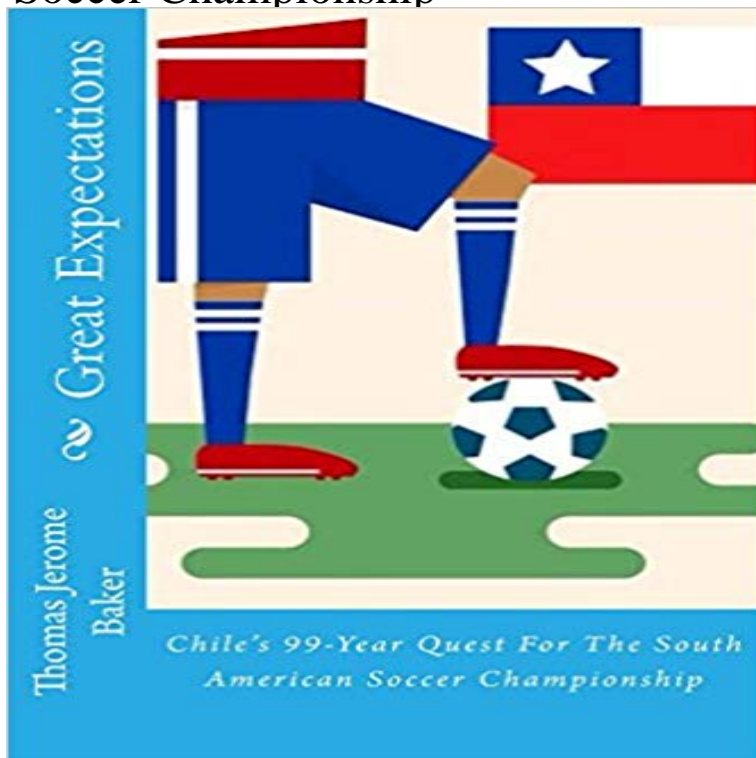


## Great Expectations: Chiles 99-Year Quest For The South American Soccer Championship



You and I are fans of La Roja, Chiles national soccer team. Chile has a 100-year history of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Many times, in many places, home and abroad, we discovered a way to lose, usually after having played like world champions (2007, 2000, 1987, 1962, 1955, 1954, 1952, 1945). That's why we suffered, but we kept on loving La Roja, even when we knew in our heart of hearts our ultimate destiny. We knew, deep in our hearts, we would lose again. It was our destiny. If there was a second place, it was ours...unless there was a third place. Then we would gladly give up second place in order to have third place. Worse than that, for example, Chile was not allowed to compete in the 1990 and 1994 World Cup. An entire country paid the unjust price for the misconduct of one person. In their prime, a generation of world class players was denied World Cup participation. No matter what happened, Chile kept coming back for more. Of course, La Roja would then give us more suffering. Mind you, I'm talking about passionate suffering of the soul. The passion has been burning brightly since 1895, when the Football Federation of Chile (ANFP) was founded. Now you know why we play the beautiful game, win or lose. It was beautiful in 1955, 1956, 1987, and 1991. World Cup 1962 was as good as it got for most of us. We won third place in the world, the whole world. Four times we got close, second place, but never first. Yes, winning second place, four times, is a great moral victory, but we were never champions. Then Marcelo Bielsa came to Chile and taught us a new way to play. We attacked, we pressed the other team all over the field. Our confident, high-energy, aggressive, free-flowing, and fluid style made us winners. When Jorge Sampaoli became coach, he did things the Bielsa way. And we kept on winning. After 99 years of losing, Chile, playing beautifully, finally won her first

championship. We are champions, now, always, and forever...

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Santos at age 15 and the Brazil national football team at 16. .. Pele also played in the South American Championship.