

THE WORLD'S PERSPECTIVE

Initially some around the world felt that Ben Ali was set to liberalize the political system in Tunisia. In 1989 the French Center for Political and Society Studies gave him the Man of the Year award for his work in promoting human rights in Tunisia. The following year, the U.S. Department of State asked Congress for authorization to increase funds for assistance to Tunisia for fiscal year 1990. The American perception, as expressed by official opinion, was that Ben Ali was trying to revitalize a nation that had been in serious economic trouble.

Despite Ben Ali's promise to improve human rights and his introduction of a more liberal press law, Human Rights Watch continued to denounce the government's human rights record. From 1990 to 1992, Ben Ali emphasized Tunisia's stand against extremism and terrorism. In what he described as measures beyond simple considerations of security, he used swift police actions to deal a blow to militant Islamic groups, sending their leaders into exile. Tunisia had more than one thousand political prisoners, was listed as one of the ten countries in the world most hostile to a free press, and is among the State Department's list of countries that use excessive stress and duress interrogation tactics. Ben Ali's government defends its policies. After the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, foreign minister Habib Ben Yahia visited London, where he spoke on the alleged danger of Tunisian Islamists abroad and called for the extradition of Hizb En Nahda leadership.

Ben Ali has received various honors and awards. For his longtime support of youth sports and promotion of Olympic values, he was presented the Olympic Merit Award in 1996 by the Association of National Olympic Committees. During the same year he received the Health for All gold medal from the World Health Organization.

LEGACY

As the second president of independent Tunisia, Ben Ali will also be remembered as one who continued his successor's moderate, pro-Western orientation, and who used an iron fist to crush the political Islamist movement in his country.

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updated by Michael R. Fischbach

BENAYOUN, YOSSSI

(1980-)

Yossi Benayoun is one of the most outstanding Israeli football (soccer) talents ever. Playing as an attacking midfielder, he became famous for his dazzling dribbles and brilliant passes. At the start of his career, Benayoun was nicknamed "the kid" by the Israeli press, both for his boyish looks and due to his senior debut being made when he was only seventeen.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Benayoun was born on 5 May 1980 in Dimona, an underprivileged immigrant town located in the Israeli Negev desert, to parents David (Dudu) and Zary. As a child, Benayoun had an extraordinary gift for football and he started playing in the local Ha-Po'el Dimona kids club when he was eleven. As a teenager, he played in Ha-Po'el Be'er Sheva club where he excelled in the youth squad. Because his family could not afford the bus fare,



Yossi Benayoun. IAN WALTON/GETTY IMAGES.

BIOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Name: Yossi Benayoun

Birth: 1980, Dimona, Israel

Family: Wife, Miri Ben Yosef; one daughter, May.

Nationality: Israeli

PERSONAL CHRONOLOGY:

- **1996:** Voted MVP of the UEFA championship for youth under 16; joins the Ajax Amsterdam football academy
- **1997–1998:** Top scorer for Ha-Po'el Be'er Sheva, Israel
- **1999:** Transfers to Haifa; becomes first Israeli footballer to play simultaneously in three national teams (senior, Olympic, and youth)
- **2000–2001:** Voted MVP of the Israeli league while playing for Maccabi Haifa
- **2002:** Transfers to Santander
- **2005:** Transfers to West Ham; participates in the FA Cup finals; nominated captain of the Israeli national team

Benayoun and his father used to hitchhike from Dimona to Be'er Sheva almost on a daily basis.

In September 1995, when Benayoun was fifteen, he met Miri Ben Yosef, who later became his wife. The two studied together in the same class in high school. "After knowing her for only two days, and dating her once, I told her that we would get married, be happy, and have kids together," Benayoun recalled (Marlin-Rosenzweig, 2006).

When Benayoun was eighteen he joined the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), as military service is mandatory in Israel. He served as a sports instructor in the navy for three years. Because army service is flexible for professional athletes, Benayoun's career as a footballer was not compromised and he continued to play in the Israeli league.

Benayoun and Ben Yosef married on 14 May 2002 in a lavish wedding that was covered extensively in the local media. In November 2003 the couple's first child, May, was born in Spain, where they were living at the time. In the summer of 2005 the family moved to London, England.

INFLUENCES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

In May 1996 Benayoun made his first impact in the world of professional football in the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) championship for youth under sixteen. Benayoun led the Israeli team to the third place in the tournament, and was also titled most valued player (MVP) of the event. Consequently, he was invited to join the football academy of the renowned Dutch club Ajax Amsterdam.

Benayoun moved to the Netherlands with his family and girlfriend Miri, and was offered a four-year contract as a first team player. Meanwhile, his family returned to Israel, and Benayoun, who felt homesick and lonely, declined the offer. He returned to Dimona after only eight months in Ajax, and the Israeli sports media criticized him for giving up on what was referred to as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

During the football season of 1997–1998, Benayoun returned to Ha-Po'el Be'er Sheva's senior team and was their top scorer with fifteen goals. The club's survival in the top division came down to two matches on the final day of the league. In the last minute, a penalty for Be'er Sheva gave the club an opportunity to beat the rival team, Maccabi Haifa football club, but only seventeen-year-old Benayoun was brave enough to take it. With tears streaming down his face, he stepped up to the challenge. The goalkeeper blocked the kick, but Benayoun followed up and kicked the rebounding ball straight into the net. Benayoun collapsed in tears when news arrived that a late goal in another game meant they would be relegated anyway.

After that season, Benayoun was transferred to Maccabi Haifa, where he played four consecutive seasons between 1998 and 2002. During these seasons the club won the national championship twice, and in his third season Benayoun was voted MVP of the league.

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Benayoun left for Racing de Santander football club, a first division club in Spain after his success in Haifa. Benayoun's high-quality performance helped to arrest the club's slide toward relegation, and he became one of the club's biggest stars and scorers.

After three seasons in Santander Benayoun decided it was time to move on, and in July 2005 he transferred to British West Ham United Football Club. The move was accompanied by criticism of the Bolton Wanderers Football Club, who also held negotiations with Benayoun for his transfer. With Benayoun's contribution, West Ham finished in the respectable ninth place in 2005–2006 premier league season, and secured a place in the UEFA Cup as the runner-up group of the Football Association Challenge Cup (commonly known as the FA Cup).

In conjunction with his international career, Benayoun also became a key figure in the Israeli national

team. In 1999 he became the first Israeli footballer to play simultaneously in three national teams: senior, Olympic, and youth. During the World Cup 2006 qualifiers, Benayoun became the leading player of the team after equalizing against Cyprus at home and scoring twice against Switzerland. In the summer of 2006 Benayoun became captain of the national team. "This is the biggest event, a tremendous achievement in my career," he later said of the nomination in the article "Benayoun: Becoming Captain Is the Biggest Achievement of My Career" on YNET.

LEGACY

Once doubted because of his slender physical appearance, Benayoun has managed to surprise many football fans and critics with his agility and clever dribbles. While his career is continuing to develop, Benayoun has established himself as an international football player of exceptional flair, creativity, originality, and character.

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Or Rubinowitz

BEN JELLOUN, TAHAR (1944–)

Tahar Ben Jelloun (also Tahir, Taher Benjelloun) is a leading Moroccan poet, novelist, essayist, and journalist whose rich intellectual and creative production now spans more than four decades. Most of his books are available in fifteen or more languages; the most popular have now been translated into forty-three languages.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Ben Jelloun was born in Fez on 1 December 1944. His autobiographical essay *La soudure fraternelle* (1994; Fraternal bonds) provides an important source of information on his early childhood and adolescence. In particular, Ben Jelloun recalls his arid apprenticeship at the local Qur'anic school as well as his premature confrontation with the experience of a classmate's death. Ben Jelloun has also fondly evoked the nurturing familial

BIOGRAPHICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Name:** Tahar Ben Jelloun (also Tahir, Taher Benjelloun)
- Birth:** 1944, Fez, Morocco
- Family:** Wife and daughter
- Nationality:** Moroccan
- Education:** 1956–1963, Fez (*Lycée*); 1963–1966, Muhammad V University in Rabat (philosophy); 1971–1975, Ph.D., psychology, University of Paris

PERSONAL CHRONOLOGY:

- **1971:** Publishes first collection of poems, *Hommes sous linéaire de silence* (Men under a shroud of silence)
- **1972–present:** Correspondent for the French daily *Le Monde*
- **1978:** Elected to Académie Mallarmé in Paris
- **1987:** Wins Prix Goncourt for *La nuit sacrée* (The sacred night)
- **1991:** Wins Prix des Hémisphères for *Les yeux baissés* (With downcast eyes)
- **1994:** Wins Prix Méditerranée for *L'homme rompu* (Corruption) and Grand prix littéraire du Maghreb for totality of his work
- **2004:** Wins International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for *Certains aveuglants absence de lumière* (This blinding absence of light)

atmosphere of his home, where devout Muslim parents raised him in a spirit of religious tolerance and freedom.

In 1955 Ben Jelloun's parents moved to Tangier, and several of his novels abundantly address, through fictionalized accounts and historical mediation, his antithetical vision of the two cities. Ben Jelloun lived in Tangier until the age of eighteen. He has portrayed himself as a timid and studious adolescent whose passion for cinema—the films of John Ford, Howard Hawks, and Orson Welles, for instance—started at that time. It is thus while still at his *lycée* (high school) in Tangier, at the age of fourteen, that Ben Jelloun saw Alain Resnais's *Night and Fog* for the first time, an event instrumental in developing his own historical and philosophical comprehension of genocide. His love affair with cinema also led