

When Gigi Riva was a child prodigy

Pubblicato: Mercoledì 1 Dicembre 2010

Gigi Riva 50 years later. An interview to the strongest striker of all time, published in the Repubblica newspaper and taken by VareseNews, awakened the memories of one of our regular readers, **Enzo Zuin, 66 years old, entrepreneur in Besozzo, whose hobbies are writing and journalism** (he was part of the board of directors of the “Voce”, an Italian newspaper founded and directed by Indro Montanelli, as shareholder readers’ representative.) On 16th June 1960, when he was sixteen years old, Enzo wrote his first short article for the “Prealpina” (a newspaper published in the north–west of Lombardy), commenting on a youth football tournament, in which seven players took part, in the Brebbia oratory. The Leggiuno team won the tournament, thanks to a promising young Italian footballer’s goals, Gigi Riva, at the beginning of a career rich in goals and victories: “During the grand final, Leggiuno beat Gavirate 8–4 with little Riva scoring 4 goals” Zuin tells. “I immediately realised, and I wrote it, that **I was facing a truly promising Italian footballer.** During that Trofeo Triangolo Giallo (Yellow Triangle Trophy), many people could admire the feats of the one who I defined as “**lightning**” in the provincial football setting. Riva’s teammates called him “*el furzelina*” : I remember two wonderful goals that bent the hands of the skilled goalkeeper of Gavirate team. **Very thin and with fork legs, he was able to kick with a scathing and deadly strength.**” A year later, in 1961, Riva transferred to the Laveno team, so until 1964 he played with the Legnano team kit, then to Cagliari, where, in a historic feat, he managed to win the championship in the sporting year ‘69/’70.

Zuin didn’t limit himself to memories, but succeeded in contacting **the Leggiuno goalkeeper from that time, Domenico Tosini, who was born in 1942:** “After that match in Brebbia, we ran away with breathless haste to go and play for another trophy in Cardana in Besozzo: we played many of them one after the other, to earn some money; one Sunday in the morning, afternoon and evening we played three semi-finals on various pitches and a final in Cadrezzate” – Tosini remembers. “In Cardana Riva we scored seven goals during the grand final where we won 9 – 1. **It was a great time, also because having had Gigi, future Italian football champion, as a teammate is not something that everyone can experience.** Furthermore, we were young and we were 50 years old younger.” After the chat between Tosini and Zuin, **an old photo** of the Leggiuno team also appeared, taken in 1955 in Leggiuno Oratory, with “*el furzelina*” Gigi Riva, when he was a 11 year–old child, but already recognisable (he is the third from the left on the front row). Memories that resurfaced thanks to an article by VareseNews, remembering a little great champion who from “*el furzelina*” became “The Rumble”.

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