



AI Shorta's Greatest Moments - Number 16: Ayad Bunyan becomes president of AI Shorta (2012)



Before the 2012 elections for the club's new president, AI Shorta's president was legendary goalkeeper Raad Hammoudi who captained the club to the league title during his playing days. However, his spell as club president was not so successful, with the lowest point in that spell coming when AI Shorta just survived relegation to the Iraqi Division 1 by the skin of their teeth, finishing +5 goal difference above the drop zone.

AI Shorta fans had had enough of watching the demise of their great club, so when Ayad Bunyan became president on 18 May 2012 after receiving 372 votes in the elections, AI Shorta supporters hoped that they would witness a new beginning for the club. But very few could have predicted the sheer impact that this one man would have on the club in the next two years.

After finishing in seventh place in the 2011-12 season, AI Shorta began drastically changing their squad ahead of the start of the 2012-13 campaign. Ayad Bunyan helped the club attract big-name players from the Iraqi League such as Hussein Kareem, Abbas Hussain Ruhaima, Mohammed Gassid, Muslem Mubarak, Hussein Abdul Wahid, Ahmed Ayad and Waleed Salem as well as players from foreign leagues such as Nashat Akram from Al Nasr, Cameroonian pair Jean Michel N'Lend and Innocent Awoa, Ivorian defender Suwaria Mohammed, Nigerian striker Minusu Buba

and Burkina Faso international Paul Koulibaly.



These signings, as well as the appointment of Thair Jassam as manager, contributed to AI Shorta sensationally winning the league in the 2012-13 season, just two seasons after finishing one place away from relegation. That season was no fluke though as Ayad Bunyan once again proved his effectiveness in running the club as they won the league again in the next season with AI Shorta signing even more big-name players including Mustafa Kareem, Qusay Munir, Mahdi Kareem, Ali Bahjat, Hamdy Al-Massri and Cristiano da Silva Santos. Before the start of the 2014-15 season, Ayad Bunyan also conducted deals for the likes of Marwan Hussein, Muthanna Khalid, Nashat Akram, Makadji Boukar, Salam Shakir and Alaa Abdul-Zahra - these were the types of players AI Shorta fans could only dream of seeing their club sign during the Raad Hammoudi era.

Not only did Ayad Bunyan significantly improve the squad by attracting such players, but he also announced plans for the club to build a new sports complex (AI Shorta Sports City) containing a new 10000-seater stadium. He oversaw the contract negotiations between AI Shorta and the Swedish construction company Nordic Sport as well as the demolition of AI Shorta Stadium. He also oversaw the introduction of a new logo for the club

in 2014, as well as getting the club both an official kit manufacturer in Nike and a kit sponsor in Royal Arena Sport.

He helped to improve the facilities at the training ground as well appointing quality, experienced training staff from Brazil to ensure that the players could play at their best. When Ayad Bunyan left the club in early 2015, he certainly left it in a much better position for new president Riyadh Abdul-Abbas than Raad Hammoudi did in 2012.

To put it concisely, the man revolutionised a relegation-battling club and turned them back into what they once were - the best club in Iraq. AI Shorta are forever indebted to Ayad Bunyan - a true legend and a hero to all AI Shorta fans.

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