

Nine Thousand Kilometres, One Shirt, One Football Family: Coritiba's Tribute Reaches Beyond Brazil



Curitiba, Parana Aug 11, 2026 (Issuewire.com) - Football's international reach is often described through broadcast rights, followers and merchandise. Coritiba Foot Ball Club showed another kind of reach in its 2-1 victory over Chapecoense: the ability to make a supporter on another continent feel present in a stadium he could no longer reach.

Before kick-off at Couto Pereira, Coritiba's players entered the field in shirts carrying the name of Jonny Butcher, an English supporter living with ALS. In the UK, the condition is better known as motor neurone disease, or MND. The shirt replaced the usual main sponsor position with Jonny's name, a sunflower and the words: "Your strength inspires us. We stand as one."

Jonny's route to Coritiba began with Norwich City. Through the friendship between the clubs, and later through his relationship with Curitiba-born Ana Clara, a Brazilian club became part of his daily life in England. He followed Coritiba from more than 9,000 kilometres away and hoped to return to Curitiba to attend a match beside his brother-in-law, Lucas Espinoza. His condition made that journey unworkable.

The response from Coritiba was carefully grounded in the people around the story. Fans, players, club administrators and management signed a banner for Jonny before the match. Lucas represented the family in the stadium. The club also announced that shirts from the tribute would be destined for Jonny's family and an organisation supporting people affected by rare diseases.

Then came the match. Tiago Coser and Pedro Rocha scored as Coritiba beat Chapecoense 2-1.

Players later showed shirts naming injured teammates Lucas Ronier and Pedro Rocha during a celebration, a simple sign that the group extended beyond those able to play that evening.

For global football, the significance lies in the detail. This was not a generic campaign about values. A club from Curitiba responded to one supporter in Norwich with his name, his family's links to the city and the dream he was unable to complete. It allowed local supporters to take part and gave international audiences a reason to look at Curitiba beyond the scoreline.

Founded in 1909, Curitiba has deep roots in Curitiba and plays at Estádio Couto Pereira, a ground woven into the club's identity. The tribute proved that local history and global relevance can reinforce one another. A stadium in southern Brazil made room for an English supporter. That is football's global community at its most convincing.

Sponsor acknowledgement

Coritiba's official communication says the action was made possible with the support of the club's official sponsors: Diadora, Ademicon, Paraná Banco, JFK, Master Cargas and DS Indústria de Peças Automotivas. Their participation allowed the tribute shirt to carry Jonny's name while keeping the club's commercial partners visibly connected to the action.

About Maidaan Sports

Maidaan Sports is an independent football news and publishing platform covering club football, player stories, competitions and supporter culture. This third-party release is being distributed because Coritiba's tribute joins a Brazilian match result with a human story that reached audiences in Brazil, the United Kingdom and beyond.

Official Coritiba channels and videos

[Website](#)

[Official tribute announcement](#)

[Norwich-Curitiba post](#)

[Pre-match tribute reel](#)

[Match-day tribute reel](#)

[Instagram](#)

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