Football, racism and dignity: the centenary of the historical response of the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama and its impacts beyond the four lines

Futebol, racismo e dignidade: o centenário da resposta histórica do Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama e os seus impactos para além das quatro linhas

Fútbol, racismo y dignidad: el centenario de la respuesta histórica del Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama y sus impactos más allá de las cuatro líneas

DOI: 10.55905/oelv22n5-109

Receipt of originals: 04/16/2024
Acceptance for publication: 04/29/2024

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ABSTRACT
Historical reports indicate that practices similar to what is currently understood as football originated in China, around five thousand years ago. However, it was only in the 19th century, in England, that modern football began to be practiced. Although there is disagreement among historians, the most accepted thesis is that the sport was brought to Brazil by a student from São Paulo called Charles Miller (1874-1953), in 1894. The sport quickly became a rage in society; however, this initial support was restricted to the Brazilian aristocracy, with the less wealthy classes being viewed with bad eyes by the elite who linked football to an imaginary of European modernity. In 1923, however, the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, made up of 12 black athletes and workers – who became popularly known by the nickname “Camisas Negras” – won that year's Carioca Championship. Perplexed, Rio's football elite then imposed a series of obstacles to Vasco da Gama's participation in the following year's championship, 1924, which included, in addition to the requirement to build its own stadium, the exclusion of the aforementioned squad, under the justification that they did not fit the sporting conduct required by the championship. In view of the above, on April 7th, 1924, the then president of Vasco, José Augusto Prestes, sent a letter addressed to the new association of Rio de Janeiro clubs, giving up participation in that year's championship and forever changing the direction of
sport in the country. The approach method adopted is inductive; the procedure method will be the case study; the research technique developed will be bibliographic.

**Keywords:** Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, Human Dignity, Football, Racism, Historical Response.

**RESUMO**

Relatos históricos apontam que práticas semelhantes ao que se compreende hodiernamente como futebol se originaram na China, há cerca de cinco mil anos. Todavia, foi somente no século XIX, na Inglaterra, que o futebol moderno passou a ser praticado. Embora haja discordância entre os historiadores, a tese mais aceita é a de que o esporte foi trazido ao Brasil por um estudante paulista chamado Charles Miller (1874-1953), em 1894. Rapidamente, o esporte virou febre na sociedade; todavia, esta adesão inicial era restrita à aristocracia brasileira, sendo as classes menos abastadas vistas com maus olhos pela elite que ligava o futebol a um imaginário de modernidade europeia. Em 1923, contudo, o Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, composto pelo escrete de 12 atletas negros e operários – que ficou popularmente conhecido pela alcunha de “Camisas Negras” –, venceu o Campeonato Carioca daquele ano. Perplexos, a elite do futebol carioca, então, impôs uma série de entraves para a participação do Vasco da Gama no campeonato do ano seguinte, 1924, dentre os quais incluía, além da exigência da construção de um estádio próprio, a exclusão do aludido esquadrão, sob a justificativa de que não se enquadrassem na conduta esportiva requerida pelo campeonato. Ante o exposto, em 07 de abril de 1924, o então presidente vascaíno, José Augusto Prestes, enviou uma carta endereçada à nova associação de clubes cariocas abrindo mão da participação do campeonato daquele ano e mudando para sempre os rumos do esporte no país. O método de abordagem adotado é o indutivo; o método de procedimento será o estudo de caso; a técnica de pesquisa desenvolvida será bibliográfica.

**Palavras-chave:** Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, Dignidade Humana, Futebol, Racismo, Resposta Histórica.

**RESUMEN**

Relatos históricos apuntan que prácticas similares al que se comprenden hodiernamente como futebol se originaron na China, há cerca de cinco mil años. Hoy en día, en algún momento del siglo XIX, en Inglaterra, el fútbol moderno pasó a ser practicado. Embora haja discordância entre los historiadores, a tese mais aceita é a de que o esporte foi trazido ao Brasil por um estudante paulista chamado Charles Miller (1874-1953), em 1894. Rapidamente, o esporte virou febre na sociedade; todavia, este avance inicial era restrita à aristocracia brasileira, sendo as classes menos abastadas vistas com maus olhos pela elite que ligava o futebol a um imaginário de modernidade europeia. En 1923, sin embargo, el Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, compuesto por 12 atletas negros y operadores – que popularmente fue conocido por la alcunha de “Camisas Negras” –, venció el Campeonato Carioca del año. Perplexos, a elite do futebol carioca, então, impôs una serie de entraves para a participación do Vasco da Gama no campeonato do ano seguinte, 1924, dentre os quais incluídos, além da exigência da construção de um estadio propio, a
1 INTRODUCTION

Scientific research at the stricto sensu postgraduate level requires the researcher, beforehand, to understand that there are previously established methods that must be followed. Obedience to such methods aims to achieve concrete results through paths that have logic and objectivity at their core, this technique being called methodology. In order to give veracity to what is brought up, assuming the reason as a scope of research, science takes science itself as a method of investigation, giving this process the name of epistemology. In this sense, the entire knowledge validation process involves respecting a logical and connected line of reasoning.

In this way, the present work intends to unravel the consequences of the Historical Response of the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama not only in the football field, but also...
in the social field, with priority given to techniques that aim at the concreteness and veracity of what is intended, propose at the end to the reader.

To improve the didactics of the text, it is necessary to explain some initial concepts covered in the research based on specific theoretical references\(^5\). Firstly, it should be noted that this article will have as its base theory the work “O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro”, by the journalist, sports columnist and writer Mário Leite Rodrigues Filho (1908-1966), son of also journalist Mário Leite Rodrigues (1885 -1930) and brother of journalist, playwright and writer Nelson Falcão Rodrigues (1912-1980).

The book portrays the origins of football on Brazilian soil, going from the first matches of the round ball sport to its professionalization. In the beginning, the sport was linked to an ideal of European aristocracy, where only white men achieved prominence in structured and elite clubs.

In turn, black men were marginalized and reduced to floodplain fields, having to divide their short time between work to support themselves and their family, and “naked” on the weekend; At the same time, men from wealthier families had, in addition to the structure of the biggest clubs at the time, enough free time to study in the morning and play football in the afternoon, without the need to work to avoid starving.

In Rio de Janeiro, the destination of footballers who were members of Rio’s elite were the traditional Botafogo de Futebol e Regatas, Clube de Regatas do Flamengo and Fluminense Football Club. Men from the less affluent classes were left with clubs with less potential, which, in most cases, only competed in suburban competitions.

This reality lasted for more than two decades, until, in 1922, the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama, a club with Lusitanian origins and commanded by Portuguese traders, rose from the third to the second division in Rio and won the championship, having been promoted to the tournament elite.

\(^5\) Gustin; Dias; Nicácio (2020) understand that the construction of the theoretical basis of scientific research must take into account its object as a central element, and, from this aspect, delimit the basic theory that meets the intended directions of the work that the researcher is carrying out, checking coherence to what you intend to research.
The big problem was that Vasco da Gama was made up mostly of black people and workers; even the white men who made up the squad were of humble origins, given the fact that the team was made up of employees of Portuguese traders in the city of Rio.

In this context, Vasco became a great rival not only for teams from Rio de Janeiro, but throughout Brazil, as it suffered from xenophobia for having Portuguese origins, and racism for having a squad made up of black men and brown.

It is important to highlight that the aristocracy of Brazil in the 20th century saw the stereotype of Brazilians as a white man with European features; Thus, although Vasco da Gama's athletes were more similar to the mixed race individual characteristic of their homeland, they were not recognized as such by the elite.

As a symbol of the elitization of the sport, there is the stand itself, where its attendees were men wearing fine suits, ribbon hats and polished shoes, while the women wore long dresses, chic shoes and carried scarves with them in the hands to cheer on the high society boys; black and poor people were not welcome in football stadiums during the first half of the last century.

In 1923, however, everything changed. In an overwhelming manner, Vasco da Gama won the Campeonato Carioca of the first division and left all the other elite clubs in Rio de Janeiro stunned. Now, how could a club made up of black workers beat clubs made up of white people from wealthy families? All of this went against what was understood about the sport imported from the Old Continent.

Then, in 1924, in order to prevent Vasco's participation in that year's championship, the directors of rival clubs began to investigate the professional and social activities of the Vasco team, since football was still amateur, and players were prohibited from playing, receive a salary for playing sports, nor treatment as an athlete.

Vasco, therefore, was investigated on suspicion of committing “professionalism”. Levity; it was, in fact, a subterfuge used to mask racism against the team made up of low-

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6 To cheer on the white boys who played football at the beginning of the 20th century, girls from rich families carried scarves that, in addition to composing their look, were twisted during tense moments during the match. Thus, according to Rodrigues Filho (2003), the word “fans” was used by supporters of football teams.
class and illiterate black people; rules not approved by the legal system were used\textsuperscript{7} to annihilate any attempt to popularize football, in order to maintain the elitism of the round ball sport.

Without achieving their objective through the regulations of the Metropolitan League of Land Sports (LMDT), the opponents resorted to creating a new entity to organize that year's state championship, the Metropolitan Association of Athletic Sports (AMEA).

To join this new association, the Cruzmaltino club should exclude from its squad all players of “dubious professions”, that is, those who perform manual labor, professions considered unworthy by the higher classes; Furthermore, the club was required to build its own stadium that would offer good conditions for the show.

Approximately one hundred years ago, on Monday, April 7\textsuperscript{th}, 1924, the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama made history by writing Letter number 261 in the name of its then president, José Augusto Prestes (1875-1952), to refuse the conditions imposed by the new association of Rio clubs, stating: “These are twelve players, young, almost all Brazilian, at the beginning of their career, and the public act that can tarnish them, will never be practiced with the solidarity of those who run the house that welcomed them, not even under the pavilion that they so gallantly covered with glory”.

From that day on, football was never the same. A precedent was set for the emergence of historic names in the history of sport that marked generations and filled Brazilians with pride and joy. Between victories and defeats, black people found in football a platform for social advancement that was previously not allowed to them.

The present work intends, therefore, to make an overview of everything that happened after the “Golden Law of Football” – Vasco da Gama's letter to the Rio elite of that year – and the phenomena that involve the fight against color and racial prejudice race and the search for human dignity in such a racist environment.

\textsuperscript{7} The legal system goes back to the idea of positive law, which, in turn, requires the understanding of Bobbio (1989), even though his thinking is framed as neopositivist. The author proposes the use of rigorous legal language as an epistemological assumption of legal science, although he does not fail to recognize the prevalence of facts over norms.
To this end, the aim is to seek scientific coherence based on the understanding of the object studied, meeting the epistemological and methodological requirements of postgraduate research, and, therefore, due to the nature of the research, the approach method is inductive; the procedure is the case study; the research technique will be bibliographic.

2 GENERAL CONTEXTURE OF BRAZILIAN FOOTBALL IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

Initially, in order to enter the universe of Brazilian football at the beginning of the last century, especially in Rio, it is necessary to eliminate the ideas spread by common sense of a fully civilized and regulated society by socio-legal guidelines.

The ideas brought here, although they date back to a past context, are in accordance with today's understanding of modern science, as it imposes a gradual investigation of past facts through historical incursions, in order to strengthen this postgraduate research (Oliveira, 2004).

The year was 1884 when São Paulo native Charles William Miller (1874-1953) – son of the Scotsman John d'Silva Miller and the Brazilian of English descent Carlota Antunes Fox, born in São Paulo, the capital, close to a railway station where his father he worked – he left on his way to Hampshire, England, to complete his studies (Mills, 2014).

To reach the Land of the Queen, the then young boy had to cross the ocean using the ship called Elbe, from Royal Mail and Packet Line. The crossing from Santos to the English port took around twenty days, and some of the only pastimes on board were playing shuffle-board – a sport similar to bowling – and racing wooden horses (Mills, 2014).

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8 Marconi; Lakatos (2003) understand that the case study consists of one of the main procedural methods adopted by science.
9 Santos (1989) understands that there is a crisis in the paradigm of scientific rationality, understanding that it is necessary to reconstruct the relationship between science and common sense.
10 Fonseca (2009) understands the science of law as a regulator of society. To ratify his thesis, he develops a method of procedure that is, at the same time, social, legal and critical, since he understands that the three aspects are interconnected.
What Miller didn’t know was that that trip would change his life forever. Mills (2014) says that, at that time, British youth loved playing sports full-time. It cannot be denied that, in ancient times, the practice of kicking balls as a sport was already common. However, the modern conception of football originates in 19th century England.

During this period, schools and universities in England did not compete in sports against each other, which meant that each institution had its own sports based on its own rules. To put an end to this confusion, its sporting representatives met with the aim of standardizing sporting practice so that they could compete against each other (Mills, 2014).

In this context, Ebenezer Cobb Morley (1831-1924), an English sportsman, helped to establish the Football Association, the highest football body in England to this day. Morley is considered the father of the association over which he presided and was secretary from its foundation in 1863 until 1884, and the father of modern football (Mills, 2014).

From this association, the so-called FA Cup – or England Cup in Portuguese-speaking countries – emerged, becoming, therefore, the oldest football competition in the world, played since 1871. The first edition took place between 1871 and 1872, and had Wanderers Football Club as champion (Taylor, 2013). Since then, 143 editions of the competition have been played, with Manchester City Football Club being the most recent winner, in the 2022/2023 season.

Inserted in this context, the now adult Charles Miller returned to Brazil in 1894, bringing with him two balls and a lot of football experience. Although there is disagreement among historians, this is the official version of the arrival of football in Brazil, although some claim that the sport had been practiced on Brazilian soil since the mid-1870s (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

In the beginning, football had two striking characteristics. The first of them was the fact that he was an amateur; professionalism was rejected at all costs by its practitioners, with Charles Miller himself against the professionalization of the sport. The second of these was “European perfume”; the players dressed elegantly, wore uniforms made of wool and were from rich families (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).
It is important to highlight that football arrived in Brazil in 1894, just six years after the abolition of slavery, which had officially occurred in 1888 with the signing of the Lei Áurea. The wounds from centuries of slavery were still very open, being reflected in all spheres of society (Fraga, 2009).

There were no social plans for the integration of former slaves into society, which culminated in the process of marginalization – in the sense of living on the margins of society – of these individuals, as they faced difficulty obtaining paid work and, therefore, remained far from high society (Loner, 1999) (Domingues, 2009).

Football was an expensive sport, where only the children of extremely rich parents could survive. Even victory celebrations were expensive, as they were held at sumptuous dinners, filled with luxury and expensive drinks (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Thus, there was no space for black men in Rio's elite. The rich families were all white, which consequently kept them away from the big football clubs in the country. When a white team faced a team that had a black player, this player was booed and attacked by the most abject insults imaginable. The individual could not even react, under penalty of even more ferocious reactions against the person who “dared” to occupy a typically aristocratic position (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

It is in this context that the Club de Regatas Vasco da Gama ceases to be a club focused exclusively on rowing and starts to operate in football. Activities on the field began around 1915 and, in 1916, the club was already demonstrating its pioneering spirit. The Vasco team began assembling that year's squad looking for players who were good at ball, regardless of skin color or social class (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

In 1919, Vasco already had a very competitive team. In 1922, after rising from the third division, he won the second division of the Campeonato Carioca. The following year, in 1923, Vasco was champion of the first division of the state tournament with the following formation: in goal, goalkeeper Nelson, black; in defense, Leitão and Mingote, illiterate; in midfield, Nicolo and Bolão, also black; in the attack, the workers Artur, Paschoal, Tortedorli, Arlindo, Cecy and Negrito; in technical command, Uruguayan Ramón Platero. These were the 11 men who made up the starting team of the team nicknamed "Camisas Negras" (Cerreira, 2020).
However, the campaign of eleven wins, two draws and just one defeat by a team made up of black men from so-called unworthy professions infuriated the teams from Rio's South Zone. Unable to prove that the *Camisas Negras* committed “professionalism”, considered irregular at the time, the solution found by the aristocratic clubs of Rio de Janeiro was the creation of a new league, the Associação Metropolitana de Esportes Athleticos (AMEA) (Cerreira, 2020).

The demands made on Vasco to enter the league were twofold: the first was the construction of a stadium capable of hosting big games; It should be noted that, in the first years of football, the Vasco team played their games at the stadium of the extinct Andarahy Athletico Club team, located in the North Zone of the city; the second – and main – requirement was the exclusion of all 12 black men who were part of the Cruzmaltino squad, as they did not meet the standards required by the new league (Cerreira, 2020).

### 3 THE HISTORICAL RESPONSE OF THE VASCO DA GAMA REGATAS CLUB

The Vasco da Gama neighborhood, where the Vasco da Gama Stadium is located, popularly known as São Januário, was created based on a bill by a radio broadcaster, councilor and Vasco native called Áureo de Souza Ameno (1933), sanctioned by the then mayor of Rio de Janeiro, Luiz Paulo Conde (1934-2015), in 1998, the club's centenary year.

To create the neighborhood, a division was made, starting from the surroundings of São Januário, in the eastern part of the Bairro Imperial de São Cristóvão, Central Zone of Rio de Janeiro, far from the luxurious neighborhoods of Leblon, Copacabana and Ipanema, all located in the South Zone of the Municipality, which means that Vasco has, as the geographical location itself suggests, popular roots (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

In this context, after this advance of half a century in time, we return to the 1920s. The year is 1924. Vasco had two alternatives: the first of them would be to comply with
all the determinations of the Rio football elite, in order to maintain the sport imported from Europe with an English feel (Pereira, 2000).

The second would be to remain in the Metropolitan Land Sports League (LMDT) and give up competing in the state tournament with the big clubs in the state until then: America Football Club, Bangu Atlético Clube, Botafogo de Futebol e Regatas, Clube de Regatas do Flamengo and Fluminense Football Club (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

April 7th, 2024 marks the centenary of what is, for many, the greatest document in the history of Brazilian football and one of the greatest documents in the history of world football: the Historical Response. In it, the then president of Vasco, José Augusto Prestes, did not comply with the demands made of them and gave up on joining the new club association (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Letter No. 261 was written by Prestes in his own hand and sent to Arnaldo Guinle (1884-1963), then president of the Associação Metropolitana de Esportes Athleticos and the Fluminense Football Club, and contained the following words: “We are sure that Your Excellency will be the first to recognize that it would be an unworthy act on our part to sacrifice, to the desire to join the AMEA, some of those who fought for us to have, among other victories, the City Football Championship of Rio de Janeiro in 1923” (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Furthermore: “In these terms, we feel we have to inform Your Excellency that we have given up being part of AMEA”. Thus, in that year of 1924, two state championships were held: a championship held by the already traditional Metropolitan Land Sports League, won by Vasco da Gama; and another organized by the Associação Metropolitana de Esportes Athleticos, won by Fluminense (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

It is important to highlight that both tournaments were later recognized as Campeonato Carioca by the Football Federation of the State of Rio de Janeiro (FERJ), founded in 1978, the current highest football entity in the State. However, at the time, Vasco's decision was seen as a major affront to the elite football played in the country, and would forever change the direction of Brazilian football (Pereira, 2000).

11 Foucault (1999) brings inequality as a kind of “necessary” consequence for defending the interests of the dominant classes.
In 1925, after all this confusion, Vasco was finally accepted into the Metropolitan Association of Athletic Sports. In that championship, the Vasco team reached third place, and, in the following year, won runner-up (Rodrigues Filho 2003).

Even though it did not meet the requirement to get rid of the Camisas Negras, Vasco signed, on March 28th, 1925, the deed of commitment to purchase and sell a plot of land measuring 65,445 square meters located in the Bairro Imperial de São Cristóvão (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

At the time, he raised funds from his own fans to raise the amount necessary to pay for the land and, subsequently, begin construction on what would be, until then, the largest stadium in Latin America (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

The Foundation Stone of São Januário was laid on June 6th, 1926, in an event marked by the presence of the then mayor of the Federal District, Alaor Prata Leme Soares (1882-1964). However, during construction, the then President of the Republic, Washington Luís Pereira de Sousa (1869-1957) denied authorization to import Belgian cement, used in the Jockey Club, and, without that material, it is estimated that around six thousand barrels of cement and two hundred and fifty-two tons of iron were used in the work (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

On April 21th, 1927, just over ten months after the Foundation Stone event, Vasco put an end to any possible allegations that it could be excluded from the league because it did not have its own stadium. The event was even attended by President Washington Luís, who had refused to supply the cement necessary to optimize construction (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

Until 1930, when the Centenário Stadium was inaugurated in Montevideo, for the first World Cup, São Januário was the largest stadium in the Americas; until 1940, when the Paulo Machado de Carvalho Municipal Stadium, Pacaembu, in São Paulo was inaugurated, São Januário was the largest stadium in Brazil; and, finally, until 1950, when the Jornalista Mário Filho Stadium was inaugurated, Maracanã, São Januário was the largest stadium in Rio de Janeiro (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).
About to reach its centenary year, in 2027, São Januário continues to be the largest private stadium in the State, and Vasco continues to be the only one among the four big ones in Rio to have a private stadium (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

This temple of world football was the scene of countless historical events, among which it is worth mentioning: the signing of the Labor Laws and the creation of the minimum wage by Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (1882-1954), then president of Brazil, in gigantic demonstrations on the 1st May, Labor Day; the use of its facilities to house recruits from the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (FEB) who were preparing for the Second World War (1939-1945); the concession to demonstrate for the legalization of the Communist Party after the release of Luiz Carlos Prestes (1898-1990) in 1945; among other major events (Malhano, C.; Malhano, H., 2002).

In this vein, in the face of all this Vasco movement, the discussion about professionalization in football was reignited. This became a natural and inevitable path for all clubs, with Camisas Negras playing a fundamental role in this process (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Largely because of this movement, the Metropolitan Association of Athletic Sports would come to an end in 1935, giving way to the newly created Metropolitan Sports Federation (FMD), which would take the reins of the professionalization of sport, something that the old association was against and found itself forced to give in (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

4 THE CONSOLIDATION OF FOOTBALL POPULARIZATION IN BRAZIL

The idea of popularization refers to what is popular, of the people, belonging to the broad masses. In this sense, before reaching the final considerations, it is necessary to go through this chapter which will talk a lot about the consequences that the Camisas Negras brought to Brazilian football and the impact that this had beyond the four lines.

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12 History tends to be cyclical and break dogmas and paradigms previously considered absolute (Chauí, 2000).
To achieve this objective, didactics and clarity\textsuperscript{13} they are fundamental, in order to ensure the organicity that good science requires (Adeodato, 1999). Scientific construction will be based on criticism\textsuperscript{14}, in order to bring up discussions relevant to today's social situation in the socio-legal field\textsuperscript{15}.

The gradual construction of this chapter serves, above all, to give credibility to the work (Guimarães; Lobato; Marques, 2024), as the aim here is to point out the historical importance of the \textit{Camisas Negras}, but, at the same time, to expose all the weaknesses that a society drowning in racism, whether structural, veiled or explicit, can affect black people (Fraga, 2009).

In this vein, Arthur Friedenreich (1892-1969) from São Paulo is considered the first great star of national football. Although he was the biggest name in Brazil at that time, he was still suffering from racism. His hair, curly and wavy, sparked comments about Friedenreich's origins, the son of a rich German merchant and a black Brazilian washerwoman (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Rodrigues Filho (2003) narrates that Friedenreich was always the last athlete to enter the field. The delay was due to the care he had to take when straightening his hair. The first star of the Brazilian team, champion and scorer of the title goal of the 1919 South American Championship – the current Copa América –, spent hours in the dressing room to hide his frizzy hair.

In 1914, Fluminense brought the player Carlos Alberto, a black athlete, from America. Although he was not white, his color did not differ so much from the other players on the American team. However, at the Laranjeiras club, his color difference to the other players on the tricolor team was quite pronounced. Therefore, in order to alleviate the discrepancy between his color and that of his teammates, Carlos Alberto

\textsuperscript{13} Popper (1992), one of the great exponents of the hypothetical-deductive method, warns against excessive elaborate language. According to him, the damage to the work occurs as this excess can make the text incomprehensible to the average reader.

\textsuperscript{14} Going against this thought, Bachelard (1996) understands that it is more prudent to work with the idea of a conservative methodology. Reading this point of view is essential to broaden the horizons of the reader, who begins to dialogue with two perspectives.

\textsuperscript{15} Wolkmer (2011) addresses the critical idea of law as a zetetic science, that is, it places questioning as a central position, breaking with any dogmas conceived as absolute truths until then, which means stating that any paradigm can be investigated, questioned and questioned.
adopted a ritual of applying rice powder to his face right after shaving (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

In clashes against America, the American team, which already knew about their former player's practice, provoked him with shouts of “rice powder” in a joking and pejorative tone. Mixed with the sweat that ran down his face, his skin took on a grayish tone, and the screams from the stands echoed even louder (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

The nickname quickly passed from the athlete to the club. Once, even without Carlos Alberto on the field, shouts of “rice powder” also came from the general stands. Rice powder was seen as something fine and fragrant, which was no cause for embarrassment for the Fluminense team, who embraced the nickname. The club, however, in the words of Rodrigues Filho (2003), tried to be more careful not to include a black player in its squad again.

That said, the question arises: what did Arthur Friedenreich and Carlos Alberto have in common? Both worked before or at the same time as Camisas Negras. After 1924, the presence of blacks in football and the debates about its professionalization became too pronounced. Leônidas da Silva (1913-2004), nicknamed “Black Diamond” or “Rubber Man”, came into football in the 1930s, when Rio clubs were already accepting black people in their squads (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

Leônidas, in Rio de Janeiro, would play for Vasco, Botafogo and Flamengo. Outside the state, he played for São Paulo Futebol Clube. He was the great player for the Brazilian team in the 1938 World Cup and the inventor of the plastic football move known as “bicicleta” (Rodrigues Filho, 2003).

In 1944, the Vasco squadron emerged and became known as Expresso da Vitória. The first team to adopt the 4-2-4 formation, it was the precursor of a style of play that produced good football in national, continental and intercontinental tournaments, with the South American Championship of Champions in 1948 being the main one, as it was the precursor tournament to the current Copa Libertadores da América. But, to talk about this writing, it is necessary to talk about Moacyr Barbosa do Nascimento (1921-2000) (Rodrigues, 2014).
Moacyr Barbosa, or simply Barbosa, was Vasco's goalkeeper between 1945-1955 and, later, between 1958-1962. For many, he is considered the greatest goalkeeper in the history of the São Januário club. He could be remembered for countless positive achievements he achieved throughout his career. However, it was marked by a specific move: the alleged failure in the 1950 World Cup final, held in Brazil, in Uruguay's second goal, scored by Alcides Edgardo Ghiggia Pereyra (1926-2015), in a packed Maracanã (Rodrigues, 2014).

As fate would have it, Alcides Ghiggia was the last player from that final to remain alive; and even more ironic is the fact that he died on July 16th, exactly the same date as the world final that consecrated him, 65 years after that sunny Sunday afternoon in Rio in 1950, which made his legend even more bigger (Rodrigues, 2014).

Brazil lost that World Cup that would be known as the greatest sporting tragedy in the country's history. The trauma was so great that the team's uniform was changed: a competition was opened to choose the new color of the Brazilian shirt, which went from white to yellow. The episode became known as Maracanazzo and haunted the Canarinho team for several years, giving rise to what Rodrigues (2014) called the “mutt complex”.

After the defeat, Barbosa, a black athlete, was nationally stigmatized as the main culprit in the Brazilian defeat. He suffered personal intimidation throughout his life, according to reports from the former archer himself, and died without due recognition from the Brazilian nation for his services rendered (Rodrigues, 2014).

In addition to Barbosa, two other athletes were especially marked after that final: Juvenal Amaso Amarijo (1923-2009), or simply Juvenal, and João Ferreira (1922-2003), known as “Bigode”. The question then arises again: what did Barbosa, Juvenal and Bigode have in common? They were all black men. Once again, the easiest targets were chosen as scapegoats, and they were stigmatized until the end of their lives (Rodrigues, 2014).

Eight years after the sporting tragedy, however, this complex of mongrels would finally be exorcised. Born in Três Corações/MG on October 23rd, 1940, Edson Arantes do Nascimento (1940-2022), known as Pelé, was born to reign. The young black man,
just 17 years old, enchanted the world in Sweden in 1958, when, in just four games, he scored six goals and brought the first World Cup to Brazil (Basthi, 2008).

The King would be world champion on two other occasions: in 1962, in Chile, scoring a goal in two games; and in his masterpiece, in 1970, in Mexico, when he scored four goals in six games and provided the Brazilians with one of the greatest individual performances by an athlete in World Cups to date (Basthi, 2008).

Pelé, a black man, from humble origins, reached the top of the world. On several occasions, the King made clear his passion for Vasco, his father's club. The institution that fought against racism and opened the doors for black people in football is intrinsically linked to the 20th century athlete. Pelé even played for Vasco in four matches, back in 1956 (Basthi, 2008).

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As the first conclusion of this work, the importance of black people in Brazilian football is highlighted. Throughout this article, numerous black athletes were mentioned, but it is also worth mentioning several other black national sports heroes, such as Domingos da Guia, Didi, Garrincha, Jairzinho, Romário, Ronaldinho Gaúcho or Dida, the latter of whom played a role fundamental in the training of young black Brazilian goalkeepers, who were systematically persecuted due to the trauma with Barbosa in 195016.

More recently, there is no way to talk about racism and Brazilian football without mentioning Vinícius José Paixão de Oliveira Júnior, or simply Vini Júnior, symbol of the fight against racism around the world after numerous criminal attacks suffered in Spain17.


revealing the fact that this is not a problem abandoned in the 20th century, but rather a struggle that continues even to this day.

As a second conclusion, we have that the Camisas Negras were pioneers of a movement that continued to gain strength in football. The importance of black people in Brazilian football was mentioned above, but it is important to mention that, if it weren't for the pioneering spirit of Vasco da Gama, who gave human dignity to those workers who were part of the Rio de Janeiro champion team of 1923, the process of opening football to black people and brown people would have taken a while.

In a hypothetical way of thinking, the question arises: would Pelé have existed if it hadn't been for Vasco's pioneering spirit? Would another club have had the courage to open its doors to black, poor and working-class people, if it weren't for Vasco? If yes, when? These are questions that further exalt the Historical Response of 1924. The movement began a new era in football: the era of football that was beginning to become professional and that accepted players regardless of their skin color or social class.

The third conclusion drawn from this work is that the Historical Response impacted a field far beyond the four lines. In the social aspect, it is possible to see that countless young black people from peripheral areas over the last few decades have gained opportunities to change their lives through football.

Sport, previously taken over by the elites, was embraced by the people, and stopped being a tool of exclusion, becoming a platform for ascension. Despite racism still latent in modern society, it is possible to affirm that social advancement through football has become something possible for young black people.

On the other hand, as a fourth and final conclusion, although this universe was opened to black people, it was not possible to eliminate racism from football. As mentioned in item 4 of this article, black players continued to be the most targeted on the field, especially in the Maracanazzo episode, in 1950. In the year 2024, the athlete Vinícius Júnior suffers persecution even when he is not on the field18.

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It's a kind of guarded opening: black men can play football; however, its margin of error is smaller. If he makes a mistake, he will be persecuted; if you step out of line, you will be chased; If you react to attacks, you will be chased. Social ills are still present in society. But it is certain that the *Camisas Negras* paved the way for these discrepancies to be increasingly reduced.

Finally, it should be noted that this work sought to bring to light a historic and striking fact that turns one hundred years old in 2024. The centenary of the Historical Response encompasses a series of nuances that deserve to be studied in depth. The article in question aims to bring to academia this very important discussion that is still so present today.

Although evolution is undeniable, it is still far from ideal. As an example, in the legal field, the crimes of racism and racial insult began to be punished in a very recent context, making it clear that the racial struggle, in Brazil and around the world, is still in its infancy.

Social gaps exist and must be filled. We need to talk about these topics. Vasco da Gama, nowadays, adopts an active stance in combating any types of prejudice\(^1\), treating the pioneering history with great responsibility\(^2\) and enlightener, since the training of young athletes at Colégio Vasco da Gama\(^3\), even the professionals.

There is an urgent need to better understand the practical effects of social ills on the most vulnerable individuals in society. Therefore, it is important that you never forget the acts of bravery that, in the past, made such a difference. It is necessary to have the

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necessary dimension and pride in the 1924 Historical Response of Vasco da Gama, the club that faced racism.
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