

# Nima Alamiyan, Neda Shahsavari Qualify for Paris Olympic Games



A combo picture of Nima Alamiyan (left) and Neda Shahsavari

TEHRAN – Iranian table tennis players Nima Alamiyan and Neda Shahsavari have qualified for the 2024 Paris

Olympics by grabbing the gold medal at the Central Asia Regional Olympic Qualification held in Tashkent, Uzbeki-

stan.

Alamiyan emerged victorious against his elder brother Noshad 4-1 in the final match of the sporting event and secured the top spot in the tournament.

This marks Nima's third consecutive appearance at the Olympics by winning gold in the Central Asia Regional Olympic Qualification games. Additionally, Noshad Alamiyan has a high chance of earning a quota through the world rankings. He placed 51st in the latest rankings published by the World Table Tennis Federation, marking a significant improvement of 17 places.

Earlier today, Iranian woman table

tennis player Neda Shahsavari qualified for the Paris Olympics by winning gold at the event.

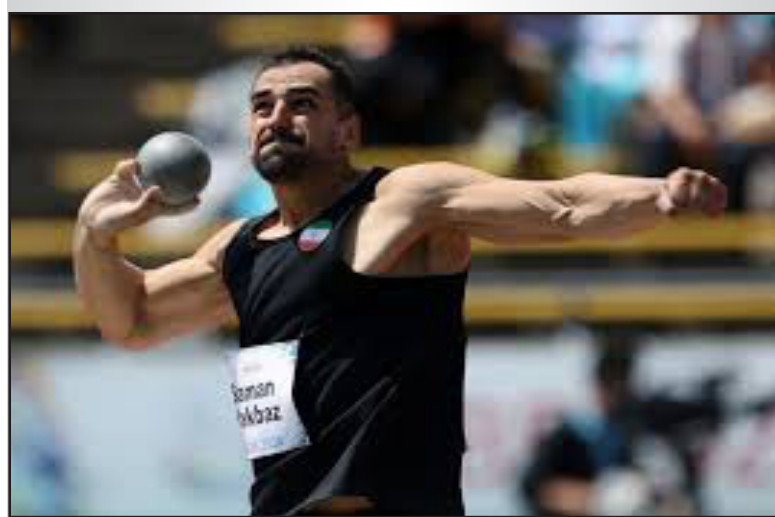
The tournament's title was won by Iran's Shahsavari, who defeated her rival from Kazakhstan 4-3 in the final.

A total of 18 athletes from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan participated in the competition.

The Paris-2024 Table Tennis Qualification Tournament took place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from May 17-19, 2024.

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## Pakbaz Wins Bronze in Shot Put at World Para Athletics



TEHRAN – Iranian shot putter Saman Pakbaz won a bronze medal at the Men's Shot Put F12 in the 2024 World Para Athletics Championships on Saturday.

Spanish thrower Kim Lopez Gonzalez won the gold medal with 15.22 meters.

Emils Dzilna from Latvia claimed the silver with 15.00

meters and the bronze medal went to Pakbaz with a throw of 14.56 meters.

Held in East Asia for the first time and a crucial qualifier for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, the Kobe 2024 Para Athletics World Championships attracted over 1,000 athletes from 100 countries and regions to compete in 168 events.

## Swiatek Brushes Sabalenka Aside to Win Third Italian Open Title

ROME (Reuters) - Iga Swiatek beat Aryna Sabalenka 6-2 6-3 to win her third Italian Open title on Saturday as the Pole came out on top once again in a battle between the top two in the women's rankings following her Madrid Open triumph earlier this month.

The title was the 21st of Swiatek's career as the world number one extended her unbeaten run to 12 matches on clay to sound out a warning to her rivals ahead of this month's French Open where she is a three-time winner and the defending champion.

"After Madrid I knew it would not be easy. It can always go both ways," 22-year-old Swiatek said. "Thank



you (Sabalenka) for sharing the court with me and pushing me to be better."

Swiatek broke Sabalenka twice in the first set where the

Belarusian conceded 12 unforced errors in a lopsided start to the match. Sabalenka fought back, reaching five break points in a bid to lead 2-0 in the

second, but Swiatek held her own serve.

Sabalenka failed to break again with Swiatek holding her nerve to save two break points on her next serve. The set progressed to 3-3 before the Pole broke twice, ensuring her victory in the tournament without dropping a set.

"I love this tournament... I'll come back stronger next year and hopefully win the trophy," Sabalenka said as she congratulated Swiatek. "I hope we make it to the final at Roland Garros and I will get you there."

In response, Swiatek said: "We will see about the Roland Garros final."

## Leverkusen Make Bundesliga History by Ending Season Unbeaten



Champions: Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso and his players celebrate with the Bundesliga trophy.

LEVERKUSEN (AFP) – Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday became the first team in Bundesliga history to go through an entire season unbeaten after a 2-1 home win against Augsburg extended their undefeated streak in all competitions to 51 games.

Crowned Bundesliga champions for the first time in April, goals from Victor Boniface and Robert Andrich put Leverkusen -- who play the Europa League final against Atalanta and the German Cup final this week -- on course for victory.

Elsewhere, Leverkusen's rivals Cologne were relegated after a 4-1 loss at Heidenheim.

Union Berlin scored in stoppage time against Freiburg to win 2-1 and beat the drop, leapfrogging Bochum who will play a two-legged relegation play-off against second-division Fortuna Dusseldorf after losing 4-1 at Werder Bremen.

Xabi Alonso's Leverkusen took the lead after 12 minutes when Amine Adli forced Augsburg goalkeeper Tomas Koubek into an error, winning possession before squaring for Boniface to tap in from close range.

Midfield star Andrich doubled Leverkusen's lead, backheeling in a rebound after 27 minutes.

Augsburg teenager Mert Komer pulled one back on his first start for the visitors with a stunning strike on the 62nd-minute mark, but Leverkusen held on to win ahead of what could be an historic week.

At the other end of the table, Union -- who were playing Champions League against the likes of Real Madrid as recently as December -- were locked 1-1 at home to Freiburg in stoppage time and headed for a relegation playoff clash with Dusseldorf.

Union had been reduced to 10 men when Michael Gspurning was red carded with four minutes remaining but won a penalty just into stoppage

time.

Kevin Volland missed the spotkick but Janik Haberer was there to turn in the rebound and save Berlin.

Bochum, who looked to have secured top-division football with a 4-3 win at Union Berlin two weeks ago, will now need to beat Dusseldorf in a home and away playoff.

The loser of that playoff will play second division football with Cologne as well as Darmstadt who were relegated earlier in the season.

Serhou Guirassy scored a brace as Stuttgart won 4-0 at home against Borussia Moenchengladbach, leapfrogging Bayern Munich, who lost 4-2 to a Andrej Kramaric-inspired Hoffenheim, into second spot.

Without the injured Harry Kane, Bayern were 2-0 up after just six minutes thanks to goals from Mathys Tel and Alphonso Davies.

Maximilian Beier, selected as part of Germany's Euros squad on Thursday, cut the deficit two minutes later, capitalising on a Manuel Neuer error to make it 2-1.

Kramaric then scored three goals in 20 minutes to turn the match on its head. Bayern finished outside the top two for the first time since 2010-11.

Borussia Dortmund veteran Marco Reus signed off in impressive style in his last home match, scoring a goal and laying on another in a 4-0 win over Darmstadt.

In Dortmund's last competitive outing before June's Champions League final clash with Real Madrid at Wembley, Reus set up Ian Maatsen for the opener after 30 minutes, then added one of his own from a free kick eight minutes later.

Julian Brandt and Donyell Malen added second-half goals to seal the win.

Eintracht Frankfurt came from two goals down to draw 2-2 at home with RB Leipzig, while Mainz came from behind to win 3-1 at Wolfsburg.

## Mavericks Beat Thunder in Thriller to Reach Finals



Washington scored all nine of his points in the fourth quarter

WASHINGTON (AP) - PJ Washington scored two late free throws

as the Dallas Mavericks beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 117-116

in a thrilling game to reach the NBA Western Conference Finals.

The Mavericks transformed a 75-58 deficit in the third quarter into a 115-110 lead with just over a minute remaining before the top-seeded Thunder scored six unanswered points.

Washington was fouled by Shai Gilgeous-Alexander as he attempted a three-pointer with 2.5 seconds remaining.

He made the first two free throws before intentionally missing the third.

Although the Thunder collected the rebound, Jalen Williams' long-range effort was well off target as the Mavericks took the best-of-

seven series 4-2.

They will face defending NBA champions the Denver Nuggets or the Minnesota Timberwolves, who meet in a game seven decider on Sunday, in the conference finals.

The winners of that seven-game series will reach the NBA Finals starting on 6 June.

Luka Doncic scored 29 points and made 10 rebounds and 10 assists for the Mavericks, who have reached the conference finals twice in three years.

Gilgeous-Alexander, who scored 36 points for the Thunder, said: "If I had the moment back I wouldn't have fouled him; let him make or miss the shot."

## Kenyan Runner Kwemoi Banned for Six Years for Blood Doping

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Kenyan Olympian and former World U-20 10,000m champion Rodgers Kwemoi has been handed an extended six-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit for blood doping.

Kwemoi was found guilty of using blood boosters to improve his performance due to abnormalities in his Athlete's Biological Passport, according to a verdict signed on April 24, 2024, and made public by AIU on Friday.

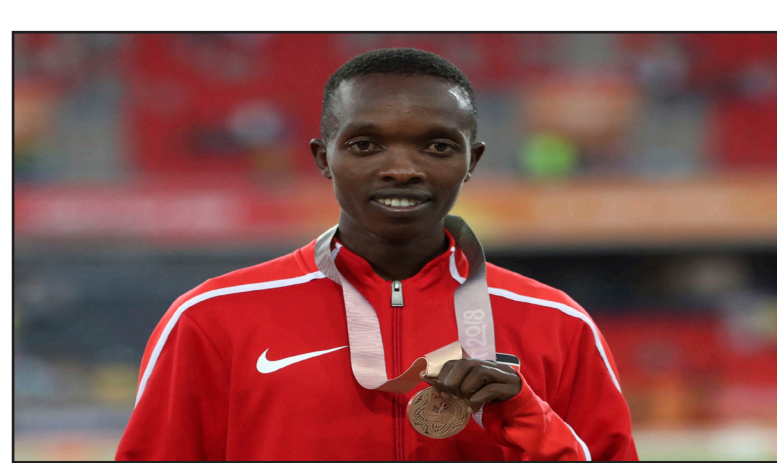
The 27-year-old runner was once tipped to be the future of long-distance track running in the East African nation following his breakthrough victory at the Bydgoszcz 2016 World U20 Championship in Poland.

However, a three-judge panel sitting in London and chaired

by David Sharpe convicted him of blood doping. Kwemoi will also forfeit all titles, records, and earnings accrued between July 18, 2016, and August 8, 2023, besides being ordered to pay World Athletics \$3,000 as part of the costs of prosecuting his case.

Kwemoi, who set the Istanbul Half Marathon course record of 59:15 in 2022, chose a three-judge hearing to argue his case through a London lawyer who represented him pro bono after being notified by the AIU of his Adverse Analytical Findings.

The judges threw out his defense that the abnormalities in his ABP were as a result of natural variations due to the physiological responses influenced by the frequent changes in climate, altitude, and other environmen-



Men's 10,000m bronze medalist, Kenya's Rodgers Kwemoi on the podium at Carrara Stadium during the 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast, Australia, on April 14, 2018.

tal factors.

While the panel of experts agreed with his argument that high altitude affected ABP values, they nonetheless identified

significant Aggravating Circumstances that pointed to manipulation of blood done in the lead-up to the "most important athletics competitions".