

Stephen Brandt



FLAMENGO

Winning all
the Cups



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Chapter 1

The History of Flamengo Football Club

FLAMENGO STARTED in 1895 just six years after the Proclamation of the Republic, but not with football. The club actually started with rowing, which was a very popular sport then. This was practised on the beaches of Flamengo and Botafogo, and the club were christened Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, wearing the red and black uniform that you see today.

Just after the founding of the club, football began to take preference. In 1911 there was an internal disagreement within Fluminense; some talked about leaving the club; others spoke about leaving the sport completely. Alberto Borgerth, a Fluminense player, made a proposal to create a football team in Flamengo. On 8 November the football section was created. The new team drew attention, and created popularity by training at Praia do Russel. Flamengo's first match was on 3 May 1912, in a 16-2 win over Mangueira. The first line-up was: Baena, Píndar, Nery, Coriol, Gilberto, Galo, Baiano, Amaldo, Amarante, Gustavo and Borgerth. Gustavo, Amarante, Amaldo had four, Borgerth three and Galo one.

Flamengo were very good right away – in 1912 they won their first Campeonato Carioca. The win came in the second to last match, 2-1 over Fluminense. Riemer scored the all-important title goal. That first football shirt they wore was ‘*Papagaio de Vintem*’, chequered in red and black. They did go to a horizontal-stripe kit afterwards, and as is common have changed their kit every so often to help boost shirt sales.

Going back to that first goal, we should talk about Gustavo de Carvalho.⁸ That first goal, according to the club’s official website, was right from the opening kick-off. In the first attack of the match from Flamengo at the opponents’ goal, Gustavo took a pass from Baiano and put the ball in the back of the net. Gustavo didn’t stay in football that long; he retired in 1918. He returned, being elected as president of Flamengo in 1939 and staying until 1942.

We get to move on with another great name on the ledger of Flamengo: Henry Welfare, an ex-Liverpool player.⁹ The story starts back in Liverpool with his home debut against Sheffield Wednesday on 15 February 1913, deputising for Bill Lacey. While he didn’t score that often, he was a good hand for the club. He did score his only goal for Liverpool at Anfield against Derby County.

Not getting any more matches at Liverpool, Welfare moved to Rio de Janeiro in August of 1913 to work as a geography and maths teacher at Ginásio Anglo-Brasileiro. The school’s PE teacher, J.A. Quincey-Taylor, happened to be the first-team coach at Fluminense Football Club,

8 www.torcedores.com/noticias/2020/05/autor-de-primeiro-gol-da-historia-do-flamengo-saiu-do-maior-rival-e-marcou-cinco-vezes-na-estrela

9 www.lfchistory.net/Players/Player/Profile/879

and used Welfare's talents to their fullest for the team. It would be 20 more years before a professional league formed in Brazil, and Welfare was at the top of the scoring charts. From 1913 to 1924 they won the Campeonato Carioca, the football league of the state of Rio de Janeiro, three years on the trot, scoring 163 goals in 166 matches.

As an amateur, Welfare wasn't committed to a team so he turned out for Flamengo in their tour of Belém from December 1915 to January 1916, scoring seven goals in four games. Then in 1927 he became the coach for Vasco da Gama, and for the next ten years he was the best coach in the land.

Brazilians are known for their colourful nicknames, and the use of just first names. Pelé's name is a nickname, and we talk about Ronaldo, Romário, Zico and Sócrates because of such a thing. Henry Welfare was listed as Welfare, but that was because he was English. As Alex Bellos says in *Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life*, 'Brazilian football is an international advert for the cordiality of Brazilian life because of its players' names. Calling someone by their first name is a demonstration of intimacy, calling someone by their nickname more so.'¹⁰

Local players would be called by their first name, like Zico, Nunes, Júnior et al. It's just a common way Brazilians changed the game. Take any line-up from any club and you'll see the last names of the European-based players. It's always Cruyff, Keegan, Dalglish, Pelé, Zico and Ronaldo. The more and more you look at the sport, the more you see the Brazilian influence.

10 *Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life* – Alex Bellos, p253.

We transition back to the tale of the Flamengo history. The beautiful game in Brazil¹¹ is well known worldwide. It's fashionable to own a scarf or jersey, or know their players. There are many podcasts and computer games that help people learn about the players from the past. But what if I told you there was a player before Pelé that was better? His name was Arthur Friedenreich. And yes, he was German/Brazilian.

Friedenreich, a son of a German businessman, played soccer in São Paulo. Arthur was half white, half black. Oscar, who was Arthur's father, played soccer at the Brazilian club SC Germania, which as the name infers was only for German immigrants. Arthur joined the club at 17 in 1909, which made him the first black player in history to play in the professional league. Brazilian society was very racist at the time. Blacks weren't allowed to celebrate with their club if they won a cup, and were not able to hold top jobs. Arthur would go on to play with many of the top clubs at the time: São Paulo, Flamengo, Ypiranga, Atlético Mineiro and Paulistano.

The Tiger, as he was affectionately called by the fans, did something even the great Pelé didn't do. He became the top scorer in Brazil eight times, in 1912, 1914, 1917, 1918, 1919, 1921, 1927 and 1929. Arthur was a great dribbler, would never give up on the field and had a sharp eye for goal. When he played for Paulistano when they toured Europe, his fandom stretched worldwide. By the start of the 1920s he was considered the best player in the world.

11 <https://worldsoccertalk.com/2016/08/20/arthur-friedenreich-first-great-brazilian-player/>

On the international level, his best achievement was Brazil's 1919 Copa América triumph, where he scored the winning goal against Uruguay in the 122nd minute. It was such a good goal that the boot he scored it with was paraded by fans around the streets of Rio de Janeiro. The boot was even nicknamed 'The glorious foot of Friedenreich'. It was finally put in a local jeweller's store for all to see.

He was one of those players who changed society. Very few can say that. Many players changed the game. Where he met racism and prejudice, he changed it. Where black players weren't allowed in national teams or to celebrate with their fans or team-mates, he changed that. In 1921 society was outraged when the black players were left out of the national side by the selection committee. That was because the common folk didn't see the colour of their skin; they saw their play. That was something Brazilian blacks needed. He lived the life that he could, drank expensive beer and partied when he wanted.

We cannot leave this chapter without talking about Fla-Flu and the start of the problems. The name of the rivalry comes from the two names of the clubs, Flamengo and Fluminense. Later, we will go more into this rivalry. Alberto Borgerth helped the club get started.

Borgerth was born on 3 December 1892 to a Brazilian father, Dr José de Siqueira Alvares Borgerth, who was head of security during D. Pedro II's second reign, and a Hungarian mother. He lived in his early days with the sport that was accorded to him. Alberto even rowed at Flamengo when he was 13, but never thought his career would be so intertwined with the club. In 1910 he played for Fluminense, debuting when he was only 17, in a 5-2 victory over América. Borgerth scored two goals on his debut. They didn't win

the title that year, but the next season Fluminense won the Campeonato Carioca.

There was a break that caused players from Fluminense to leave. In September of 1911 the coaching staff at Fluminense decided to drop Borgerth and other players. This caused a rift between the players and the club. Borgerth took the lead on the discussion, and where there wasn't any solution, he reported that back to the rebels. The consensus of the group was to resign from the club. That led them to finding a new club, to which Flamengo were the solution. The catch in this was Flamengo were a rowing club, and lacked a football team. So in November of that year Borgerth proposed the creation of a football side of the club. The members of the club, on Christmas Eve 1911, voted to start a football club. The first training was at Russell Beach in Rio.

Alberto Borgerth came to Flamengo with Gallo, Nery, Amarante, Gustavinho, Lawrence, Baiano, Baena and Píndaro. As mentioned above, Flamengo's first match was a 16-2 win over Mangueira, with Borgerth scoring some of the goals. In that first year Flamengo captured the championship three points ahead of the second-placed club. This would be the missing piece to crown Borgerth's commitment to Flamengo. He didn't stop there, as he was part of the 1915 title-winning side, and he retired in 1916 as the first great goalscorer, putting in 21 goals in 45 matches.

Clubs get their colours in strange ways. Atlético Madrid and Athletic Bilbao were originally in Blackburn-like colours until a snafu made them switch to Southampton colours. Notts County are partly responsible for Juventus's jersey, and there are some rumours floating around that Leeds going to white jerseys was because of Real Madrid. Boca Juniors got their colours from the ships coming into the port.