

In the interview, written by Bruno Tavosanis for the Italian newspaper "Il Gazzettino", Viviana Druidi is the actress of a very hard attack on the Italian Subcommittee of Rollerski. The accusations are tough; boycott, attempts to obstruct her results. If this matter happened to be a case of war, the committed crimes would have been considered as high treason and so a death sentence to our leaders.

So therefore, here it is, the sad story about a star which is not able to shine and a thirty years old sportswoman with a long military career who is not able to grow up, as the T.D. (lawyer) Pierluigi Papa makes clear to us in this interview.

She came back from Sestola furiously. The Technical Delegate of the Italian Subcommittee for Rollerski (seen in the photo, while he is giving the race-speaker a helping hand with the technical explanations during the sprint at the World Cup at Pavullo), that "incompetent", as it was interpreted from the interview of the Italian newspaper "Il Gazzettino", avoided to intervene after her disqualification for changing track. Finally he succeeded in completing the plot he organized for such a long time. The T.D had just one object; to boycott her. The reason is obvious; the Technical Delegate is "mixed up in a rollerski-brand. He wants to exclude me, because I am not using the rollerskis he recommends".



In plain words, this is what the athlete of the Italian Police Force of State for the Forest and the Environment ¹ thinks and speaks, and she did even get into print. Now, that it has come to this point, it could be interesting to ask Dr. Zanetti, what he think about the athlete's behaviour. Dr. Zanetti is the responsible of the Italian Police Force of State for the Forest and the Environment's Sports Centre, where Viviana Druidi is on active service. If the girl is right, he should at least take up a position. Last year, about this time of year, Marco Albarello, the Technical Delegate of Italian Cross Country Team, got crucified for much less.....

Viviana Druidi's attack was delivered, when the Technical Delegate of Italian Rollerski was unable to reply, he was on holiday about fifteen thousand miles away. We were therefore obliged to wait for the T.D's return to publish the interview signed by Bruno Tavosanis which appeared on the website of the newspaper "Il Gazzettino del Nord Est". In the meanwhile, we have asked Pierluigi Papa about his opinion of the accusations from the sportswoman of the Italian Police Force of State for the Forest and the Environment.

Have you read about the accusations that comes from Viviana Druidi? It seems as if, the contents of the interview is a summary of what the self-same athlete tells widely about in every race-camp. A boycott from the Italian Federation! An inadequate treatment for a professional. Well, should the Italian Federation and especially its T.D really fall over themselves to prevent her from attaining the results she deserves. What do you think about it?

"Considering my position as Technical Delegate of Italian National Team of Rollerski (responsible for the team), my care and gratefulness towards Viviana Druidi do not change, although I have almost just read the article signed by Bruno Tavosanis a few minutes ago. I think, that it is only right and legitimate to throw light and clarity on the truth, even though the contents of the accusations gives more a smile, than it gives anger. I have to reestablish the true story, because

¹ **Corpo Forestale dello Stato** is translated into; **the Italian Police Force of State for the Forest and the Environment**

Druidi's speech also involves other persons that might be offended or could receive a damaging effect (I am thinking for example of the rollerski-brands she refers to)".

"First of all, it is thanks to the Federation and especially thanks to my intervention, that Viviana Druidi got the possibility to become a real professional athlete of rollerski this year. I think it is a rare chance to have in a sport where the participants are mostly amateurs, also at international level. Viviana got an exemption from Marts to September inclusive. That means, she was spared to do her duty on the station of the police's Sports Centre, so she could do her training and prepare herself, still keeping pay and holiday intact. To obtain this goal, I had to insist and "fight" with the tough resistance of dr. Zanetti, the Responsible of Winter Sports for the Sports-Centre of the Police Force of State for the Forest and the Environment. Certainly, the communication work done by the Chairman of the Subcommittee for Italian Rollerski, Roberto Tonussi, was decisive to convince the Police of the Forest and the Environment, like the press conference at Skipass ² was decisive too. Skipass throws light on our sport and we are really pleased about it.

How are the relations with the Federation?

"The intervention of the Federal Councillor Leandro Naroli (*in the photo with the T.D Papa*), still on the occasion of Skipass at Modena, was without doubt determinant too. I can therefore proudly take the responsibility for Viviana Druidi became a real professional (after many years of fair military service). Furthermore I would like to say that if Roberto Tonussi and I did not concentrate all our efforts on tracing financial resources, the National Team would only have been able to participate in three competitions out of the six possible. The Federation was very grateful for the work we carried out as they invited the other sectors to use us as a good example. Once more thanks to me that Druidi meet her present Trainer Matteo Sironi, the Technician on the National Team, and it is also due to him, that she attained results this year. That we created a technical staff with high competence to the National Team (besides Sironi, there is also Ranaldi e Sormani), explains also the success of our boys and girls, inclusive Viviana Druidi".



For what reason should the Technical Delegate first carry through a work that costs sweat, toil and tears to get both an exemption to this athlete and financial resources to the National Team, and then later on try to boycott her?

"Viviana Druidi's hypothesis is the most entertaining part of the interview. That I should be in a gang of ... I do not know which, rollerski-brand and for that reason, I should boycott her results. Since I am using rollerskis from Eagle this year, I presume she must refer to this brand, but it is not to leave out of account that I am doing my best to advise the rollerskis which are used by most part of the team, and in this case it is the ones from Skiway of D'Incal, whereas Eagle is only used by two athletes, I think. Well, the thing that makes my smile is that I did not buy any rollerski from D'Incal this year (also because I still had a good store of Skiway's frames and wheels, all legally paid).

My purchases have actually privileged the sponsor of the National Team, the Monsero brand. I bought seven pairs of rollerskis from him, that I am using with satisfaction for training. Three pairs of rollerski from the Eagle brand, that I am using for competition. Two pairs of Rossignol ski boots

² Skipass is a yearly meeting and fair for winter sports held in Bologna

from D'Incal. Five pairs of Rottfella bindings from the Crestani Sport brand. Everything paid as I am in the habit of doing. I have never accepted material as gifts, not even the pair of frames that Evio Tiozzo (I-Gliti) wanted to give me, they got repelled to sender. With all respect for the producers of rollerskis, I do not understand what interest I should have by supporting one trade name rather than another. Though, I reserve in any case the right to express my opinion or to give some advise, just like any other person. I do not want to offend anyone at all, but I think, I take possession of profession, that allows me to buy, what I want to buy, even without asking for a special offer”.

So what do you think must be the reason to so much wickedness?

“I do think, I am guilty in one certain thing, That I have created motivations and competitiveness in the rollerski sport. This year the female team managed to reached a level and objects, that would have been unthinkable just three years ago. Female rollerski sport in Italy simply did not exist. The best result so far was a twelfth place of Monica Comi at the World Championships at Rotterdam,



and there is not much to mention about victories and so on at the World Cups. This year we concluded the World Cup with five girls out of the ten first places (first Bogatec, third Druidi (*in the photo; The pursuit race at the World Championship, she arrived second at the finish line*), fifth Paulina, sixth Leoni, eight Rosa). The Italian women won seven first place in the World Cup, five seconds places and six third places. At the Wold Championships we won the Sprint, the Team Relay and in the Individuals we got a second and fourth place. A test done recently at Sondalo,

demonstrates how the preparation level of our rollerski athletes is competitive to the one from the National Team of Cross Country”.

How and when did it come to this dispute and why did it come at all?

“It is obvious, that it is more difficult to be brilliant and make oneself conspicuous among lots of good results and maybe Viviana (once she was use to race alone) suffers from that. After all, I have to take care of the interests of the National Team and Federation and certainly I can not make a team with only one single girl from the Environment Police. I perceived the first sign of this wickedness at the final part of the World Cup 2004, when Viviana Druidi telephoned me to oppose the convocation of Moroder and Paluselli, according to her, they would steal her World Cup points”. Then at the Rollissima-race there was a strange occurrence. Just exactly Moroder and Leoni (invited by me) were both waiting for Druidi at the final, pressing themselves in between her and Firsova, so the two girls could pass the finish line behind her. It has not been difficult to convince the two athletes to do the race in her advantage, for them it was a pleasure to do splendid teamwork. The only problem was that the wait became quite long, so long that they thought, for a while, she had left the race. Even though their running speed was near a travel on foot, the two girls risked to arrive at the finish line alone”.

This year the disputes began after the World Cup in Croatia, just before the World Championships.....

“It was a difficult travel, it was marked by the accident of Ribolzi”. Viviana pretended that she could organize all the transports for herself, except when it was convenient for her to lean on the Federation, for example in case of expensive air transports. The reason to this is that now being a professional athlete, she had a need to be different from the other girls. I consulted the Federation to

know if I could give the girl permission to do it, but I got an answer which were as plain as it were categorical; The convened athletes at the National Team, of all disciplines, have to stick closely to the directives of the Technical Management. There is no exception for anyone, not even for the strongest Champions of Speed Skating. When I informed this to Druidi, she gave me an answer that I can not repeat for the sake of decency. After all, Druidi (*in the photo at the prizegiving of the Italian Championship in Uphill*) travelled with the Federation to Germany, she behaved as if nothing had happened and she won the race. Then at the World Championships the athlete from the Environment Police had the possibility to go to France already on Monday, the first competition was to be held on Friday. I do not think, that even the athletes from the National Team of Cross Country Skiing, that have to face races with much higher competitive level compared to Druidi's efforts, have the possibility to arrive at the World Championships so many days before".



Let us return to the accusation of “high treason”; did you wanted make a plot with the jury to disqualify Druidi at Sestola.....

“Druidi made a mistake at Sestola, that not even a competitor of a “Mickey Mouse Trophy” would have done. About seventy meters before the finish line, the track were divided into three corridors, marked with plastic skittles. Anna Santer, who had the lead, entered on the first corridor to the right, Druidi on the corridor in the middle and the Ukraine Nesterenko on the corridor to the right, just like Anna Santer. After about ten meters Druidi jumped in between the skittles and changed her course to the right corridor, pressing herself in between Santer and Nesterenko. The protest of the Ukraine stands to reason, as it also stand to reason that Druidi got disqualified. It was a real grave error on the part of the athlete and she has seriously penalized the Federation; after thirteen World Cup races, six travels and a great deal of money spend. Druidi has taken away a historic result for Italy, because if she remained in the Results, we would have won the first and the second place in the final results of the World Cup for women. It is quite remarkable, how she was the only athlete out of hundred and forty athletes (who participated in not only the World Cup, but also in the amateur competition) to change running track in a forbidden zone.”

And what do you say about the “plot” of not making her run with the frames she had chosen to use at the World Championship?

“Still another of Druidi's claims, that is a laugh. I was told by the German Technical Delegate Ostermeier at Geyer, at the last part of the World Cup that preceded the World Championship, that he had proposed a protest against Druidi. She was the first classified in the pursuit race, but he required to disqualify her for using equipment which is not on the commercial market and therefore not accessible to all athletes. The Manager of F.I.S. Jurg Capol gave over the telephone a directive to the French Technical Delegate, also present at Geyer. He recommended to use tolerance in the World Cup, but maximum severity and respect towards the regulations of the World Championship. I informed therefore Druidi Saturday evening telling her that I would ask for more information the next morning. I presented the problem to my French colleague the lawyer Jean Pierre Chocet, the Chairman of the F.I.S. Subcommittee for Rollerskiing, during the warm-up for the Sprint race on the Sunday. I accompanied Druidi to him, so he could make a check up on the equipment. After a quick check, he assured both me and the athlete, and



he told us that she could participate with her rollerskis at the World Championships. I let the Chairman repeat his assurances once more before leaving; that there would not be any problems for Druidi at the World Championships and actual it became like that” concludes the T.D. Papa.

It seems like appreciation and gratitude does not belong to the professional sportswoman Viviana Druidi. She lost the historic rival Alberto Pertile on the National Team (surprisingly, how painful she made some of her scenes towards poor Alberto), and it seems as if she always needs a new enemies to attach. Who else but our T.D. (building up a strong and competitive team) is better to be blamed for having prevented (boycotting) her from winning the World Cup?

Well well, the professional sportswoman did not make it, she did not win neither the World Cup of Rollerski nor the World Championship of Rollerski, so at least she had to put the blame on someone..... There is a star up there in the sky somewhere, which is unable to shine, and there is a girl down here in Italy from Friuli, who is unable to grow up.

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