

= Nani =

Luís Carlos Almeida da Cunha , ComM (born 17 November 1986) , commonly known as Nani (Portuguese pronunciation : [naˈni]) or Luís Nani , is a Portuguese professional footballer who plays as a winger for Spanish club Valencia CF and the Portugal national team . Although predominantly right @-@ footed , he has been utilised on the left wing on many occasions .

Nani was born in Cape Verde and emigrated to Europe with his family at an early age . He was raised in Portugal and began his football career playing for local side Real Massamá . At the age of nine , he began training with Sporting Clube de Portugal and S.L. Benfica on alternate days , eventually joining Sporting 's youth squad after they offered him pre @-@ season training . In 2005 , he made his professional debut with the club and won the Portuguese Cup during his second season with them . Nani was named the SJPF Young Player of the Month for May 2007 and his performances with Sporting culminated into a move to English club Manchester United in July 2007 for a fee of ? 25 million .

Nani won the Community Shield on his competitive debut at Manchester United and added a number of trophies , including the Premier League and Champions League during his debut season at the club . He established himself as first @-@ choice winger at United and won a further three Premier League titles , the Football League Cup , one FIFA Club World Cup , and three Community Shield titles . Individually , Nani was included in the Professional Footballers ' Association (PFA) Premier League Team of the Year on one occasion and was a nominee for the PFA Young Player of the Year in 2011 . Following a loan back to Sporting , in which he won the Taça de Portugal , he was signed for £ 4 @.@ 25 million by Fenerbahçe in July 2015 , and a year later he signed for Valencia .

Nani is also a Portugal international . Prior to playing at senior level , he played at under @-@ 21 level . He made his senior international debut in September 2006 in a friendly match against Denmark and scored his first international goal during the 4 ? 2 defeat in Copenhagen . Nani has represented his country at four major tournaments , including three European Championships : he took part at the 2008 , 2012 and 2016 European Championships , reaching the semi @-@ finals of Euro 2012 , and winning Euro 2016 ; he also participated at the 2014 FIFA World Cup with Portugal . Since his debut , he has made over 100 appearances and scored 20 goals for the Portugal national team , making him their fourth @-@ most capped player of all time .

= = Early life = =

Nani was born on 17 November 1986 in Praia , the capital of Cape Verde , off the West African coast . Nani emigrated with his family to Portugal at an early age . Nani was raised by his aunt Antónia in the Santa Filomena estate in the Amadora district of Lisbon after being abandoned by his parents . At the age of five , his father left for a holiday in Cape Verde but never returned and when he was 12 years old , his mother left Portugal to start a new life in the Netherlands . Nani has nine siblings from his mother , of which he is the youngest , and five from his father . Nani gained his nickname from an elder sister at a young age .

Nani 's older brother taught him how to play football and he played with his childhood friend , midfielder Manuel Fernandes . Around the age of 14 , Nani 's older brother took him to train with Real Massamá . They were Nani 's first club and gave him money , food , and helped him obtain an ID card and a passport . At the age of 16 , Nani was training on alternate days with Sporting Clube de Portugal and Benfica . Nani sometimes walked miles to and from practice before Sporting offered him pre @-@ season training . Despite growing up in Lisbon , Nani and his brother supported FC Porto as a boy and his footballing hero was Luís Figo .

= = Club career = =

= = = Sporting CP = = =

Nani joined Sporting Clube de Portugal from his first club , Real Massamá . After two seasons in the youth team , where he won the National Junior Championship in 2004 ? 05 , Nani was promoted to the first team early in the 2005 ? 06 season . On 10 August 2005 , Nani made his Sporting debut , coming on as a substitute for Custódio in the 73rd minute in a 1 ? 0 home defeat to Udinese in their third @-@ round qualifier in the UEFA Champions League . Nani made his Portuguese Liga debut on 28 August , replacing Deivid in the 76th minute of a 1 ? 2 victory over Marítimo at the Estádio dos Barreiros . Nani scored his first Sporting goal on 30 October , opening the scoring in a 2 ? 2 draw away to Boavista . Nani ended the first season of his career with 36 appearances and five goals in all competitions .

Nani first came into the spotlight after scoring in the Champions League against Spartak Moscow , netting Sporting 's goal in a 1 ? 1 Group Stage tie on 27 September 2006 . Nani helped Sporting win the 2006 ? 07 Portuguese Cup , lifting the trophy after a 1 ? 0 win over Belenenses on 27 May 2007 in the final . Nani was then named as the SJPF Young Player of the Month for May 2007 . Nani 's second season with Sporting ended with similar league statistics , with 40 appearances and six goals in all competitions .

= = = Manchester United = = =

= = = = Early years = = = =

Nani was sold to Manchester United for ? 25 @.@ 5 million , five percent of which was paid to Real Massamá , his first professional club . He passed his medical on 6 June 2007 , and signed a five @-@ year contract a month later , joining Portuguese compatriot Cristiano Ronaldo ? with whom he lived for a time at the start of his Manchester United career ? at the club .

Nani scored on his debut in a pre @-@ season friendly against Shenzhen , netting the third in a 6 ? 0 win . He also scored in the following game against Guangzhou Pharmaceutical with a chip off the right post from the left side of the penalty area in a 3 ? 0 win . On 5 August 2007 , Nani made his competitive debut for United , coming on as a substitute in the Community Shield against Chelsea . He marked his debut with a trophy after they won 3 ? 0 on penalties , following a 1 ? 1 draw during normal time . This was followed up by Nani 's third goal for the club three days later , when he scored against Glentoran in another 3 ? 0 pre @-@ season win .

Nani 's Premier League debut came in United 's opening match at home to Reading on 12 August as a substitute for Wayne Rooney , who had suffered a foot injury . Two weeks later , on 26 August , Nani scored his first competitive goal for United , netting a 30 @-@ yard goal in the 69th minute against Tottenham Hotspur . Nani also set up crucial goals for Louis Saha and Nemanja Vidi? , allowing United to beat both Sunderland and Everton 1 ? 0 , respectively . He returned to face his previous club , Sporting CP , in a Champions League tie in September , though it was teammate and fellow former Sporting player Cristiano Ronaldo who scored the winner in a 0 ? 1 victory . Nani opened the scoring in a 4 ? 1 home victory over Middlesbrough on 27 October .

On 16 February 2008 , Nani put in a man of the match performance against Arsenal in the FA Cup Fourth Round , his goal and two assists helping United to a 4 ? 0 win over their rivals . During the match , Nani was involved in an altercation with Arsenal captain William Gallas , who felt that the Portuguese was " showboating . " After the match , Arsenal manager Arsène Wenger was equally displeased , while Gilberto Silva said that Nani had a " big head . "

On 23 March , Nani set up the second and scored the final goal in a 3 ? 0 victory over rivals Liverpool , in the 79th and 81st minutes respectively , after coming onto the pitch as a substitute . On 3 May , towards the end of a 4 ? 1 home win over West Ham United , Nani was sent off for the first time in his United career for a headbutt on West Ham defender Lucas Neill . On 21 May , Nani came on as a substitute for Wayne Rooney in the 2008 UEFA Champions League Final as United defeated Chelsea 6 ? 5 on penalties following a 1 ? 1 draw after extra time . Nani took and scored Manchester United 's crucial fifth penalty in the shootout .

Nani scored his first goal of the 2008 ? 09 season on 23 September 2008 , scoring United 's third goal in a 3 ? 1 win over Middlesbrough in the last minute to secure passage to the Fourth Round of the League Cup . On 18 October , he scored from a Wayne Rooney assist to complete the 4 ? 0 rout of West Bromwich Albion at Old Trafford . On 20 January 2009 , he opened the scoring for United in their 4 ? 2 win at home to Derby County in the second leg of their League Cup semi @-@ final .

= = = = Breakthrough = = = =

After Cristiano Ronaldo 's transfer to Real Madrid in the 2009 close season , the weight of expectation was on Nani to step up from bit part player and replace his compatriot . Nani 's first contribution to United 's new season was opening the scoring in the 10th minute of the 2009 FA Community Shield , but United eventually lost the match on penalties after a 2 ? 2 draw . Nani suffered a dislocated shoulder during the match , which was originally expected to keep him out of the start of the season . He recovered in time to play 17 minutes for Portugal against Liechtenstein on 12 August , however , and started the match against Birmingham City on 16 August . Although he provided the assist for Wayne Rooney 's winning goal in the 34th minute , Nani was replaced by Ryan Giggs at half @-@ time . On 22 August , Nani scored his first league goal of the 2009 ? 10 season , netting a free @-@ kick against Wigan Athletic in a 0 ? 5 away win .

Following several poor performances , Nani criticised Sir Alex Ferguson for his lack of confidence in him . Despite this outburst Nani was given a chance to shine and provided an assist for Wayne Rooney in the 4 ? 0 league win over Hull City . Soon after this positive display , he put in another good performance in their League Cup semi @-@ final victory over derby rivals Manchester City , revealing a heart @-@ to @-@ heart with Sir Alex Ferguson had resulted in a better display of form . On 31 January 2010 , Nani scored the first goal and set up Rooney 's 100th career Premier League strike in a 1 ? 3 league victory over Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium . Nani 's goal was first thought of as a Manuel Almunia own goal by many sources , but was confirmed as belonging to Nani on 26 March by the Dubious Goals Panel . Following this performance , Nani then set up the second of a 5 ? 0 home win over Portsmouth .

Just four days later , however , he was sent off for a lunge at Stiliyan Petrov against Aston Villa , which resulted in a three @-@ match ban and ruled him out of the League Cup final . On 10 March , Nani set up Rooney 's second in a 4 ? 0 win over Milan , before providing another assist for Rooney four days later , in the 3 ? 0 league victory over Fulham .

On 26 March , Nani signed a new four @-@ year contract with United , committing himself until 2014 . A day later , Nani took his assist tally in the league for the season to nine as he set up two goals in a 0 ? 4 win over Bolton Wanderers at the Reebok Stadium , providing goals for Dimitar Berbatov and Darron Gibson . On 7 April , Nani scored his first ever European goals for United , netting two strikes in a 3 ? 2 victory over Bayern Munich . Despite United winning the game , they were eliminated from the competition due to the away goals rule when the aggregate score was 4 ? 4 . On 24 April , Nani scored his first league goal at Old Trafford in 18 months , netting United 's second in a 3 ? 1 home victory over Tottenham Hotspur . On 2 May , Nani scored for the second game in a row , netting the only goal in a 0 ? 1 away victory over Sunderland . Nani 's third season with Manchester United ended with 34 appearances and seven goals in all competitions .

= = = = 2010 ? 11 season = = = =

On 22 August 2010 , Nani missed a penalty in the 87th minute away to Fulham , and they then equalised two minutes later through Brede Hangeland to end the game 2 ? 2 . Six days later , in a 3 ? 0 home victory over West Ham United , Nani netted his first goal of the season and assisted Dimitar Berbatov in a Man of the Match display . Nani scored and assisted Michael Owen in a 2 ? 2 away draw away to Bolton Wanderers on 26 September . On 16 October , Nani scored United 's second in a 2 ? 2 home draw against West Bromwich Albion . Four days later , Nani scored his first Champions League goal of the season , netting the solitary strike in a 1 ? 0 home victory over

Bursaspor .

On 30 October , Nani scored a controversial second goal as United beat Tottenham Hotspur 2 ? 0 at home . He scored into an empty net after Tottenham goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes rolled the ball out to take a free @-@ kick that he thought had been given for handball , however , play was allowed to go on as referee Mark Clattenburg did not blow his whistle . On 27 November , Nani scored United 's fifth goal in a 7 ? 1 home win over Blackburn Rovers . Nani netted his first goal of 2011 as he scored the winning strike in a 2 ? 1 home victory over Stoke City on 4 January .

On 22 January , Nani scored the final goal of a 5 ? 0 home victory over Birmingham City . Nani netted United 's only goal in their first league loss of the season , a 2 ? 1 defeat at Wolves on 5 February . Seven days later Nani scored his first Manchester derby goal , opening the scoring in a 2 ? 1 home victory over Manchester City .

On 6 March , during United 's 3 ? 1 loss against Liverpool at Anfield , Nani was injured following a challenge from Jamie Carragher just before half @-@ time . Nani shed tears after the challenge and he was subsequently taken off the pitch in a stretcher . Following post @-@ match comments to the press from Manchester United it was believed Nani had suffered a broken leg . However this was not the case as he started training the following week . It was thought that Nani would miss up to three weeks as a result of this tackle and would return in April , however , he recovered in time to play 61 minutes of a 2 ? 1 victory over Marseille on 15 March .

Nani was revealed as a contender for the Professional Footballers ' Association (PFA) Young Player of the Year award alongside teammate Javier Hernández on 8 April . However , many people , including Nani , expressed their surprise that he was not nominated for the main award . Following this nomination , he assisted both goals in a 2 ? 0 home win over Fulham on 9 April . Nani lost out to Jack Wilshere for the PFA Young Player of the Year award on 18 April but he was however included into the PFA Premier League Team of the Year for the first time . He was awarded for his outstanding season as he was voted Players ' Player of the Year at the club 's awards night on 18 May .

== == 2011 ? 12 season == ==

Nani began the new season by putting in a man of the match performance and scoring twice against derby rivals Manchester City in the 2011 Community Shield , including a 94th @-@ minute winner , as United came from two goals down to win 3 ? 2 on 7 August 2011 . He scored his first league goal of the 2011 ? 12 season by netting United 's fifth goal in an 8 ? 2 victory over Arsenal on 28 August . Nani made his 100th Premier League appearance on 18 September as he scored in a 3 ? 1 home win over Chelsea . He scored with a long range strike after cutting inside from the right wing . He was also awarded with the man of the match . In United 's following league game at the Britannia Stadium , Nani scored his third goal of the season in a 1 ? 1 draw with Stoke City . He played a neat one @-@ two with Darren Fletcher before making his way through Stoke 's defence and firing a low shot inside the left post . Nani started the match against Manchester city where they fell victim to a 1 ? 6 beating at home to their neighbours . On 1 November , Nani was shortlisted for the prestigious FIFA Ballon d 'Or .

On 10 December , the first match after United 's elimination from the UEFA Champions League , Nani scored a brace in a home game against Wolves . He opened the scoring in the 17th minute to put them 1 ? 0 up with a shot into the bottom left corner . He scored his second goal in the 56th minute , tapping in from Antonio Valencia 's drilled cross across the six @-@ yard box to extend the lead to 3 ? 1 . He was later replaced by another winger Ashley Young as the game finished 4 ? 1 to the home side . Nani scored his sixth league goal of the season and provided two assists in a 5 ? 0 away win at Fulham on 21 December . He first advanced on a run down the left flank before crossing for Danny Welbeck to slot home . He then met a Ryan Giggs cross with his head , to glance United into a 2 ? 0 lead . He then returned the compliment , squaring for Giggs to put United 3 ? 0 up before half time .

During United 's 2 ? 1 win against Arsenal on 22 January , Nani sustained a foot injury from a tackle by Arsenal defender Laurent Koscielny in the 75th minute and was replaced by fellow winger Ashley

Young . After a scan on Nani 's foot , he was feared to have suffered a metatarsal injury , thus not being able to play for 2 months . Nani returned to football on 15 April at United 's match against Aston Villa as a substitute , replacing Ashley Young on the left wing . He scored a goal in stoppage time (93rd minute) with a low shot past Villa keeper Shay Given from Evans 's assist with a through pass , resulting in a 4 ? 0 win over Villa . Nani then followed this up with another goal when chipping Tim Howard at his near post the final score resulted in a 4 ? 4 draw at Old Trafford against Everton .

== = 2013 ? 14 season = = = =

On 5 September 2013 , Nani renewed his contract with Manchester United , which was to keep him at the club until 2018 . He started his first game of 2013 ? 14 season against Liverpool in the League Cup . Despite this , Nani spent most of the season struggling against injury and trying to find form .

== = Loan return to Sporting CP = = = =

On 19 August 2014 , Sporting CP announced the return of Nani to the club on a season @-@ long loan from Manchester United , as part of a deal that brought in Marcos Rojo to Manchester United . He was given the number 77 shirt .

Nani made his comeback at José Alvalade in a league match against Arouca , four days after signing . He missed a penalty , received a yellow card and was substituted in the 77th minute , as the match ended in a 1 ? 0 win for Sporting . He scored his first goal of this loan on 17 September , opening a 1 ? 1 draw at NK Maribor in the first match of the Champions League group stage . He was also voted Man of the Match . Nani scored his first league goal for the club four days later in a 4 ? 0 win against Gil Vicente F.C. On 3 January 2015 , Nani was sent off for two bookings in a 3 ? 0 win over Estoril . Nani scored in Sporting 's penalty shootout victory over S.C. Braga in the 2015 Taça de Portugal Final , which earned the club their first trophy since 2008 .

== = Fenerbahçe = = =

On 6 July 2015 , Nani joined Turkish club Fenerbahçe , signing a three @-@ year deal for a fee of £ 4 @. @ 25 million . He and his former United teammate Robin van Persie debuted 22 days later in a goalless home draw against Shakhtar Donetsk in the third qualifying round of the season 's Champions League , with Nani starting . He scored two goals including the winner , a free kick in second @-@ half stoppage time , against Antalyaspor on 30 August .

== = Valencia = = =

In July 2016 , Nani signed for Spanish club Valencia on a three @-@ year contract , with Valencia paying an undisclosed fee to complete the transfer .

= = International career = =

== = Portugal under ? 21 = = =

Nani was the youngest member of the Portugal squad at the 2006 UEFA Under @-@ 21 Championship , making his debut on 23 May 2006 in a 0 ? 1 defeat to France U21 . He appeared in all three games , scoring no goals , before Portugal bowed out in group stages . During the 2007 European Under @-@ 21 Football Championship , he made four appearances , scoring one goal in a 4 ? 0 victory against Israel U21 in a group stage match on 16 June 2007 , and had to be taken off during the match after a right ankle injury .

== Portugal senior team ==

Nani made his first appearance for the senior Portuguese team on 1 September 2006 , and marked his debut with a goal in Portugal 's 4 ? 2 friendly defeat to Denmark . Nani was omitted from Portugal 's 1 ? 1 draw with Armenia , but was recalled for Euro 2008 qualifiers against Poland and Serbia in September . He also provided the assist for Ricardo Quaresma 's goal in a friendly against Italy on 6 February 2008 . Nani was ruled out of Portugal 's friendly with Greece in March 2008 due to injury .

=== Euro 2008 ===

Nani was a regular member of the Portuguese squad in Euro 2008 qualification , and scored one of the goals in the 2 ? 1 away win over Belgium on 2 June 2007 . Nani received a call @-@ up to Luiz Felipe Scolari 's 23 @-@ man squad for Euro 2008 alongside Manchester United teammate Cristiano Ronaldo . During the campaign Nani played three games and started just one , but did provide the assist for Hélder Postiga 's goal during a substitute appearance in the 3 ? 2 quarter @-@ final defeat to Germany on 19 June .

=== Post @-@ Euro 2008 ===

Nani 's fourth international goal came in Portugal 's final friendly game before their World Cup qualifying campaign started , a 5 ? 0 victory over the Faroe Islands on 20 August 2008 . Nani scored the final goal of a 4 ? 0 victory over Malta as Portugal started qualification for the 2010 World Cup on 6 September . He opened the scoring in the 3 ? 2 home loss against Denmark four days later . Nani helped Portugal book a play @-@ off place for the World Cup as he netted in the 4 ? 0 home win over Malta on 14 October 2009 . Nani was influential in the play @-@ off against Bosnia and Herzegovina , setting up Bruno Alves for the only goal in the first leg . Raul Meireles ' goal in the second @-@ leg sealed Portugal 's place at the World Cup in South Africa .

On 1 June 2010 , Nani netted Portugal 's third in a 3 ? 1 victory over Cameroon . Following that game Nani was named in Carlos Queiroz 23 @-@ man squad for the tournament , However , on 8 June , Nani was ruled out of the tournament through a shoulder injury and was replaced by Benfica midfielder Rúben Amorim .

Nani scored twice and assisted once in Paulo Bento 's first game in charge of Portugal in a 3 ? 1 Euro 2012 qualifying win over Denmark on 8 October 2010 . Nani scored twice and set up another again in a 5 ? 3 win over Iceland on 7 October 2011 .

=== 2014 FIFA World Cup ===

Nani started in the opening match of the 2014 FIFA World Cup for Portugal against Germany . After the match he stated how the team played well despite the loss and how " the referee has discriminated against us , but that 's normal , Portugal against big teams never get help ... " . In the team 's second fixture , Nani scored the opening goal for Portugal in a 2 ? 2 draw with the United States .

=== UEFA Euro 2016 ===

Nani scored Portugal 's first goal in the last match of the group stage , a 3 ? 3 draw against Hungary on 22 June , to help the team qualify for the knockout round . He subsequently contributed to the only goal of the match in a 1 ? 0 extra @-@ time victory in the last 16 against Croatia on 25 June . During their quarter @-@ final match on 30 June against Poland , Nani set up Renato Sanches 's goal in regulation time , and later scored Portugal 's fourth penalty in an eventual 5 ? 3 shoot @-@ out victory , following a 1 ? 1 draw after extra @-@ time . In the semi @-@ finals

against Wales on 6 July , he scored the second goal in a 2 ? 0 victory . In the final against host @-@ nation France on 10 July , Nani was awarded the captain 's armband after Ronaldo was forced off in the opening 25 minutes of the match following a challenge from Dimitri Payet . During extra @-@ time , substitute Éder scored in the 109th minute to earn Portugal a 1 ? 0 victory .

= = Style of play = =

In the early stages of his career at Manchester United , Nani often invited comparison in playing style and ability with club and international colleague Cristiano Ronaldo , for whom he often deputised at club level .

In Ronaldo 's absence , however , Nani 's style has developed into a more classical winger 's style , able to play on both wings though more comfortable on the right , utilising pace , ball control and trickery to create space . While capable of cutting off both wings to strike at goal from distance , Nani has substantially fewer goals , yet a substantially higher proportion of assists than his former colleague . He can also play in the more attacking position of forward or wing forward .

= = Celebration = =

Nani celebrates with a " mortal " (" Leap of death ") , similar to that of Obafemi Martins and Lomana LuaLua . The celebration derives from Nani 's background in capoeira , which he used to practice as a child . For a while , it was reported that United manager Sir Alex Ferguson had banned Nani 's celebration due to fear for his safety . Nani denounced the reports in August 2007 , stating that it was " not true " and that " Ferguson has never spoken to me about this subject and I am going to continue to celebrate goals in this way . The conversations he has had with me are normal conversations , like he has with all players . "

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Club = = =

As of 28 June 2016 .

= = = International = = =

As of 13 July 2016

= = = International goals = = =

As of match played 6 July 2016 . Portugal score listed first , score column indicates score after each Nani goal .

= = Honours = =

= = = Club = = =

Sporting CP

Taça de Portugal : 2006 ? 07 , 2014 ? 15

Manchester United

Premier League : 2007 ? 08 , 2008 ? 09 , 2010 ? 11 , 2012 ? 13

Football League Cup : 2008 ? 09 , 2009 ? 10

FA Community Shield : 2007 , 2008 , 2010 , 2011

UEFA Champions League : 2007 ? 08
FIFA Club World Cup : 2008

= = = Country = = =

Portugal
UEFA European Championship : 2016

= = = Individual = = =

SJPF Young Player of the Month : May 2007
PFA Premier League Team of the Year : 2010 ? 11
Premier League Assist Leader : 2000 ? 11
Manchester United Players ' Player of the Year : 2010 ? 11
SJPF Player of the Month : October 2014 , November 2014