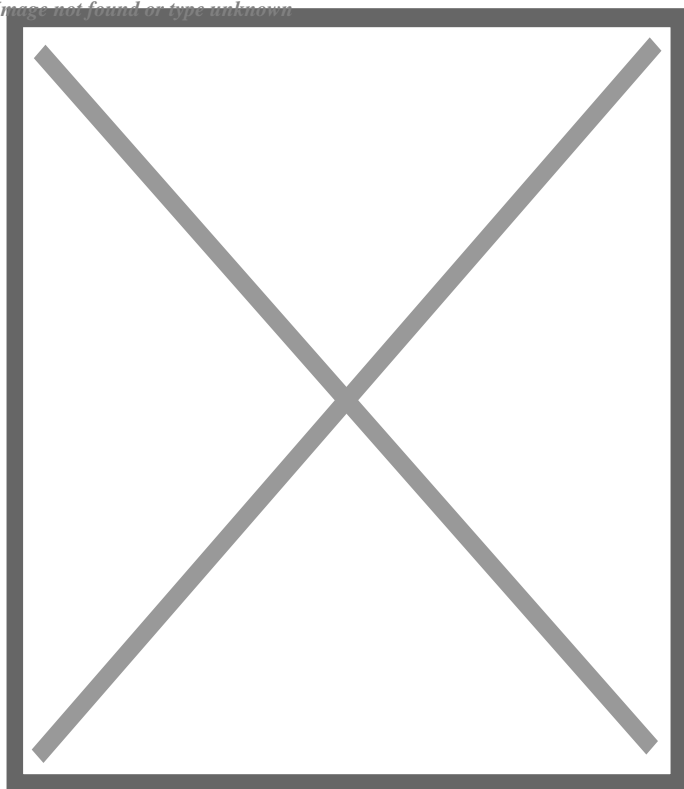


Brazil declares three days of mourning for Pele

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?The football legend, who is deemed the greatest player of the 20th century, died in Sao Paolo on Thursday.?

Brasilia, December 30 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has declared three days of national mourning for Pele after the legendary footballer died at the age of 82. The measure was announced on Friday in a decree published in an extra edition of the government gazette and signed by the outgoing president, who is set to leave office Sunday.

Pele's death, announced on Thursday, was "due to multiple organ failures resulting from the progression of colon cancer associated with his previous medical condition." The wake will be held on Monday, and his funeral on Tuesday in Santos, the southeastern city where he played most of his career, his former club said after his death.

“The wake for the greatest footballer of all time will be held in Urbano Caldeira Stadium, better known as the Vila Belmiro, where he enchanted the world,” Santos football club said Thursday in a statement, adding that Pele would then get a funeral procession through the city’s streets before a private burial ceremony.

In Zurich, Switzerland, at the headquarters of FIFA, the world’s football governing body, the flags of all member nations were lowered to half-staff on Friday in honour of Pele. “Flags at the home of FIFA in Zurich are flying at half-mast today, as we remember the eternal king: Pele,” the organisation said on Twitter.

“Since the news was confirmed, the world of football has been united in their sadness and in sharing their memories and love of a man who was simply named ‘O Rei’ – The King,” FIFA said on its website.

Pele was named by FIFA as the greatest player of the 20th century. The Brazil legend is the only player to have won the World Cup three times.

The death of ‘The King’ triggered a wave of tributes from around the globe to the man who both transformed football and transcended the sport.

In a testament to Pele’s influence, international figures, including United States President Joe Biden and former leader Barack Obama, Brazilian music legends Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach and FIFA President Gianni Infantino all paid tribute.

Top-flight football matches in England, Italy and France will all honour Pele before each match in the upcoming round of games, it was announced Friday. “In tribute to Pele, Premier League clubs will remember his contribution to football during Matchweek 18 [December 30-January 1] by holding a minute’s applause prior to kick-offs,” said a statement on the English Premier League’s Twitter feed. “Players and match officials will wear black armbands,” it added.

A similar announcement was made by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC). “On the occasion of all the friendly matches scheduled for today, Friday, December 30, and on the 16th day of the Serie A on Wednesday, January 4, the FIGC has arranged a minute’s silence to remember Pele,” it said in a statement.

Games in France’s Ligue 1 will be preceded by a minute’s applause while a photo of Pele with the World Cup is shown on the big screens in the stadiums, said the Professional Football League (LFP).

In Spain, La Liga announced that a minute of silence would be observed before each match, starting with Thursday evening’s encounter between Atletico Madrid and Elche.

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