

SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE

by Giuseppe Profeta



Presentation

A story set on the race tracks, we talk about motocross, speed races with motorcycles on rough terrain. To do this sport requires an innate passion, and this FRC Racing Team has enough of it. People who have always breathed exhaust fumes, with the roar thundering in their ears and reaching their stomachs, feed and live off Motocross.

To introduce you into the story it is necessary to understand the social environment of this category of sportsmen, exhibitionists and eccentrics. Motorcyclists, mythical figures, free spirits, are those who reject discipline and school that does not value individual diversity. The motorcycle is the means that allows them to bring out their abilities.

The author, addresses a very narrow range of readers and uses a colloquial form with an informal language. A detail that characterizes the story is in the use of verbs, in fact when the writer exposes the events he uses the past time, but in the most exciting moments, he uses the present, as if he relives those moments so intense.

This book? A recipe for a dish to taste on the podium of the Italian Motocross Championship. A few simple ingredients but enough to make a dish with the quality mark.

The ingredients are the protagonists:

Gaetano, a small unconscious rider, who one day finds himself on a motorcycle by chance, but then realizes that risk and speed go hand in hand with the rhythm of his blood.

And his parents, who perhaps dreamt of a phenomenon son and found themselves the champion son.

Then there is Giuseppe Profeta, author and protagonist with his Team. He managed to transmit to Gaetano all his experience and passion accumulated in 50 years of activity. He always remained faithful to this sport, he took the challenge and as if he was in the kitchen, with his initiative and determination at 360 degrees, he took it, worked it, peeled it, seasoned it, decorated it, cooked it and put it on a tray in plain sight to be enjoyed ...what? THE VICTORY!

It was a meal complete with icing cake appreciated by all.

Angela Alati

The departure of everything

A cold evening in early November 2015 brought us the news that our favourite pilot would not be racing with us in the coming season. The cold evening was nothing compared to that brought by this news. The workshop was deserted, and we were sitting on two wobbly chairs that with difficulty bore our weight, which increases more and more every year, fortunately also increases the experience, and everything, even a mistake, leads to increase this baggage of information.

I, President of this Sports Club, and Paolo Vice. It was just us that evening, and on us and our decision depended the future of what was a project born with Fulvio and that bad luck had not wanted it to take place with him. Fulvio, exceptional centralizer and collector of ideas and positive elements, then blocked in 2010 by a bad accident. We were left with the legacy of a project to carry out, of a desire that it was his duty to carry out, for the esteem that we bring to this great friend.



There was talk of what could be done to make up for the lack of our beloved pilot, a young boy who had been with us for many years, replacing him was not easy. We looked at different opportunities, but they were all negative for various reasons. At that time we had good economic possibilities that allowed us the luxury of being able to choose what to do and where to allocate funds for the new racing season, but deciding wasn't easy, everything seemed difficult and among the many options I tried a heartfelt choice, and I said to Paolo: I like Cassibba! He had no hesitation, and answered me: me too! Gaetano Cassibba is a Sicilian boy from the province of Ragusa with an innate talent, and during the 2015 season we saw him in serious difficulty with a bike not suited to his potential, in fact, he risked more than he should and made up for the shortcomings of the bike with his riding and incredible grit. Gaetano seemed to us a good choice, but it was a shame that he was busy with another Sicilian team and to have him with us wouldn't have been easy.

The decision was made and it was still difficult to get to this little phenomenon. We decided that in the days to come, we would contact his father to propose a collaboration.



Two days later my phone rings, it was Davide (secretary of the Club, who worked with Paolo to manage the Team's workshop), he tells me to join him in the workshop where I would find the Cassibba. How, I was wondering, are the Cassibba's here? Strange cases of life, I had in mind to contact them, but fate mocked them as never before, led them to me. As if everything was written, foreseen by someone, it was an important sign that I absolutely had to make real by trying a deal.

I immediately went to the headquarters and found Gaetano there with his father Salvatore and Andrea, his trusted mechanic. The long-awaited Gaetano was there in front of me with his good boy's face, with blue eyes and blond hair, with his athletic physique in the right proportions, with such sweetness in the way he spoke and smiled. With my mind confused by emotion I tried to expose our project, the words came out by themselves as if the magic of the moment was natural. They listened to me and I was even more charged by the feeling of approval, I continued along the line my heart dictated, because these are things that come out of there and not from the mind, there is nothing rational when you put the passion in the middle. The sensations are: the guidance of the mind and the desire to do well that gives the final push. The glances crossed to understand each other, the vibrations dictated behaviors and gestures gave the impression of positivity. It took little to understand us and just as little to decide that it could be done, they needed us and vice versa. We said goodbye by postponing the closing of the agreement to a few days, we needed time to receive validation from a sponsor who would sign the "Cassibba Project".

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The euphoria was great, we had the best pilot we could wish for, even if he hadn't shown his enormous potential.

The next day Salvatore called us saying that we should have confirmed the deal at all costs, because he thought it was the best for his son. We even more loaded we went to the sponsor, and after closing the negotiations positively we called him confirming that Gaetano would race with us, with the FRC Racing Team.

We were literally over the moon, we were expecting a fantastic season of racing with this talent, until now unexpressed. We should have committed ourselves as never before and we couldn't afford any mistakes.

There were a lot of things to think about and a lot more to do, we had to organize everything to be ready. We still needed a lot of things, and despite the years spent in the Italian Championship, we felt like high school students who have to pass their first exam of maturity. That's how it was for us, a competitive high school diploma exam where we put so many years of sacrifice on the line, exposing ourselves as never before, we were sure that we would be "the ones to beat", because we felt that with Gaetano we would fight for the first positions, but knowing that it would be difficult. In spite of this we were ready to fight for the summit and this charged us beyond all expectations. A great personal and economic commitment awaited us.

The first decision was to define what brand of bike we would be racing the new season with. We had always used KTM bikes, and we knew every secret about them, but there was an attempt to approach them from Husqvarna, and in particular from the area manager. We were pleased because it showed us that we were on the right track. They wanted this marvel on their motorcycles, and we, who were in a way the managers, asked for it. That shy approach led to a collaboration that lasted the whole season at the Milan Motor Show. We were proud to be able to represent the Swedish brand, so we always took care of the team's image, out of respect for those who trusted us.

Having established that Husqvarna would be Gaetano's bike, another problem remained to be solved: in our program there was a second rider, Diego Brigante, who was supposed to participate in the Italian Championship. He was a small and talented rider from Reggio Calabria. Being younger and less experienced than Gaetano we opted for a smaller 65 cc bike. He came from our Cross School and was in his first season of racing. Certainly it would have been a force to make him take part in the national championship, having just started, but since he had considerable riding skills it seemed the most appropriate choice.

The problem was that the Swedish brand did not produce bikes of this displacement, so we opted for a KTM SX 65 with Husqvarna colours, but without their brand.

The third bike was entrusted to a thirteen-year-old from Messina, Francesco Spanu, who also came out of our Cross School. In today's motocross the age is decisive and Francesco needed to grow up fast. It seems strange but with his thirteen years he is considered great. We had seen a hidden talent in him that needed to be brought out. Obviously the experience in the race is decisive and the approach to the world of the Italian Championship is not easy for those who start; tracks with difficult terrain, very high level of competition asked Francesco an exaggerated commitment, but it was necessary that he was there to perceive and get used to a different approach to racing. We only asked him to participate, to understand in which direction to work. He would be racing the 125, and a beautiful Husqvarna TC 125 was waiting for him.



I have always taken care of the graphics and image of FRC Racing. Now it was time to express all the passion in this project with the image that I would have built for the purpose. The look had to express the energy and passion that drove us to do all this. To do this I had a prestigious brand that represented those who wanted to emerge on the market, so I decided to respect their traditional colours, without upsetting our style based on the balance of colours and the action of shapes.

I have revised our logo in light of the parameters available to me. I decided to change our usual colours, which were suitable for the Austrian brand (orange, acid green, white with a bit of red) to those more suitable for the Swedish brand which have always been: dark blue, very white and a touch of yellow. From this study came out the graphics for race wear, race after race, motorcycle and van clothing, as well as frontal tents and riders' banners. On the computer everything looks beautiful, with the new colors everything gives me the impression of having reached the goal. I decided to leave the graphics of Cassibba's TC 85 as close as possible to the original ones, in order to promote the market Husqvarna was aiming for, while for the 125 I opted for a total improvement.



End of October 2015. Gaetano's bike, a flamboyant Husqvarna TC 85 my 2016 arrived from the Florindo Finamore dealer in Roccagloriosa. While we return the rodiamo in a cosentino track. In the workshop we apply the posticce graphics, those that only serve for the presentation of the team that will take place soon.

Gaetano, with his dazzling eyes, seemed to perceive the task ahead of him, but his eleven-year-old looks like a lot for the grit in his eyes. He was as sweet as usual and when he spoke to us he always did so politely. He asked me insistently when he would have the technical clothing, obviously this was what interested him most about the project at the time. Those questions showed a desire to

be presentable in the eyes of everyone, to wear those new colors with pride.

On that occasion I could meet little Mario, Gaetano's little brother of just four years old. In this child I saw the desire to be part of the team, not as the little one of the group, but as the absolute protagonist. They told me when trying a minicross, that his father had bought on the occasion of our first meeting, he had faced a curve widening a bit too much, hitting a wall that made him fall. Well, he hammered that wall because he had allowed himself to get in his way preventing him from turning.

And we are making our race debut on 8 November in the last round of the ACSI Moto Calabria Trophy run by Antonio Gelonese. The track is the one in Crotone, which has hard, steeply sloping terrain similar to that on which the national races would take place. On that occasion Gaetano's bike was flanked by those of Team 2015 with the 2016 colours, under the tent this changeover was evident. In the race Gaetano gave a show by showing everyone what he was able to do on a difficult track. But the organizers to put him to the test made him race against the biggest 125. In spite of the greater difficulty of both starts he only needed two bends to take off his rivals and fly solo to the finish line.



The other two drivers of the nascent Team, Diego Brigante and Francesco Spanu, also took part in this Crotona race. Both conquered the second step of the podium. Subsequently: at the race of November 22, on the track of Motta San Giovanni (RC), for Gaetano was a clear victory. The following week, at the track of Patti (ME), hometown of a certain Tony CAIROLI, Gaetano made his debut in Sicily on his new bike at a Regional Championship race. In the paddock the looks were all for him, after the sensational change of team and bike. This little boy was pointed out by all as the worthy successor of the eight times World Champion.



The presentation of the Team



As the first days of this December 2015 pass, the preparation work for the upcoming season is intense on several fronts. The next commitment is the presentation of the team at our usual end-of-year party, which would follow the mid-season competition. On these occasions drivers and sympathizers get together to receive the prizes commensurate with the commitment and the race classifications, but it is above all a moment of conviviality, where friendship and a smile are much more important than dinner and the prize. I organized the presentation for December 12 in a place overlooking the Strait of Messina.

That evening the guests arrived on time, perhaps out of curiosity to discover the revelation I had in store. The surprise was there under a blue coloured cloth, imposing and mysterious, someone tried to peek but it was immediately taken by Roberto (manager of the Cross School's plant), delegated in this evening to collaborate in the musical accompaniment and projections.

The evening was expected to be pleasant, and when everyone was seated the atmosphere warmed up, becoming the right one, and then began with the projection of a video of the

season just passed, which collected the most significant and entertaining moments of the students on the track, something very pleasing to those present.

In the dark of the hall a hammering music gave prominence to the purpose of the evening, the presentation of the team with the new logo and the new bike, which would take the place of the Austrian brand. Always with the same musical base I started to present the riders of the Racing Team, one by one, as they deserve: Diego Brigante, Gaetano Cassibba and Francesco Spanu, for the Italian Junior Championship, and Antonio Tramontana, for the Regional Championship of motocross class MX2. Then came the turn of Paolo Ellena, Vice President of the Team, and Davide Formica indispensable Secretary. This is the team of the 2016 season, with the undersigned to lead the group in a project with great ambitions.

The evening continues in a goliardic tone with dinner and awards ceremony for the drivers and students who have distinguished themselves in the season just spent in the various displacements, followed by sponsors and friends. To each one space and appropriate prize.

The next day (December 13, 2015) we went to Lamezia Terme to participate in a minor race, which saw for the third time in Gaetano race on Husqvarna.

On the track "The Squirrel" he showed a lot of familiarity with driving, travelling twice as fast as his opponents.

Every race up to the moment, from easy to difficult, he masterfully dominated them. Everything seemed to be predestined for the best.

Preparation for the competitive season

The Christmas festivities were spent for everyone in serenity, and we took advantage of it to put in place everything that was necessary in view of the next commitment.



On the third of January we went to Caltagirone where the "Maddalena Valley" slope welcomed us on a sunny day, disturbed by a cold wind that could jeopardize the possible jumps of our little talent.

Gaetano arrived with his father Salvatore and his mechanic Andrea, Paolo and I were there waiting for them.

We started the bike to warm it up. The engine burst into a full, metallic rumble, typical of a vehicle that hadn't yet been broken in. You could feel that everything was still too new. Gaetano was wearing for the first time the jersey that will accompany him all season long. I realized that one of my dreams could come true, to have this kid on the team. I get closer, we look into each other's eyes and in those eyes I see the determination I've seen throughout the races to follow, a sweet but determined, energetic look with a desire

to win. I am sure that this little genius will leave a mark on his life, and we will all enjoy his results for a long time. He gets on track and the adventure begins.

That day he went around respecting the advice and putting in place all the tricks we thought necessary. When you watch him ride you realize the innate class he has, and for connoisseurs it is truly a deep pleasure.

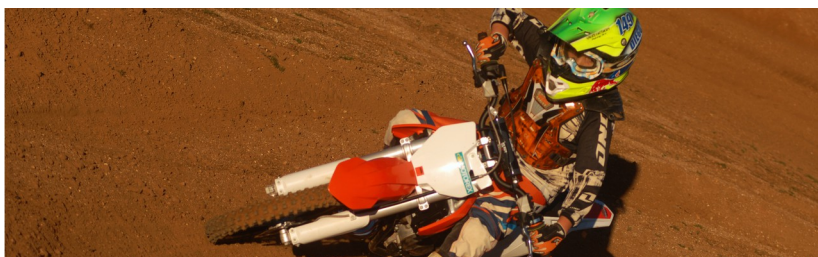
We returned satisfied with what we saw and amazed at Gaetano's potential.



For those of us who have little time the day dedicated to the Epiphany is one more day to dedicate to the Team, in fact we go to Locri, on the Ionian coast of Calabria, the only track that the bad weather of those days has spared. There were a lot of people present; many were the drivers from that area, others had come to see Gaetano, after hearing about his training in that area of Calabria. That day our little champion shot a lot of laps, improving lap after lap, and nobody, even older or with a bigger bike, was able to keep up with him. We had an extra confirmation that he drove the way we wanted him to.

In that context also came to light his best side, the personality of a mature and determined subject, but modest, nice and friendly with everyone. In that situation I saw in him a potential champion also in this aspect.

The days passed in a frenetic work. I had to design the graphics to customize the van, the banners and the curtain walls, as well as the race and after-race clothing, the graphics of the final bikes, stands, carpets, inscriptions, suspension preparations and... .. whoever has more of them. In addition, there are training sessions, even those on the tracks where the Italian Championship will take place, and then we must also plan the trips. In short, it's not over anymore.



Meanwhile, on February 6, Diego tests for the first time his KTM SX 65 for the first time, which he will use throughout the season. Compared to his previous KTM the difference is remarkable, in any case he manages to exploit it, despite the fact that a break-in period is necessary for both. Looking at him from the outside, he looks like a child like the others, but Diego has an uncommon grit. He uses a riding technique and not instinct, adopting a clean style

suitable for sliding the bike. I've nicknamed him "Diego of wonders" because he always manages to amaze me in doing unusual things. He has mixed Italian-Brazil blood, and this combination has given us a boy with a sweet face and a sweet way of talking, and a tough and daring character.

After this first training on their new bikes Diego and Gaetano set off to reach and test the tracks where the selections will take place. These races are important, as the first three races are qualifying for the three finals; only the first twenty-four of each category are admitted and they are divided into two zones: Central South and North, while the final races are National.

Just returned our Gaetano Sunday, February 14, allows the luxury of winning the first round of the Sicilian Regional Championship in Noto (Syracuse). The following week he wins again in Crotona in the first round of the Challenge FMI Calabria. In practice he wins all the races in which he participates. Now the most difficult and important ones are waiting for him, the races of the Italian Championship. In that context the level is very high and everyone is very trained and motivated, it will not be easy at all.





In the meantime the third rider of the Team, Francesco Spanu from Messina, starts the break-in of his Husqvarna TC 125 by taking part in some races in Calabria where he obtains excellent results. Also the little Diego participates in several races to train and get used to the new bike.



Days and days of incessant work ahead of the start of the championship. On the one hand we, at the headquarter, to prepare everything you need in terms of documentation, equipment and image; on the other hand Gaetano, Diego and Francesco intent to prepare in the best possible way for the big debut. The first round of the three selections will take place on March 13th in Montevarchi (Arezzo) in the Miravalle circuit.

The tension waiting for this first test was very high, and we were all tense as violin strings, restless and worried about what was waiting for us; we were also used to important competitions, as we had been attending them for many years, but now it was different, we were going to win the second place we didn't care, we wanted to win! The imperative was a must.

The years spent cultivating this project had been fruitful, but time was over, we knew we had to close the team at the end of the season, so we couldn't afford to make a mistake. We had to do it for us and especially for Fulvio, the mentor of everything we were. His sports work project deserved to be closed in style after the unfortunate accident that had taken him off the track forever. He showed us the way, even though he had to give in, and we felt responsible for this legacy he had left us.

The van with its new image was ready for the race to the big goal. The effort and work to prepare everything in the best possible way for the start erased any trace of anxiety. We were ready, both us and the van loaded with the bikes and everything we needed to set up our paddock space.



Starting from Reggio Calabria every race is an endless journey, long hours driving with the vehicle loaded, with short stops to not lose much time. For the Cassibba family then the journey is even longer; they live in a beautiful little village on the sea called Santa Croce Camerina, in the province of Ragusa, in the beautiful Sicily embellished by the Baroque style that floods the historic centers and with all the scents and colors of the Mediterranean. The only defect of this place is the distance from the rest of the peninsula. Just to get to Villa San Giovanni it takes four hours of travel, including the estimated ferry time around the hour. This makes one think of the sacrifices faced by the Cassibba family to satisfy their son's passion. The same sacrifices that the Cairoli family made at the time, to make a very young Tony run. They left in an old motorhome, which was doing 80 km/h at most, destroying their lives to allow their son to stand out. At that time I was the correspondent of Motocross magazine and Tonino I saw him born and grow up on a motorbike. I tried in every way to give him space in the magazine, but the editorial staff wisely refused. One day on the phone I told the editor-in-chief: when you make the first cover in Cairoli it will be the beginning of an endless series. We all know that Tonino has become great and his eight world titles are few compared to his indisputable class.

The story now repeats itself with Gaetano, worthy successor of the Sicilian phenomenon, and the sacrificial journeys to race where there is motocross, they say, because in the end the South has given a lot to Italian motocross.

***First Selective Italian Junior Championship
Montevarchi (Arezzo) 12-13 March 2016***

The cold of Montevarchi that Friday night had welcomed us. Near the Miravalle circuit I had found a B&B to sleep in, where I had also booked beds for my colleagues in the team who were to join me. The Cassibba family, together with the Spanu and Brigante families, had found a nice agriturismo to sleep in. Paolo and Davide had to arrive in the evening, instead they arrived in the early hours of the morning, this delay had not taken away the desire to be on the track early, in order to mount the structure where we would spend the next two days.

That Saturday morning the track tests were supposed to take place, in addition to the ones that decided the line-up. The day after two races would fill the schedule. In the days before the race it had rained and the paddock was quite muddy. We set up the tents in a meadow area that made it less problematic.

It was nice to see friendly faces, so many people you meet on the race track and always see them with pleasure.





As usual, because of the bond of sympathy that binds us, the Ferla family from Syracuse set up their tents next to ours. Carmelo, Roberto's son, made his debut in this race in the 125 class. His grandfather, despite his not-younger age, did not want to miss him and was ready to make any sacrifice in order to be actively present. Always smiling and pleasant, as rich of an education that borders on excess, not noisy or intrusive, they are willing to share everything they have. We were happy to have them by our side, because their way of doing so lowered the tension of the day.



The four motorcycles made a good show; two were Gaetano's, one Diego's, and the biggest 125 by Francesco. They were beautiful in the coloring I chose, clean and shiny enough to hurt the thought of having to dirty them when entering a muddy

track. Looking at the bikes lined up, I noticed a strange thing that made me think; it seemed like fate wanted us to understand once again that everything was planned. Let me explain better: Gaetano's race number was always 49, but the other two members of the team had chosen, without knowing it, numbers where Gaetano's was present, 149 from Diego and 499 from Francesco. How can we not believe that our future was already written?

The schedule of the day was punctuated by the "time tablet" that marked the times of entry to the track. The first would have been Francesco Spanu with the 125. His was a double debut, as he had never tried the track and had never raced a race of that level. Obviously his emotion was great and for us, his teachers in the cross school, seeing him on the track was a great satisfaction. On the occasion he hesitated a little bit, but watching him race was always a pleasure. Just one inaccuracy, due to a slide, made him pay the tribute that everyone has to pay at the debut.

In the meantime Gaetano had prepared himself for his entrance on the track. For us it was the realization of a dream, to be able to see this young champion with our colours in a race of that championship. He faced the track with maturity, flaunting confidence, riding as only he knows how, taking the bike to the limit with ease while memorizing his reactions. My heart was beating fast and my face definitely had the expression of happiness.

On the way back he had given us some information that was useful to improve the bike in view of qualifying.

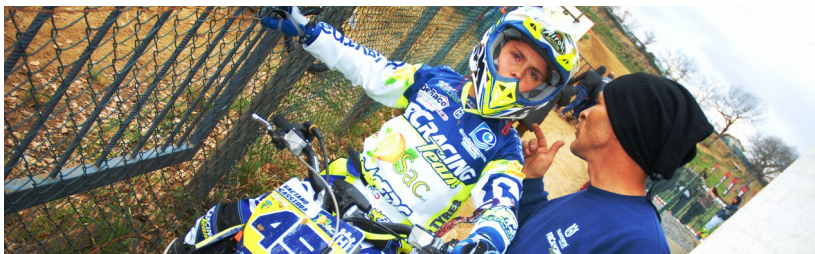


It was time for Diego Brigante, our little but great driver of the 65, and Francesco Spanu with the big 125. The previous month Diego had tried this circuit, so he wasn't completely unprepared, something that didn't happen to Francesco.

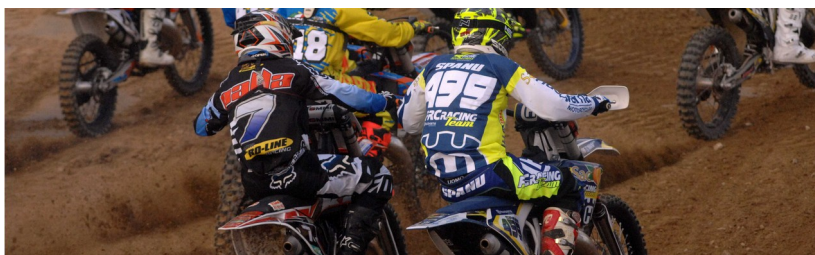
I was looking at them on the track and I thought: these two little pilots on their debut what courage they have, they manage to do things that would certainly be difficult for me to do. The driving position of both of them was as usual perfect thanks to the many days of training in Cross School. From theirs they put a lot of desire and great passion.



In the afternoon qualifying session Gaetano had given us a great satisfaction with the record time of his group, separating the second by five seconds. In the other group the strong driver Matteo Vantaggiato had set an incredible time ahead of Gaetano Cassibba in the overall standings. On the other hand, the young driver from Puglia was the opponent I expected to have. The previous year he was the Italian Champion of the 65 class with the team of my friend Daniele Pardi, a discoverer of great talents, and to see him in first position was not a novelty for me. Daniele and his father Giuliano have always had great drivers and their passion has made them a job of it. They can manage a myriad of champions with ease having a proven organization.



The result of the qualifications was immense, we put into practice those hopes that we kept dormant. Inside me there was a turmoil of sensations and satisfaction. Work always pays off.



For my two young debutants, qualifying was a hard obstacle to overcome. Francesco in the difficult 125 class had entered Group B with the twenty-seventh time, while Diego had obtained an honorable 22nd position. We were equally happy to see them fighting hard against the best of national motocross.

Looking through Gaetano's standings, I was reading a lot of names that I knew, including: Simone Marini, the youngest rider competing in the 85 Junior, his tenth position was incredible (his class had to be 65, but his physical dimensions were not); then the very good Giammaria Catinello, Sicilian from Syracuse, who was in sixth position and who, together with Eros Aricò from Messina, had made their mark in these difficult qualifying sessions.



Finally comes Sunday, the long-awaited day that marks the beginning of this Championship. In the early morning the warm-up opens the races, followed by the first heats. Obviously we are anxious, anxiety commensurate with the importance of the event. We start to get serious, and every mistake is paid dearly. Therefore everything "must" work at its best, otherwise an impossible future recovery.



Davide takes Gaetano in his arms for a souvenir photo to dilute the tension of the moment. Salvatore, Gaetano's father, decides to estrange himself by placing himself in a quiet area in order to enjoy the race and the great emotions that he will certainly have. For my part I go to the grandstand from where you can see and take a decent photo, even if the photos at that time will not be



a priority for me.

With our Cassibba, Paolo Ellena and Davide Formica enter the track in the mechanical area and signaling devices ready for every event, with the table will give useful indications at every step, Andrea instead supports Gaetano in the starting area. These elements are the soul of the team, without their support nothing could have been achieved, the goal was common and also the choices.



Andrea Filice would deserve a chapter just to clarify what the link between him and the Sicilian champion could be. He fixes his bike, he is close to him, he advises him, he approaches him and whispers to him about things that only they know about, evidently motivates him to do well. In the photos you can clearly see how Gaetano relaxes with him at his side, in fact my first thought when I took Gaetano with me was to leave him close to him for the whole season.



The start, in a motocross race, is the most important and decisive moment. It is so decisive that insiders consider it the first race, the second comes after, the first is the start, because it conditions the final result. The choice of the starting position is made by respecting the position in qualifying, and everyone remains faithful to it for both races.

And here we are at the start of the first heat this season. The young riders, with the small 85 cc bikes, finish the reconnaissance lap and return to the pre-alignment zone.

In this area are allowed the riders and only one companion, so Andrea joins Gaetano who, with his presence, softens the tension of those moments. The exhaust fumes fill this area, you can breathe the real competition and pretend not to look at the opponent, but in the end you can see everything of everyone.

At the Race Director's signal the engines are turned off and from that crazy noise of warm-up engines you pass to an unreal silence.



The rider-boys slowly push their bikes in the direction of their place behind the starting gate, they look like gladiators with their protective clothing, and like the gladiators who enter the arena to put on a show, only here the lions are replaced by the many horses with which the engine is equipped, but the fight is the same, a fight against the movement of the vehicle and the impervious terrain. In this silence you can hear the low murmur of the audience, the wind blowing and the noisy footsteps that the boys produce with the heavy protective boots.



Everyone has their place behind the gate, carefully chosen and prepared for the purpose just beforehand in a ritual that no one renounces. They go there fully dressed, they go to the chosen position and with their boots they press the area where they will rest their clawed wheels to have the best traction at the moment of the initial start. Many believe that this improves the act of starting, in my opinion it improves concentration. I have noticed that some of them stop, while pushing with the tips of their boots on the ground, stop and point their eyes towards the first corner, hoping to get there first.

This is a very intense moment, and it is so intense that photographers, including myself, love to capture these strange attitudes, full of tension and superstitious rituals. Gaetano is the second to enter the "arena", he has chosen an almost central place, the others arrive in single file, positioning themselves in their own space. Now the engines start again in an even more deafening roar. The smoke from the exhausts, for these oil thirsty two-stroke engines, fills the air with an odour we love.



They are so close to each other that they look like one strange little worm with strong colours, with its belly up, its legs waving as they move their helmets. The noise of the engines goes up amplified by the panels that delimit the space behind the bikes. The green flag is raised and it starts at minus fifteen seconds, all of them are super concentrated with the engines on high to be clean and make the most of the moment of shooting.

At minus five the time expands and becomes very long, the engines are kept at maximum, the looks of the riders are exclusively on that iron bar that prevents him from going and when he goes down will start the free rein, the impetuosity and the desire to win. The rules require the gate bar to fall within those five seconds, so everyone knows that if that happens they must be ready to release the clutch. This is as if it were the trigger of a gun, which when a light goes on must be pressed to shoot (a similarity loved by my friend and great former Calabrian driver Franco Candido), for them this moment is the decisive one and leaving the clutch properly gives or takes away the chance to be in front of everyone at the first corner.

The gate goes down, the rear wheel scratches the ground in search of the best grip, many are so reactive that they crush it with the front wheel making it go down anticipating the force of gravity; it is overtaken by the front wheel and then used by the rear wheel, increasing grip. At this point they are all directed towards the first curve, positioned with the body stretched backwards to push on the platforms, in search of the best grip and speed.



In the Miravalle circuit the start is uphill and the engine counts for a lot. Gaetano with his above-average muscle mass struggles, but with great determination comes out of the first few corners. Here they are tackling the technical jumps of the first downhill race which is opposite the grandstands. These kids look like professional riders because of the way they face the difficult track, they jump side by side in search of the best trajectory. The engines are pushed to the limit and overtaking happens especially in this first phase, conquering a good position then determines the whole race. My little champion is in good shape, he passes in second place between Matteo Vantaggiato and Morgan Bennati.



So well that Matteo is recovering from an injury just before the start of the championship that has affected his preparation, so I expect a physical decline. We insiders, with the experience, already know how a race will go and we need little to understand the potential of the drivers, just the way to drive, or other small nuances that give us a clear idea.

On lap two, Gaetano took the lead. In the next five laps also Bennati overtakes Vantaggiato at unexpected speed, he approaches Gaetano and even overtakes him. I knew that Morgan was playing at home, but seeing him so fast worried me a bit. Gaetano doesn't give up and overtakes him in the stretch of jumps before the finish zone, he does it by jumping low, keeping the wheel on the ground to increase traction. From that overtaking I understood how much potential my young rider has. They came close, but the third is about twenty seconds away, obviously the fast Vantaggiato realized he didn't have the physique for the duration of the heat.

These young drivers amazed us with their maturity and intelligence in handling the races in an incredible way.

Obviously great joy for all of us, but also attention to not distract our little champion in view of race two.



The second heat has little history as it was dominated by Gaetano, who from the second lap overtook Morgan relegating him to second place until the finish line, third again Matteo with almost identical gaps in race one.



Celebrations and extreme satisfaction for the result obtained that put us at the top of the championship standings. Gaetano confirms our predictions by positioning himself as the driver to beat in these selective. Strangely enough I found a Morgan Bennati as the opponent of the season. This guy, from Castiglion Fiorentino, wasn't in my predictions, but he proved to be very good on the field and to tell you the truth he worried me a lot. After the match I advised Gaetano that it would be good to go and pay tribute to his worthy adversary. Morgan's balance was wonderful, twelve meters of assistance and hospitality.

With not little awe we introduced ourselves, they welcomed us with kindness, Morgan was changing, he had a sweet smile and seemed more shy than Gaetano. We congratulated and waving goodbye they asked us where we were parked, I turned around and with my index finger I pointed to our "camp", yes... Compared to theirs we were really camped, but happy to be camped, after all we had only won, or rather won the first race.



Our other two boys behaved in an honorable way facing a very difficult race, both were happy and looking forward to repeat the positive experience.

Other drivers from the South under our eyes were: Giammaria Catinello excellent sixth place in race one and ninth in the final race, confirming the excellent qualification, and fourteenth place overall for Eros Aricò in his first race in the major class.

The comeback was very pleasant, throughout the trip we discussed the feats of our Gaetano who was really formidable in the race.

**First round European Championship 85
Brezice (Slovenia) 2-3 April 2016**

The second test awaits us, after a month in the very difficult track of San Severino, where everything counts: engine, suspension, driver and above all luck. Before, however, we had an even more important commitment, the European Championship! In our program of races was also expected to participate in this prestigious event. It would take place in Slovenia on 7 and 8 May, in a country where motocross is a very important sport, and which has given many champions. The races of this championship are quite difficult for various reasons, one of the most important is the age difference between the riders of the 85 class. In that displacement can participate riders much older than eleven year old Gaetano, and experience as the age make the difference. We knew we were starting at a disadvantage, but being there was crucial to adding international experience to his little baggage. Gaetano's father, with mechanic Andrea and my trusty Paolo, set off in a nine-seater van. Given the distance it was necessary to leave well in advance; this is what it means to live in the South of Italy.





For this European Championship that started in Slovenia he was given the race number 349 to replace his inseparable 49. In that race Gaetano did very well, despite the heavy ground and some slips. They returned satisfied with what they had done, full of pride for having contributed to the international debut of our champion.



***Second Selective Italian Junior Championship
San Severino Marche (Macerata) 16-17 April 2016***

Now the mind empties of everything to concentrate on the race in San Severino second round of the three selective. This track is located near Macerata and is considered one of the historical tracks of the Marche region, with difficult ups and downs, hard and stony ground. Gaetano and Diego had been at this circuit in February when they had travelled for a week rehearsing almost all the circuits selected for the championship. Francesco who had not been able to try it, in agreement with his father and us, decided not to participate in this second round, focusing on untitled races. In my opinion, a very good choice that eliminates the risk of physical damage that could have compromised the entire season, on the other hand, the young man from Messina had only to gain experience, but doing it is one thing, unnecessarily risking injury is another.



To be competitive you need to try the tracks before the races, unfortunately we live far from all the circuits of the Italian Championship. We are at a disadvantage compared to the others

and we are forced to pay too big a price, and yet that day in San Severino Gaetano, after some not exciting tests due to various problems, made a sparkle winning the first race of the day, followed by Giorgio Di Crescenzo of Team Pardi and his most direct opponent in the championship, Morgan Bennati.



In race two Gaetano, after a bad start, recovered until the third position followed by Morgan Bennati. The race was won by Giorgio De Crescenzo, with Gaetano in second place overall, third Matteo Vantaggiato. What a race these guys have done in this hellish circuit! We were happy, we had passed one of the toughest tracks in the whole championship, and we were still first in the Championship standings.



***Second round European Championship 85
Gazzane di Preseglie (Brescia) 7-8 May 2016***

In order not to lose the rhythm of the race, Gaetano and our Team, on May 7th and 8th go near Brescia for the second round of the European Championship for a further test of international experience.

**Third and last Selective Italian Junior Championship
Savignano sul Panaro (Modena) 21-22 May 2016
Awarding of the title of Italian Champion Central and Southern Italy**

The third selection, the one that would determine the victory of the Central-Southern Championship, was scheduled in the circuit of Savignano sul Panaro. In a path full of ups and downs, with a medium-hard bottom without stones, we played the chance to win a title, no less important than the final one. Winning this first legitimation was the first driver to be beaten in the Central-Southern area, so we arrived loaded and motivated to win race and Championship.



Gaetano was calm, I could see his potential. I, on the other hand, was as usual worried, even though I trusted my boys who, at least up to the moment, had done their job very well.

The atmosphere under the tents was pleasant, everyone was doing their bit to make the two days of racing less tense. Besides, the paddock is very long and we were in a rather secluded area, which allowed us maximum peace of mind. Our team had paid for the parking space for all the races and this allowed us to take advantage of all the amenities and services.



For this last selection our Gaetano gave the best of himself, dominating over all the opponents in order to create the **perfect race**. He won the qualifying in a clear manner, scoring the track record, he dominated the two heats, separating his rivals by more than fifteen seconds. This was the Cassibba we wanted, the one who at the decisive moment chose how to destroy everyone by putting his class. We certainly couldn't ask for more.



In this last semi-final, the little Diego Brigante, second team leader, gave everything he had to do, and by winning the access to the finals he showed his skills. In his first year of racing he reaches a great goal.





We were euphoric, we had won the race becoming **Italian Central-Southern Champions**. Gaetano couldn't wait to win, they had given him a gold medal that represented him, he was the real talent, the one who knows how to fight battles, who manages the races in a superb way, who drives like nobody else and who above all fears nobody.

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Returning to our seats the party was great with compliments from everyone, but we had won a battle not the war, that was waiting for us shortly after with the first of the final races, where we would clash with the drivers from the north, which we knew very strong. In order not to face them unprepared, we had brought Gaetano to take part in the first selective of the North on March 20th in Mantua, taking advantage of the fact that he had a license with the historic Moto Club Costa Volpino of Bergamo, among other things, in the same race in Mantua he won the test valid as regional Lombardy in both heats. The strongest were Andrea Viano, who had won as Gaetano the corresponding Italian Championship in the North zone, Alberto Ladini, Daniel Gimm and Andrea Rossi.

***First National Final Italian Junior Championship
Bridge at Egola (Pisa) 9-10 July 2016***

Now the target was set for July 10th, the day it started getting serious. We prepared ourselves psychologically to overcome this great obstacle, there was no way to arrive without tension. We loaded the van very carefully to avoid forgetting anything, we had to be ready for any eventuality. The day of departure had arrived, it was at the beginning of July and the heat was beginning to be felt. We waited for the Cassibba's who arrived from Ragusa in the team's workshop to face the trip together. More than a thousand kilometers that separated us from the track of Ponte a Egola, which is located between Pisa and Florence. We weren't afraid of the distance, we were used to the long trips.

During the trip we joked to ease the tension, but everyone's thoughts were there, at the first race of these finals, where we played everything, hopes, frustrations and future, especially for Gaetano. We knew that at the end of the season we'd give up, but Tano wouldn't, he'd continue on his path as champion and he could use a title in his career. TC 49 was predestined to be so and no one could prevent it, my belief was that it was all written down and we were just leaving it to fate, it was too many coincidences not to think about it.



At this race also came the little of Cassibba, Mario, who with his impetuousness made everything nice. He was sweet and had intelligent eyes that didn't miss anything, moreover with the bike he was a marvel, he did things that others at his age can't even think of doing. He had an extraordinary balance that allowed him to perform incredible stunts. Looking at him I could see a future as a free styler, because motocross would have been too easy for him. He was the one who, when we were busy following the races, would sneak up on us, hugging us or giving us a token of affection, we would wince at the surprise and then melt into his sweet eyes.

How beautiful these young talents are. Off track always playing and exchanging opinions, in fair competition opponents.



The track of Ponte a Egola welcomed us on a sultry day, we knew we would suffer the heat, but we never thought it could be so strong. The track is located in a rather closed valley where the wind doesn't circulate, just think that it has no telephone coverage.

On Saturday with official practice we realized that Andrea Viano would be our first opponent. He had a light and precise way of riding, he almost seemed not to go fast, but he was very fast in the corners, the bike instead of sliding, he reminded me a lot of a French champion, Jean Michel Bayle, who had these incredible riding qualities.

The second one would be Daniel Gimm, small but very tough. Very fast at the start and gritty like nobody else, then he would "fly". Everybody jumps, and at this level they do it very well and they have a control of the bike to envy to experienced champions, but Daniel had that something extra that gave me goosebumps. In the air he took the bike where he wanted it, moved it, closed it, tilted it, but not to make a spectacle, just to be faster. It came naturally to him like nobody else, he was one with his bike, and this way of riding worried me, it could have made a difference. Then the worries were for other terrible kids, like Ladini, Vantaggiato, Rossi, Bennati, Paglionico, Di Crescenzo, Palombini and Emiliano De Risi, Viano's teammate. In short, various and varied worries kept me awake.

This first final of the Championship marked the beginning of the war and we, but above all Gaetano, were ready for the battles that awaited us. The races took place in incredible heat, poor kids! They are already small and frail, but on a bike they have a strength beyond all logic, but on a day like this the physical effort would have destroyed everyone.



Race one was won by Andrea Viano, who, together with Gaetano Cassibba, took off everyone, it was clear that they had another step in these weather and track conditions, followed by Ladini, Rossi and Gimm.



During the rest between the two heats, Gaetano reintegrated, and with a slightly larger physique than his opponents, he recovered everything. He won the second heat with extreme ease dominating it from the first lap, he was really formidable. Following again Andrea Viano and Mattia Paglionico. The title was mortgaged by our great champion.

In this race they didn't have the drivers I expected with performances similar to Gaetano's, it must have been the heat or the pressure for the importance of the event but Morgan Bennati, who with Gaetano had fought the selective, or Matteo Vantaggiato or Fabiomassimo Palombini, from Team Aldebaran, and Giorgio Di Crescenzo, all guys from the Centre-South that should have been in the first positions, were absent.



On the podium Gaetano was given the red championship leader's table, a table that meant a lot to everyone. He could receive it only because he had won the second heat, even though he was on equal points with the strong Viano, so he was going to the second round of the three finals with a bit of fear due to the fact that every little nuance in the race could compromise everything.

The fight between the two kids was tight, they seemed to have a slightly higher stride. They gave the impression of being equal in everything: performance, consistency of results, fast laps and much more, on the other hand they had both won the two championship selections (North and Centre-South), confirming the rankings.



Our Diego Brigante, in this first final race, has confirmed his remarkable skills, even if he ran one heat without saddle... after losing it. Diego shows us more and more that, despite his inexperience, he has the makings of a champion and sooner or later he will certainly be noticed by everyone.

The day was coming to an end, the sun was going down and it was less hot, we abandoned ourselves on the cool lawn to enjoy the moment. All around us the guys were fighting with water, they were the same ones who were fighting on the track just before, but once the helmet was taken off they were together, all the competitiveness turned into a game.





Gaetano wanted me to take a photo that remains the most beautiful of the entire season. I portrayed him with Gaia Palombini, Fabiomassimo's sister of Team Aldebaran, a young girl who had a particular sympathy for Gaetano. I portrayed them with their wonderful smiles, they gave off joy and youth, satisfaction and beauty, happiness of the result. This image for me will be the one that will represent the whole season, every time I look at it it brings me back to live the same emotions of that day.



Second National Junior Italian Championship Final Hexanatoglia (Macerata) 3-4 September 2016

Summer was passing quickly, we were concentrated on September 4th for the second round of the finals. It would take place on a circuit that has done and given so much to motocross in Italy, the Marche region of Esanatoglia, the first crossodromo to host international races, where the greatest champions of yesterday and today competed. We had the right fear of this prestigious circuit, we came here with the red table of championship leader, and this fact worried me a lot. Gaetano travels harder when he is under pressure, when he knows that he has to give everything to win something, arriving as a winner takes away his charge. In any case we went with the desire to beat the great opponents who, in the summer, had had the opportunity to train to make up for the strength that Tano had shown at the overbearing race in Pisa, where he proved to have a physical condition and a pace unsustainable for all in torrid weather conditions.



In the circuit we were positioned in an open area overlooking the track, such position was certainly a way that Luca Basili, of Off Road Pro Racing, attributed us to compensate for less favorable positions in previous races. The organization, which manages this and other championships, has people within it who are always available and very professional; you can see them in every condition at everyone's disposal, always smiling and ready to deal with any problem is placed with naturalness. They are truly exceptional.



Also this time next to us parked the Ferla, who with Carmelo participated in the 125 championship, sharing with us joys, sorrows and conviviality. With them every race became a pleasant holiday.

Thinking back to those moments of the race, I see Gaetano very tense, in the qualifying heat he drove badly and the track, with a particularly hard and slippery ground, needed a guide contrary to his. A sixth time confirmed what I saw, but I knew that he was a racing animal, a real fighter, and this made me feel quite calm.



During the warm-up Gaetano climbed up the standings to fourth place, this meant that he started to relax in view of the two challenging heats that awaited him.

In race one, after the first lap, he passed in fourth position because of a start in the middle of the group. Andrea Rossi, on the other hand, was taking off in front of everyone. On lap four Viano was in second place and Cassibba was already third, in seventh Gaetano overtook Andrea and crossed the line in second position. In race two a marvelous Daniel Gimm started in the lead and stayed there until three laps from the end when he was overtaken by Viano, who started badly, had made the difference until he won. Gaetano, still in clear difficulty in the starting stages due to the climb of the start, recovered up to an honorable third position, which meant losing the red table of leader in favor of Andrea Viano.





Our pilot was angry for not being able to show his speed and, with the usual determination that distinguishes him, he postponed everything to the last race, that of Ottobiano.



To believe that our Tano can be considered defeated is a simple illusion. He is born a fighter and does not give up in front of anything, he does it to achieve his goal and to get there he trains in all the ways he is allowed, to the point of exhaustion. In order to win he knows very well that he will have to face sacrifices and renunciations. That's why after the race he takes the initiative to make the van's nose head north, not home as it would have been normal, he wants to go immediately to Ottobiano to prepare himself in the best possible way for the final race, the last chance he has to win this title. *"...no chance must be left to chance, I want to fight until the last lap."*

To do this he must prepare himself as only he knows how to do, turn and turn on that track, know it, grasp its secrets and appreciate it.

Ottobiano is located a short distance from the house of his friend and friend Andrea Viano, he is more advantageous, he is from the North! Gaetano, although he is from the South, which can't be any further South, has no intention of backing out.

In the paddock of Ottobiano he will spend the two weeks that separate him from the final, he will sleep in the van, he will eat what his companions will provide him, he will be far from his mother and her comfort, after all he is only eleven years old and at that age every child needs it. He will only be fighting against everything and everyone, but he will do so with the desire for redemption that only the great champions possess. That desire to emerge that is in their DNA, and when the going gets tough they are ready to fight with even more strength.



TC 49 has been running non-stop, consuming litres and litres of fuel, taking GoldenTyre tyres and mousses to the extreme. He filmed on a track he didn't know, memorizing its secrets, trying new trajectories, astonishing everyone who saw him for his constancy in wanting to be the right protagonist, the one who feels predestined to do something bigger than any of his peers.

He was in the right place, he knew he was there to win a race worth a lifetime, and he didn't want to miss the opportunity he had been given. The wait for the fateful day was long, but every turn he took, every braking, every jump marked the time, all these obstacles attacked them with a speed unknown to others, and for those like him who love to ride motorcycles, time goes fast.

How many times in the evening after so much turning, sitting in a folding chair, he would watch the sun set on the horizon, stopping to think about what was waiting for him. Smelling the fresh air at the end of summer, he released sighs that surrounded his thoughts of champion, of future champion.

***Third National Junior Italian Championship Final
Ottobiano (Pavia) 18-19 September 2016
Assignment of the Italian Championship Title 85 Junior***

The final race at Ottobiano was approaching and I was working in the Chieti area and I asked Daniele Pardi, from the team of the same name, if he would give me a lift to Pavia where he too had to go, as he has a good number of guys to follow in the same race as us. Daniele lives in that city where he has an established Motocross School with Racing Team, he runs it together with his father Giuliano, founder and creator of this forge of champions. He gave me the confirmation that we could make the trip together and showed me a B&B where to sleep, the next day he would pick me up.



Punctual, like someone who has a commitment he doesn't want to miss, here he comes and because of the rush to go he won't even let me have breakfast. We leave with his van and on the way, at a stop, a little boy with a little angel face comes up with us, later I discover that he is Giorgio Di Crescenzo, one of Gaetano's opponents. Is it possible that these kids without helmets all look cute, cute, and then they become terrible when they are on a motorcycle?

I congratulated him on the season and he kindly thanked me.

The trip was rather, a cool evening welcomes us to Ottobiano. At my paddock they tell me that Gaetano is on the track racing against one of the best talents of this championship, Kevin Cristino. On the training track Gaetano seemed to me very fast, and this took away the last doubts that I still had. Incontratolo welcomed me with a smile and a big hug. I was once again happy to see him, I missed him for too long, he always manages to be a good centralizer.

With Gaetano there was his mother Agnese and his maternal grandmother who did not want to give up this opportunity to be close to their little one, for the same reason there was also Cibeles, Diego's mother. Everyone seemed serene and aware of how much was waiting for them the next day.



The Saturday of practice was a continuous greeting, between one heat and another, now after five races and ten days spent together we were all friends, the paddock was a continuous shaking of hands and hints of greetings, a very pleasant atmosphere.

In qualifying, Daniel Gimm posted a record lap to take pole position, followed by Viano, Rossi and my Gaetano. I wasn't satisfied with the fourth fastest time and apparently neither was he, in fact as soon as he got off the bike he called his father with unexpected authority saying that they had to talk immediately. From this attitude I understood his nervousness, obviously the bike had something he didn't like, and as it should be, he wanted to confide in me. I was surprised by this, but after all I was pleased, he had the attitude of an adult who knew what he wanted. I later learned that it was just a lack of power for a defective spark plug, but for Gaetano, who had given so much in recent weeks, it was a tragedy.

The team's technicians worked late into the night to be sure of an efficient bike for the next day, Andrea and Paolo continuously felt the breath on the neck of this devil dressed as a boy.

It was a sleepless night for everyone: for the very young riders who felt the tension of the final race, for the parents who were aware that their children were facing bigger difficulties than them, and for those like me, the final result was unexpected.

The sunrise in the paddocks is always noisy, there are many mechanics who start the engines to test the carburetion, and these noises combined with the exhaust smoke pollute the pure morning air. The 125 engine capacity drivers are the first to enter the track,

then we move on to the lower engine capacities. They start at eight o'clock with the warm-up, then move on to the actual races.

Under our tents, the little Mario, Gaetano's brother, is already active, he pedals and rides with the bike to vent the desire for a bike that is not yet completely granted to him. His bright eyes control everything and everyone, he participates as he can, and his presence is now a constant. He knows that for Gaetano, or Tano as he calls him, it is an important moment, in fact he is close to him without disturbing him too much.

Gaetano's smile, coming back from the warm-up laps, confirms that the bike is to his liking, even if he didn't pull the engine as much as he could have done to save it as much as possible in view of the hard work in the race.



The more I looked at him, the more I realized he was ready for the challenge. Coming second in the overall standings was good, Tano came angry, and this attitude gave him the right charge to be combative beyond imagination.

The first final is scheduled just before lunch, and here we are already in the pre-park. We say goodbye to everyone, we are more friends than opponents. I congratulate those who deserve it, and I look at my Gaetano ready to enter for the first of the two races that will mark his future, from the outside he seems very calm, I am not at all, the tension is now sky-high. I know that his parents are in an embankment in front of the first bend, and from that point they will observe their son's exploits.



With the permission of photographer I enter the track, even if I will take few photos in those tense conditions, I have already taken enough at other times. I meet Sabrina Scarpellini, official photographer of the championship, who combines the fact of being the mother of a pilot to that of an excellent professional. Sabrina loves her job and she does it with scruple and attention, every shot she takes has something magical about it.



In front of me is the starting zone, the drivers are behind the gate, each one of them is as relaxed as the tension can be, they are waiting for all those fifteen seconds that will start the race. Here is the sign that is exposed, the engines are at full throttle when the fifteen-second sign passes to five, the guys can't wait to start, start to attack this river sand, to fight and understand the real forces on the field.



The gate comes down and everyone comes towards me at a crazy speed; Viano enters first followed by Gimm, Rossi and Vantaggiato, Gaetano is slightly behind but fits in well. They start looking at each other, studying each other, to understand where and how to overtake each other. They pass me in the straight next to the start, I see them all fast and motivated to do well. Viano is still leading, with Gimm and Rossi to follow, Gaetano is in fourth. At the finish on lap one, Rossi and Gaetano passed Daniel Gimm. During the second lap, Gaetano made the record lap of the track with over two seconds on all, overtaking Rossi and taking Viano who, feeling the pressure, slipped into the only downhill section of the circuit, Cassibba in the lead with Rossi and Gimm to follow. Viano came in seventh, but knowing him he wouldn't give up.



Gaetano continued to hammer on lap after lap, holding the lead and taking out Gimm, who meanwhile overtook Rossi, by five seconds. At the finish line came Cassibba, Gimm and the very strong Andrea Viano, more than twenty seconds behind, then a formidable group of riders led by the excellent Emiliano de Risi, followed by Rossi, Bennati, Paglionico and Vantaggiato.

After the finish line we breathe a sigh of relief, the first race is ours, now awaits us the second, the decisive one. With the points gained Gaetano is in first position in the Championship, but in motocross never take anything for granted, the championships are won after the checkered flag, never before!



More suffering awaits us on this long day, race two! The decisive one, where we play everything, where TC 49 will have to do everything to fulfill his dream. **Now he is one step away from the title, so much awaited, searched for, sweaty, loved, but above all... wanted.**

We all go to the track, the guys are already ready to enter the arena, I hear the murmurs of the public and the wind blowing to clean the air that smells like the scent of the Po Valley countryside, earth and engines. A tremor pervades me, it is the agitation of the great event, of the moment that I too, like Tano, have dreamed and searched for.

Winning would mean the exceptional conclusion of an adventure that began in the last days of 2010 and that today, thanks to an eleven-year-old boy I never thought I could have with me, closes in a positive way, for him who certainly deserves everything he gets, as well as for us.



For this last race Paola Battistini and her brother Andrea of MUD motorcycle clothing, have created a suit for Gaetano, with a bright red to replace our classic dark blue. With this new look he feels comfortable and this will give him even more confidence of his potential.





TC 49 is positioned in the first gate, with Daniel Gimm next to him who is the best in the starts. The start of this decisive race is the same for everyone, the front wheels, just after the start, are on the same line, but after ten, twenty, thirty meters, everything changes. Daniel leaves everyone, only Andrea Viano, with the usual class that has always distinguished him, manages to reach him in braking. At the next corner Gaetano has already recovered. An incredible, for speed and grit, Mattia Paglionico manages to contrast all cut to the lead on the first lap followed by Gaetano Cassibba, who meanwhile got rid of his rivals, third again Viano, and fourth Gimm with a wheel Vantaggiato.

During the second lap, as in race one, everything was decided: Gaetano took the lead leaving Paglionico in the clutches of Viano, who overtook him the next lap. TC 49 is concentrated, just watching the track and doing all the laps without giving up, without looking at anything. They are alone, he and his bike, they are fighting against everything and everyone, against a sandy bottom that puts him in trouble, but not enough to slow him down, against the number of laps that are missing at the end of everything, the total liberation, the final joy.



Each lap passes on the final jump, and jumping as high as it can confirm the domination over this kingdom that is conquering. I see him passing by me and I keep wondering if what I was experiencing was reality or a dream, if that was the little Cassibba I saw in the photos, and that just because he was called a great champion of uphill races, for me he had to be a fast kid.

In my bag I had the commemorative T-shirt, the kind you use to do when you win a title, that you use only once and then you put aside in perpetual memory, I had to give it to Gaetano as soon as I crossed the finish line. By now we were almost at the end of this heat and the wait to show it off had almost arrived, just as my breath was over for the emotion of seeing him at the last jump on the last lap.





It was done, we had won RACE AND TITLE, we were Italian Champions together with our Gaetano Cassibba, a marvel!

I could see it from afar celebrated by so many drivers. It was a whirlwind of hands, smiling faces, fraternal hugs, we were happy about it all. Finally I held him close to me, so strong and for so long, as if I wanted to relive a season in that long embrace, as if I wanted to thank him for what he did for all of us, tears came down by themselves, happiness was immense. He was delightfully happy, he had the sweat mixing with the tears of emotion. Gaetano was loved and for his sweetness he was appreciated by everyone who came into contact with him, with his beautiful eyes he would tear everyone away and when it happened that he lowered his gaze it was only to give an even more intense one. He had the quality to centralize on himself the positive sides of all of us, he managed with

a few touches and words a group of adults hanging from his gestures. What a boy, and what a man this champion will be, in life as he already is in sport. He will be unattainable by all.



After the race it was wonderful and exciting, we were wearing the shirt that declared, for those who didn't know it yet, that Gaetano Cassibba was the new Italian Champion of the Junior 85 class, and he was the first Sicilian to boast this title. Not even the great Tony Cairoli had done it winning only in 125. And then we, the FRC Racing Team, were the ones who had done something that "SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE", as it was considered out of reach of the Southerners.

On that day, the South won the title for the first time with a driver from the South. We had fought and defeated teams that have always dominated our nation, it was David against Goliath. We "Davide" who showed up in the paddocks with our van, against the big trucks of the "Golia", we who gave Husqvarna the chance to win a championship ahead of many KTM.



In the championship rankings we could read Gaetano's name at the top with the name of FRC Racing and the Swedish brand next to it, then underneath all the others with Austrian bikes, all the same in their orange, among other things just the bikes we used for all the years FRC Racing has been on the track. A change that has brought good, and not only to us.

Finali MX Junior Rd 3

85 Junior - Classifica di Giornata

Pos	Num	Pilota	Naz.	Team / Motodub	Moto	G1	G2	Totale
1	49	CASSIBBA Gaetano	ITA	FRC Racing Team	Husqvarna	120	120	240
2	8	VIANO Andrea	ITA	MGR Motocross Team	KTM	80	100	180
3	130	GIMM Daniel	ITA	Gorlese Mario Colombo	KTM	100	65	165
4	95	PAGLIONICO Mattia	ITA	A.M. Aretina	KTM	50	80	130
5	90	VANTAGGIATO Matteo	ITA	Wolf e Fox	KTM	45	60	105
6	46	DE RISI Emiliano	ITA	MGR Motocross Team	KTM	65	34	99
7	20	ROSSI Andrea	ITA	Mxone	KTM	60	32	92
8	24	MAZZANTINI Ylberio	ITA	Brilli Peri	KTM	32	50	82
9	6	DI CRESCENZO Giorgio	ITA	Pipri di Royal Pat	KTM	26	55	81
10	53	PIAS Simone	ITA	Casarese	KTM	36	45	81
11	111	TURAGLIO Nicolo'	ITA	Gattinara	Yamaha	40	40	80
12	18	CROSA Edoardo	ITA	Motoclub Sciarborasca	KTM	34	36	70
13	71	BENNATI Morgan	ITA	A.M. Aretina	KTM	55	0	55
14	204	VOLPICELLI Edoardo	ITA	MGR Motocross Team	KTM	25	30	55
15	114	TORTOMASI Andrea	ITA	Gattinara	Yamaha	30	24	54



...and Diego Brigante? Our little Diego, almost forgotten by everyone by Gaetano. He has realized what many boys dream of, living a season of races of the highest level, with very fast drivers who gave him the time to understand, to understand that you can do, that you can be just as fast. It just takes commitment, training and a lot of sacrifice.

Diego who, in the last heat of this championship, lost his chain in the reconnaissance lap, arriving next to the starting gate with the bike pushing in a sea of tears. In that situation I saw the determination of this little man, the desire to be the fighter he is. Diego was also at Ottobiano in the fortnight before the race, and with Gaetano he lived the sacrificed lives of the great champions, he understood what it takes to win. Diego has grown a lot in one season, and that was the purpose for which he was thrown into the fray. He fought against himself to reach his limits, against the others who didn't appreciate him and who now have to look at him with respect, a respect earned on the field, among the great riders who one day will be great men.

Enjoy the Title

The "after" for Gaetano was a succession of commitments, first the family ones, with grandparents and relatives to celebrate it, then with the City where he resides whose Mayor appreciated what this little fellow citizen of his did, and finally with interviews with newspapers and TV.

Gaetano has grown, both in stature and driving, has become mature and is ready for the new season to face new battles.

I appreciated a lot of things about this boy who, without knowing it, has given me a lot. He made me happy by making possible a hidden goal of mine, a real dream that I kept aside. I was aware of the great difficulties that existed to make it real, that's why I say that a little boy has done things that nobody could imagine. To have him next to me was a privilege seasoned by the passion that unites us, it was a real bond of sport; we both made the most of our potential, and together with the others on the team we completed a season that we will certainly remember forever.

As far as we're concerned, our next season will be very difficult to replicate. I don't deny that I would have liked to relive this season just gone by, perhaps with as many splendid results.

Circumstances change, people, social relationships and above all we in the stable are so mature that we understand that everything has its time.



Il Paddock

The thing I will miss is wandering around the paddock chatting with everyone, greeting friends and acquaintances, having lunch where I happened to be invited. So many of those things that only in that world is possible to do.

Arriving in this "small town" the first one to greet was Francesco Predinzani, a good and nice man, who, as a good Tuscan, knows how to evaluate the things he sees. Thanks to his contacts, which in our world are crucial, we had the racing clothes for the drivers and the tyres with mousses. His contagious smile dispersed generosity and passion. Great friend and great man far beyond sport.



I will certainly miss the Barbaglia family, with Enrico, Emanuela and Eugenio. In their camper I had coffee and lunch a few times. In the paddock was my happy island. Eugenio, a very fast driver of the 85 senior who grew up on the sand of the DMX in Dubai, on that sand I met them and since then they have remained dear friends.



And when it came to eating, certainly the best table is in Pierluigi Bastianini's hospitality truck from Rieti. His wife Roberta is always busy preparing lunch for all those whom the "Bastia" invites during her wanderings in the paddock. Not only did she fix the motorbikes for her son and his riders, but she was also sympathetic and collected friends who came from all over the world. What an incredible character!

Still unforgettable was the welcome of the Marini family from Rome. Mariano and Sara were apprehensive parents of Simone, the youngest ever in the Junior 85 category, whom I pointed out as a possible future champion. Time will give me credit for that.





Then the Sicilians, people who opened more than one door for hospitality and kindness. They are, with Team Bertuccelli gathering new talents, a very tight-knit group. How many pleasant breakfasts we had together in the hotel before returning to the paddock. They were my companions from the track to the hotel and back for the two days of the race. How could we forget the sweetness of the children in that group, the tender eyes of Manuel Polizzi, the grit of Salvuccio Grasso, the clever little face of Davide Marabotto and the way he talked about Giammy Catinello. Even now I'm still in contact with some of them, actively participating in their racing vicissitudes. My Sicilian side, due to my father's origins, has given me a privileged access to their friendship also in daily life.



I'll miss so many people, so many friendly faces and so many smiles. How many times a word makes a meeting more beautiful, and of words and meetings I have had many. I appreciated the elegance of the Bennati family, the sympathy of the Gimm family, the passion of the Viano family and the infinite dedication to the sons of two fathers such as Alessandro Lippolis towards his son Giovanni and Salvatore La Mendola, who with his brother Francesco, bring another little Giovanni to the races from far away Agrigento.

Many stories for many future champions, many will succeed, others perhaps not, but all remain indiscriminately faithful to their passion as they will remain in my heart out of affection and sympathy.

Have a good life at full throttle.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alessandro Lippolis', written in a cursive style.

Thanksgivings

Many friends have supported us by allowing us to achieve this prestigious result:

Luigi Gerace from Sac Succhi di Rizziconi (Reggio Calabria), who has been at our side since the beginning of our sporting commitment.

Tino Florio from the Ophthalmic Centre of Reggio Calabria. Ophthalmologist and father of our driver Matteo, supporter in this season only.

The De Raco brothers from Taurianova (Reggio Calabria) have been present in our sector for years now with their company of ecomured houses.

Gimmy Mallamace of MG Tyres of Lazzaro (Reggio Calabria), who has actively contributed to the long trips.

And then many others who have trusted us in various ways, such as Musolino Costruzioni by Mimmo Musolino, the B&B SunMoon by Mariangela Iannò and Grafica 2000 by Roberto Reitano.

Finally, a special thanks goes to Paola and Andrea Battistini from MUD for the racewear of our drivers. At GoldenTyre, in the person of Carlo Amedeo, for the race tyres and mousse. To 3D graphics for the motorcycle stickers, and to Husqvarna, in the person of Lello Tasca, for the excellent bikes made available through the Motor Service Dealer of Florindo Finamore.

Many people involved in this ambitious project, some of them will deserve my respect in the future, others perhaps less, but to all of them goes the total thanks for having been present until the final victory.

Thought from a little pilot

What follows is the thought of Emiliano De Risi, an eleven-year-old junior rider, who lets off steam by answering on Facebook to someone who asks him how he feels about motocross.



Everybody asks me, but in those 20 minutes of pure madness, how do you feel? Well, my dear, it's indescribable until you feel the adrenaline: when at 15 seconds you find yourself not doing anything wrong, and then when at 5 you feel the shivers slowly rising on your back. This is just a part of it all, where we drivers, by some people understood as crazy unconscious and labeled as people who risk their lives for a passion, run only to win.

Then at the edge of the track there are them, our parents, our heroes in short, call them what you want, coach, supporter, or simply mom and dad, for us are superheroes who always help us to improve. They on the trackside, who in their hearts always hope that everything will go well, without any hiccups, but sometimes something can happen, and it is precisely those moments that make you understand who we are, ready to never give up, and even if we

get hurt, we are ready after a month to get back in the saddle impatient. And it's precisely when you get hurt, when you're in the hospital waiting for them to examine you, you think about everything that happened, and you get pissed off, you get really pissed off, and you say to yourself: I was a co...I had to stay calm. Then there are always our "superheroes" who tell us: when it has to happen it happens ... and we are there in silence.

Ultimately I want to convey to parents who think this sport is dangerous, and that their children would like to practice it, but they don't let them. Remember that you don't do your child any good, you hurt him even more by forbidding him to realize a dream...

Emiliano De Risi

Conclusions of a great adventure

With this goal ends the adventure of the **FRC Racing Moto Club, FRC Racing Team** and **FRC Racing Cross School**.

Three projects born in November 2010 from an intuition of Fulvio Collià, who selected the right people to create a structure destined to lead the South in off-road racing, from 2010 as a KTM dealer and then as a sporting activity.



It was a project born with Fulvio and that bad luck had not wanted it to happen with him. Fulvio was an exceptional centralizer and collector of ideas and positive elements then blocked in December 2010 by a bad accident. We were left with the legacy of a project to be realized, of his desire that was mandatory to carry out, with the respect and affection that we brought to this great friend.

We worked to respect his dream, trying to live up to his expectations. His idea was to do things big, but not having him at our side we tried to do them to the best of our ability.

We have detached the sports part from the commercial part making it independent, and from there was born the Cross School that has brought a lot to all of us.



The Moto Club already lived of its own light and until 2015 did everything, even organizing races and winning every year all the titles that the Calabrian Federation put up for grabs, also participated in the Italian Junior Championship with various Calabrian riders who gave prestige to us and the whole Calabria.





In 2016 the "Racing Team" project starts. We wanted a structure that would bring the long-awaited quantum leap and be the swan song before the final closing. The years spent cultivating this project had been fruitful, but time was over, we knew we had to close the team at the end of the season, so we couldn't afford to make a mistake. We wanted to do it both for us and for Fulvio, mentor of everything we were. He deserved a beautiful end to his working and sporting project, and bad luck didn't want him there, it was for him that we did everything, and he was the one who showed us the way, even though he had to leave, and we felt responsible for this legacy.



The rest is history that you already know, an Italian title that for us has a double importance, allows us to close winning and to dedicate this victory to our great friend.

Hello Fulvio, we gave and did what we could, the only thing we didn't realize is to have you back

Moto Club FRC Racing

Giuseppe Profeta (President)

Paolo Ellena (Vice President)

Davide Formica (Secretary)

Roberto Sergi (Director)

In the Prophet (Counselor)



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Giuseppe PROFETA
born in Reggio Calabria on 01 May 1955

SPORTING ACTIVITY

- Collaboration with texts and photos to MOTOCROSS magazines and MOTOSPRINT years from 1987 to 2004;
- Certificate of "IMF Federal Executive Officer". (Polcanto FI, 5 - 7 June and 25 - 27 September 1998);
- Enduro in the 90's and motocross in some races;
- from 1998 to 2003 he organized competitive events in the Enduro and Cross-Country sector (100 MINUTES);
- years 2010/2011/2012/2013/2014 D.S. of the Moto Club FRC Racing as Team Coordinator;
- year 2014 founder of the FRC Racing Cross School
- President of the Moto Club FRC Racing 2015/2016 and Sac Succhi FRC Racing Team Manager

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