

= Fandi Ahmad =

Fandi bin Ahmad , PBM (born 29 May 1962) is a retired Singaporean footballer who was the head coach of the former LionsXII in the Malaysian Super League . He mainly played as a striker , but could also play as a midfielder . He played for Malaysia Cup state sides Singapore FA , Kuala Lumpur FA and Pahang FA , and won titles with all three , including two Doubles in 1992 and 1994 , and the Golden Boot in 1988 . Fandi also played for Niac Mitra (Indonesia) , Groningen (Netherlands) , Geylang United (Singapore) and SAFFC (Singapore) . With the Singapore national football team , Fandi won 101 caps , scored 55 goals , won three Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) silver medals and was captain from 1993 to 1997 . He managed SAFFC , Pelita Raya (Indonesia) and Johor Darul Takzim (Malaysia) , served as assistant national coach and runs the Fandi Ahmad Academy . As a 1994 winner of the Pingat Bakti Masyarakat (state medal) , the first Singaporean footballer to play in Europe , the first Singaporean millionaire sports person and first Singaporean sports person to have a published biography , Fandi has been called a national legend . He has five children with his wife , South African model Wendy Jacobs , and his father is Ahmad Wartam , a former national goalkeeper . Fandi was ranked sixth in a list of Singapore 's 50 Greatest Athletes of the Century by The Straits Times in 1999 .

= = Early years = =

As a young child , Fandi was obsessed with football and spent much of his time kicking a ball . His family lived in two rooms in Woodbridge Hospital , and he had to sell nasi lemak to help support them . Fandi 's father , Ahmad Wartam was then a goalkeeper for the national team . Fandi started playing as a goalkeeper , but was advised by a teacher to switch to midfield . When he was 12 , his parents divorced , after which he lived with his father and paternal grandparents . At Serangoon Gardens Secondary School , Fandi played for the school football team , but neglected his studies and was retained . He then transferred to the Singapore Vocational Institute and obtained a National Trade Certificate 3 . He played for Kaki Bukit Football Club in the amateur National Football League , where he was spotted by Singapore FA coach Sebastian Yap .

= = Club career = =

Fandi joined Singapore FA in 1979 and became a regular midfield player , scoring four goals in his first Malaysia Cup season . The retirement of Arshad Khamis and Dollah Kassim prompted Jita Singh , the new Singapore FA coach , to play Fandi as a striker . During the 1980 Malaysia Cup season , Fandi scored eight goals , including the winning goal in the final against Selangor FA . He enlisted for National Service in September 1980 and was given light duties , such as collecting the camp garbage , so he could continue playing for Singapore FA . In 1981 , Fandi won the FAS Footballer of the Year award for helping Singapore FA reach the Malaysia Cup final . The following year , Singapore FA did not play in the Malaysia Cup for political reasons , and Fandi underwent a shoulder operation ; he could not play football for six weeks and was discharged early from National Service .

Selangor FA invited Fandi to play for them against Argentine club Boca Juniors in a friendly game , in which Fandi scored the only goal for Selangor FA ; the score was 2 ? 1 . Fandi received offers from several Malaysia Cup teams , Indonesian side Niac Mitra , Swiss club Young Boys and Dutch side Ajax . After a three @-@ week trial , Ajax offered Fandi a three @-@ year contract , but Fandi instead signed a one @-@ year contract with Niac Mitra , where he spent one season , helped them successfully defend their Galatama League title and was the third @-@ highest scorer with 13 goals . In a friendly match between Niac Mitra and Arsenal , Fandi scored a goal in a 2 ? 0 victory ; however , he left Niac Mitra due to a sudden Galatama League ban on foreign players .

In 1983 , Fandi moved to the Netherlands and signed a two @-@ year contract with FC Groningen . A thigh injury acquired in a friendly match kept him off the field for ten weeks , but in his first Eredivisie game he scored twice in a 2 ? 0 victory over Go Ahead Eagles . Three days later , he

played in the first leg of a UEFA Cup second @-@ round match against Italian side Internazionale , and scored the second goal in a 2 ? 0 win , though in the second leg Groningen were defeated 1 ? 5 . The Groningen fans voted Fandi the most popular player and the most skilful player that season ; he scored 10 goals in 29 games to help the Dutch club rise from ninth to fifth place in the Eredivisie . As an April Fools ' Day joke , The Straits Times published a front @-@ page story claiming that Manchester United had signed Fandi . However , his second season was marred by a recurrence of the thigh injury and a dispute with the coach . He played only two full games that season and Groningen did not offer him a new contract . During his time in the Netherlands , Fandi scored 11 league goals in 36 league games for Groningen .

The next club that Fandi played for was Malaysia Cup side Kuala Lumpur FA , which in 1987 won its first Malaysia Cup title . It was Malaysia Cup champions again the following season ; Fandi won the Golden Boot , having scored 21 goals . After a third season at Kuala Lumpur FA , in which it won a third consecutive Malaysia Cup , Fandi signed a two @-@ year contract with Greek club OFI Crete in 1990 . However , problems with his International Transfer Certificate prevented him from playing for Crete , so he left Greece after two months . Fandi then joined Pahang FA , where he reverted to playing mainly in midfield due to his advancing age . Fandi missed several months of games because of heel and thigh injuries , and scored three goals to help Pahang FA win the Malaysia Cup and Malaysian League Double in 1992 . That year , he also became the first Singaporean sportsperson to have career earnings exceeding a million Singapore dollars (not adjusted for inflation) .

Fandi rejoined Singapore FA after it was relegated to the second tier of the Malaysian League . Singapore FA was promoted and reached the Malaysia Cup final in 1993 , and finished the 1994 season as Malaysia Cup and Malaysian League champions . Captain Fandi played in 39 of Singapore FA 's 41 games in the double @-@ winning season , was the top scorer with 26 goals and was voted Player of the Season ; he was also awarded a state medal , the Pingat Bakti Masyarakat (Public Service Medal) . The following season , Singapore FA withdrew from the Malaysia Cup and a fully professional Singaporean league , the S.League , was formed . In its inaugural season in 1996 , Fandi captained Geylang United and was the joint top scorer with 11 goals , including the equaliser that confirmed Geylang as league champions . The Asian Football Confederation declared him the Player of the Month of June 1996 . Geylang was given special dispensation to pay Fandi thrice the S.League salary cap . His playing career concluded with three seasons at SAFFC , during which they won two S.League titles and two Singapore Cups . Because of injuries , Fandi was limited to mainly short substitute appearances , but he continued to score crucial goals , notably two against Cambodian side Royal Dolphins in the Asian Club Championship , until his retirement in 1999 .

= = International career = =

From 1979 to 1997 , Fandi made 101 appearances for the Singapore national football team , scored 55 goals and earned a place in the Asian Football Confederation Hall of Fame . He started as captain of the national youth team that won the Lion City Cup in 1976 and 1977 , then joined the senior national team on a tour of Russia , where he played in two friendly games and scored two goals in the second . His first senior cap came at 17 years , 3 months and 23 days , making him Singapore 's youngest @-@ ever full international , until his record was broken by Hariss Harun in 2007 . However , in his first international competition , the 1979 SEA Games , Fandi did not score in four matches . He scored against India and North Korea in the Olympic Games qualifiers , but did not score in three FIFA World Cup qualifying matches . In the 1981 Ovaltine Cup , Fandi scored all Singapore goals in the 3 ? 2 aggregate victory over Malaysia . Fandi scored a goal in a 1 ? 2 loss to Thailand in the 1981 King 's Cup and a hat @-@ trick against the Philippines at the 1981 SEA Games . In 1992 , Fandi scored twice against Nepal and once against Thailand in the King 's Cup , then scored when Singapore beat Malaysia 3 ? 1 in the Ovaltine Cup .

The following year , Fandi helped Singapore win the first of three SEA Games silver medals , with two goals in a 3 ? 0 group stage win over Brunei and two against Malaysia in the semi @-@ final .

Despite suffering an ankle injury in the 1 ? 2 final defeat by Thailand , he played in the 1983 Merlion Cup , and scored in a 1 ? 0 semi @-@ final win against of China . The second SEA Games silver medal came in 1985 , when Fandi scored against Malaysia and the Philippines in the group stage , then two goals against Brunei in the semi @-@ final . At the 1989 SEA Games , Fandi scored in the 4 ? 0 victory over Myanmar that took Singapore past the group stages , the last @-@ minute winner in the semi @-@ final against defending champions Indonesia and Singapore 's single goal in the 1 ? 3 final defeat by Malaysia . This completed the hat @-@ trick of silver medals , though in 2007 , he said that " not winning the SEA Games gold medal " was among " his biggest regrets " . Fandi also played at the 1990 Asian Games and scored in the 6 ? 1 win against Pakistan .

During the 1991 SEA Games , Fandi scored both Singapore goals against Myanmar in the group stage , but was substituted in the semi @-@ final match , after Indonesian fullback Herry Setyawan elbowed him in the eye . That match ended goalless and the Lions lost on penalties . Fandi also missed Singapore 's failed attempt to qualify for the 1992 Asian Cup , having sustained a heel injury . At the 1993 SEA Games , captain Fandi scored a hat @-@ trick in the 7 ? 0 defeat of the Philippines , followed by the second Singapore goal in the 3 ? 3 semi @-@ final draw with Myanmar and scored once in the 3 ? 1 win over Indonesia that secured a bronze medal for Singapore . Fandi also played in the inaugural Tiger Cup , and scored an equaliser against Malaysia , a goal against Brunei and two against the Philippines . 1997 was a disappointing year for Fandi , who failed to score in the Dunhill Cup and the World Cup qualifiers . After the 1997 SEA Games , where his goal in the semi @-@ final could not prevent a 1 ? 2 defeat to Indonesia , Fandi retired from international football .

= = Coaching career = =

After his retirement from playing , Fandi worked as a coach . He started as the assistant to Singapore 's national coach , Vincent Subramaniam , for the 1999 SEA Games , where Singapore finished fourth . In 2000 , Fandi became coach of SAFFC and guided them to the S.League title , and he won the S.League Coach of the Year Award . Under Fandi , SAFFC ended the 2001 season without winning a trophy and were 2002 S.League champions by a 20 @-@ point margin . Fandi then simultaneously served as assistant national coach , helping Singapore win the Tiger Cup in 2005 , and coach of the Young Lions , which rose from the bottom of the S.League in 2003 to two third @-@ place finishes in 2004 and 2006 .

From November 2006 to March 2010 , Fandi managed Indonesian side Pelita Raya , where he adopted a youth policy that helped them win promotion from the second division , then guided the club to two mid @-@ table finishes in the Indonesia Super League . Since then , he has been a scout for Italian club Vicenza Calcio , a regional project manager for the Genova International Soccer School and manager of Malaysian Super League side Johor Darul Takzim . In 2011 , he founded the Fandi Ahmad Academy , which organises training programmes and overseas opportunities for talented young Singaporean footballers . Fandi is one of seven Singaporean coaches with a professional AFC coaching diploma and is widely considered a future coach of the Singapore national football team ; in December 2013 , he became head coach of the Singapore LionsXII , with Nazri Nasir as his assistant . In May 2015 , he led LionsXII to clinch the Malaysia FA Cup , their first trophy of the season .

= = Beyond football = =

Fandi is a devout Muslim , avoids scandals , does not smoke or drink , and is often described as humble , filial and compassionate . He married South African model Wendy Jacobs in 1996 and the couple have five children ; the eldest two are youth footballers who impressed at trials at Arsenal , Chelsea and Milan . They are currently playing for Home United in the S.League. He is the first Singaporean sportsperson to be the subject of a biography , which was released in 1993 and called The Fandi Ahmad Story . It sold 17 @, @ 000 copies in two months and was translated into Malay .

Products Fandi has endorsed include Lotto sportswear , Royal Sporting House sportswear , Uncle

Tobys cereal , Carnation milk and energy drink Isomax . In 1996 , he released an album of English and Malay songs and produced Meniti Pelangi , a television programme about disadvantaged Malay Singaporeans . Three years later , he opened a restaurant and a car dealership , but both closed down within two years . He has also served as an ambassador for national anti @-@ smoking and anti @-@ drug campaigns , raised funds for victims of the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and participated in a Northeast Community Development Council initiative to organise community service programmes .

In October 2014 , the Madame Tussauds Singapore museum unveiled a wax figure of Fandi , the first of any Singapore athlete . The wax figure depicts a younger Fandi in 1994 , back when he captained the Singapore Lions and led them to victory in the Malaysia Cup .

In 2015 , Fandi also became the star of the first of three videos filmed specially to promote the 2015 Southeast Asian Games , hosted in Singapore . Titled " Ordinary " , the video depicts Fandi 's rise from a simple boy playing soccer in his backyard to one of Asia 's most talented footballers . It was directed by local filmmaker , Nicole Woodford .

= = Career statistics = =

= = Honours = =

= = = Player = = =

Niac Mitra

Galatama : 1982 ? 83

Kuala Lumpur

M @-@ League : 1988

Malaysia Cup : 1987 , 1988

Pahang

M @-@ League : 1992

Malaysia Cup : 1992

Singapore FA

M @-@ League : 1994

Malaysia Cup : 1980 , 1994

Geylang United

S.League : 1996

Singapore Armed Forces

S.League : 1997 , 1998

Singapore FA Cup : 1997

Singapore Cup : 1999

League Cup : 1997

Singapore

Southeast Asian Games :

Silver medal ? 1983 , 1985 , 1989

Bronze medal ? 1991 , 1993 , 1995

= = = Head coach = = =

Singapore Armed Forces

S.League : 2000 , 2002

LionsXII

Malaysia FA Cup ; 2015

= = = Individual = = =

S.League Coach of the Year : 2000