



Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 44: Waleed Salem



Right-back Waleed Salem, born on 5 January 1992, started his career at Al Kahrabaa and joined Al Shorta in 2012. At the Harps, he became the best right-back in the league. His first goal for the club was arguably his most important, as he scored a fantastic equalising goal in the 45th minute of the first Baghdad Derby with Al Zawraa in the 2012-13 season.

Two minutes later, just before half-time, Waleed swung in a fantastic free-kick which was headed in by Jean Michel N'Lend, and the game ended 2-1. Waleed's goal and assist in that game would prove crucial as Al Shorta won the league by only two points. The following season, Al Shorta won the league once again with Waleed Salem scoring in a 5-0 win over Duhok.

Waleed was a crucial player in Al Shorta's run to the 2015 AFC Cup knockout stage, playing a major role in Al Shorta's fourth goal in a 4-0 win over Al Jazeera of Jordan with his long-range screamer hitting the post and rebounding off of the 'keeper into the net. He continued his goalscoring exploits into the 2015-16 season, firing the ball into the net from outside the box against Amanat Baghdad in a 1-0 win that helped Al Shorta qualify for the next round of the league by the skin on their teeth.

Waleed's debut for the Iraq national team came just before he signed for Al Shorta, and he was one of Iraq's best players in the game as they narrowly lost 1-0 to Japan in 2014 FIFA World Cup qualifying. He has since become Iraq's first choice right-back, scoring his first international goal in the 2015 AFC Asian Cup third place match, and he remains one of Al Shorta's best and most loyal players.

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