



FOOTBALL PRESENTER

Laura Esposto

Former Italian model Laura Esposto presents Football Italiano on UK channel Five and for Sky TV in Italy. She shows off her football knowledge and proves she is more than just eye candy

You were born in Bologna, do you still have strong connections with the city?

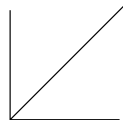
My parents still live there, along with the rest of my family and best friends, so I visit all the time. My dad supports Bologna football club and he introduced me to the sport at a very young age. He started the ball rolling, as it were.

How did you move from modelling to presenting?

I was lucky enough to realise my ambition to become a model quite quickly and while I was working in Italy, the owner of the AC Milan TV station gave me the chance to present. I grabbed the opportunity and was then spotted on the show by someone at the British channel, Five, who offered me the Football Italiano job. The best thing about TV is that you get to talk and interact with the audience, it's the highlight of my work.

Which are your favourite European cities to hang out in?

It has to be London and Milan because I have a lot of friends there and I like the way of life and culture in both. I love sushi



so my favourite place to eat out in London is Nobu. I can be a real party girl but only if I don't have to work the next day. Otherwise, I need eight hours sleep.

Which team do you support?

I follow AC Milan and my favourite player is Brazilian midfielder Ricardo Kaká. I think he's a genius on the pitch and he has such class. He's not just great as a player but is also a good guy, a genuine role model for the younger fans and players.

What are your predictions for this season's fixtures?

There's a good chance Inter Milan will win the scudetto (Serie A) this year and, of course, I want Italy to win the European Cup. I was hoping that AC Milan would win the Champions League again but they went out in March. It was a real shame, I was very upset, but I'm still proud of what they've achieved. In this game you have to learn that you can't win everything. It's something that new players need to accept. It can be a hard barrier to get through but that's the reality.

Is doing a live show nerve wracking?

Not any more. When I first used to present live it was very scary, but now I'm used to it and feel completely

comfortable. When you first start out they make you very aware of what not to do on live television. There are plenty of obvious mistakes such as swearing and missing your cues, and the pressure at first is huge. You can almost imagine all the people at home watching and waiting for you to speak. But now I find it normal and actually really like it. I'm hoping that in the future I can move into other areas of presenting but I need to work on improving my English.

What would you say to people who believe you're just on-screen eye candy?

They should look past the stereotype and they'll see that I am actually very knowledgeable about football. I get recognised a lot in Britain now, more than in Italy, and I hope that my fans love me for both my image and my understanding of the game.

Laura Esposto appears live on Five's Football Italiano, on Sundays at 1.30pm; Euro 08 kicks off next month en.euro2008.uefa.com