

# PELÉ

## WHO IS PELÉ?

Pelé, born Edson Arantes do Nascimento (October 23, 1940, Três Corações, Brazil), was a Brazilian football (soccer) player. In his time, he was probably the most famous and possibly the best-paid athlete in the world. He was part of the Brazilian national teams that won three World Cup championships (1958, 1962, and 1970).

### Early days

Pelé began playing for minor teams and at first, was rejected by major teams in São Paulo. Nevertheless, in 1956 he joined Santos Football club as a left forward and went on to win nine league championships as well as the Libertadores Cup and the Intercontinental Club Cup. His main skills included high kick accuracy as well as an incredible ability to anticipate other players' moves. During his World Cup career, he scored 12 goals in 14 matches.



### A class above the rest

In 1958, following the World Cup, Pelé was awarded the highly prestigious National Treasure Award, which is awarded by a government to someone who has been recognised for significant contributions to their culture and heritage. It is suggested that this decision also helped ensure that no other large teams could try and poach him for their side since it meant that he would have to remain in Brazil.

### Road to a record

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1969, in his 909<sup>th</sup> match, he finally scored his 1000<sup>th</sup> goal. The route to this record achievement was not an easy one, however. Earlier match opportunities saw him instead stepping in to defend the goal when his team's goalkeeper was seriously injured, and another attempt was prevented when a fullback stepped in to make the shot an own goal instead of allowing Pelé the victory.

The victory match was held inside the incredible Maracanã Stadium against Vasco de Gama. The atmosphere was glorious, and fans around the world tuned in on their televisions to catch the miracle. First attempts were blocked by the opposition, and even Vasco de Gama supporters were yelling at their own team for holding back 'The King'. The opportunity finally presented itself when Pelé was badly tackled and awarded a penalty. The shot was taken by 'The King' himself, knocked into the right corner, and the crowd went wild. Lifted high in the air by a pitch invasion of supporters, Pelé would down in history.

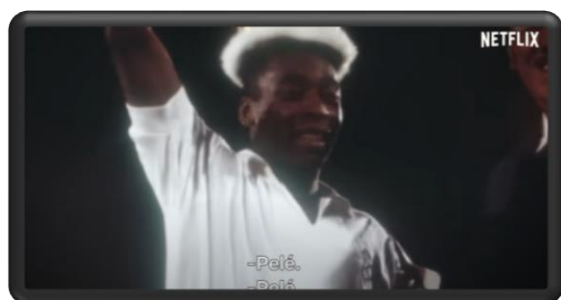


### **A lasting legacy**

Following his career, he continued on to receive an International Peace Award in 1978, was named Athlete of the Century twice, was honoured by a museum opening up in Santos all about his life and starred in various films and documentaries.

In 1994, he was awarded the Goodwill Ambassador for his work surrounding world peace, children's rights and poverty alleviation. This continued with the Children in Need award in 2012 for his humanitarian work and the Pelé Foundation, which was set up to empower children across the world and support their futures.

Find out more...



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMyUnyxVB9Q>

<https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/pele>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6jRK5ZlkdI>

### **Example Questions**

1. What was Pelé's nationality?
2. Which award ensured he stayed in Brazil and recognised his contributions to his culture and heritage?
3. Against which team did he score his 1000<sup>th</sup> goal?
4. How many games did he play during his World cup career?
5. Following his retirement, what charity did he set up to support and empower young children across the world?

