

VareseNews

“Joel was a leader, a generous driving force”

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“**Someone will certainly be missing** in the changing room, that empty space in the group will be felt.” These were the words of **Paolo Masini**, the trainer of Joel, who died on Tuesday, after he was hit by a train outside the station in Venegono Superiore. The teenager was crossing the railway tracks, and was not wearing earphones, as it had initially been suggested. Maybe he was **distracted**, by his haste to catch the train to school. The fact remains that **Joel Moreno Garcia**, a student at the Hotel School in Gallarate, is no longer with us.

On Tuesday evening, the **first rosary** was said in **San Giorgio Parish Church** in Venegono Superiore, where Joel lived with his stepfather, his mother and his two younger sisters. The church was packed with people: **relatives, friends and acquaintances**, but above all, young people, **school companions**, and almost all of the **Insubria** football team, from Gazzada Schianno, who had come to remember their companion. “We were going to play next **Thursday evening**, a rescheduled championship match, but we don’t feel like it now,” Masini continued. “**I don’t know if the team will be on the pitch** on Sunday, either. It’s been a great shock for everyone.”

The date of Joel’s funeral is not known, his body is still being held by the judicial authorities, but it should be matter of hours. The football team, Insubria Calcio, will take part in Joel’s funeral. In the meantime, **in the village and among his friends**, the pain over his death is enormous.

“On Sunday, he scored **a great goal** against Rhodense, it was outstanding,” the trainer said. “It hurts to think that I’m never going to see him again. He had great qualities, but above all, he was a player that knew how to play in a team. **He was a leader**, he always played an active role, he was determined, a driving force for everyone.”

The Junior Insubria team is at the bottom of the championship division, and it has been very difficult recently. “I trained Joel for two years,” Masini continued. “Then he went back to Ecuador last summer, but he said **that he wasn’t happy there**, so he came back to Italy in November. And he came back to playing in our team, in his team. I also recently returned to training, **and it was a pleasure to see him again, to play with him**. At that time, we had to work for the good of the team, to avoid favouritism, and he did it, often forgoing **his unconventional moves**. He had grown up a lot.”

The trainer’s recollection continued, his voice, often broken with emotion. “He gave his soul when he played, not only on the field, but also in the changing room. **He was an extrovert, extremely generous, and he had a strong personality**, he led the group, and gave of himself for the others. We had discussions in the past, about football, because he took the initiative too much, but that’s how he was, that was his approach to football. As a trainer, these things make you really angry, **but they’re also the things that endear a player to you more**. Now, it’s going to take time for a bit of calm to return, not only to me, but to the whole team. We miss him greatly in the changing room.”

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