

More Than a Match: How Coritiba Football Club Turned a Supporter's Story Into a Community Initiative

Brazilian football club honours Norwich supporter Jonny Butcher with a match-day tribute supporting rare-disease awareness

CURITIBA, BRAZIL, August 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For American readers encountering Coritiba Football Club for the first time, the story of the Brazilian football club's tribute to Norwich supporter Jonny Butcher offers an example of how a football organisation can bring supporters, players, sponsors, and community partners together around a shared cause.



During a match at Estádio Couto Pereira, Coritiba honoured Jonny Butcher, a 29-year-old supporter from Norwich, England, who is living with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). The players wore a special shirt carrying his name, alongside a sunflower representing hope and rare-disease awareness and the message, "Your strength inspires us. We stand as one." The squad also entered the field carrying a banner bearing the same wording.

Jonny grew up supporting Norwich City FC and discovered Coritiba through the connection between the English and Brazilian clubs. His relationship with Curitiba became deeper after he met Ana Clara, a Curitiba native who later became his wife. From more than 9,000 kilometres away, Jonny followed Coritiba's matches late at night and travelled to Couto Pereira with his brother-in-law, Lucas Espinoza. When his condition made that journey impossible, Coritiba brought him into the heart of the match day. Lucas represented Jonny and his family inside the stadium.

The setting gave the tribute additional significance. Founded in 1909, Coritiba is one of Brazil's historic football institutions. The club takes its name from the city it represents and has played at Couto Pereira since 1932. The stadium is located in Alto da Glória and has become both a football venue and a civic landmark.

Curitiba, the capital of Paraná in southern Brazil, is internationally associated with urban planning, public transport, parks, and civic innovation. Coritiba reflected that civic character by coordinating its football staff, communications teams, commercial partners, and supporters around one shared purpose.

The tribute extended beyond the match itself. Match-worn shirts were designated for Jonny's family and an organisation supporting people affected by rare diseases. By placing his story on a major professional football stage, Coritiba created an opportunity to raise awareness and connect an individual tribute with practical support.

"This tribute would not have been possible without our sponsors and partners: Diadora, Ademicon, Paraná Banco, JFK Investimentos, Master Cargas, Bourbon Hotel & Suítes Curitiba, DS Indústria de Peças Automotivas and Princesa dos Campos," Coritiba said. "We also thank the supporters in Brazil and England who embraced Jonny's story. Together, they turned a shirt into a message of belonging and showed what football can achieve when institutions, businesses and communities stand together."

The initiative brought together the club, supporters, sponsors, and community organisations around rare-disease awareness and support for Jonny and his family. It also highlighted the role professional football clubs can play in community programmes that extend beyond match-day competition.

Supporters can share Jonny's story, amplify trusted rare-disease organisations, volunteer, fundraise, and encourage continued community programmes. Sponsors, media organisations, and governing bodies can also use their platforms to support patients, families, and carers.

From Curitiba to Norwich, the initiative demonstrates how football can connect people across borders while supporting awareness and community solidarity.

About Coritiba

Coritiba Foot Ball Club, commonly known as Coritiba or Coxa, was founded in 1909 and is based in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. The club is one of Brazil's historic football institutions and plays its home matches at Estádio Couto Pereira.

Official links

- Coritiba official website: <https://www.coritiba.com.br/>
- Coritiba official release: <https://www.coritiba.com.br/noticias/1486237>
- [Coritiba Instagram — Jonny's story](#)
- [Coritiba Instagram — Coritiba and Norwich](#)
- [Coritiba Instagram — tribute reel](#)

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