

# Ahmad Aminzadeh Snatches Two Golds at Para Powerlifting World Cup



TEHRAN – Iran's Ahmad Aminzadeh won two gold medals at the 2024 Para Powerlifting World Cup.

He seized the gold in the Men's Over 107 kg, lifting 250kg.

Anton Kriukov of Ukraine won the silver with 248kg and Georgian Akaki Jintcharadze bagged the bronze with 242kg.

Aminzadeh also won another gold medal with a total of 741kg.

A total of 313 athletes from 66 nations competed in the competition to improve their Paralympic rankings one last time.

The competition kicked off on June 20 in Tbilisi, Georgia, and runs until June 26.

## Iran Discovers Fate in 2026 World Cup Qualifiers

Group A	Group B	Group C
IR IRAN	KOREA REPUBLIC	JAPAN
QATAR	IRAQ	AUSTRALIA
UZBEKISTAN	JORDAN	SAUDI ARABIA
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	OMAN	BAHRAIN
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	PALESTINE	CHINA PR
DPR KOREA	KUWAIT	INDONESIA

TEHRAN – The continent's path to the FIFA World Cup 2026 was finalized following the conclusion of the FIFA World Cup 26 Preliminary Draw – AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road To 26 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Thursday.

The 18 teams were divided into three groups, with eight confirmed berths and a possible additional spot via a playoff available for Asia at the FIFA World Cup 2026 to be co-hosted by Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia and Palestine are making their debuts at this stage of the AFC Asian Qualifiers.

Group A will see top seeds Iran challenged by reigning AFC Asian Cup champion Qatar, Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan and DPR Korea.

Iran is seeking its sixth appearance at the FIFA World Cup.

Korea Republic leads the Group B cast with Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and Kuwait also in the hunt for the two automatic spots to the Finals.

Korea will be the favorites, having made 10 consecutive FIFA World Cup appearances since 1986.

Heading Group C will be Japan, who is seeking to qualify for the FIFA World Cup for the eighth consecutive time.

Standing in its way will be Australia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, China PR and Indonesia.

The top two finishers from the three groups will confirm their places at the FIFA World Cup 2026 while the third and fourth-placed teams from each group – six in total – will progress to the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 Playoff, to be contested in two groups of three teams in a single round robin format, with both group winners qualifying for the global showpiece.

The two second-placed finishers from the Playoff will face off in a home and away tie to earn the right to reach the Intercontinental Playoff and vie for the final available berth.

The AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 26 will kick off on September 5 with the final round of matches scheduled for June 10, 2025.

## UEFA Euro 2024

### Romania, Slovakia Make Last 16 After Lively Draw



FRANKFURT - Romania's Razvan Marin scored a first-half penalty to cancel out Ondrej Duda's headed goal for Slovakia as the teams played out a 1-1 Euro 2024 Group E draw on Wednesday to both reach the last 16.

All four sides in Group E finished on four points, with Romania earning top spot on goals scored from Belgium, and Slovakia ending third, ahead Ukraine on goal difference.

Romania and Slovakia must wait until the completion of the group stage on Wednesday to learn their last-16 opponents, but

Belgium will face France in Duesseldorf on Monday.

Romania reached the knockout stages of the Euros for the first time since 2000, while for Slovakia it will be a second appearance in the last 16 after 2016, when they lost to Germany.

Team mate Ianis Hagi said no-one in the squad was surprised to have reached the knockout stages.

### Belgium Limp into Euro Last 16 after 0-0 Draw, Ukraine Go Out



Belgium played out a nervy scoreless draw with Ukraine to eventually wrap up second place in Group E and set up a last-

16 tie with France, with the Ukrainians eliminated on goal difference, finishing bottom of the group behind Slovakia.

With all four sides locked on points as the final games began there was no margin for error, while a win would see any team through, and both sides went hunting for goals from the kick-off.

The best early chance fell to Romelu Lukaku, who was played in by a trademark defence-splitting pass from Kevin De Bruyne in the seventh minute, but as so often in this tournament, the burly striker fluffed his finish and the danger was easily averted, setting the tone for Belgium's evening.

Stringing five across the back, defending was the focus for Ukraine and they did so all over the pitch, pressing hard and tackling aggressively, but not recklessly, as they sought to contain the Belgians.

They had chances of their own too, and Roman Yaremchuk will regret not being more selfish when he was played in and, rather than shooting, opted to square to Artem Dovbyk, but his pass was too hard and flew harmlessly across the goal.

## River Seine Unfit for Swimming One Month From Paris Olympics

PARIS (AFP) – The river Seine is still failing water quality tests one month before the Paris Olympics when it is scheduled to host the open-water swimming competition and the swimming leg of the triathlon, results showed Friday.

The latest tests, completed last week and released by the Paris mayor's office, showed levels of the E.Coli bacteria -- an indicator of faecal matter -- are far above the upper limits imposed by sports federations.

On June 18, the level of E.Coli was 10 times acceptable levels and at no point did it fall below the upper limit of 1,000 colony-forming units per 100 millilitres (cfu/ml) used by the World Triathlon Federation.

The readings for enterococci bacteria were better, but they were still at unsafe levels for several days last week.

"Water quality remains degraded because of unfavorable hydrological conditions, little sunshine,

below-average seasonal temperatures and upstream pollution," the mayor's office said in a statement.

French authorities have spent 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in the last decade trying to clean up the river by improving the Paris sewerage system, as well as building new water treatment and storage facilities.

But major storms still overwhelm the capital's waste water network, some of which dates back to the 19th century, leading to discharges

of untreated sewage directly into the river.

After months of unusually wet weather, the Seine is currently high up its banks, with its flow around four to five times higher than its usual level in the summer months, according to recent readings.

Organizers insist that some dry weather and sunshine in July should be sufficient to make the Seine fit for the outdoor swimming events.

## WADA President Criticizes Politicization of Anti-Doping in U.S.

BEIJING (Reuters) - The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) president Witold Banka criticized the United States for politicizing anti-doping and called it hypocritical and double standard in a statement published on WADA's official website.

The United States House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing titled "Examining Anti-Doping Measures in Advance of the 2024 Olympics," which disguised under its title a focus on a contamination case from 2021 involving 23 Chinese swimmers.

"The hearing sought to further politicize a relatively straightforward case of mass contamination that has been turned into a scandal by a small number of individuals, mainly in the United States," Banka said in the statement.

"WADA's job as the global regulator for clean sport is to strive to ensure that athletes of the world enjoy the same protections, rights and responsibilities whether they are from Boston or Beijing. When we review cases, we must always think about what is fair to those athletes, whatever their sport and whatever their nationality."

The world anti-doping chief quoted in the statement American politician Adlai E. Stevenson's saying "A hypocrite is the kind of politician who would cut down a redwood tree, then mount the stump and make a speech for conservation" when addressing the talks in the hearing, led by Travis Tygart of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), who claimed other countries and WADA were not playing by the rules when numbers showed themselves are



World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) President Witold Banka

far from fulfilling their due responsibilities in anti-doping.

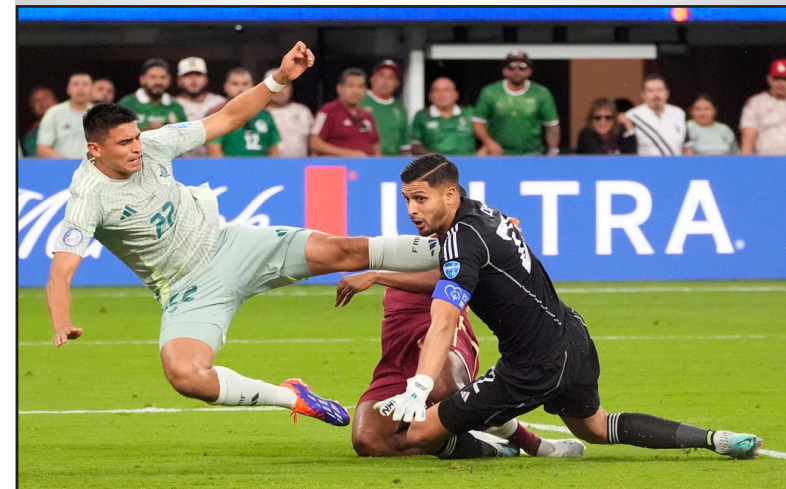
"To this day, 90 percent of athletes in the U.S. do not enjoy the protections provided by the World Anti-Doping Code (Code). That is because the main professional leagues and college associations refuse to be brought in under the system overseen there

by the USADA.

"Even the remaining 10 percent of athletes in the U.S. are not receiving the sort of support they deserve, a reality illustrated by the fact that 31 percent of American athletes under the Code were not sufficiently tested in the 12 month-period prior to the Tokyo Games.

## Copa America

### Rondon Sends Venezuela Into Copa Quarters With Win Over Mexico



INGLEWOOD (AFP) - Salomon Rondon tucked away a second-half penalty to send Venezuela into the Copa America quarterfinals with a 1-0 win over Mexico in Group B, a result that also sent Jamaica crashing out of the tournament.

Rondon made no mistake from the spot in the 57th minute after Jon Aramburu was brought down inside the box by Julian Quinones, sending Mexico keeper Julio Gonzalez the wrong way and slotting home into the bottom corner.

The goal was Venezuelan all-time top scorer Rondon's 42nd

for his country.

Mexico were awarded a penalty of their own for a handball in the dying minutes after a video review concluded Miguel Navarro had blocked Jorge Sanchez's shot with his left arm.

However, Venezuela goalkeeper Rafael Romo got down low to parry Orbelin Pineda's 87th minute spot kick.

The win moved Venezuela, who beat Ecuador in their opening match, up to six points at the top of the group and secured their progress to the last eight with a game to spare.

### Ecuador Beat Jamaica to Keep Copa America's Hopes Alive

LAS VEGAS - Ecuador kept their hopes of qualifying for the Copa America quarterfinals alive with a 3-1 win over Jamaica in Las Vegas that left the 'Reggae Boyz' on the brink of elimination.

Ecuador went ahead in the 13th minute via a Jamaica own goal, when Piero Hincapie's cross from the left was deflected off Kasey Palmer's shin into the net.

The South Americans doubled the lead via a Kendry Paez penalty kick just before the inter-

val after a handball by Gregory Leigh, before Alan Minda killed off the contest in the 91st minute with a goal from a classic counter-attack.

Jamaica halved the deficit shortly after halftime, scoring their first-ever Copa America goal in their eighth match in the tournament following a corner.

Ethan Pinnock's effort was blocked by the Ecuador defense but the rebound fell to Michail Antonio, who rifled the ball into the net.