



Why Soccer Matters: A Look at More Than Sixty Years of International Soccer

By Pelé



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“I know in my heart that soccer was good to me, and great to the world....I saw, time and again, how the sport improved countless millions of lives, both on and off the field. For me, at least, that’s why soccer matters.”

The world’s most popular sport goes by many names—soccer, football, the beautiful game—but fans have always agreed on one thing: The greatest player of all time was Pelé. During his twenty-year career, he was heralded as an international treasure, and his accomplishments on the field proved to be pure magic: an unprecedented three World Cup championships and the all-time scoring record, with 1,283 goals. Since retiring, he has traveled the world as soccer’s global ambassador, relentlessly promoting the positive ways soccer can transform young men and women, struggling communities, even entire nations.

Now, for the first time, the legendary star and humanitarian explores the sport’s recent history and provides new insights into the game. With unparalleled openness, he shares his most inspiring experiences, heartwarming stories, and hard-won wisdom. This is Pelé’s legacy, his way of passing on everything he’s learned and inspiring a new generation. In *Why Soccer Matters*, Pelé details his ambitious goals for the future of the sport and, by extension, the world.



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Editorial Review

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These days, it's difficult to appreciate the fame of Edson Arantes do Nascimento—or Pelé. The soccer prodigy who helped Brazil win three World Cups became a global sports superstar at the dawn of the TV era, and like the Beatles, he was famous when there weren't really rules for it yet. His first-person account will please sports fans with its tales of his quick success for the Santos football club, magical World Cup moments, and victory lap with the New York Cosmos. But it's the personal insights that make it worthwhile. Interestingly, he never liked his nickname but came to use the persona of Pelé as a shield against celebrity. Describing his growth as a person and player, he comes across as a thoughtful, humble, self-deprecating man well aware of his talents, his failings, and his good fortune. And his frequent observations on how different things were back then—at the 1958 World Cup in Sweden, Brazil's team shirts were bought at a Stockholm department store—provide a fascinating contrast to the corporate world of sports today. --Keir Graff

Review

"An engaging reflection on international football in the World Cup era. Pelé's voice shines through...Provide[s] insight into the world's most popular game through the eyes of its most revered figure."—*Kirkus Reviews*

About the Author

Pelé started his professional career at the age of sixteen for Santos Futebol Clube, a club he stayed with for nearly two decades. In 1958, he won his first World Cup for Brazil at age seventeen—the youngest winner ever. He went on to win another two World Cups in 1962 and 1970, making him the only player in the world today with three Jules Rimet trophies. He is the all-time leading scorer in the history of the sport (1,283 goals in 1,366 matches).

Named one of the "Top 20 Most Important People of the 20th Century" (*Time*) and "Football Player of the Century" (FIFA), Pelé today maintains his commitment to the sport and to society by fulfilling various roles as spokesperson, ambassador and philanthropist.

Brian Winter, the chief correspondent for Reuters Brazil, has coauthored several books, including a memoir by Brazil's former president Fernando Henrique Cardoso. He lives in São Paulo.

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