



AI Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 16:

Basem Qasem



Basem Qasem was a talented midfielder player who was also capable of playing in defence. The AI Shorta legend started his career at AI Jaish before spells at AI Amana (now Amanat Baghdad) and AI Quwa Al Jawiya before his career really kicked off when he moved to AI Shorta.

He became a star player at AI Shorta, helping them win the 1985 Arab Police Championship when they defeated AI Shorta (Saudi Arabia) 1-0 in the final.

The highlight of his playing career came when he featured twice in the 1986 FIFA World Cup for Iraq; the first as a substitute against Paraguay (as a defender) and the other against Mexico (as a midfielder) with Iraq narrowly losing both games 1-0.

After he retired, he became a manager and returned to manage AI Shorta (alongside Muwafaq Hussein) for the 1993-94 season where AI Shorta finished fourth. He also managed AI Shorta in 1996, leading the team to victory at the 1996 Al Nasr Al Adheem Cup.

He returned to manage AI Shorta again at the start of the 2002-03 season and under his guidance AI Shorta were top of the Iraqi First Division League after twelve games with an outstanding record of 30 goals scored, three conceded and zero losses. He was ousted from the club however when Uday Hussein's henchman Aseel Tabra was brought in as the new club president.

After the 2002-03 season was over, Basem was reappointed by AI Shorta and he coached them through their 2003 Arab Champions League campaign but was sacked after the club lost the 2003 Iraqi FA Cup final to Al Talaba (the club's second straight FA Cup final defeat and fifth in their history).

In 2011, Basem took charge of AI Shorta for a fourth time. The season before, AI Shorta had only survived relegation to the Iraqi Division 1 on goal difference, so Basem was given the unenviable task of trying to resurrect a fallen giant. He did a fantastic job for most of the season, with AI Shorta challenging for an AFC Cup spot for a large majority of the campaign. It looked as if AI Shorta would secure a top-four finish (a huge improvement on the last season) but their form dipped right at the end of the season and Basem was sacked after a 5-1 defeat at home to Erbil with Mohammed Tabra taking over the last four games; AI Shorta lost three of those last four and eventually finished seventh.

Despite the disappointing end to the season, Basem Qasem managed to revive AI Shorta as one of Iraq's biggest clubs, and gave new manager Thair Jassam a great platform to work from in the 2012-13 season when AI Shorta won the league. Just like Mohammed Tabra, Douglas Aziz, Mudhafar Nouri, Younis Abid Ali and Faisal Aziz, Basem Qasem made his name as an AI Shorta legend as both a player and a manager.

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