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## Italian Team of the Century named

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THE VFL/AFL Italian Team of the Century - comprising some of the greatest names the nation's only truly indigenous code has ever known – was revealed to more than 1000 people at a charity event in Melbourne on Thursday night.

The elite 18-man team (plus four interchange players) was selected from a squad of 50 players, which was in turn cherry-picked from a list of 148 known footballers of Italian origin - each of whom has made a unique contribution to the game at various stages over 110 years of league competition (see [www.italianteamofthecentury.com.au](http://www.italianteamofthecentury.com.au)).

All proceeds from the event - organised by prominent Italian organisation the Toccolan Club with the support of the AFL and Puma – were donated to the Royal Children's Hospital.

### The VFL/AFL Italian Team of the Century is as follows:

**B:** Frank Curcio, Stephen Silvagni, Len Incigneri

**HB:** Alec Epis, Anthony Koutoufides, John Kennedy Jr

**C:** Robert DiPierdomenico, Ian Stewart (Cervi), Peter Matera

**HF:** Peter Riccardi, Alan Martello, Mark Mercuri

**F:** Phillip Matera, Saverio Rocca, Brendan Fevola

**Foll:** Steve Alessio, Mark Ricciuto, Peter Pianto

**I/C:** Sergio Silvagni, Tony Liberatore, Scott Camporeale, Joe Misiti

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**Captain:** Mark Ricciuto

**Coach:** Ron Barassi

**President:** Frank Costa

The team includes two members of the AFL's Team of the Century – full-back Stephen Silvagni and centreman Ian Stewart – who have been named in those same positions for the Italian team.

Anthony Koutoufides, named in the Greek Team of the Century on account of his late father's heritage, was also eligible for inclusion in the Italian team, given that his mother is Italian-born.

Similarly Peter Matera, named in the Indigenous Team of the Century by virtue of his mother's heritage, was eligible for selection for the Italian team as his father is Italian-born.

John Kennedy Jr qualifies as his maternal grandparents were Italian-born.

The Italian Team of the Century also comprises:

- the first footballer of Italian origin to captain and coach a senior League team and the only footballer to complete his career before World War II - Len Incigneri;

- an Australian Football Hall Of Fame Legend - Ian Stewart - and Hall Of Fame inductee - Stephen Silvagni;

- four Brownlow medallists - Ian Stewart (1965-'66 & '71), Robert DiPierdomenico (1986), Tony Liberatore (1990) and Mark Ricciuto (2003);

- a Norm Smith medallist - Peter Matera (1992);

- a reigning Coleman medallist who, since 1897, is the only footballer of Italian origin to be the League's leading goalkicker in a season - Brendan Fevola (2006);

- a father/son combination - Sergio and Stephen Silvagni (Carlton);

- a set of brothers - Peter and Phillip Matera (West Coast);

- 16 premiership players including five-time Hawthorn premiership footballer Robert DiPierdomenico;

- 11 club best and fairest players, including three-time winners Ian Stewart and Mark Ricciuto;

- two 300-game players - Stephen Silvagni (312, Carlton) and Mark Ricciuto (303, Adelaide);

- fourteen 200-game players and five 100-game players, with only Len Incigneri (97 games) failing to break the ton;

- seven club Team of the Century players – Sergio and Stephen Silvagni (Carlton); Frank Curcio (Fitzroy); Tony Liberatore (Footscray/Western Bulldogs); Peter Pianto (Geelong); Robert DiPierdomenico (Hawthorn); and Ian Stewart (St Kilda and Richmond);

- 12 All-Australian representatives;

- an AFLPA Most Valuable Player - Anthony Koutoufides (2000); and

- four current players – Scott Camporeale, Brendan Fevola, Anthony Koutoufides and the Italian Team of the Century captain, Mark Ricciuto.

The Italian Team of the Century was recently finalised after a marathon meeting of the eight-man selection panel comprising president Frank Costa, coach and chairman Ron Barassi, together with Kevin Bartlett, Brendon Gale, John Russo, Kevin Sheedy, Bob Skilton and Bill Stephen.

Each of the 148 footballers eligible for selection met the following criteria, in that:

- he has played senior VFL/AFL football at some point between the years 1897 and 2006 inclusive; and

- he is either Italian-born or a first or second-generation Australian of Italian origin (ie. at least one of his parents and/or grandparents, paternal or maternal, is Italian-born).

Of the 22 players named in the Italian Team of the Century, Carlton and Essendon boast the greatest club representations with five players each – Scott Camporeale, Brendan Fevola, Anthony Koutoufides, Sergio Silvagni and Stephen Silvagni for Carlton and Steve Alessio, Camporeale, Alec Epis, Mark Mercuri and Joe Misiti for Essendon.

Of the 148 VFL/AFL footballers to have met the aforementioned selection criteria, only one – Carlton's one-gamer Peter Bevilacqua – is Italian-born.

Len Incigneri and Frank Curcio, who died in 1964 and 1988 respectively, were

represented at the event by their sons Len Clark (Incigneri) junior and Michael Curcio.

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