



Al Shorta's Greatest Moments - Number 2:

Majeed penalty snatches title away from Jawiya in final seconds of season (1998)



After finishing the 1996-97 season in fifth place, few expected Abdelilah Abdul-Hamed's Al Shorta to win the league the following season. However, captained by Saad Qais, Al Shorta did just that as a penalty by league topscorer Mahmoud Majeed in the final minute of the season clinched a sensational eighth title for the club.

Going into the final day of the league season on Friday 5th May 1998, there were three contenders for the title; all three of them were from Baghdad. Al Quwa Al Jawiya were on top of the league with 70 points and +46 goal difference. The eventual champions Al Shorta were in second, also with 70 points but with +40 goal difference, six less than Jawiya's total. Al Zawraa were in third with 69 points and +48 goal difference.

League leaders Al Quwa Al Jawiya were playing fellow title hopefuls Al Zawraa at Al Shaab Stadium at the same time as Al Shorta were playing Al Sulaikh (who ended the season in 10th position) at Al Kashafa Stadium. If Jawiya won against Al Zawraa, they would be

the champions unless Al Shorta won by a hugely unrealistic scoreline against Al Sulaikh. Al Shorta had to beat Al Sulaikh and hope that Jawiya did not win against Al Zawraa in order for them to win the title and Al Zawraa had to beat Jawiya and hope that Al Shorta failed to beat Al Sulaikh if they wanted to win the league.

Haider Hameed scored on the 21st minute for Al Shorta to put them in the lead against Al Sulaikh and keep their title hopes alive. However, lowly Al Sulaikh shocked everybody when Salim Khanjar and Mohammed Ali Abbas each scored in quick succession in the opening half to go 2-1 ahead and severely dent Al Shorta's hopes of winning their second ever Iraqi Premier League title.

Over at Al Shaab Stadium, Jawiya had opened the scoring



against Al Zawraa through Razzaq Farhan's close-range finish but Adnan Mohammed's one-on-one finish soon after brought the game to one apiece. A draw would be enough for Jawiya to win the title if Al Shorta failed to defeat Al Sulaikh.

Al Shorta attacked and attacked but it was looking more and more unlikely for them to win the title as the clock ticked on and they were still 2-1 behind. But, they then produced one of the most memorable and stunning comebacks in the history of Iraqi football, shocking fans, pundits and players alike all over the country. With just six minutes of normal time left to score two goals, Al Shorta were in deep trouble. They managed to get one in the 84th minute when a header was tipped onto the crossbar by Al Sulaikh's goalkeeper and Al Shorta's Mafeed Assem managed to poke the ball home. The goalkeeper did manage to parry the ball away but the ball had already crossed

the line in the opinion of the referee (very few players protested the decision) and it was 2-2. But a 2-2 draw was not enough for Al Shorta, they still needed another goal from somewhere.



At Al Shaab Stadium, Jawiya's crucial game with Al Zawraa had ended at 1-1, ending Al Zawraa's hopes of winning the league and meaning that Al Shorta would win the league if they could grab one more goal. False news filtered through Al Shaab Stadium that Al Shorta had drawn their game 2-2 with Al Sulaikh (which would have meant that Jawiya were the champions) when of course the game was not over. In what was a comedic but unfortunate moment for Al Quwa Al Jawiya's players and staff, they gathered round the centre of the pitch celebrating, believing that they had won the title. Players were on their knees and they even performed a lap of honour in front of the joyous crowd with their manager Ayoub Odisho telling the cameras how happy he was that he had led his side to the

title. All would change for them in a matter of minutes.

Al Shorta's game was very close to its end. With just a few minutes to go, Al Sulaikh went down to ten men due to a horrible foul from behind on an Al Shorta player as he was bearing down on goal. It was the perfect opportunity for Al Shorta to throw everybody forward and in minute 90+3, their determination and will to be champions paid off as Al Sulaikh's Haider Kadhim gave away a careless penalty by bringing down an opposing player in the box. The league's top scorer, Mahmoud Majeed, was brave enough to step up to take the crucial spot-kick and showed nerves of steel as he coolly sent the 'keeper the wrong way by rolling the ball to the 'keeper's right and sending Al Shorta's players and fans into ecstasy at Al Kashafa Stadium. The referee blew the final whistle soon after the goal and Al Shorta were the champions for the eighth time in their illustrious history.



The news slowly filtered through at Al Shaab Stadium that Al Shorta had won the game late on and won the title. Jawiya's fans and players stopped celebrating and the players trudged off of the pitch in embarrassment just a week after a 97th-minute goal from Al Zawraa saw them lose the Iraqi FA Cup final. Manager Ayoub Odisho, who was earlier given 'the bumps' by the delighted Jawiya players, heard the news halfway through an interview and, in what is now one of the most infamous moments in the league's history, Odisho stopped talking and stood in silence with a horrified, distraught face.

It was another despairing moment for Jawiya but an amazing moment for Al Shorta whose hard work and determination saw them lift the famous trophy after travelling to Al Shaab Stadium to

collect it. Al Shorta ended the season two points ahead of Jawiya and three points ahead of Al Zawraa with a record of 23 wins, four draws and three defeats from 30 games. Remarkably, Al Shorta scored in every single league match of the season.

To see for yourself the drama of the final day unfolding in all its glory, [click here](#).

AL SHORTA'S RESULTS FROM THE 1997-98 IRAQI PREMIER LEAGUE:

Round	Opponent	Result	Al Shorta scorers
1	Al Kut	2-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Ziyad Tariq
2	Al Zawraa	2-2 draw	Mahmoud Majeed, Mazen Abdulsattar
3	Samarra	4-0 win	Qais Issa, Ahmed Jadiea, Mohammed Razzaq, Mahmoud Majeed
4	Misan	4-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Abdulhussein Jawad, Saad Qais, Ahmed Ayad
5	Al Sinaah	1-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed
6	Diyala	3-1 win	Mahmoud Majeed (2), Mafeed Assem
7	Al Jaish	4-1 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Mafeed Assem (2), Ahmed Jadiea
8	Al Minaa	2-3 loss	Haitham Sabri, Mahmoud Majeed
9	Al Quwa Al Jawiya	3-2 win	Abdulhussein Jawad, Abbas Raheem, Mahmoud Majeed
10	Salahaddin	3-0 win	Abbas Raheem (2), Mohammed Abdulrazzaq

11	Al Mosul	2-1 win	Ahmed Jadiea, Mohammed Abdulrazzaq
12	Al Talaba	1-1 draw	Mahmoud Majeed
13	Al Naft	3-2 win	Abbas Raheem, Mahir Ogla, Ziyad Tariq
14	Al Najaf	1-2 loss	Mahmoud Majeed
15	Al Sulaikh	2-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Saad Qais
16	Al Kut	2-0 win	Ziyad Tariq, Abbas Raheem
17	Al Zawraa	1-1 draw	Qusay Hashim
18	Samarra	1-1 draw	Mahir Ogla
19	Misan	1-2 loss	Abbas Raheem
20	Al Sinaah	2-0 win	Abdulhussein Jawad, Mafeed Assem
21	Diyala	2-1 win	Qais Issa, Mahmoud Majeed
22	Al Jaish	2-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Abbas Raheem
23	Al Minaa	3-2 win	Mahmoud Majeed, Saad Qais, Maher Habeeb
24	Al Quwa Al Jawiya	3-2 win	Saad Qais (2), Qais Issa
25	Salahaddin	2-1 win	Mafeed Assem, Mahir Ogla
26	Al Mosul	6-2 win	Mahmoud Majeed (2), Qais Issa, Saad Qais, Mahir Ogla, own goal
27	Al Talaba	1-0 win	Mahmoud Majeed
28	Al Naft	2-1 win	Mafeed Assem (2)
29	Al Najaf	3-0 win	Mafeed Assem, Mahmoud Majeed (2)
30	Al Sulaikh	3-2 win	Haider Hameed, Mafeed Assem, Mahmoud Majeed

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