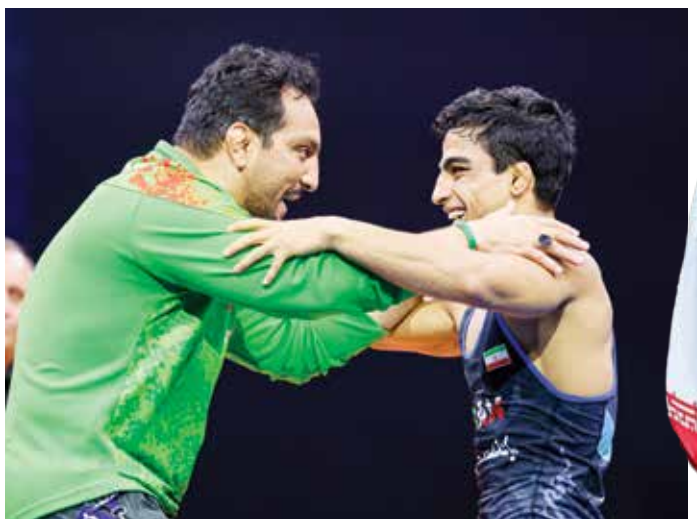
Wrestling World Championships:

Javan stuns Uguev, Zare' retains superheavyweight supremacy

Sports Desk





Iran's Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan inflicted a shock defeat on three-time champion Zavur Uguev in the 61kg final, while Amirhossein Zare' claimed a fourth superheavyweight title in five years, as the Iranian freestyle team collected two gold medals on the penultimate day of the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Despite Saturday's triumphs, Iran missed out on a second successive team title at the event, settling for third place in the standings, with the two-horse title race between the USA and Russia going down to the wire on the final day.

Javan beats the odds

It was only back in August that Javan – a silver medalist on his Senior Worlds debut last year and an Asian bronze medalist in April – faced omission from the Iranian squad for the World Championships after weighing well above his category limit at a weigh-in session at the national team camp.

Less than three months on, however, Javan, despite his relatively unconvincing performances en route to the final, delivered a spot-on display to pull off one of the biggest upsets of three days of freestyle action, avenging last year's final defeat to the Tokyo Olympic champion.

Javan handled everything Uguev threw at him in a frantic second period.

After Javan received an activity point in the first period, Uguev went ahead in the second with an activity point and a stepout from a single-leg attack.

Iranian wrestler Ahmad Mohammadnejad-Javan (R) celebrates with head coach Pejman Dorostkar after winning the freestyle 61kg title at the World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 31, 2026.
IAWFIR

When Uguev went on the attack again, Javan countered and spun behind for a go-ahead takedown, then added a gut wrench to lead 5-2.

The Russian desperately attempted to grab Javan's leg twice more, only to see the 22-year-old Iranian get behind him on both occasions to secure a massive 9-2 victory and claim Iran's first freestyle gold in Astana.

In another final featuring Iranian and Russian wrestlers later in the day, Zare' proved to be in a league of his own in the 125kg class, cementing his status as the overwhelming favorite for the superheavyweight title at the Los Angeles Olympics in two years.

Also a world bronze medalist in 2022, Zare' had little trouble putting away Abdulla Kurbanov with an 11-0 victory that ended 56 seconds into the second period – his fourth consecutive victory by superiority in Astana, during which he did not concede a single point.

In the first period, Kurbanov tried to match Zare's power, but could only manage to give away five consecutive stepouts.

Kurbanov changed his strategy in the second period and tried to be more aggressive by shooting, but fared no better. Zare' put his full weight on Kurbanov and spun behind him before hitting a gut wrench to make it 9-0. He then got behind Kurbanov again on another shot to end the match.

For Zare', the victory keeps him undefeated since losing in the final of the Paris Olympics to Georgian Geno Petriashvili, adding to his titles at both the Asian Championships and Asian Games earlier this year.

Elsewhere, three-time silver medalist Mohammad Nokhodi made sure he would finish on the podium at the World Championships for a sixth successive occasion after progressing to the 79kg final.

An Asian Games gold medalist in October, Nokhodi opened his bid for a maiden world title with a 10-0 hammering of Tajikistan's Somonjon Ikromov, then outmuscled Latvia's Alans Amirovs in similar fashion, winning 12-2 to advance to the quarterfinals.

A nervy 6-4 victory over Mahamedkhabib Kadzimahamedau of Belarus sent the Iranian into a semifinal clash against former world U23 champion Dzhabrail Gadzhiev of Azerbaijan. Nokhodi won 9-5 to set up a final meeting with American Levi Haines, who edged out Mongolia's Suldkhuu Olonbayar on criteria (3-3) in the other semifinal.

Iran's Amirhossein Zare' celebrates with the national flag after winning the freestyle 125kg gold medal at the Wrestling World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 31, 2026.
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Nokhodi's compatriot Amirreza Firouzpour, meanwhile, missed out on improving on his bronze medal from last year's edition after suffering an 11-8 defeat to American defending champion Trent Hidlay in a thrilling 92kg semifinal.

Hidlay was trailing 8-2 when he scored a takedown and used a leg lace to turn Firouzpour twice, leveling the score at 8-8 in the closing seconds of the first period. The Iranian held a criteria lead going into the break, before the American forced Firouzpour to concede another takedown to take a 10-8 lead.

Firouzpour dug deep in search of a match-winning takedown, but as he tried to jump over Hidlay, the American blocked him and planted him outside the zone to score one point, making it 11-8 and booking his place in a second successive World Championships final.

Saturday's action was one to forget for Iranian duo Mohammad Valizadeh and Amir-Mohammad Yazdani.

Valizadeh opened his campaign with an 11-0 victory over Ukraine's Roman Hutsuliak but suffered a 12-2 defeat to American Spencer Lee – a Paris 2024 Olympic silver medalist – in the round of 16.

Two-time world silver medalist Yazdani, meanwhile, pulled off nail-biting victories over Hungary's Murad Kuramagomedov (4-3) and Cuba's Geannis Garzon Tamayo (15-12) but was undone by Russia's Inalbek Sheriev in the quarterfinals, losing by fall in the first period.

Saturday's results came after Iran had collected two bronze medals through Rahman Amouzad (65kg) and Hassan Yazdani (97kg) on the preceding night, while Sina Khalili (70kg) and Kamran Qassempour (86kg) had finished empty-handed in their respective events.

Dakar 2026 Youth Olympics:

Iran into men's beach volleyball knockouts



JAVID NIKPOUR/volleyball.ir

Sports Desk

The Iranian pair of Amin Vakili and Amirreza Jamshidi secured a place in the knockout stage of the men's beach volleyball event at the Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games with a straight-set victory over the Cayman Islands duo on Saturday.

Having beaten the Congolese pair 2-1 in their Pool B opener the previous day, Vakili and Jamshidi emerged victorious in emphatic fashion, winning 21-6 and 21-5 in their second outing to move level on four points with Austria's Paul Hohenauer and Martin Poinstingl ahead of their group-deciding clash for top spot on Sunday.

The fourth edition of the multi-sport event, staged in Africa for the first time, kicked off with the opening ceremony at the 55,000-seat Abdoulaye Wade Stadium in Diamniadio, 30km from the Senegalese capital, on Saturday.

Iran is represented by 29 athletes across two team events, including beach volleyball, and 12 individual sports at this year's edition.

The girls' futsal team makes up the largest contingent, with 10 athletes.

Beach wrestling features four Iranian competitors, while taekwondo has two participants – one girl and one boy. Badminton also has two representatives, one of each gender.

Iran's remaining athletes will compete in swimming, wushu taolu, triathlon, table tennis, boxing, road cycling, athletics, judo and fencing. The individual quota breakdown is as follows: one boy each in swimming, wushu taolu, triathlon, table tennis, road cycling, athletics and judo, and one girl each in boxing and fencing.

The Dakar Youth Olympics mark Iran's fourth participation in as many editions since the event was first introduced at Singapore 2010, where the country secured two gold, two silver and one bronze medal.

At Nanjing 2014, Iran collected three gold and three bronze medals before achieving its best performance to date with seven gold, three silver and four bronze medals at Buenos Aires 2018.

World Taekwondo Grand Prix:

Iran calls up 10-man squad for Series final

Sports Desk

Iran men's head coach Payam Khanlarkhani has called up a 10-man squad for a training camp ahead of the upcoming World Taekwondo Grand Prix Series event in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The fourth and final event of this year's Series will be staged in the Kazakh capital on November 28-29, serving as part of the qualification pathway for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Reigning Olympic champion Arian Salimi will headline the Iranian roster in Astana, looking to pick up where he left off at the previous Grand Prix event in Paris last month, where he defeated Caden Cunningham in the +80kg final to repeat his triumph over the Briton in the final of the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Joining Salimi at the training camp are world and Asian champion Abolfazl Zandi – also a gold medalist at the Paris Grand Prix – Mahdi Haji-Mousaei, Amirsina Bakhtiari, Yasin Valizadeh, Radin Zeinali, Danial Bozorgi, Amirreza Gholami, Ali-Asghar Alimoradian and Mohammad-Hossein Yazdani.

Notably absent from the squad is national team captain Mehran Barkhordari. The Paris Olympic silver medalist's omission from the training camp has been attributed to his failure to qualify for the Grand Prix Final.



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