

## LEVON PACHAJYAN'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FOR ARMENIAN SOCCER

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**AS: What are your club's objectives for the current season?**

LP: As you know last season we played in the second division and were promoted into the first one, so our



primary objective was to retain our spot in the first division. Although, I must say that Sanat Naft FC could have set even higher objectives because, as the results show, we are quite successful this season, especially at home. We won eight games six out of which at home! I hope we will not only retain our place in the first division but also take a spot in the Top 5. Now we are six-seven points behind the leaders and having played one game less.

**AS: There is no much information on Iranian football. How do you view Iranian football?**

LP: As a high-level football. Many clubs are as strong as clubs from mid-level European championships.



Some are even stronger. A good proof to that is this season's top side Zob Ahan FC - the last AFC Champions League finalist. And, of course, you saw the Iranian National Team playing in Yerevan. Organizational issues here are just not on a high level which affects the progress.

**AS: There are probably some exotics in Iranian football that you have never witnessed anywhere else, including Armenia and Sweden.**

LP: Oh yeah! The supporters... of my club, of course. They are just unbelievable. I have never seen anything like that. Twenty five-thirty thousand crowds come to the stadium on each game and you just can watch them for hours. And, of course, they eagerly participate in club's activities and help us win. For example, if we lose two or three games we would just not go out to walk the streets, believe me. It is possible that some supporters would want to hurt us! So we are

forced to win all the games (*laughs*). They really are big fans (*laughs*).

**AS: You have already spent enough time in Sanat Naft FC, don't you think that the move from Europe to Iran was a step back for your football progression?**



LP: Perhaps yes, in a way. Europe is the highest point in football. It is incomparable with all the other continents in terms of football image. However, from another viewpoint the Iranian championship is high-level and, at least, as strong as the championships I had played in. Sure here it is difficult to progress as a player but I will overcome all the difficulties and use the first opportunity to return to Europe. The time will tell!

**AS: Is your family with you in Iran?**

LP: Yes, but at times I remain alone. I try to be with my family whenever possible since here it is quite hard to

live alone.

**AS: How do you spend your spare time?**

LP: Mainly at home – internet, TV, books... When my family is here we go out to walk or dine somewhere. There is not much you can do here. As you know Iran is a very religious and close country with no places of entertainment.

**AS: How about going back to Europe? Any specific offers?**

LP: Of course, I am taking steps in that direction. I have agents who follow me here in Iran and keep in touch with me. Whenever there is an opportunity I will definitely move back. At this point I have no specific offers. Actually, I would like to play until the end of the season here. Next summer some news from Europe might come, we will see then...

**AS: Please define the Swedish-Norwegian phase of your career. Was it successful or some things went not the way you expected them to go?**

LP: It was a huge experience for me, however, due to some reasons it did not last. I consider it as a success, although I must confess that I made many mistakes. It could have been better and now I would have possibly played in a higher class club. But I got just what I got and no complaints!





**AS: Do you follow the Armenian Premier League? What can you say about this year's season?**



LP: Yes, I do. I watched some games. This year the competition was stronger. It was not clear who will win the title until the final gameday. The fact that FC Pyunik is the champion again is logical. FC Banants lost a very good opportunity by wasting points at the end of the tournament.

**AS: Will you consider continuing your career in Armenia?**

LP: Not now. I always consider continuing my career in

Armenia as the last thing. It sounds indiscreet but I have achieved everything that I could achieve in Armenia. I do not plan to come back to Armenia in the nearest future. However, I would not exclude such a possibility. Everything is possible in football.

**AS: Many have been asked this question recently; it is interesting to know your opinion as well. What are the reasons for our National Team's success?**

LP: Firstly, playing well! I think that Vardan Minasyan is coming close to realization of what he wants and says. He always says that by playing well we can be successful and I agree with him. By playing poor you can win one or two games, accidentally, whereas when you play well your chances to win grow higher. Also, we have a very strong squad now. We have high-class players who can achieve good results. I hope we will show stability throughout the season and the stability is also an asset for success.

**AS: Next year everyone will expect that our National Team will be as successful and this will increase the pressure on the players. How hard it will be to cope with the pressure?**



LP: The pressure can play both good and bad roles. We have a young squad and I hope that the guys will not blow out because of being too over-motivated to necessarily win. As well as, we should not view these

games as the end of the world; we should normally prepare for these games and play them just like the past ones. I am certain that there is nothing to be afraid of.

**AS: In 2007 you were named the Armenian Player of the Year. Who do you think are the contenders this year?**

LP: Yes, 2007 was really the best for me! This year I think that Karlen Mkrtchyan and Gevorg Khazaryan will contend to be named the best player.



**AS: Which one of your goals scored both as an international and club player is the most memorable for you?**

LP: I scored two goals as an Armenian international and the most memorable is the first one scored against Moldova. As a club player I would point out the one I scored for FC Pyunik against Reykjavik FC in the Champions League (you can watch the replays of this goal on

Armenian-soccer.com). But the most memorable goal for me is the one I scored for FC Kotayk against FC Mika. It was on eightieth or eighty-fifth minute of the game. I won the ball on our side of the pitch, dribbled by four-five players and scored. It was unbelievable.

**AS: What interests do you have apart from football?**

LP: Too many. First of all, the internet, PC games, books, painting. When in Armenia I really enjoy night life, partying and going outside the city. Whenever possible I go to theaters and movies.

**AS: Thank you for the interview and we wish you success.**

LP: Thank you and I wish success to your website.

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*Photos: Armenian Soccer archive*

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