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Sports World

With LAKIS KONISTIS

W-LEAGUE ONE STEP CLOSER AND LIVE

The new national women's football competition, the Westfield W-League, is a step closer with the release of the draw for the inaugural season by Football Federation Australia (FFA). The first round of the Westfield W-League will be held on 25-26 October with the opening match between Perth Glory and Sydney FC at Members Equity Stadium to be televised live.

FFA CEO Ben Buckley said that women's football has enjoyed an average annual growth rate of 6.3% over the past five years and is the fastest growing team sport for girls and women in the country.

"There are 100,000 registered female football players involved in formal competition, and we estimate there are even more who play informally," he said.

He said that women's football is in a growth phase internationally as well. "In the past 12 months, the Westfield Matildas, Westfield Young Matildas and Westfield Under 17 Women played 30 international matches in countries as diverse as China, Brazil, New Zealand, Vietnam and the USA to name just a few. We expect the Westfield W-League to be a big contributor to improved performances on the world football stage for Australia's women's teams."

Eight teams will compete in the Westfield W-League - one from each of the seven Australian Hyundai A-League teams, with Canberra United rounding out the draw.

Other match-ups for Round 1 of the Westfield W-League include:

- Melbourne Victory v Central Coast Mariners at Telstra Dome
- Queensland Roar v Adelaide United at Queensland Sports Centre
- Newcastle Jets v Canberra United at Wanderers Oval, Broadmeadow

As well as the four grounds used in Round 1, games will also be held at Hindmarsh Stadium in Adelaide, Bob Jane Stadium and Epping Stadium in Melbourne, Spencer Park and Perry Park in Brisbane, McKellar Park in Canberra, Parramatta Stadium

and Campbelltown Stadium in Sydney and Oakes Oval at Lismore. The Westfield W-League 2009 finals series will be contested by the top four teams at the end of the ten-round competition, with the Grand Final to be held on Saturday 17th January.

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE 2009 UPDATE

The Board of Football New South Wales has confirmed ELEVEN spots only for next year's NSW Premier League competition so far.

The eleven clubs are:

A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers, Bankstown City, Blacktown City Demons, Bonnyrigg White Eagles, Manly United, Marconi Stallions, Sutherland Sharks, Sydney Olympic, Sydney United, West Sydney Berries and Wollongong Wolves FC

Just as we wrote FIRST, Bonnyrigg White Eagles have been promoted due to winning the Super League Minor Premiership.

CONGRATULATIONS to Jim Forrest and his Board for sticking to their original decisions and not changing their minds along the way. The Board still believes that "12" is the right number and as such have sought "Expressions Of Interest" for the vacant position left behind by an unfinancial Penrith Nepean United.

Who will go for the spot? Parramatta Eagles are desperate for the spot, so too are Macarthur who will resubmit.

As highlighted by Football NSW, "The expressions of interest must come from within the geographic area of Football New South Wales".

Does this mean Belconnen can't apply? My mail is they will..... and will have supporters too!

Expressions of interest will close at 5pm on the 15th of October, 2008.

POLAND STILL EURO 2012 HOST, FOR NOW.....

Poland may remain host of soccer's 2012 European Championship. But for how much longer?

Co-host with Ukraine, Poland is staggering from one crisis to another, from construction delays to corruption, from a national federation suspension to possible forfeiture of World Cup qualifying matches.

Yet, European soccer's governing body is still giving the nation ONE MORE CHANCE to stage its biggest competition. "There is no doubt that our trust has been weakened in Poland's capacity to organise the Euro," UEFA spokesman William Gailard said. "Now it's up to them to behave in a way

that will make us again confident that everything can go well."

That means the championship is still heading for a nation where soccer is in disarray and the running of the federation is now being monitored by the world governing body.

WHO'S IN LINE???

Italy, surprisingly beaten by Poland and Ukraine in the ballot to stage the 2012 Euros, would be happy to take over if either Poland or Ukraine, of both, had the competition taken away. So would Germany, well equipped to stage the event after the 2006 World Cup, with no fears about being ready on time and with comparative harmony off the field.

But UEFA has given both Poland and Ukraine another chance to prove they could host Euro 2012 despite strong concerns they won't build stadiums, transportation links and hotels on time.

The two nations can't afford any more delays or slips.

"We were promised new airports and we will not have new airports," UEFA president Michel Platini said. "We were promised new roads and we are still waiting. Warsaw and Kiev are the key issues. We cannot organise a European competition without the capital city."

Three days after Platini's news conference, the Polish government suspended the national soccer federation for failure to confront corruption in the league.

Authorities have charged more than 100 people - including federation members, coaches, referees, players and club officials - with rigging matches in the top domestic leagues and 29 clubs have been implicated. That doesn't sound like the ideal place to host a European Championship. Both Poland and the Ukraine have a lot to do.

"TOO MANY FOREIGN OWNERS"

FIFA president Sepp Blatter is also upset by the wave of foreign ownership in the English Premier League at present. "Something is wrong here," he said. Seven Premier League clubs are in the hands of foreign owners: Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool, Aston Villa, Portsmouth, Manchester City and Fulham. Prompting a senior British government official to urge the Football Association to tighten regulations over buyers.

Last year, leading soccer officials said such ownership brought a new edge to the league. But Blatter says "the matter has gotten out of hand. It is not only American investors who have come in. Arab investors are coming. We have seen one investor from Thailand - and he is going back!"

ΑΛΒΑΡΟ ΡΕΚΟΜΠΑ: "Είμαι έτοιμος να παίξω"

Ο Αλβάρο Ρεκόμπα παραχώρησε την πρώτη του συνέντευξη τύπου ως παίκτης του Πανιώνιου και στη συνέχεια πήγε στην μπουτίκ της ομάδας, υπογράφοντας εκατοντάδες αυτόγραφα σε φιλάθλους που τον περίμεναν. Ο Ουρουγουανός σούπερ σταρ ξεκαθάρισε ότι είναι έτοιμος να κάνει το ντεμπούτο του στην επόμενη αγωνιστική και να ανταποδώσει την αγάπη και την εμπιστοσύνη που του έχουν δείξει

όλοι στον Πανιώνιο.

«Ευχαριστώ την ομάδα για όσα έχουν γίνει ως τώρα. Μου έδωσε τη δυνατότητα να προσαρμοστώ χωρίς πίεση. Μου έχουν δώσει χρόνο να ετοιμαστώ όπως πρέπει. Αυτό που μένει από εδώ και πέρα είναι να ανταποδώσω την αγάπη και την εμπιστοσύνη που μου έχουν δείξει όλοι, από τον κύριο Τσακίρη μέχρι τους φροντιστές και τους φιλάθλους», δήλωσε αρχικά

ο Ουρουγουανός σούπερ σταρ. Στη συνέχεια, ξεκαθάρισε ότι ήρθε η ώρα να αγωνιστεί: «Στο φιλικό της Κύπρου (12/10 με Ομόνοια) θα αγωνιστώ κανονικά και με την επανέναρξη του πρωταθλήματος θα είμαι έτοιμος. Πριν από το προηγούμενο παιχνίδι είχαμε μιλήσει με τον προπονητή για το αν θα αγωνιζόμουν, αλλά του είπα πως δεν ήμουν ακόμη έτοιμος να αποδώσω όπως θέλω και συμφωνήσαμε

να συνεχίσω να δουλεύω σκληρά για μια βδομάδα μετά τη διακοπή. Θα μπορούσα να είχα παίξει, αλλά δεν θα ήμουν αυτός που θα ήθελα. Είχαμε πει και πριν έρθω πως δεν θα μπορού να παίξω από την αρχή και θα χρειαζόμουν κάποιον χρόνο. Αισθάνθηκα καλά στο φιλικό με την Καλλιθέα και στο επόμενο ματς θα είμαι έτοιμος να παίξω. Το 100% της απόδοσής μου θα έρθει μέσα από τα επόμενα παιχνίδια».