



I enjoyed my time in England and would love to come back one day



Profile
Laura Esposto

➔ "Probably, in the beginning, it was a little bit difficult for me because of the language," Laura Esposto says of her one-year spell fronting the ill-fated *Football Italiano* on Five. "But the thing I didn't like was that some journalists in England said I didn't know about football. Well, I've been doing this job since 2002 and I know that I know lots about football – and I would like to see those guys trying to talk about English football in Italian!"
On the basis that the majority of English football pundits struggle to make any sense at all in their own language (yes Garth, we're looking at you), the charming Ms Esposto makes a very valid point. And, although she may have spent only one season on our screens – the rights to broadcast Serie A matches in the UK now rest with ESPN – the 31-year-old would love another crack at some point in the future.
"I enjoyed a lot my time in England, and I would really like to come back one day," she says, although for the time being she's busy enough back home. As well as presenting a weekly live phone-in on the Milan Channel – AC rather than Inter – Esposto also now has a regular gig with the Sky Sport group of satellite channels. "We don't know yet what I'll be doing for the World Cup," she adds. "But I will probably have my programme still – maybe 10 or so shows while the tournament is on."



Laura is quick to remind *Sport* that Italy are, of course, the defending champions – but can they repeat their feat of 1938 and retain the title? "I hope Italy can win it again, but I'm not sure," she admits. "But England against Italy in the final would be good, wouldn't it? I would love to see the face of Fabio Capello having to face Italy and Marcello Lippi in such a game."
Which reminds us – what does she make of so many Italian managers coming into the English game when so few of our coaches go in the opposite direction? "Managers like Capello, Carlo Ancelotti and Roberto Mancini have had very good results in Italy, but I think they feel a little less pressure in the English game," she explains. "They feel more easy about life and are free to manage better than they can in Italy."
And British managers? "You have Roy Hodgson, who I met when he was a guest on *Football Italiano*," says Esposto. "He was very nice, and he speaks Italian – although maybe he is the only one."
Unless Big Sam Allardyce and Tony Pulizzi have been hiding their linguistic lights under a bushel all these years, we suspect the lady is correct once more. But hang on a minute – we've been chatting for ages and all *Sport* has discovered is that Laura Esposto loves football and that Roy Hodgson is a very nice man. This could well have been the greatest conversation of our lives. ☺

Anyone who follows Italian football may already know of Laura Esposto – and those who don't are in for a rare treat

Football ITALIANA

FAST FACTS

LAURA ESPOSTO
Age 31
Birthplace Bologna, Italy
Occupation Presenter and model

FABRIZIO LEVANTI/PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE