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Yamamay, an affirmative decision: continued support to Futura

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The shadow hanging over the new Futura Volleyball team has disappeared. **Yamamay will continue to support the Italian championship team**, and has confirmed the sponsorship contract, which has just expired, for another year (with an option to renew for subsequent years), although the amount of the sponsorship has been reduced. The positive outcome to this matter had been in the air, considering also the location chosen for the announcement, the head office of the Inticom Group, in Gallarate. And yet, before the press conference, there was a surreal atmosphere, with the relaxed silence of those who knew, or thought they knew, everything already, and the much tenser silence of those who still feared the unthinkable. But then, a few minutes later, the verdict most hoped for was given by Francesco Pinto, the chairman of Inticom, and Luciano Cimmino, the chairman of Pianoforte Holding, which manages the clothing company. At the end of the conference, with an unexpected, albeit not unusual, turn of events, Mayor Gigi Farioli arrived to bless the new “marriage”. But it would be wrong to describe all of this just as a clever publicity strategy. There was, indeed, a real danger that the Futura team would lose their long-standing partner, if **the suggestion of introducing a second sponsor (whose identity we should discover in a few days) had not been made**. In the meantime, the end of the uncertainty is a very important step forward, as it will allow the team immediately to look at the market, with solid economic backing.

During the meeting, Francesco Pinto was bursting with ideas and emotion. “The championship, and the other victories this year have changed the history of our group,” he explained. “We were thinking about leaving volleyball for something more important and international, but **the response following the championship win, also abroad, made it clear that we could make an effort** and go on to play in a top level Champions League, and give meaning to everyone’s commitment.” And, for the most important European competition, Yamamay might be joined by a second sponsor. “It’s not one of the names mentioned during the few last days,” Pinto said (so not Banca Intesa, who hold 10% of the Pianoforte share), “but the team is considering a second partner, and I hope they announce it soon. There’s room on the T-shirt, **and we’re looking at a double name**. Nobody is being ruled out, but I hope the new sponsor agrees with our line, and focuses on the business approach, without interfering in the technical management of the team, which is what I think happens in all of the teams in the A1 League.” But Pinto went on, and suggested a different scenario for the next few years. “I’d like this to be a season of reflection, to imagine a broader model of participation, which returns the team to the region. I’m not talking about a consortium of companies, but about the **direct involvement of fans, who could give concrete**

and constant support to the team, another approach to sponsorship. Let's be clear, it's only an idea, but if we can't do this in Busto Arsizio, it means it can't be done in any other Italian team." In short, a Barcelona-style Yamamay team, with shareholding by the people? It is too early to say, but it is going in the right direction.

Going by the facts, the reduced budget and the farewell announced by Massimo Aldera are still not a sufficient reason to uncork the sparkling wine, but on both the fronts, Pinto is confident. "We have a bunny in our pocket," he said, in Roger Rabbit-style, hoping also that the CEO might review his position. "The beauty of the project," he concludes, "has overcome the limits imposed by time and circumstances. We've gone the extra mile." **Luciano Cimmino** remembered the results of the other sports teams sponsored by the holding company: not only Federica Pellegrini, but also women's soccer, which, this year, achieved promotion to A1 League (which has been absent from Naples for thirty years), and water polo, which reached the quarterfinals of the major league.

"The aim of our sponsors is never purely commercial," Cimmino said. "**We always embrace a project, and we try to achieve the top.**" Mayor Farioli agreed, and did not exclude the possibility of support from the town council, maybe in terms of a reduced cost of hiring the sports arena.

The last item of news, which might be less important, but is nevertheless much appreciated, is the announcement of greater involvement of the female athletes in the company's advertising campaigns: in the near future, we **will see the "butterflies" wearing designer pyjamas and swimsuits**. And since beauty is not everything, we might also read the degree thesis about Yamamay, that Floortje Meijners is currently writing.

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