

RONALDO

Brazilian fails to win consensus

Ronaldo dominated the World Cup but was he the world's best player in 2002?

The media panel that selected German goalkeeper Oliver Kahn over Ronaldo for the 2002 World Cup MVP award got it wrong, but what about the panelists who selected Ronaldo as the winner of the two main year-end awards, FIFA's World Player of the Year and Europe's Golden Ball?

Ronaldo beat Kahn twice — the first after Kahn fumbled Rivaldo's shot — to give Brazil a 2-0 win over Germany in the World Cup final. Ronaldo finished with eight goals, the most by a player in a World Cup since Gerd Mueller's 10 goals in 1970, and scored in all but game.

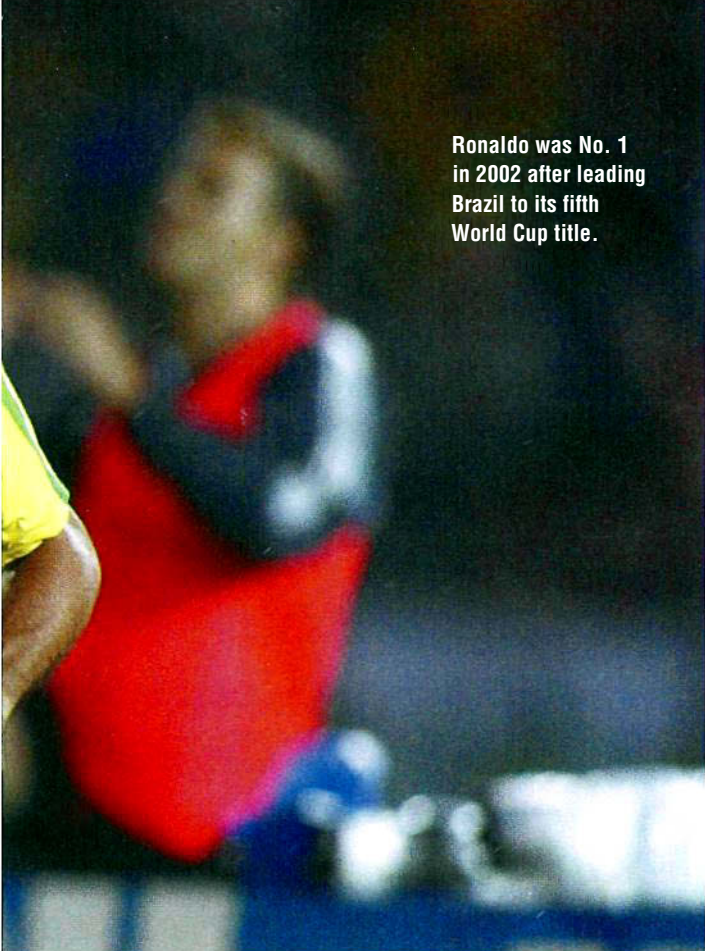
Ronaldo's spectacular World Cup capped a comeback from injuries that limited him to only 36 league games at Inter Milan the last four years.

He only played 12 league games — four at Inter Milan and eight for Real Madrid — in 2002, raising doubts among some voters about the worthiness of Ronaldo's candidacy.

In the vote of national team coaches for FIFA's World Player of the Year, Americans Bruce Arena (USA) and Steve Sampson (Costa Rica) didn't include Ronaldo in their three picks: Arena — 1. Raul, 2. Kahn, 3. Thierry Henry; Sampson — 1. Roberto Carlos, 2. David Beckham, 3. Raul.

In the media balloting for European Player of the Year, Carlos Roberto, Ronaldo's Brazil and Real Madrid teammate, had more first-place votes than Ronaldo (23-16), but Ronaldo appeared on more ballots (45-34).





Ronaldo was No. 1
in 2002 after leading
Brazil to its fifth
World Cup title.

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