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## **Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star**

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**Jak cytować [how to cite]:** Kosak R., *Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star*, "Sport i Turystyka. Środkowoeuropejskie Czasopismo Naukowe" 2020, t. 3, nr 2, p. 41–56

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### **Al-Saadi Kaddafi – piłkarz, który chciał zawojować piłkarski świat**

#### **Streszczenie**

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie osoby Al-Saadi Kaddafiego, trzeciego syna dyktatora władającego Libią w latach 1969–2011 Mu'ammara al-Kaddafiego. W pierwszej części artykułu autor przybliży pierwszy etap życia syna dyktatora, kiedy to Al-Saadi Kaddafi, dzięki znajomościom ojca, poznaje świat piłki nożnej, m.in. poprzez treningi pokazowe we włoskim klubie Lazio Rzym, gdzie liczone, że z czasem nabierze odpowiednich umiejętności, aby stać się piłkarzem tego klubu. W tej części artykułu autor wyjaśnia, dlaczego ten plan się nie udał. Następnie autor prezentuje w artykule kulisy barwnej kariery sportowej Al-Saadi Kaddafiego – najpierw w libijskiej piłce nożnej, a następnie w najwyższej klasie we Włoszech – Serie A, związanej z klubami AC Perugia, Udinese Calcio i UC Sampdoria (jako piłkarz) oraz z Juventusem Turyn (jako działacz i jeden z udziałowców klubu). W końcowej części artykułu autor skupia się na dalszych losach Al-Saadi Kaddafiego po zakończeniu przez niego dalszej kariery piłkarskiej oraz przedstawia losy jego osoby po wybuchu tzw. Arabskiej Wiosny, w wyniku której ród Kaddafich utracił władzę w Libii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Al-Saadi Kaddafi, Serie A, Libia, Arabska Wiosna.

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## Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the person of Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the third son of a dictator who ruled Libya during the years 1969–2011 – Mu'ammad Al-Gaddafi.

In the first part of the article, the author writes about the first stage of the life of the dictator's son, when Al-Saadi Gaddafi, thanks to his father's acquaintances, enters the world of football, among others through demonstration training sessions at the Italian club Lazio Roma, where it was hoped that over time he would acquire skills to be able to play football in this club. In this part of the article, the author explains why this plan failed.

In the next part of the article, the author presents the backstage of Al-Saadi Kaddafi's tempestuous career first in Libyan football and then in the highest class of the Italian Serie A connected with such clubs as AC Perugia, Udinese Calcio and UC Sampdoria as a footballer and with Juventus Turin as one of the club's officials and shareholders.

In the final part of the article the author focuses on the fate of Al-Saadi Gaddafi after completion of his football career and presents what happened to him after the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring as a result of which the Gaddafi family lost their power in Libya.

**Keywords:** Gaddafi, Serie A, Libya, Arab Spring.

An interesting offer, the value of which is 1000 euro can be found in the archive auction site of eBay. It relates to the T-shirt of one of the most unusual footballers who played in the highest entertainment class in Italy – Serie A. One can ask a question: a T-shirt of which superstar could achieve such a price, Diego Armando Maradona's, Zinedine Zidan's, Ronaldo Luis Nazario de Lima's or maybe of the player considered by many to be the best Italian footballer in recent years the legendary capital of AS Roma Francesco Totti, or maybe Silvio Piola's, the best goal scorer in the history of Series A? None of the ones mentioned above. The man who was wearing this T-shirt was a forward but he has never scored a goal despite his four-year stay in Series A. He had only played in two matches coming as the last reserve. Under normal circumstances, the footballer with such a CV would have to fight to find a place in a Series A team, but he would not have found one. This footballer is Al-Saadi Gaddafi<sup>1</sup>.

The purpose of this article is the presentation of his colourful biography connected with football and the course of his life after completion of his football career.

Al-Saddi Gaddafi was born on 28th of May 1973 in Tripoli as the third son of former Libyan leader Muammad Gaddafi<sup>2</sup>. Muammad Gaddafi was interested in football on an average level, he played it only as a hobby.

He only became active during elections of FIFA authorities since he possessed an enormous influence on African football associations. Thus during elec-

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<sup>1</sup> P. Bandini, *The Dictator's Son and Serie A. The Curious Tale of Saadi Gaddafi*, <http://thelab.bleacherreport.com/dreams-of-a-dictator-s-son/> [accessed: 18.08.2017].

<sup>2</sup> *Al-Saadi Al Gaddafi*, <http://www.transfermarkt.pl/al-saadi-al-gaddafi/profil/spieler/6193> [accessed: 18.08.2017].

tions of, for example, the president of FIFA, one of the candidates' purposes for this post was to buy Gaddafi's favours<sup>3</sup>.



**Photograph 1.** The graphics shows Al-Saadi and Muammar Gaddafi

Source:<http://thelab.bleacherreport.com/dreams-of-a-dictator-s-son/> [accessed: 18.08.2017].

Lack of deeper engagement in matters of Libyan football by senior Gaddafi caused that the scope for action for Al-Saadi Gaddafi was opened. The latter showed interest in football from an early age, but despite the passion for football Al-Saadi Kaddafi also loved entertaining lifestyle.

Saadi ordered private concerts of Mariah Carey, The Pussycat Dolls, Usher. The parties he organised were legendary. Rapper DJ Whoo Kid described one of them in such a way:

I open and there are a dozen or so models wearing military dresses, all of them have uzi. 'We are here to take you for the private Gaddafi's party'. When we get there I could not believe my eyes. I have never seen such a mountain of cocaine<sup>4</sup>.

A. Gaddafi spent annually about 200 million euro on his sumptuous lifestyle. He had always with him a suitcase full of notes and if they were finished, he made use of Libyan embassy as his ATM. Basically he did not know the value of money

<sup>3</sup> T. Kistner, *Fifa Mafia*, Kraków 2014, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> DJ Whoo Kid's *Weird Night With Muammar Gaddafi's Son*: "I've Never Seen So Much Cocaine", <http://www.miaminewtimes.com/music/dj-whoos-weird-night-with-muammar-gaddafis-son-ive-never-seen-so-much-cocaine-7701474> [accessed: 18.08.2017].

– he bought everything he wanted irrespective of the price. Dinner for ten thousand dollars or a flight by his private plane to the other end of the world to return after two days, it was not a problem for him<sup>5</sup>.

Lazio Roma wanted to use this passion for football and wasting money. The club's authorities counted that thanks to trainings with stars under, among others, Paul Gascoigne's<sup>6</sup> leadership in the club, he would gain proper abilities to play in an ideal Serie A. It turned out quickly that the cunning plan of Lazio officials failed and instead of greater inflows to the club's budget, A. Gaddafi spent money on, for example, a new yacht.



**Photograph 2.** Al-Saadi Gaddafi during trainings with Paul Gascoigne in Lazio Roma

Source: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/saadi-gaddafis-footballing-obsession-became-no-laughing-matter-bb7p6lz7w0h>, [accessed: 3.09.2018 r.].

Nevertheless, in the year 2000, Al-Saadi decided to make his childlike dreams come true and become a footballer, he considered himself to be a new Alessandro del Piero. There was nothing strange about it, except for the fact that he was already 27 years old and the period of wild lifestyle was behind him.

His loving father, Muammar, decided to make his son dream come true. In the authoritarian country Saadi would buy one of clubs in Tripoli and he would

<sup>5</sup> *Szalony świat Saadiego Kaddafiego*, <http://weszlo.com/2016/10/25/szalony-swiat-saadiego-kaddafiego/>, [accessed: 18.08.2017].

<sup>6</sup> Paul Gascoigne (born on 27th of May 1967 in Gateshead) – an English footballer playing on the position of a midfielder, part of the England team, participant of, among others, finals of World Cup 1990 and European Cup 1996. Known by his nickname ‘Gazza’.

become its honourable chairman. He could take all the power, among others, he would solemnly start each match and with the help of highly-placed father he would build the team's power enjoying himself in Football Manager<sup>7</sup> live. However, A. Gaddafi went a step further.

Day by day he became a contestant of Al-Ahli Tripoli. He decided himself to be a forward. As the only footballer in the club, he had the respected in the football world number 10 and his name on the T-shirt. All for the fact that fans and commentators could appreciate the class of 'an outstanding' player.

Playing for preservation, the team quickly climbed up the table thanks to Saadi's help. He did not hesitate to set up meetings in order to achieve the favourable result just to look good in them. As a result, there was an incredible number of penalty kicks in Al-Ahli matches, the executor of which was the dictator's son. Unofficially, it was said that the rival goalkeepers specially let the balls pass after throws of the heir to the throne just not to be exposed to his anger.

As an example of effects of his outbursts of anger the history of Al-Nasr Bengazi club can be used. After one of matches, when rivals from Bengazi decided to get off the pitch as a protest against the methods of refereeing the meeting with the team of young Gaddafi. In revenge the young Gaddafi brought to the obliteration of their stadium, the training base and removal of the club from the football world map<sup>8</sup>.

With each passing year, Al-Saadi Gaddafi caused through his actions that the highest Libyan football league was becoming the private Al-Saadi Gaddafi's league. In the year 2001 he was the owner of the leading league team, Al-Ittihad Tripoli and the vice-president of Libyan football federation. In this club, Al-Saadi could at last celebrate twice in a row the acquisition of title of master of Libyan league at apparently good personal statistics<sup>9</sup>. He had also behind him the début in the national representation. Unfortunately, there are different pieces of information about his performances for the simple reason that sources provide fragmentary data and certain parts of the post-game reports received the status 'missing'. According to the portal transfermarkt.com, Al-Saadi Gaddafi played probably in 18 matches of the national team during the years 2000–2006 in which he scored two goals<sup>10</sup>. An interesting history connected with this stage of the career of the hero of this article related to his appearance play in the national team is

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<sup>7</sup> Football Manager – series of computer sports games of club's managers kind. It arose after completion of cooperation of the studio sports interactive with the partnership Eidos Interactive as a result of which the studio ceased to product series of games Championship manager and started to produce competitive clubs' managers.

<sup>8</sup> Al-Nasr Bengazi Club was reactivated again in 2002 year.

<sup>9</sup> *Kadhafi, Al-Saadi*, [https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al\\_Saadi\\_Kadhafi.html](https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al_Saadi_Kadhafi.html) [accessed: 03.09.2018].

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Saadi Al Gaddafi*, <https://www.transfermarkt.pl/al-saadi-al-gaddafi/leistungsdaten/spieler/6193> [accessed: 31.08.2019].

a situation from the friendly match with Canada. While there was a result 3:1 for Canada, Al-Saadi was changed. There would not be nothing special about it but for the fact that this change was irreverently called ‘the longest change in the world of football’. During the change, before the dictator’s son left the pitch, he thanked for the game and he shook hands with everybody<sup>11</sup>.

Saadi was so certain that he could do whatever he wanted in football that he even wanted to persuade his father to apply for the organisation of football World Cup in Libya in 2002, but it was definitely too late for the realisation of this idea.

Because junior Gaddafi’s plan to win national league was realised so soon, Saadi dreamed about showing his football talent to a wider audience. Running trainings with Ben Johnson and football trainings with the legendary player of the national team of Argentina considered to be one of the best in the history, Diego Armando Maradona,<sup>12</sup> were supposed to help him in making his dream come true.

Serie A became again Saadi’s ideal league. The enormous impact on the choice of this league had very good relationships between Libya and Italy. At the beginning of XXI century Muammar Gaddafi cooperated closely with the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. The then Prime Minister of Italy loved money, so the friendship with the Libyan tyrant, connected with considerable financial benefits, suited him<sup>13</sup>.

As far as the league was concerned, it is worth mentioning that Serie A was in those days considered to be the best league in the world. The following players were running on pitches of the Italian stadiums: the legendary Milan’s forward Andriy Szewczenko, the Czech legend of Juventus, Pavel Nedved, and the group of outstanding Italian representatives headed by Roberto Baggio<sup>14</sup>. Saadi Gaddafi was supposed to join this company in the year 2003.

It was planned that the Libyan would perform in the team of the then masters of Serie A, Juventus Turin. Buying 7,5% of shares in the club<sup>15</sup> by the Gadaffi family was the element of this plan. As a result, they entered Juventus management board and they were represented by none other than Al-Saadi. This transfer was however blocked by the then coach of Juventus F.C. Marcelo Lippi, who said that he did not want to have Gaddafi junior in the team. It was a very brave decision because he risked loss of his position as it was in case with the previous

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<sup>11</sup> *World’s Longest Substitution?*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybA8XpWYV1A> [accessed: 31.08.2019].

<sup>12</sup> *Jak syn tyrana chciał zostać piłkarzem, czyli niesamowita historia Saadiego Kaddafiego*, <http://igol.pl/syn-tyrana-chcial-zostac-pilkarzem-czyli-niesamowita-historia-saadiego-kaddafiego/> [accessed: 4.05.2017].

<sup>13</sup> P. Turczyński, *Libijska wojna domowa i międzynarodowa interwencja 2011 roku – Postawy społeczeństw Libii i Zachodu*, “Zeszyty Naukowe WSOWL” 2012, nr 1 (163), pp. 158–159.

<sup>14</sup> *Roberto Baggio*, <https://www.transfermarkt.pl/roberto-baggio/profil/spieler/4153> [accessed: 31.08.2018].

<sup>15</sup> M. Bankowicz, *Muammar Kaddafi: Arabski lider czarnej Afryki?*, “Forum Politologiczne” 2008, vol. 7, p. 219.

coach who opposed Gaddafi and it was the Libyan representation selector Franco Scoglio who, as a result of the lack of appointment of Gaddafi to the national representation was immediately dismissed<sup>16</sup>.

As a result of the fiasco of this transfer of Gaddafi to Juventus, the another alternative was searched. It turned out that Luciano Gaucci, the president of Perugia, is willing to help Gaddafi. He was quite a peculiar character in Italian football. His main life motto was: no matter what they say, it is important that they talk<sup>17</sup>. He imported the first Japanese to Serie A Hidetoshi Nakata and the footballer of the South Korea representation Ahn Jung-Hwan who was hired to Perugia, but he was then dismissed from the club by Gaucci because he 'dared' to score so called 'golden goal' to Italy during the extra time in 1/8 final of the 2002 World Cup<sup>18</sup>. Gaucci wanted to introduce a woman to the team which would be an unprecedented event in the contemporary football<sup>19</sup>.

Saadi entered the convention and Gaucci hit the spot. People talked about Perugia all the time. Luciano Gaucci presented the backstage of Gaddafi's transfer to the club in such a way:

The idea of this transfer was born during my conversation with Saadi three weeks ago. I threw it half joking, half seriously and now it became reality. This is a hazardous movement from our side but he will prove his quality on the pitch<sup>20</sup>.

However, the backstage was unofficially totally different. Berlusconi himself reported to Gaucci and transferred several million dollars to his account and persuaded him to transfer the player only to maintain good relationships on the Libya-Italy line<sup>21</sup>.

Gaddafi junior was presented in Torre Alfina, the great medieval castle owned by the club's president with the participation of the most important worldwide television broadcasters. Although Al-Saadi was not well-known among Perugia's fans, hundreds of them appeared in order to welcome a new player in the team. Gaddafi decided to play in Perugia with the number 19 and there was his name 'Saadi' on the T-shirt. He was supposed to play in the club on the forward position.

<sup>16</sup> *Gaddafi joins board of Juventus*, <https://www.scotsman.com/sport/football/gaddafi-joins-board-of-juventus-1-626882> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>17</sup> P. Bandini, *The Dictator's Son and SerieA.The Curious Tale of Saadi Gaddafi*, <http://thelab.bleacherreport.com/dreams-of-a-dictator-s-son/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>18</sup> *Ahn sacked by bitter Perugia*, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2002/jun/19/worldcup-football2002.sport19> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>19</sup> *Jak Luciano Gaucci szuka napastnika*, <http://rfl.pl/jak-luciano-gaucci-szuka-napastnika/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>20</sup> *Jak syn tyrana chciał zostać piłkarzem, czyli niesamowita historia Saadiego Kaddafiego*, <http://igol.pl/syn-tyrana-chcial-zostac-pilkarzem-czyli-niesamowita-historia-saadiego-kaddafiego/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



**Photograph 3.** The presentation of Al-Saadi Gaddafi as a new Perugia player

Source: <https://thelab.bleacherreport.com/dreams-of-a-dictator-s-son/> [accessed: 04.09.2018].

In order to increase Al-Saadi Gaddafi's popularity, it was decided to conclude an agreement with the most popular Arabic television Al Jazeera which transmitted Perugia's training sessions. The young forward, Emanuele Berettoni admitted that players felt as if they were participants of the reality show:

Saadi could his get colleagues' support, he took them to parties, shopping. He sponsored Jay Bothroyd's honeymoon trip, he also took him for the weekend to Los Angeles. He took Zelijko Kalac to the Bahamas. No wonder that his colleagues from Perugia did not remember him badly<sup>22</sup>.

Saadi's colleagues from Perugia's team remember that he was present at every training session. He could sometimes do it with the proverbial bang. He happened to fly in by helicopter, he was accompanied by a procession of servants, but he was there and he trained as everybody else. He did not demand special treatment. Salvatore Fresi, the then Perugia's defender remembers:

He was among us as a thirteen year old boy among adults. He tried to give one hundred percent but physically he could not simply match us<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> P. Bandini, *The Dictator's Son and SerieA. The Curious Tale of Saadi Gaddafi*, <http://thelab.bleacherreport.com/dreams-of-a-dictator-s-son/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>23</sup> *Szalony świat Saadiego Kaddafiego*, <http://weszlo.com/2016/10/25/szalony-swiat-saadiego-kaddafiego/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

Excuses were invented in Perugia why Gaddafi did not play. Firstly, it was said that he had to renounce his shares in Juventus. Then, it was stated that he was still injured and he was not able to play. Finally, he succeeded to complete the desired début and it was with Juventus, his favourite club with which he had earlier celebrated triumphs as a shareholder. He played for a quarter of an hour and he did not show anything special<sup>24</sup>.

As far as playing in Perugia is concerned, more can be said about Gaddafi's out of field life. He was a hero of the loud scandal when it turned out the his anti-doping result was positive and showed the presence of the prohibited nandrolone in his body. Gaucci tried to explain that it was because of analgesics, but it was clear that the real reason was Gaddafi's passion for cocaine.

As it turned out, a quarter of the match with Juventus was the only official Gaddafi's performance in the colours of Perugia:

I was not successful in Perugia because I had too weak colleagues in the team. I think that in a team like Juventus I would show better my technical skills<sup>25</sup>.

After a weak season, Perugia fell to the lower league Serie B. It did not suit ambitions of Libyan dictator's son. He started another search of the club which would admit the player with doubtful skills. Another club, fighting for the UEFA Champions League and willing to make use of Gaddafi's services was Udinese, which counted that admission of the Libyan dictator' son to the club would add to the club's budget a few additional million euro. It turned out that he managed to play only for 11 minutes<sup>26</sup> in the club with Stadio Friuli.

When it seemed that his disappointing stay in Udinese would end Gadaffi's career on the Italian Peninsula, Sampdoria reported to him. In the team from Genoa, Gadaffi had absolutely no chance for debut, but he showed that he could play like nobody else. It came to light that the player who lived for a year in a hotel forgot to pay for his stay and the sum of money was considerable and amounted to 394 thousand euro, which the court in Liguria as a result of judgement of the year 2010 ordered Gadaffi to pay<sup>27</sup>. The hotel where the footballer lived was not the most expensive apartment in the town, but everyday parties, airstrip for the helicopter and rental of the whole floor and even special place for cages with lions made up that amount of money. Even the doorman earned on Gadaffi's amusement because one day he sold to mass-media the history about excesses of the Libyan.

<sup>24</sup> *Gaddafi makes debut*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3679853.stm> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>25</sup> *Pilkarskie historie XII: Wplywow y tatuś*, <http://bezszyldu.pl/pilkarskie-historie-xiii-wplywow-y-tatus/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>26</sup> *Gaddafi set to quit Udinese*, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4596716.stm> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>27</sup> *Italian court tells Gaddafi son to pay huge hotel bill*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10601275> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

The history connected with the conquest of European football by a forward was completed by the same man who commenced it – Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. At the end of the year 2007 he said:

I think he should end his career and come back to Libya<sup>28</sup>.

Gaddafi senior was getting fed up with the fact that his son did not make his dreams come true, He was just wasting money and ridiculed his nation. Moreover, slowly it was almost the time for the Gaddafis in which football receded into the background.

Gaddafi junior returned to his home quickly. It seems that the most important thing that he loved in football was a footballer's life and spotlights directed at him but not hard work<sup>29</sup>.

Finally, it is worth asking a question: what kind of footballer Saadi Gaddafi was? He was a lanky left-footed forward. He could play with his head at a decent level and he could find himself in a goal scoring situation. He rarely gave a ball to his colleagues, he has never been seen to score a goal in a different way than after a kick from the striking with laces. Throughout his whole career he did not exceed 30 goals<sup>30</sup>.

**Table 1.**

Season	Club	Number of performances (participation in the match team)	Number of scores
<b>Club career</b>			
2000/2001	Al-AhlyTripolis	24 (24)	3
2001/2002	Al-IttihadTripolis	38(38)	14
2002/2003	Al-IttihadTripolis	36 (36)	6
2003/2004	AC Perugia	1(5)	0
2004/2005	No club	0(0)	0
2005/2006	Udinese Calcio	1(2)	0
2006/2007	Sampdoria Genua	0(0)	0
<b>National team career</b>			
2000–2006	Libya	18	2

Sources: *Kadhafi, Al-Saadi*, [https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al\\_Saadi\\_Kadhafi.html](https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al_Saadi_Kadhafi.html) [accessed: 19.08.2019 r.]; *Al-Saadi Al Gaddafi*, <https://www.transfermarkt.pl/al-saadi-al-gaddafi/leistungsdaten/spieler/6193> [accessed: 20.08.2019].

<sup>28</sup> *Jak syn tyrana chciał zostać piłkarzem, czyli niesamowita historia Saadiego Kaddafiego*, <http://igol.pl/syn-tyrana-chcial-zostac-pilkarzem-czyli-niesamowita-historia-saadiego-kaddafiego/> [accessed: 4.09.2018].

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Kadhafi, Al-Saadi*, [https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al\\_Saadi\\_Kadhafi.html](https://www.national-football-teams.com/player/14462/Al_Saadi_Kadhafi.html) [accessed: 5.09.2018].

Ending this part of Al-Saadi Gaddafi's life, the career of the hero of this article should be summarized. Table 1 shows what Al-Saadi Gaddafi's career looked like statistically as a whole.

He did not have any problems with finding a new purpose in his life. From now on he decided to take up only with business. In the year 2006, Al-Saadi Gaddafi, together with the Libyan government, initiated the project of creating a half-autonomous city in Libya similar to Hong Kong which was supposed to stretch 40 km between Tripoli and Tunisian border. The proposed new city was supposed to become a modern bank, medical and educational centre where visas would not be demanded. The city was planned to own its own international airport and a big seaport. Gaddafi promised religious tolerance to both, synagogues and churches, as well as no discrimination in this new metropolis. The new city would have business law in 'western' style.

In spite of finishing of his football career, Saadi was a hero of other scandals. He was even called 'the black sheep' of the Gaddafi family. In the year 2009, an American diplomatic spy mentioned Al-Saadi's 'fights with police officers, drugs and alcohol abuse, excessive parting' and 'immorality with women and men'<sup>31</sup>. Junior Gaddafi's bisexuality and fear of the leader of Libya, senior Gaddafi, of other scandals with participation of his son caused that in the year 2009 Saadi married al-Khweilda, the daughter of Al-Hmeidi, Libyan military commander<sup>32</sup>.

Simply fabulous Saadi's life ended with the outbreak of so-called Arab Spring as a result of which, during the years 2010–2012, majority of North African leaders lost their power. Every day, Muammar Gaddafi's rule became weaker and weaker. In the year 2011, the civil war between supporters of Gaddafis line and their opponents began in Libya<sup>33</sup>.

A few years after Saadi wanted to become a star of Serie A, he had to take arms and take the lead of the army defending the regime and he was authentically afraid of what the next day of his life was to bring.

Al-Saadi Gaddafi led the fight in a very brutal way. He is said to be the initiator of changes in fighting tactics of the government forces. Instead of using heavy infantry, tanks and armoured cars that could be easily distinguished from Free Libyan Army, small, fast, universal units were sent to fight with the rebels.

During the civil war Saadi Gaddafi led a small brigade of 500 – 700 soldiers. He participated in the battle of Marsa al-Burajka, also called Brega, which took

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<sup>31</sup> *Libya: Gaddafi mouthpiece caught fleeing dressed as a woman*, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8798089/Libya-Gaddafi-mouthpiece-caught-fleeing-dressed-as-a-woman.html>, [accessed: 5.09.2018].

<sup>32</sup> *New York Times Kept Qaddafi's Son's Bisexuality Quiet*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/09/times-kept-qaddafis-sons-bisexuality-quiet-governments-request/337842/>, [accessed: 5.09.2018].

<sup>33</sup> J. Zdanowski, *Znaczenie Arabskiej Wiosny*, "Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe" 2013, nr 3, p. 13–32.

place from March 31 until April 6, 2011. This battle ended in victory of the army loyal to M. Gaddafi's regime. Slightly injured, Al-Saadi managed to return to Tripoli on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April 2011<sup>34</sup>.



**Photograph 4.** Al-Saadi Gaddafi as the commander of the Loyalist army during the civil war in Libya in the year 2011

Source:<http://wyborcza.pl/51,76842,15580085.html?i=2> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

On August 24, 2011, A. Gaddafi contacted CNN declaring that he was authorised to negotiate on behalf of the Loyalist forces and he wanted to discuss the ceasefire with the USA and NATO authorities<sup>35</sup>. A week later, he got in touch with Al Arabiya television declaring that his father was ready to resign and he appealed for a dialogue.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September, during the interview for CNN, A. Gaddafi said that his brother's Sajf al-Islam 'aggressive' comment led to the break of talks between forces of the National Temporary Council and M. Gaddafi's Loyalists in BaniWalid. Moreover, he admitted that he had not seen his father for two months. A. Gaddafi demanded the neutral position during the talks and he expressed his predisposition to mediate between both sides of the conflict.

<sup>34</sup> A. Basbous, *Le Tsunami arabe*, Paris 2011, p. 211.

<sup>35</sup> *Gadhafi son offers to broker Libya cease-fire*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/08/24/libya.saadi.gadhafi/index.html> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, Gaddafi escaped to the Niger where he received permission for the departure ‘for humanitarian reasons’<sup>36</sup>. The government of Niger planned to keep Gaddafi while establishing what to do with him. Brigi Rafini, the Prime Minister of Niger said that he did not allow for Gaddafi’s extradition. On the 11<sup>th</sup> day of November, the president of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, said that his government had decided to grant Gaddafi asylum ‘for humanitarian reasons’. Nevertheless, Gaddafi junior sounded out the possibility of escape to Barbados, Venezuela or Mexico. He tried to escape under an assumed name but finally his escape failed<sup>37</sup>.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of March 2014, Libya announced that A. Gaddafi was extradited by Niger and he was staying in Tripoli. The list of accusations was long: from the match in 1996 when he was supposed to issue the order to shoot at the crowd, through killing the other footballer until war crimes during revolution in the year 2011.



**Fot. 5.** Al-Saadi during the process regarding the murder of footballer Bashir al-Riani

Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/event/gaddafis-son-saadi-appears-in-court-589842317#saadi-gaddafi-late-libyan-leader-muammar-gaddafis-son-faces-charges-picture-id495258964> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

<sup>36</sup> *Probe urged into how Ontario-based bodyguard helped Gaddafi’s son flee from Libya*, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/government-urged-to-proble-gaddafi-sons-bodyguard-who-is-based-in-canada> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

<sup>37</sup> *Mexico ‘stops entry’ of Libya’s Saadi Gaddafi*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-16075043> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

In May 2015, A. Gaddafi appeared in the court in Tripoli and he was formally accused of illegal imprisonment and of murdering the footballer Bashir al-Riani in the year 2005<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, everyone remembered how much he had spent on his whims annually, how many cars and residences he had. At present Al-Saadi Gaddafi is in Libyan prison pending judgment. The fabulous life that he led in the first half of his life turned into a nightmare in the second half.

To conclude, I should ask and answer the question why it is worth talking about Muammar Gaddafi's third son. The biography of Al-Saadi Gaddafi is a challenge because there is little information related to him. Pieces of information are partial because he could be found in his father 'shade' and he was not taken into account as a successor after his father's Muammar retirement for the simple reason that he was only the third son of the dictator and his brothers Muhammad and Sajf al-Islam had better chances of ruling Libya. People started talking about Al-Saadi only when he decided to make his dream come true and become a professional footballer. But as for football, Al-Saadi Gaddafi was just one of many children of the dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, and he was only famous as the son of his famous father.

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<sup>38</sup> *Saadi Gaddafi in court in Libya for start of murder trial*, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/11595914/Saadi-Gaddafi-in-court-in-Libya-for-start-of-murder-trial.html> [accessed: 5.09.2018].

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### **Deklaracja braku konfliktu interesów**

Autor deklaruje brak potencjalnych konfliktów interesów w odniesieniu do badań, autorstwa i/lub publikacji artykułu *Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star*.

### **Finansowanie**

Autor nie otrzymał żadnego wsparcia finansowego w zakresie badań, autorstwa i/lub publikacji artykułu *Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star*.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star*.

### **Funding**

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of the article *Al-Saadi Gaddafi, the son of a dictator who wanted to be a football star*.

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