



AI Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 22:

Abbas Raheem



The late, great Abbas Raheem was a brilliant attacking midfielder who, during his two spells at AI Shorta, cemented himself as a true legend of the club.

An AI Shorta supporter as a child, Abbas joined AI Shorta ahead of the 1997-98 season and, under the management of Abdelilah Abdul-Hamed, he scored seven league goals that campaign as AI Shorta won the Iraqi Premier League on the final day of the season.

In 1999, Abbas moved to Al Zawraa and scored a remarkable seven goals in his first three league games there. The legend rejoined AI Shorta in 2001 under Ahmed Radhi and immediately found a place in the first team again, scoring goals in 7-0, 5-0 and 3-1 wins over Samarra, Al Nasiriya and Al Sinaah respectively as AI Shorta finished in third in the 2001-02 season. That season, AI Shorta also won the Iraqi Elite Cup with Abbas Raheem scoring goals against Al Karkh and Al Zawraa in the group stage (the goal against Al Zawraa was a stunning long-range curler) and playing every single minute of the successful tournament.

The following season, the two-footed star scored against Duhok, Al Najaf, Al Quwa Al Jawiya, Al Karkh and Samarra in the league as AI Shorta were crowned champions for the second time in his career, but his best performance that season came in the round of 16 of the Iraqi FA Cup where he put four goals past Al Diwaniya as the Police won the game 8-1 and they eventually finished as runners-up in the tournament. He also starred in the 2003 Arab Champions League for AI Shorta, scoring a screamer from outside the box in a 4-2 defeat to Syrian side Al Jaish.

His final goal for AI Shorta came in March 2005 when he netted in a 5-1 demolition of Misan before he left to join aforementioned Syrian club Al Jaish in 2006 but he sadly had to retire that year due to a persistent injury he picked up there. He played 35 games for the Iraq national team between 1999 and 2003 (scoring four goals) and after his playing career was over he went on to become a manager at former Iraqi Premier League champions Salahaddin.

The AI Shorta legend tragically died on Friday 10th August 2012 in a car crash on the road from Baghdad to Najaf and he died at the scene, aged just 35 years old. Eight months later, AI Shorta's league match with Al Sinaah was played in remembrance of Abbas, and when Nashat Akram scored to make it 1-0 he ran over to a picture of Abbas and kissed it. That special moment (and that special game) was very emotional for AI Shorta's players and fans and he is now remembered and commemorated in a different way each and every year on the date of his death. A truly gifted player and a great person, Abbas will forever be missed.

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