

# Noshad Alemiyan Starts Grand Smash Sweden Tournament on High Note



TEHRAN – Iranian table tennis player Noshad Alemiyan on Friday defeated Marcos Madrid from Mexico in the Grand Smash Sweden tournament.

In the first round of the Grand Smash Europe qualifiers, which are being hosted by Malmo, Sweden, Noshad Alemiyan managed to defeat Marcos Madrid from Mexico with a score of 3-0.

Alemiyan, who is in the tournament with a world ranking of 132, defeated his opponent with a ranking of 177 in three consecutive games with scores of 11-6, 11-9 and 11-8 and advanced to the next round.

Noshad to face Chan Baldwin from Hong Kong, who holds the world ranking of 61, in the second round of the qualifiers.

The 2025 Grand Smash Europe tournament is being held from August 13 to September 2, hosted by Malmo, Sweden.

## Sepahan, Esteghlal Learn Fate in AFC Champions League Two

TEHRAN - The stage is set for the AFC Champions League Two 2025-26 following the conclusion of the Group Stage Draw in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Friday.

The Group Stage is scheduled to conclude on December 24, 2025 before moving into the Round of 16 between February 10-19, 2026. The Quarter-finals and Semi-finals are set for March 3-12 and April 7-15 respectively, with the Final penciled in for May 16, 2026.

Draw Result

Group A: Al Wasl FC (UAE), Esteghlal FC (IRN), Al Muharraq SC (BHR), Al Wehdat (JOR)

Group B: Al Ahli SC



(QAT), PFC Andijon (UZB), FC Arkadag (TKM), Al Khaldiya SC (BHR)

Group C: Sepahan SC (IRN),

Al Hussein (JOR), Mohun Bagan Super Giant (IND), Ahal FC (TKM)

Group D: Al Nassr Club

(KSA), Al Zawraa SC (IRQ), FC Istiklol (TJK), FC Goa (IND)

Group E: Beijing FC (CHN), Macarthur FC (AUS), Tai Po FC (HKG), Cong An Ha Noi FC (VIE)

Group F: Gamba Osaka (JPN), Nam Dinh FC (VIE), Ratchaburi FC (THA), Eastern FC (HKG)

Group G: Bangkok United (THA), Selangor FC (MAS), Lion City Sailors FC (SGP), Persib Bandung (IDN)

Group H: FC Pohang Steelers (KOR), BG Pathum United (THA), Kaya FC-Iloilo (PHI), Tampines Rovers FC (SGP)

## Basketballers to Face Australia in Asia Cup Semifinals



TEHRAN – Defending champion Australia will face determined Team Melli of Iran in a high-stakes Jeddah showdown in the 2025 FIBA Asia Cup semifinals on Saturday.

By the end of Saturday night, only one will still have a shot at

the FIBA Asia Cup 2025 title.

Australia and Iran have taken different routes to get here. The Boomers have been all business, sweeping Group A and cruising past the Philippines in the Quarter-Finals. Their average winning margin of 25.3 points per game

tells the story of a team barely tested, with maybe just one bad half of basketball in the entire tournament.

Iran's road, however, has been bumpier but no less remarkable. The Group B winner has twice stared down late deficits, first against Japan in the Group Phase, then in the Quarter-Finals against Chinese Taipei, when it came from 21 points down to steal a win.

With a younger, retooled core missing some of Team Melli's iconic veterans, they arrive in the last four undefeated. However, as seasoned veteran Arsalan Kazemi termed themselves during the course of the competition, "We are the underdogs."

These two have clashed on the

international stage plenty, with Iran even securing a victory over Australia in a FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Asian Qualifiers meeting. However, they have only once faced each other at the FIBA Asia Cup, which was a 79-56 Boomers win in the 2017 Final.

For Iran, this is a chance to gain a measure of payback and reach the Final for the first time since that edition. For Australia, it's about keeping their perfect all-time FIBA Asia Cup record intact and moving one win away from a third straight crown.

With unbeaten records, contrasting styles and a place in the championship game at stake, Saturday's clash has all the ingredients of a Jeddah classic.

## Sinner, Swiatek Advance in Rain-Hit Cincinnati Open

MASON, Ohio (Reuters) - Third seed Iga Swiatek reached the Cincinnati quarterfinals with a 6-4 6-4 win over Sorana Cirstea, while defending champion Jannik Sinner beat Adrian Mannarino following a lengthy rain delay.

Wimbledon champion Swiatek extended her perfect record against Cirstea to 5-0 and will next face the winner of an all-Russian clash between Anna Kalinskaya and Ekaterina Alexandrova.

"We played many tough matches, so I know Sorana can really hit the ball well, especially on faster surfaces," Poland's Swiatek said.

"I'm happy I was solid enough. I was trying to be proactive with my serve, not many of my first serves went in, but I was happy I was solid on my second serves."

Fellow Pole Magda Linette upset fourth seed Jessica Pegula 7-6(5)



Jannik Sinner of Italy plays a backhand during the match against Adrian Mannarino of France during Day 7 of the Cincinnati Open.

3-6 6-3 in a third-round match that extended over two days after Tuesday's suspension due to rain.

The American had levelled the match at a set apiece, but on

Wednesday's resumption Linette earned the break before closing it out on serve for her second Top-10 win of the season.

In the men's draw, top seed Sin-

ner kept his title defense on track, beating French qualifier Mannarino 6-4 7-6(4) after an almost three-hour rain interruption.

The Italian struggled to find his rhythm, failing to serve out at 6-5 but sealing the tiebreak with back-to-back aces for his 24th consecutive hard-court victory.

Sinner will face either 23rd seed Felix Auger-Aliassime or France's Benjamin Bonzi in what will be his fifth quarterfinal this year.

Ben Shelton, whose match was also halted after the first set, advanced to the round of 16 with a 7-6(3) 6-3 win over Roberto Bautista Agut. The American fifth seed will next face Czech Jiri Lehecka.

Alexander Zverev completed a 6-4 6-4 win over Brandon Nakashima after the match was suspended overnight when he was leading 5-4 in the second set.

## Zahra Nemati Wins Exemplary Asian Official Award



TEHRAN – Zahra Nemati of Iran's Para archery team has won the Exemplary Asian Official award.

Nemati was honored for her visionary leadership and deep commitment to advancing the Paralympic Movement.

Her efforts have significantly supported governance, athlete advocacy, and visibility for Para sport in Asia.

The Asian Paralympic Committee (APC) held its prestigious Asian Awards Ceremony on 13 August 2025 in Astana, Kazakhstan, celebrating the region's most outstanding contributors to the Paralympic Movement.

The event took place during a landmark week for the APC, which also included the 2025 Conference and General Assembly.

## Tractor Discover Opponents in 2025-26 ACL Elite



TEHRAN – Tractor football team of Iran will not face Saudi Arabian teams in the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Elite.

The draw for the Elite ACL league stage was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on Friday.

A total of 24 teams (12 from the East and 12 from the West) will participate in the league stage.

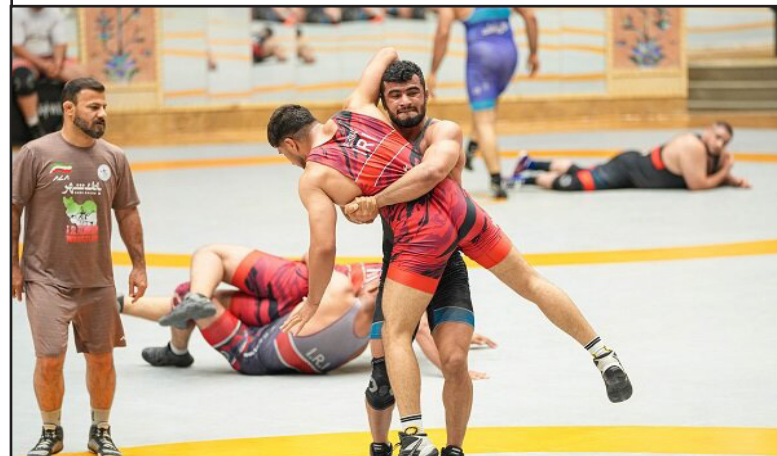
The competition will start on

September 15 and last until April 25 of next year.

Tractor will face Qatar's Al Sadd SC, champions in 2011, Al Shorta (IRQ), Sharjah (UAE), Al Duhail (QAT), Shabab Al Ahli (UAE), Nasaif (UZB), Al Gharafa (QAT) and Al Wahda (UAE), as they look to better last season's quarter-final finish.

Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia is the defending champion.

## Greco-Roman Wrestlers Off to Serbia



TEHRAN - Iran's Greco-Roman wrestling team left for Mladenovac, Serbia, on Friday to participate in the Ljubomir Ivanovic Gedza Cup international competitions.

Iran will likely be main challenger, while other major challengers include Georgia, Azerbaijan, India, and UWW wrestlers, many of whom are continental champions.

The Iranian team includes:

55 kg: Muhammad Pooya

Asadi

63 kg: Reza Gheitashi

72 kg: Iman Muhammadi -

Ahmad Reza Mohsen Nejad

77 kg: Amir Mehdi Saeedi

Nava

82 kg: Alireza Muham-

mad Hosseini

87 kg: Yasin Yazdi - Mu-

hammad Hossein Ostad

Memar

130 kg: Ayub Hussein-

vand

Coach: Mehdi Aliari - Abbas Keshtkar.