

FOREGROUND: IN THE TOP LEAGUE FEWER SICILIANS  
THAN PLAYERS COMING FROM THE TOWN OF BRESCIA  
**FEW, EMIGRANTS: SICILIANS PLAYERS IN SERIE A**

There are only 13, or 3.82% of the total.

Aronica: «The facilities weren't there». Mascara: «How many sacrifices I made».

It is a Swiss study, but the issue is totally Sicilian. In Serie A only 13 football players out of 340 (3.82%) are Sicilians. Accardi and Foti, who play for Sampdoria, are originally from Palermo, as are Aronica (Reggina), Carbonaro, Cossentino, Rinaudo, Giovanni Tedesco and Velardi, all of whom play for Palermo football club. Furthermore, D'Agostino plays for Udinese, Calaiò for Napoli, Giacomo Tedesco, Mascara and Millesi for Catania. To make a comparison, the urban area of Brescia counts 21 players in "Serie A", eight more than Sicily which has a population almost ten times greater. The Lombardy region leads the list with the highest number of players in "Serie A" this season: 55.

**PHENOMENON.** The research – carried out in Lausanne by Claudio Ballor, AISTS student (International Academy of Sports Science and Technology), a school for future sports managers – reformulates an old problem. The sociology study, positively assessed by Joe Maguire – Professor of the English University of Loughborough, England, and one of the most renowned experts in the field of Sociology of Sports, has verified the existence of a social issue in Sicilian football. To do so, Ballor used a sociological method and took into account both social and economic indicators.

**CAPITAL.** The project of establishing a strong territorial identification southern clubs is still too far to be reality, but in the last few years the culture has evolved. An emblematic circumstance arose in Palermo: the defender Cossentino has already played in the Uefa Cup against Fenerbahce, but he has yet to make his first appearance in Serie A. The same applies for the other two new players, Carbonaro and Velardi. Palermo's football academy has launched the vast majority of Sicilian talents, over the last years. The central defender Rinaudo, born in the Kalsa neighbourhood, is just the most recent example of a football player who has been cultivated from within the club and now in the spotlight. «Even in the past – the Palermo football club's midfielder Giovanni Tedesco says –, this club launched relevant players, such as Vasari and Ignoffo. My rise through the ranks has

been hard: at the beginning of my career I was always coming back to Palermo far off – the towns where I was playing –, just to see my partner Alessandra...».

**ICON.** The story of Beppe Mascara is without doubt very meaningful too. He made his first appearance in Serie A last season playing for Catania football club after a long “mess-tin” in Serie B playing for Palermo’s team, Genoa and Perugia’s club. More than any other player, he is the footballer who now represents Catania fans’ feelings: «I have made it thanks to many sacrifices. My family, in Caltagirone, used to live from day to day, and I worked in the mornings and trained during the afternoons. However, I think something is changing. Now it is easier to emerge: even from the most isolated villages in Sicily, you have football academies linked to the major professional clubs».

**DANGERS.** Totò Aronica, expert defender for Reggina, has Franco Ceravolo, Juve’s talent scout, to thank. It was thanks to him that he was able to move from Bagheria, a fifth division football club, to the black-and-white club in 1996: «The lack of facilities may have been the biggest problem in the past, and now I believe the problem lies in the Sicilian youngsters’ attitude. Nowadays, in fact, it is easier to become a professional footballer, but staying at the top is harder. Everybody watches TV and maybe thinks that our world is made up of just celebrities and money. Yes, it is true that these elements are present, but to make it to the top one has to sustain many sacrifices and live a well-disciplined life».