

BROTHERS FIRST RIVALS SECOND

FILIPPO AND SIMONE INZAGHI HAVE EACH IMPRESSED AS COACHES THIS SEASON, BUT HOW HAVE THEIR COACHING CAREERS DEVELOPED? ROSSELLA MARRAI-RICCO TAKES A LOOK AT THEIR RESPECTIVE JOURNEYS.



'PIPPO WROTE: "HAVE COURAGE BROTHER, THIS IS YOUR MOMENT."

In 1973, Giancarlo and Marina Inzaghi celebrated the birth of their first baby boy, Filippo. Three years later, another son joined the family, Simone. Little did they know, these two would become inseparable and write their names into the history books of Italian football.

Born in the capital town of the Emilia-Romagna region, Piacenza - which in Latin means, "to please" - the two lanky brothers fell in love with the Beautiful Game. However, it was the eldest who showed the most promise, and it was Pippo, as he came to be known, who was often the first to be picked. When called by his friends to play in the park, the youngster - later dubbed SuperPippo - responded by saying: 'Only if Simone can play too.'

It was a brotherly love that stretched way beyond their days of playing in the park, or as teammates at Piacenza, and rivals on the field later on in their playing careers, and even today, Pippo can still be found looking out for his younger brother's best interests. There was never any divide in the Inzaghi households over who was better. Instead, both papa Giancarlo and mamma Marina encouraged their sons equally and allowed them to follow a career path of their choosing.

For both Pippo and 'Simo,' it involved playing football professionally in Italy, before converting into youth team coaches at Milan and Lazio respectively. From there they would eventually take over the head Coach role at the clubs they earned legendary status.



Pippo would only play with his friends if Simone could join

'ONLY IF SIMONE CAN PLAY TOO'

The firstborn, Filippo, enjoyed a career laden in silverware. Considered one of the greatest goal-poachers in the game, the former Juventus and Milan striker raked in three Serie A titles, two Supercoppa Italiana trophies, a UEFA Intertoto Cup, a UEFA Super Cup, two UEFA Champions Leagues - scoring the decisive goals in the 2006/07 final against Liverpool - a FIFA Club World Cup, and the most prestigious of all, the FIFA World Cup.

It was because of his success that Simone was often left lingering in the shadows of his brother's accomplishments. Remarkably, though, it only brought them closer, and during the 2007 UEFA Champions League final in Athens, Simo could be found cheering Pippo on from the stands. A year later, Simone decided to call time on his own career, following a decade spent at Lazio. At Formello, he won a Serie A title, three Coppa Italia trophies, two Italian Super



Pippo Inzaghi's coaching career has started to show promise at Venezia

Cups, and a UEFA Super Cup. It was here where his new adventure began, one which has arguably seen him step out from under his older brother's umbrella and flourish into one of Italy's most promising tacticians. Fittingly, the renaissance occurred on the day the former Brescello hit-man turned 40, on 5 April 2016, and it was also the day he was unveiled as Lazio's new head Coach, following Stefano Pioli's dismissal after the



Simone Inzaghi has grown into his own as a manager at Lazio

4-1 defeat to arch-rivals Roma. For Simone, it was the ultimate birthday gift – a dream come true. “It was emotional,” Giancarlo told *Corriere dello Sport* after Inzaghi’s debut on the Biancoceleste bench in a 3-0 win over Palermo. “His dream was always to be on the bench, he wanted to coach Lazio. He persevered, and his dream arrived.”

After six years spent gaining valuable coaching experience with Lazio’s Allievi and Primavera sides, it was Simone’s time to make the step up to the first team, and his No. 1 fan had a few words of wisdom to share with his ‘little bro.’ In a text message, Pippo wrote: “Have courage brother, this is your moment.”

It certainly has proven to be the case. After

'SIMONE BROUGHT ENTHUSIASM AND A HUNGER TO WIN BACK INTO HIS SIDE'

inheriting a squad dismantled by injuries and suspensions, the 41-year-old has brought enthusiasm and a hunger to win back into his side, all while solidifying the defence and keeping injuries to a minimum.

However, his most notable trademark is how he instilled a new sense of confidence in his fringe players, and got the maximum out of the promoted youth. Slowly, he has blindsided everyone through Lazio’s undeniable progression, and it comes as no surprise that his team are staring at a possible UEFA Champions League qualification and the latter stages of the Coppa Italia. Conversely, further north of the peninsula,

Pippo can be found heading the bench of Venezia, and just like his sibling, he is doing a stellar job too.

Following an unfortunate reign with his former club Milan during the 2014/15 season, where the Rossoneri finished in their lowest League position, 10th, of the Silvio Berlusconi’s era, Inzaghi went on a year-long hiatus that saw him visit clubs to study their coaching regimes before turning to the interesting project headed by Italian-American attorney Joe Tacopina.

Given Filippo’s stature in Italian football, it came as no surprise that players jumped at the chance of working under the 2006 World Cup winner, and he has managed to rope in several former top-flight names. The 43-year-old has worked exceptionally hard at bettering himself as a coach as well as his tactical approach to the game, and as his team sit on the verge of securing promotion to Serie B, he has managed to shake off a large portion of the scepticism that latched onto him from his time with Milan.

For Filippo and Simone, the roads they have travelled on have often been similar, but the outcome hasn’t always been the same. Still, the one thing always guaranteed is the brotherly love and support they have for each other and their desire to meet up on the field again. “We each have our own path to walk and I hope one day we will get to face off against each other as Serie A managers, just like we did as players,” Simone told the Italian media.

Even now, the fans are anxiously waiting for the day the Inzaghis sit on the bench in a Serie A encounter, and when that happens, there is one thing that is certain. They’ll be brothers first, rivals second.

» GOING THE EXTRA MILE

The Inzaghi brothers have so far enjoyed successful campaigns at their respective clubs and some surprising details have helped.

With many players permanently attached to their phones, Simone’s secret lies in WhatsApp messages. In order to prepare his players away from the training ground, he has instructed his technical team to send each player videos of his opponents via the messenger app.

The goalkeepers and the defenders receive videos of the movements and plays of their opposition’s attackers, while le Aquile midfielders and the forwards will study video clips of their opponent’s defenders. A stroke of genius!

Meanwhile, Emiliano Mondonico famously said: “It isn’t Inzaghi who is in love with the goal, it is the goals that is in love with him.” For any aspiring striker it would be a dream to work under one of the world’s most lethal goal-poachers, and after a two hour intensive training session, Pippo hosts a ‘il maestro del gol [the master of goals]’ lesson.

With all the players required to sit on the pitch and listen, the tactician walks his players through ways and means of how to play off the last defender, move into spaces, read the game, and, of course, score. It is no wonder Venezia average 1.6 goals per game!

