

The Lions of Mesopotamia



1) Discussion

- a) Has your international team ever won an international tournament? How did you feel?
 - b) Have you watched the Asian Cup?
 - c) What do you know about football in Iraq?
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2) Vocabulary

a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

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|-------------------------|---|
| 1) Strength (noun) | a) In sports, to play against an opponent. |
| 2) Determination (noun) | b) To fill someone with the motivation or ability to do or feel something. |
| 3) To mirror (verb) | c) To show the same as someone/something. |
| 4) To Face (verb) | d) The quality of being physically strong or having the power to handle difficult situations. |
| 5) Co-host (noun) | e) To share the responsibility of hosting an event or tournament. |
| 6) Struggle (noun) | f) A challenging effort to overcome difficulties. |
| 7) To inspire (verb) | g) The effort to achieve something despite challenges or difficulties. |
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b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.

Strength

Determination

To mirror

To face

Co-host

Struggle

Inspire

- 1) Mexico will be a _____ of the 2026 World Cup.
- 2) Arjen Robben had a lot of _____ with injuries during his career, but he overcame them and he became an amazing player.
- 3) The players' celebrations _____ that of the fans.
- 4) Real Madrid showed great _____ to win 3 Champions Leagues in a row.
- 5) Spain _____ The Netherlands in the 2010 World Cup final.
- 6) Football players often _____ others to work harder and achieve their dreams.
- 7) The win shows the teams _____.



3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

a) Who were the key players for Iraq during the 2007 Asian cup?

The Lions of Mesopotamia

Iraq's win in the 2007 AFC Asian Cup wasn't just about football; it gave hope to a country torn by war. Their unexpected victory brought a country together and gave Iraqis around the world something to celebrate.

Coached by Jorvan Vieira, Iraq's squad included a mix of experienced players and talented young players. Key figures like Younis Mahmoud, Nashat Akram, and goalkeeper Noor Sabri played pivotal roles in the team's journey to glory. Their strength and determination on the field mirrored the resilience shown by the Iraqi people.

In the group stage they faced tough teams like co-hosts Thailand, Oman and Asian football giants Australia. Iraq managed to finish top of their group. In the quarter-finals Iraq beat co-hosts Vietnam 2-0, thanks to two goals from Younis Mahmoud Khalaf. The semi-finals saw them defeat South Korea on penalties after a 0-0 draw. In the final they played rivals Saudi Arabia, winning 1-0 thanks to another goal from Younis Mahmoud Khalaf.

The victory meant more than just a trophy. It brought Iraqis together, despite their differences, to celebrate as one nation. It gave them hope and pride in a time of struggle.

The players became heroes, inspiring future generations. Younis Mahmoud Khalaf was joint top-scorer, won the Player of the Tournament award and became a national hero. Noor Sabi was named Goalkeeper of the tournament and Bassim Abbas won best defender.

Though Iraq still had many problems, the win reminded them of their strength and potential, even in hard times.



4) Discussion

- a) What do you think of Iraq's 2007 Asian Cup win?
- b) Do you think football has the power to change society?
- c) Can you think of any other examples of unlikely tournament winners?

