

SPORT

340. *Simon Tortell (Sliema, Malta)*

Academical career comes first for Sliema prospect

In the history of Maltese football one finds a breed of players who mixed a career in law or medicine with the game. One only needs to mention Dr Frankie Busuttil or Dr George Bonello Dupuis as two fine examples. Another member of this class was Simon Tortell.

Tortell was born in Sliema on August 8, 1959, and was educated at St Joseph's School, the Lyceum and the University. A keen sportsman, he played waterpolo and football. In summer he played for Sliema ASC and was reserve for classy goalkeeper Michael Soler but football was by far his best proposition.

Tortell was a fine inside-forward and had he opted for football, he would surely have made it to the all-time hall of fame. He, however, was more interested in his career as a lawyer than playing football.

For him his legal career always came first and he missed many matches for the Wanderers and the national team because of his studies.

When he graduated in May 1994, he immediately retired from the

SHADOWS FROM THE PAST

Carmel Baldacchino

game. He was still 24 at the time. Tortell was a product of Sliema. He started playing at the tender age of 13 in the minor league and made his first team debut for the Wanderers in 1975-76 against Marsa.

During his career, he played 63 league matches, scoring 18 goals in the process. However, this figure could have easily been doubled had he chosen to continue.

Tortell won the championship with Sliema in 1975-76 and the FA Trophy in 1978-79. This was possibly his greatest moment in football. In the FA Trophy, he scored the two goals which helped the Blues beat Floriana in the final.



Sliema 1978/79 – Trophy winners. Standing: Aquilina, Buckingham, Tortell, Losco, Fabri, Schembri. Squatting: J.J. Aquilina, Tabone, Pandolfino, Camilleri, Sciberras.

As a youth, Tortell was considered as one of the brightest local prospects. He was picked three times to represent Malta in the UEFA Youth tournament. Making his full national team debut against Wales in Wrexham, he went on to play four more times in the national jersey.

Tortell played against Holland in the Euro Championship and in the notorious match against Spain in Seville. He also played in the friendly games against Tunisia in 1979 and 1980.

After his retirement, Tortell served on many sporting committees and in the early 90s he was also chairman of the National Council of Sport.

For the record...

Simon Tortell's competitive career

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP				
SEASONS	TEAM	PLAYED	Goals	
1975-88	Sliema Wanderers	63	18	
FA TROPHY				
SEASONS	TEAM	PLAYED	GOALS	
1975-79	Sliema Wanderers	6	3	
INDEPENDENCE CUP				
SEASONS	TEAM	PLAYED	GOALS	
1977-88	Sliema Wanderers	8	1	
TESTAFERRATA CUP				
SEASONS	TEAM	PLAYED		
1977-80	Sliema Wanderers	3		
EUROPEAN CUPS				
SEASONS	TEAM	EURO CUP	CWC	UEFA CUP
1976-77	Sliema Wanderers	2	–	–
1979-83	Sliema Wanderers	–	4	–
1977-81	Sliema Wanderers	–	–	2

BASKETBALL

Partizan player 'critical' after shooting

Yugoslav basketball player Haris Brkic was in a critical condition after an unidentified assailant shot him in the head on Tuesday, Yugoslav media reported yesterday.

The assailant approached Brkic and fired two shots in his face from point blank range with a small-calibre hand gun when the player tried to get into his car, the daily Vecernje Novosti said.

Brkic was attacked after a training session in Belgrade's Pionir Hall with his club, Partizan Belgrade. Officials at Belgrade's emergency centre said Brkic's condition was stable after surgery but added his life was in the balance, the newspaper reported.

The motive for the attack was not clear. Brkic, a 26-year-old point guard, joined Partizan a week ago for his second spell with the club. He was one of their leading players from 1993 to 1999 before he joined Yugoslav champions Buducnost Podgorica.

BOWLING

Blind people may play competitively by 2008

Tenpin bowling may become an internationally competitive sport for the blind by 2008 with the help of high-tech guidance systems, a Singapore news website reported yesterday.

The International Blind Sports Federation is spearheading the move to include tenpin bowling in the Paralympics, the Olympic Games for the disabled, Channel News Asia said in its online edition.

Portable guidance systems will help blind players pace their delivery and release the ball at the right point. The website gave no details of how the devices might work.

Federations for the blind from 12 countries are in Singapore to finalise the rules to take bowling to competitive levels, it said, adding that the international body hoped to have everything endorsed by next September.

SAILING – Sydney-Hobart race

Race director steps down

The director of the Sydney-Hobart yacht race has stepped down after an adverse finding by a coroner into the storm-swept 1998 race in which six people died in a vicious storm, the host club said yesterday.

Phil Thompson was singled out for criticism in a coroner's report delivered on Tuesday. Thompson was in charge of that race and was leading preparations for the 2000 race, which sets sail on December 26.

"Phil Thompson, the previous race director, has stood aside and will play no further role in the management of the 56th race, which starts from Sydney Harbour on Boxing Day," the Cruising Yacht Club of Australia said.

New South Wales state coroner John Abernethy wrapped up a nine-month inquest into the deaths of the six sailors by making 14 recommendations in a 340-page report which was critical of Thompson, the club and weather officials.

ADVERT