

## Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Iran beats Jordan  
to advance to  
basketball quarterfinals

● aichi-nagoya2026.org

## Sports Desk

Iran secured an 81-68 victory over Jordan on Sunday to progress to the last eight in the men's basketball event at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Veteran Mohammad Jamshidi produced a game-high 30 points to help Iran overcome a physically demanding defensive display and maintain control at crucial stages of the game. It was Iran's second straight victory over the West Asian side, following a win when the two teams met in the FIBA World Cup Asian qualifiers in Amman in July.

The victory saw Iran finish atop the Group B standings with five points, equal with the Chinese Taipei, which defeated Qatar 91-69 later in the day to join Iran in the knockout stage.

Jordan put Iran's offense under considerable pressure, but Jamshidi stepped up when his team needed an offensive spark. The experienced guard combined calm decision-making with accurate shooting to repeatedly halt Jordan's attempts to swing the momentum.

The win followed Iran's earlier 72-69 victory over Chinese Taipei, in which

Jamshidi scored 18 points. Returning recently from injury, he showed considerable improvement against Jordan, exploiting gaps in the defense and making the most of isolation situations.

His mid-range shooting was particularly effective. Precise step-back moves allowed Jamshidi to create space against Jordan's defenders, and he repeatedly found the basket whenever the opponents threatened to narrow the gap. His ability to control the tempo helped Iran avoid rushing its possessions and remain composed under pressure. Jamshidi finished with two successful three-pointers and also contributed four assists, underlining his role in Iran's offensive organization. He posted an efficiency rating of 19 and remained influential beyond his scoring output.

His playmaking was highlighted late in the game when he delivered a spectacular no-look pass to set up Alireza Sharifi for a slam dunk, providing a fitting finish to one of Iran's most effective offensive sequences.

The victory will be particularly valuable for head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos,

who has now seen Jamshidi return to form at an important point in the campaign. The guard's ability to combine scoring with playmaking gives Iran another option when opponents succeed in disrupting its offensive rhythm.

While Jamshidi supplied the standout individual performance, Iran's success came from its ability to withstand Jordan's physical approach and respond whenever the game threatened to become a contest of momentum.

Matin Aqajani and Piter Girgoorian also made valuable contributions, chipping in 15 and 14 points, respectively, as Iran bounced back from its first-day setback against Qatar in style and remained in contention for a fifth basketball medal in six editions of the multi-sport event.

The victory offered further encouragement following Jamshidi's return from injury and gave Iran a reliable scoring outlet in a demanding game.

Iran will hope the win provides further momentum as the team advances to the quarterfinals and faces increasingly challenging opponents.

## In-form Zahedi lighting up Malaysian football, chasing Asian glory

## Sports Desk

When Shahab Zahedi made the surprising move to Malaysian side Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT), few could have predicted the impact he would make. Yet, just eight games into his tenure, the Iranian forward has already racked up six goals and one assist, turning his goal-scoring exploits into a routine headline in Malaysian football. His performances have sparked both admiration and debate, with critics questioning whether his success is a product of a weaker league. Zahedi, however, remains unfazed, focusing instead on his ambitions in AFC Champions League Elite. Zahedi's transfer to Malaysia was as unexpected as his scoring streak has become predictable. The former Persepolis striker chose a league that some consider to be outside Asia's top tier, raising questions about his motivations. Yet, for Zahedi, the decision was deeply professional. "I

had several offers, even from Iran, but I preferred to continue abroad," he explains. "The club's structure, ambition, and investment in infrastructure convinced me. From the outside, people might see Malaysia and assume a lower level, but this club is different—professional, growing, and perhaps unattainable for many teams."

His choice appears vindicated. JDT sits atop the Malaysian league, and Zahedi's goal-scoring form has been nothing short of remarkable. "I have to be happy," he says. "My job is to score, and doing it consistently brings satisfaction to me, the fans, and the club. The key is to keep this momentum going."

Not everyone has been quick to praise Zahedi's achievements. Some critics point to the perceived lower quality of the Malaysian league as a factor behind his success, attempting to diminish his performances. Zahedi's response is measured but pointed: "I don't

know what to say to that. You've never seen me engage in controversy, and I'd rather stay silent and enjoy the journey. But if someone thinks that way, they're welcome to come here and try it themselves. Maybe they miss scoring and celebrating goals—perhaps they should come and experience it."

His words carry a quiet confidence, reflecting a player who has learned to let his football do the talking. With his focus firmly on the upcoming clash against Thailand's Buriram United in Asia's elite club competition, Zahedi is eager to translate his domestic form onto the continental stage. "We have a crucial match. Last season, the team performed well in Asia, reaching the quarter-finals before losing to Al-Ahli. Naturally, we expect to achieve something big again. But Buriram will be tough."

Zahedi speaks with palpable admiration for his new club's facilities and ambitions. "The club's

infrastructure is unmatched—on par with European teams. They're building a camp inspired by Real Madrid's, a comprehensive training complex for all age groups. The medical center is unlike anything in Asia, with consultants from Barcelona and Manchester City. The Sultan Ibrahim Stadium is modern and impressive, and the academy collaborates with Borussia Dortmund and Valencia.

"I've played in different leagues, but I love this club's vision. The investment in infrastructure and the future is something you don't see outside Malaysia. A team with a plan, a structure, and a place among Asia's elite last season—that's why I made a professional decision based on the project, not the country's name."

Zahedi's move to Malaysia has also raised questions about his chances of returning to the Iranian national team. Some worry that playing in a league perceived as weaker

could harm his prospects. Zahedi, however, remains pragmatic. "I played for Persepolis and in Japan's league, which no one could describe as weak. The national team has a strong staff that analyses performances based on various parameters. The most important thing a player can do is perform well. I can't control the coaching staff's decisions; I can only control my quality, goals, fitness, and performances in domestic and Asian competitions. If I continue this run and do well in the Champions League Elite, I've done my part. The rest isn't in my hands." Zahedi's final thoughts on JDT reveal a club driven by relentless ambition. "This team isn't satisfied with what it has built. From the outside, you see trophies, wins, and unbeaten runs. But inside, the message is always: 'Next step.' They talk about the future every day and have huge ambitions. We'll have to wait and see what they achieve."



● JDT



● Sadeq Samimi will represent Iran in the men's discus throw event at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games.  
● IRNA

## Iran names athletics lineup for Asian Games

## Sports Desk

The Athletics Federation of Iran has announced the names of the 11 athletes who will represent the country at the upcoming Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

"The track and field athletes were in training camps for more than 18 months and took part in several Grand Prix competitions, record-setting events within the camps,

international competitions in Belarus and the national championships in Shiraz. Ultimately, seven male and four female athletes were selected from among these competitors and will be sent to the Asian Games," Hashem Siami, vice president of the national governing body, told IRNA. Shot put duo Mohammad Reza Tayebi and Hassan Ajami will be joined by Ali Amirian (800 meters), Sadeq

Samimi (discus throw), Hossein Nouri (1,500 meters), Hassan Taftian (100 meters), and Benjamin Yousefi (100 and 200 meters) in the men's competition, which will kick off at Paloma Mizuho Stadium in Nagoya on September 23.

Meanwhile, Zahra Salehi (200 and 400 meters), Fatemeh Mohitizadeh (heptathlon), Reyhaneh Mobini (long jump), and Maryam Kazemi (triple jump) will look to secure Iran's maiden women's

athletics medal in the history of the multi-sport event.

Athletics has been one of the country's established medal-producing sports at the Asian Games, yielding 13 golds, 16 silvers and 10 bronzes across different editions. Ehsan Haddadi, the federation's chairman, tops Iran's list with four golds and one silver in the discus throw between the 2006 and 2022 Games.