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## Examples of Discrimination in Football

### **Indicative age: 15 - 18**

This source collection provide a range of the unfortunately large number of episodes in which football-related discrimination has taken place. The selection tries to cover a large spectrum of victims (mostly players, but also coaches and referees), who had suffered various forms of hostility because of the colour of their skin, because of their gender, ethnical or religious beliefs and political ideas.

Many of the episodes take place in strictly contemporary times, but some of them are related with 20<sup>th</sup> century dictatorships, such as Italian fascism and Spanish Francoism.

Analysing them, students can have an idea of the many reasons why a player can suffer discrimination, but also ow it changed during the last century, how many “steps forward” have been done and how many are yet to be done.

All the articles are bound to create discussion, so they are especially useful for group work, open questions and activities like “Find another example in your country” can easily be done.

This collection of Examples has been developed by Enrico Cavalieri within the framework of the Football Makes History project, which is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union as part of the Football History for Inclusion project.

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# New law allows Italian women's teams to actually pay their players

This is so, so very overdue.

The biggest soccer news of the day in Italy is that the budget committee of the Senato della Repubblica has passed a new amendment to the law that governs professional sports in the nation which will allow for full professionalism in the women's game for the first time, removing the salary cap and allowing the teams in Serie A to pay their players actual wages. The Senate has allocated €11 million over the next 3 years to allow the semiprofessional clubs to make the transition.



Calcio Femminile Serie A, to give it its full name, has been forced to treat its players as semiprofessionals for its entire existence, forbidding teams to pay salaries; the only “wage” that a woman in Serie A receives is a per diem of €60 (and that for just 5 days a week) and a match bonus of €77.47. That’s obviously miles short of a living wage, which means that most women players in Serie A rely on part-time jobs or family and friends to make ends meet.

While the push for full professionalization—and its attendant perks of a paycheck and health insurance (pretty important for an athlete)—has been building since at least 2015, most teams in Serie A resisted the change on the grounds that paying salaries would bankrupt them. This wasn’t a baseless fear, either, as Atalanta Mozzanica was forced to shut up shop due to a cash shortfall just this summer.

While Fiorentina deserves praise for founding its women’s team—the first in Italy attached to a men’s club—the annual operating budget of €800,000 isn’t even a drop in the bucket of the Viola’s finances; for comparison’s sake, that’s roughly two-thirds of what Cyril Théréau brings home every year. Even if the brass wanted to pay the players more, the rules prevented them from doing so.

With other clubs like Juventus, AS Roma, AC Milan, and Inter Milan following in the Viola footsteps, though, there’s suddenly no shortage of teams that are capable of actually paying their female players. Although the disparity in salaries between men and women will remain one of exponential proportions, at least the women will be able make something resembling a living.

“We are very happy!” said Katia Serra, former Serie A striker and spokesperson for the Associazione Italiana Calciatori (the Italian Players’ Association), told L Football. “I want to thank Senator [Tommaso] Nannicini [who sponsored the bill], the government, and all the parliamentarians who have worked for this momentous occasion. Now the alibi that professionalism is too expensive no longer works. The €11 million allocated are a sufficient fund for the necessary economic coverage. This is only a first step, fundamental to building professionalism together with the FIGC and all the federations interested in finally giving equal treatment to women athletes.”

Italy has fallen miles behind England, France, and Germany in funding women’s football, and it shows: Fiorentina are one of the three strongest clubs in the nation and were absolutely destroyed by Arsenal

in the Champions League. The ability to pay wages will allow Italian clubs to attract better talent and let domestic players focus on their football instead of worrying about how to handle the bills, which should in turn lead to a more competitive league, a higher standard of play, and improved performance in continental competitions, both club and international.

The new law doesn't come into effect until January of 2020, so the Viola brain trust has to figure out very quickly how to set up a pay structure. The biggest changes, though, will probably occur in the summer, when the club can start signing players to fully professional, guaranteed contracts. Rocco Comisso has already shown that he's serious about the women's side, putting in appearances at matches and training sessions, and it's easy to believe that he'll invest as heavily as possible.

For women's soccer on the peninsula, throughout Europe, and all over the world, this is a solid beginning. It's not the end, though. It's not even the middle. We're still not sure what this will look like in practice; there could well be a salary cap put in place to allow those clubs that aren't attached to another organization to remain at least somewhat competitive. The truth is that we just don't know how it's going to look because nobody's ever seen a league in Italy go from semipro to pro. All we can say is that it's a huge win for the players, the fans, and the sport, and that should be enough.

Source:

[https://www.violanation.com/fiorentina-latest-news-updates/2019/12/12/21011257/new-law-allows-italian-womens-teams-to-actually-pay-their-players-fiorentina-professional-serie-a,](https://www.violanation.com/fiorentina-latest-news-updates/2019/12/12/21011257/new-law-allows-italian-womens-teams-to-actually-pay-their-players-fiorentina-professional-serie-a)

last accessed on 26 April 2021.

# U.S. Soccer, not Megan Rapinoe, was the distraction on Thursday night

By: Nina Mandell | September 16, 2016 10:18 am



U.S. Soccer had been worried that Megan Rapinoe's protest would take away from Heather O'Reilly's farewell game.

Instead, as Washington Spirit owner Bill Lynch did, they stole the thunder on their own with a statement slamming Rapinoe's quiet protest during the national anthem.

Rapinoe — following what she said earlier was a lot of discussions back and forth with US Soccer — took a knee during the national anthem before her team's game against Thailand on Thursday night. It was, to be clear, a big deal. There's a difference between kneeling while wearing your club team uniform and the United States

national team uniform. She knew that.

"I think it is a bigger deal," she said last week. "Especially when you have two anthems, I've already seen stuff about standing for the Thai anthem and not standing for the US anthem. Again I think that's people uncomfortable with the conversation that I'm trying to have ... but I think it is a big deal. I take playing for my country very seriously. Anyone who knows me knows that. Anyone who barely knows me knows that."

But in a statement on Thursday, U.S. Soccer slammed the decision, implying that the midfielder didn't realize what a privilege it was to play for the team. They must have missed the part where she pushed through recovering from a torn ACL in nine months to represent her country at the Olympics.

"Representing your country is a privilege and honor for any player or coach that is associated with U.S. Soccer's National Team. Therefore, our national anthem has particular significance for U.S. Soccer," US Soccer said in a statement issued Thursday. "In front of national and often global audiences, the playing of our national anthem is an opportunity for our Men's and Women's National Team players and coaches to reflect upon the liberties and freedom we all appreciate in this country.

"As part of the privilege to represent your country, we have an expectation that our players and coaches will stand and honor our flag while the National Anthem is played."

The U.S. has had a long history of athletes protesting during the national anthem, medal ceremonies or in other times when according to modern day critics they're apparently supposed to just silently stand and follow the rituals put in place long before they ever stepped foot on the field or court. They're supposed to be role models, but only ones that fit our ideals of good behavior and sticking to sports. And they're not supposed to recognize the false comparisons between doing things like standing respectfully for an anthem of a country that's not your own and protesting during the one played for the one that is.

But that's not what patriotism is. And Rapinoe — as do the other professional athletes taking a knee during the national anthem — recognizes that.

"I'm very proud to pull on this shirt and play for this country, and also represent my country in a different way in speaking out for people that are oppressed," Rapinoe told ESPN after the game.

Patriotism is not about blindly saluting your country's flag when you think something is very wrong in the country that you've represented proudly on the world stage. Patriotism is about being the best citizen you can be — and that means drawing attention and working to fix things that are wrong.

And for those worried about Rapinoe stealing the show from O'Reilly? Sure, maybe that is what we're talking about this morning. But if US Soccer hadn't issued a statement less tolerant than most of those issued by even NFL teams, would we be? I'm not sure. But with their statement, U.S. Soccer ensured that no one is paying attention to the 9-0 win and O'Reilly's beautiful goal that contributed to it.

Source:

[https://ftw.usatoday.com/2016/09/u-s-soccer-not-megan-rapinoe-took-the-attention-away-from-heat-her-oreilly,](https://ftw.usatoday.com/2016/09/u-s-soccer-not-megan-rapinoe-took-the-attention-away-from-heat-her-oreilly)

Last accessed 26 April 2021

# Mario Balotelli on Verona abuse: 'Problem is that I am Italian'

Mario Balotelli says the racist abuse he suffered at Hellas Verona on Sunday was especially a "problem" because he's Italian.

The Brescia striker kicked the ball into the crowd and threatened to walk off the pitch early in the second half of his side's Serie A defeat at Verona because he said some fans were making monkey noises.

Serie A's disciplinary tribunal handed Verona a one match partial stadium ban on Tuesday for racial abuse and the club banned ultras leader Luca Castellini for 11 years after he claimed that Balotelli will "never be completely Italian."

Speaking to TV channel Italia 1, Balotelli, who was born in Italy to Ghanaian immigrants and has represented the Italian national team, said: "I am not saying that I am different from the other players who receive the same abuse, the same monkey noises, but the problem is that I am Italian."

The league had previously ignored monkey noises directed at Inter Milan's Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku during a match at Cagliari in September. There was also no punishment for racist chants aimed by Verona fans at AC Milan midfielder Franck Kessie, who is from the Ivory Coast, in September.

Derogatory chants have also been aimed at Dalbert Henrique, Miralem Pjanic, Ronaldo Vieira and Kalidou Koulibaly in Serie A this season. All the players targeted -- except for Pjanic, who is Bosnian -- are black.

Balotelli, who spent the past three seasons in France, returned to Italy this season with Brescia, his hometown club and a regional rival of Verona.

"I'll be honest, I really like the stadium in Verona and their fans, as they have always mocked in an amusing and ironic way," Balotelli said on the program. "If they want to distract a player, they can do it in a thousand ways, but not [with racism]."

"My daughter saw this on TV and that made it hurt three times as much," Balotelli added. "I can take all kinds of insults, but ones based on racism are not acceptable, have never been acceptable and never will be acceptable. Those who did it, and I repeat they are only a few, are complete idiots."

On Tuesday, a group of local Verona councillors said they wanted the city government to take action against Balotelli for unjustly defaming Verona.

Gazzetta dello Sport published a motion sent to the Verona council by four councillors proposing that "the mayor and the legal offices of the municipality should take legal action against the footballer and all those who attack Verona by unjustly defaming it."



The motion added: "It is no longer fair that Verona is put in the dock when, as in this case, nothing happened."

Source:

<https://www.espn.com/soccer/brescia/story/3984036/mario-balotelli-on-verona-abuse-problem-is-th-at-i-am-italian>,

Last accessed on 26 April 2021.



# Lesbian Football Player Banned From Every Club In Cameroon

After the football club she played for fired her, Stenie found that every club in Cameroon had been instructed not to hire her.

News 9 January, 2019. Written by Sarah McKenna Barry.



A football player in Cameroon has been turned away from every team due to the fact that she is gay.

Under the pseudonym of Stenie, the 18 year-old athlete spoke to *Gay Star News* about her experience of discrimination from the football clubs of her home country:

Two years ago she played professionally with a club in Yaoundé, however, after receiving pressure from the public who objected to the woman's sexuality, the club fired her.

Stenie told *Gay Star News* about how both her gender and sexuality stood in the way of her athletic pursuits:

“I decided to pursue a career in football even though I knew that people in Cameroon discriminate against female football players on the assumption that they are all lesbians.

“In 2013, I decided to join a club to start a football career and to fulfil my dream of becoming a professional football player. I played for five years. Two years ago, I became a professional at Intersport football club.

“At first, it was really hard. I endured insults and discrimination. Team members called me a ‘rug muncher’. Others pejoratively called me ‘father.’”

Stenie describes an incident in which two men attacked her after a match:

“I barely escaped from two men who jumped me from the bushes on the way home. I was able to get out of that mess only because passersby heard my cries and intervened.”

Despite her talent, Intersport told Stenie that she could no longer play with the club:

“They said that the club's success was in jeopardy because of public and anti-gay judgements about me.”

A teammate then told Stenie that management had declared her permanently barred from the team. The football player reported the discrimination to Cameroon's National Football Federation, who dismissed the case in support of the club's decision:

“They also rejected me, merely saying that they do not support homosexuality.”

Stenie continues:

“I tried to join another club, but was turned down again. I learned that the federation had decided that I could no longer play for any club in Cameroon because of my sexual orientation.”

Cameroon is one of the 33 African countries where same-sex relations are criminalised. LGBT+ people can face up to a five-year prison sentence. Additionally, there have been numerous reports of violent conversion therapy tactics within the country, including the “corrective rape” of LGBT+ people. Humanity First Cameroon, an LGBT+ organisation, found that one in five lesbians and one in ten gay men had been raped in Cameroon in 2018.

Source: <https://gcn.ie/lesbian-football-player-banned-club-cameroon/>,  
Last accessed on 26 April 2021.

# Gay referee gets red card in Turkey

After coming out on TV, Halil Dincdag sues football federation over sacking

By Nicholas Birch

Turkey's football authorities were at the centre of a growing scandal this week after a referee they had sacked for homosexuality and outed to the press began fighting back in the courts and the press.

"They thought I was an ant that they could crush, they thought I would run away and hide in a corner," Halil Ibrahim Dincdag said. "But they have destroyed my life and I will fight them to the end."

Mr Dincdag, 33, from Trabzon, had been refereeing in the local league for 13 years when he was informed this May that his licence would not be renewed. Two days after he appealed his dismissal to the football federation, stories about him began appearing in the national press. As a result he was sacked by the local radio station he worked on and forced to flee to Istanbul to spare his family from an influx of journalists. It was at this point that he decided to come out as gay, while appearing on a popular television sports programme.



"The day the press started writing about me, I went into a coma, and the day I appeared on TV I died," he said in his lawyer's office. "Thirty-three years of my life had disappeared. Since then, I have been trying to resurrect myself."

Mr Dincdag's television appearance was an act of considerable courage. Homosexuality is not illegal in Turkey, unlike in some other Muslim countries. But homophobia is widespread, no-where more so than in the world of football. "The crowds shout 'faggot' at referees whose decisions they don't like," Mr Dincdag said. "Well, here I am."

His principled stance brought him a wave of support. Three-quarters of Trabzon's 80 referees rang him up to congratulate him. Thirty thousand people signed a petition launched by Turkey's most influential newspaper backing his campaign. One columnist even compared him to Harvey Milk, America's first openly gay politician. Turkey's deputies brought his case to parliament. Most importantly for Mr Dincdag, his pious family, from whom he had kept his homosexuality secret, stood behind him.

Caught off balance by the outcry, Turkey's football federation began back-peddalling fast. Its vice-president Lutfi Aribogan said Mr Dincdag's sacking had nothing to do with his sexuality and everything to do with his lack of "talent". The head of the referee's board then said the door remained open for Mr Dincdag to return to the fold, insisting that it was Mr Dincdag's lawyer, not the federation, that had leaked his name to the press.

"Do they have no fear of God," Mr Dincdag asked, pointing to a sheaf of match reports dating back a decade that show him to have ranked among the best local referees. "I've already gone to the courts over this, and I'll go all the way to Europe if necessary."

Empowered by Turkey's European Union accession bid, the Turkish gay and lesbian rights lobby has become increasingly outspoken over the past decade. Activists say Mr Dincdag's fight for his rights has the potential to become a landmark case. "For years, the European Union has been talking about the importance of legislation on sexual discrimination in the workplace," said Ali Erol, a spokesman for KAOS-GL, an Ankara-based gay and lesbian rights group. "So far Turkey has not taken one step forward."

Old-fashioned views of homosexuality remain widespread. Speaking on television shortly after Mr Dincdag came out, Turkey's most popular football commentator Erman Toroglu, himself a former referee, said he didn't think the 33-year old should be given his job back. "I reckon [homosexual referees] would have a tendency to give more penalties to good-looking, tough footballers," he said.

Mr Dincdag's eyes glaze over with anger at the recollection. "Does Toroglu assault every pretty girl he passes in the street?"

source:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/gay-referee-gets-red-card-in-turkey-1718056.html>,

Last accessed on 26 April 2021.

# Hakan Sukur – Turkey’s fallen hero who can never return home



Scorer of the fastest World Cup goal had Turkey’s president as a wedding guest but now lives in enforced exile in the US

There is a photograph, famous in Turkey, taken at the wedding of one of the nation’s greatest footballers, a Uefa Cup winner who played in a World Cup semi-final. In the picture, Hakan Sukur is next to two witnesses, the nation’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the cleric Fethullah Gulen. A wedding is supposed to be one of the highlights in a man’s life but it did not work out like that for Sukur.

The woman he married that day is dead, Sukur’s father has been imprisoned and the player capped 112 times by Turkey finds himself in exile. Should he ever return to his native land he would face charges of insulting the president and rebelling against the government. Life imprisonment would be certain and he could even face the death penalty. He will never see his father again, all the adulation he once had is lost. Sukur has lost his country.

Other footballers have fallen but nothing can touch the Sukur story for the heights and the depths. He was a legend, the Bull of the Bosphorus in a country where they eat, drink and sleep football. He had it all: record goalscorer for Galatasaray and his country, huge respect even from fans of the other Turkish giants, Fenerbahce and Besiktas. He even played nine times for Blackburn Rovers in the 2002-03 season, scoring twice. He achieved renown at the 2002 World Cup, scoring against the South Korea hosts in 10.8sec in the play-off match – the fastest goal at an international tournament.

After retirement aged 36, he worked as a pundit and then went into politics. Sukur represented the religious and conservative AKP, the party in power today. And then, suddenly, the picture went out of focus, and everything he had achieved counted for nothing.

His marriage ended in divorce. His former wife Esra was killed in the 1999 earthquake that took the lives of at least 17,000 people in Izmit and Istanbul. Sukur was now a pundit on TRT, the national TV channel. He was knowledgeable and came over as serious, always interesting and incisive. He married again and had three children. His political leanings led him to become an MP for the ruling Justice and Development Party, the party of Erdogan. But he retained a close connection to Gulen, the other man in that wedding photograph.

Gulen is a shadowy figure who lives in Pennsylvania but would desperately like to return to Turkey to lead it towards a more Islamic state. So in 2013, when the government decided to close the crammer-type schools run by Gulenists (they have an extensive network of schools around the world), Sukur resigned from the governing party and became an independent MP. Football now seemed a long way off and his troubles were just starting.

He had already been courting controversy, such as telling a university audience: “I am an Albanian, as such I am not a Turk,” dangerous words at the best of times in a country where words such as “Albanian” and “Kurd” can be seen as being pitched against the prevailing nationalism.

In 2016 Sukur was indicted for insulting the president on social media. He went on trial in absentia in June, insisting he had not intended to target the president but prosecutors said the tweets were clearly related to Erdogan.

Then, in July of that year, the failed coup d’etat was blamed on Gulenists. In the middle of the most populated city in Europe gunfire could be heard. More than 300 people lost their lives. In the months that followed, 120,000 lost their jobs and 50,000 were arrested. Anyone with Gulenist sympathies was under suspicion. An arrest warrant was issued for Sukur in August. Prosecutors in Sakarya province charged him with membership of an armed terror group, the state-run Anadolu agency said, referring to what Ankara calls the Fethullah Terror Organisation.

Sukur had a chance to renounce Gulen and assure his freedom and safety but passed up on that. Sukur’s father, Selmet, was seized at a mosque in Adapazari. They were charged with supporting the coup financially and their money and assets confiscated. Sukur managed to escape to the US. In June his father was reported to have died of cancer without regaining his freedom.

Sukur remains in exile, surrounded by mementos of his brilliant football career. But a sensitive man, who so missed Turkey when he played abroad, finds his name tarnished in the country where once it rang out in stadiums and in the streets.

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2018/feb/18/hakan-sukur-turkey-fallen-hero-exile>,  
Last accessed 29 April 2021.



# End of my Italian chapter means trading Turin for fresh adventures

This weekend I will play my last game for Juventus, bringing to an end a year and a half of great success and lots of learning. When I arrived in the summer of 2018 I was attracted by a big club still in its infancy as a women's team, and a big project on and off the pitch that I could be a part of. On the pitch, we achieved a lot of rapid success: a league title, the domestic cup and the Supercoppa. Off the pitch, I think it is fair to say things have been a little more uneven.

Looking back at my achievements with this team, which included finishing last season as top scorer, I feel proud. When I arrived I did not know whether I could adapt to the style of play, or the culture, language and city of Turin. I knew I would play, but I did not know where, or how well. In a team built around a core of nine Italy internationals, I managed to seamlessly fit in. I do not think that is an easy thing to do for an international striker. This season I have moved position, playing wide on the right with different responsibilities. It has been difficult to maintain my goalscoring form and I have not always been the best version of myself, but it has been yet another learning experience.

I have worked with some brilliant people. The team's sport scientist, Emanuele Chiappero – we call him the Prof – is the best I have worked with in football and completely changed my body, fitness levels and general athletic feeling going into games. Rita Guarino is an extremely technical coach who gave me a lot of freedom last season to express myself on the field. The sporting director, Stefano Braghin, is a visionary, a true gentleman, and someone I would love to continue to see as a mentor. I owe huge thanks to the physios, led by Ottavia Maffei, and the media team. Lastly there are players such as Lisa Boattin, Aurora Galli and Michela Franco who could not be kinder, more selfless teammates. I will never forget how quickly two of them were at my hospital bedside after I had a serious car accident in Turin earlier this year.

So leaving 18 months into a two-year contract has not been an easy decision. I realise my focus needs to be on the next three-to-five years of my career rather than the next few months, but it also reflects the fact that off the pitch I have found the last six months very difficult.

For a while after I arrived I was discovering the city and discovering Italy. I would travel to other cities on my days off and grasp whatever opportunities I could find. I am very curious, I like to go to events, galleries, shops, and there is not as much variety as I would like in Turin.

More importantly sometimes Turin feels a couple of decades behind in terms of its general openness to different kinds of people. I have grown tired of walking into stores and feeling as if the owner expects me to rob the place. There is only so many times you can arrive at Turin airport and have the sniffer dogs treat you like you are Pablo Escobar. I have not experienced any racism from Juventus fans



or within the women's league, but there is an issue in Italy and in Italian football and it is the response to it that really worries me, from owners and fans in the men's game who seem to see it as a part of fan culture.

Beyond that, if the club want to continue attracting Europe's talent to Italy there needs to be some focus on making internationals feel at home and an important part of the long-term project. Even if the team are playing well, if things are not going right off the pitch it will only be a matter of time before a player thinks, sod this, I'm going home. I think you can definitely tell the clubs with the best cultures, the ones that are genuinely open to what everybody brings to the table, by how long they keep hold of their international players.

But I believe the global awareness of Juventus Women has grown in the time I've been here. I have tried to help, by writing this column and speaking in the media about everything that sets the club apart and the nuances that make the women's Serie A such an interesting league. I know that more and more international players are interested in Juventus, and maybe I have played a small part in that.

Juventus and the league have more changes to make if they are to compete with Europe's best. There are rumours of a shift from amateur to professional status for women in Italy, which would be a big step. Top players want to be part of a culture that always seeks to evolve and to excel. The old saying has it that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. I would say that is not the best approach in football: you should always try to improve, and that means you're always looking for ways to change things for the better. I think many see a club that has won the last two league titles and conclude nothing needs fixing.

My last game is against Fiorentina, last season's runners-up. It is a big game in the title race against a key rival. I am looking forward to waving goodbye to the Juventus fans who have shown me respect and support. On Sunday I fly back home.

I have had my ups and downs in Italy and learned a huge amount about myself. When you play abroad it is often the bad days that really shape and strengthen you. When our players return to England they are judged by what they achieved on the field while they were away, but I am sure players such as Toni Duggan in Madrid, Jadon Sancho in Dortmund and Chris Smalling in Rome will agree that adapting to cultures outside your comfort zone is a significant success that improves you.

I think I have achieved a lot in Turin. I have won trophies, scored goals, played at the Allianz Stadium, learned Italian and explored Italy. Now I am excited about being back in London, not just because I will have my friends and family around me, but because there are so many exciting opportunities.

Between now and Christmas I will be working for Amazon at Premier League games, working at WSL games, and doing some more exciting things with my book. A lot of people see the end of the year as a time for reflection and also for making plans and setting goals for the future, and I'll certainly be doing that. An 18-month chapter is closing, in a long career. I am going to be back on home soil, where it all started, and once again I am excited about what the future has in store.

Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2019/nov/28/the-end-of-my-italian-chapter-means-trading-turin-for-fresh-adventures>, Last accessed 29 April 2021.



# Kurdish footballer quits club and leaves Turkey after alleged racist attack



ISTANBUL, Turkey - Following an alleged racist attack over his Kurdish and Alevi origin, a German-Turkish footballer, Deniz Naki, said he had left Turkey this week and would be quitting his Ankara club.

Naki, who played for the Genclerbirligi club, said he was attacked on the street in the Turkish capital last Sunday by three men shouting racist abuse and challenging him over his support for the Syrian-Kurdish town of Kobane, which is battling a siege by Islamic State (ISIS). He suffered minor injuries to his face and hand.

“They surrounded me and continually swore at me. They swore at me for being Alevi and Kurdish. They shouted things about Kobane,” the 25-year-old Naki said in a statement on his Facebook page.

“While I tried to calm them down, the guy to my left suddenly punched me in my face. I was in shock. To protect myself I punched back and retreated from there. I was worried they

may have a gun or a knife. They carried on swearing at me, shouting ‘Let ISIS do whatever to me,’” Naki wrote.

On Wednesday, he told the BBC he had since left Turkey and had no intention of returning.

Naki had recently posted pictures of himself on social media with messages of support for Kobane. The predominantly Kurdish town along Turkey’s border has been under attack by jihadists for the past few weeks and has become the latest flashpoint in Syria’s civil war.

Naki had already been the victim of abuse on social media earlier this year because of a tattoo on his right arm with the words ‘Dersim 62’, referring to the traditional name and vehicle registration number of Tunceli, a largely Alevi-Kurdish town in eastern Turkey.

There are around 15 million Alevis in Turkey, including ethnic Turks and Kurds. Alevism is a heterodox Islamic faith that draws from Shi’ism, Sufism and Anatolian folk tradition. Its followers were often persecuted under the Ottoman Empire and in the early years of the Turkish Republic. There have also been more recent targeted attacks on Alevis.

Dersim, now known as Tunceli, is most known as the sight of a massacre of thousands of mostly Alevi Kurds in 1937 by the Turkish military who were trying to put down a rebellion. In 2011, the Turkish government issued an official apology for the killings on behalf of the Turkish state.

Naki said he decided to leave not so much out of fear for himself but for his teammates.

“My fear was not for myself. I could not go out alone in Ankara. I was worried about my teammates. I was scared something could also happen to them. There was just no reason for me to stay here anymore,” Naki wrote on Facebook.

When asked about his plans for the future, Naki told the BBC he would only go back to Turkey to visit and would not be returning to play football there.

"There is no tolerance. I would only go back because I love my country, I love my hometown. That's it. I will carry on with my career in Germany," he said.

Source: <https://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/06112014>, Last accessed on 29 April 2021.

# How To Handle Coming Out In The Premier League

With two high-profile Premier League players about to come out, how can we use this to effect real change for gay sportspeople, asks Rob Buchanan?

Social media is abuzz with the news that two high-profile Premier League footballers are about to come out as gay. One of these household names even played for the English national team. They will be the first openly gay players still playing in the upper reaches of the English league to reveal their sexuality since Justin Fashanu in 1990.

While it's so very tempting to play the speculation game, doing so would be to miss the entire point of the impending event. These specific coming outs could be stage-managed and processed on social media in a way that could benefit LGBT tolerance in sport for everyone. And truth be told, this will be less of a watershed moment in gay visibility in the sports world than it will be a stage two in the movement towards 'normalising' the reality that LGBT people are in all walks of life, even Premier League football.

When rumours surfaced that a big reveal of male gay players was on the cards, some of the speculation pointed towards Manchester United player Luke Shaw.

This was mainly in the form of Internet trolling and taunts from opposition fans. Shaw's aggressive response spoke volumes about the whole problem of gays in Premier League football. Although he isn't even in the top ten speculated players he felt the need to make a statement that he wasn't one of the players rumoured to be coming out. His reaction was disproportionate, cringe-worthy and disappointing; the type of response you would make if you were accused of a disgusting crime. Once can only speculate on the anxiety that prompted him to make this non-statement.

But who could blame him? He only needs to look at the disturbing and sad example of Fashanu to know where coming out in British professional football has led. When Fashanu bravely came out two and half decades ago, instead of being hailed as a trailblazer and applauded for his bravery and honesty, both the media and the football industry crucified him. His persecution was both shameless and socially approved at that time, and it ultimately led to his suicide. How many terrified, closeted players of his generation laughed and jeered at Fashanu in changing rooms across the UK even as they spent sleepless nights fretting over disclosure of their own secret sexuality?

And genuinely queer players haven't been the only victims of such abuse. In the late 90s, Graeme Le Saux was wrongly labeled as gay after saying he went on holiday with a fellow player, and his name became by-word for homophobic taunts from the stands.

The more recent coming out stories of former Villa player, Thomas Hitzlsperger and LA Galaxy player, Robbie Rogers might have garnered more positive reactions, but Hitzlsperger waited until retirement



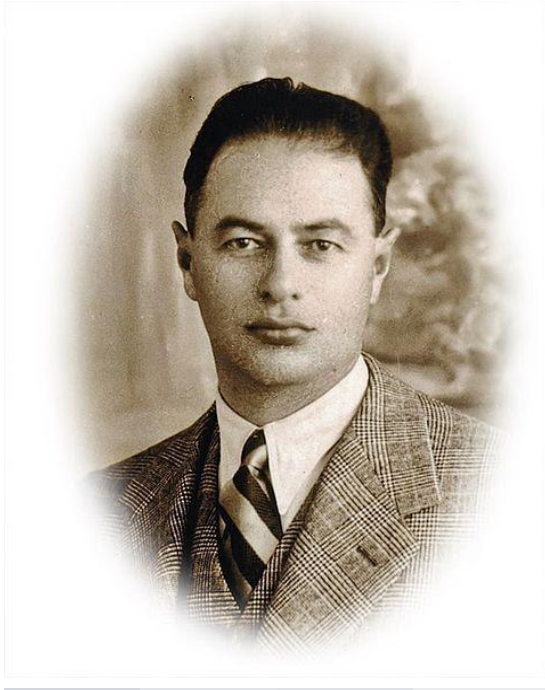
before coming out, while Rogers wasn't playing in the Premier League and the professional environment of US soccer is dramatically different from that in the UK.

So how best to manage the aftermath of two Premier League players nailing their rainbow colours to the mast? Firstly, the LGBT community should try to channel these two men's personal stories into paving a path for more queer players to come out and more straight players to become allies. We should also be seeking to show how irrelevant sexuality is in terms of playing sports, never mind day-to-day life. It's by reinforcing this as an 'non-issue' and shaming those childish enough to think otherwise that we beat homophobia at its own game.

Let's have no patron saints of queer sports. Let's not run away with ourselves in the lionisation of these players. The boomerang of that effect is that we distract ourselves from these players' skills, and from the sport itself, to focus on who's shagging who. The breaking down of stereotypes cannot be done not by singling out individuals to praise them for things that are beyond their control. It is by highlighting what they do control in their sports lives and how their personal lives are of little relevance to that talent.

Source: <https://gcn.ie/handle-coming-premier-league/>, Last accessed 29 April 2021

# Arpad Weisz: the Auschwitz victim who helped shape the idea of modern football



**IF HISTORY CROSSES** its path, a good story can become a tragic one. This was the case for the story of Arpad Weisz. At the beginning of the 1937/38 season, this Hungarian gentleman was revered as the best manager in Europe. In the previous eight years, he had won three Scudetti and, just a year earlier, had beaten Chelsea in Paris, winning the equivalent of today's Champions League. His story was at its peak. Unfortunately, history was at its lowest.

That same year, 1938, Benito Mussolini proclaimed a number of controversial racial laws throughout Italy. All Jews living in the country were forced to leave. Weisz and his family were among them. From that moment began a spiral of events that no individual could have ever hoped to stop. The Second World War broke out and Arpad Weisz met the same fate as six million other Jews.

The brutality of history could have erased this story altogether were it not for the efforts of an Italian

journalist, Matteo Marani, who spent years researching and digging in the past, trying to resuscitate this old figure. His book, *From the Scudetto to Auschwitz*, contains everything the world knows about Weisz.

He was born in 1896 in the Hungarian town of Solt, near the border with Austria. At the beginning of the 20th century, the area along the Danube between Budapest and Vienna became one of the cradles of football in Europe. The Hungary national team rose to become one of the finest of that era, pioneering a new style of play. At the 1924 Olympics, they were among the favourite. The captain of that team was Béla Guttmann, a Jew who later survived Auschwitz and went on to become the manager of the great Benfica of Eusébio, winning the European Cup twice along the way. Arpad Weisz was the left winger.

The exposure granted by caps in the national team brought him to what would become his second home: Italy. He was first scouted and signed by Padova in 1925, playing there for a year before moving to Inter. A serious injury, however, cut short his career and forced him from the pitch to the bench. He spent one year in South America, between Argentina and Uruguay, probably to hone his skills in what was considered the best footballing countries in the world. When he came back to Italy, he was put at the helm of one of his old clubs: Inter.

From day one, Weisz fit perfectly within a club he already knew, and even more so within the city, which he loved. Milan, at that time, was a vibrant city, a hub for cultural exchanges and a cradle of progressive ideas. A well-spoken and educated man like Weisz was fascinated by that environment. Whenever he had the chance, he cherished the opportunity of engaging in discussions in one of the

many cafés of the city. His favourite topic was of course football and, in Milan, he found many peers to talk with. As a result of his humble nature, however, Weisz probably never realised how much he himself had become the focus of those discussions.

His idea of football was in line with the progressive spirit of the city. He was one of the first managers in Italy to personally lead the training sessions, wearing a tracksuit and joining his team. His main contribution was the adaptation in Italy of the so-called W-M format, developed in those years by [Herbert Chapman](#), the much-vaunted manager of Arsenal. His tactical principles and philosophy were converted into a football manual in 1930, which at the time had enormous success. The preface was written by Vittorio Pozzo, the Italian legend who led *Gli Azzurri* to two consecutive World Cup wins in 1934 and 1938. Pozzo had an enormous amount respect for Weisz and treated him as a peer, if not an inspiration.

However, Weisz was not only a tactical innovator – he was also a keen scout. When he first came to Inter, he mentored Fulvio Bernardini, who later became the first Italian manager to win the Scudetto with two different teams – Fiorentina and Bologna. Together, they often stopped to watch the youth team train. Weisz immediately noticed a young man who was a prodigy with the ball at his feet but deemed too weak physically. Weisz, against common consensus of the time, took that 16-year-old into the first team. His name was Giuseppe Meazza, the future all-time scoring leader for Inter, double World Cup winner and one of the greatest Italian footballers of all time.

This mixture of tactical intelligence and an eye for talent propelled Weisz to his first major success – the Scudetto in 1930. It was a historic season, the first in which all clubs were grouped in a single table, moving away from the regional divides. It was also significant because Weisz became the youngest manager to win the title at the age of 34. It's a record unbeaten to this day.

A change in ownership at Inter created frictions that forced Weisz to leave the *Nerazzurri* just one year after the title. He went on to coach Bari and Novara in two brief stints before landing, in 1935, in the city where he'd garner the most praise: Bologna. The northern city was less cosmopolitan than Milan but suited the necessity of familiar tranquillity that had become fundamental for Weisz. He and his wife Elena had two children, Roberto and Clara, who needed stability. Bologna provided exactly that.

From a footballing standing point, the club was on the up. Bologna had experienced success in the 1920s and the team had now been acquired by a new, enterprising owner in Renato Dall'Ara. He and Weisz established a fruitful working relationship, which equipped the manager with a squad strong enough to challenge Juventus, the dominant force in Italy over the previous five years.

These promises were fulfilled thanks to the usual discipline and acumen of Weisz. His understanding of the importance of the morale of his players meant that many of them performed far better under his leadership than they had ever done so before. And so, after a great first season, the title came down to the final day of the season. It was never in doubt, with Weisz's super motivational skills seeing the *Rossoblu* home.

The Scudetto cemented the confidence of a team primed to build a dynasty. The following year, the victory came much more easily in the league and the team was invited to participate in a football tournament organised during the 1937 International Exposition in Paris. The tournament also featured the rare appearance of an English club, which up until that point had had the aristocratic aura of invulnerability. After all, they were the inventors of the game.

Weisz's team proved everyone wrong. The English club, Chelsea, were forced to admit their inferiority after a humiliating 4-1 defeat. The Italian and European press hailed the Hungarian manager and marked the birth of a team which would "make the world tremble".



Bologna won two Scudetti over the next three years, however Weisz wasn't there for those glories. He lost his team when his life story became intertwined with the history of the world. Weisz was a Jew, but not an orthodox. His religious zeal was more devoted to football than God. He had even christened his two children as Catholics. None of that mattered when Mussolini launched the racial laws in 1938.

The Weisz family was forced to leave the country they had called home for 15 years. They fled to Paris, stayed there for three months, before moving to the Netherlands where Weisz had found a coaching job in Dordrecht. It was a small town, a lot less lively than Bologna and with a team struggling to avoid relegation. The drop from the height of Europe's best to a provincial club must have been vertiginous. But Weisz was a pragmatic man and considered security more important than ambition. In April 1939, the Netherlands seemed a much more secure and tolerant place than Italy. Unfortunately, it was not meant to last.

War broke out soon after and the Nazi's *blitzkrieg* came and flooded Holland. The Jewish were the first to feel the repercussions, first through the discrimination, and later through deportations. One morning in August 1942, the Gestapo came knocking on Weisz's front door. The family was first moved to a Dutch labour camp in Westerbork, and then, after a few months, loaded on a train to a new destination: Auschwitz. When they got there, they were immediately divided. Elena, Roberto and Clara were sent to Birkenau, the slaughterhouse where people were sent to die. Arpad, however, was kept alive and exploited as a worker. His body lasted another 18 months but his mind was long deceased without his family. He died in January 1944.

Arpad Weisz remains a victim of history. However, when it comes to football, he was a great protagonist. He helped develop the game into what we know today. Through his work and innovations, he turned his tragic story into an eternal one, cementing his legacy in the face of oppression and death.

Source:

<https://thesefootballtimes.co/2018/02/27/arpad-weisz-the-auschwitz-victim-who-helped-shape-the-idea-of-modern-football/>, Last accessed on 29 April 2021.

# Tottenham vs Chelsea: Antonio Rudiger 'racially abused' by supporter

Jack de Menezes  
Sunday 22 December 2019 19:06

Chelsea's 2-0 win over Tottenham was overshadowed by the latest incident of alleged racism in the Premier League, with play halted and fans warned of their behaviour by a stadium announcer during Sunday's match

Referee Anthony Taylor reported an allegation of racist abuse made against Chelsea defender Antonio Rudiger in the second half of the fixture.

The defender appeared to tell Cesar Azpilicueta that he had heard or seen monkey gestures after an object was thrown onto the pitch. Taylor was then informed and play halted before he headed over to the touchline.

As well as the fourth official, Taylor spoke to both Jose Mourinho and Frank Lampard before the match continued. Soon after, a stadium announcement said "racist behaviour among spectators is interfering with the game", which is in line with recently approved anti-racism protocols in the Premier League.



The stadium tannoy made two further announcements regarding the initial incident, with the third coming in injury time. According to the protocol, the game should have been abandoned at this point.

Azpilicueta was asked after the match what happened when Rudiger came to him to report the abuse.

"We have meetings with the Premier League before every game and we have been told to report straight away to the referee if any incident of racism happens," he told Sky Sports.

"Toni (Rudiger) came to me and told me he heard some racist songs toward him, so I reported to the ref immediately and left it to the ref to do his job.

"We are very concerned and very aware of this behaviour and we need to stop it. Now I hope everything gets clear and we eradicate it as soon as possible.

"It's an issue not only in football but in life and all together we need to work towards the eradication of the problem."

Tottenham manager Jose Mourinho said: "I saw the referee follow the protocol. He came to Andre Marriner (the fourth official), he came to me and (Chelsea manager) Frank Lampard and told us what was happening."



Speaking on Sky Sports, former England defender Gary Neville immediately questioned what was being done to eradicate racism in the English game, having previously criticised the authorities' handling of the issue.

“We demand Uefa crackdown on the Bulgarian FA, but what are we going to do here, to crack down on our game?” asked Neville.

Earlier this month, Manchester United players reported being racially abused during the derby against Manchester City, in which both Fred and Jesse Lingard appeared to be targeted, while City forward Raheem Sterling was a victim of racist abuse last season during the side's victory at Chelsea.

Source:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/premier-league/tottenham-vs-chelsea-antonio-rudiger-racially-abused-spurs-fan-investigation-racism-son-red-card-a9257366.html>, Last accessed 29 April 2021.

# Fútbol y política: Los jugadores que desafiaron al franquismo



Sergio Manzanera y Aitor Aguirre, de Racing de Santander, lucieron un brazalete negro para protestar contra los últimos fusilamientos del régimen.

Hace ya 43 años, un 27 de septiembre de 1975, **la dictadura de Francisco Franco llevaba a cabo sus últimos fusilamientos**. Las víctimas: Jon Paredes (Txiki) y Ángel Otaegui (miembros de ETA); José Luis Sánchez Bravo, Ramón García Sanz y Xosé Humberto Baena, militantes de FRAP (Frente Revolucionario Antifascista y Patriota). La decisión causó un amplio rechazo internacional, pero

no sirvió para salvar esas vidas. Inesperadamente, un día después de las ejecuciones y ante todo pronóstico, **dos futbolistas de Racing de Santander se animaron a desafiar al franquismo** luciendo un brazalete negro: ellos fueron Sergio Manzanera y Aitor Aguirre.

¿Arriesgada iniciativa? Sí, por supuesto. Los deportistas lo hicieron en el partido ante Elche, en los Campos de Sport del Sardinero. En el descanso, de regreso al vestuario, la situación se puso tensa, como se esperaba, claro está. Según el *Diario Montañés*, “cuando los jugadores regresaban a los vestuarios, los cordones negros seguían atados en las mangas blancas de las camisetas de Aitor y Sergio. Creen que nadie ha dado importancia al hecho, pero se equivocan. **Varios policías vestidos de paisano apartan a los futbolistas y se dirigen a ellos amenazantes: ‘O se quitan ahora mismo esos brazaletes o ustedes no salen en el segundo tiempo, se vienen con nosotros a comisaría’.** Algo asustados, se desprenden de los cordones y uno de los policías los recoge como si fueran pruebas finas de algún delito”.

## Translation: Football and politics: the players that challenged francoism

Sergio Manzanera and Aitor Aguirre, of Racing de Santander, wore a black bracelet to protest against the latest executions of the regime.

43 years ago, on September 27, 1975, the dictatorship of Francisco Franco carried out his last executions. The victims: Jon Paredes (Txiki) and Ángel Otaegui (members of ETA); José Luis Sánchez Bravo, Ramón García Sanz and Xosé Humberto Baena, militants of FRAP (Antifascist and Patriot Revolutionary Front). The decision caused a wide international rejection, but it did not serve to save those lives. Unexpectedly, one day after the executions and without any advise or expectation, two

Santander Racing players had the courage to challenge Franco by wearing a black bracelet: they were Sergio Manzanera and Aitor Aguirre.

Risky initiative? Yes of course. The athletes did it in the game against Elche, in the Sport Fields of Sardinero. On the break, back to the locker room, the situation became tense, as expected, of course. According to Diario Montañés, “when players returned to the locker room, the black laces were still tied in the white sleeves of Aitor and Sergio's shirts. They believe that nobody has given importance to the fact, but they are wrong. Several policemen dressed as civilians take the football players away and address them menacingly: "Either those bracelets are taken off right now or you don't leave in the second half, you come with us to the police station." A bit scared, they get rid of the laces and one of the police picks them up as if they were fine evidence of a crime.

Source:

<https://www.goal.com/es-mx/noticias/los-futbolistas-que-desafiaron-al-franquismo/d9551okwrhc61xopm5hbgyr8a>, Last Accessed 29 April 2021.