

Olympiakos approach Sydney FC about pre-season match

REPRESENTATIVES of Greek powerhouses Olympiakos have approached Sydney FC about the prospect of a glamour pre-season friendly match as the Sky Blues ponder how best to capitalise on the interest in football generated by the World Cup.

While negotiations are still at an early phase, Sydney officials are quietly confident the match would attract a strong crowd if it ends up going ahead, with Olympiakos boasting a sizeable number of supporters in the Australian-Greek community.

The proposed match is likely to go ahead at some point in either late June or early July, with a second match against Melbourne Victory helping to fill out a two-match tour.

Sydney FC chief executive Edwin Lugt said there "were also other European clubs" who had expressed a desire to play in the harbour city.

"We're certainly interested in hosting overseas clubs and there's been contact made with us for bringing Olympiakos to Sydney," he said. "But it's fair to say that the talks are in a preliminary stage and we're still waiting to hear more about the proposal."

Sydney are desperate to give their fans the prospect of a prestige friendly match after seeing the the opportunity to host English clubs Everton and Middlesbrough slip through their fingers last year, while Fulham and Wolverhampton made appearances against other A-League clubs.

However, with Sydney's management wondering how they can make the most of being A-League champions and with the World Cup offering a huge boost to football, the Sky Blues are eager to make a statement this time around.

"What we'd really like is a big name,

especially with the interest at that time from the World Cup," Lugt said. "We're always interested in having an attractive club come to Sydney as part of our pre-season. But there are still many hurdles. Friendlies have to be approved by the FFA and a stadium would need to be underwritten."

Depending on the timing of the match, it's understood that the Greek club could be without key quartet Kostas Mitroglou, Avraam Papadopoulos, Georgios Galitsios and Vasilis Torosidis, who, if selected to play at the World Cup, would only come to Sydney if their national team duties had wound up.

Meanwhile, former Sydney defender Ruben Zadkovich has returned to the A-League after agreeing to a three-year with the Newcastle Jets.

Zadkovich burst on to the scene with the Sky Blues as a versatile, hard-run-

ning player, going on to make 38 appearances before making a surprise move to English Championship side Derby County.

However, despite scoring Australia's only goal in the Beijing Olympics – and making his Socceroos debut later in 2008 – the 23-year old failed to make an impression in England and was released in January this year.

Elsewhere, Ian Ferguson's troubled stint as coach of North Queensland is officially over after he accepted an offer from Perth manager Dave Mitchell to become the Glory's assistant coach.

"I've known Dave Mitchell for a while and it was a great honour when he asked me to be part of his team for next season," Ferguson said yesterday. "Perth Glory has a proud history and it's wonderful to be joining the club."

SEBASTIAN HASSETT

Article from Sydney Morning Herald



12.000 Greeks Moved to Germany the Past Two Years

The growing numbers of unemployment, fear of the economic crisis, low wages and flexible working patterns that take place in Greece are forcing more and more Greeks to move outside of Greece.

Countries of Central and Northern Europe are the main destination for Greeks, where they hope to find at least an organized social state, which will help them get out of the dead end they've been living in.

Resembling the difficult years of the '60s, when thousands of manpower fleeing abroad, many Greeks did not leave with the dream of creating wealth, not even if they had a great financial opportunity.

There are just a few jobs available, even in Europe, so the ambition for change is limited to a normal job, and perhaps a better salary. Minimum wage in other countries is usually double than Greece. The consequences of the economic crisis create a new wave of immigration. Until a few years ago people who chose to leave were scientists, today, the number of unskilled workers is increasing dramatically. Experts state that this trend will intensify in the coming years as the cuts continue in salaries and the unemployment rate reached a red level. Only in Germany there are over 12.000 Greek immigrants in the past two years looking for a better tomorrow...

Loula Kostos: 45 years of compassion recognised

MILAS Ellinika? Do you speak Greek?

It was one simple, urgent question more than 45 years ago that led to an extraordinary life of volunteering.

Loula Kostos was at the Royal Children's Hospital when a doctor asked for an interpreter.

The mother of two felt she had truly helped, translating the doctor's diagnosis to his Greek patient.

She joined the hospital's volunteer service in September 1964, translating diagnoses and medical advice.

By the late 1980s her focus shifted to patients in recovery, offering companionship and reassurance.

And still, every Monday, the Toorak retiree goes to the Parkville hospital.

"When I first started, I used to stay all day. I had a beeper and they'd tell me where to go," she said.

"I'd go straight after the boys went to school. It is very rewarding, perhaps most of all for me."

She has seen children at their most vulnerable: with illness, injuries, deformities, and post-op.

"I realised how lucky we are to have had healthy children. So much can go wrong," Mrs Kostos said.

"I marvel at people with



Loula Kostos. Picture: Steven Crabtree N40MP608 newsphotos.com.au - From Stonnington Leader

disabled children, how they cope, so often single mothers because the father can't. The children are just so vulnerable - but gorgeous."

Mrs Kostos will be recognised as the first volunteer of 45 years service in a ceremony this November.

Whilst she is appreciative that her efforts have been recognised, she admits it has not always been easy.

"I had to get used to what I saw in the early days because you see a lot of bad things," she says.

"When I first started I remember a little Greek boy born without a top on

his head and with three nostrils, and I had to go and interpret for the little boy's family.

The father said he couldn't take his baby home because it was so awful and told them to take him away to a special home.

But it had a good ending because a week later, the parents came in and said they wanted to keep him. He grew up doing all the things the doctors said he couldn't do; he learnt to walk, grew to be intelligent and in the end they put a top on his head."

As the Greek-Australian community grew and their children grew up speaking

English, Loula moved away from interpreting and to helping the families in the recovery ward.

A normal day at the hospital will see her in the waiting room keeping children occupied with toys, and comforting mothers whilst their children undergo surgery.

"I walk in with the mothers down that long corridor before their child is having heart surgery and it is very traumatic for them.

"They start crying and they make you cry too sometimes. But you become hardened to it and you learn how to cope, just like they all do."

Despite suffering from and eventually beating breast cancer, Kostos continued her volunteering services and intends to continue into the future. She laughs heartily when I remind her that it is her eightieth birthday this year.

"I enjoy it- that's the reason I keep going! You go in there on Monday and you feel on top of the world and by the end of the week you're complaining about little things and just as you get fed up, you go in there again on Monday and think, oh my God aren't I lucky!"