TEHRAN – Iran national football team have not won a title in the AFC Asian Cup about half a century and is not good news for one of the continent's heavyweights.

The Iranian team have qualified for the FIFA World Cup in the last three editions but have never advanced to the next stage.

In my opinion, it refers to the players' culture. They have not yet learned the professionalism in the sport.

Iran were the favorites to win the title in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.

Iran had to defeat Japan in the competition's semifinals to book a place in the final but suffered a shocking 3-0 loss against Samurai Blue.

The game was on a knife-edge but a misjudgement from Iran defender Hossein Kanaanizadegan tilted it Japan's way 11 minutes after half-time.

While he was protesting his innocence over an edge-of-the-box challenge, Takumi Minamino played on and crossed to Yuya Osako, whose glancing header put Japan ahead.

Iran conceded two more goals and failed to qualify for the final.

On Sunday, Iran booked a place in the 2023 AFC U17 Asian Cup and will have to meet Japan in the semifinals on Thursday.

Hossein Abdi will not have Abolfazl Zoleikhaei in the key match after the iconic defender received a yellow card in the match against Yemen.

He was shown a yellow card by the Korean referee after protesting the assistant referee in the final minutes of the match.

The Iranian football players must learn to respect the referees' decision and there is no conspiracy against them.

They MUST learn it as soon as possible.

We see so many protests in Iran's football league and the players create controversy in the competition.

No, it doesn't work. If Iran want to win a title in the continent's event, the players must act wisely.