

VareseNews

Marotta: “Motivation and skill beat recommendations”

Pubblicato: Venerdì 11 Aprile 2014

Fans of Juventus adore him, those of other teams look at him with suspicion, as the manager of the “Vecchia Signora” (Old Lady). **In Varese, people speak about him** with admiration, respect, but also regret over having to link his name with that of a controversial chairman, Mario Colantuoni. But everyone agrees on one thing, when they speak about **Giuseppe Marotta, 57, from Avigno**: he is someone that has run the course in football, working his way up from the bottom, and coming to occupy **one of the most important and coveted posts**.

Beppe (as everyone calls him) spoke about his climb to the top, today (Tuesday 8 April) **at Insubria University**, in the Main Hall in Via Dunant, Varese; Beppe is the second, important guest in the series of encounters organised by the course in Communication Sciences, after the great master of ceremonies of finance and politics, Alfredo Ambrosetti.

“The university’s aim is to put different sectors in town in contact, and so, I’m happy to see a lot of students and several people from outside the college,” the Dean, **Alberto Coen Porisini** (a self-declared Inter supporter) and the degree course chairman, **Fabio Minazzi**, said.

Marotta was interviewed by **Gianno Spartà**, the long-time reporter for the newspaper *La Prealpina*, and strong defender, at the beginning of the encounter, of sports journalists (“who describe something that is seen by everyone, that isn’t ‘hidden’, like certain political and judicial matters, and, therefore, a constant target of criticism”).

It was Spartà who pointed out that the 5-0 suffered by Varese was missing from the Juventus website, in the section dedicated to the worst defeats. “I don’t know why it’s not on the website, but I remember that match perfectly,” Marotta explained. “**That day, I was a ball boy**, it was the greatest championship in Varese’s history, and that **was the first team that got my heart racing**, the one for which I later became warehouseman and then manager, the one where my career in the world of football began.”

YESTERDAY AND TODAY – On several occasions, Marotta (who has a forty-year career behind him) described the differences between football back then and football today. **About the players**, he said, “They used to bring simplicity and, often, the values of the Italian province. Today, they’re much more **emancipated and demanding**, and they have very different daily encounters with the managers and trainers. They’re managed as though they were companies.”

Marotta then spoke about **the chairmen**. “The ones I’ve worked with were almost all great industrialists, and I learnt a lot from each of them. Once, they were patrons who felt a social duty to support the teams in their towns; today **the model has evolved**. Some, like Moratti, are still like that, although they’re more up to date; others, like Berlusconi, have used football as a powerful part of their image; then there are those (the Varese of old, Pozzo’s Udinese) who have this activity to promote and give value to young people.” And **the trainers**. “We’ve gone from the former footballer that moves to the bench to put into practice the empirical concepts he’d learnt, to **highly qualified professional figures** that have to face strong and

stimulating competition.”

THE TIME OF JUVE – Of course, he could not fail to talk about the current season, particularly Juventus’s place at the top of the league, and about the future transfer market. “As Trapattoni would say, ‘Don’t count your chickens before they hatch’. **I don’t think the championship is already ours**; there are 18 points up for grabs, and that’s a lot, even though our team has accumulated a good advantage over Roma, **established by an extraordinary performance**. But setting the pace in sport is tiring; we’ve done it for three years, thanks above all to **a leader like Antonio Conte**, and we hope to bring the result home.” On request, Marotta also spoke about his great rivals, **Inter and Milan**, but without causing any controversies, as Andrea Agnelli did. “Those who live sport know there are important cycles that end, at a certain point, and we know this also in Varese, if we consider the great Ignis basketball team. This season, Milan and Inter haven’t been competitive, but I think that **with the fortunes and importance of their owners, they could soon be on top again**. Juve has had some advantages from this, but I think that recent results are due to the merit of our team. About the market, we have a good economic situation, but we always have to respect certain economic and financial balances. We’ll continue to act in accordance with these guidelines, and trust in the ability of our trainers more than on crazy expenditures. Having said this, **Juve is a buying, and not a selling, company**.”

STADIUM, SCHOOLS AND FACILITIES – It might not have been necessary to listen to Marotta’s talk today at Insubria, but **we would have expected to see some representatives of the Town Council and of Varese 1910**, as the Juventus manager spoke on several occasions of the importance of the stadium and of having other associated facilities. “The Juventus Stadium is extraordinarily important; it gives a **sense of belonging**, it acts as a deterrent to violence, it has improved an area of the town, it produces **greater income** for the company, great human warmth on the part of the people, and has also created a lot of **jobs**. It hasn’t stayed like the others, a white elephant, that opens only on Sunday, but is alive throughout the week, contributing to improving the club’s turnover.”

Beside the stadium, Juve is working on **the “Continassa” project**, “an area of 40,000 m² that can be used by the first team and by the juniors, but also with a hotel, private construction, and shopping spaces. And a high school, because **the job of us managers is also to act responsibly towards the 300 families** of the boys in the talent centre. The boys forget all too often that they’re students before they are footballers, so we’ve created the Juventus High School, which combines sport and school, and enables many to get their diplomas, including some former footballers.”

LADS, THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD DO – Lastly, Marotta turned several times to the numerous students present, many of whom are studying Communication Sciences (there was surprise in the hall when he revealed that **the Juventus press office has no fewer than 30 people** ...). “First of all, my advice is start where things are difficult; it’s not easy to follow a path where everything goes well. Then, remember that **you learn by making mistakes**: experience, including the mistakes, is a great teacher. I remember something that Italo Allodi (a great sports director from the past, who also worked in Varese, *ed.*) said: in football, the bricklayer doesn’t become an architect overnight. It’s not enough to know certain mechanisms to be successful, and recommendations aren’t what you need. It’s true, **I’ve seen some that have been recommended** in my job, **but they didn’t manage to prove themselves**, and they were soon overtaken. What counts is motivation, combined with skill: only then will you be successful.”

And among the most important people in his working life, **Marotta mentioned Mario Colantuoni**, who was the chairman of Juventus at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, who was associated with Juventus's just failing to get into Serie A, and with the subsequent selling off of players to Triestina. "He was **the first person to have faith in me** and he drove me to jump onto the classic train that passes only once in a lifetime. Since then, I've learnt that, in football, glory can come and go quickly; this is why I've tried to **maintain certain values, like simplicity and humility**, which doesn't mean a lack of ambition. But respect for humanity, for the people around you and for what you do professionally are characteristics that should always be taken account of."

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