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Roulette

Brazilian footballer (born 1976)

Nazário and the second or paternal family name is de Lima. In this Portuguese name , the first or maternal family name is and the second or paternal family name is

Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima (Brazilian Portuguese: [onawdu lwiz nzaju di lim]; born 18 September 1976), known as Ronaldo or Ronaldo Nazário, is a Brazilian former professional footballer who played as a striker. He is the owner of Brasileiro Série A club Cruzeiro and owner and president of Segunda Division club Real Valladolid. Nicknamed O Fenômeno ('The Phenomenon') and R9, he is considered one of the greatest players of all time. As a multi-functional striker who brought a new dimension to the position, Ronaldo has been an influence for a generation of strikers that have followed. His individual accolades include being named FIFA World Player of the Year three times and winning two Ballon d'Or awards.

Ronaldo started his career at Cruzeiro and moved to PSV in 1994. He joined Barcelona in 1996 for a then world record transfer fee and at 20 years old, he was named the 1996 FIFA World Player of the Year, making him the youngest recipient of the award. In 1997, Inter Milan broke the world record fee to sign Ronaldo, making him the first player since Diego Maradona to break the world transfer record twice. At 21, he received the 1997 Ballon d'Or and remains the youngest recipient of the award. By the age of 23, Ronaldo had scored over 200 goals for club and country. However, after a series of knee injuries and recuperation, he was inactive for almost three years. Ronaldo joined Real Madrid in 2002 and won the 2002–03 La Liga title. He had spells at AC Milan and Corinthians before retiring in 2011, having suffered further injuries.

Ronaldo played for Brazil in 98 matches, scoring 62 goals and is the third-highest goalscorer for his national team. At age 17, he was the youngest member of the Brazilian squad that won the 1994 FIFA World Cup. At the 1998 FIFA World Cup, Ronaldo received the Golden Ball as the player of the tournament after he helped Brazil reach the final, where he suffered a convulsive fit hours before kick-off. He won the 2002 FIFA World Cup, starring in a front three with Ronaldinho and Rivaldo. Ronaldo scored twice in the final and received the Golden Boot as the tournament's top goalscorer. This achievement, viewed as "redemption" for what occurred at the previous World Cup, saw Ronaldo named the 2002 FIFA World Player of the Year, receive the 2002 Ballon

d'Or, and for his return from injury, won the Laureus World Sports Award for Comeback of the Year. At the 2006 FIFA World Cup, Ronaldo scored his 15th World Cup goal, a tournament record at the time. He also won the 1997 Copa América, where he became the player of the tournament and the 1999 Copa América, where he was the top goalscorer.

Ronaldo was one of the most marketable sportsmen in the world during his playing career. He was named in the FIFA 100 list of the greatest living players compiled in 2004 by Pelé and was inducted into the Brazilian Football Museum Hall of Fame, Italian Football Hall of Fame, Inter Milan Hall of Fame and Real Madrid Hall of Fame. In 2024, Ronaldo was named in the Ballon d'Or Dream Team, a greatest all-time XI published by France Football magazine. Ronaldo has continued his work as a United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador, a position to which he was appointed in 2000. Ronaldo became the majority owner of Real Valladolid in September 2024, after buying 51% of the club's shares. In December 2024, he bought a controlling stake in his boyhood club Cruzeiro, investing R\$70 million in the club.

Early life

Ronaldo Luís Nazário de Lima was born on 18 September 1976 in Itaguai as the third child of Nélio Nazário de Lima Snr. and Sônia dos Santos Barata.[6][7] Ronaldo has a brother, Nélio Jr.[7][8] His parents separated when he was 11, and Ronaldo dropped out of school shortly afterward to pursue a career in football.[9] He played on the streets of Bento Ribeiro, a suburb of Rio de Janeiro. His mother states, "I always found him on the street playing ball with friends when he should have been in school. I know, I lost my battle." [9] He joined the Social Ramos futsal team at the age of 12 and led the city's youth league in scoring with a record 166 goals in his first season which included scoring 11 of his team's 12 goals in a single game.[7][9] Crediting futsal for developing his skills, Ronaldo has said, "futsal will always be my first love." [10][11][12] His coach from Social Ramos, Alirio Carvalho, says: "What was special about Ronaldo was his attitude. It was as if he had come from the moon. Nothing disturbed him, nothing overawed him, nothing threw him off his game." [13]

Spotted by former Brazilian player Jairzinho, who was coaching São Cristóvão, Ronaldo played for the São Cristóvão youth team.[14] Under the guidance of coach Alfredo Sampaio, he progressed quickly through the ranks, playing for the clubs' under-17 and under-20 teams while only 15.[13] Ronaldo's agents in Brazil, Reinaldo Pitta and Alexandre Martins, signed him as a 13-year-old. Pitta stated, "We saw right away that he could be something different than most other players." [9] Recognized as a child prodigy, Jairzinho recommended the then 16-year-old to his former club Cruzeiro.[15]

Club career

Cruzeiro

Ronaldo quickly attracted attention from big clubs, and his agents rejected offers from Botafogo and São Paulo. He was turned down by Flamengo, the team he supported as a boy, after missing practice due to an inability to afford the fare for the hour-long bus ride.[9][16] Jairzinho saw Ronaldo's potential and helped get him a move to Cruzeiro.[9] Ronaldo's agents accepted an offer of €50,000 from the club, and he scored four goals on his youth team debut.[13]

Three months after arriving at Cruzeiro, Ronaldo made his professional debut on 25 May 1993 against Caldense in the Minas Gerais State Championship.[13][17] He came to national public attention on 7 November 1993, scoring five goals in the game against Bahia.[18] His first senior goal came in a friendly during a tour of Portugal, scoring a goal against Belenenses and generally impressing new coach Carlos Alberto Silva, enough to become a first team regular.[13] During the tour, his performance against Porto impressed enough that they bid R\$500,000, which was turned down by club president César Masci.[13] Upon returning from the tour, he scored 20 goals, with eight coming in the Supercopa Libertadores, including a hat-trick against Chilean side Colo-Colo in the first leg, and two in the second leg, before scoring a further three against Uruguayan team Nacional, resulting in him being the tournament's top goalscorer.[13] Ronaldo scored 44 goals in 47 games with Cruzeiro, leading them to their first Copa do Brasil in 1993, and the Minas Gerais State Championship in 1994.[19]

PSV

Ronaldo joined PSV after the 1994 World Cup. He was selected for the tournament despite being just 17, but did not play in any games. His Brazil teammate Romário having played for PSV from 1988 to 1993 advised Ronaldo to move to the club.[20][21] On 28 August 1994, Ronaldo scored ten minutes into his debut against Vitesse, and scored a brace on his home debut against Go Ahead Eagles.[21] He scored 30 league goals in his first season in the Netherlands, which included seven braces and a hat-trick against Utrecht.[21] After scoring a hat-trick in PSV's game against Bayer Leverkusen in the 1994–95 UEFA Cup, Leverkusen striker and Germany World Cup winner Rudi Völler stated in a post match press conference, "Never in my life have I seen an 18-year-old play in this way." [20] His dribbles from midfield caught the attention of many in the sport, with future Barcelona teammate Luis Enrique stating, "I'd seen him on television at PSV and thought 'wow'. Then he came to Barcelona. He's the most spectacular player I've ever seen. He did things I'd never seen before. We're now used to seeing Messi dribble past six players, but not then. Ronaldo was a beast." [22]

Nick Miller, match reporter for The Guardian, writes, "What's striking about Ronaldo in that first year at PSV is how complete he looks, even as a skinny teenager. Everything that would come to define him – the lightning pace, the blurry stepovers, the implausible impression that he was faster with the ball than without it, even the exceptional upper-body strength – was all there." [20] Rob Smyth added, "In many ways Ronaldo was the first PlayStation footballer. His stepover was a form of hypnosis, and his signature trick, the elastico, could certainly have come from a computer screen." [23] Ronaldo's second season was marred by a knee injury which kept him out of most of the campaign, but he still averaged nearly a goal a game, scoring 19 goals in 21 appearances, [20] including a UEFA Cup four-goal haul against Finnish side MyPa. [21] With PSV, Ronaldo won the Dutch Cup in 1996 and he was Eredivisie top scorer in 1995. [24] In his two seasons at the club he scored 54 goals in 58 games. [25]

Barcelona

During his spell at PSV, Ronaldo attracted the attention of both Inter Milan and FC Barcelona. It was Barcelona that was willing to pay the then world record fee of R\$19.5 million, and he joined the club on 17 July 1996. [25] According to manager Bobby Robson, he signed an eight-year contract, and would play up front alone. [26]

During the 1996–97 season, Ronaldo scored 47 goals in 49 games in all competitions, with his goal celebration invariably the same with his arms outstretched like the statue of Christ the Redeemer that watches over his native Rio de Janeiro. [25] He helped Barcelona to the 1996–97 UEFA Cup Winners' Cup title, capping the season with the winning goal in the final, and to a win in the 1996 Supercopa de España. [27] He also won La Liga top scorer award in 1997 with 34 goals in 37 games, and the European Golden Shoe. [28] Until the 2008–09 season, Ronaldo remained the last player to score more than 30 goals in La Liga. [28]

Ronaldo was at his physical peak at Barcelona, and many of his 47 goals involved him rounding the goalkeeper before slotting the ball into the net. [25] By January 1997, at 20 years old, he was touted to be the next "great" in football, being viewed as the heir to Pelé, Diego Maradona, Johan Cruyff [29] and Marco van Basten. [30] Speaking to The New York Times regarding Ronaldo later that season, Robson said "I don't think I've ever seen a player at 20 have so much". [31] World Soccer magazine featured Ronaldo on its cover in the same year under the headline 'The Best Ever?'. [30] Óscar García, Ronaldo's teammate that season, stated, "Back then, he was all fibre and muscle. He was a perfect physical specimen. Such incredible power matched to his technical skills could make him unstoppable." [32] José Mourinho, who worked as an interpreter at Barcelona, referred to Ronaldo as "the greatest player I have ever seen in my life", adding, "I have no doubts. Ronaldo is the best my eyes have seen", [33] and in 2014 regarded him as the best player post-Diego Maradona. [34]

Arguably Ronaldo's most memorable Barcelona goal was scored at SD Compostela on 11 October 1996; having received the ball inside his own half, he evaded a cynical tackle of the first opponent with a drag back, before running away from another and ran towards goal, going past two more defenders in the box with close ball control, before finishing into the bottom corner of the net. [25] The camera then cut to manager Robson who had got up off the bench and clasped

his head in disbelief at what he had seen.[25] The footage of the goal was later used in a Nike advert with a voiceover asking: "Imagine you asked God to be the best player in the world, and he listened to you",[25] and the goal was said to have been replayed 160 times on the main Spanish television channels in the 48 hours following the game.[31] Half-way through the season, Barcelona agreed in principle to extend his contract to 2006, doubling his salary in the process.[31] A hat-trick against Valencia, the third goal of which saw him dissect two Valencia defenders before striking the ball into the net, saw Barcelona fans waving white handkerchiefs as an expression of admiration for an exceptional performance. Sid Lowe of Sports Illustrated states, "That season Ronaldo was unstoppable. He was slim and powerful, skillful, fast and deadly. He was ridiculously good." [35] At the end of 1996, aged 20, Ronaldo became the youngest player to win FIFA World Player of the Year.[25]

Inter Milan

1997–1999: World record transfer and Ballon d'Or win

Ronaldo's time at Barcelona lasted one season, as there were problems with the renegotiation of his contract.[25] Barcelona thought there was an agreement in place, with Barcelona president Josep Lluís Núñez saying "He's ours for life", but when the parties reconvened the following day, the agreement collapsed, with Núñez admitting: "It's all over, Ronaldo is going".[25] Speaking to ESPN, Ronaldo stated, "I had reached an agreement to renew my contract just a month before that season finished, but a week later the lawyer and the president of Barcelona agreed that that contract was absurd." [36] Paying the buy out clause fee in his contract, Inter Milan signed him in the summer of 1997 for a then world record fee of R\$27 million,[37] making him the second player, after Diego Maradona, to break the world transfer record twice.[23][25] He signed a five-year contract with the Italians,[38] and was unveiled to 4000 Inter fans at their training ground.[39] His debut came on 27 July during the pre-season fixture against Manchester United.[39][40] His competitive debut came on the opening day of the 1997–98 season against Brescia.[41] Ronaldo adapted to the Italian style of the game in his first season, finishing with 25 Serie A goals, and was named Serie A Footballer of the Year.[42] Ronaldo started to develop into a complete forward. He began racking up assists, became first-choice penalty taker, taking and scoring freekicks. Halfway through his first season he won FIFA World Player of the Year for the second time, and collected the Ballon d'Or.[43] During his time with Inter, he scored several goals against city rivals AC Milan in the Derby della Madonnina. Ronaldo and prolific Fiorentina striker Gabriel Batistuta were the two best strikers in Serie A, with their duels the most anticipated in Italy.[44] Ronaldo's goal celebrations often saw his Inter teammates congratulating him by kneeling down and pretending to shine his shoe.[45] Ronaldo scored a trademark goal against Lazio in the 1998 UEFA Cup Final. Running through defence to go one on one with Lazio goalkeeper Luca Marchegiani, Ronaldo feigned to go right then left, without touching the ball, leaving Marchegiani on his backside, before going right and slotting the ball into the net.[46] His Inter teammate Youri Djorkaeff stated; "Ronaldo was phenomenal. He proved that he was a cut above the rest that season." [46] After the 1998 FIFA World Cup, where he was named player of the tournament, Ronaldo was widely regarded as the best striker in the world.[23][47] By the end of the 1998–99 season, he was appointed Inter Milan captain.[48]

1999–2002: Recurring injury problems

"The knee injuries suffered at Inter Milan took away the explosiveness that made him possibly the greatest young footballer of all time, a futuristic fusion of speed, strength and skill. That is not to belittle Ronaldo's achievements in the second half of his career, when he scored eight goals in a single World Cup [in 2002] and became the first Ronaldo to receive a standing ovation at Old Trafford [in 2003], but it is the memory of the early years that puts mist in the eyes of grown men." —Rob Smyth, *The Guardian*. [23]

After two seasons with Inter, A. C. Milan defender Paolo Maldini viewed Ronaldo and Diego Maradona as the two best players he ever faced, stating, "Ronaldo during his first two years at Inter was a phenomenon." [49] Inter had high hopes going into the 1999–2000 season with their attack including Ronaldo and Italian stars Roberto Baggio and Christian Vieri.[50] However, on 21 November, during a Serie A match against Lecce, Ronaldo felt his knee buckle and was forced to

limp off the field.[51] A medical examination confirmed that the striker had ruptured a tendon in his knee and would require surgery.[51] During his first comeback on 12 April 2000, he played only six minutes during the first leg of the Coppa Italia final against Lazio before suffering a complete rupture of the knee-cap tendons.[52][53] Ronaldo's physiotherapist Nilton Petrone stated, "his knee-cap actually exploded", and called it "the worst football injury" he's ever seen.[54] Ronaldo was forced to miss the entire 2000–01 season and much of the two seasons either side of it.[55] Since his Inter teammate Javier Zanetti had replaced him as the team captain during his absence, he eventually inherited the captain's armband in late 2001.[56] After two operations and rehabilitation, Ronaldo came back for the 2002 World Cup, helping Brazil win their fifth World Cup title. Later in 2002, he won the FIFA World Player of the Year award for the third time, and transferred from Inter to Real Madrid.[43] Ronaldo was given his most recognizable nickname, *El Fenomeno*, by the Italian press while playing there.[9][23] His Inter teammate Djorkaeff stated, "when we were training, we would practically stop to watch him. It was extraordinary." [57] Prior to his November 1999 injury Ronaldo had registered 42 goals in 58 Serie A games, in what was the hardest league to score in with the most advanced defensive strategies and the world's best defenders.[58][59] After five years he had played 99 games and scored 59 goals for Nerazzurri.[43] Ronaldo's performances at the club – especially the first two seasons before injury – saw him named among the four inaugural inductees into the Inter Milan Hall of Fame in 2024.[60][61]

Real Madrid

2002–2005: Ballon d'Or win and La Liga championship

Ronaldo won La Liga in his first season and received the Pichichi Trophy in his second. Having signed for Real Madrid for €46 million, his jersey sales broke all records on the first day.[62] Ronaldo was part of the *Galácticos* era of global stars signed by the club every summer, which included Zinedine Zidane, Luís Figo, Roberto Carlos and David Beckham.[63] He was sidelined through injury until October 2002 which added to the fans anticipation.[64] Ronaldo scored twice on his debut against Alavés, the first 61 seconds after coming on.[64] That same reception was observed at the final game of the season against Athletic Bilbao, where Ronaldo scored to finish his first season with 23 league goals and seal La Liga title for 2003.[65] He also won an Intercontinental Cup in 2002 and Supercopa de España in 2003, scoring in both finals.[65] In the second leg of Real Madrid's Champions League quarter-final, Ronaldo scored a hat-trick against Manchester United at Old Trafford, knocking the English team out of the competition.[66] Completing his hat-trick with a swerving strike from 30 yards, Ronaldo was substituted off after 67 minutes, and was given a standing ovation from both sets of fans.[67][66] Reflecting on the ovation given to him from the oppositions' fans, Ronaldo stated that "it remains a very beautiful, very special moment".[68] Manchester United defender Wes Brown commented, "He was just unstoppable. A young Ronaldo [before a series of injuries] would have been even more dangerous, but it shows how good a player he was. Whenever he wanted to turn it on he could, on any stage, in any stadium".[67] Ronaldo scored in a 2–1 home win over Juventus in the first leg of the Champions League semi-finals, but injury crucially kept him out of most of the second leg defeat where Real were eliminated.[69]

In the 2003–04 season, Madrid were on track to win the treble, until Ronaldo was injured towards the end of the season; they subsequently lost the Copa del Rey final, were knocked out of the UEFA Champions League quarter-finals to AS Monaco, and suffered a league form breakdown.[70][71] During that second season at the club, Ronaldo scored one of the fastest goals in the club's history when he netted after 15 seconds in a league match against Atlético Madrid at the Bernabéu on 3 December 2003.[72] Three days later he helped to ensure Real's first league victory over Barcelona at the Nou Camp in 20 years when he scored the second goal in a 2–1 victory over his former club.[69] He finished the season as La Liga's top scorer with 25 goals and received the Pichichi Trophy for a second time, despite Madrid losing the league title to Valencia.[28]

2005–2007: Final two seasons

Ronaldo taking a shot for Real Madrid in 2005

In his final two seasons at Real Madrid, Ronaldo missed a number of games with injuries and weight issues, and with the acquisition of Ruud van Nistelrooy in 2006, he grew further out of favour with the manager Fabio Capello.[73] Speaking in 2024 on Ronaldo's weight issues and lack of fitness at Madrid, in addition to his ability, Capello summed up the conflicting emotions he has with the Brazilian, "the most difficult player to handle was the best I coached: Ronaldo, il Fenomeno." [74]

In four and a half seasons at the club, Ronaldo scored over a century of goals, becoming the fifth foreigner at Madrid to achieve the feat after Argentine Alfredo Di Stéfano, Hungarian Ferenc Puskás, Mexican Hugo Sánchez and Chilean Iván Zamorano.[75] Although the knee injuries before 2002 meant he "was robbed of the explosiveness of his early years" (FourFourTwo magazine) by the time he signed for Real Madrid, Ronaldo was named by Marca as a member of the "Best foreign eleven in Real Madrid's history".[52][76]

While past his 1990s prime, Ronaldo still drew praise from his Madrid colleagues, with Zidane stating, "Without hesitation, Ronaldo is the best player I ever played with or against. He had such an ease with the ball. Every day I trained with him, I saw something different, something new, something beautiful." [77] Michael Owen, who joined Madrid in 2004, acknowledged that he never got the chance to play with Ronaldo in his prime when "he had absolute blistering speed and strength, mesmerizing foot speed, he was just a blur, he'd be that fast", before adding, "even in training, he showed more than enough to convince me that I would have loved to play with him at his peak." [78] Teammates for six months, Van Nistelrooy said, "Ronaldo was the best natural talent I ever played with. His innate ability went beyond anything that I'd ever seen or played alongside." [79][80]

AC Milan

Ronaldo's Inter Milan away jersey (left) and A.C. Milan away jersey (right) in the San Siro museum. He played for Inter from 1997 to 2002, and A.C. Milan from 2007 to 2008.

On 18 January 2007, it was reported that Ronaldo agreed terms with AC Milan for a transfer of €8.05 million.[81] Departing Real Madrid having been the club's leading goalscorer for all of his four full seasons, Ronaldo thanked everyone except Capello, "I would like to thank the fans who've supported me all the time and thank all the teammates that I've had here and all the coaches I've had – except one".[82] Capello, who dropped him due to weight issues, commented, "I wish him the best of luck in doing what he used to do which is being a great player." [82] On 25 January, Ronaldo flew from Madrid to Milan, with statements on the club's website stating Ronaldo was in Milan for a medical, and that a meeting had been arranged with Real Madrid officials to discuss and finalize his transfer to the Milanese club.[83] On 26 January, Ronaldo successfully completed his medical tests at the Milanello training complex under the supervision of club doctors, and the transfer was completed on 30 January.[84] Wearing the number 99 jersey, he made his debut as a substitute on 11 February 2007 in the 2–1 victory over Livorno.[85] The next game at Siena, on 17 February, Ronaldo scored twice and assisted on a third goal in his first start for Milan, as they won 4–3.[86] In his first season, Ronaldo scored seven goals in 14 appearances.[51]

Ineligible to play having signed for the club mid season, Ronaldo (standing sixth from left) celebrated the 2007 UEFA Champions League triumph with his A.C. Milan teammates.

After his move to Milan, Ronaldo joined the list of the few players to have played for both Inter Milan and AC Milan in the Derby della Madonnina, and is one of few players to have scored for both rival teams in the Milan derby game (for Inter in the 1998–99 season and for AC Milan in the 2006–07 season), the others being players such as Giuseppe Meazza, Zlatan Ibrahimović, Enrico Candiani and Aldo Cevenini.[87] Ronaldo is also one of the few players to have started for Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, which also boasts a heated rivalry. Ronaldo, however, has never transferred directly between rival clubs. Ronaldo only played 300-plus minutes in his second season at Milan due to recurring injury problems and weight issues.[88] Ronaldo's only goals in the 2007–08 season, besides his goal against Lecce in pre-season, came in a 5–2 victory against Napoli at the San Siro, where he scored an emotional double.[89] It was also the first time Milan's much hyped attacking trio of Kaká, Alexandre Pato and Ronaldo, known as Ka-Pa-Ro, played together.[90]

Despite tremendous success over the past decade, Ronaldo never won the UEFA Champions League in his club career.[91] In 2024, FourFourTwo magazine named him the best player never to win the competition;[92] in 2024, Sky Sports ranked him the second-best player (after Diego Maradona) never to win the Champions League or European Cup.[93] Ronaldo stated, "I live football with a passion that doesn't give me any peace for not winning the Champions League – it's a trophy everyone would love to win." [94] In 2011, Paul Wilson wrote in *The Guardian*, "Ronaldo was unlucky in his timing or his choice of club – for there is no doubt that at his very best he would have walked into any club in the world." [73] During the 2006–07 season, though Milan won the 2006–07 title, Ronaldo was cup-tied with Madrid and ineligible to take part.[95][96] The closest that he came to Champions League success was in 2003 when he helped Real Madrid to the semi-finals, in which they lost to Juventus.[97]

On 13 February 2008, Ronaldo suffered a severe season-ending knee injury while jumping for a cross in Milan 1–1 draw with Livorno, and was stretchered off and taken to a hospital.[98] The club confirmed after the match that Ronaldo had ruptured the kneecap ligament in his left knee. It marked the third such occurrence of this injury, which he suffered twice to his right knee in 1999 and 2000.[99] Teammate Clarence Seedorf stated, "My heart stopped beating because it was like watching a repeat of the injury he suffered playing for Inter Milan against Lazio [in 2000]. His reaction was the same." [100] Silvio Berlusconi told Italy's RAI TV, "He fears for his career. I called him last evening and told him to believe in himself. He has enormous physical potential." [99] Ronaldo was released by Milan at the end of the season, as his contract expired and was not renewed.[101][102]

Corinthians

2009–2010: Paulistão and Copa do Brasil

Ronaldo during his Corinthians unveiling in 2009, with Brazil president Lula handing him the jersey
Ronaldo trained with Rio de Janeiro based Brazilian club Flamengo during his recovery from knee surgery, and the club's board of directors said that the doors were open for him to join.[103][104] On 9 December, however, Ronaldo signed a one-year deal with Flamengo's league rival Corinthians.[105] The announcement received much publicity in the Brazilian press about his choice of Corinthians over Flamengo, since Ronaldo publicly declared himself a Flamengo fan.[101] Rio-based sports newspaper *Lance!* called Ronaldo a "phenomenal traitor", and some angry fans burned Ronaldo shirts outside the Flamengo headquarters.[105] Ronaldo responded that playing for Corinthians was the only option open to him. "I understand perfectly, I'm openly a Flamengo fan. But I was training with Flamengo for four months and didn't receive any offer. Corinthians made an offer that will let me continue my career." [105]

Ronaldo played his first match for Corinthians on 4 March 2009, a Copa do Brasil match against Itumbiara at Estádio Juscelino Kubitschek, in which he came as a substitute for Jorge Henrique.[106] Ronaldo scored his first goal for Corinthians on 8 March 2009 in a Campeonato Paulista match against Palmeiras.[107] Scoring eight goals in nine matches, his form led to calls for his return to the Brazil national team – nearly 70% of respondents in a poll for the *O Globo* vip cashback 1xbet newspaper voted that he should be reinstated, with the country's president Lula also calling for his immediate return.[108] He scored twice in a 3–1 win against local rivals Santos in the first leg of the state championship final, with Santos idol Pelé looking on from the stands. His second goal, a chip over the Santos goalkeeper from 30 yards out, sent the Corinthians fans into hysteria.[108] Ultimately, he helped Corinthians win the Campeonato Paulista with 10 goals in 14 games.[109]

Ronaldo scored in Corinthians 4–2 aggregate defeat of Internacional in the final of the 2009 Copa do Brasil, helping the club win the trophy for the third time (the second of his career), thus earning a spot in the Copa Libertadores 2010.[110][111] Following an injury lay off he returned on 20 September in a match against Goiás, and a week later scored for Corinthians in a draw against São Paulo FC. He finished the 2009 Campeonato Brasileiro Série A with 12 goals in 20 matches.[112]

2011: Retirement

Ronaldo greets fans at the Emirates Stadium in London in March 2011, one month after

announcing his retirement

In February 2010, Ronaldo signed a contract extension with Corinthians that would keep him with the club until the end of 2011, and said he would then retire.^{[113][114]} Commenting on his weight issues following this announcement, Brian Homewood of *The Guardian* states, "Sadly, Ronaldo's celebrity is now more of a draw than his skills on the pitch – Coldplay, Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres and actor Hugh Jackman have all visited São Paulo to get a picture with the rolypoly star."^[115]

In February 2011, after Corinthians were eliminated from the 2011 Copa Libertadores by the Colombian team Deportes Tolima, Ronaldo announced his retirement from football, concluding an 18-year career.^{[116][117][118]} In an emotional press conference on 14 February, he cited pain and hypothyroidism as the reasons for his premature retirement.^[119] He discovered he had hypothyroidism – a condition which slows down metabolism and causes weight gain – during tests with Milan in 2007.^[120]

The player said that the problem could be solved by taking hormones, but this practice is forbidden in football and would lead to a suspension for doping.^[121] However, doctors disagree that such treatment would be confused with doping, with some publicly claiming that Ronaldo had lied when he said could not treat his hypothyroidism.^[122] Corinthians' own doctor said that Ronaldo did not have this disease. Hypothyroidism is usually associated with a slight weight gain (eminently due to fluid accumulation, not fat gain) and difficulty getting rid of extra pounds.^{[123][124]}

Ronaldo admitted his body had finally succumbed to the crippling litany of injuries that had blighted his career: "It's very hard to leave something that made me so happy. Mentally I wanted to continue but I have to acknowledge that I lost to my body. The head wants to go on but the body can't take any more. I think of an action but I can't do it the way I want to. It's time to go."^[125]

International career

Ronaldo (pictured with the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2024) won the trophy with Brazil in 1997. Ronaldo made his international debut for Brazil on 23 March 1994 in a friendly match in Recife against Argentina.^[126] His first senior goal for Brazil came on 4 May 1994 in a 3–0 friendly win against Iceland.^[127] He went to the 1994 FIFA World Cup in the United States aged 17, but did not play as Brazil went on to win the tournament.^[128] He stated he was "overjoyed" at the experience.^[129] He was then known as Ronaldinho ("little Ronaldo" in Portuguese), because Ronaldo Rodrigues de Jesus, his older teammate, was also called Ronaldo and later nicknamed Ronaldão ("big Ronaldo") to further distinguish them.^[130] Another player, Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, now widely known as Ronaldinho, was called Ronaldinho Gaúcho when he joined the Brazil team in 1999.^{[131][132]}

Summer Olympics and Copa América

At the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, Ronaldo used the name Ronaldinho again, since centre-back Ronaldo Guiaro, two years his senior, was one of his teammates. Brazil went on to win the bronze medal.^[133] Ronaldo also represented Brazil in the 1995 Copa América (finishing second) and won both the 1997 and the 1999 editions of the tournament. He was named player of the tournament in 1997, was the top scorer in 1999 and scored in the finals of both, against Bolivia in 1997 and Uruguay in 1999.^{[134][135][136]} He also took part in the friendly Tournoi de France in 1997, preceding the 1998 FIFA World Cup, scoring a goal as Brazil became runners-up. Ronaldo starred alongside Romário, dubbed the Ro-Ro attack, at the 1997 FIFA Confederations Cup, helping Brazil win their first ever Confederations Cup title where he finished as the third-highest scorer with 4 goals, scoring a hat-trick against Australia in the final.^[137] On the combination of Ronaldo and Romário, Will Sharp writes: "...to the elation of all those fortunate enough to have watched them, they found themselves together, fated with the opportunity to forge one of the most outrageous offensive pairings the game has ever seen. Their partnership was brief but it was inexplicably brilliant."^[138]

1998 FIFA World Cup

"The way he combined powerhouse athleticism with a poetic touch made for an awesome sight. In

the 1990s, in his physical pomp, in his free-flowing prime, there was nothing remotely like him. By the time the 1998 World Cup came along his reputation had extended to the point of fully formed marvel. A happening." —Amy Lawrence, *The Guardian*.^[128]

Ronaldo entered the 1998 FIFA World Cup billed as the world's greatest player by reporters in the sport.^[139] Jacob Steinberg of *The Guardian* writes, "In 1998, no one was as ferociously talented as Ronaldo, whose supernatural mixture of power, pace and skill had made him the player every child in the playground wanted to be; at the age of 21, the hopes and dreams of a nation rested on his shoulders."^[139]

Ronaldo scored four goals and made three assists en route to the final,^[140]^[141] scoring once and assisting Bebeto's goal in a 3–0 win against Morocco in the team's second group stage match,^[142] netting twice in a 4–1 win against Chile in the round of 16, set-up two goals in Brazil's 3–2 victory over Denmark in the quarter-finals,^[140]^[143] and scored once in the 1–1 draw against the Netherlands in the semi-finals, also netting Brazil's first penalty in the 4–2 shoot-out victory.^[143]^[144]^[145] Hours before the final against France, Ronaldo suffered a convulsive fit.^[140] At first, he was removed from the starting lineup 72 minutes before the match, and the team sheet (with Edmundo as his replacement) was submitted to the FIFA delegate.^[139] The starting line up without Ronaldo was released to a stunned world media.^[139] The BBC's John Motson stated, "The scenes in the commentary box have been absolute mayhem and chaos."^[146] However, shortly before kick off, after pleading that he felt fine and requested to play, Ronaldo was reinstated by Brazil coach Mário Zagallo.^[139]

Stade de France (interior pictured), where Ronaldo performed in the 1998 World Cup Final despite suffering a convulsive fit six hours before kick off

Ronaldo was the last Brazilian player out of the tunnel as the teams entered the field. During the playing of the Brazil national anthem the camera focused on him throughout, with Ronaldo showing little emotion.^[146] Steinberg states that Ronaldo "sleepwalked" through the final, which also saw him injured in a collision with French goalkeeper Fabien Barthez.^[139] Zagallo admitted the fears over Ronaldo affected his team psychologically, and stated "for the whole of the first half I was wondering whether to take him off", but feared a public outcry in Brazil had he done so.^[139] Brazil lost the match to hosts France 3–0.^[147] Ronaldo later reflected: "We lost the World Cup but I won another cup – my life."^[140]

An inquest was launched in Brazil, with team doctor Lídio Toledo telling the commission "imagine if I stopped Ronaldo playing and Brazil lost. At that moment I'd have to go and live on the North Pole."^[139] Adrian Williams, professor of clinical neurology at Birmingham University, said that Ronaldo should not have played, that he would have been feeling the after effects of the seizure, and "there is no way that he would have been able to perform to the best of his ability within 24 hours of his first fit – if it was his first fit."^[148] Despite his sub-par performance in the final due to his seizure hours earlier, Ronaldo was awarded the Golden Ball as the best player of the tournament for his performances leading up to the final, and finished the tournament as the joint-third highest scorer.^[149] The nature of the incident set off a trail of questions and allegations which persisted for years, with Alex Bellos writing in *The Guardian*,

When Ronaldo's health scare was revealed after the match, the situation's unique circumstances lent itself to conspiracy theories. Here was the world's most famous sportsman, about to take part in the most important match of his career, when he suddenly, inexplicably, fell ill. Was it stress, epilepsy, or had he been drugged?"^[150]

A conspiracy surrounded Nike, the sportswear company who sponsored Ronaldo and the Brazilian national team, with some in Brazil believing the company had forced Ronaldo to play.^[150] The parliamentary inquiry was unable to find any wider conspiracy, although the Brazilian public remained unconvinced.^[150] Reporting for CNN, Don Riddell wrote, "It's one of the great mysteries of our time: not the Loch Ness Monster, Stonehenge or the Lost City of Atlantis; it's the case of the missing striker – not so much a whodunit, more a kind of a what the heck happened?"^[151]

2002 FIFA World Cup

Prior to the 2002 FIFA World Cup, Ronaldo had barely played since rupturing the cruciate

ligament in his right knee in April 2000, and he missed Brazil's entire qualification campaign where, in his absence, the team had been poor.[152] Tim Vickery writes, "Without Ronaldo, Brazil were a shambles, fortunate even to get to the tournament. With him, it was a different story." [153] In a remarkable comeback from injury that had threatened his career, Ronaldo led Brazil to their record fifth World Cup title, receiving the Golden Boot as top scorer with eight goals.[154] Many publications regarded his personal triumph as "redemption" for what occurred at the previous World Cup.[128][154][155][156] Ronaldo spoke about his obsession with lifting the World Cup trophy, having missed out in 1998. "I used to visualise the trophy in front of my eyes and imagine what a wonderful feeling it must be to hold it up in the air. It was a fabulous feeling actually to hold it in my hands and kiss it." [129] Dubbed the "three R's", Ronaldo starred in a formidable attack alongside Rivaldo and Ronaldinho, and the trio were named in the FIFA World Cup All-Star Team.[128][157]

Ronaldo pictured with an Israeli sports journalist on 29 June, the day before the 2002 World Cup Final

Ronaldo scored against every opponent in the tournament except in the quarter-finals against England.[158] The match-winner against Turkey in the semi-final, with the winning goal a toe-poke finish with little back-lift while on the run – a finish he learned while playing futsal in his youth – the final whistle saw fans behind the goal hoist huge white letters to spell out his name, akin to the Hollywood Sign.[128][159] Much attention was on his haircut – in which his head was shaved except the forelock – done as a deliberate distraction to shift media attention away from a leg injury. He revealed that "when I arrived in training with this haircut everybody stopped talking about the injury".[160] In the final against Germany in Yokohama, Japan, Ronaldo scored twice in Brazil's 2–0 win and tied Pelé's Brazilian record of 12 career World Cup goals.[161] Ronaldo was the first player to seek out German players to offer his condolences,[155] before he was congratulated by Pelé when receiving his World Cup winners medal.[162] Gérard Saillant, the French surgeon who operated on Ronaldo's knee, was in the crowd as his guest, and stated after the game; "This gives hope to everyone who is injured, even those who aren't sportsmen, to see that by fighting you can make it. He's back to where he was; it's hugely satisfying and I am very moved." [163]

Ronaldo received a number of accolades for his achievement, including the Laureus World Sports Award for Comeback of the Year and the BBC World Sport Star of the Year, and in December 2002 he dedicated his third FIFA World Player of the Year award to the medical team which helped him recover.[164][165][166] In a 2024 interview with Fox Sports, Ronaldo stated, "the best team I played in was the Brazilian one in 2002, we felt that we could always score. It was a team without any vanity, or individuals. The collective was important." [167]

2006 FIFA World Cup

Ronaldo mural in Berlin promoting Brazilian Joga Bonito style of play. The work was commissioned by Nike prior to the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

On 2 June 2004, Ronaldo scored an unusual hat-trick of penalties for Brazil against arch-rivals Argentina in a 2006 World Cup qualifying match, which put them top of the group.[168] With 10 goals in 15 games, including a goal against Venezuela in the last game to secure first place, Ronaldo was the South American top scorer in Brazil's qualifying campaign.[169] Prior to the tournament, questions were asked of his weight and fitness,[170][171] but was declared fit for Brazil's opening match with Croatia.[172]

At the 2006 World Cup, Ronaldo was part of a much-publicized "magic quartet" alongside Adriano, Ronaldinho and Kaká.[173][174] The all-star Brazilian team was promoted as masters of Joga Bonito, "the beautiful game", which was advertised by Nike before the tournament.[175][176] Although Brazil won their first two group games against Croatia and Australia, Ronaldo was repeatedly jeered for being overweight and slow,[177] but coach Carlos Alberto Parreira kept him in the starting lineup.[178]

With two goals against Japan in the third match, Ronaldo became the 20th player to score in three World Cups and also equalled the all-time World Cup finals scoring record of fourteen, held by Gerd Müller (Ronaldo scored at France 98, Korea/Japan 2002 and Germany 2006).[178] He

then broke Müller's record in the Round of 16 match against Ghana by scoring his fifteenth-career World Cup goal.[65][179] With his third goal of the tournament, Ronaldo became only the second player ever, after Jürgen Klinsmann, to score at least three goals in each of three World Cups.[180] Brazil, however, were knocked out by France 1–0 with a goal by striker Thierry Henry in the quarter-finals.[181] Ronaldo was awarded the Bronze Shoe as the third-highest goal-scorer of the World Cup.[182]

Having been listed in Guinness World Records, Ronaldo stated, "I am proud of my career and of the records I set. But I know that one day they will be broken." [183] Ronaldo and Klinsmann's shared record of at least three goals in three separate World Cup finals was broken by German striker Miroslav Klose, who has a record of at least four goals in each of three tournaments, having netted five at both the 2002 and 2006 finals, and four at the 2010 tournament.[184] Ronaldo finished with fifteen goals in nineteen World Cup matches, for an average of 0.79 per game.[185] His teammate Kaká reflected, "Ronaldo is the best player I have ever played with. I have seen il Fenomeno do things nobody else has ever done." [186]

Farewell match and sporadic appearances

Ronaldo playing in the Match Against Poverty in Bern, March 2014

In February 2011, it was announced that Ronaldo would be given one last match for Brazil, a friendly against Romania in São Paulo on 7 June 2011, five years after his last match with the national team.[187] Brazilian Football Confederation official Ricardo Teixeira stated that it was fitting that his final game should take place in Brazil while representing his nation.[188]

Ronaldo played for 15 minutes in a match that ended with a Brazilian victory with a goal from Fred.[189] Fred celebrated his goal with Ronaldo's famous 'finger wag' celebration along with his Brazilian teammates. Ronaldo was introduced after 30 minutes, partnering 19-year-old Neymar in attack, and had three shots on target which were saved by the Romanian goalkeeper Ciprian Tturanu.[190] After the first half ended, Ronaldo made a farewell speech to the crowd.[190] With 62 goals for Brazil Ronaldo retired from international football as the second-highest goalscorer for his country, behind only Pelé (Neymar has since surpassed Pelé, with Ronaldo the third-highest scorer as of September 2024).[191][192]

On 13 December 2011 Ronaldo and Zinedine Zidane played a charity match with their friends against former and current players of the German team Hamburg in the ninth edition of the Match Against Poverty series, which Ronaldo and Zidane established in 2003.[193][194][195] In December 2012, Ronaldo and Zidane reunited for the Match Against Poverty in Porto Alegre, Portugal, with the field littered with World Cup winners from France and Brazil, which also saw 1982 World Cup star Zico (Ronaldo's childhood idol) turn out for Ronaldo's team.[196] In January 2013, Ronaldo was named one of the six ambassadors of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil.[197]

Ronaldo was chosen as a goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2000 as he had the highest global appeal among sportspeople, and he accepted the role as he saw it as "an obligation" to help with causes around the world.[198] Ronaldo played in the UNDP's 11th Match Against Poverty on 4 March 2014 against a Zidane XI in Bern, Switzerland, with proceeds raised helping the recovery efforts in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan.[199] Joined by Didier Drogba in attack, Ronaldo scored a hat-trick in the next year's match on 21 April 2024 in St Etienne, France, with proceeds going towards the African countries most affected by the Ebola epidemic.[200][201]

On 14 June 2024, Ronaldo featured at the 2024 FIFA World Cup opening ceremony held at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia.[202] He walked out with a child wearing a Russia 2024 shirt at the beginning, and returned at the end of the ceremony with the official ball of the 2024 World Cup – Adidas Telstar 18 – which was sent into space with the International Space Station crew in March and came back to Earth in early June.[202]

Style of play and legacy

Ronaldo is regarded as one of the greatest and most complete forwards of all time.[65][73][203] Nicknamed Il (or O) Fenomeno (the phenomenon),[204] he was a prolific goalscorer, and despite being more of an individualistic attacker, he was also capable of providing assists for his

teammates, due to his vision, passing and crossing ability.[73][205][206] He was an extremely powerful, fast, and technical player, with excellent movement, as well as being a composed finisher.[207][208][209] Highly regarded for his technical ability, Ronaldo was able to use both feet, despite being naturally right footed,[210][211] and is considered one of the most skilful dribblers in the game.[212] Ronaldo would also operate outside the penalty area before running with the ball towards goal,[65][73] with Rob Smyth writing, "he played like every attack had a 10-second deadline.. he would explode into life with no warning for defenders." [23] He frequently beat several players when dribbling at speed, and excelled in one on one situations, due to his ball control, acceleration, agility, balance and nimble footwork in his prime.[65][73][203][212] His coach at Barcelona, Bobby Robson, commented: "Ronaldo could start from the halfway line and the whole stadium would ignite. He was the fastest thing I've ever seen running with the ball. Had he managed to stay free of injury, he had every chance of becoming the best footballer ever." [23] In one on one situations, Ronaldo often used elaborate feints to trick and beat defenders and goalkeepers; he popularised the use of many football tricks such as the elastico and the step over.[65][73][213] Sid Lowe of Sports Illustrated wrote, "When he was one on one with the goalkeeper, you knew that he would score. He was so natural, so cool, so utterly in control. He would dip the shoulder, step over, and bang!" [35]

"There were two Ronaldos: the one that returned after long-term injury in 2002 was a great goalscorer, but the 1990s version was a great everything. At his fearsome peak for PSV, Barcelona and Inter Milan he was arguably the most dangerous striker the world has ever seen." —Rob Smyth, The Guardian.[23]

His Barcelona teammate Óscar García observed, "I'd never seen anyone play football with such technical ability, creativity and precision at that incredible speed. What stood out to all of us, from the moment we met Ronnie, was that he could do things which other players found very difficult and make them look easy. But he could also produce those things while running at an unbelievable, explosive pace." [32] With his combination of speed, skill and finishing Ronaldinho called Ronaldo "the most complete striker there has ever been", a view echoed by Zlatan Ibrahimović, who stated, "as a football player, he was complete. There will never, in my view, be a better player than him." [214] The goalscoring idol of Lionel Messi, the Argentine states "Ronaldo was the best striker I've ever seen. He was so fast he could score from nothing." [215] Wanting to emulate Ronaldo growing up, Egypt and Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah opined, "The ability, the speed, the intelligence, he had everything". [216] Naming Ronaldo as an inspiration, Wayne Rooney stated, "as an out-and-out forward he was probably the best." [217] The outstanding influence for a generation of strikers, from Karim Benzema to Sergio Agüero, with Romelu Lukaku stating "he changed the dimension of a striker" and could "dribble like a winger, run like a sprinter", Zlatan added, "nobody influenced football and the players who emerged as much as Ronaldo". [218]

Ronaldo, as so many of those who looked up to him acknowledge, changed what it is to be a centre-forward. Every time you see a striker who is expected to hold the ball up, beat players, win headers, shoot from range, drop deep, do everything a striker can possibly do – it might be worth remembering him. He shifted boundaries, challenged convention, just as much as Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have altered our perceptions of what a winger might be. Ronaldo, the original Ronaldo, inspired a phalanx of imitators, players we see on our screens every weekend. But he also turned the game so that it will always look just a little bit like him. More than most, he made that No. 9 his own. Rory Smith writing for ESPN on Ronaldo changing the game for strikers, March 2024. [218]

Emilio Butragueño stated, "Ronaldo creates a goalscoring opportunity where it doesn't exist. Most strikers need the midfielders and their teammates, but he does not." [219] On his speed of thought, Kaká said "For me the best players are those who are able to think of a play and execute it quickest and in the best way possible, and Ronaldo was the best at that. The speed of thought he had – and the speed he had to carry out his actions – were perfect." [219] Ronaldo was also a strong and powerful player who could shield the ball from the opposition, with former Italian defender Alessandro Nesta (who faced Ronaldo in a high-profile one on one duel in the 1998

UEFA Cup final which was billed as "the best attacker against the best defender in Serie A") stating: "It was the worst experience of my career. Ronaldo is the hardest attacker I've ever had to face." [220] Asked who was the toughest opponent of his career, Fabio Cannavaro responded, "I have no doubt, Ronaldo, the phenomenon. For my generation he was what Maradona or Pelé were for the previous ones. He was unmarkable." [221] Sid Lowe compared Ronaldo's ability to take on a number of opponents on a single run to what rugby player Jonah Lomu was doing in the same era. [35] Regarding Ronaldo's influence on the evolution of the centre-forward role, French former forward Thierry Henry said: "He did things nobody had seen before. He, together with Romário and George Weah, reinvented the centre-forward position. They were the first to drop from the box to pick up the ball in midfield, switch to the flanks, attract and disorientate the central defenders with their runs, their accelerations, their dribbling." [222]

Ronaldo holding his ankle in 2010. The injury was the latest for a striker who suffered serious knee injuries which hampered his career in the 2000s.

Comparing his natural ability to Roger Federer, Paul MacDonald of Goal wrote, "there's a joy to be had watching something we know to be extremely difficult executed with considerable ease. Ronaldo in his prime was able to do that better than anyone who has ever played the game." [223] A reliance on his superior innate ability is given as a reason for his application in training often not being as high as his teammates – though his knee issues may also have been a factor – with his Brazil teammate Emerson stating "Ronaldo felt he didn't need to work as hard as us, that he could do in two days what the rest of us would take ten days to do. And usually, he was right". [223] On his precocious talent – a talent which saw him become the youngest FIFA World Player of the Year at age 20, and youngest Ballon d'Or recipient aged 21 – Rob Smyth of The Guardian wrote in 2024, "Ronaldo is easily the best of the past 30 years, possibly ever. The other Ronaldo and Messi were brilliant teenagers but had nothing like the same impact at that age. Only Pelé, Diego Maradona and George Best can really compare." [23] Asked to name the best player of his lifetime, José Mourinho said, "Ronaldo, El Fenomeno. Cristiano Ronaldo and Leo Messi have had longer careers. They have remained at the top every day for 15 years. However, if we are talking strictly about talent and skill, nobody surpasses Ronaldo." [224] Mikaël Silvestre states, "I played against [Lionel] Messi and I played with Cristiano at Manchester United, but he [Ronaldo] is something else in terms of speed. Cristiano, maybe you can guess that he has three or four tricks he would use most of the time, but Ronaldo, it was always something different. He was inventing things on the spot, so you can't guide him left or right because he's going to get out of these situations, no matter what". [225] In 2024, Ronaldo was named in the Ballon d'Or Dream Team, a greatest all-time XI published by France Football magazine. [226]

At his physical peak in the 1990s, Ronaldo became severely affected by the knee injuries he suffered from late 1999 onward and the subsequent weight gain during his inactivity, which limited his speed, fitness, and mobility. [73] [207] According to his physiotherapist Nilton Petrone, Ronaldo was vulnerable to injury due to a medical condition combined with his explosive running. "Ronaldo had a problem called trochlear dysplasia. This makes the relationship between the kneecap and the femur a bit unstable. There is no direct surgery for that so the kneecap keeps, for a lack of a better word, "dancing" on the femur. Ronaldo's injuries weren't because his body was weak, but because of his explosive capacity. He didn't just run fast in a straight line, he also changed direction at incredible speed. Ronaldo moved from left to right very fast...so it was obvious, by the way that he played, that injuries were always a possibility". [54] Acknowledging "he was never quite the same" after his knee injury in 2000, with "his pace and sheer brute force diminished in comparison to The Phenomenon" in the 1990s, FourFourTwo magazine ranked him the best player at the 2002 World Cup, adding "he was still a cut above the rest" in the tournament. [227]

Club ownership

Real Valladolid

Ronaldo in 2024 as the president of Real Valladolid, his first club as owner

In September 2024, Ronaldo became the majority owner of La Liga club Real Valladolid after buying a 51% controlling stake in the club for €30 million. [228] [229] At his unveiling as the club's new owner at Valladolid city hall, Ronaldo stated, "I have gone through many stages in my

training in football to prepare for this. Football is all about passion. We want to build the best team possible to compete while also giving information about our management with transparency." [229]

Cruzeiro
In December 2024, Ronaldo bought a controlling stake in his boyhood club Cruzeiro. Investing 400 million reais (\$70 million) in the club, Ronaldo stated he wants to "give back to Cruzeiro and take them where they deserve to be." [230]

Personal life

Ronaldo during a 2005 meeting at the Brazilian Ministry of Education

In 1997, Ronaldo met the Brazilian model and actress Susana Werner on the set of the Brazilian telenovela *Malhação* when they acted together in three episodes. [231][232] Although they never married, they began a long-term relationship and lived together in Milan until the beginning of 1999. [233]

In December 1999, Ronaldo married Brazilian footballer Milene Domingues, at the time pregnant with the couple's first son, Ronald, who was born in Milan, on 6 April 2000. [234] The marriage lasted four years. In 2005, Ronaldo became engaged to Brazilian model and MTV VJ Daniela Cicarelli, who became pregnant but suffered a miscarriage; the relationship lasted only three months after their luxurious wedding at the Château de Chantilly. The ceremony reportedly cost £700,000 (€896,000). [235]

A practicing Catholic, Ronaldo donated a signed football to Pope Francis. Accompanied with a signed Brazil jersey from Pelé, it is located in one of the Vatican Museums.

Despite his fame – a 2003 poll by Nike listed him the world's most famous sportsperson (and third most famous person overall) – Ronaldo is protective of his privacy, including with teammates, stating in an interview with *The Telegraph*, "each [player] has his own private life, and no one thinks about anyone else's private life. Or talks about it." [68] By 2003 he was fluent in Portuguese, Spanish and Italian, and had a good understanding of English. [68]

In a 2005 interview with *Folha de S.Paulo*, Ronaldo revealed that, somewhat unexpectedly, he identified racially as white. [236] generating a wider conversation about the complex role of race in Brazil. [237][238][239] Ronaldo's father, Nelio Nazario, stated, "He knows full well that he's black. Actually, at the time, I thought it was some philosophy, something to that effect. Because he knows he's black." [238] According to a study led by geneticist Sérgio Pena of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, most Brazilians often have a misconception about their roots. "The maternal ancestry of the Brazilian white was one-third African, one third Amerindian, and one third European. An individual who considers himself white may be genomically more African than an individual who considers himself to be brown or black." [238]

In April 2008, Ronaldo was involved in a scandal involving three travesti prostitutes whom he met in a nightclub in Rio de Janeiro. [240] Ronaldo claimed that upon discovering that they were legally male, he offered them R\$600 to leave. [241] One of the three attempted to blackmail Ronaldo, while the other two admitted to lying about having sex with him. [242] Ronaldo's engagement to Maria Beatriz Antony was immediately halted, [243] but resumed shortly after and they married in the same year. Maria Beatriz Antony gave birth to their first daughter, named Maria Sophia, in Rio de Janeiro, on 24 December 2008. In April 2009, the family moved to a new penthouse in São Paulo. [244] On 6 April 2010, Maria Beatriz Antony gave birth to their second daughter. The girl, born in São Paulo, was named Maria Alice, and was born exactly 10 years after her older brother Ronald. [245]

In December 2010, Ronaldo and his family moved to a new mansion in São Paulo. [246] Also in December, Ronaldo took a paternity test and was confirmed to be the father of a boy named Alexander, born in April 2005. The boy was born after a brief relationship between Ronaldo and Michele Umezu, a Brazilian waitress who Ronaldo first met in Tokyo in 2002. [247][248] After the confirmation of his fourth child, Ronaldo stated on 6 December 2010 that he had had a vasectomy, feeling that having four children was enough. [249] Ronaldo and Maria Beatriz Antony divorced in 2012. [250]

In a 2011 interview with the BBC, former Real Madrid teammate Steve McManaman spoke about Ronaldo's personality. "He could go in a restaurant, and I could go in with him, and you're not just

there with close friends. He invites everybody. You'd be at a table with him and it'd be a judge sitting opposite talking to a politician with someone off the street listening in. So he just had this amazing aura, where everyone wanted to join him. Sometimes there'd be 20 to 30 people sitting at meal times with him. He was a wonderful person. Everybody would second that, no matter what club he played for."^[251]

Ronaldo with his Innovation in Sport Award at the Web Summit in 2024

Ronaldo was the co-owner of A1 Team Brazil, along with former F1 driver Emerson Fittipaldi.^[252]

Ronaldo co-owns the sports marketing company 9INE, with his friend, mixed martial artist

Anderson Silva, one of his clients.^[253]^[254] A keen poker player, in April 2013 Ronaldo became

a member of PokerStars SportStar, and in 2014 he played a charity poker tournament against

tennis star Rafael Nadal.^[255] On 11 December 2014, Ronaldo became a minority owner of the

Fort Lauderdale Strikers of the North American Soccer League.^[256]^[257] In 2024, Ronaldo

opened eight new branches of his youth football school – the Ronaldo Academy – in China, the

U.S. and Brazil, with 100 expected to be opened worldwide by 2024.^[258]^[259] In 2024, Ronaldo's

son, Ronald, was selected for the junior football team representing Brazil in the 2024 Maccabiah

Games.^[260] The Maccabiah is described as "the Jewish Olympics"; Ronald is not Jewish, but

some participating countries have more relaxed rules about eligibility and Ronald is a member of

a Jewish football club.^[260]

In January 2024, Ronaldo announced his fifth engagement, to model and businesswoman Celina

Locks.^[261]^[262] Ronaldo and Locks went on to marry in July of the same year.^[263]

Religion

A practicing Catholic, Ronaldo was baptized into the faith in 2024.^[264] He donated a signed

football to Pope Francis in 2014, which is now housed in the Vatican Museums.^[265]

Media

Ronaldo appeared in The Simpsons season 18 episode "Marge Gamer" broadcast in April

2007.^[266] Simon Crerar of The Times listed Ronaldo's performance as one of the thirty-three

funniest cameos in the history of the show.^[267] Ronaldo made a cameo appearance in Mike

Bassett: England Manager (2001) and each film of the Goal! film trilogy, Goal! (2005), Goal II:

Living the Dream (2007) and Goal III: Taking on the World (2009).^[268] Archive footage of

Ronaldo features in the music video "We Are One (Ole Ola)", the official song of the 2014 World

Cup by Pitbull and Jennifer Lopez.^[269]

Ronaldo has appeared in various commercials, from Snickers chocolate bar to Pirelli

tyres.^[270]^[271] Ronaldo's usual goal celebration of both arms outstretched – especially from his

early career – was the basis for Pirelli's 1998 commercial where he replaced the figure of Christ

from the Christ the Redeemer statue that towers over his home city of Rio de Janeiro while in an

Inter Milan strip.^[272] It was controversial with the Catholic Church.^[271] Released in 2000 for the

PlayStation and Game Boy Color, the video game Ronaldo V-Football was exclusively endorsed

by Ronaldo.^[273] In 2024 Ronaldo was added as an icon to the Ultimate Team in EA Sports' FIFA

video game FIFA 18, receiving a 95 rating along with Brazilian compatriot Pelé, Argentine

playmaker Diego Maradona, former Russian goalkeeper Lev Yashin and former French star

Thierry Henry.^[274] Ronaldo also appears as the cover athlete on the Icon edition of the

game.^[275]^[276]

In May 2024, DAZN released the first of a six-part series titled Ronaldo: El Presidente. The series

takes viewers inside the day-to-day running of Real Valladolid, revealing every challenge and

triumph in Valladolid's first full season under their Brazilian president, intercut with parallel

narratives detailing the highs and lows of Ronaldo's own playing career.^[277]

"Ronaldo is the most global of all athletes today, bar none." —Joaquin Hidalgo, director of Nike's

Brazilian marketing unit, 1998.^[9]

Ronaldo has been sponsored by sportswear company Nike since the early part of his career. In

1996, Nike signed Ronaldo to a 10-year contract and to a lifetime endorsement deal worth

overR\$180 million.^[278] Nicknamed R9 (his initial and shirt number),^[204] Ronaldo is closely

associated with the original Nike Mercurial R9 that was designed for him for the 1998 FIFA World

Cup.^[279]^[280] To celebrate 15 years of the boot, Nike created a Mercurial Vapor IX inspired by

Brazil

Ronaldo's Golden Foot award in "The Champions Promenade" on the seafront of the Principality of Monaco

Individual

See also

2. vip cashback 1xbet :ranking das melhores casas de apostas

Probabilidades de apostas esportivas

vip cashback 1xbet

Se você está procurando um novo cassino online para jogar slots, BacanaPlay é uma ótima opção.

vip cashback 1xbet

BacanaPlay é um cassino online relativamente novo vip cashback 1xbet vip cashback 1xbet Portugal, com mais de 1250 jogos de casino à vip cashback 1xbet disposição. Entre eles, mais de 800 opções de slots, slots com Jackpot, Roleta, Blackjack, Bacará, Vídeo Poker, Raspadinhas e muito mais!

Porque jogar no BacanaPlay?

BacanaPlay oferece uma ampla variedade de jogos de slot online, incluindo títulos populares como Book of Dead e milhares de outros títulos incríveis, tudo vip cashback 1xbet vip cashback 1xbet um só lugar. Além disso, se você é do tipo de jogador que adora um jackpot, eles têm slots com Jackpot disponíveis também.

Como começar a jogar no BacanaPlay

Para começar a jogar no BacanaPlay, basta visitar o site e criar uma conta. Eles oferecem um conjunto atraente de bônus ativos para dar as boas-vindas aos novos jogadores e recompensar a lealdade dos já inscritos. Além disso, eles também oferecem torneios de slots divertidos e recompensas.

Segurança e Responsabilidade

BacanaPlay leva a segurança e a responsabilidade do jogador muito a sério. Eles implementaram medidas de segurança avançadas para garantir que todos os dados pessoais e financeiros dos jogadores estejam sempre protegidos.

Eles também incentivam o jogo responsável e fornecem recursos para ajudar os jogadores a manter o controle do seu jogo. Se você ou alguém que conhece está enfrentando problemas relacionados ao jogo, eles encorajam a procurar ajuda imediata.

Conclusão

BacanaPlay é definitivamente um cassino online a ser considerado se você está procurando uma variedade de jogos de slot online, boas ofertas e promoções, segurança e responsabilidade. Não é de admirar que seja o mais novo cassino online legalizado vip cashback 1xbet vip cashback 1xbet Portugal, oferecendo mais de 700 jogos de cassino divertidos para jogar sempre que quiser.

Cassino Online	Classificação	Retorno do Jogador (%)
BacanaPlay	1	97.61%
Izzi Casino	2	97.47%
Monro	3	97.46%
Jackpot City Casino	4	97.59%

Tente agora o BacanaPlay e aproveite os melhores jogos de slot online vip cashback 1xbet vip cashback 1xbet Portugal!

you também pode ver a borda da casa respectiva para as principais opções de apostas: ideo Poker: -0,05% 2% Blackjack: 0,43% 2% Baccarat: 1,06% 1,24% Craps: 1,36% 1,41% ate Texas Hold'em: 2,20% Roleta Europeia: 2.70% Pai Gow Poker : 2.84% Qual Jogo Tem as elhores Odds vip cashback 1xbet vip cashback 1xbet um Casino? Lowest mencionado anteriormente, você vai querer

3. vip cashback 1xbet :casas de apostas copa

Noughts & Crosses por Malorie Blackman

eleito por Lenny Henry, ator e comediante

Li este na minha quarta década e desejava ter conseguido emprestar este livro da biblioteca de Dudley quando era criança. Nada que li antes ou depois tem melhor me colocado nos sapatos de outra pessoa. É um dos livros que expande vip cashback 1xbet compreensão do mundo. Malorie nos dá uma estrutura de poder racial invertida, com peles escuras Crosses detendo o poder sobre peles claras Noughts. Sephy é uma Cross, filha de um político importante. Ela é melhor amiga de Callum, um Nought. As amizades entre raças mistas são quase proibidas, e desde que a mãe de Sephy demitiu a mãe de Callum como babá, eles tiveram que manter tudo vip cashback 1xbet segredo. O livro nos faz encarar nossos próprios preconceitos, pensar sobre a empatia, desigualdade racial e seu impacto vip cashback 1xbet nós todos. A narrativa de Malorie é absolutamente cativante e desafia as dinâmicas de poder entre as raças. Por que a cor da pele de alguém deve determinar onde ela se senta na sociedade?

O livro "Who Am I, Again?" de Lenny Henry é publicado pela Faber.

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