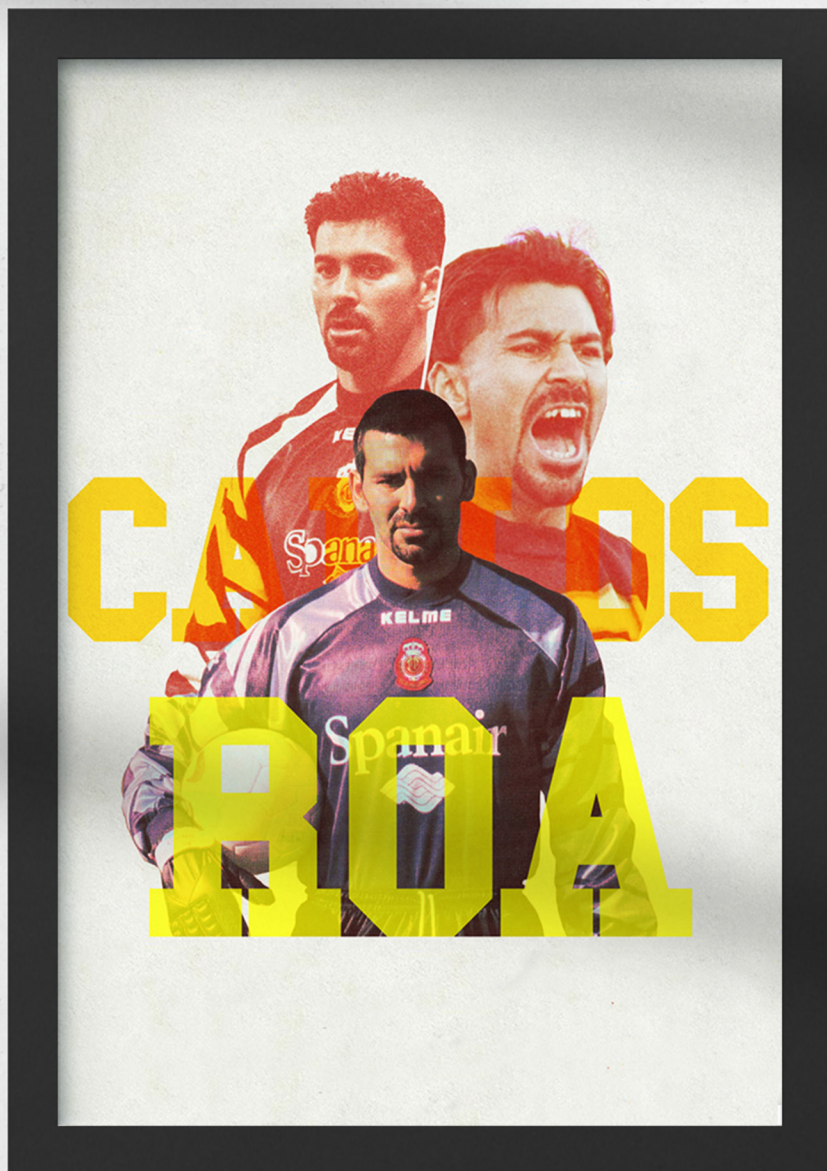


RCDMAGAZINE

RCDMAGAZINE MAY 2020 N°9



Carlos Roa (1997-2002)
Retratos

Una serie de retratos para conmemorar la fundación del primer club de fútbol de la isla.
del primer club de fútbol de la isla.
del club histórico mallorquino.



RCD MALLORCA



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The Interview: Carlos Ángel Roa



“At Real Mallorca I had the best years of my career”

Over the course of the previous few weeks in lockdown, we have enlisted fans across our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages to settle a debate spanning generations: what is RCD Mallorca's greatest starting XI? With votes totalling in the thousands to first decide upon who should be given the honour of wearing our No.1 jersey, Carlos 'Lechuga' Roa was elected as the club's finest goalkeeper ahead of Dudú Aoate and Ezzaki Badou who finished second and third respectively.

First-choice shot-stopper throughout the most successful epoch of our history, Roa won the Spanish Super Cup, reached Copa del Rey and UEFA Cup Winners' Cup finals and helped the club achieve a record high third-placed finish during a spell at Son Moix which spanned five seasons. To celebrate the Argentine's place among our prestigious pantheon of bona-fide club legends, RCD Magazine went Stateside via virtual means to speak with the man himself.

Carlos, it's a pleasure for us to speak to you again and congratulations on being voted as the best goalkeeper in our club's history by fans. What's it like receiving such an honour?

The pleasure is all mine! Being able to hear from you and fans again has made my day. First



“That fact fans still remember me after so many years makes me very happy”

of all, I get very emotional hearing that as such a long time has passed since my era at Mallorca. It was a wonderful stage in my career and my best years too. That fact fans still remember me after so many years makes me very happy. I'm very touched and it brings me a great deal of joy.

Before reflecting on your time here in Mallorca, let's talk briefly about what you're currently up to. You've been part of Matías Almeyda's backroom staff at San Jose

Earthquakes as a goalkeeping coach in the MLS. How's life in the United States?

We're very happy here. All of us who are part of Matías coaching staff were players, but we never had the chance to play in the United States. It's a bit different to our Latin culture, but you learn from everything. We had a big challenge ahead of us after a difficult first season, but we got some good results. This was our season of growth and consolidation, but as you already know, the coronavirus has put everything on hold.

Bragging rights in California aren't a given considering San Jose Earthquakes have a well-known rival in LA Galaxy...

Absolutely! Look, last year, when a world-class player like Zlatan Ibrahimovic played with them, we beat them both home and away. What penalised last year was the bad run of results we had in the final part of the season and that deprived us of a place in the qualifiers for the title.

You're active on social media and don't shy away from interacting with fans. This year is the 22nd anniversary of our cup final against FC Barcelona and many Mallorca players have reminded you of the match you had despite losing the title – people still wonder how Stankovic's penalty didn't

go in!

It's impossible, right? That was our night, and for many reasons too. The plan was not to go to penalties. We were playing well against a spectacular Barcelona side at the time, who had just won the league with players like Rivaldo and Luis Figo. I'll tell you one thing though, I knew that if it went to penalties, I would be confident. I felt good both physically and mentally, but getting to penalties was not easy. We received two red cards in extra-time, Enrique Romero and Oscar Mena, and Jovan Stankovic was injured. We resisted stoically. When we got to penalties, it was clear that it was not going to be our night. Mallorca did end up winning the Cup in 2003, however. There you have, the club's big moment, not ours. What's clear though, is that we have to be proud of the performance from



the team and the fans. I haven't talked about it this much after so many years. I couldn't enjoy my best years as a footballer as the only thing that mattered to me as a player was: winning, winning, winning, success, and then winning again and playing well in training and matches for both Mallorca and the national team. I couldn't stop to think what was going on and appreciate that it was nice and so special. It's something that is remembered by the entire generation of fans that were

involved in that match against Barcelona, that title and that team. I still get goose bumps looking back at everything.

Hector Cúper famously said after the defeat that Barcelona took home the cup that night, but Mallorca had won it. Do you feel the same way?

I still think that we should have won it. It's no consolation that he said Barcelona took home the trophy, not in the slightest. Of course, the defeat bothers me, but we can't change what has been and gone. What does fill me with satisfaction is the fact that we did everything possible to try and win it. Barcelona were the favourites, yet we gave them a good game and they were worried about us. For Barcelona it's just one more cup. They're used to winning, but their fans must have been like: 'damn, these guys have



made us sweat for it'. We were so close to winning it. After the game, losing out on penalties and receiving a runners-up medal from the king, we were broken. I was in a very bad way in all honesty, because we had given everything and it wasn't enough to win the title. As time has passed, I've learnt to value that final.

You mentioned that you felt confident going to penalties, but few goalkeepers can say they saved three spot-kicks and then also stepped up themselves to score...

If we had won the title, it would have been truly epic. I was able to save three penalties from players of Rivaldo, Figo and Albert Celades' calibre, but then also score myself. I was the first one to put his hand up to take a penalty. Cúper told me to forget about it, but I wanted to take one and had it clear. We lacked something, because let's not forget, we also missed

four. It was fate, because even penalties were an eventuality we had trained for. The one which really would have put us in a position to win was taken by our set-piece specialist and best player, Stankvoic - someone who used to hit them like god himself and had never missed - yet he wasn't able to score. That showed he's also human and can make mistakes. It's not easy walking 70 metres to the penalty spot, with all the people shouting and the opposition goalkeeper ahead of you. Your legs begin to tremble because of the enormous responsibility that rests on your shoulders.

While your first season in the Primera División following promotion from the Segunda División was good, next year was even better: champions of the Spanish Super Cup with a win over Barcelona, third in the league, Champions League qualification, the Cup Winners' Cup final and a Zamora trophy for yourself...

"As time has passed, I've learnt to value that final"

Cúper gave shape to a team, which as you said, had come from playing in the Segunda División. Honestly, the team had to respond because we didn't start well. The first half of the season went badly and there were even some people calling for Cúper's head until we won and then went on a really good streak. We either won or drew, very few games were lost after that. If God had brushed us a little more with his magic wand, who knows what we could have achieved. We could have won the Copa, Supercopa and Cup Winners Cup titles and have fought for the league. What would be of Mallorca then? It's something that will never be matched. We were individual

cogs that fitted together and worked perfectly.

Every footballer we've spoken to who played in that Mallorca side remember it very fondly...

I would have liked to have been able to stay at Mallorca. Who knows? Maybe as coach or goalkeeping coach, but life takes you on a different path. I have a lot of affection for Mallorca because they've always treated me very well and because I enjoyed some of the best moments of my life there, like when the Argentina national team called me to participate at the World Cup. I wish when my career ended that I could have had some sort of connection with the club and live on the island. I would have been eternally grateful for that.

You mentioned the 1998 World Cup in France, a tournament where you went onto make two decisive penalty saves against England in the last 16 that put your country in the quarter-finals and made you national hero. What are your memories of that experience?

I'd already had a reputation having made those penalty saves against Barcelona and the same journalists were referring to me as: 'the Argentine goalkeeper who saves penalties'. It was a tough game against England, which as you know for everything that's historically involved, also makes it a classic-grudge match. I remember the penalty

shoot-out and our coach, Daniel Passarella, came up to me and told me that we had to win. That put a lot of pressure on me, but all things considered, I did okay. The game had to be won because if we didn't, the criticism would have been heavy. In Argentina, football is a passion and very intense,



the time, but reflecting upon it, was it the right one?

It's always difficult and complicated to delve into this topic. Through the passage of time, I think about it now and it pains me to have left the island at that time because I had a great relationship with the people, team-mates, coaching staff, colleagues and fans at the club. My heart and mind asked this of me and it was what made me happy at the time. I was leaving a place where I was treated wonderfully and some people didn't understand that part me, the different and spiritual side I have. Later on, when I was in the street people would stop me or they would send me letters saying: 'what happened to you? Are you crazy? I still don't understand...'. I know it's a difficult decision to understand, but on top of that, it was tough for me and my family to start a new life which was totally different to that of a footballer. It was also difficult for Mallorca who had to get rid of me at a period when I was playing the best football of my career. I remember going to see the president and couldn't stop sweating when I told him and that my decision was final. I remember going to Madrid with Alejandro Camano, my representative, to speak with the president. Not only was there a religious aspect to my departure, but there were also economic issues involved which will never be known because they're personal and belong to that moment. If



some things had been taken into account, then perhaps my decision would have been different. In the end, everything accelerated really quickly and I stuck to my decision. However, just look at how things were eight months later when I returned to Mallorca: the doors were left wide open for me by the club and the treatment was exemplary. I ended my contract in 2002, and despite an offer to renew, I knew I had to leave to get minutes. I wanted to play and Leo Franco was the starter, so I went to Albacete and was lucky to be able help them get promoted to the Primera División and face Mallorca which, by the way, we won.

You also experienced a bitter fight against cancer which thankfully you were able to overcome, even if it meant another year out of football...

I've had different moments throughout my life where I've been in danger, but fortunately, I've always come out the on top and believe my faith also helped me overcome cancer. It has been another obstacle to overcome and brought my family even closer to me.

Looking back at it all, do you have any anecdotes from your time in Mallorca?

Look, I've always had a bad memory and with age things have got even worse! But I've got one for you which is very funny during the training camps shared with Mena and Amato, especially being Argentines and having played together in Lanús. Amato was elbowed one match and had lost two teeth, so he had to put a denture in

his upper jaw. In a later game, while celebrating a goal, his denture came out and he was looking for it like a madman in the grass until he found it. It's didn't stop there though, as one night, in the hotel on an away trip, we went to his room and removed his false teeth so he had to live without them at the hotel and do a press conference missing his front teeth. We've never laughed so much before in our lives!

There was real comradery at Mallorca under Cúper, wasn't there?

We were a family and we're all still friends. Despite the distance between many of them, each of us having followed our own lives, that affection still remains intact. Thanks to social media, I was recently able to say hello to Kike Burgos and César, who were both team-mates of mine but also rivals, because there can only be one goalkeeper and we all wanted to play. That didn't stop us from having a great relationship however, and from time to time, catching up



"We were a family and we're all still friends"

and asking how everything is going. That's the truly beautiful thing about football and the time I had at Mallorca. Cúper, for example, I've not seen him in a long time and I would love to have a chat with him about the good old days. I've followed all of my old team-mates and know what they're all up to.

Whenever you want to come to Mallorca and Son Moix, which is still very much your home, we'll be waiting for you here. Thanks for speaking with us, Carlos.

I send my love, blessing and I wish all the luck in the world to the team and hope it can stay up this year in the Primera División for many years to come because it deserves it. Visca Mallorca!



Ante Budimir: Numbers Count

The stark reality of a striker's career is that it is one ultimately adjudged by an unsystematic relationship between goals and numbers, so perhaps it's little wonder Ante Budimir has found himself drawn to the figures and aptitude a degree in economics entails. Having hit the target nine times so far this season and earning himself the title as the highest-scoring Croatian across Europe's top five leagues in the process, the forward has successfully juggled remote education with professional football throughout several epochs of his career. While lockdown may have freed up time for some much-needed revision ahead of this summer's examination period, the resumption of first-team training at Ciudad Deportiva Antonio Asensio means Budimir is once again working towards goals both on and off the pitch.

"The first day back at Son Bibiloni was spectacular," he told Play Red. "To see the grass again, to touch the ball, to be with my team-mates – it was fantastic. It's a bit strange for each player just to have one ball, but you have to adapt.

"Scoring goals is just one thing I miss about football, but I also miss many other things such as putting on the shirt, playing at Son Moix and being with my team-mates. It's obvious that as a striker, I also miss celebrating scoring a goal."

With students all over the world adapting to the remote learning Budimir is accustomed to as a result of the of the COVID-19 crisis, our striker recently passed two tests from the comfort of his own home and has revealed the secret behind combining a full-time profession with lectures and

"My older sisters encouraged me to study a degree in Economics and I'm enjoying it"



homework.

"My older sisters encouraged me to study a degree in Economics," he continued. "They were



studying it and told me they would help me. That gave me the confidence to do it and honestly, I'm really enjoying it. I like to learn new things and not relax. Combined with professional football, it

hasn't always been easy to finish work in a timely manner.

"The rules at the university in Croatia where I study are very strict and you've got to do the exams in person. One of the good things about the pandemic is that it can now be done online. The other day I passed two exams. Vicente Moreno doesn't need to worry though; I won't be asking him for permission to leave on the day of the Barcelona game for exams! I've got time for everything."

When competitive football return as discussions between La Liga and the Consejo Superior de Deportes continue at the time of writing, the hosting of FC Barcelona could potentially mark the recommencement of our season – an opponent Budimir knows well having scored twice in a 5-2 defeat at Camp Nou earlier this season.

"It does feel like it was a lot, but it's good because that result is behind us now," he said. "Facing Barcelona will be a new and different game, so we have to forget about the result we had at Camp Nou. I think we can do much better than the first game. You've always got to look forwards."

The Push For Promotion Continues For RCD Mallorca B

Although the Real Federación Española de Fútbol have taken the decision to conclude all remaining domestic seasons at non-professional levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic, manager Julián Robles and his RCD Mallorca B side still have it all to play for.

The introduction of an alternative 'express play-off' system for Tercera División clubs to determine who will play in the Segunda B next year has pit our youth team – who finished third in the league – in a semi-final versus CD Ibiza for a potential finale against either first-placed UD Poblense or fourth-placed CE Felantix. Venues and dates still require confirmation, yet preparations ahead of an intense push for promotion are already underway according to manager Robles.



"We've been working in a different context to usual within the world of football," he told RCDMagazine. "We've got to adapt day-by-day to the working methodology that has evolved as a result of the pandemic. Fortunately, we have a very committed, hard-working and professional group of players. All the work that we've given the boys has had a very positive response and we're delighted with the work they've been doing. Now the Federation has made a decision which is to play an express play-off to go up to Segunda B and that's our goal."



"It's clear that this was always going to be a complicated and controversial decision which wasn't going to satisfy everyone. We would have liked to have been able to play the remaining 11 matchdays and win, lose or draw each of those out on the pitch. Now we must focus on the objective which is in front of us: the express play-off. We will give everything throughout the 90 minutes, and if we make the final, it will be another match which follows those same characteristics."



"We've got a tough opponent like CD Ibiza ahead of us, although any of the sides in the play-off positions are very difficult," he continued. "CD Ibiza is going to be a tough team to hit on the counter-attack, are dangerous and have very good players. In any case, we'll be ready to rise to the challenge and achieve our goal."

"We had seen a margin for improvement in the last 10 games while in the play-off positions, which has been helped in part by the four additions made ahead of the second half of the season. The growth of all players was important and we hope they're at their best for the express play-off we will face."

Dimonió voted La Liga's best mascot



Dimonió has been crowned champion of La Liga's Mascot Tournament with victory over Valencia CF's 'Amunt' in a hotly-contested final. Receiving over 12,000 votes across Twitter in the grand finale, our mascot had previously overcome the likes of

SD Huesca, Racing Santander, Las Palmas and Real Sociedad thanks to the incredible support of RCD Mallorca fans, first team stars, coaching staff and sporting idols such as Rafa Nadal and Steve Nash.



Remember?

The night we conquered the Bernabéu



The 2002-03 season is rightly remembered for our first-ever Copa del Rey title, although few nights have gone down in club folklore like the 5-1 victory over Real Madrid earlier that year at the Santiago Bernabéu.

Wins in both the semi-finals of the cup and domestically against title-chasing Deportivo de la Coruña at the Riazor - in addition to a much later 2-1 overcoming of FC Barcelona at Camp Nou - had earned manager Gregorio Manzano and his exciting RCD Mallorca team a reputation for being a big-game side, although it was an evening in the capital on the 3rd of May 2003 which affirmed we could handle the pressure an upcoming Copa del Rey finale against Recreativo de Huelva would ensue.

Up against a Los Blancos starting XI featuring the likes of Luis Figo, Zinedine Zidane and Ronaldo, it was the latter's killer instincts inside 10 minutes which gave the eventual league champions an advantage come half-time. Despite an up-hill challenge made all the more arduous following an early setback, whatever was said during the interval had a galvanising effect: Walter Pandiani levelled matters two minutes after the restart, and just moments later Albert Riera had turned the game on

its head. Samuel Eto'o then haunted his former side with a strike after the hour mark, before an own goal from Roberto Carlos and a 90th minute drive from Carlitos put the finishing touches to an unforgettable comeback on the peninsular.

Seventeen years on, we brought together Manzano, Riera and Ariel Ibagaza for a review of a performance fans still talk about today:

Manzano: "It was a beautiful night, something we might never see again – especially considering our feat was produced in the second half alone. Playing against Real Madrid is never easy, but we had a recent 4-0 victory over them in the Copa del Rey quarter-finals fresh in our memory. I remember things started with Ronaldo scoring, and when that happens, you think you might be in for a long night. Madrid slowed their intensity towards the end of the first half and we took advantage of that in order to grow into the game later on."

Riera: "That RCD Mallorca team had an ease and confidence about them. I knew that 'El Caño' Ibagaza was going to make two or three chances per game, I knew that Lozano was going to steal between 15 or 20 balls per game and I knew that 'El Rifle' Pandiani

was going to get on the end of at least two crosses. It was the same with everyone. There was such confidence in the team so we were calm. We were a good side and had also had great individuals who always solved things for us on a bad day."

Ibagaza: "When we looked at the scoreboard and saw the result, we couldn't believe it. It's something that has remained a part of the club's history. Years have gone by and people still remember it, even the youngest fans."

Manzano: "We must remember Real Madrid were league champions that year. We're not talking about a Real Madrid in decline, far from it. We're talking about a team with players such as Zidane, Figo, Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos, Iker Casillas – it was a team in a real moment of brilliance. We had a very offensive team, but a difficult start to the season. We began with three defeats in a row, although ultimately had a fruitful year."

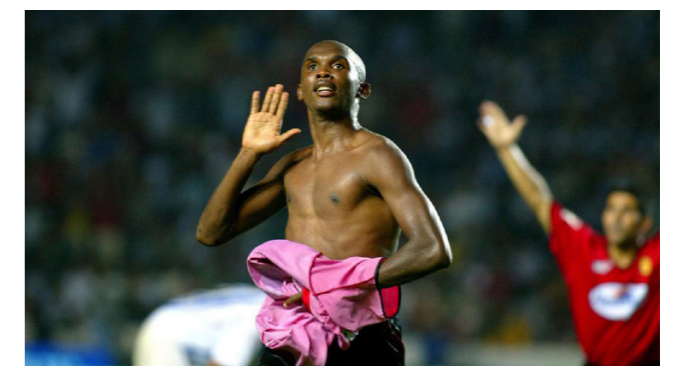
Riera: "For me, one of the keys to that season was Gregorio Manzano. The affection that he treated the group with was where everything began. We started badly, but the team kept believing and kept working the same way. It's true we had very good players, and the results show that, but Manzano's group management was very good."

Ibagaza: "We had Samuel Eto'o, who burst onto the scene as a footballer and caused havoc that season. For example, that match against Madrid which we're talking about, Samuel scored a great goal and left Roberto Carlos chasing his shadow."

Real Madrid 1 - RCD Mallorca 5

Real Madrid: Casillas, Salgado, Helguera, Hierro, R. Carlos, Zidane, McManaman, Figo, Makelele, Guti y Ronaldo. Manager: Vicente del Bosque.

RCD Mallorca: Franco, Cortés, Lussenhof, Niño, Poli, Riera, Ibagaza, Marcos, Novo, Pandiani y Eto'o. Manager: Gregorio Manzano.




While the recent anniversary of an unforgettable visit to the Bernabéu was a good excuse to reunite three of members of the Copa del Rey winning side once again, it wasn't long before attention quickly shifted to our 3-0 win over Recreativo de Huelva in the final:

Manzano: "The domestic season showed us we could get great results against the best teams, like the 5-1 victory over Real Madrid, but it also made us see that we couldn't miss the opportunity to win the Copa del Rey. In the final, we faced an already relegated Recreativo de Huelva, but we had to go into that final with the utmost respect possible."

Riera: "Speaking about that Copa del Rey final, and the difference between important games we had already played at the Camp Nou or the Bernabéu, I remember feeling nervous before the final against Recreativo. I think it was because I knew the history of Mallorca and how difficult it was for a club like ours to reach a Copa del Rey final and have the opportunity to win it. We were certainly the favourites, but there are always surprises in football. All that considered, to be able to life the title as a Mallorquin, that was a great honour."

Ibagaza: "The team knew how to suffer and had patience, as we showed when Leo Franco managed to save a one-versus-one situation with the score goalless or the dangerous crosses Recreativo put into the box. Until Samuel got the second goal, the team always had this winning character to it which made it was it was."


Reserved For Legends: Esteve Fradera




Fact File

ESTEVE FRADERA

- **Born:** 07.05.1963, Santa Coloma de Farners, Girona
- **Position:** Centre back
- **Seasons:** 5
- **Debut:** Osasuna 1 - RCD Mallorca 0 (03.09.1989)





Esteve Fradera swings open the door to his office at the sawmill and biomass factory of his hometown in Santa Coloma de Farners before continuing his phone call. Pacing back and forth clutching a pair of dusty goggles in one hand, with the other, he gesticulates an apology. Our introductory moments in Fradera's working environment perhaps speaks more for the former centre back than the following hour and a half spent in his company: despite being just a stone's throw away from the Nou Camp he once graced, the life he leads 24 years on since his retirement could not be further removed from the sport.

"The truth is, I don't miss football," he begins, having hung up and perched himself behind his neatly organised desk. "When I left Barcelona, I was pretty much always playing, but in the last year of my career, which was when I returned to Mallorca, an injury decided my future. It was a traumatic retirement; I couldn't leave football the way I would have liked to."

Rewinding to the first of two spells at RCD Mallorca following a transfer from Segunda División side CE Sabadell in 1989, Fradera's career cut short by injury is juxtaposed by its early pre-cursor of supposed

longevity. Registering the most minutes in his debut campaign as Los Bermellones survived their first season in the Primera División, the defender repeated the feat the succeeding season with a runner-up finish in the Copa del Rey having lost out to Atlético Madrid in extra time. Such heroics were not to be the following year as RCD Mallorca suffered relegation and Fradera joined Albacete, but after two years at the Carlos Belmonte, he returned 'home' for a second tenure at the club.

The homecoming of a popular figure among the terraces of the Lluís Sitjar was soon soured by an Achilles injury which limited the once ever-present Fradera to just two appearances, but perhaps more poignant, the realisation that his career in professional football had come to an abrupt end: "I chose to end that stage in my life," he continued. "It was a beautiful period. I'm in no doubt that after all that, it was already over. I would have liked to retire like many of team-mates and have done it on my terms in the moment, but it couldn't be like that. It was a goodbye through the backdoor."

Returning to his hometown of Santa Coloma de Farners in Girona, Fradera entered the world of



"It was a traumatic retirement; I couldn't leave football the way I would have liked to"

sawmill and biomass before the succeeding season to his retirement had even got underway: "When I played football, that obsessed me," he said. "What was I going to do when I hung up my boots? What was I going to do? I had experience of seeing former team-mates who had not been able to manage their lives after football. Regardless of whether or not you have enough money for the rest of your life, I was concerned about having an activity and keeping busy. I was young, 33-years of age and my whole life ahead of me. I retired in June and by September I was already in the sawmill. I started a new life, totally different from the one I had been leading until then. Little by little, I was disconnecting from football until I reached the point where I no longer wanted to watch games on TV. I had the option of being a coach when Serra Ferrer was manager of FC Barcelona's youth team but it didn't last long. I had to decide between football or a private company, and I opted for the second option."

While Fradera's inharmonious departure from football may appear to be one lacking in sentimentality on his part, the former centre back has fond memories of his time in red black: "That first year at Mallorca was fantastic," he recalled. "We had a very good team and we conceded the fewest goals in the division. Ezzaki Badou won the Zamora trophy for goalkeeper



with fewest goals. Lorenzo Serra Ferrer was a very demanding coach who knew how to get the best out of you. The second year was an incredible year in which we were able to reach the final of the Copa del Rey. That was very special for all of us. Things in the third year were already different and we couldn't stay up after that."

Twenty-four years have passed since Fradera retired from football, and to this day, an unopened box sits in his basement containing photographs, newspaper reports and match-worn shirts. As the interview draws to a close, there is perhaps good reason to re-visit what promises to be a timely reminder of days past: "In the Sitjar we felt very comfortable," he reflected. "It was a very hostile pitch for a rival team. I remember when Real Madrid played and Michel looked at me before starting and told me: 'Damn, once again we have to play here'. When teams like Madrid or Barcelona came, we tried to keep the pitch in the best condition possible. You could feel the fans were very close to you, it was very special. There was one legendary fan at the club, in Mallorqueta, that even went as far as coming to my house to paint my door. Free of charge! They were very endearing people."

During his tenure on the island, Fradera made 171 appearances, scored six times and captained the side on numerous occasions. While football is well in truly in the rear-view mirror for the factory worker, Fradera wishes nothing but a bright future for the club he once represented: "I want Mallorca to be in the Primera División forever."

Surprise! Our Senior Stars Videocall The Fútbol Base

Xisco Campos, Abdón Prats, Lago Junior, Aleix Febas, Salva Sevilla, Joan Sastre, Alejandro Pozo, Cucho Hernández, Dani Rodríguez and Take Kubo spoke with youth players about working from home, staying focused and making it to the top

The next generation of talent in our academy ranks received a surprise videocall from a number of our first-team players in lockdown.

With Fútbol Base's 12 youth teams - ranging from the ages of eight to 21-years-old - still unable to play or train, the likes of Xisco Campos, Salva Sevilla, Abdón Prats, Lago Junior, Aleix Febas, Joan Sastre, Alejandro Pozo, Cucho Hernández, Dani Rodríguez and Take Kubo gave aspiring youngsters a much needed boost by discussing a range of topics such as training from home, staying focused and what it takes to reach the top.

"The initiative arose from a conversation between Xisco Campos and Javi Recio in which Xisco shared the first team's concern for how our boys at grassroots football were getting on," said Academy Director, Sergio Vallecillo. "From there, the possibility arose to connect players from the senior squad with different teams we have here at grassroots level. Futbol Base Co-Ordinator Toni Álvarez carried it all out together with the club's communications department.

"We wanted to show our support for the boys and their families, and thank them because they've shown a lot of integrity and solidarity during the difficult situation we've had to live through. I think it has been just as rewarding for the first-team players as the kids. They've had the chance to remember their childhood and what it was like training at that stage, and in the cases of Abdón, Xisco or Joan, what it's like going through RCD Mallorca's academy. I think it was very positive and constructive."



Having graduated from our academy in 2004 under Hector Cúper and then becoming captain of his boyhood club upon a return to Son Moix, Xisco Campos has stressed the

importance of unity at every level amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

"The idea was that our grassroots boys feel

the support of the first team," Xisco Campos told RCD Magazine. "I think that the club have handled things well. Seeing how we're united and collaborate with one another in a good way is incredible to me. I think that will make us stronger and I'm sure we'll go further as a result."

While competitive football could remain suspended for the foreseeable future, those responsible for the Fútbol Base say they can already see the positive effect the first team have had on our next generation of talent.

"The boy's acceptance of recent events has been very good," said Futbol Base Co-Ordinator, Toni Álvarez. "We planned it as a surprise and the boys have appreciated it very much. Being able to see role models so closely and being able to chat for a while with them has filled our boys with enthusiasm and has given them a boost to face what is left of lockdown."

"It has been spectacular," added Futbol Base, president Paco Galmés: "It's the first time in history that something like this has been done in grassroots football. I think the boys and the coaching staff of our different teams have enjoyed this initiative and I am sure they will take advantage of the advice that the first-team players have given them."





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