasrollahi (+65kg) all missed out on the podium in their respective divisions.

Ranking gains

Iranians have made significant gains in the latest World Taekwondo rankings following strong performances at the Chuncheon Korea Open, WT President's Cup and Women's World Open Championships. The latest rankings, released by World Taekwondo, cover the Olympic standings in four men's and three women's weight classes, as well as the world rankings across eight men's and seven women's divisions. Teenage prodigy Hana Zarrinkamar tops the Olympic women's +67kg rankings with 116 points. Zarrinkamar won gold at both the Korea Open and President's Cup before claiming silver at the Women's World Open Championships in Taiyuan. She is also

ranked No. 1 in the world in the +73kg division. Elsewhere in the women's rankings, Saghar Moradi climbed an impressive 58 places to fourth in the Olympic -67kg rankings with 58 points. Her bronze medal at the President's Cup and gold at the Women's World Open Championships were key to her rise. Nastaran Valizadeh is 11th in the Olympic -57kg standings and sixth in the world in the -62kg division, while Kiani is 29th in the Olympic -57kg rankings and 17th in the world in the same category. In the men's Olympic rankings, Zandi climbed 18 places to fourth in the -58kg division with 50 points, while Mahdi Hajimousaei also moved up 18

places to third in the Olympic -68kg rankings with 50 points after winning gold at the Chuncheon Open and President's Cup. He is ranked No. 1 in the world in the -63kg category. Danial Bozorgi made one of the biggest jumps in the latest rankings, soaring 256 places to 20th in the Olympic -68kg standings with 30 points after winning the President's Cup. He is also ranked 10th in the world in the -68kg division. Olympic champion Arian Salimi, meanwhile, climbed 12 places to third in the Olympic +80kg rankings with 50 points, while his compatriot Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani is 13th with 30 points. Yazdani is fifth in the world in the -87kg category.

AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Championships: Iranian pairs bow out in knockouts

Sports Desk

The AVC Beach Volleyball Continental Championships in Shangluo, China, was an event to forget for Iran after the country's two pairs suffered knockout-stage defeats in the men's competition. Abolhassan Khakizadeh and Amirali Ghalehovi saw their campaign end in the quarterfinals after falling in straight sets (24-22, 21-13) to hosts Wu Jiaxin and Zhou Chaowei on Saturday. The Iranian duo, which claimed an impressive silver medal at April's Asian Beach Games, began with a 2-0 victory over Sergey Bogatu and Kirill Gurin in Pool D, avenging their semifinal defeat to the Kazakh pair at the CAVA Championships in July. They then lost to pairs from Australia and Oman but still managed to progress to the round of 16 as runners-up in the group. The pair then defeated Japan's Kai Kurokawa and Ryuichi Adachi 2-0 (21-17, 23-21) to advance to the last eight. Saturday's setback came after Alireza Aqajani and Abbas Pourasgari, who won the Fans' Choice award at the inaugu-



● VOLLEYBALL WORLD

ral AVC Gala Awards last month, lost to Thailand's Tipjan Pithak and Muadpha Wachirawit 2-1 (21-17, 20-22, 15-11) in the first knockout round. Bronze medalists in the 2024 edition, the Iranian pair had beaten Australian and Uzbek duos either side of a 2-0 loss to Wu

Jiaxin and Zhou Chaowei to finish second behind the Chinese pair in Pool A. The event serves as a qualification pathway for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics, with the champions in each gender category securing a berth at the sporting extravaganza.

IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships:

Iran's participation in doubt over visa denial

Sports Desk

Iran's men's team may withdraw from the upcoming IWBF Wheelchair Basketball World Championships, which will kick off Wednesday in Ottawa, Canada, after the host country failed to issue entry visas to Iranian head coach Behrouz Soltani and his assistant. Iran is to begin its Group D campaign against Germany on the opening day of the competition before facing Morocco two days later, followed by a final group game against hosts Canada on Saturday. The top two teams from each of the two groups will progress to the quarterfinals.

"We still hope the issue will be resolved and that we can travel to Canada before the competition gets underway," Soltani's assistant, Mo-



● MNA

hammadreza Dastyar, who has also been denied a Canadian visa, told Mehr News Agency on Saturday, as the Iranian squad remains in Istanbul. Asked whether the national team would compete at the World Championships without the two main members of the coaching staff, Dastyar said the decision rests with the Iranian Ministry of Sports and the Sports Federation for the Enabled. With the World Championships serving as part of the Paralympic qualification pathway, a possible withdrawal could deal a major blow to the Iranian team, bronze medalists at the previous edition, in its bid to secure a berth at the LA 2028 Paralympics.

Najafi wins Iran's third gold at World Nomad Games

Sports Desk

Iran's Mostafa Najafi won the country's third gold medal at the 2026 World Nomad Games in Kyrgyzstan by claiming the top prize in the men's +100kg Güleş event. Najafi faced Azerbaijan's representative in the title bout and secured a convincing 6-1 victory to claim the gold medal. Güleş is a traditional Azerbaijani/Turkic form of belt wrestling. Najafi's gold came after Sajjad Soltaninejad and Reza Qeitasi had also triumphed in their respective events. Soltaninejad claimed the Strongman title, finishing atop the standings after three days of grueling competition and successfully negotiating a series of demanding and heavy events. Meanwhile, Qeitasi, Iran's flag bearer at the opening ceremony, won gold in the men's Tayak Tartysh on Wednesday, securing the first gold medal for the country's 130-athlete delegation. Tayak Tartysh, also known as mas-wrestling, is a strength contest originating from the Sakha, or Yakut, tradition. Two athletes sit facing each other with their feet braced against a board and compete by pulling on opposite ends of a short wooden stick. The aim is to pull the opponent across the board or take the stick away. Qeitasi also represented Iran at the 2024 World Nomad Games in Kazakhstan, finishing runner-up in the Strongman competition behind the representative of the host country.

Sadeq Azarang got Iran off the mark on the opening day of the showpiece on Tuesday, settling for silver in the men's +90kg kurash class, which featured 22 contestants, after suffering defeat to Uz-

bekistan's Nomonjon Radjabov in the final.

An Asian Games gold medalist at Hangzhou 2022, the Iranian defeated opponents from the host country, Russia and Georgia before beating his Turkmen opponent to reach the final.

Mohsen Mirzaei, meanwhile, won silver in right-arm wrestling, while Iran's four-man team, comprising Nader Kazemi, Sajjad Jafari Gohari, Abbas Azimi and Hamidreza Saeed, also finished runner-up in the tug-of-war event.

Maryam Farahaninia won bronze in Tayak Tartysh, while Abolfazl Heydarimehr took bronze in Alysh. Mohaddeseh Tabarok also claimed two bronze medals in right- and left-arm wrestling, with Amirreza Sahraei earning bronze in Sarym wrestling and Hassan Pooladi finishing third in the men's 64kg sambo competition.



● IRNA