

Wrestling World Championships:

Iran finds freestyle consolation as Yazdani, Amouzad salvage bronze



Sports Desk

Hassan Yazdani and Rahman Amouzad gave the Iranian freestyle team some consolation at the end of two days of mixed results at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, by claiming two bronze medals on Friday.

Widely regarded as among the favorites in their respective divisions in the buildup to the tournament, both wrestlers had to recover from last-gasp setbacks in their second bouts on the preceding day to finish their campaigns with something to cheer about.

Iranian wrestling great Yazdani, making his World Championships debut in the 97kg category, opened his bid for a fourth gold medal at the showpiece with a victory by technical superiority against South Korea's Pureun Kim but was undone by Arash Yoshida in the round of 16.

Yazdani was leading 5-4 with less than 10 seconds remaining before Yoshida managed a go-behind for a 7-5 victory. Iran challenged the



Iranian freestyle wrestler Hassan Yazdani (blue) is seen in action against Japan's Arash Yoshida at the World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 29, 2026.

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call, believing the Japanese wrestler had scored the takedown after the clock had run out, but the two-point score was confirmed on review.

Yazdani was given a second chance at a podium finish when Yoshida reached the final and made the most of it, storming to a 10-0 victory over India's Vicky in the repechage.

Before the tournament, Iranian fans were hoping to see their national hero tested against two dominant forces in the weight class, American Kyle Snyder and Russia's Abdurashid Sadulaev. While neither of those showdowns materialized, Yazdani still set up a highly anticipated clash with reigning Olympic champion Akhmed Tazhudinov in the third-place bout and rose to the occasion, beating the Bahrain wrestler, who was

born in Russia, 5-0 – courtesy of four stepouts and a passivity point – to clinch an eighth world medal of his illustrious career, adding to his one gold and two silver medals at the Olympics.

"Thank God I managed to win a bronze and not return home empty-handed. I had set my sights on a different outcome, but it just was not meant to be. I hope to upgrade my medal at next year's World Championships and the 2028 Olympics, and make my people happy," Yazdani said after becoming the first wrestler in the history of the World Championships to win medals in four different weight categories. The feat dates back to 2015, when he won a silver medal in the 70kg category on his maiden appearance.

Snyder, meanwhile, went on to beat Yoshida on criteria (4-4) for his fifth world title, while Sadulaev defeated Poland's Zbigniew Baranowski to claim the other bronze medal in the category.

"They're just monsters," Snyder said of Yazdani and Sadulaev, who was beaten by the American in



Iran's Rahman Amouzad (red) wrestles Belgium's Ayub Musaev at the World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on Oct. 29, 2026.

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the quarterfinals, after sharing the podium with the two wrestling greats. "They inspired me in many, many ways. They are a huge part of my life. They're my friends, too."

Relief for Rahman

Amouzad, meanwhile, got off to an emphatic start to his title defense in the 65kg category on Thursday, outmuscling Belgium's Ayub Musaev and Turkey's Ahmet Duman by technical superiority.

The Iranian, however, was a shadow of his ruthless best against Armenia's Vazgen Tevanyan in the quarterfinals, and his hesitant approach ultimately cost him as the Armenian pulled off a major upset after being awarded a point in the dying seconds for what was deemed to be fleeing the hold by the Iranian in the closing four seconds. Iranian coaches again had their challenge rejected as Tevanyan won 3-2.

Amouzad bounced back to hammer Kazakhstan's Ossimzhan Dastanbek 11-0 before edging out familiar rival Shamil Mamedov 5-4 to add a world bronze medal to his

two golds from 2022 and 2025. Amouzad and the other contenders in the division were handed a wake-up call ahead of the Olympics in two years after American prodigy Bo Basset – a world U20 champion in August – defeated Tevanyan 9-1 in the final to claim gold on his senior debut at the World Championships.

Zare', Javan into finals

Earlier in the day, Iran's Ahmad Mohammadnejad Javan and Amirhossein Zare' secured places in the finals of the 61kg and 125kg events, respectively.

A silver medalist last year, Javan was barely convincing throughout the day but still managed to set up a final showdown with Russian defending champion Zavur Uguev – a rematch of last year's final – after beating Kazakhstan's Assyl Aita-

kyn 3-1 in the semifinals.

Chasing a fourth world gold in five years, defending champion Zare' again proved to be in a league of his own in the superheavyweight category, securing three victories by technical superiority without conceding a point, including a semifinal triumph over American Wyatt Hendrickson, to advance to the final, where he will face Russia's Abdulla Kurbanov.

The World Championships, meanwhile, proved to be a tournament to forget for Iranian medal hopefuls Kamran Qasempour and Sina Khalili.

A two-time world champion in the 92kg category, Qasempour opened his campaign in style by defeating reigning Olympic champion Magomed Ramazanov of Bulgaria 5-3 but was stunned by lesser-known Kyrgyz wrestler Malik Shavaev in the round of 16, suffering a shock defeat by fall in the first period.

World U20 champion Khalili, meanwhile, defeated Uzbekistan's Shakhzodbek Yarashev 8-0 in his first bout in the 70kg category

Moscow Karate Universe International 2026:

Iran's Nemati, Saeidabadi into kumite finals

Sports Desk

Iran's Morteza Nemati and Fatemeh-Zahra Saeidabadi progressed to the finals of their respective kumite categories at the 2026 Moscow Karate Universe International. A gold medalist at June's Asian Championships, Nema-

ti picked up where he had left off at the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games in September, finishing atop his pool with three wins before defeating Turkmenistan's Davut Nazmyradov 2-1 in the quarterfinals and following that up with a 6-0 semifinal victory over Uzbekistan's Mamayusuf

Mukimjonov to reach the final of the men's -75kg category, where he will face Russia's Gadzhi Gadzhiev today. Saeidabadi, meanwhile, entered the women's -55kg event fresh off an impressive silver medal at the Asian Games. She overcame opponents from Yemen and

the host nation to reach the knockout stage, where the young prodigy defeated Russia's Anna Sergeevna Chernysheva 9-1 before outclassing Uzbek karateka Dilaferuz Kuzieva 8-0 to set up a final showdown with reigning world champion Ahlam Yousef of Egypt.

Helia Komasi was the other Iranian in the category, but her campaign ended in the first knockout round following a defeat to Russia's Sofia Liaskalo.

Iran will also fancy its chances of winning a medal in the women's -50kg category today, as Masoumeh Mohsenian takes on compatriot Setareh Zarei, while Yalda Naqi-Beiranvand faces Uzbekistan's Mohinur Teshaboyeva in the two bronze-medal bouts.

In women's individual kata, Fatemeh Sadeqi and Melika Ezzati will also be aiming for bronze medals when they take on opponents from Thailand and Russia, respectively, in today's third-place contests.

AFC Women's Champions League:

Khatoon to face Kobe Leonessa in Group A opener



Sports Desk

Iranian top-flight champion Bam Khatoon will take on Japan's INAC Kobe Leonessa in its AFC Women's Champions League Group A opener in Yangon, Myanmar, today.

Khatoon is making its fifth appearance in AFC competitions – the most of any women's club on the continent. Having won a 12th domestic league title

and a fifth in a row last season, Marzieh Jafari's side will aim to improve on its quarterfinal finish in the 2024/25 campaign.

INAC Kobe Leonessa ended a four-year wait for a second league title in the 2025/26 season to earn its place in the competition.

The Iranian outfit will face defending champion Naegohyang Women's FC of North Korea in its second game at

Thuwunna Stadium on Wednesday before concluding its group campaign against hosts AYEYAWADY FC next Saturday.

The top two teams from each of the three groups will be joined in the quarterfinals by the two best third-placed teams. The quarterfinals will be played in single-leg ties in March, hosted by the three group winners and the best-ranked runner-up.



Iran's Morteza Nemati (L) and Fatemeh-Zahra Saeidabadi have progressed to the final bouts in their respective kumite divisions at the Moscow Karate Universe International.

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