



La Fenice di Torino

Juve's rise from its ashes



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It was the 4th of July, 2006. The verdict was in. There were charges against Juventus, AC Milan, Lazio, Fiorentina, and Reggina in the Serie A match-fixing scandal - everything had been revealed after an investigation into GEA World. Clubs in world football often get away with discrepancies and incidents like this (usually they do) but this time, things were different.

This *Calciopoli* scandal had grabbed the Italian league with both hands and gave world football a vigorous shake. There was no escaping judgment now; after a series of appeals and court procedures, the final punishments had been decided.

AC Milan had 30 points deducted from their 2005/2006 league campaign and were to play one game behind closed doors the next season. Fiorentina had been taken out of the 2006/2007 Champions League and with two games behind closed doors. Lazio had been taken out of the 2006/2007 UEFA Cup with two games behind closed doors. Reggina had been fined €100,000 and their President was handed a 2.5 year ban from football alongside a €30,000 fine. Juventus had it the worst though.

They were stripped of their 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 league titles, the latter now belonging to Inter Milan, and worst of all, they had been relegated to Serie B.

The board handed in their resignations in May with Moggi, the mastermind at the centre of *Calciopoli*, following suit. The players left one after the other. Lilian Thuram and Zambrotta left for Barcelona, Cannavaro headed for Madrid along with manager Fabio Capello while Patrick Vieira and Ibrahimović made their way over to rivals Inter Milan. However, the ones who shared the same blood as Juventus stayed - Del Piero, Nedvěd, Buffon, Camoranesi, and Trezeguet. The other players had their prices massively dropped and the *Bianconeri* lost all their pull in the transfer market. Their image had been tainted and the ocean of respect the world had for them was now merely a puddle. The club's share price had fallen to half its value and the club's value was around €145 million only. It was an institutional crisis at its finest.

World Cup winners were now playing in the second tier of Italian football but they did not lose heart even once. They immediately bounced back to the first division after achieving promotion in their first try.

This was not the end of the troubles, however. Juventus finished 3rd in the league in their return season but after a string of poor performances,

Claudio Ranieri was relieved of his position. The next three managers, Ferrera, Zaccheroni, and Delneri, completed three seasons between them, with two disastrous finishes in 7th place. The extent of Juventus' ordeal was manifested in their 4-1 defeat to Fulham in the Europa League R16.

The night is darkest just before the dawn. And with that dawn, came Juve's rise to dominion.

The Stadio Olimpico gave way to the Juventus Stadium and Andrea Pirlo joined on a free.

Antonio Conte was now at the helm and after a 5 year hiatus from the *scudetto*, Juventus were back on top.

Juventus reached their first UCL final in 2015 after 12 years after regulating their performances in the competition over a few seasons. A painful defeat to Barcelona would ensue but it was a sign of the right decisions being made.

In 2016, Juventus was valued at €1.3 billion and they signed Higuain from their rivals Napoli for €90 million, making it the third most expensive

transfer in history at the time. The hard work of the Agnelli family was making itself more and more evident.

The Juventus Stadium now gave way to the Allianz Stadium.

Juve would make it to another UCL final in 2017, bested by Madrid this time, but it was evidence of the wonderful work going on at the club: they had made their second UCL final in just three seasons. Their *scudetto* from 2012 had now become *scudetti* with Allegri as the boss and the club haven't looked back since— they're the first team in Italy's history to win seven league titles consecutively.

Today, exactly 10 years from *Calciopoli*, this very club is now valued at around €1.4 billion and have seen a 31% increase in their stocks. This very club has now signed Cristiano Ronaldo, arguably the best player in the world, football's biggest personality, the most marketable player in the world, the man in monstrous form year in, year out, without which 3 consecutive UCLs wouldn't have been possible and the very man with over 600 goals, 4 UCLs, and 5 Ballon d'Ors to his name. It may well and truly be the “deal of the century”.

There's only one way it seems Juventus can go from here and that's up. Nothing less will be expected now. They were dragged through the dirt and humiliated a decade but the Old Lady really is the phoenix of world football, rising from its own ashes.

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