

= Nuno Mendes (footballer) =

Nuno Alexandre Pereira Mendes (born 7 April 1978) is a retired Portuguese footballer who could play in defence and midfield .

He began his career with Vitória Guimarães and made his first team debut during the 1996 ? 97 Primeira Liga season . Mendes spent three seasons in Liga de Honra , playing for Aves , Felgueiras and Chaves respectively before moving to France to join Division 1 club Strasbourg in 2000 . He returned to Portugal a year later to play for União Leiria , managed by José Mourinho , before spending a brief period with Braga in 2002 . Mendes spent 18 months with Moreirense and then dropped down a division to play for Santa Clara in 2004 .

A year later , Mendes played in England for Championship club Plymouth Argyle before returning to France with Créteil of Ligue 2 . Having spent a brief spell with Penafiel in 2007 , he returned to Aves , where he played for two seasons in Liga de Honra . He dropped down to the Portuguese third division in 2009 to play for Moreirense before spending a season with Trofense . Mendes retired in 2011 after a year with third division side Gondomar . He represented Portugal at under @-@ 21 level .

= = Club career = =

Mendes was born in Guimarães . He joined his home town club , Vitória Guimarães , at an early age and progressed through their youth system . He made his first team debut in a 4 ? 1 win against Chaves on 23 February 1997 . He made 5 more appearances that season , including a 1 ? 0 defeat to Marítimo on 2 May 1997 , which was his last for Vitória . Mendes joined Liga de Honra side Aves on loan for the 1997 ? 98 season . He scored four goals in 27 league appearances for the club as they finished 15th in the table . The following season , he joined Felgueiras on loan . They finished 5th in Liga de Honra and Mendes was a first team regular . He made 28 league appearances and scored two goals . Mendes had his contract with Vitória Guimarães terminated in June 1999 , allowing him to sign a two @-@ year deal with Chaves .

He made 27 league appearances in his only season with the club , scoring twice , as they finished 12th in Liga de Honra . He moved to France in June 2000 to play for Division 1 club Strasbourg . Having signed a four @-@ year contract , he made his debut in a 1 ? 1 draw at Lille on 29 November 2000 . He found first team opportunities limited during the 2000 ? 01 season , making six more league appearances as the club were relegated to Division 2 . However , the season did end well for Mendes as he won his first trophy as a professional , the Coupe de France . He made two appearances in the competition , but did not play in the final where Strasbourg defeated Amiens on penalties .

Mendes returned to Portugal ahead of the 2001 ? 02 season , joining Primeira Liga club União Leiria on a season @-@ long loan . Reflecting on his time in France , he said " I never hid my desire to return to Portugal , but now I can not say anything more . " He made his debut on 11 August 2001 in a 0 ? 0 draw at Braga . Mendes played regularly under the management of José Mourinho prior to his departure to Porto , but fell out of favour under his replacement , Vítor Pontes . He made 16 league appearances for Leiria , helping the club finish 7th in the Primeira Liga , before returning to Strasbourg . Upon his departure , Mendes was critical of the club 's president João Bartolomeu , who he believed created instability at the club . " The Union of Leiria is a complicated club at senior management level , especially the president , who sees things where they do not exist and it creates instability in the squad , " said Mendes who " leaves great friends in Leiria " .

In May 2002 , he signed a two @-@ year contract with Braga . He made his debut in a 3 ? 2 defeat at Belenenses on 5 October 2002 . In a season disrupted by injuries , Mendes only played in one more match for Braga , against his old club Vitória Guimarães . He had his contract cancelled in January 2003 , which allowed him to join Moreirense . He made his debut on 3 February 2003 in a 1 ? 1 draw at Benfica . He made two more appearances that season as the club finished 12th in the table . Having fractured his foot in July 2003 , he was used sparingly during the 2003 ? 04 season by manager Manuel Machado . He made four league appearances in an injury @-@ plagued

season , as the club finished 9th in the Primeira Liga . Mendes dropped down a division in June 2004 after signing a one @-@ year contract with Santa Clara . " This project is attractive , " he said . " The coach , Jose Morais , spoke to me and showed willingness in me to go to the Azores and that 's important . I know that Santa Clara is going through some difficulties , but the Department intends to make a financial recovery in time and maybe next season bet on rising . "

He made his debut on 29 August 2004 in a 3 ? 1 defeat against Feirense and was sent off for two bookable offences . The club finished 15th in Liga de Honra in the 2004 ? 05 season , with Mendes making 17 league appearances . He scored his first goal for the club in his final game , a 4 ? 0 win against Naval on 22 May 2005 . After his contract with Santa Clara expired , he joined English Championship club Plymouth Argyle on their pre @-@ season tour of Sweden in July 2005 . Having appeared in friendlies against Betsele and Umeå , he signed a permanent contract with the club . " I am delighted to have got him , " said manager Bobby Williamson of his new signing . " It 's a great opportunity that I could not miss , " Mendes said in an interview with Portuguese newspaper Record . " It is valid for two seasons , with a few perks that are unheard of in Portugal . Essentially , the level of premiums for targets , as is normal in English football . "

Mendes made his debut in a 1 ? 0 defeat at Crystal Palace on 20 August 2005 . He made two more appearances , including one in a 2 ? 1 League Cup win against Peterborough United , before losing his place in the squad when Bobby Williamson was replaced by Tony Pulis as manager . He had a trial with Major League Soccer club New York Metrostars in January 2006 before his contract with Plymouth Argyle was cancelled by mutual consent . In June 2006 , he returned to France where he signed a two @-@ year contract with Créteil of Ligue 2 . He made his debut on 28 July 2006 in a 0 ? 0 draw with Guingamp . Mendes made six more appearances for the club , before being released from his contract in December 2006 . A month later , he returned to Portugal where he signed a short @-@ term contract with Liga de Honra club Penafiel . He made his debut in a 1 ? 0 defeat at Rio Ave on 4 February 2007 , and made 5 more appearances during the 2006 ? 07 season as Penafiel finished 8th in the table . Having reached the end of his contract with the club , Mendes returned to Aves ahead of the new season .

He made his league debut on 18 August 2007 in a 2 ? 1 defeat at home to Olhanense . Mendes scored his first goal in his second stint for Aves on 17 February 2008 in a 1 ? 1 draw with Trofense , and he scored again one week later in a 2 ? 1 defeat at Varzim . He finished the 2007 ? 08 season with 23 league appearances and two goals , helping the club finish 8th in the Liga de Honra table . He made four more league appearances the following season , before being released from his contract in January 2009 due to a lack of first team opportunities . Mendes dropped down to the third division of Portuguese football later that month , for the first time in his career , to return to Moreirense . He made his debut on 25 January 2009 in a 1 ? 0 win at Chaves , and scored his first goal a week later in a 2 ? 2 draw with Tirsense . Mendes scored two goals in a 3 ? 0 win against Ribeirão on 8 February 2009 and was sent off later in the game . He scored four goals in 12 appearances for the club , but Moreirense were unable to gain promotion back to Liga de Honra , finishing 2nd , three points behind Chaves .

In August 2009 , Mendes joined Liga de Honra club Trofense on a one @-@ year contract . He made his league debut on 19 September 2009 in a 3 ? 0 defeat at Feirense . He made eight more league appearances , before being released from his contract in January 2010 . He then returned to the Segunda Divisão with Gondomar and he made his debut on 31 January 2010 in a 2 ? 0 win against Vieira . His first goal for the club came one week later in a 4 ? 4 draw with Espinho . Mendes scored his second goal in a 2 ? 1 win against Padroense . He made 12 league appearances in the 2009 ? 10 season , scoring twice , as they finished 4th in the table . Having lost his place in the team during the 2010 ? 11 season ? making one league appearance ? Mendes left Gondomar at the end of the campaign and subsequently retired from playing .

= = International career = =

Mendes represented the Portuguese national team at every youth level , from under @-@ 16 to under @-@ 21 . He earned four caps at under @-@ 21 level .

= = Honours = =

Coupe de France : 2000 ? 01

= = Career statistics = =

Sources :