

“Passi da gigante” by Dino Meneghin

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Three or four generations of fans, people with grey hair (if any) sitting next youngsters that are at maximum thirty years old that listen with their mouths wide open. And even among the public, a **resounding percentage of men over six feet**, that have come to listen to stories of those who were major players. **Their stories, the history:** of the Varese and the Italian basketball team told by a man who more than any other represents it, **Dino Meneghin**. The Legend sits informally, on a table in the Salone Estense, to talk about **his biography "Passi da gigante"**, written with **Flavio Vanetti**, another Varese player that during the period of the great Ignis has experienced it before from fans like the **Mayor Fontana** and then as a journalist such as **Ettore Pagani**, called to coordinate the evening organised by the municipality.

A full hour, spent like a real **"One man show" hosted by Meneghin firsthand**, a bit like his performances on the court. Dino speaks off the cuff, recognizing people in the audience, and asking those present to confirm his stories. Tales that, if we did not know that were real, might seem like **the result of the pen of a very imaginative author**. Starting from the beginning: "I was a Marcantonio already when I was eight years old, I have always been the tallest of my age and my gym teacher what did he make me do? "The shot put" laughs Meneghin "Luckily, one day at the "Pellico" (secondary school) I saw **Nico Messina** that made me run while wearing a coat and told me to buy a pair of basketball shoes. My mom did not know what that word was but she bought me them. **Red, those of Simmenthal:** Messina as first thing ... made me change them. "

In Milan, years later, Dino would actually landed in generating strong stomach ache in the Varese fans: a chapter carefully avoided in the evening of the Este Palace, where the memory

was almost all for the legend of the "yellow and blue avalanche".

"A team that, according to an American study" – explains Vanetti – "was the most successful **in the history of basketball** based on the games played and won." For this reason, the signing of the "Corriere" launches a major appeal to the Mayor Fontana: "The first thing I would do is to point out the **symbolic places of the Great Ignis** that can be found in the city. The older offices, the fan gatherings and so on. With a minimum amount you can recreate a route that signals a unique history. "

MeanwhileDino continues to hold court: **by the (fake) Russian Roulette staged by Iellini** (with a real gun) in the European fight with **Nantes** with Sandro Galleani protagonist and Meneghin only stopped by the scissors wielded by a Slavic player. And yet the transfer to the East ("with the national team we had many tournaments in Bulgaria and Romania ... never in France, Spain or the Maldives!"), **The trips to Russia** for the Cup with salami and Parmesan cheese hidden in a suitcase, the **match in South America** against the local hero nicknamed Mandrake, a man that spread sweat and hair oil over the marker opponent whenever he smoothed his hair. A handful of stories, dozens, hundreds and the proposal relaunched to Lucarelli **to write a book-manual with all the jokes** invented and implemented by the players of the strongest team in Europe. "Because when it comes to sports, we always approach terms like" battle "or" sacrifice "or" spitting blood ". But it is nicer to talk with positive terms, it is better to win joking and smiling. "

And so, while waiting for encyclopedia of the yellow and blue team, you can read "Passi da gigante" where the stories are there in abundance. And spending the 18 euros of the cover price will also help the [Fondazione Fade](#) which deals with different types of hepatitis.

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