



Al Shorta's Greatest Players - Number 6:

Saad Qais



Saad Qais was one of Iraq's top players in the 1980s and 1990s, earning half-a-century of appearances for the Iraq national team and winning many trophies with his clubs too.

Saad's career started in 1983 with Al Shorta (known as Quwat Al Emen Al Dakhili for a short while between 1983 and 1984) before joining Al Rasheed in 1985 with fellow Al Shorta stars Younis Abid Ali and Riyadh Abdul-Abbas.

Al Rasheed won three league titles and three Arab Champions Leagues in the next five years but Saad departed the club and returned to Al Shorta for the 1990-91 season where Al Shorta finished third, before joining Al Rasheed's successors, Al Karkh, and playing there for the next few years.

After a few years abroad, Saad Qais returned to Al Shorta and was captain of the side by the 1997-98 season. That season, the captain scored six league goals (including a brace against Al Quwa Al Jawiya in a 3-2 win which he maintains are his most important goals) as Al Shorta won the league in the last minute of the season ahead of runners-up Jawiya.

The midfielder, comfortable at left-wing too, was also a star internationally, scoring the winning penalty in the penalty shootout of the 1989 Peace and Friendship Cup final against Uganda as Iraq won 5-4 on penalties. He scored seven goals in Iraq's 1994 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign and was one of Iraq's best players of that period.

Saad continued playing at Al Shorta until 2001 when he retired from football, but he soon came out of retirement to play for Norwegian side S.A.F.K. Fagernes (now known as Valdres F.K.) until 2005 when his career ended. He was also one of few players brave enough to speak out against the horrible actions of Uday Hussein and was subject to some of his tortures himself.

Saad will always be remembered for captaining Al Shorta to the league title in 1998 and is a true club legend.

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