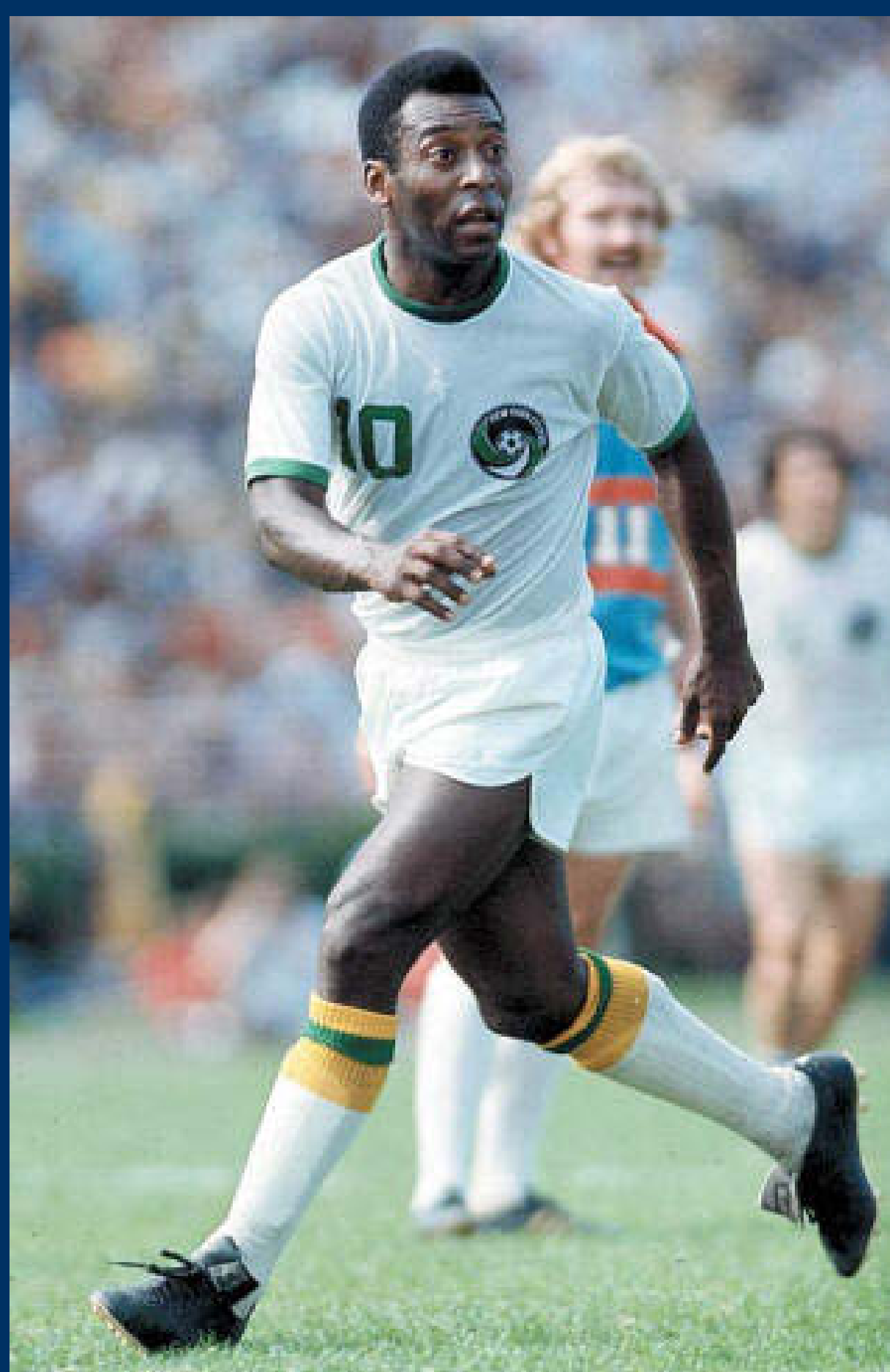


Pelé

THE KING WHO INSPIRED AMERICA



BACKGROUND

Born Edson Arantes do Nascimento in Três Corações, Brazil, Pelé grew up in poverty, often playing soccer barefoot because his family could not afford proper equipment. As a boy, he learned the game by kicking a ball made from rolled-up socks or stuffed newspaper tied together with string. His remarkable talent and determination transformed those humble beginnings into one of the greatest careers in sports history.

CAREER

Pelé led Brazil to an unprecedented three FIFA World Cup championships (1958, 1962, and 1970) and scored more than 1,000 career goals, earning recognition as one of the greatest soccer players of all time. In 1975, he joined the New York Cosmos of the North American Soccer League, where his arrival attracted sold-out crowds, international media attention, and some of the world's top players, helping establish professional soccer in the United States.

IMPACT

Pelé transformed soccer from a niche sport into a growing American pastime. His popularity with the New York Cosmos inspired millions of fans, increased youth participation, and helped lay the foundation for the sport's continued growth across the United States. In 2026, Baye Adofo-Wilson's group acquired the Cosmos, announcing a 2026 return in USL League One and bringing Pelé's legacy to a new generation.

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