



Asociación POR NUESTRO BETIS

Apartado 1266. 41080 - Seville (Spain)

info@pornuestrobetis.com

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Dear Sirs

*As we have read the article published in your newspaper regarding the centenary of Real Betis Balompié club we are fans of written by **Sid Lowe** and titled “**Betis have become weirdly normal**”, we’d like to make the following comments so just after your judgement it could be published as well:*

First of all, we’d like to mention that Real Betis Balompié is a centenarian club supported by a highly loyal mass of fans, whose number reaches almost one million people all around the globe, according to a recent survey accomplished by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (Sociological Survey Centre) depending on the Spanish Government.

Our club was born with the name of Sevilla Balompié, Sevilla in honour of its city, Balompié in honour of Spanish language (that’s Spanish word for Football). Later on we took the name of Betis from another club we merged with, thus we took in justice a name with five thousands years from the river flowing our homeland, the name of our own city and finally the name Andalusia was given for more than 800 years back. Thus we were born as Balompié, Betis by adoption and Real (Royal) as honoured by Spanish Monarchy. These three words melt in their own and without hesitation the identification with our homeland and our universality, tradition and elegance.

For 7 years, our club, the same winning the 1935 League played in Tercera División (equivalent to English Second Division), suffering continuous economic and sport shortage and problems but this situation far from making us disappear made us stronger, more united and we coined the motto: “Viva el Beti manque pierda”, as a symbol of unconditioned love to our colours. This motto “el Manquepierda” made Spain to fall in love and admiration with our club, something we can roughly compare with famous Liverpool “You’ll never walk alone”.

Our club was the same who won the First King’s Cup (Spanish Cup) in 1977 right after the democracy came back to Spain . This club was third in 1995 and fourth in 1997. It also got to the King’s Cup final were it finally lost with almighty Barcelona , although it was just a few minutes away from the Cup. This is the same club that, only two years ago won again the King’s Cup and was the first Andalusian club ever in playing the Champions League (it finally was fourth again in Spanish League and won the right to be in the Champions after beating French Monaco in the Previous Round).



It is true we are a singular and extraordinary club, but not because of flamenco and outrageous ideas and behaviours. We represent Seville and Andalusia , our city and our river. We made our way through all divisions of Spanish Tournament, from bottom Tercera Division to top Primera División, and Champions League. We lived and felt the highest and the lowest. Anyway, we are a club with mixtures, a mixed blood entity, as the culture of our homeland is. And we are proud of it, because this mixing holds the most important part of our richness.

We are a club belonging to a great city and country. A city and a country full of art and joy, not the land of bullfighters and flamenco dancers as some may think. An excellent city and country to live in, not only to visit as a tourist. This city is full of richness and beauty in every single corner, not only crowded with flamenco clubs. A city and a country proud from modesty and humble from nobility. This greatness is not only supported by the economic and/or demographic data but mainly by its people's hearts of gold.

The Real Betis Balompié is not a red cape or a flare. It is not a bust or a bottle. It's a club full of magic for every one who wants to know its history and go deeper than mere anecdotes. It is a club that shows off with pride Seville and Andalusia all around Spain and beyond our boundaries, a club that served as an joining force for emigrants, as a remembrance of their country just to make universal their homeland and Spain more part of themselves. It is a club that back in 50s went beyond football to become a leitmotiv, a very personal outlook on life. A club loved by bullfighters, artists, writers, kings' mothers and people not very fond of football all the same.

We are very sorry that an article devoted to the centenary of our club had not even tried to go deeper in the essence of these 100 years and its marvellous group of fans, making a very superficial and typical picture of its principal shareholder and his behaviour. That's the main reason why we are sending these lines as Asociación de aficionados (Supporters' Trust), group that is working side by side with us.

Supporters Direct is the expansion to other countries of the Supporters's Trust British model.

Just to finish we'd like to sum up all our comments to your article by paraphrasing some verses of Betis centenary anthem: Betis is more than a feeling, badge or flag, much more than all of that...because beyond itself, there will always be someone crying: "Viva el Betis Manque Pierda"...

Ricardo Cabrera Cosano

President of the Supporters' Trust "Por Nuestro Betis"