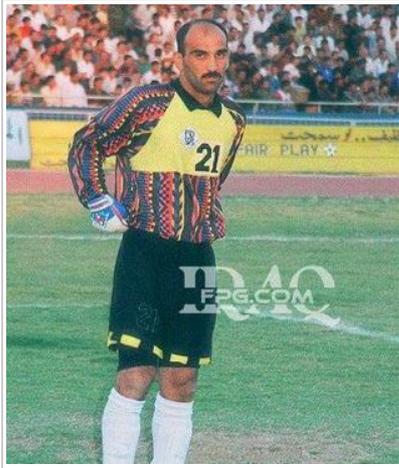




Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 33:

Ayad Khudhair



Goalkeeper Ayad Khudhair, affectionately nicknamed Ayad Sasuke by the Al Shorta faithful, will always be remembered as the man between the sticks when Al Shorta won their famous 1997-98 league title.

Ayad, born on 24 July 1969, joined the club in 1995 when manager Kadhim Al-Rubaie signed him from Al Umal. His first game for the club was the Iraqi El Clásico between Al Shorta and Al Zawraa in the 1995-96 season. Ayad kept a clean sheet on his debut as the Harps won 1-0 against the eventual league champions and Ayad instantly became a fan favourite.

He played as second fiddle to the legendary Emad Hashim at the start of his Al Shorta career, but when Emad moved to Al Zawraa in 1997, Ayad became Al Shorta's number one goalkeeper and he made the most of his opportunity. The Harps won eleven games in a row to secure the 1997-98 league title and Ayad was one of the most important components of that famous team, and was one of the most loved players by the fans. He went on to start the 1998 Iraqi Super Cup match but the Harps fell to a 1-0 defeat to Al Zawraa after conceding an 88th minute goal.

Emad Hashim returned to the club for the 1998-99 season which saw Ayad move to Al Karkh. He retired in 2002 after a spell at Al Jaish, with his last ever match being a 1-0 win over Al Naft, and now works as a goalkeeping coach.

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