



SERVETTE FC 1890

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From Pré Wendt to the Parc des Sports

The "Football Club of Servette" was founded on March 20, 1890, when a young British man received an oval ball and wanted to assemble a team. Rugby-football was thus played on the Pré Wendt ground. Later, the players were forced to move to the Prairie Field, and then to the Plainpalais Plain. Official tenants of the Plain, they were however condemned to two years of inactivity during the national exhibit in Geneva. During the resumption of club activities in 1898, it became increasingly difficult to find opponents to play rugby in Switzerland. They nevertheless faced the imposing team of Lyon in front of 3'000 spectators before creating a football section (1899) which quickly made great strides. Servette imminently became a member of the ASF (Swiss Football Association) in 1900 and moved to Pré Cayla the following season. The Parc des Sports was inaugurated there in 1902 with a stand reserved for women and for members of the committee. The stadium was situated on the outskirts of the future Stade des Charmilles (Charmilles Stadium). Servette mightily shined there with 5 Swiss national league titles (including 3 under British trainer Teddy Duckworth), 9 consecutive French-speaking Switzerland titles and thousands of spectators every weekend.



The magic of "Les Charmilles"

In 1930, at the time of the return of Teddy Duckworth in Geneva, Servette once again won the Swiss league title. That same year, the "Grenats" finished third of an international tournament bringing together ten national champions for the inauguration of the Stade des Charmilles. President Paul Addor and the banker Gustave Hentsch are at the origin of this project and of its single main stand "A" which became the pride of club members. The place's magic quickly manifested itself as Servette gained its seventh, eighth and ninth national titles in 1933, 1934 and 1940 for its fiftieth anniversary. The popularity of the club continuously rose among all social classes.



The "Swirl" invades Switzerland

In 1946, Servette gained its tenth national title. Embarked by a group nicknamed "tourbillon" (Swirl), which featured a sulphurous attack quintet of Belli-Facchinetti-Tamini-Pasteur-Fatton. Led by "a facetious leader, of unequal mood, inspired, subtle, malignant: Lulu Pasteur. Irony and spirit of Servette" (JJ Tillmann). Offense-minded and inviting football that the men of Jaccard reproduced for five beautiful years at Les Charmilles, was finally rewarded with a trophy. A national Cup triumph in 1949 and another league title in 1950 for the club's sixtieth birthday added to the trophy shelves of this exceptional and popular generation. All was well at Servette. The training grounds were moved to the centre of Balexert and additional spectator stands built at the Charmilles that gave the stadium a warm enclosure of British style.

Three Magyars at the service of the team

In 1954, six young Hungarians (including Pazmandy, Makay and Nemeth) fled their country and remained in Switzerland while in training with their junior national squad. The trainer Karl Rappan welcomed them at Servette, but it's his successor Jean Snella who reconquered the title in 1961 with their inclusion and the likes of Fatton, Barlie, Bosson, Meylan and Heuri among others.

The assessment was amazing with 46 points in 26 matches and 77 goals struck for only 29 conceded. European ambitions were therefore legitimate the following season (1962). In an amazing match and thanks to a hat-trick by Fatton and a goal from Robbiani, Servette turned a 1-3 deficit into a 4-3 victory in injury time at Charmilles in front of 26' 000 spectators against Dukla Prague in the eighth-final stage. Without its Hungarians for the the return leg because of current political events, Servette lost to the Czech club 2-0 and found itself eliminated from the competition. A second consecutive national title was nevertheless achieved, thanks in large part to Jacky Fattion's 25 goals, national leader in this category for the third time.



The season of all superlatives

In 1978-79, the Servette team led by their trainer Pzmandy and pedsident Cohannier grew in maturity. After having barely missed winning the league title two years in a row, this formidable association of individualities and strong personalities were at the top of their game and realised an uncharted exploit in Switzerland by winning 4 major trophies. Support was massive, as evident by the 22'500 spectators present in Charmilles for the victory of "Les Grenats"



over their main rivals of the time, the FC Zurich of Tchaikowski (1-0, on a strike by Schnyder on served by Barberis). It is one of ten victories by Servette in a final turn which counted as many matches! In the National Cup final, a rematch was necessary to gain the title against the Bernese squad of Young Boys (3-2, with goals by Weber, Hamberg and Barberis in front of 35' 000 spectators at the Wankdorf). The supremacy of "Les Grenats" was further proven with two additional trophies acquired in the "Coupe de la Ligue" and the "Coupe des Alpes".

An abbreviated run in European competition constituted the only false note in what otherwise was a fabulous season. After having carried out the exploit of eliminating PAOK Salonique and Michel Platini's ACE Nancy, the Servettians were ousted in the quarter-finals against the German contingent of Fortuna Düsseldorf without a single defeat (0-0 in the first leg and 1-1 at Charmilles on an away goal from Hamberg). The 23' 000 spectators present that day at Charmilles certainly still remember how close their team came to qualifying for the semis on a strike that hit the crossbar in injury time. Such a shame, as this fabulous Servette team seemed destined to go far in this European competition.

The return of Barberis

Between 1977 and 1983, The Charmilles grounds were modernised under the presidencies of Roger Cohannier and later Carlo Lavizzari had installed floodlights, an electronic display board and a roof over the stands situated behind the two goals. The "Grenats" also displayed their team ambitions. In 1984, and after three brilliant seasons in Monaco, Bertine Barberis carried out an appreciated return to Charmilles with the aim of reconquering a national title, answering the call from Carlo



Lavizzari and trainer Guy Mathez. The objective was barely missed as a result of a litigious penalty granted by the referee Daina after 109 minutes in the title match in Bern against Young Boys. Nevertheless, The "Grenats" won four days earlier on this same turf the national Cup final against Lausanne (1-0, goal by Geiger in front of 38' 000 spectators). The following year (1985), Servette brilliantly regained the league title thanks to nineteen victories for only three defeats in 30 meetings.

The crazy last years at Charmilles

Servette had to wait a shift in power -and the financial rescue of the club- by the popular figure Paul-Annick Weiller to celebrate a sixteenth national title for the "Grenats" (1994). The wonders Sony Anderson (11 goals in 6 months), Neuville (16 goals), Sinval (7 goals and 11 assists) or Djurovski in defense contributed with the Genevese players Aeby and Barea to write a beautiful page of the club's history with an offensive and colourful style. The title was gained



on the last match day at the the detriment of Grasshoppers thanks to a victory on the ground of Young Boys (1-4 goals of Neuville 3x and Sinval), whereas their rivals had to settle for a draw in Aarau (1-1). A deserved achievement for coach Petkovic, who was able to contend without his star player Anderson in the final league round by aligning a resolutely offensive formation using three strikers..

In December 1996, Servette was bought over again, this time by the French group Canal+ following a serious illness of the outgoing president, and leaving once again the club in debt. The club's progression remained constant and a seventeenth league title was gained in 1999 under the genevese skipper Gerard Castela. Pédat, Fournier and their teammates were crowned in an insane meeting tainted by floods in Lausanne against their direct competitors (2-5 goals by Vurens 3x and Petrov 2x). Only 10' 000 privileged spectators could now attend marquee matches at home following the installation of individual seats inside the entire stadium. In 2001, this formidable group

was crowned once again with a Swiss Cup title, with former Servette midfielder Lucien Favre at the bar (3-0 in Basle against Yverdon thanks to goals by Frei, Lonfat and Petrov and the support of almost 15' 000 supporters who travelled all the way from Geneva for this occasion).

The last great feat in the decayed but boiling Stade des Charmilles, was highlighted by an impressive European run disputed in a full house from beginning to end in 2001-2002 (successive eliminations of Slavia Prague, Real Saragossa and Hertha Berlin before falling in eighth-finals against Valencia, future prize winners of the competition). The collective outburst of joy on the goal qualifier from Oruma at the 87th minute against Saragossa and the punishing 0-3 inflicted to Hertha in Berlin remain the most striking moments of this memorable campaign. The Charmilles grounds were then definitively abandoned on December 8, 2002 after a 4-4 draw snatched against Young Boys following spectacular closing fifteen minutes (3 goals!) which ignited the crowd one last time in this magic place.

Renaissance between La Praille and Balexert

The move of Servette to the new Geneva stadium in La Praille could have contributed to the financial rescue of the club, unfortunately this was not the case. Inconsistent attendances and varying results (a modest best third place finish in league play, with nonetheless 10' 000 spectators on average over two years with high marks reaching 30' 000 and 20 '000). The bankruptcy of the professional team was inevitable taking into account the excessive expenditures carried out (February 2005). Geneva was found orphan of its team in



the first division and Servette was forced to rebuild at La Praille and in the 3rd Swiss division (1ère ligue) while rebuilding from the ground up through amateur and development sectors. At this level of play, the club always counted on an important popular support - more than one thousand subscribers! - and on ambitious leaders dedicated to a return to the elite level while preaching financial cautiousness, hard work, transparency and honesty. At the helm of president Francisco Fortified, the club returned to its general headquarters in the sporting Centre of Balexert where, as in its past, senior and junior teams trained. It took only one season for Servette to achieve a promotion to the Swiss Challenge League (2nd division) thanks in large part to Julian Esteban, the very young prodigious striker courted all over Switzerland, and to the loyal Servettians Pizzinat, Londono, Barea and Bratic. The last step which now separates the club from the first division is certainly the biggest, but the healthy structure now installed makes it possible to foresee the future with much optimism.

All united in the legend

The 2008-2009 season marked a turning point in the revival of Servette FC. Majid Pishyar became the president of the Genevan team. His firm intention is to professionalise the club at all levels and his ambition is to bring back the "Grenats" to the Super League (1st division). Wishing the goal of having Servette FC rekindle with its glorious past: "All united in the legend" becomes the club's slogan. The President, Majid Pishyar, and the executive committee decide unanimously, in December 2008, to create the company "Servette Football Club 1890 SA".



Aside from its sporting development, Servette FC wishes to implicate itself socially. A partnership with the association "Courir... Ensemble" (Run... Together) is inaugurated in January 2009.

Behind the scenes, the Servette staff is hard at work, and the Genevese supporters answer the call. Against Lausanne-Sport, a new attendance record for Servette in Challenge League is reached for a match of Servette FC in Challenge League, with close to 10' 000 spectators present.

Leaders, players and supporters all wish only one thing: to return to its glory days and do everything in its power to rejoin the elite of Swiss football.

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