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Sports World

With **LAKIS KONISTIS**

IS FOOTBALL RECESSION-PROOF?

There is no doubt that the world is heading into a recession.

Whilst the world economies are the talk of the town at present, fears of a global recession increase- and many football clubs all around the world will be wondering about their immediate futures as well.

From the bosses of Europe's big domestic leagues, to UEFA and FIFA, the world game continues to chase the big money- at a time when most major companies are actually beginning to tighten their belts.

You do not need an Economics degree to realise that something in that equation has to give.

But at what price?

Several key television rights deals are up for renegotiation in the coming weeks and months, and with television companies looking for value like never before, it will be interesting to see what final deals are struck.

To be fair, the big leagues and competitions are actually in a stronger position than in buoyant economic times. The networks continue to chase guaranteed winners, programs which are certain to attract advertisers. Soccer fits that bill perfectly.

The English Premier League for example will rake in megabillions when its deal for the 2010-2013 seasons is revamped. The German Bundesliga can also expect to outstrip all previous deals in that country with a long-term agreement for live rights and highlights packages. And despite concerns of whether Poland and Ukraine will be ready to stage Euro 2012, the TV rights will sell for huge money following the success of Euro 2008 as a spectacle.

But it is at club level, where things may be different.

The excess cash may only serve to widen the gap between the haves and have-nots.

Of course, predictions about the demise of competitiveness have been raised before, but clubs still have been able to make the jump up to the top leagues.

With prize money - especially in the EPL - heavily staggered, chances are that the rich will keep getting richer. And everyone else will attempt in vain to scale the dizzy heights. The only opportunity for most clubs to bridge the gap will be if they attract investment from a multimillionaire prepared to plough in vast sums of cash- like at Manchester City.

But what are the chances of that happening in the current economic climate?

Soccer's financiers at the top of the tree may be proudly crowing that they have made the sport of football recession-proof. But is this really the case back at the grassroots level?

Time will tell.....

TSATTALIOS NAMED IN YOUNG SOCCEROOS SQUAD

Qantas Young Socceroos Head Coach Jan Versleijen has selected a squad of 23 players for the upcoming

AFC U/19 Championships which will be held in Saudi Arabia from 31 October-14 November 2008.

The AFC U19 Championships, which will be held in the city of Dammam, will also serve as the qualifying tournament for the FIFA U-20 World Cup Egypt 2009 which will be held in July.

The Qantas Young Socceroos will go into the tournament with confidence following their recent win at the ASEAN Football Federation U19 Youth Championships in Thailand where they defeated the likes of China, Thailand and the Korea Republic.

The players selected are Isaka Cernak (Queensland Roar), Luke De Vere (Queensland Roar), Nathan Elasi (Melbourne Victory), James Holland (Newcastle Jets), Marko Jesic (Newcastle Jets), Matthew Jurman (Sydney FC), Ben Kantarovski (Newcastle Jets), Milos Lujic (Melbourne Victory), Sam Munro (Sydney FC), Tahj Minniecon (Queensland Roar), Daniel Mullen (Adelaide United), Jason Naidovski (Newcastle Jets), Mitchell Nichols (Queensland Roar), Thomas Oar (Queensland Roar), Andrew Redmayne (gk) (Central Coast Mariners), Sebastian Ryall (Melbourne Victory), Nikolas Tsattalios (Sydney FC), Oliver Bozanic (Reading FC, England), Alex Cisak (gk) (Leicester City, England), Peter Cvetanovski (Borussia Mönchengladbach, Germany), Daniel Ireland (gk) (Coventry City, England) and Ryan McGowan (Hearts FC, Scotland).

The Qantas Young Socceroos have been drawn in Group D and will play their first match of the tournament against Thailand on Saturday 1 November, and then face Uzbekistan on Monday 3 November before their final group match against Jordan on Wednesday 5 November.

The top 4 nations from the AFC U19 Championships will qualify for the FIFA U/20 World Cup which will be held in Egypt from 10th-31st July 2009.

A-LEAGUE TRIVIA

* Sydney FC has been unable to defeat Melbourne Victory since 3 December 2005. This Saturday's match will be 1057 days since Sydney FC last defeated Melbourne Victory.

* Only Perth Glory, who have not defeated Queensland Roar since 10 September 2005 have currently gone a longer time without defeating a fellow club.

* Wellington Phoenix are aiming for their longest undefeated streak in the Hyundai A-League- four games.

* This round back in 2007 saw Sydney FC's Nikolas Tsattalios become the youngest player to start in a Hyundai A-League match, (aged 17 years and 233 days).

* Newcastle Jets Ben Kantarovski, has since become the league's youngest starter, (aged 16 years 208 days) in Round 1 this season.

* And finally, Central Coast Mariner's coach Lawrie McKinna is going pink this Friday. McKinna will apparently be colouring his chest pink and then waxing it all off to help raise funds for breast cancer research!

BETEZY- \$2,500 FREE BETS!!!

You will note that as of today "Sportsworld" has a new sponsor of its regular weekly column.

BETEZY!

Betezy is Australia's fastest growing bookmaker and as an introduction is offering all "Sportsworld" readers the opportunity to join in on the fun and receive up to \$2,500 in free bets- simply by opening an account with Betezy!

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Mention this advertisement for special service from the boys at Betezy!

"BETEZY BET OF THE WEEK": THESEO IN THE COX PLATE!

Since we now have Betezy on board with "Sportsworld", it would be amiss of me not to provide for you all what will be known as Sportsworld's weekly "Betezy Bet of The Week".

Each week, Drew from Betezy will be giving us all his best bet to follow from Betezy beginning today.

Tomorrow sees the running of the W.S Cox Plate and Drew from Betezy is keen on the Gai Waterhouse trained Theseo on an each-way basis.

The Epsom Handicap winner is around the \$14.00 mark will be ridden by stable jockey Nash Rawiller.

Drew concedes that the joint favourites; New Zealand trained mare Princess Coup and the Newcastle trained filly Samantha Miss will be hard to beat however he believes Theseo looks a strong each-way bet at an attractive price.

"The way the horse hit the line in the Epsom indicated to me that he'll run a strong 2000m" he added.

SILVER MEDAL AWARDS 2008

CL North 1st Grade Premiers - Balmain FC

Conference League 1st Grade Champions

- Balmain FC

Div 1 Grade 20 Premier Runners up

- Blacktown Spartans

Div 1 Grade 20 Premiers & Champions

- Spirit FC

Div 1 1st Grade Premier Runners up

- Inter Lions

Div 1 1st Grade Premiers & Champions

- Spirit FC

SL Grade 20 Premier Runners up

- Central Coast

SL Grade 20 Premiers & Champions

- Northern Tigers

SL 1st Grade Premier Runners up

- PCYC Parramatta Eagles

SL 1st Grade Premiers

- Bonnyrigg White Eagles

SL 1st Grade Champions - FC Bossy Liverpool

Div 1 Youth League Club Championship

- Blacktown Spartans

Super Youth League Club Championship

- PCYC Parramatta Eagles

SL Club Championship - Bonnyrigg White Eagles

Conference League South Fair Play Award

- Hakoah

Conference League North Fair Play Award

- Penang FC

Division 1 Fair Play Award - Hills United

Super League Fair Play Award

- Mt Druitt Town Rangers

Goalkeeper of the Year - Ali Akbal

(Bonnyrigg White Eagles)

Coach of the Year - Mile Todoroski

(FC Bossy Liverpool)

Player of the Year SL 1st Grade - Stuart Page

(Northern Tigers)