

# Japan's Greatest Players



## 1) Discussion

- a) What do you know about Japanese football? Did you watch any of their games at the last World Cup?
  - b) Can you name any famous Japanese players?
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## 2) Vocabulary

### a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

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|---------------------------|---|
| 1) Jinking (adjective)    | a) The state of lasting a long time.    |
| 2) Blaze a trail (phrase) | b) To lead the way or do something new. |
| 3) Accomplishment (noun)  | c) To cover or last for a certain time. |
| 4) To dazzle (verb)       | d) To impress someone a lot.            |
| 5) To span (verb)         | e) Quick, fancy moves in sports.        |
| 6) Longevity (noun)       | f) A goal reached by hard work.         |



**b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.**

Jinking

Blaze a trail

Accomplishment

To dazzle

To span

Longevity

- 1) Legendary manager Sir Alex Ferguson's career \_\_\_\_\_ several decades.
- 2) Cristiano Ronaldo never fails to \_\_\_\_\_ fans with his incredible goals and breathtaking performances.
- 3) Paolo Maldini's \_\_\_\_\_ as a professional footballer is remarkable, having played at the highest level for over two decades.
- 4) Pele was one of the first players to \_\_\_\_\_ in international football.
- 5) In world football, players like Lionel Messi are known for their \_\_\_\_\_ skills, dodging defenders with quick moves.
- 6) Winning the World Cup is the biggest \_\_\_\_\_ for any national team.



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

- a) What Japanese players are mentioned in the article?

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#### **Japan's Greatest Players**

Japan has produced many talented footballers that have left a mark on the global stage. From jinking dribbles to breathtaking goals, these players have amazed fans worldwide with their skill, determination, and passion for the beautiful game.

Shinji Kagawa, often called as one of Japan's finest midfielders, showed his talents on the international stage and in top European leagues. His journey took him from Borussia Dortmund, where he won two Bundesliga titles and showed his playmaking abilities. He moved to Manchester United in 2012, where he became the first Japanese player to win the Premier League title. Kagawa's creativity, vision, and ability to find the back of the net earned him accolades and admiration from fans around the world.

Hidetoshi Nakata, a legend of Japanese football, blazed a trail in Europe during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Known for his versatility and technical prowess, Nakata played for esteemed clubs such as AS Roma, Parma, and Bolton Wanderers. His accomplishments include winning the Serie A title with Roma and being named Asian Footballer of the Year in multiple years. Nakata's impact went outside of the pitch, as he inspired a generation of Japanese players to pursue their dreams on the global stage.

Keisuke Honda, a dynamic midfielder who could score goals, enjoyed success in both club and international football. During his time at CSKA Moscow, Honda played an important role in the team's Russian Premier League triumphs and UEFA Champions League campaigns. He later transferred to AC Milan, where he continued to dazzle fans with his technical ability and scoring prowess. Honda's contributions to the Japanese national team, including memorable performances in the FIFA World Cup.

Shinji Okazaki, known for his hard work and goal scoring instincts, made him a success in Europe. He played for Mainz 05 and Leicester City. Okazaki's biggest moment came in the 2015-2016 season when he played an important role in Leicester City's historic Premier League title triumph.



## JAPAN'S GREATEST PLAYERS: INTERMEDIATE - B1

Kazuyoshi Miura, often known as "King Kazu," holds the record of being the oldest professional footballer to score a competitive goal. With a career spanning several decades, Miura's journey took him from Japan to Brazil, where he played for Santos FC, before returning to Japan to become a legend in the J-League. His passion for the game and remarkable longevity continue to inspire footballers of all ages.

These famous Japanese football players have made a big impact on the sport, showcasing skill, resilience, and passion on the global stage. Their contributions have not only made Japanese football famous but have also made them Japanese football legends.

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### 4) Discussion

- a) Which of the players in the article did you already know about?
- b) Which of these players do you think had the best career?
- c) Have any Japanese players played for your club or in your favourite league?

