



Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Jamshidi stars as Iran beats Bahrain to progress to basketball semis

Sports Desk

Iran's men's basketball team edged out Bahrain 79-74 at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games on Wednesday to advance to the semifinals, remaining on course for a fifth medal in six editions of the multi-sport event. Standing between Iran and a place in the final in Friday's last-four clash at Nagoya's Aichi International Arena will be South Korea, which thrashed Jordan – silver medalist in Hangzhou 2022 – 114-80 earlier in the day. Veteran shooting guard Mohammad Jamshidi delivered yet another impressive performance in his first international tournament in three years, chipping in 20 points, with Mohammad Heydari add-

ing 19 – including nine from behind the arc. Arman Zanganeh finished on 11 points for the Iranian outfit, with team captain Arsalan Kazemi posting a double-double with 11 rebounds and 10 assists. Two Bahrainis also registered double-doubles, with Mustafa Rashed contributing a game-high 26 points and 12 assists, while American-born guard Elijah Thomas had 24 points and 10 rebounds. Jakarr Sampson, meanwhile, produced a decent showing with 18 points for Bahrain, which made the brighter start, scoring the first four points, before Iran responded with two three-pointers from Heydari and later took a 9-7 lead after a steal and a three-pointer by Piter



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Girgoorian. The teams remained closely matched until Iran pulled clear late in the opening quarter to lead 21-17. Greek head coach Sotiris Manolopoulos's side ex-

tended its advantage in the second quarter through two three-pointers by Zanganeh and further contributions from Mahdi Jafari, Jamshidi and Kazemi. Bahrain managed to reduce

the deficit, but Iran went into halftime 43-34 ahead. Jamshidi and Matin Aqajpour hit three-pointers early in the third quarter as Iran moved 49-39 in front. Bahrain fought back

strongly, however, with Simpson, Ahmed Haji and Rashed helping the team level the score at 51-51 with 3:29 remaining in the quarter. Iran regained the lead through Salar Monji, Heydari and Girgoorian and entered the final period 60-55 ahead. The momentum shifted again in the fourth quarter. Iran opened a 68-61 lead through Navid Rezaeifar and Heidari, but Bahrain responded with three-pointers from Rashed and Simpson before Rashed's steal and score put Bahrain ahead 69-68. Zanganeh immediately restored Iran's lead from beyond the arc, while Jamshidi added another three-pointer to make it 74-69. Rashed cut the defi-

cit to two with another three-pointer with 1:54 remaining, and Simpson tied the game at 74-74 with 1:14 left. Jamshidi then delivered at a crucial moment, converting a two-point field goal while drawing a foul and adding the resulting free throw to put Iran 77-74 ahead. Bahrain's Rashed was subsequently ejected after receiving a technical foul, and Jamshidi converted another free throw in the closing seconds to seal Iran's victory. Iran had endured a disappointing start to its campaign, suffering a 59-53 defeat to Qatar in its Group B opener, before bouncing back in style to beat Chinese Taipei 72-69 and then Jordan 81-68 to finish atop the group standings.

AFC Champions League Two:

Rahmati praises 'disciplined' Golgohar on continental debut



Golgohar midfielder Louay Ben Hassine (99) is seen in action against Al Jazira's Mamadou Coulibaly during an AFC Champions League Two Group B game in Hisor, Tajikistan, on Sept. 15, 2026. ● AFC

taken a toll on his players ahead of their continental debut.

"The Iranian league has taken all our energy. We have had to play a league match every four days, and we faced Al Jazira while tired," he said. "The players gave everything, and we will try to collect the points we need in the upcoming matches to qualify from the group."

Rahmati welcomed the upcoming international break as a breather for his players.

"Qualification would be a great achievement for Golgohar, which is participating in Asian competitions for the first time," Rahmati said.

The coach also pointed to the significant changes made to the squad in the preseason, saying the team needed time to develop.

"The team has undergone many changes, with a lot of new players joining. That is why we need time to build the team we have in mind," he said.

Golgohar will resume Group B action with an away game against Bahrain's Al Muharraq in Riffa on October 14. The Bahraini club got off to a losing start in the group on Tuesday, suffering a 1-0 away defeat to Turkmenistan's FC Arkadag.

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Golgohar head coach Mahdi Rahmati was full of praise for his players' "disciplined performance" after the Persian Gulf Premier League club played to a goalless draw on its continental debut, sharing the points with the UAE's Al Jazira in the AFC Champions League Two Group B opener in Hisor, Tajikistan, on Tuesday. Neither side was able to find a way through during the clash at Hisor Central Stadium, which served as Golgohar's home venue for the day, with the Iranians' well-drilled defense keeping their more experienced, Cosmin Olariu-coached opponents at bay throughout. Former Guangzhou Evergrande and Al Nassr forward Anderson Talisca carried the main threat for Al Jazira, with the Brazilian going close on multiple

occasions during the opening 45 minutes to give the Emirati side the lead. His first sight of goal came in the 12th minute when his attempt from distance flew narrowly wide of Farzin Garousian's left post, while 20 minutes later his header from eight yards out was comfortably gathered by the goalkeeper. Al Jazira's dominance continued into the second half, with Garousian called upon to deny Bruno Conceicao's goal-bound header on the hour mark. Thirteen minutes later, Mamadou Coulibaly's effort bounced off the top of the crossbar, with the midfielder looping his shot towards goal after Talisca's free kick had been blocked and Milson rolled the rebound back into his teammate's path. As Al Jazira kept probing for a way through, Kristjan Asllani almost netted at the death with a diving

header, but the Iranian side's defense remained resolute to secure a well-deserved point. "It was a difficult and demanding match. I thank my players for their disciplined performance as, for more than 90 minutes, they showed great concentration, worked extremely hard and followed every detail of our game plan," Rahmati, who replaced Mahdi Tartar on the Golgohar bench in the summer, said after the match. "Our first match in Asia was an important one, and earning our first point was significant for the team's confidence," the coach said. "We knew it would be a difficult game. At the beginning, we were looking to control the match, and then we wanted to create chances against Al Jazira." Rahmati also criticized the demanding schedule of the Iranian top flight, saying the packed fixture list had

Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games:

Iran U23 defeats UAE in football opener



Sports Desk

The Iranian under-23 national team beat all odds to get off to a flying start in the men's football event at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games, defeating the United Arab Emirates 3-1 in the Group B opener on Wednesday.

three minutes later, when Emirati midfielder Solomon Sosu made a mess of clearing Shahrabadi's effort and put the ball into the back of his own net.

English-born midfielder Mackenzie Hunt gave the UAE a lifeline five minutes later when his in-swinging

before concluding the group stage against North Korea three days later.

The top two teams from each of the four groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

Elsewhere, Thailand came from behind to beat Kyrgyzstan in a thrilling Group A opener on Wednesday.



Iranian U23 winger Yousef Mazraeh (20) dribbles past an Emirati player during a 3-1 victory at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in Kariya, Japan, on September 16, 2026. ● asiangames2026.org

Despite entering the tournament on the back of a hampered preparation, with head coach Hossein Abdi having expressed frustration at the pre-match press conference after having only 15 outfield players and three goalkeepers at his disposal for the game, Iran started on the front foot at Wave Stadium Kariya but had to wait until the 49th minute to break the deadlock through Persepolis striker Pouria Shahrabadi, whose free header from Farzin Mo'amelehgari's cross found the bottom corner. The second goal came just

cross from the right flank went straight past Iranian goalkeeper Mohammad Khalifeh. Yousef Mazraeh restored the two-goal cushion in the 88th minute. The Foolad Khuzestan winger was first to the rebound after Kasra Taheri's effort from the edge of the box was blocked, sending the ball past Emirati goalkeeper Khaled Al-Mohtadi with a diving header. Chasing a first medal at the Asian Games since the Doha 2006 bronze, four-time gold medalist Iran will be back in action against China on Sunday

Uzbekistan made a statement start to its campaign on Tuesday, thrashing the Philippines 5-1 in Group C, with Vietnam and Kuwait sharing the spoils in a 1-1 draw. South Korea also enjoyed an emphatic win in its opening game in Group D, hammering Qatar 4-1 on Tuesday.