

The Wabara case: basketball against racism

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It has a name that recalls music but that wants to be also a provocation against racism: **"I want a black skin"** is the campaign launched by the **Italian Basketball Federation** after the case involving **Abiola Wabara**, the Italian centre basketball player with Nigerian origins, who, during a playoff match of women's A1 that her team, Geas Sesto San Giovanni, had played on the Comense's court, was the target of insults and spitting.

Federbasket, that had immediately taken an unequivocal stand through its president **Dino Meneghin** ("They are idiots" he said, referring to those who said the insults), now has thought to an initiative to bring to the indoor stadiums the next weekend.

"Basketball has always been characterised by multiracialism" we can read on the federation's statement, "In the course of time, foreign players have allowed our sport to grow up and become apparent. The Italian Basketball Federation asks to all members of the initiative and to the fans to colour their skin with a **very evident black mark**, in the next championship play-day, as representation of all the colours of every ethnic group, to feel ourselves all the same." All the main national associations join the campaign: Serie A, LegaDue, Lega Nazionale Pallacanestro (men's B1, B2 e C3.) the women's Legabasket; with them also the unions of the players' (Giba), the coaches (Usap) and the referees (Aiap).

Also in the Masnago indoor stadium, where **the highly anticipated derby between Cimperio and AJ Milano (in the side picture Marco Mordente, from Milan and that plays for the Italian national team, set the example)** is planned, will be fulfilled the instruction of the Federation: "We have just received the message and we will organise ourselves to join the initiative" **explains Cecco Vescovi, president of the Varese Pallacanestro.**

"We are only waiting for further indications, so that we can "unify" the "colouring" of the players; however it will be about drawing a mark on the body before entering the court."

A movement that **in Italy doesn't have any large scale records**; the initiative reminds the one that was undertaken some years ago by Treviso Calcio (football team), whose players reacted in this way after the insults received by one of their own teammates.

Meanwhile **the question and answering does not calm down on the Wabara-case.** After the president of Comense, Antonio Pennestri, stood up for the supporters of Lariano, by saying that Wabara should not had reacted to the insults "losing points to the level of who had offended her", it was the turn of the organised ultras groups of Comasco to say their piece. **The Curva Como (football) and the Eagles Cantù (Basketball)**, were trotted out as potential authors of the insults and spits and they had first denied that they were at the PalaSampietro and then they had Abiola Wabara of lying, by speaking of chorus and spits that never existed and they ask the basket player to offer her apologies.

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