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NEW BRAND ERA

Juventus has bounced back from a scandal-ridden mid-2000s to European football's top table in remarkably quick fashion. And now is time for the Italian club to cash-in on the turnaround in fortunes and take Brand Juventus to the world. **Matt Cutler** reports.

WITH TWO SERIE A TITLES in a row, a brand-new stadium and some of the world's biggest names on its books, the streets of Turin are looking a lot brighter than they were five years ago.

Juventus is the most successful club in the history of Italian football and, from Giampiero Boniperti to Zinedine Zidane via Michel Platini, has had some of the most decorated players from the footballing history books in its famous black and white stripes.

But those same history books record a dark mid-2000s where Italian football was blighted by alleged unlawful contact between clubs and referees. The Calciopoli scandal, as it became known, came to light when conversations between Juventus directors Luciano Moggi and Antonio Giraudo and several top-level Italian football officials - encouraging them to select 'favourable' referees - were published.

Juventus was stripped of its 2004/05 and 2005/06 Serie A titles, kicked out of the 2006/07 UEFA Champions League and relegated to the second-tier Serie B, leading many star players to depart, including Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

However, those dark days have been firmly put in the past, and the Italian champions are now looking to build on recent successes to establish the club as not only a European football power, but one of the leading clubs in the world. The signing of Argentinean international Carlos Tevez from Manchester City for €12 million at the end of June was certainly a statement of intent.

"We've come a long way in a short time, and the various commercial developments we have been implementing is making Juventus much more than a football club," Juventus commercial director Francesco Calvo told *SportBusiness International*, referring in particular to the work done in and around the club's new 41,000-seater stadium. Built on the site of its former home - the Stadio delle Alpi - the new ground officially opened in September 2011.

Through the Juventus Stadium, the club has become the only major team in Italian football to own its own ground - all other Serie A teams not only have to pay rental fees to city councils for the right to play in their stadia, but are heavily restricted in terms of improving



NAMING RIGHTS QUESTION

Not only is the Juventus Stadium the only major football arena to be owned by an Italian football club, it is also one of the few new-build venues to not have a naming rights sponsor in place.

It's not for want of trying: in 2008, three years before the venue officially opened, the club sold the 12-year rights to the SPORTFIVE agency for €75 million.

Earlier this year Italian media reported that, following its deal to become the club's technological partner, Samsung was in talks to extend its contract to cover the stadium naming rights in a five-year, €120 million deal. *SportBusiness International* understands, however, that there is no truth to reports, despite SPORTFIVE's continued search for a partner.

facilities and maximising the potential revenues around matchdays.

However, the new Juventus Stadium has been developed as a multi-purpose arena that is active both on matchdays and non-matchdays. On the former, 4,000 'premium' seats are available to those seeking top-end hospitality, while the arena also has bars, restaurants, shops and a creche area.

On non-matchdays, the arena offers flexible space for corporate gatherings and conferences while, through the 'Continassa project', a 200,000-square-metre area nearby is being developed into a Juventus Museum (officially opened on May 2012), a new HQ for the club's

backroom staff and a series of fields reserved for Juventus Soccer Schools.

With UEFA financial fair play regulations coming into force from the 2013/14 season - dictating that clubs must break-even, earning more in both matchday and non-matchday revenues than they spend on player transfers and wages - the additional revenue streams will play a key role in ensuring Juventus stays shoulder-to-shoulder with the leading footballing forces.

But it's not just in the stadium space that Juventus is eyeing major revenues. With a €35 million three-year shirt sponsorship deal, running until 2014/15, with Jeep - the US-based off-road vehicle brand that is a subsidiary of Fiat - the club is looking to sign global partners with various exclusive category brands in deals worth at least €1 million a year.

Jeep's deal covers the vehicle category, online gambling company bwin signed last month while Samsung became the club's official technological partner in November 2012, before renewing not long after for a wider range of rights, in particular in the digital and social media space. However, others are up for grabs, and Calvo says the commercial team is travelling far and wide to get new deals signed.

"We are looking to partner with international brands that are global leaders in key sectors," says Calvo. "The model of selling sponsorship has changed and, just as we have gained a competitive advantage with our stadium, we are looking to lead the way with how Italian football clubs sell sponsorship internationally.

"With Jeep, we have a partner that is a [brand] leader with a strong foothold in major territories across the world. It is with this type of company we are looking to make partnerships with."

With the club's international ambitions, Juve is also looking to sign a new kit supplier deal. Its current agreement, worth around €12 million per year with Nike, expires at the end of the 2014/15 season - and with the number of replica shirts sold likely to increase proportionately with the club's international profile, revenue-share models mean any new deal should bring the Turin side a significant rights-fee increase.

Calvo and his team's project to physically take the club to international markets has already started in earnest. At the start of this month the team crossed the Atlantic to take part in a US tour, taking in the Guinness-sponsored International Champions Cup, featuring home team LA Galaxy and six other leading European teams in six major US cities. Outside the US, key target markets to grow the Juve brand will be China, Indonesia, Australia, Japan and India.