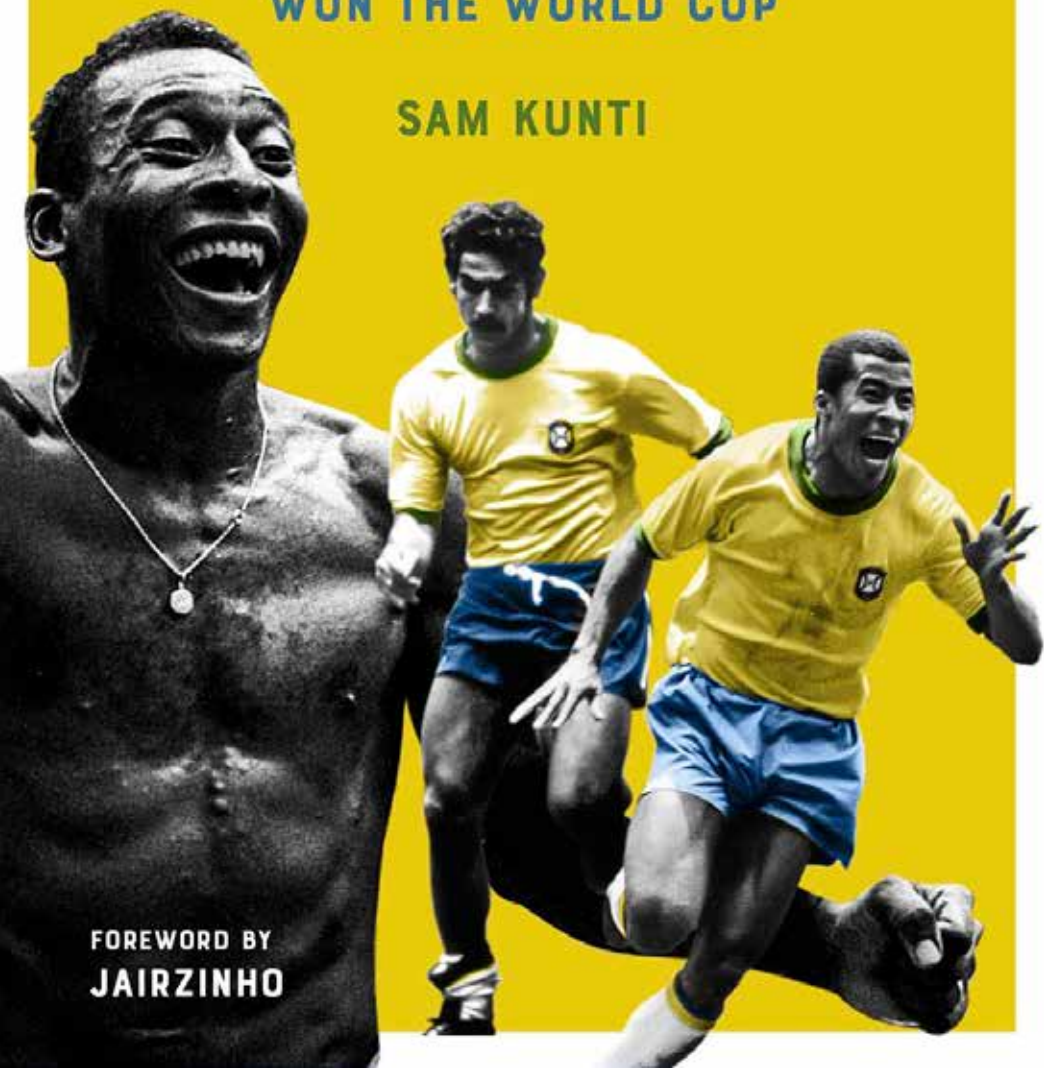


BRAZIL
1970

HOW THE
GREATEST TEAM OF ALL TIME
WON THE WORLD CUP

SAM KUNTI



FOREWORD BY
JAIRZINHO

BRAZIL
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Chapter I

The Money Tour

PELÉ LIMPED in and out of matches, while the other demigods of Brazilian football hobbled along. Brazil's players were in a war of attrition. The matches, the travel, the functions, the receptions and the media obligations were taking their toll. They looked haggard, their tracksuits rumpled, their bodies sapped and, everywhere they went, opponents lurked with a weapons-grade enthusiasm to destroy the Seleção.

It was April 1963. In the space of 22 days, Brazil had criss-crossed the Old Continent playing nine friendly matches. 'We were simply on our last legs,' said Santos outside-left Pepe. The European tour was too exhausting. The reigning world champions lost four times but, according to the PR playbook of Brazil's all-powerful sports governing body, the Confederação Brasileira de Desportos (CBD), the tour was simply an experiment aimed at rebuilding the team in time for the 1966 World Cup in England.

‘It was absurd, the truth is that the tour should have never happened,’ fulminated Santos’s Antonio Lima. Botafogo midfielder Gérson took the argument further to say that the ill-fated tour and its organisational template destroyed Brazil’s chances of retaining the World Cup.

* * *

Brazil had just won the Copa Roca, a tournament with Argentina, and yet the mood in the Brazilian camp was sour in April 1963, the month São Paulo was to stage the fourth edition of the Pan-American Games, with the majestic Estádio Municipal Paulo Machado de Carvalho – the famous Pacaembu – as centrepiece venue. In the political arena, Brazilian president João Goulart was fighting for his survival.

The first leg of the European tour had resulted in an embarrassing 1-0 defeat against Portugal in Lisbon, nullifying the promise of a \$500 bonus by João Mendonca Falcão, Brazil’s delegation chief and the president of the Federação Paulista de Futebol (FPF), if the tour ended undefeated. The aggravation wasn’t simply financial. Carlos Nascimento, the team’s supervisor, and coach Aymoré Moreira, whose brother Zezé had coached Brazil at the 1954 World Cup, were having a squabble over personnel preferences against Portugal. The supervisor wanted to attack from the onset with Gérson in the starting line-up. The coach,

however, leaned conservatively towards an unchanged team from the Argentina match-ups. The discordance was palpable and Brazil were left to lament a match that delivered very little, belying what the Portuguese press had billed as a 'theatrical spectacle'.

In 1962 the Brazilians had defended the World Cup against Czechoslovakia in Chile and, in the autumn, the Copa Libertadores champions Santos had enhanced Brazil's dominance in the game by wresting the tag of best club in the world from Real Madrid. In the Intercontinental Cup, they defeated European champions Benfica 8-4 on aggregate. Europe and South America had a monopoly on the elite game and the Intercontinental Cup was established to crown the best team at club level. The competition was a matter of utmost importance and, in the second leg in Lisbon, Pelé destroyed Benfica. The scoreline was 5-2 in a match he still considers his finest. 'I believe that without exaggeration, without any exaggeration,' affirmed Benfica's José Augusto. 'Pelé was the light, the leading figure of the team, the best-ever Santos side. They were fabulous, extraordinary.'

In the spring of 1963 Brazil's national team carried their reputation, that of superlative ball virtuosos, who elevated the game to an art in a dazzling mix of speed, skill and precision to Europe. Portugal's coach José Maria Antunes warned Brazil that his team 'would play with a perfect defensive block in a 4-3-3 formation

which won't allow penetration and not even long-distance attempts'. Antunes was a pragmatist but, in matching Brazil's system, he was audacious. After all, the Brazilians had won the last two World Cups perfecting that formation as Zagallo shuttled up and down his left wing to, in turn, offer defensive cover and attacking support. Portugal executed Antunes's game plan well, with defender Vicente shackling Pelé, who sustained an ankle injury in the 20th minute. The Portuguese and international press oscillated between euphoria and outright satire to describe how Vicente had closed down Pelé and marked him out of the game.

Alfredo Farinha from Portuguese sports daily *A Bola* asked, 'Where is Pelé? In Vicente's pocket!' Peter Lorenzo from the *Daily Herald* claimed that Vicente 'never allowed Pelé to distance himself more than 60cm from him'. And when Pelé did, Hernani Silva or Mario Coluna provided extra cover. The Portuguese rearguard disarmed Brazil's talisman. In attack, the constant movement off the ball from Augusto, Eusébio and Yauca confused the Brazilian defence.

After 20 minutes, the trio sensed that Brazil's left-back Altair lacked rhythm, so they channelled much of their attack on the right. Augusto scored. The experience was sobering for Brazil; they had no response to a well-organised block embedded in the successful system of their own design. The Brazilians were selfish in possession and guilty of poor decision-

making. Their players often slowed down the pace and, in that respect, the second-half introduction of Zagallo was futile.

Altair, Claudio Danni, Dorval, Gérson, Pelé and Pepe, starters against Portugal, hadn't played in the World Cup Final in Chile, but Brazil's invincibility had been shattered. The aura of the double world champions suddenly shone a little less. Even in the pre-television age, Brazil was a byword for style and success. To watch Brazil play was to savour the greatness of single-name stars. It was to revel in the reality or even just the idea that they had no equals. It was as if each and every single one of their players were, in their own right, artists. Above all, Brazil possessed the ultimate thrill for a spectator: Pelé, the game's unmatched global superstar.

Europe remained besotted with the South Americans, and smitten with Pelé. Brussels was no different. The Belgian FA, the Koninklijke Belgische Voetbalbond, spent about 1.25 million Belgian francs in match fees and guest expenses to stage the first-ever encounter between Brazil and Belgium, considered a fair-to-middling European outfit.

* * *

In friendly matches, the Belgians were renowned as giant-slayers. In 1954, they were the first team to defeat world champions West Germany. The pertinacious

striker Rik Coppens toyed with Werner Liebrich, the World Cup's best defender, to score the match's only goal. Belgium registered a more significant victory in 1956, winning 5-4 against Hungary, albeit the opposition were without both Nándor Hidegkuti and Zoltán Czibor. At the interval, Hungary led 3-1 but, in the second half, the ageing Hungarians were exposed. After the defeat, their coach Gusztáv Sebes was dismissed. Irrevocably, the decline of the Golden Team had begun. In just 90 minutes, the Belgians had wrecked a world order.

In 1963 Belgium were a light version of an accomplished Anderlecht team that, under the leadership of a blossoming Paul Van Himst, belonged to Europe's middle-tier clubs. The teenager was a youth product of the club and, in 1962, he won his first national crown with Anderlecht. The jaunty national team employed a 4-2-4 system, introduced by French coach Pierre Sinibaldi, who'd arrived at the Brussels club in 1960. A disciple of Albert Batteux, he imported the techniques from the French coaching school of Stade de Reims. It pleased Anderlecht's new president Albert Roossens, who'd outlined a policy of youth development and choice transfers to transform the club and achieve a style of play that would be branded 'champagne football'.

Van Himst became the focal point of a team that included local boys Jean-Marie Trappeniers, Pierre

Hanon, Jef Jurion and Jean Cornelis, Ostende duo Wilfried Puis and Laurent Verbiest, and Ronse's Jacques Stockman. Perhaps a young Van Himst with his agility, dribbles and instinct for goals reminded Sinibaldi of Raymond Kopa. Together they developed a slow, but skillful and polished game that resulted in the elimination of Real Madrid in the European Cup in 1962 after a 3-3 draw in the Spanish capital, followed by a 1-0 second-leg victory. Van Himst admitted that Madrid were 'a team on the way back' after their supremacy in the late 1950s but recalled how potent they still were. '[Alfredo] Di Stefano was the first modern player, because he had a free role,' explained Van Himst. 'He could defend, attack and score goals. This was the Real Madrid of [Ferenc] Puskas, Di Stefano and [Francisco] Gento. Di Stefano had everything. Physically, he was unbelievably strong. He could just keep running.'

Players with a lot of lung power and pace were something of a problem for Anderlecht. In the Sinibaldi philosophy, the backline pushed up to use the offside trap and play possession football. That tenet left Anderlecht exposed against quick, counter-attacking teams. A hard-wired Dundee United eventually eliminated Anderlecht in the quarter-finals of that season's European Cup. 'Anderlecht was the first team to play that way [in Belgium],' said Van Himst. 'Standard was more about individual marking and

physicality. It was based on Brazil, who also played 4-2-4 and the offside trap, which was dangerous against good teams. It taught us a lot. We also played in the opponent's half, because of Sinibaldi's approach.'

Jan Mulder, a 1965 Anderlecht recruit playing the Just Fontaine role, wrote of Sinibaldi that he was 'a nice guy, but not a special coach'. Van Himst dismissed that idea. 'That doesn't correspond with reality,' he insisted. 'Sinibaldi imparted something to our football. He was a nice guy, a Corsican, who had a lot of character. You had coaches who never looked at the human side of things, who neglected it. Not so for Sinibaldi. He was a figure with a lot of personality. His tactical approach was a point of discussion; the system with a flat back four, almost playing in the midfield, always with the offside trap. That helped us, but it was risky. Against Manchester United [in 1968] we dominated the match ... We bettered Bobby Charlton and Nobby Stiles, but when they played diagonal passes in behind the defence they'd be one on one with the goalkeeper.'

Anderlecht went on to lose the tie 4-3 but, despite the flaws of Sinibaldi's system, 'champagne football' would become a part of the Anderlecht DNA and exert a major influence over the national team with a core of Anderlecht players in the early 1960s. 'The national team also played this way,' explained Van Himst. 'The limitation was that some Standard Liège players would be included and they were not accustomed to

that system. You'd have instances when one would go forward while the other ran back.'

That's why on the eve of the match, Belgium's coach Arthur Ceuleers devoted a long team talk to tactics and how to stop Brazil's devastating frontline with zonal marking. Ceuleers's influence, however, was limited by technical director Constant Vanden Stock, who would become Anderlecht's chairman from 1971 to 1996, and called the shots in the selection committee. Faced with the presence of full-backs Jef Vliers from Standard Liège and Guy Raskin from Beerschot VAC, Ceuleers thought it inopportune to simply apply Sinibaldi's philosophy and play the Brazilians offside with a high defensive line.

His Brazilian counterpart also previewed changes, with Pelé in doubt after Vicente's knock. In Lisbon, the Brazilian team had demonstrated a prevalence to simply feed the ball to Pelé and wait for the talisman to play his way through the opponents but, under the close watch of Vicente, Pelé's moment of ignition never arrived.

Predictably, much of the build-up focused on Pelé and his injury. The Belgian newspaper *Het Volk* painstakingly noted that, upon arrival at Brussels airport, Pelé drank cold milk with his chicken Provençal. There was room for amusing observations as well as bigotry in the portrayal of Brazil as an exotic touring circus: '[Vicente] Feola, the fattest coach in the world, still ate with the same conviction of Sweden [the

World Cup] and Rome [the Olympic Games]. Dieting still seems unknown to him, because he devoured chunks of bread with tons of butter ... Mario Americo [the masseur] is still the same somewhat monkey-like type, a shoeblick somewhere in Chicago.'

With only 20 minutes until kick-off, Pelé was declared unfit; or perhaps he simply needed rest for the more prestigious friendly against France four days later in Paris. Belgium still faced seven world champions in goalkeeper Gilmar, defenders Djalma Santos, Mauro and Altair, midfielder Zito, and forwards Zagallo and Amarildo. Santos formed the backbone of the Brazilian team with five players; Mengálvio anchored the midfield alongside his club captain and Dorval played at outside-left.

On a night when Belgium showcased their own interpretation of the beautiful game in Brussels, Pelé's supporting cast was no match. The Belgians rendered Brazilian football outdated, outmoded and irrelevant. They played a rich, evocative game, exhibiting a mastery usually associated with their celebrated opponents. Within 21 minutes they'd scored four times. Belgium were practising blood sport. The attacking prowess of Stockman and the finesse of Van Himst stunned the Brazilian defence. It seemed the goalscoring would never stop. Together with Hanon and Paul van den Berg, the magic quartet ridiculed Brazil. Stockman, the archetypal Anderlecht forward with drive and

lethality inside the box, was the absolute star. After three minutes, he opened the score with a rasping shot and in the 12th minute he provided the assist from the left for Van Himst to double Belgium's lead with a first-time deflection beyond goalkeeper Gilmar.

Brazil were in disarray. They lacked mental sharpness, intensity and concentration. Flustered, they no longer played out of a calm and disciplined defence, which in normal circumstances would effortlessly interchange from 4-2-4 to 4-3-3. The third goal was even worse from Brazil's point of view, with Altair beating his own goalkeeper. The world champions were usurped from their own league, bewildered by Belgium's unexpected speed and precision. Stockman blasted a fourth past Gilmar. 'It was a shock,' said Pepe, who watched on from the bench. 'Moreira had replaced me with Zagallo, who defended more, but it didn't help.'

After all the pining for Pelé, the fans in the stands had forgotten about him. Instead, they were relishing the sight of the mighty Brazil being dismantled by a superb home team. In the 33rd minute, Altair cleared Van Himst's attempt off the line before Quarentinha, in a rare Brazilian attack, reduced the deficit to 4-1.

The match was no longer a contest after the interval. Around the hour mark, Stockman completed his hat-trick, displaying the full oeuvre of his skills by dribbling past three Brazilians before scoring. Djalma Santos, Altair and Mauro illustrated Brazil's

impotence by repeatedly hoofing the ball long. ‘Brazil didn’t establish themselves at any point,’ said Lima, who debuted against the Netherlands eight days later. ‘The result, we felt, was a bit exaggerated, but altogether fair considering the football that Belgium had played.’

The final score read 5-1 and the Brazilians were embarrassed in a way that had some pondering the gravity of the result. In his daily column ‘Na Grande Area’ in *Jornal do Brasil*, star journalist Armando Nogueira lamented:

‘It was at dusk on a Belgian Wednesday: the stars of deception were shining in the sky that adorned the Atomium monument, in Brussels. It was there, in the old Heysel Stadium, that I felt my body shiver ... I started to laugh – laughing out of shame. The men who organised this damned excursion degraded the Seleção and didn’t rebuild the golden Seleção. Belgium is a modest team to demoralise the glorious legend of two admirable achievements of our football. The Belgians put the ball between the legs of the Brazilians – and the terraces sang the chorus of loud laughter. The Belgians exchanged back-heel passes – and the terraces still sang the chorus of loud laughter. Hardly did the Belgians know they were not defeating the golden team because we no longer have a golden team. The golden Seleção, the Belgians knew, never played to make money, the team of Didi only played for glory, the team of Vava played football so that the Brazilian people had more and more joy to be

Brazilian. The team of Nilton Santos can not be confused with this Seleção, crucified between an aeroplane and a tourist hotel.'

Inevitably, Belgian newspapers waxed lyrical. *Het Laatste Nieuws* exclaimed, 'Pelé played in our ranks!' *Le Soir* wrote of a 'démonstration éclatante' and *De Standaard* noted that the victory was a 'testimony to our football prosperity', but cautioned against reading too much into the result given Belgium's past disappointments in matches that mattered. Sweden and Switzerland had eliminated the Belgians in the 1962 World Cup qualifiers. 'At European level we did get results, but not enough in relation to the quality we possessed,' admitted Van Himst. 'We were semi-pros, something that played a part as well. We had a very good team, but perhaps we lacked a bit of professional guidance at the time. Everyone had a job, you know, a bit of office work.'

De Standaard did ponder the ramifications for Brazil and a shift in the balance of power:

'It will never be possible to accurately determine when an enterprise, a team or a career is over the top and when the downturn begins. England were humiliated in 1950 in Belo Horizonte by the football cowboys of the United States, but how long did it take for the British to drift from the level of the best European teams? Where did the decline of the renowned Hungarian phalanx from the first half of the fifties begin? In Bern?

In Istanbul? In Brussels? The absence [of Pelé and Garrincha] lifted the veil over the limitations of their successors. Brazil are still wearing football's crown, but their possibilities are no longer endless.'

Here, context is crucial. The result was of seismic significance for Brazil, but less so for the Belgians. Transient glory aside, the victory was largely inconsequential for Ceuleers's diffident semi-professional team. The 5-1 capitulation, Brazil's heaviest loss since the 1940 Copa Roca and the nadir of the tour, was insignificant in isolation, but subsequent defeats against the Netherlands (1-0) and Italy (3-0) exposed deeper issues.

* * *

The players offer differing explanations for Brazil's 1963 downturn. Amarildo had been instrumental in the 1962 World Cup win but he simply chuckled at the memory of the year that followed. The Brazilians went on a shopping spree around Europe, with a particular, if not unhealthy, interest in transistor radios and dolls. Amarildo told me:

'You know what it was like; there were few who travelled abroad. That tour was a stroll. Some players didn't train the way they had always trained. There was always a bit of freedom. It was football without any commitment. Well, we had obligations, yes. There was no camp [concentração]. When you play

a game with nothing at stake, with no obligation to win ... it was entertainment. The World Cup was valued. On tour, life was a bit more joyous and clearly the returns were very slim. It wasn't the Seleção of the World Cup. Everyone played, the balance was lost and the productivity diminished. These things happen, but better that it happens during the parties and the strolls than in the World Cup qualifiers or the World Cup. That would be different. It would be a different tour, a different way of approaching the games.'

'The Seleção in 1963 was disorganised, without a strong leadership,' said Gérson. That season, the midfielder moved from Flamengo to Botafogo. He'd debuted for the amateur national team at the 1959 Pan-American Games and represented Brazil at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome but a knee injury prevented him from travelling to Chile. However, on the European tour he was still very much a novice, competing with Mengálvio for a role alongside Zito. The midfielder played three full matches on the tour: against Portugal, France and the Netherlands. But, while his vision and technique were already evident, he failed to strike up any connection with the Santos legend.

'You noticed the decline,' analysed Gérson. 'The disorganisation and the lack of physical fitness. There were some players from 1962. That would derail 1966. You could already picture what was going to happen. In

1963, in every game, it was a different team, as it would turn out to be in 1966. The disorganisation of the 1966 World Cup had its roots in that tour.’

Perhaps the minds of the Botafogo duo were drifting as well. Italian clubs were courting Gérson and Amarildo and, as early as Lisbon, Nascimento expelled representatives from both Juventus and Fiorentina from the team hotel. Amarildo’s light-hearted explanation touches on a modicum of the truth, but Gérson’s account is more instructive.

Strictly based on results, Brazil’s tour was a disaster. In 56 matches from 1959 to 1963, the Brazilians had seen 40 wins, six draws and ten defeats. However, in the space of just 29 days and nine matches – 22 days in Europe as well as trips to Cairo and Tel Aviv – they were defeated four times. The end-of-tour victories over Egypt (1-0) and Israel (5-0) were irrelevant.

The selection committee panicked after the Belgian defeat, not helped by a 2-0 training-ground loss against Racing de Paris on the eve of the France friendly, which journalist Dacio de Almeida regarded as ‘worse than ever’ in *Jornal do Brasil*. Feola and Moreira were World Cup-winning coaches but their experience contributed little to a tour that should have been valedictorian for Brazil’s golden generation. They didn’t introduce a new generation either. The Seleção was in a transitional phase but there were some mitigating circumstances: the team’s luminary Didi had retired and Garrincha

was injured. In 1963, the Botafogo wizard with bendy legs played only two matches in a row. His knee was in a bad way, a splintered cartilage causing it to swell. Regular perforation and drainage did little to remedy the injury and, in 1964, surgery followed. Garrincha's desperately sad terminal decline had begun. In Europe, Moreira had a catchphrase about the inimitable winger: 'We should have brought Garrincha even if it was to play in a wheelchair.'

Feola also sidelined the 38-year-old Nilton Santos, Brazil's greatest-ever left-back, from his squad. São Paulo's Roberto Dias, Corinthians's Eduardo and Marcos as well as Santos's Lima and Rildo were debutants on the tour. Nevertheless, Feola had still retained 11 World Cup winners. 'You had players who couldn't be called up again and players who went for the first time,' explained Lima. 'All of this, instead of helping, was confusing.'

The team had just three run-outs before embarking for Europe. The tour diary was gruelling with little or no time to rest and recover in a schedule that compelled Brazil to play every three to four days.

'Eat, play, rest and recover as much as possible,' recalled Amarildo, in between all the tourism he'd undertake. Brazil even squeezed in a training match against a select team from Philips, the Dutch technology giant. All the players received a transistor radio and \$100. That day the team arrived at midnight

in Germany, where Falcão argued with German officials over the contractual details of a potential match in Berlin against a select of local players. He simply wanted more money. ‘It was a Seleção *caça-níquel* [a gold-digging team],’ lamented Lima. Rildo backed this up, going on to say that ‘the CBD went on the tour to make money’.

* * *

Santos were the first Brazilian club to exploit their players, milking foreign tours for cash, almost on an industrial scale. In 1959, Santos and Pelé played 22 matches in 44 days in eight European countries, encountering, among others, Real Madrid, Barcelona, Hamburg, Feyenoord and Sporting Lisbon. That year Pelé played 82 matches for his club. A year later Santos scheduled a further 18 matches across Europe. This time in the space of 44 days. The 1961 tour was perhaps even tougher: 19 matches in 50 days. ‘The workload and activity was intense,’ remembered Lima, who played for Santos from 1961 to 1971. ‘We disputed the Paulista championship, the Rio-São Paulo tournament, the Copa Libertadores and toured. You never stopped. You played nearly the whole year.’

The Brazilian club became football’s equivalent of the Harlem Globetrotters and the CBD had no qualms about replicating Santos’s exploitative model. Pelé was the standout player, a global brand and a magic money

machine all in one. A lucrative business was built around his personality.

At least Nascimento kept up the pretence. He never ceased to repeat how important the tour was in building a fresh team for the 1966 World Cup. Before the tour's first match, he rued the absence of so many great players. 'Unfortunately, it is necessary to renew the team and let's hope that the new players reach the heights of the old ones who will never be forgotten; Nilton Santos, Zozimo, Didi, Bellini, Vava and Castilho,' said Nascimento. 'Only those who lived with these guys, like me, understand their true value. It is sad they are not part of the touring party, but we are obliged to rebuild ... if we do not want to transform the dream of conquering the World Cup into a pure mirage.'

On tour the players received a bonus of \$100–\$200 for each win. 'They gave Pelé a bit more, which was about \$50,' said Rildo. The CBD's net profit from the match fees, ticketing and sponsoring, revealed CBD president João Havelange, was estimated to be \$250,000. After Lima and Eduardo had left the field in tears following the 1-0 defeat to the Netherlands, *Jornal dos Sports'* columnist Fernando Horacio wrote that they weren't to blame, in a column titled 'Exploiters Don't Cry'.

Havelange was a rising star in sports administration, who prided himself on never entering a dressing room. Having participated in two Olympic

Games, first as a swimmer and then as a water polo player, he had an upright, athletic posture and was an imposing personality. His full name Jean-Marie Faustin Godefroid de Havelange revealed an aristocratic, Belgian ancestry. In 1963 he became a member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). At the CBD, Havelange's management strategy had always been risky. He relied on loans and public funding to offset any deficits. Financial limitations, Havelange believed, weren't enough to constrain his expansive agenda to develop amateur sports across the board and to improve Brazil's medal haul at the Olympic Games.

In Rome, at the 1960 Olympic Games, 81 athletes, Brazil's largest delegation ever, represented the country. In the 100m freestyle swimming competition, Manoel dos Santos claimed bronze. The basketball team matched him. Arguably, the 39th rank in the medal table, alongside British West-Indies, was a modest result, but this time around Brazilian athletes had enjoyed better conditions to prepare because of the substantial investment in their disciplines. With its nationwide popularity, it was football that funded the other sports.

The returns of the 1962 World Cup win were, however, limited and Brazil's plummeting economy and subsequent inflation, the consequences of overheated national-developmentalism from the Juscelino

Kubitschek era, led to a financial crisis at the CBD. Havelange needed money. The CBD invested in real estate on one of Rio de Janeiro's main avenues, the Rio Branco. The prize asset, however, remained the national team, so in the spring of 1963 they were sent on a money tour, even if it meant forfeiting participation in the South American championship. The fundraising tactic wasn't novel. In 1960 Brazil played Egypt thrice in Cairo, on the invitation of popular president Gamal Nasser, raising \$15,000.

In 1963 Brazil broke multiple records in Europe. Gate receipts in Hamburg were \$24,190, a German record, and £80,000 in London, an English record. At Wembley, Brazil met Alf Ramsey and a young Bobby Moore for the first time. In the 85th minute, Bryan Douglas prevented the hosts from losing one of that year's FA centenary celebration matches with a tap-in at the far post.

Upon appointment, Ramsey had assumed all selection responsibilities. Brazil's unwieldy selection committee of Moreira and Feola, on the contrary, remained flustered. 'You had two coaches, how could they even be expected to build a team?' asked Rildo. 'They were questioning each other. Aymoré [Moreira] wanted a player, Feola another. So, that was part of the disorganisation of the Seleção. Aymoré managed one way, Feola the other. When the Seleção returned home, Aymoré was dismissed. The two didn't understand each

other. He'd say A and the other B. They were never in tune as two coaches of Brazil should be.'

They resolved to field as many Santos players as possible. With the entire squad fit for once, a Santos-heavy Brazil defeated Sepp Herberger's West Germany 2-1 in Hamburg, arguably their finest outing on the tour, before drawing with England. In Milan, however, Italy swept a Santos-styled Brazil aside, 3-0. Gilmar claimed that Falcão asked team doctor, Hilton Gosling, to forcefully inject Pelé's knee before the Italy match. 'Falcão sent Gosling, but Pelé didn't accept the injection,' said Rildo. '[Giovanni] Trapattoni neutralised Pelé for 90 minutes. Pelé didn't do anything in that game. They wrote that Trapattoni stopped Pelé in his footsteps, but the problem was that Pelé was so tired.'

'Santos's team understanding couldn't simply be copied,' said Lima. 'That was among us. There was a lot of criticism in Brazil at the number of players from Santos. They selected nine players from Santos and two or three players from the other clubs, who were going to form the starting eleven. Did it work out? No! The Brazilian press criticised the tour with reason: the players were worn out from the state championships and then you come up with a tour to take on Germany, Italy and England.'

Amid all the confusion, chaos, tourism, exhaustion and greed, which played an insidious role throughout the tour, the Brazilians failed to realise that European

football was changing. Portugal and the Netherlands marshalled defensive blocks, Belgium relied on skill, and Italy mixed organisation with technique. Indeed, there was no anointed formula to beat Brazil, but each team trusted their own virtues. Europe's game was slowly gaining in strength and physicality.

Lima maintained:

'The big problem wasn't them, the big problem was us. Falcão was invited as delegation boss. Here comes the proof that there was an understanding between Mendonca Falcão, the president of the FPF, and João Havelange, the president of the CBD. There was an agreement; you take so many Paulista players and some Carioca players and you form the Seleção, and let's play 10 or 15 games and pocket the money. Done! I am not going to use the word exploited, but it was a tour based upon the players of Santos. Why would you take nine players from Santos? You are basically selecting the entire team. Why? To sign the most lucrative contracts.'

Falcão's role on tour was ceremonial. However, his various positions at home suggested that he was a *cartola*: Portuguese for top hat and a colloquialism in Brazil for a powerful football official. He ran one of Brazil's most powerful state football federations, sat on the CBD, presided over the Conselho Nacional de Desportos, the country's national council for sports, and even dabbled in politics. The tour was a tit for tat – the prestige of heading the Seleção in exchange for

his loyalty. This arrangement suited Falcão, and his position in São Paulo remained protected even if Paulo Machado de Carvalho, a football official at São Paulo FC and the owner of TV Record, yielded immense power. On tour, Falcão, in his own right, managed to organise an audience with Pope John XXIII through the Brazilian Embassy in Rome.

According to Rildo:

‘All of us, the players, knew that the CBD travelled for money. The CBD had a financial interest. All the players noticed this, but they couldn’t do anything. The only one who could have possibly changed something was supervisor Carlos Nascimento, but he didn’t do it, because it was in his own interest not to. The players didn’t have the physical condition to even play 30 minutes. In the first half, we’d play more or less, but in the second half we were just dead. Even against Egypt we had problems. It was difficult. Egypt were shit, but we all wanted to be substituted and we didn’t have the physical condition to finish the game. It was a disastrous tour, one of the worst Brazil had ever undertaken, it was said at the time.’

Brazil were rushing headlong into a crisis and didn’t heed the warning signs. On the eve of the France match, Dr Gosling remarked that just three or four players in the entire squad were match fit. A fortnight after the tour, he warned that, without proper physical preparation, Brazil wouldn’t retain the World Cup in

1966. In fact, he said, 'Brazil will lose the next World Cup if we do not seek to improve our players' physical preparation because the Europeans for reasons that include race, nutrition, medical care and the weather are currently playing a vigorous and fast-paced game that we can't cope with.'

Did the doctor's warning really matter in the end? Brazil and Santos had found a financial fail-safe. At the time of Dr Gosling's foreboding, Santos, with Pelé as a busker, were on the road yet again, playing against the likes of Eintracht Frankfurt on a tour that would stretch for 28 days and culminate with a tournament in Milan, alongside Rio de Janeiro club Flamengo.

The circus was simply moving on.