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Welsh association football player Gareth Bale Bale with Wales in 2016Staff informationFull name Gareth Frank Bale[1]Birth date (1989-07-16) 16 July 1989 (age 31)[2]Birthplace cardiff, WalesHeight 6 ft 1 in (1.85 m)[3]Game position(s) WingerClub informationCurrent team Tottenham Hotspur(on loan from Real Madrid)Number 9Young career Cardiff Civil Service1999-2006 SouthamptonSenior career*Year Team Apps (Gls)2006–2007 Southampton 40 (5)2007–2013 Tottenham Hotspur 146 (42)2013– Real Madrid 171 (2013 80) 2020– → Tottenham Hotspur (loan) 3 (1)National team‡2005-2006 Wales U17 7 (1)2006 Wales U19 1 (1)2006-2008 Wales U21 21 14 (2)2006– Wales 87 (33) * Senior club appearances and goals count for the domestic league only correctly and from 13:56 8 November 2020 (UTC)‡ National team captains and goals correct as of 21:53, 18 November 2020 (UTC) Gareth Frank Bale (born 16 July 1989) is a Welsh footballer who plays as a winger for Premier League club Tottenham, on loan from Real Madrid in La Liga, and the Wales national team. Known for his ball striking from distance, swinging free kicks, and his ability to get past defenders with speed, Bale has received praise from his peers, who have described him as a footballer with tremendous speed, great crossing ability, a great left foot and exceptional physical qualities. Bale began his professional career at Southampton, played as a left-back and was hailed as a free kick specialist. Bale moved to Tottenham Hotspur in 2007, for a fee of £7 million. During his time at Tottenham, the manager and tactical shift saw him turn into a more attacking player. From the 2009–10 season, led by Harry Redknapp, Bale became an integral part of the team, and gained international attention during the UEFA Champions League 2010/2011. In 2011 and 2013, he was named PFA Players' Player of the Year, and was named UEFA Team of the Year. In 2013 he was also named YOUNG PLAYER of the Year, FWA Footballer of the Year and Premier League Player of the Year. He was nominated for pfa team of the year three times in a row between 2011 and 2013. On 1 September 2013, Bale was moved to Real Madrid for an undisclosed fee. Press then reported the transfer value to figures between 91 million and 100 million euros. In January 2016, documents about the transfer were leaked confirming a then world record transfer of €100.8 million, which brought down the previous record sum of £80 million (€94 million) paid by the club for Cristiano Ronaldo in 2009. Bale played an important role in his first season at Real Madrid, helping the club win the Copa del Rey and the UEFA Champions League in 2013-14, scoring in both finals. The following season he won the UEFA Super Cup and scored in a third grand final to help the club win FIFA World Cup for club teams. Two years later, he was a key player in yet another Champions League race, winning the title in 2015–16 and being inducted into the UEFA squad for the season. He was also a finalist in the UEFA Best Player in Europe Award, and was named Man of the Match when he scored an overhead kick in the 2018 UEFA Champions League final. Bale made his senior debut for Wales in May 2006, becoming the youngest player to represent the nation. He has since scored over 80 caps and scored 33 caps, making him Wales' all-time top scorer. He was the top scorer for Wales in their successful uefa Euro 2016 qualifying campaign, scoring seven goals; He then represented his nation in the last tournament when they reached the semi-finals and scored three goals. He has been named Welsh Footballer of the Year six times. In 2016, ESPN ranked Bale 12th on its list of the world's most famous athletes. Early life and career Bale was born in Cardiff, Wales, to parents Frank, a school caretaker, and Debbie Bale, an operations manager. He is the nephew of former Cardiff City footballer Chris Pike. [4] He attended Eglwys Newydd Primary School in Whitchurch. [5] It was during his time at this school that he first came to Southampton's attention at the age of nine, playing in a six-man tournament with his first club, Cardiff Civil Service. [6] Growing up, his football hero was the Welshman and Manchester United player Ryan Giggs. [7] Bale attended Whitchurch High School in Cardiff. [8] He was an avid athlete; he played football alongside future Wales rugby captain Sam Warburton,[9] rugby, hockey and excelled at athletics. [10] As a 14-year-old, he says he ran the 100-meter sprint in 11.4 seconds. [7] Due to his superior football skills, the school's PE teacher, Gwyn Morris, had to write special rules that limited Bale to playing one-touch football and not using his left foot. [9] Although he was only 16 at the time, he helped the school's Under-18 team win the Cardiff & Vale Senior Cup. He left school in the summer of 2005 with a Class A in PE among his other GCSE results. During his final year of school, he was awarded the PE Department's Prize for Services to Sport. In the presentation, Morris commented: Gareth has a strong determination to succeed and has the character and qualities to achieve his personal goals. He is one of the most selfless individuals that I have had the pleasure of helping to educate. [11] Club career Southampton On 17 April 2006, at the age of 16 years and 275 days, Bale became the second youngest player ever to play for Southampton (after Theo Walcott, who was 132 days younger) when he made his debut in Saints' 2–0 win against Millwall. On 6 August, Bale scored his first league goal, a free kick, to equalise 1–1 against Derby County. Park was 2-2. [12] He scored again, at St. Mary's, against Coventry City in the team's second game of the 2006–07 season with another free kick. [13] Bale further developed his reputation as a free-kick specialist when he hit the post from one against West Bromwich Albion. [14] By 16 December 2006, Bale's goal count had risen to five, thanks to a late equaliser against Sunderland[15] and free kicks away against Hull City[16] and at home against Norwich City. [17] In December 2006, he won the Carwyn James Award for BBC Wales Young Sports Personality of the Year,[18] and was named Young Player of the Year in the Football League on 4 March 2007. [19] This capped what was described in the local press as an incredible first full season as a professional footballer, where he was one of the Saints' most creative players despite operating) from the left-back position while his defence improved immeasurably throughout the season. [20] His last game for Southampton was in the first leg of the Championship play-off semi-final against Derby County on 12 May 2007. Bale sustained an injury in the second half, which prevented him from appearing in the second half. [21] [22] In total, he made 45 appearances for Southampton, scoring five goals. [23] Tottenham Hotspur On 25 May 2007, Bale signed a four-year contract with Tottenham Hotspur where the club paid a first million pounds for the player, potentially rising to £10 million based on performances and successes. [24] In 2007–09 Bale played for Chelsea Bale in a friendly against St Patrick's Athletic on 12 July 2007, but was substituted in the 80th minute with a minor dead leg. He made his competitive debut for Tottenham Hotspur on 26 August away to Manchester United. [25] On 1 September 2007, in his second Spurs appearance, he scored his first goal for the club in a 3–3 draw with Fulham. [26] Bale went on to score against Arsenal in the north London derby from a free kick. [27] He then scored in the League Cup home game against Middlesbrough. [28] On 2 December 2007, Bale was replaced after suffering an injury as a result of a tackle by Fabrice Muamba in the league match against Birmingham City. A scan revealed that Bale had suffered ligament damage to his right ankle, consigning him to an extended period on the sidelines. Bale had surgery on December 11. [29] In February 2008, it was clear that Bale would miss the rest of the season due to injury. [30] Sporting Director of Tottenham, Damien Comolli said, Even if the examination reveals that Gareth's foot is stable, the decision has been taken to bring him back slowly to ensure he does not get a repeat of the injury or suffer any further damage. Gareth is obviously disappointed to be sidelined for this time but he is still young and we have to do is best for him in the long run. [29] Bale returned to fitness in August 2008, the same month he signed a new four-year contract with the club,[31] and went on to make 30 appearances for Tottenham in all competitions that season. [32] He picked up his first red card of his career in a 2–1 defeat to Stoke City in October 2008. [33] That season he participated in the League Cup final against Manchester United. Bale came off the bench in the 98th minute of injury time with the final score locked to 0-0 which resulted in a 4-1 penalty shootout against Manchester United. [34] In June 2009, Bale underwent surgery for a knee injury, which left him with a sentence of more than two months. He missed pre-season games and it was estimated that he would miss the first few weeks of the 2009–10 season. [35] On 26 September, he made a comeback as a substitute in the 85th minute of Tottenham's 5–0 win against Burnley. This was Bale's first ever involvement in a Premier League win, having not been on the winning side since the Southampton move. [36] However, he struggled to break into the first team, thanks in part to the good form of Benoit Assou-Ekotto. When Assou-Ekotto was sidelined with an injury, coach Harry Redknapp decided to give Bale a chance and he impressed in Spurs' FA Cup victory in the third round 4-0 against Peterborough United. [37] His first win as a starter in a league match came in a 2–0 win against London rivals Fulham on 26 January 2010. [38] Bale's good form continued and he was named Player of the Round after helping Spurs to a 3–1 win in the sixth round of the FA Cup replay against Fulham. [39] In April 2010, Bale scored the winning goal in a 2–1 derby win in North London against Arsenal, pushing past Manuel Almunia, following a pass from Jermain Defoe. [40] Three days later, Bale scored Tottenham's winning goal with his weaker right foot in a 2–1 victory over the league leaders and the future champions Chelsea and was named man of the match. [41] He was named Premier League Player of the Month in April 2010. [42] He signed a new four-year contract at White Hart Lane on 7 May 2010, as a reward for helping the club to reach a uefa Champions League qualification place in 2010/2011. [43] San Jose Earthquakes' Arturo Álvarez eschews Bale (left) in a july 2010 friendly in San Jose, California On 21 August 2010, Bale scored two goals in a 2–1 win against Stoke City, the second of which was a head-high volley into the top right corner of the goal. [44] This was later awarded the BBC Goal of the Month for August 2010. On 25 August, Bale set up all four goals to help Spurs defeat the Young Boys 4–0 (6–3) in a Champions League play-off at White Hart Lane. [45] Although Assou-Ekotto had already returned from injury, Bale continued his good form and cemented his place in the starting line-up, where manager chose him to move to the left wing to accommodate Assou-Ekotto at On 29 September, Bale scored his first Champions League goal for Tottenham in a 4–1 home win against Dutch champions Twente in their second group stage match. [47] For his performances, he was named Welsh Player of the Year by the Football Association of Wales (FAW). [48] On 20 October, Bale scored his first senior hat-trick against European champions Inter Milan at the San Siro in the Champions League. Tottenham lost the game 4–3, having been 4-0 down in the first 35 minutes and played with 10 men for over 80 minutes of the match after goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes was sent off in the eighth minute for a pro foul on Inter's Jonathan Biabiany. [49] In the rematch at White Hart Lane on 2 November, Bale provided a man-of-the-match performance, setting goals for Peter Crouch and Roman Pavlyuchenko to give Spurs a memorable 3–1 win. [50] On 4 November, Bale stated that he intended to stay at Tottenham for the remainder of his recently signed four-year contract, despite reported interest from other clubs,[46] when, in December, he was awarded the BBC Wales Sports Personality of the Year trophy. [51] On 19 March 2011, it was announced that he would then extend his stay at the club until 2015. [52] On April 17, Bale was honored with the PFA Players' Player of the Year, which he was voted for by his peers. [53] With Spurs, he gained international acclaim during the 2010–11 UEFA Champions League with Tottenham. [54] Bale scored his first goal in the 2011–12 season on 24 September 2011, in an away game against Wigan Athletic. The match ended in a 2–1 victory for Tottenham. [57] He added his second and third goals of the season on October 30 with two goals against Queens Park Rangers in a 3–1 home win. [58] He continued his good form with the first goal in a 3–1 win over Fulham the following week, while setting up Aaron Lennon to score 2–0 at half-time. [59] The first goal against Fulham was later ruled by the dubious goal committee as an own goal by Chris Baird. [60] On 3 December, Bale scored the first goal in Tottenham's 3–0 win over Bolton Wanderers. He marked the goal with a tribute to Gary Speed by holding up his left boot, with R.I.P Gary Speed sewn on to it, in front of bolton fans. [61] On 27 December, Bale scored twice to give Tottenham a 2–0 win over Norwich City. [62] On 5 January 2012, Bale was one of the players voted into the 2011 UEFA Team of the Year. He scored his third brace of the season when he scored twice against Wigan on 31 January to take his score to ten goals for the season. [63] In January 2012, he was named Premier League player of the month for the second time in his career, after three goals and two assists in the Premier League for the month. [64] On 27 June, Bale signed a new contract, and commits to the club until 2016. [65] In the 2012–13 season, for the 2012–13 season, Bale changed his squad number from 3 to 11 as he was no longer a left-back and had asked the club for a higher number. [66] On 16 September 2012, Bale scored his first goal of the 2012–13 season against Reading in a 3–1 away victory. [68] On 29 September, Bale scored the second goal in Tottenham's 3–2 away win over Manchester United, their first win at Old Trafford since 1989. [69] He scored his first Premier League hat-trick in a 4–0 away win on Boxing Day against Aston Villa. [70] On 5 January 2013, Bale scored in the FA Cup third round against Coventry City and assisted Clint Dempsey on both of his goals in a 3–0 win. [71] On 30 January, Bale made a magnificent solo effort in the 1–1 draw against Norwich City. [72] Bale then scored against West Bromwich Albion in a 1–0 away win on 3 February. [73] Bale then took his goal for the season to 15 goals with a brace against Newcastle United in a 2–1 win over Spurs. This took Spurs to third place, and strengthened their Champions League ambitions. [74] In Bale's next game, he scored straight from two free kicks, one from 35 yards out just before half-time and another from 25 yards out in the dying seconds of injury time, to give Tottenham a 2-1 victory over Lyon in the first leg of their Europa League round 32 draw on 14 February. This took Bale to a tally of ten goals in his last ten appearances. [75] In Tottenham's Premier League game against West Ham on 25 February, Bale scored the first and third in a 3–2 win for Tottenham. His second, a long-range dipping strike from over 30 yards, in the dying stages of the game, capped a world-class performance. It was his eighth goal in six games. [76] On 3 March, Bale scored against Arsenal in a derby in north London that Tottenham won 2–1. [77] On 7 March, Tottenham faced Inter Milan in the Europa League, where Bale scored the opening goal and Tottenham won 3–0. [78] Bale's run of good form in the first few months of 2013 saw him win the Premier League Player of the Month for February[79] as well as bbc Goal of the Month in both January and February for his strikes against Norwich City and West Ham United respectively. [80] On 4 April, Bale injured his right ankle in the first leg of the Europa League quarter-final against Basel. [81] Upon his return from injury, Bale scored a goal and assisted Clint Dempsey as Tottenham beat Manchester City at White Hart Lane. [82] On April 28, Bale won both the PFA Players' Player of the Year and Young Player of the Year after his excellent performance in the 2012–13 season. [83] A week later, on May 2, 2013, he added the FWA Footballer of the Year Award from the Football Writers' Association, making Bale one of only two players to win all three of the same – what it is is Cristiano Ronaldo, who won them in 2007. [84] Bale scored the winning goal against his former club Southampton on 4 May. The goal gave Spurs a 1–0 win and was Bale's 20th in the Premier League in his 200th appearance for Spurs. On 19 May, Bale scored a goal in the 90th minute from 25 yards. This goal gave Spurs a 1-0 win over Sunderland, but was not enough to give them Champions League football for the following season. [85] Real Madrid Bale announced at the unveiling at Real Madrid in September 2013 On 1 September 2013, Spanish club Real Madrid announced that they had reached an agreement on a transfer of Bale,[86] and signed a six-year contract in a world-record deal at the time. [87] The Spanish press (and Real Madrid TV) reported that Bale had cost £77 million (€91 million), while the British press reported a transfer fee of £85.3 million (€100 million), which would be above Cristiano Ronaldo's transfer fee of £80 million (€94 million). [88] [89] [90] However, in January 2016, documents relating to the transfer were leaked by Football Leaks confirming a transfer fee of €100.8 million (£85.1 million). [91] Bale's record was surpassed in August 2016 by Paul Pogba's record sum of €105m (£89.2m). [92] Bale was awarded jersey number 11 in Madrid. [93] 2013–14 The first half of Bale's season was plagued by injuries; of Real's first 16 games after his signing, Bale missed five and was substituted on or off in six others, playing only five full games. [94] Bale scored in his Real Madrid debut, a goal that came in the 38th minute against Villarreal, before being substituted later in the match for Ángel Di María. [96] Bale's second appearance for Madrid came in a 6–1 victory over Galatasaray in the Champions League. Although Bale only played the last 26 minutes, his free-kick led to Cristiano Ronaldo's second goal of the match. [97] On 28 September 2013, Bale made his home debut as a second-half substitute in a 1–0 defeat to local rivals Atlético Madrid. [98] After a brief appearance against Juventus in the Champions League[99], Bale made his debut in El Clásico on 26 October, but was substituted in the 61st minute. Barcelona won the game 2–1, and Bale's performance drew some criticism in the media. [100] Four days later, he scored two goals and assisted on two in a 7–3 victory over Sevilla. After his impressive performance the Spanish press nicknamed Bale The Cannon. [101] Atlético Madrid's Arda Turan (left) who chased Bale in September 2013 In November, he assisted two more goals in Madrid's 3–2 victory over Rayo Vallecano,[102] before scoring in a 2–2 draw against Juventus in the Champions League. [103] He then scored a 25-yard free kick against Galatasaray in the Champions League, a match madrid won 4–1 despite being down. [104] On November 30, Bale rounded the month with his first hat-trick for Real Madrid, as well as assisting Karim Benzema, in a 4-0 victory over Real Valladolid. It was a perfect hat-trick: a goal with a header and one with each foot. [105] On 26 February 2014, he scored two goals in Real Madrid's 6–1 win against Schalke 04 in the Champions League eighth round of the first 16 stages. [106] He then scored one of the team's three goals in a 3–0 quarter-final win over Borussia Dortmund on 2 April, taking him to five Champions League goals for the season. [107] In La Liga, he scored four goals in three games between 31 and 33, defeating Rayo Vallecano (5–0),[108] Real Sociedad (4–0)[109] and Almería (4–0). [110] It's hard to see a player like that sprint at that stage of the match. – Barcelona coach Gerardo Martino on Bale's 85th match winner for Madrid in the Copa del Rey final. [111] On 16 April, Bale scored the winning goal for Real Madrid with five minutes left in the 2014 Copa del Rey Final against rivals Barcelona. [112] Bale is considered one of the best goals of his career and singled out Barcelona defender Marc Bartra from the halfway line (with Bale running off the pitch at one point) before converting past goalkeeper José Manuel Pinto. [112] In the post-match interview Bale stated, I had to get around the player and go off the pitch to do it, while his Real Madrid team-mate Xabi Alonso commented, It was incredible, I've never seen anything like it. [111] The goal was Bale's 20th of the season and his first in a Clásico game. [111] On 24 May, Bale scored in the 110th minute of the extra time to set up Real Madrid 2–1 against city rivals Atlético Madrid in the UEFA Champions League final in 2014, when Los Blancos won their 10th European Cup. [113] The goal made Bale the first Welshman to score a goal in a European Cup final.[1] [114] Bale finished his debut season with 22 goals and 16 assists in all competitions. [115] Real Madrid's attacking trio Bale, Benzema and Cristiano, known as the BBC, finished the season with 97 goals. [116] Bale started the 2014–15 season with Real Madrid in 2015, starting the 2014–15 season in good form, playing a full 90 minutes and assisting cristiano ronaldo's first goal in a 2–0 win at Cardiff City Stadium against Sevilla to win the UEFA Super Cup in 2014. [117] After the game, ronaldo described his performance as fantastic. [118] Six days later, Bale scored his first goal of the season in a 4–2 away defeat to Real Sociedad. [119] Bale scored twice in Real's 8–2 victory over Deportivo La Coruña on 20 September 2014. [120] In December 2014, Bale scored in a third grand final, the second goal in a 2–0 win over San Lorenzo, to help the club win the FIFA Club World Cup. [122] In a match against Espanyol on 10 January 2015, Bale was booed by some Madrid fans who condemned him as being in shooting for goal and not passing to Ronaldo. [123] Bale was defended by Carlo Ancelotti over this plus difficulties at the end of the season. [124] On 18 April, Bale sustained a calf injury against Málaga. [125] In 2015–16 Bale scored two goals in Real Betis in September 2015 during the UEFA Champions League campaign. [116] His two goals took the total number of goals scored by Madrid's attacking trio Bale, Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo to 200 goals since they first played together in 2013. [116] On 20 December 2015, he scored four goals in a 10–2 victory over Rayo Vallecano. [126] On 9 January 2016, Bale scored his second hat-trick of the season in Madrid's 5–0 defeat to Deportivo La Coruña in Zinedine Zidane's first game as head coach of Los Blancos. [127] After being sidelined since 19 January, due to a calf injury he sustained in a 5–1 league victory at home to Sporting Gijón, during which he had also scored the opening goal of the match,[128][129] Bale returned to the pitch on 5 March; he scored Real Madrid's last goal of the match in Real Madrid's 7–1 home win over Celta de Vigo. [130] On 20 March 2016, Bale scored his 43rd La Liga goal in a 4–0 defeat to Sevilla to surpass Gary Lineker as the highest scoring British player in the history of the competition. [131] On 23 April, Bale scored twice as Real Madrid drew 0-2 and won 3–2 at Rayo Vallecano. [132] Bale was a regular starter when the team won the UEFA Champions League in 2015/16. He assisted the team's only goal and continued to score in the shootout against Atlético Madrid in the final. [133] 2016-17 On 30 October 2016, Bale signed a new contract with Madrid until 2022. [134] On 22 November 2016, Bale injured his ankle senor during the 2–1 victory at Sporting CP that would rule him out for up to four months. [135] On 23 April, Bale made his 100th appearance in La Liga in a 3–2 home defeat to Barcelona, but was forced out after suffering an injury. [136] Despite suffering several injuries during the season, he managed to present 19 times to Madrid as they won their 33rd La Liga title. [137] After missing more than a month, he returned to play for the 2017 UEFA Champions League final, which Madrid won. [139] 2017–18 Bale (right) with Luka Modrić during the 2018 Champions League final. The 2017/2018 season saw some improvement in Bale's goal record in the league, cup competitions, and in the Champions League. He was part of Real Madrid's victories in both the 2017 UEFA Super Cup[140] and the 2017 Supercopa de España,[141] and he was also part of the club's victorious 2017 FIFA Club World Cup campaign, winning a third trophy before 2018 had even begun. [142] In La Liga he made 26 appearances and scored 16 goals but Real Madrid failed to regain the title, finishing on In the UEFA Champions League competition 2017/2018, Bale scored once before the final. This goal came from the match against Borussia Dortmund in the group stage, when he opened the scoring in a 3–1 victory in Germany. [144] In the 2018 UEFA Champions League final, Bale scored two goals, first an overhead kick and then a long-range strike, resulting in a 3–1 victory over Liverpool, to help Real Madrid win their 13th Champions League trophy. [145] He became the first substitute to score twice in a Champions League final and was named man of the match. [146] [147] In 2018–19 After the BBC trifecta had been broken up with Ronaldo's transfer to Juventus, and the new coach Julen Lopetegui was replaced by new coach Julen Lopetegui[148], Bale was constantly present in August 2018, and was awarded Cinco Estrellas Mahou for Real Madrid player of the month, scoring against Getafe and Girona on the way. [149] On 19 December 2018, Bale scored a hat-trick in a 3–1 win over Kashima Antlers in the 2018 FIFA Club Cup semi-final. [150] He became the third player to score a hat-trick in a FIFA Club World Cup match after Cristiano Ronaldo and Luis Suárez. [151] He also became the third player to score in three editions of the competition after Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. [152] He was awarded the Golden Ball after Real Madrid won the competition by beating Al Ain FC 4–1 in the final. [154] On 9 February 2019, Bale scored his 100th goal for Real Madrid after scoring the team's third goal as a substitute in a 3–1 away win over city rivals Atlético Madrid; [155] however, he was also the source of controversy in the media after the match, due to the provocative goal celebration he made towards the opposition fans. [156] 2019–20 In July 2019, he was close to leaving the club, according to manager Zinedine Zidane,[157] but later that month a proposed move to Chinese club Jiangsu Suning was called off by Real Madrid. [158] In October 2019, Bale was said to be angry at Real Madrid and wanted to leave,[159] but later that month Zidane said bale had never asked to leave. [160] Ex-Real Madrid president Ramon Calderon also said Bale should return to Tottenham. [161] He made 16 appearances during the league season, winning La Liga in 2019–2020. [162] Return to Tottenham Hotspur On 19 September 2020, Bale returned to Tottenham Hotspur on a season-long loan. [163] He scored his first goal since returning to the club on 1 November as a substitute, in a 2–1 home win against Brighton & Hove Albion. [164] On 3 December, he scored his 200th career goal in a 3–3 draw against LASK in the Europa League. [165] International career Wales Bale plays for Wales in a qualifier against Austria in October 2016 Bale was selected by Wales at the end of 2005-06 for a friendly against Trinidad and Tobago on 27 27 In 2006,[166] In the match in Graz, Austria, he replaced David Vaughan after 55 minutes and assisted Robert Earnshaw's winning goal in a 2–1 victory. [167] At 16 years and 315 days, Bale became the youngest player to play for Wales, breaking a record held by Lewin Nyatanga who set that three months earlier; this record was itself replaced by Harry Wilson in November 2012. [168] Wales youth guru Brian Flynn commented that Bale was potentially a future star of the game, comparing his technical ability to Ryan Giggs. [169] On 7 October 2006, Bale became the youngest player ever to score for the senior national team in the European Championship qualifier against Slovakia with a free kick. [170] Bale was eligible to play for England through his grandmother, but he stated in 2016: 'I wouldn't care if I never qualified – I would never play for England. [171] After a long injury break, he returned and started in the World Cup qualifier against Finland on 10 October 2009. [172] On 14 October, he played a part in Wales' last World Cup qualifier by setting up David Vaughan to score the opening goal against Liechtenstein and winning the free kick that led to the second, Aaron Ramsey's first at senior level. [173] In December 2010, Bale was awarded the BBC Cymru Sports Personality of the Year trophy. [174] On 12 October 2012, Bale scored both goals for Wales in a 2–1 victory over Scotland in a 2014 World Cup qualifier. [175] Euro 2016 campaign Bale with Ashley Williams (left) at the July 2016 homecoming event in Cardiff. With thousands of supporters observing, Bale described the incident as very special in a BBC interview. [176] Bale scored two goals, one with a header and another with a free kick, as Wales beat Andorra 2–1 in their first euro 2016 qualifying campaign. [177] In doing so, he became Wales' 10th all-time top scorer with 14 goals, along with John Hartson. [178] Bale scored twice on 28 March 2015, in a 3–0 win away to Israel. [179] On 12 June, his 50th international, he scored the only goal to defeat Belgium in a home qualifier, taking Wales above the Belgians to the top of Group B.[180] He led the Jazz Richards' cross on 3 September in a 1-0 away win over Cyprus, leaving Wales three points away from qualification. [181] With uefa Euro 2016 qualification (the country's first major finals since the 1958 Fifa World Cup), on 13 October 2015, Bale scored his seventh goal in the qualifying campaign in Wales' final qualifier against Andorra at Cardiff City Stadium. [182] On 11 June, Bale scored the first goal in Wales' clash with Slovakia in their opening UEFA Euro 2016 match from a free kick, helping his country secure a 2-1 win and, in the process, lead them to their first win in a tournament in 58 years. [183] His goal saw him become the first Welsh To score at a major international tournament since Terry Medwin's goal against Hungary at the 1958 FIFA World Cup. [184] He then followed this up by scoring another opening free-kick goal against England in the second group stage, though Wales went ahead and lost the match 2–1; This made Bale the first player to score two free kicks in a European Championship since Germany's Thomas Häßler in 1992. [185] Bale scored his third goal of the tournament in a 3–0 win over Russia, making him their all-time top scorer in major tournaments, ahead of Ivor Allchurch, who scored twice in the 1958 World Cup; he also helped create the second goal of the match, scored by Neil Taylor. [186] In the last 16 against Northern Ireland at the Parc des Princes, Bale sent in the cross from which Gareth McAuley scored an own goal to give the Welsh victory. [187] Wales were eliminated after a 2–0 defeat to future champions Portugal in the semi-finals of the tournament on 6 July. [188] On 5 September 2016, Bale scored twice in a 4–0 win over Moldova in a 2018 Fifa World Cup qualifier. This brought him to 24 international goals, surpassing both Ivor Allchurch and Trevor Ford, and behind only Ian Rush's 28. [189] On 22 March 2018, with 29 goals, Bale became Wales' all-time top scorer, surpassing Ian Rush's 28, thanks to his first hat-trick of his international career in a 2018 China Cup match against China. [190] [191] Great Britain Bale, who met the age criteria for playing at the 2012 London Olympics, said in May 2011 I want to play in the Olympics for Great Britain's Olympic football team, in defiance of the FAW. [192] On 28 October 2011, Bale became the first player to be photographed wearing a model of the British football fan jersey in London, 2012 in London. In response, FAW chief executive Jonathan Ford said: Our position remains unchanged. We're not for Team GB. Gareth can make his own choices and make his own decisions. But we're not going to stop anyone from playing. On behalf of Bale a spokesman said while he is 100% Welsh, he is also British. [193] At the end of June 2012, Bale withdrew from the tournament with a back injury. On June 29, he informed Team GB football manager Stuart Pearce that he would not be available for selection because he had aggravated an old back and hip injury during a training run. Given the short recovery time between the Olympics and the start of the Premier League season, Bale had decided to withdraw rather than exacerbate the problem. [194] Bale recovered from his injury in good time to join spurs' pre-season tour of the United States, where he scored against LA Galaxy on July 24[196][197] and against the New York Red Bulls a week later. [198] Between those games, Bale also played against Liverpool when he injured himself in a tackle by Charlie Adam. [199] Bale's appearances on Spurs' pre-season tour with Team GB's Olympic games, where they drew with Senegal before victories over the United Arab Emirates and Uruguay took them through to the knockout stages, where they lost to South Korea after a shootout. Bale's withdrawal from the Team GB squad attracted calls for sanctions against him[196] including a ban from the rest of Spurs' pre-season tour[200] but, in the absence of an official complaint from Team GB, these were not implemented. Spurs manager, André Villas-Boas, defended the player who insisted bale had recovered faster than expected. [201] The club's stance was supported by British Olympic Association chairman Lord Moynihan. [202] Tottenham released a statement in connection with Bale's non-selection for Team GB, stating that Gareth sustained an injury as he built up his fitness in front of stuart pearce's side. MRI scan reports were sent to the FA medical team on June 29, 2012. He was subsequently selected on the basis of this injury and the inability to predict recovery time. This decision was not taken lightly and was made only after consultation with Team GB's medical team, who agreed after seeing the medical reports. [203] Style of play Bale (pictured in 2015) is best known for his pace, athleticism and bending attacks from a distance (often using knuckle ball technology) One of the fastest footballers in the world at his peak,[204] Bale started out as an offensive left-back or wing-back at the start of his career. [205] It was at Tottenham Hotspur that his manager Harry Redknapp decided to take advantage of Bale's pace and played him as a left winger, where he developed into a world-class player. [206] He is known for his speed, strength, stamina, close ball control, course ability and agility. His acceleration allows him to regularly get past defenders and into space where he can score or create. [206] [207] [208] [209] Bale is also a free kick specialist, and is known for using knuckle ball technology (developed by Juninho Pernambucano) when taking free kicks. [210] When moving forward on the wing, he regularly started scoring with powerful attacks from outside the penalty area. [212] In addition to his athletic and offensive capabilities, Bale has also drawn praise in the media for his work rate and defensive contribution sensieus outside the ball. [213] As Bale has developed into one of the most dangerous left wingers in the world, his style of play has won admiration from managers, current and former players such as Luís Figo,[214] José Mourinho,[215] Igor Štimac,[216] and Dani Alves. [217] Bale has been described as a footballer with tremendous speed, great passing ability, a large left foot and exceptional physical characteristics. [218] Former Liverpool player and BBC Sport pundit Mark Lawrenson said in 2011: What makes Gareth Bale so special? Simple. is one of the fastest players I've ever seen, but he has a different gear and the ability to find that extra pace within the next step. He has the ability to perform and use his technique at a great pace. [219] During the 2011–12 season, Harry Redknapp experimented with using Bale in a free role, as an attacking midfielder, or as a second striker. [205] [220] [221] The following season, André Villas-Boas, put Bale into this role on a more permanent basis. [222] Since joining Real Madrid, Bale has mostly been deployed as a winger, but mostly on the right flank, due to the presence of Cristiano Ronaldo on the left, a position that allows him to cut into the middle and hit the target with his stronger left foot; [223] He has also been used in a more attacking role at times, as a striker or centre-forward, [225][226] courtesy of his goalkeeper, movement off the ball, and ability to make attacking runs,[213][227] while his height, strength and course accuracy have seen him excel in the air in this role. [228] [229] [230] Despite his playing ability, however, his playing time with Real Madrid in recent seasons has been largely limited by recurring injury struggles. [208] [231] Reception On 2 November 2010, after a Champions League group stage match against Inter Milan, said teammate Rafael van der Vaart, everyone is afraid of him [Bale]. Maicon is one of the best defenders in the world, and he's killed him. [232] [233] In a report of the same match, Spanish newspaper El Mundo said: Bale combines the height and construction of an 800-meter runner like Steve Ovett with the acceleration and directness of a rugby winger like Bryan Habana. And when he gets to the byline, he delivers the curling cross like a Brazilian. Big words? Yes, but that's how Bale is – easily the biggest sensation of the opening month and a half of the Champions League. Ask Maicon what he thinks after the two exhibitions Bale turned against Inter. Yesterday he left Maicon for dead and then a cunning old fox like Lúcio was left in his wake as someone trying to follow the steam trail of an airplane. Three goals and two assists – against the European champions. His achievements have been amazing. [234] With the spotlight rising on Bale after his performances, in October 2012 his Spurs manager Harry Redknapp put him in the same class as both Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. He said: He is an amazing, fantastic talent and he is looking for Ronaldos and Messis in this world and he is getting better and better. He's almost unplayable when he's on his game. He's a real world-class player. There's no one he couldn't play for. He'd improve any team. [235] Bale has been accused of diving into parts of the British media. [236] However, this has been denied by Bale,[238] Redknapp[239] and Wales coach Chris Coleman. [240] On December 29, 2012, Bale yellow card for simulation for the 2012–2013 season. It was his fifth for simulation since the start of the 2011-12 season, and no other Premier League player had more than two warnings for simulation during that time. [241] Between August 2008 and his departure from the Premier League, he was booked eight times for simulation. The next most booked players were shown three yellow cards each. [242] Bale was ranked 12th on ESPN's list of the world's most famous athletes in 2016,[243] while The Guardian listed him as the seventh best football player on the planet that same year. [244] Outside of football Personal life Bale lives in Madrid with his fiancee Emma Rhys-Jones, his high school sweetheart. [245] Their first child, Alba Violet,[247] was born in Cardiff on 21 October 2012, and their second daughter, Nava Valentina, was born in the same city on 22 March 2016. [248] On July 17, 2016, a day after his 27th birthday, Bale announced that he and Rhys-Jones had become engaged. [249] On March 9, 2018, Bale announced that he and his fiancée were expecting their third child. [250] Later that year, on May 8, the couple announced the birth of their son Alex Charles. [251] Bale is teetotal. [252] [253] Trademark application, media, endorsements and wealth Bale wears Adidas X15 football boots On March 26, 2013, Bale filed an application with the Intellectual Property Office to register a logo based on his heart shaped goal celebration along with his squad number (eleven) to be used on a range of goods such as clothing and shoes. [254] Bale is a member of EA Sports' FIFA series, and he has appeared on the British, Irish and Middle Eastern covers of FIFA 14, along with global cover star Lionel Messi. [255] His 'heart' goal celebration is featured in FIFA 14. [256] Bale has approved several companies in his career and has current contracts with Adidas, EA Sports, Lucozade and BT Sport. [257] [258] In March 2014, Bale was the first player to wear the Adidas F50 football shoes. [259] In 2015, he presented the Adidas X15 football boots. [260] Active on social media, Bale has over 35 million Instagram followers, earning $185,000 per sponsored post, the second highest paid Briton after David Beckham. [261] Philanthropy In November 2014, Bale participated in FIFA's Campaign 11 against Ebola with a selection of the best soccer players from around the world, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar, Xavi and African star Didier Drogba. [262] Under the slogan Together, we can beat Ebola, FIFA's campaign was conducted in conjunction with the Confederation of African Football and Health Experts, where players held up 11 messages to raise awareness of the disease and ways to combat it. [262] In October 2020, he gave £15,000 for Christmas hampers in Swansea, Wales. [263] Golf Bale is a huge golf fan and has a copy of the 17th hole – the island of Green – at TPC at in his garden. [264] His love of golf was blamed by Spanish media as the reason he has spent so much time out injured for Real Madrid. [264] Bale was interviewed in episode 179 of The Erik Anders Lang Show podcast where he said his golf handicap was between a three and a four. [265] Career statistics Club As of match played 10 December 2020 Appearances and goals by club, season and competition Club Season League National Cup[a] League Cup[b] Europe Other Total Division Apps Case Apps Goals Apps Goals Apps Goals Southampton 2005-06[266] Championship 2 0 0 0 0 0 — — 17 2 0 2006-07[267] Championship 38 5 1 0 3 0 — 1[c] 0 43 5 Total 40 5 1 0 3 0 — 1 0 45 5 Tottenham Hotspur 2007-08[268] Premier League 8 2 0 1 1 3[d] 0 — 12 3 20 08-

09[269] Premier League 16 0 2 0 5 0 7[d] 0 — 30 0 2009-10[270] Premier League 23 3 8 0 3 0 — — 34 3 2010-11[271] Premier League 30 7 0 0 0 11[e] 4 — 41 11 2011-12[272] Premier League 36 9 4 2 0 2[f] 1 — 42 12 2012-13[273] Premier League League 33 21 2 1 1 1 8[f] 3 — 44 26 Total 146 42 216 3 10 2 31 8 — 203 55 Real Madrid 2013-14[274] La Liga 27 15 5 1 — 12[e] 6 — 44 22 2014-1 5[275] La Liga 31 13 2 0 — 10[e] 2 5[g] 2 48 17 1 2015-16[276] La Liga 23 19 0 0 — 8[e] 0 — 31 19 2016-17[277] La Liga 19 7 0 0 — 8[e] 2 0 0 27 9 2017-18[278] La Liga 26 16 2 1 — 1 7[e] 3 4[h] 1 39 21 2018-19[279] La Liga 29 8 3 0 — 7[e] 3 3 3 8 3 3[i] 3 42 14 2019-20[280] La Liga 16 2 1 1 — 3[e] 0 0 20 3 Total 171 80 13 3 — 55 16 12 6 251 105 Tottenham Hotspur (loan) 2020/21[281] Premier League 3 1 0 0 0 0 6[f] 1 — 9 2 Career total 360 128 30 6 13 2 92 25 13 6 508 167 ^ Includes fa cup, Copa del Rey ^ Includes League Cup ^ Appearance in Championship play-offs ^ a b Uefa Cup appearances ^ a b c d e f g h Appearances in the UEFA Champions League ^ a b c Appearances in the UEFA Europa League ^ An appearance in the UEFA Super Cup , two in the Supercopa de España, two appearances and two goals in the FIFA Club World Cup ^ An appearance in the UEFA Super Cup, one in the Supercopa de España, two appearances and a goal in the FIFA Club World Cup ^ An appearance in the Supercopa de España, two appearances and three goals in the FIFA Club World Cup International Main article : List of international goals scored by Gareth Bale As of the match played 18 November 2020[282] Appearances and goals of the national team and year National team Year Apps Goal Wales 2006 4 1 2007 7 1 2008 5 0 2009 7 0 2010 4 1 201 1 6 3 2012 5 3 2013 5 2014 5 3 2015 6 5 2016 11 7 2017 3 0 2018 6 5 2019 9 2 2020 4 0 Total 87 33 Awards Tottenham Hotspur Football League Cup runner-up: 2008-09[283] Real Madrid La Liga : 2016-17,[284] 2019-20[162] Copa del Rey: 2013-14[285] Supercopa de España: 2017[[286] UEFA Champions League: 2013-283-285]14,[287] 2015-16,[288] 2016-17,[289] 2017-18[290] UEFA Super Cup : 2014,[291] 2017[292] Klubb-VM: 2014,[293] 2017,[294] 2018[295] Årets individuella spelare i Tottenham Hotspur Young: 2009–10,[296] 2010–11[297] Årets spelare i Tottenham Hotspur: 2012 –23[298] UEFA Best Player in Europe Award 3:e plats: 2016[299] ÅRETS UEFA-lag: 2011,[300] 2013[301] UEFA Champions League-trupp för säsongen: 2015–16[302] Årets walesiska fotbollsspelare : 2010,[48] 2011,[303] 2013,[304] 2014,[305] 2015,[306] 2016[307] Årets ESM-lag: 2012–13[308] Årtiondets fotbollstränare: 2015[309] Månadens spelare i Premier League: april 2010, januari 2012, Februari 2013[310] PFA Årets LAG: 2006–07 Championship,[311] 2010–11 Premier League,[53] 2011–12 Premier League,[312] 2012–13 Premier League[83] PFA-spelares spelare Årets spelare : 2010–11,[53] 2012–13[83] ÅRETS UNGA SPELARE i PFA : 2012-13[83] FWA Footballer of the Year: 2012-13[13][2013[2012/13[2013[2013[2013