



## Al Shorta's Greatest Moments - Number 4: **Final-day 3-0 victory over Al Talaba seals Al Shorta's ninth league title (2013)**



Al Shorta finished the 2011-12 season in seventh place and, despite appointing an experienced manager in Thair Jassam and signing a number of good players prior to the 2012-13 season, including foreigners Innocent Awoa and Jean Michel N'Lend, very few expected them to win the league. The pundits' favourites for the title were Erbil (the reigning champions), Duhok and Al Quwa Al Jawiya; Al Shorta were simply seen as outsiders for the title, at most.

However, four games into the season, Al Shorta proved a point to the whole of Iraq that they should be taken seriously when Jean Michel N'Lend's hat-trick of headers contributed to a 4-1 demolition of Iraqi giants Al Quwa Al Jawiya. Al Shorta went the first 20 games of the season undefeated and scored impressive victories over the likes of Al Minaa (4-1), Erbil (1-0), Al Masafi (5-0), Al Sulaimaniya (4-0), Karbalaa (3-2) and

Duhok (4-3) over the course of the season.

Al Shorta had the chance to clinch the title when they faced Erbil at Al Shaab Stadium in their 32nd game out of 34. They took the lead early on in the second half but an injury time equaliser from Erbil meant that Al Shorta would have to wait before they could celebrate. Now, it was a victory in their next game against Al Zawraa that would clinch the title, but after taking a 1-0 lead through captain Nashat Akram's header, their hearts were broken once again when Hayder Sabbah scored an 84th minute equaliser for Al Zawraa.

This meant that Erbil were now just two points behind Al Shorta, with Al Quwa Al Jawiya just a point behind Erbil. The title race was going to the last day. Al Shorta needed to win their final game against Al Talaba to be sure of the title, whereas Erbil needed to win their game and hope that Al Shorta slipped up again. Al Quwa Al Jawiya needed Erbil and Al Shorta to lose and defeat Al Masafi by a big goal-margin.



Nerves among the Al Shorta supporters were suppressed to an extent when Hussein Kareem put 'Al Qeetharah' a goal up before the half-hour mark, but they were all but gone by the time Nigerian striker Minusu Buba and Iraqi full-back Dhurgham Ismail had scored second half goals which secured both the victory and the title and sparked wild celebrations in the national stadium. The full-time whistle blew to confirm that Al Shorta had claimed their ninth league title and their first one in ten years.

The Police ended with 72 points, two points ahead of Erbil and three ahead of Al Quwa Al Jawiya (who both won their final games) with a record of twenty wins, twelve draws and two defeats. They also won the Baghdad Cup earlier that season with a 1-0 win over Al Zawraa to complete the double. Amjad Kalaf was Al Shorta's top scorer with nine goals.



**AL SHORTA'S RESULTS FROM THE 2012-13 IRAQI PREMIER LEAGUE:**

Round	Opponent	Result	Al Shorta scorers
1	Al Sinaah	1-0 win	Innocent Awoa
2	Al Najaf	2-0 win	Muslem Mubarak, Amjad Kalaf

3	Zakho	0-0 draw	
4	Al Quwa Al Jawiya	4-1 win	Jean Michel N'Lend (3), Muslem Mubarak
5	Al Masafi	3-2 win	Muhammed Faisel, Amjad Kalaf, Muslem Mubarak
6	Al Kahrabaa	0-0 draw	
7	Al Naft	2-2 draw	Jean Michel N'Lend, Hussein Abdul Wahid
8	Al Sulaimaniya	1-1 draw	Dhurgham Ismail
9	Al Minaa	4-1 win	Dhurgham Ismail, Hussein Kareem, Ahmed Ayad, Ali Rahim
10	Naft Al Junoob	2-1 win	Hussein Kareem, Jean Michel N'Lend
11	Karbala	1-0 win	Hussein Kareem
12	Kirkuk	1-0 win	Hussein Kareem
13	Duhok	1-1 draw	Ahmed Fadhel
14	Amanat Baghdad	1-1 draw	Minusu Buba
15	Al Zawraa	2-1 win	Waleed Salem, Jean Michel N'Lend
16	Al Talaba	1-1 draw	Amjad Kalaf
17	Al Sinaah	3-0 win	Nashat Akram, Amjad Kalaf, Minusu Buba
18	Al Najaf	1-1 draw	Nashat Akram
19	Erbil	1-0 win	Nashat Akram
20	Zakho	2-0 win	Nashat Akram, Dhurgham Ismail
21	Al Quwa Al Jawiya	0-4 loss	
22	Al Masafi	5-0 win	Amjad Kalaf (2), Hussein Kareem, Minusu Buba, Dhurgham Ismail
23	Al Kahrabaa	1-1 draw	Amjad Kalaf
24	Al Naft	2-1 win	Amjad Kalaf, Muslem Mubarak
25	Al Sulaimaniya	4-0 win	Minusu Buba (2), Muslem Mubarak, Muhaimen Salim
26	Al Minaa	1-2 loss	Muhaimen Salim
27	Naft Al Junoob	2-0 win	Muslem Mubarak, Muhammed Faisel

28	Karbalaa	3-2 win	Minusu Buba, Nashat Akram, Hussein Kareem
29	Kirkuk	1-0 win	Fareed Majeed
30	Duhok	4-3 win	Minusu Buba, Amjad Kalaf, Mahdi Kamil, Muhammed Faisal
31	Amanat Baghdad	1-1 draw	Muslem Mubarak
32	Erbil	1-1 draw	Mahdi Kamil
33	Al Zawraa	1-1 draw	Nashat Akram
34	Al Talaba	3-0 win	Hussein Kareem, Minusu Buba, Dhurgham Ismail

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