

365 bet bet

Those radios often caused friction between couples, as men out for a walk were more taken by the broadcast than by their female companion. At least the radios never physically kept anyone from their families; otherwise Sunday would be spent at the stadium or at home in front of the television. Rita Pavone sang about it, scolding her companion for preferring football and leaving her alone; Dino Risi painfully portrayed it in his episodic movie, *The Monsters*, where in the episode *What a Bad Life!*, Vittorio Gassman plays a poor family man who spends what little he has to go to the stadium; Alberto Sordi reiterated this in the memorable scenes of *The Husband and I* and *I know That You Know That I Know*.

Church, lunch, and the game are the three pillars upon which the Italian Sunday was built. Three clustered events spaced a few hours within each other: first duty, then necessity, and finally pleasure. Even if it does seem excessive calling it a pleasure, for all the times an afternoon defeat made our baked pasta go down the wrong way and along with it, the entire weekend. At my parents' house I discovered a drawer full of old pocket radios. I then found an identical one when we emptied my grandmother's house. I was reminded of them present in family photos, with that unintentionally vintage design, often surrounded by an engrossed group of people of all ages, hands cupped around their ears. I remembered afternoons in the mid-nineties when they were still used. As a child I used to take them with me on Sunday outings for the same reason everyone else took them: to follow the ball game.

The cult of the game does not have specific areas of competence, no typical geographical indication, like wine does, but it has always brought people together within its single large leather sphere. From North to South, from the countryside to the big cities, from the mountains to the sea. Those who could went to the stadium, up to the time it was more comfortable to watch matches on TV. Lunch was at home, then down to the bar, until the call of the family became too insistent to be ignored. At that point the pocket radio came in handy.

But like all cultural symbols, fans have had to deal with the progression of the sport's economic sector growing disproportionately in just a few years. The first change was the match schedule: after more than half a century of Sunday afternoon starts, the delay was born. It was the 1993 of great changes, with Italy in political turmoil and television rights becoming a greater feature of the sport. It was the first upheaval of many. In February 2024 the first round of the Series A schedule was split between Friday afternoon and Monday evening, w