



## Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 26:

### Albert Khoshaba



Albert Khoshaba was one of the best Iraqi players of his generation and was a regular for the Iraq national team during the mid to late 1960s. The pacy, skilful left-winger started his career in 1954 when he joined the R.A.F. Employees' (Assyrian) Club before signing for Al Farqa Al Thalatha, whom he left in 1957.

After his discharge from his military service, he moved across Baghdad and joined the Passenger Transport Department team (Maslaha Naqil Al Rakab), where he played for two seasons before immigrating to the United Kingdom in 1959 in the hope of living there.

However, he returned to Iraq less than a year later due to homesickness and signed for Montakhab Al Shorta in 1960 where he was the star player of the team and he became an Al Shorta legend during his spell at the club. He went on to re-sign for Maslaha Naqil Al Rakab before his retirement.

Albert, nicknamed Alberto due to his South American or European style of football, possessed blistering pace as well as great skill and was a wonderfully intelligent dribbler. The highlight of his career arguably came in 1966 when he was selected to play for the 'Baghdad XI' against Portuguese side Benfica in the opening game of Al Shaab Stadium. The best player in the world at the time, Eusebio, was part of the Benfica side who won 2-1 that day and Albert managed to exchange shirts with Eusebio after the game; Eusebio congratulated him on a brilliant performance and then said that Albert was 'one of the best wingers he'd ever seen'.

Undoubtedly an Al Shorta and Iraq legend, Albert Khoshaba is a man who true Iraqi football fans will always remember and cherish.

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