

Pick-up football in the *canchita de San Blas*

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Film title: Villa

Director: Ezio Massa

Production company: MalevoFilms

Year of local release: 2013

Brief scene description: Pick-up football in the *canchita de San Blas*

Timecode for scene: 09.31-15.17

Filming location for scene: Villa 21, Barracas, playground in front of San Blas parish

Throughout the past several decades and into the present the *_canchitas_*, or playgrounds for informal football, have been a key instrument for the articulation of community life, identity and solidarity networks in Argentine shantytowns. During the 1950s and 1960s, for example, *_canchitas_* and local football associations were simultaneously a vehicle for each shantytown to define its own character, and the founding stones for neighbourhood improvement committees. Furthermore, the symbolic density of the *_canchita_* is enhanced by the fact that it lies directly in front of the shantytown's parish chapel, the keystone of religious and charity life, and is crucially accompanied by an icon of the Gauchito Gil, a character of popular devotion in Argentina. The importance of football in the film, as a reflection of its centrality in everyday life, is not limited to the shantytown but rather applies to the society as a whole – the individual is defined by the way they play it or watch it. The *_canchita_* reflects the specificity of the shantytown environment: the social encounters taking place here evolve into a turning point in the trajectory of one of the protagonists, Fredy (Julio Zarza), underlining the multiplicity of meanings and functions served by football for Argentine society.

