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⇨ C.HERNANDEZ WINS JOHNNY WARREN MEDAL

Melbourne Victory's Costa Rican playmaker Carlos Hernandez has taken out the Hyundai A-League's highest individual accolade, the Johnny Warren Medal, at the Hyundai A-League 2009/10 Awards ceremony held at The Ivy in Sydney.

Voted on by his playing peers throughout the Hyundai A-League 2009/10 season, Hernandez blitzed the field polling 673 votes ahead of Gold Coast United's goal-machine Shane Smeltz (431) and Wellington Phoenix import Paul Ifill (311).

Melbourne Victory coach Ernie Merrick was named the Hyundai A-League Coach of the Year, as voted by his fellow Hyundai A-League coaches. This is the second time that Ernie Merrick collected the Coach of the Year award after winning the 2006/07 trophy.

Archie Thompson completed Melbourne Victory's award haul by claiming the SOLO Goal of the Year for his Round 16 goal in the 68th minute against Gold Coast United at Etihad Stadium.

The NAB Young Player of the Year Award went to Brisbane Roar's Tommy Oar who had the unanimous vote of the expert panel following his impressive performances throughout the Hyundai A-League 2009/10 season.

Shane Smeltz picked up the Reebok Golden Boot award as the Hyundai A-League's top goalscorer for the second year in a row with 19 goals, seven clear of his closest rivals.

Also for the second successive season, Adelaide United's Eugene Galekovic took out the Goalkeeper of the Year award seeing off stiff competition from Central Coast Mariners' custodian Danny Vukovic and Clint Bolton from Sydney FC.

Having claimed the Premiership on the last day of the season Sydney FC took out the Fair Play award for accruing the least number of yellow and red cards and Strebre Delovski was named the Zurich Referee of the Year.

⇨ OVERSEAS COACHES SUIT SYDNEY FC!



Sydney FC has won another A-League Premiership...

And on both of those occasions they did it with overseas coaches in charge.

First it was Pierre Littbarski and now Vitezslav Lavicka!

Now what does that tell you?



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Sports World

⇨ NOW FOR THE "BUSINESS-END"

The business end of the Hyundai A-League season kicked off last night when Melbourne Victory met Sydney FC in the major semi-final in the first of a home and away series that will decide which team moves directly into the Hyundai A-League 2010 Grand Final.

On Saturday it's Gold Coast United (3rd) versus the Newcastle Jets (6th) and on Sunday Wellington Phoenix (4th) hosts Perth Glory (5th).

⇨ NSW PREMIER LEAGUE START GETTING CLOSER

The Nsw Premier League itself is only a couple of weeks away and here are the first mouth-watering clashes for 2010:

NSW Premier League 2010: Round 1

Sat 27/Feb
Bonnyrigg White Eagles vs Sth Coast Wolves
Bonnyrigg Sports Club 7:30 PM

Sat 27/Feb
Marconi Stallions vs West Sydney Berries
Marconi Stadium 6:00 PM

Sun 28/Feb
Sydney Olympic vs Sutherland Sharks
Belmore Sports Ground 6:00 PM

Sun 28/Feb
Bankstown City vs Manly United FC
Jensen Park 6:00 PM

Sun 28/Feb
Blacktown City FC vs APIA Tigers
Lily Homes 6:00 PM

Sun 28/Feb
Sydney United vs Rockdale City Suns
Sydney United Sports Centre 7:00PM

⇨ IAN GRAY PASSES AWAY

Football Federation Australia (FFA) was saddened to hear that former Soccerroo Ian Gray passed away this week at his home in Sydney.

FFA chairman Mr Frank Lowy, AC, said the football community was shocked and saddened by Ian's passing.

"Ian gave great service to the Soccerroos playing 35 matches over 9 years and he was a very respected teammate and a friend to many," Lowy said.

"He was also an active former Soccerroo and a great ambassador for football.

"On behalf of the Australian football community I would like to send my condolences to Ian's family," concluded Lowy.

Ian was born on 22nd July 1963 and came up through the Manly Vale and Western Suburbs ranks. An experienced defender or midfielder, he commenced a 12 year national representative career in 1981 when selected in an Australian under 20 team to play in a tournament in China. He was first chosen for the senior Australian side in the 1984 World Series tournament, and later that year joined the Soccerroos on an extensive world tour encompassing matches in China, England, Scotland and Italy. He played in first stage qualifying matches for the 1986 and 1994 world cups, and took

part in the Presidents Cup in 1991 (in South Korea) and 1992 (Indonesia).

He scored six goals in the 1984 National Soccer League (NSL) season, his last season at APIA Leichhardt, as the inner-Sydney club went as far as the northern division preliminary final. After then transferring to Marconi he played in finals series in 1985 (reaching the northern division grand final) and 1986 (northern division minor semi), and from 1988 to 1990 he took part in three consecutive grand finals; he was on the winning grand final team in 1988 (on penalties over Sydney United) and 1989 (1-0 over Sydney Olympic).

After suffering an injury early in a round 25 match against West Adelaide in 1992/93 he was out of action for six weeks, returning to play in Marconi's 1-0 grand final victory over Adelaide City - his third NSL championship medal. Upon playing in the 1993/94 finals series, he became the first player to play in nine NSL finals series. He stands as the player with the second-most number of NSL appearances for Marconi, just two matches behind Tom McCulloch.

Although playing predominantly in defence throughout his career, he scored some vital goals for Marconi, including an 80th minute strike in a 2-1 win over South Melbourne in the 1988 minor semi final, and a headed goal in the 1991 elimination semi, which Marconi won over Parramatta Eagles on penalties following a 3-3 draw.

Since leaving the professional football ranks, Ian continued to play at an amateur level for his beloved Maccabi Masters and Team Bondi but mainly turned his attention to coaching and in particular mentoring junior football players.

In 2004 Ian was inducted into the FFA Hall of Fame - Award of Distinction. Ian was also a member of the FFA Appeals committee.

Hyundai A-League 2009/10 FINAL League Table

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1 Sydney FC	27	15	3	9	35	23	12	48
2 Melbourne Victory FC	27	14	5	8	47	32	15	47
3 Gold Coast United	27	13	5	9	39	35	4	44
4 Wellington Phoenix FC	27	10	10	7	37	29	8	40
5 Perth Glory FC	27	11	6	10	40	34	6	39
6 Newcastle Jets FC	27	10	4	13	33	45	-12	34
7 North Queensland Fury	27	8	8	11	29	46	-17	32
8 Central Coast Mariners FC	27	7	9	11	32	29	3	30
9 Brisbane Roar FC	27	8	6	13	32	42	-10	30
10 Adelaide United FC	27	7	8	12	24	33	-9	29

Hyundai A-League 2009/10 Leading Goal-Scorers

- 19 - Shane SMELTZ
- 12 - Carlos HERNANDEZ, Paul IFILL
- 11 - Sergio VAN DIJK
- 10 - Archie THOMPSON
- 9 - John ALOISI, Robbie FOWLER
- 8 - Daniel MCBREEN
- 7 - Steve CORICA, Matt SIMON, Mile STERJOVSKI, Matt THOMPSON