



Fred – Frederico Chaves Guedes – is expected to be one of the stars of next year's World Cup. Last season the 22-year-old Brazilian scored 40 goals in just 43 appearances (including 14 during the Copa do Brazil, an all-time record) for Cruzeiro, the club in Belo Horizonte where Real Madrid's Ronaldo learned his trade. One was the fastest goal in Brazilian football history, netted after just 3.17 seconds of play.

Belo Horizonte (beautiful horizon) – the fourth largest city in Brazil and one of its main business centres – was built with wide avenues and leafy suburbs, but now it faces problems shared with many other Latin American cities. Many of its 2.2 million people live in slums, where they don't have access to sewage or freshwater and are threatened by flooding in winter.

Fred was born in Teofilo Otoni, in Minas Gerais, also the birthplace of Pelé, probably the world's greatest-ever footballer. Minas Gerais is one of the states most affected by logging, road-building and the growth of towns and cities, which increasingly threaten the forests covering around three-fifths of the country, as well as the species that live in them. Its Atlantic forests – which are home to up to 8 per cent of all the world's plants and 5 per cent of its vertebrates, including 21 primate species found nowhere else – are particularly endangered. And agriculture, pastures and settlements have replaced trees that used to cover the southern and eastern parts of the state.

Now Fred wears the No. 11 shirt for France's champions, Olympique Lyon. TUNZA caught up with him there.

Goal **recycling**

How are you enjoying your move to France?

Being a football player in Brazil was a tremendous opportunity and a dream come true, as it let me really help my family. I loved Belo Horizonte, and the two clubs I had the opportunity to play for were very positive and beneficial for my career. And its people are very warm and friendly.

Europe is very different... the cold weather, the food, the way of life... but I like Lyon very much. I have a lot of people around to help me, and I'm making new friends. European football is different, too: the game is very quick, the opposite of how it is played in Brazil, where it is slower because of the hot weather. And the organization of the championships here in Europe is taken very seriously, which I find very good for sports.

I feel I can help my club do well. I know I can improve through training, pushing myself to the limit and learning how to care for my health.

You come from a very beautiful area – do you feel that we know enough about the environment?

Brazil is a wonderful country to visit because of its lush forests and beaches, as well as its variety of different peoples living there together without racism.

Yes, nature in Brazil is very rich and beautiful. But people who have always lived in big cities suffer, as they do not know nature. You need to travel to small towns and villages to see and experience the environment. But I think we actually are taking the environment more seriously – people nowadays think more about the future of their kids.

Have you any thoughts about what young people can do to help preserve the environment?

Recycling is the best way to preserve nature and its potential. Do not kill our forests. It is only in these last years that Brazilians have become conscious of these issues.

Knowing more about our planet is of course very important. Young people these days care more about nature and what is around them – but they need more information about what is going on and what is happening in other places. I believe that all countries can teach us something about culture and nature.