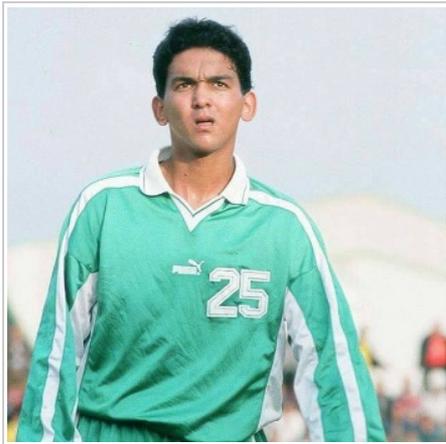




## **Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 2:** **Nashat Akram**



Nashat Akram remains arguably the greatest midfielder ever to wear the famous green and white of Al Shorta. After representing Al Quwa Al Jawiya and Al Zawraa at youth level and Salahaddin at senior level, Nashat made his breakthrough by signing for Al Shorta in 2000 at the age of 16 and quickly made his way into the first team. He was immediately identified as one of the most promising young Iraqi players of recent times, and as the years passed by it seemed more and more likely that Nashat would become one of Asia's top talents.

After helping Al Shorta win the Iraqi Premier League (then known as the Iraqi First Division League), Iraqi Elite Cup, Al Quds International Championship and reach the Iraqi FA Cup final twice during his first spell at the club (2000-2003), Nashat left to play in Saudi Arabia. The playmaker continued his great performances at both club and international level and was one of Iraq's most important players during their now famous AFC Asian Cup victory in 2007, earning the MVP award in the all-important final against the Saudis. After these impressive performances, the midfield general was set to sign for English side Manchester City but work permit issues sadly prevented

the star from becoming the first Iraqi player to appear in the Premier League. He went on to sign for Dutch giants F.C. Twente and won the Eredivisie title there but a long-term injury he suffered led to him leaving the European side and returning to the Gulf.

The legend, affectionately nicknamed 'The Maestro' by Iraqi fans, rejoined Al Shorta midway through the 2012-13 campaign and captained the Police to the Iraqi Premier League title in that season, scoring and assisting many vital goals. He then enjoyed a spell in China before returning to Al Shorta, and after a short spell at Northern side Erbil, Nashat announced his retirement from football in 2015 after becoming a father.

One of the greatest players Asia has ever produced, Nashat will never be forgotten by Al Shorta, and likewise Nashat will never forget the club where his career really kickstarted.

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