

Hong Kong Portuguese Community Artefact Collection Campaign (October 2019)

Local Portuguese people are sports enthusiasts, and football is one of their strengths. As early as 1919, the Club de Recreio football team participated in the league organised by the Hong Kong Football Association. The club trained the Gosano brothers, who were members of the Hong Kong football team in the 1930s. In the 1950s, Arthur G. Santos and his good friend J.H. Toledo, who represented Hong Kong in international tournaments, emerged as the most prominent Portuguese footballers after the Second World War. The five sons of A.G. Santos are all intricately connected to football. Representing Hong Kong and several first-division football clubs, Hong Kong footballer Leslie George Santos is the best known among them.

Leslie George Santos started playing football when he was just six years old. At the age of 12, he was introduced by his father's close friend, Toledo, to the youth teams of the Hongkong Electric Company and later the South China Athletic Association. When he was 16 years old, South China sent him to the Netherlands to train with the football club Feyenoord Rotterdam, under the guidance of football legend Johan Cruyff.

In 1985, the 18-year-old Santos represented South China in the Hong Kong First Division League. Soon he became a key midfielder, helping South China win a number of high-profile tournaments. He also won an array of personal accolades, including the Best Young Player award in 1987–1988, the Hong Kong Sports Stars Awards for three consecutive years from 1989 to 1991, and the Hong Kong Footballer of the Year in 1990 and 1991.

When he announced his retirement from professional football in 2002, Sun Hei Sports Club, the football team he played on at the time, organised a farewell match for him. Santos ended his professional career to the applause of over 7,000 football fans. He continued to contribute to Hong Kong football as a coach to train new players.



Medal presented to players of South China Football Team as the winner of the First Division League in 1985-1986.



Trophy presented to 14-year-old Leslie Santos as the 2nd best footballer at the “Tournoi International Cadets” (International Youth Tournament) in Feurs of France, 1984.



Jersey of South China Football Team owned by Leslie Santos, 1980s.



Trophy of the Hong Kong Footballer of the Year presented to Leslie Santos at the 13th (1989-90) Hong Kong Top Footballers' Award