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⇒ **HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE:
ROUND 22**

Happy New Year everyone as welcome Round 22 of the Hyundai A-League 2009/10 season. The title race remains wide open following Melbourne Victory's shock loss to North Queensland Fury. It's all up for grabs as we move into the final six rounds of the season.

On Saturday Wellington Phoenix and Brisbane Roar face off at Westpac Stadium with Brisbane desperate to make amends following their 5-1 loss to Gold Coast United. Wellington will be looking to continue their impecca-



With **LAKIS KONISTIS**

**Sports
World**

ble Westpac Stadium form that has seen them unbeaten at the Wellington ground this season.

In Gosford the Mariners take on North Queensland Fury in what could be a make or break game for both sides. Sitting in 7th and 8th respectively a win could propel one team into se-

rious finals contention while another loss will leave Central Coast languishing with six losses in a row while a loss for either side will result in the loser being the first team to record 10 losses this Hyundai A-League season.

Late Saturday, Adelaide United visit Skilled Park to take on Gold Coast United. The Reds need to make a move now if they are going to make a late push for the finals and find the form to take them into the AFC Champions League. Gold Coast however will be a tough task, and with the fans starting to make their presence felt in Robina, Adelaide will have a battle on their hands to get the three vital points on offer.

On Sunday, Newcastle Jets host Melbourne Victory and Perth Glory welcome the visit of top-of-the-table Sydney FC in matches that see four of the top 5 teams meet in 180 minutes of football that will go a long way in deciding season 5 of the Hyundai A-League.

longer this time around as he has already previously attacked Alan Wiley's fitness earlier in the season.

⇒ **WARATAH CUP 2010**

Much closer to home, The Waratah Cup, (previously known as the Tiger Turf Cup), is set to kick off early this year.

Football NSW is currently encouraging Associations sides to also be a part of this historic Cup once again.

The Waratah Cup is the equivalent to the 'English FA Cup', clubs from Associations from all parts of NSW, State League One, State League Two, Super League and NSW Premier League teams will be involved in battling to see who will be the victors of the 2010 Waratah Cup.

Depending on the number of teams involved a Preliminary round could again be organised before round 1 commences.

Associations sides along with State League Two clubs will kick off round 1 of the knock-out competition before State League One and Super League clubs enter the fray in round 2 while NSW Premier League teams commence their Waratah Cup duties in round 3.

Previous Waratah Cup Winners

- 1991 – Blacktown City
- 1992 – Avala
- 1993 – Blacktown City
- 1994 – Bankstown City
- 1995 – Sydney United
- 1996 – Sydney United
- 1997 – Wollongong Wolves
- 2004 – Sydney Crescent Star
- 2005 – Sydney United
- 2006 – Blacktown City
- 2007 – Wollongong Wolves
- 2008 – Bankstown City FC
- 2009 – Sutherland Sharks

⇒ **SOUR GRAPES?**

Have you noticed how he has been reacting lately when he HAS actually lost a game of football?

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson I am talking about. Seems he will escape sanction from the FA once again- this time for his remarks about referee Chris Foy's time-keeping.

Ferguson was angry that Foy added "a mere five minutes injury time" on to the end of the Red Devils' 1-0 FA Cup third round defeat to Leeds United, branding the referee's conduct "an insult" to fans and players.

Perhaps his team should have scored the equaliser a little earlier... rather than expect the referee to give them additional injury-time lifelines!

Ferguson could be suspended for

Stats, facts & milestones

Wellington Phoenix (9th) v Brisbane Roar (6th)

Wellington Phoenix midfielder Troy Hearfield is due to make his 50th Hyundai A-League appearance

Central Coast Mariners (7th) v North Queensland Fury (8th)

Central Coast Mariners have lost their previous five matches, and are aiming to avoid becoming the only club (apart from former team New Zealand Knights) to lose more than five consecutive games in the Hyundai A-League.

Gold Coast United (3rd) v Adelaide United (10th)

Gold Coast United are aiming for their fifth consecutive Hyundai A-League win. Only two other Hyundai A-League clubs have had a winning streak of five or more home matches previously: Brisbane Roar (once) and Melbourne Victory (twice)

Newcastle Jets (4th) v Melbourne Victory (2nd)

Newcastle Jets are aiming for their third home match victory in a row against Melbourne. The Jets have not won three consecutive home matches (in the same season) in the Hyundai A-League since its Championship-winning season 2007/08

Perth Glory (5th) v Sydney FC (1st)

Sydney FC has not conceded a goal in their previous four matches and are now aiming to equal the Hyundai A-League record of not conceding in five matches in a row, held by Central Coast Mariners, Melbourne Victory and previously by Sydney FC

ΜΕ 3-0 ΣΕΤ ΕΠΙ ΤΗΣ ΧΟΤΒΟΛΕΪ...

Ο Ηρακλής πανηγύρισε στην Αυστρία

Με το... ένα πόδι στην επόμενη φάση του CEV Cup είναι ο Ηρακλής ο οποίος επικράτησε με 3-0 εκτός έδρας της ΧότβολεΪ θέτοντας γερά θεμέλια για την φάση των «8».

Οι παίκτες του Φρέντι Μπρουκς χρειάζονται μόλις ένα σετ στην Θεσσαλονίκη προκειμένου να προκριθούν και δείχνοντας τον καλό τους εαυτό φαίνεται πως μπορούν να το καταφέρουν.

Σε ντέρμπι μετατράπηκε το πρώτο σετ της αναμέτρησης, αφού ο «Γηραιός» παρότι προηγήθηκε στο ξεκίνημα χαλάρωσε στη συνέχεια με αποτέλεσμα οι αυστριακοί να πάνε το σετ στην παράταση, όπου τελικά ηττήθηκαν με 28-30.

Οι «κυανόλευκοι» όμως ανέβασαν στροφές στη συνέχεια και στα επόμενα σετ δεν άφησαν περιθώρια στους γηπεδούχους παίζοντας με συνοχή και οργάνωση.

Τα σετ: 28-30, 21-25, 22-25



Ο Ηρακλής πανηγύρισε στην Αυστρία

Ανακούφιση για Πλιάτσικα και... μουντιαλικά φιλικά

Τυχερός μέσα στην ατυχία του στάθηκε ο Βασίλης Πλιάτσικας, ο οποίος τραυματίστηκε σε αγώνα της Σάλκε και ενώ οι αρχικές εκτιμήσεις έκαναν λόγο για ρήξη συνδέσμων, τελικά αντιμετωπίζει πρόβλημα έσω μηνίσκου.

Σύμφωνα με τους γιατρούς του γερμανικού συλλόγου ο 21άχρονος διεθνής θα μείνει εκτός δράσης για περίπου ενάμιση μήνα, όπου θα υποβληθεί σε θεραπείες και θα ακολουθήσει συντηρητικό πρόγραμμα.

Αυτό, βέβαια, σημαίνει ότι ο Πλιάτσικας θα είναι διαθέσιμος για τις τελικές επιλογές του Ότο Ρεχάγκελ ενόψει του Παγκοσμίου Κυπέλλου της Νοτίου Αφρικής.

Έπειτα από την οριστικοποίηση

του φιλικού αγώνα στην 3 Μαρτίου με τη Σενεγάλη στο Πανθεσσαλικό, στην ΕΠΟ βρίσκονται σε αναζήτηση νέων αντιπάλων για φιλικούς αγώνες.

Στόχος των ιθυνόντων είναι να κλειστούν φιλικά με ομάδες που έχουν παρόμοια χαρακτηριστικά με την Αργεντινή και τη Νότιο Κορέα.

Υποψήφιος είναι η Ουρουγουάη και η Παραγουάη από τη «σχολή» της Λατινικής Αμερικής, καθώς και η Ιαπωνία, η Κίνα και η Βόρειος Κορέα από την ασιατική.

Εξάλλου στην ΕΠΟ έχει φτάσει πρόταση για φιλικό με την Ονδούρα και το Μεξικό, ενώ υπάρχουν επαφές και με την ιταλική ομοσπονδία. Τα δύο αυτά φιλικά θα γίνουν εκτός Ελλάδας στα τέλη Μαΐου.