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## Sports World

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### VERBEEK PICKS HIS "21"

Qantas Socceroos Head Coach Pim Verbeek has selected a squad of 21 players for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup 2011 qualifier match against Indonesia in Jakarta on Wednesday 28th January.

Verbeek has drawn his squad solely from Hyundai A-League clubs, with six (6) players (Craig Moore, Archie Thompson, Tom Pondeljak, Nikolai Topor-Stanley, Danny Allsopp and Matt McKay) having previously represented the Qantas Socceroos at senior A International level.

The Qantas Socceroos have been drawn in Group B of the AFC Asian Cup 2011 qualification stage along with Indonesia, Kuwait and Oman. The top two teams from each group of the qualification stage will progress to the AFC Asian Cup 2011 which will be held in Qatar.

The players selected in the Qantas Socceroos squad will complete their club duties in the final round of the Hyundai A-League this weekend and will assemble in Jakarta from Sunday 25 January to prepare for the match. Players also involved in the Hyundai A-League 2009 Finals Series will be available for their respective semi-finals on 6 or 8 February 2009.

### QANTAS SOCCEROOS SQUAD

NAME	CLUB
Danny ALLSOPP	Melbourne Victory
Billy CELESKI	Melbourne Victory
Shannon COLE	Sydney FC
Robert CORNTHWAITE	Adelaide United
Tarek ELRICH	Newcastle Jets
Eugene GALEKOVIC	Adelaide United
Dean HEFFERNAN	Central Coast
Scott JAMIESON	Adelaide United
Dylan MACALLISTER	Central Coast
Matthew MCKAY	Queensland Roar
Craig MOORE	Queensland Roar
Tom PONDELJAK	Melbourne Victory
Paul REID	Adelaide United
Matt SIMON	Central Coast
Michael THEOKLITOS	Melbourne Victory
Archie THOMPSON	Melbourne Victory
Matthew THOMPSON	Newcastle Jets
Nikolai TOPOR-STANLEY	Perth Glory
Rodrigo VARGAS	Melbourne Victory
Danny VUKOVIC	Central Coast
Michael ZULLO	Queensland Roar

### BIG WEEKEND FOR HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

It's a big weekend coming up!

It is down to the wire this weekend during the last four games of Hyundai A-League before the finals. 5 teams – only 4 spots. And lots of possible possibilities.

Adelaide United, Melbourne Victory, Queensland Roar, Central Coast Mariners and Wellington Phoenix are still in the race to secure a spot in the Top 4. This comes as teams ranked 2nd, 5th, 4th and



1st will go head-to-head to secure their positions.

Meanwhile Adelaide United, Melbourne Victory or Queensland Roar could take home the Premier's Plate.

The regular season is also set to culminate in the magic million mark with Season 2008/09 needing only a little over 45,000 fans to total 1 million spectators through the gates.

Let's look at the games in further detail:

#### Melbourne Victory (2nd) v Wellington Phoenix (5th)

Friday 23 January, Telstra Dome, 8.00pm AEDT

• A win for Wellington Phoenix could help them secure an historic spot in the Top 4.

• Will Shane Smeltz or Danny Allsopp fire to put their team ahead?

• After having won each of their past five games at Telstra Dome, Melbourne Victory are aiming to create a new Hyundai A-League record of winning six consecutive home games.

#### Queensland Roar (3rd) v Perth Glory (7th)

Saturday 24 January, Suncorp Stadium, 7.00pm local (8.00pm AEDT)

• Will the golden touch of Queensland Roar's Sergio Van Dijk see him fly to the top of the leading goal scorers chart this season?

• Having already obtained more competition points this season (33 points) than last season (31 points), Queensland Roar are now set to finish higher on the final Hyundai A-League ladder than in any previous season. Queensland Roar's highest final placing was 4th in the 2007-08 season.

#### Sydney FC (6th) v Newcastle Jets (8th)

Sunday 25 January, Sydney Football Stadium, 5.00pm AEDT

• Antun Kovacic from Newcastle Jets is set to make his 50th Hyundai A-League appearance – that's about the only highlight here!

#### Central Coast Mariners (4th) v Adelaide United (1st)

Sunday 25 January, Bluetongue Stadium, 7.00pm AEDT

• Could this be the match that determines the final 4, as well as the premiership-deciding match?

• Central Coast Mariners have recorded an aggregate attendance of 490,137 people over 44 Hyundai A-League home matches to date. This means only 9,863 football fans need to attend the

match this Sunday in order for the Central Coast Mariners to reach an all-time aggregate of 500,000 spectators at Bluetongue Stadium.

### "I DON'T CARE IF CHELSEA SACKS ME!"

People are beginning to ask, "Is Luiz Felipe Scolari really the right man for the Blues?"

The board at Stamford Bridge seem to be mulling over the same question, and it is thought that another change of management will ensue if is no new silverware in the London club's trophy case by the end of May.

But Scolari is totally indifferent to whether or not he remains with the Pensioners.

"I don't care. If I lose my job, I have another job. Maybe tomorrow, maybe after one year or two. I've worked for 25 years, so no problem," he said in The Sun.

"I like Chelsea. I like Cobham, where I live, I like the school my son is at, I like my job here, the people, even the press. It's not a problem for me. I like every day in London. But if I go back to Brazil, I will like Brazil the same. When I was in Kuwait, I loved Kuwait. I had three fantastic years in Saudi Arabia. I love life, finish. If I lose or not lose my job, I will be the same."

You will, but how much longer will Scolari be with Chelsea remains to be seen.

### LOTS OF ADVICE FOR KAKA WHO STAYS PUT!

With every passing day it seemed more inevitable that Kaka, AC Milan's Brazilian genius, would leave Italy and join Manchester City in a world-record deal.

And there were plenty ready to offer free advice to him in relation to such a move.

David Beckham for example, made it patently clear that he disapproved of the whole affair, and he still disregarded the cashed-up Citizens as a serious threat to his beloved Red Devils.

"I only care about Manchester United personally," he told The Sun. "For me, United are the only team in Manchester."

Manchester City's reported offer of more than 100 million euros (\$131 million) for AC Milan's Kaka is 'mad' and shows soccer needs a salary cap, Queens Park Rangers co-owner Flavio Briatore said.

He too had this too say about Kaka's possible move. "If you had put (Ferrari's retired seven times world champion Michael) Schumacher in a Minardi, it would have gone nowhere," he said. "If you put Kaka in this club, it is going nowhere anyway. I think it is completely mad. You have the people in the grandstand who make 14,000 pounds (\$20,290) a year. Seeing all this money go to one player for me is not moral at all".

Manchester City are now considered the richest club in the world after being bought by Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, whose wealth is estimated at 15 billion pounds.

The club, long overshadowed by local rivals Manchester United, are 11th in the 20-team Premier League but still only four points clear of bottom-placed West Bromwich Albion.

In the end, and in a way a BIG slap in the face of Manchester City, Kaka decided to stay where he is.

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