

The Life and Development of Edson Arantes do Nascimento:

Pelé

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Abstract

When people think of the best football player in Brazil, let alone in the world, they think of Pelé. Pelé not only was an extremely talented artist in his sport, but he stressed his integrity for the country of Brazil just as he did for himself; nonetheless, his country always came first. From creating organizations to give back to the people, to taking his professional career to the heart of Brazil. These attributes allowed him to show how being a professional football player is more than just being on the field. This paper aims to analyze how Pelé's story is a true "rags to riches" timeline and to create a solid basis for why integrity fits Pelé's description. Pelé is considered one of the best soccer players on and off the pitch through his impressive career achievements, personal life triumphs, involvement in organizations and charities, and his continued efforts to improve Brazil.

Pelé joined his first soccer team in Bouru, Brazil at the age of eleven. He was on a youth team that was coached by Waldemar de Brito, a former member of the Brazilian national soccer team who played for Brazil during the 1934 World Cup. De Brito wanted Pelé to try out for a major league team so he convinced Pelé's parents but when tryouts got rejected really quickly. After getting rejected De Brito brought Pele to Santos where he earned a spot on the professional soccer club when he the age of fifteen. While playing for this team in Santos, he scored his first professional goal of his career that later led to his recruitment to the Brazilian National team. While being a part of the Brazilian National team now at the age of seventeen, he played in the 1958 World Cup in Sweden. During this World Cup, Pelé had to sit out of the first few rounds due to an injury but played during the finals where he scored and was the youngest player to do so during a World Cup. Pele scored a total of six goals during the 1958 world cup that helped lead Brazil to victory and earn their first of five World Cup titles. According to John Molinaro, "The world had been introduced to the mercurial talents of Pelé, and the soccer dynasty known as the Brazilian national team was born. Soccer would never be the same again". This shows how after Pelé played in his first World Cup, he was recognized for all of his talents and a player to watch. Pelé won in three FIFA World cups; in 1958, 1962, and 1970. Four years after playing in the 1970 World Cup, Pele went and announced his retirement but than agreed and signed a contract to play for three more years and joined a team in the United States called the New York Cosmos. He than officially retired after leading the Cosmos to their league championship in 1977. After retiring, Pele still continued to go beyond and do big things, which shows how he

displays integrity through his work and dedication. It is shown through the many accomplishments he has made, not just as a player but also as a person.

Pelé has shown integrity by not only impacting the people in Brazil but, as well as people all around the world. He has expressed his true colors and grace by donating his time and money to different organizations and Charities to embolden children. One of his greatest accomplishments is starting his own foundation called “The Pelé Foundation”. In September 2018, Pelé announced to launch his new foundation that benefits organizations around the world and will help empower children, mainly focusing around education and poverty. Growing up in poverty, Pelé has had first hand experience with the hardships and obstacles just like many children face today. Pelé states, “It has been my lifelong dream to start a foundation to help children of the world better their lives as people in my childhood helped me to better mine, My foundation reflects the life I’ve led both on and off the field and I am looking forward to working with esteemed leaders in philanthropy to help the children of our world.” (Harrie, *Look at the Stars*) This quote strongly supports on how Pelé kept his promise and this helped shows how Pele stays true to his word and helps make an impact on other people.

In the early years of this foundation, they have been partnering with Pencils of Promise and Charity:water to help raise awareness for children in poverty. Pencils of Promise was founded in 2008, and was created to enhance the access quality of education through the school systems. They work on building educational programs and as well as community impacts around the world. Charity:water was founded in 2006 to provide clean and safe drinking water to developing countries. “Pelé’s incredible career and unwavering commitment to youth empowerment and education serve as an inspiration to the over 93,000 students currently

benefiting from PoP's programs across Ghana, Guatemala and Laos." (Harrie, *Look at the Stars*)

This quote helps show how people honored Pele for his great accomplishments. Also, that he has put in a tremendous amount of dedication for these organizations and charities.

Along with Pelé starting his own foundation, he has been donating organizations and charities to help them raise awareness to their causes. Pelé has worked for children's causes through the United Nations Children's Fund, also known as, UNICEF. The UNICEF helps improve children's lives by providing health care, clean water, and an education system.

Pelé supports six main charities, such as, 46664, which is a campaign that helps raise awareness for AIDS/HIVS. ABC Trust, which is a charity based in the United Kingdom that helps street children and young kids transform their future by giving them the education they are needing. Another charity is FC Harlem, this is a charity that is a recreational league in New York for children to have the opportunity to learn the skills and ways to play the game of soccer. Great Ormond Street Hospital is located in the United Kingdom and it treats patients who are suffering from the most complex and often life-threatening conditions. Another charity is the Prince's Rainforests Project, which helps to identify and encourage rainforests nations to slow down the deforestation rates. The last charity that he mentions is the Littlest Lamb, this charity is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing children with a loving and supportive family for those who have lost one or both parents. Pelé has shown great support to these organizations and charities showing people that he is more than just a famous soccer player, he has been making so many positive impacts on children's lives around the world.

Due to Pelé's success on and off of the soccer pitch, he utilized his well-known platform to improve the conditions of Brazil in hopes of enhancing society. Pelé's altruistic motives

originate from his poor upbringing from San Paulo allowing him to understand the struggles and hardships he had to overcome in his own youth. He takes his own experiences to address aspects of Brazil that need improvement, demonstrating his integrity and moral uprightness, as he is not obligated to help, but it upholds his strong moral principles of honesty, charity, growth.

Through his own experiences, Pelé recognizes that the status of youth programs are not where they should be. In Chip Taylor Communications documentary on Pelé, it mentions his actions to improve Brazil saying that he is “hoping to introduce youngsters to the game [of football] will ignite a spark in them and keep them off the streets.” By doing this, it encourages Brazil’s younger generation to find a passion of theirs, whether it be football, school, or art, and pursue in hopes of making a life for themselves instead of turning to ugliness of the streets. This is a significant reason for improvement as crime and poverty are among Brazil’s biggest issues for the country as a whole. He sees the potential in Brazil and feels as though he is a catalyst for change for his home country.

In addition to many other high-status awards Pelé has received for his accomplishments on the field, Pelé is recognized globally for his morality and integrity. His charitable efforts were recognized by that of another country: the British government. “They were so enamored with Pele’s efforts that they decided to make him an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire” (Taylor, “Pele”). He represented Brazil as an Ambassador to advocate for the country to host the 2016 Olympics as he was a strong representative for Brazil in that he is a man of poise, respect, morality, and honesty. Pelé is known for his contributions to the game of football and charitable work; he has not been involved in any scandals drawing negative light to his name or image. Although his son was arrested relating to drug use and possession, BBC reported Pelé’s

response that “God willing, justice will be done. There is not a shred of evidence against my son.” This demonstrated Pelé’s integrity in that he remains true to his family, one of Pelé’s biggest values, in that despite the circumstance, Pelé is loyal to those around him and to upholding his values.

Pelé has and continues to exemplify integrity throughout his career. He remains true to his values. He took his platform to help the youth of Brazil, creating many charities that help the citizens of Brazil, as well as positively representing the country as a whole. Pelé remains true to his values as it matches his personal values.

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