



## Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 12:

### **Maher Habeeb**



Maher Habeeb remains one of Al Shorta's greatest ever defenders and he was a true leader on the pitch.

The definition of a tough-tackler, Maher was capable of marking any striker out of a game when at his best. He started his senior career at Al Bahri before signing for Al Minaa. In 1994, Maher moved to Al Shorta from Al Minaa and played his first game in 1995: a 3-2 victory over Al Najaf.

Little did he know that he would be playing for Al Shorta for the next fifteen years (aside from short loan spells at Al Zawraa and Al Quwa Al Jawiyya and a short spell at Al Hussein in Jordan), solidifying himself as one of the side's most crucial players. He was an important player for Al Shorta as they won the Iraqi Premier League in 1998, but the highlight of his career came on 10th February 2002 in the Iraqi Elite Cup final. It was extra-time and Al Shorta were drawing 0-0 with Al Talaba in the cup final. With just eight minutes left of extra-time, Maher Habeeb was the man who stepped up when it mattered, scoring the

Golden Goal with a bullet header and winning the cup for Al Shorta, their second in a row.

He continued to star for Al Shorta, winning the league with them in 2003, becoming the club captain and scoring goals against Al Ramadi and Al Naft in the 2007-08 season and against Duhok in the 2008-09 season (the latter being a crucial last-minute winner). His final game for the club came on 17th June 2009 against Erbil (Al Shorta's final game of the 2008-09 season) and Al Shorta unfortunately lost the game 1-0 to Ali Mansoor's goal just past the hour-mark. After retiring, Maher became the assistant manager at Al Shorta and always gave his utmost effort for the club he loves.

Captain Maher will always be remembered for his Iraqi Elite Cup heroics, but he will also never be forgotten for everything else he did for the club during his inspiring fifteen-year stay.

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