

PIERO GILI

Sportsman/trainer

When did you start to practise a sport activity?

I started basketball outside school. In schools sport activities were not included in the curriculum as they are now. There weren't any gyms. When the FIAT sport centre was just opened and I was 9, my mom gave me the possibility to attend a swimming and a basketball course. You are lucky because nowadays schools give you the possibility to start since the 1st year to be closer to sport and you have more chances.

Have you had particular difficulties to practicing this sport?

No I haven't! Even if there weren't basketball courts, I was lucky because I used to live close to a really big field where children could play volleyball, football and basketball as well, or do athletics.

Who did you help and support in your sport activity?

My parents. The sport centre was really far, so they used to take me to training sessions or to play the match by car. They have always encouraged and supported me in doing sport, this has been the most important thing for me.

When you were a child, did you think to become famous?

At the beginning, as every child, I had my idols. Nowadays for you it's easy; you turn on the TV and you can see a lot of famous players to admire. For me was difficult, because I had only the possibility to hear the NAMES of the champions and not to see their pictures! I've never thought to play in a famous team because I liked just to play and stay with my friends; my future wasn't in my mind yet. Once it happens that the most important football team of Turin came in Carmagnola to play. I had the possibility to see some famous A championship players. I was so excited that I couldn't sleep the night before. Some players of my team had the chance to play in A championship, they became famous champions.

How has been your career as a player?

First I played in a mini basketball team. As you know basketball is split in 2 sections: one for the youngest until 11 years old and the other for the oldest from 11 to 30-35 or 40 years old, not over.

In the youngest group there are 2 categories, so called: squirrels and little eagles (for boys) or gazelles (for girls). When the age for mini basket is over, there are under 14, under 15 ...under 18 categories.

At the age of 19 basketball for elders starts. The teams play in C-B-A Championships.

Carmagnola basketball team is playing in C championship and I am their trainer.

At what age can children start playing basketball?

Someone starts at 4, but the best is to start at 6.

Boys and girls can play in the same team until mini basket finishes and basketball for the elders starts.

When did you give up playing basketball?

I gave up when I was 36 and I immediately started to be a trainer.

In which category did you play? In B championship

Have you always played in the Carmagnola team? No, I haven't. I played in Carmagnola and also in Turin, Aosta, Fossano and Asti teams, then I went back to Carmagnola team.

What were your role /place in your team?

I had always been the shortest of my friends, who were really tall, 2 or more meters tall.. My role was very important anyway, I was the "play maker", the player who decides the game schemes and how the team will play.

When you were a player, did you agree with your trainer all the time?

It's difficult to be a player, because you aren't alone, you are in a team, so consequently you have to stay altogether and you have to help each other. If you don't do this the team is not in harmony. Playing in team means to have rights and responsibilities. But never forget it - "the trainer decides and does ". The players' work is to play seriously and to do their best all the time. To be a trainer is not easy both in case of winning or losing. It is strongly important to believe in the trainer's work and to trust him.

Have you ever thought to leave your sport career after an accident?

No, never! Even if I have had a lot of accidents and a lot of surgeries I've never thought to leave basketball. Nowadays I'm a trainer but I miss being a player.

What did you do to become a trainer?

First I did a preparatory course and an examination to become a 1st level trainer, then after another examination I became an official trainer.

How long have you been a trainer?

I was a player and a trainer of the youngest at the same time when I was 22. I had been a player for 27 years and I've been a trainer for 26 years.

Is basketball well known and popular in Italy?

In CONI opinion, basketball is an Olympics sport and it is the second practiced sport in Italy after football. It is the first practiced sport in the world. In the USA and in China it is the most popular sport.

And what about its spread in Italy?

In Italy the number of children who practice basketball is increasing a lot each year.

Is it easy to work with young people?

No, it isn't, but it is really funny. Over all I am really proud to see how many young people start with me and then become players in the most important Regional or National team.

Which company are you working for?

I'm working for the Carmagnola Basket Association, it is called ABC . It also means the basic of learning. My team plays in C championship.

How important is the players' behaviour ?

It's very important. Players who argue with others (players, arbiters, or trainers) are not good players. It's necessary to have a correct behavior. Who doesn't accept this rules couldn't play anymore. If a team would like to win, first of all it must have a good and responsible behavior. Sport doesn't reward who knows important people but who works seriously and hardly.

Have you ever won some important prizes as a player or as a trainer?

I won 6 championships in my career, 3 in C, 3 in B.

I shared these prizes with my team. I received my best personal prize when I was 15. I was selected for the National team in Piedmont. In the future my hope is to win more and more as a trainer with my basketball team.

Do you think it is important to do sport at an early age?

Yes, it is very important that children from six on practice sport and don't use a play station instead!!!

Now let me ask you these questions:

What do you like most when you practice your favourite sport?

Do your parents practice any sport?