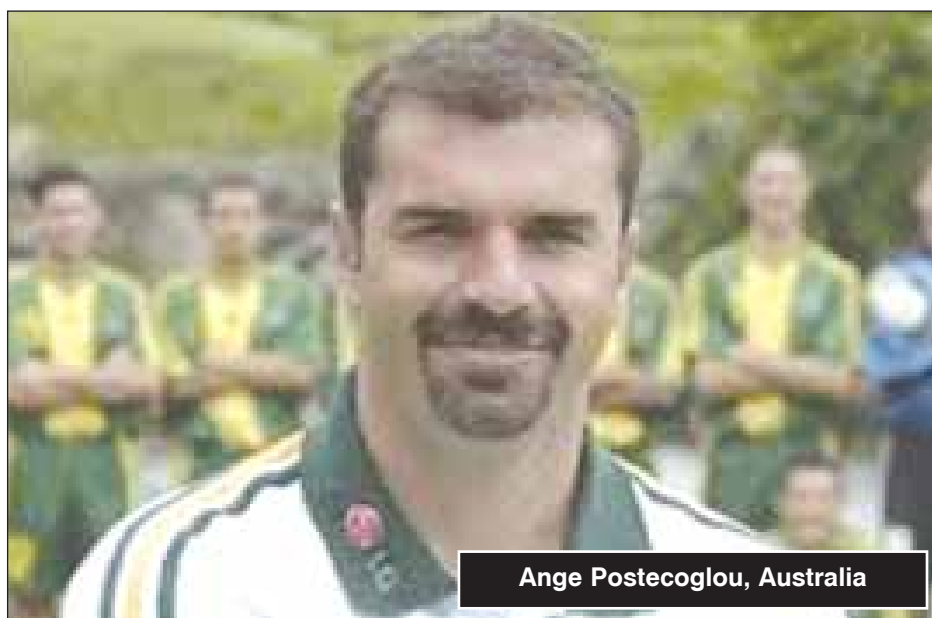


NEWS AND VIEWS

with Tony and Xanthie Rallis

No Fasculada here, we can deliver the bacon!!



Ange Postecoglou, Australia

No fasculada here, we can deliver the bacon was a text I received from Brisbane Roar coach, Ange Postecoglou. It was in reference to his teams win over reigning champions, Sydney FC. Postecoglou is no stranger to Australian football having played 193 games with former National League Championship winning Club South Melbourne, represented the Soccerroos, coached in the Old National League and winning championship with South Melbourne, coaching stints in Europe and now the A-League and 7 years as Young Soccerroos Coach. Pretty impressive resume, well why then, did the Australian football public want to question Postecoglou's actions when he surgically changed the Roar squad late last year.

Ange, you must feel justified with Roars position on the table considering the football pundits criticism of your "changing of the guard" mid last season?

Look, I had my own philosophy on what type of football club I wanted to build. The team need rejuvenation and a process of this occurred mid last season when I took over. For me it was not a risk and the process had to start last season as you have all these other considerations like salary cap restrictions.

So you were 100% confident in your vision and actions?

Tony, people do not realise I have been a coach for years and in that time you develop experience that holds you in good stead. I believe in creating opportunities for young talented players so I knew what I wanted to achieve, a quality football playing team with plenty of individuals that shared a desire to succeed.

Yes but when you release players of the experience of Liam Reddy amongst other departed players like Van Dyke, Oar, Sarota, and Zullo and replace them with unknowns like Paartalu, Visconte and Barbarouses?

What people don't realise is that I had the benefit of coaching the Australia Under 17's and Under 20's teams and knew all about Paartalu and Visconte and knew what they could offer. Even Kosta Barbarouses, I knew him playing for New Zealand Under 17's and Under 20's team and when I compared him to older New

Zealand Internationals like Shane Smeltz at the same age, I had great confidence in his ability. I knew they are players that would develop and justify my belief in them.

How does Ange Postecoglou spot talent?

Characteristics like physical attributes matter but personally I also look at the player's football intelligence. Also, how they respond to technical information. I spent some time at Arsenal with Arsene Wenger and he was quite clear that any footballer he shows interest in must be football alert.

What is the difference from coaching in the Old NSL and the current A-League?

Just the professionalism, as a coach I have the players at my disposal full-time. This allows a coach to develop the players both individually and collectively. In my days as South Melbourne most of the players held full time jobs and they trained three afternoons/evenings a week. Of course other considerations like better training facilities and grounds along with

better support staff are other main differences.

What about playing talent. Are we still developing players like we did in the '90s?

I am a big believer that we always had a playing pool of talented players. What was missing was the opportunity. With the demise of the old NSL and the first few years of the A-League, we probably failed to create the opportunities for players to be developed. You are starting to see with the development of the A-League structure, we will start reproducing.

As a coach, do you feel restricted in taking a punt on promoting many youngsters due to the pressure of securing results to keep your job?

No, not at all. I believe in young players. There is a balance between development of young players and successful results. When I was coaching South Melbourne, we won the championship and I promoted youngsters like Bill Damianos, Con Blatsis, Michael Petkovic and Michael Curcija who were all sold overseas and netted the club in excess of \$1 million. You simply must believe in your foot-

ball structure.

You coached in Greece few years back. What was it like?

It was tough. Culturally different. We would win and the supporters would want to carry you on their back to your car, the next week you would lose a game and the riot squad was there to protect you. I also learnt to deal with this type of pressure and media scrutiny.

I also had to challenge myself in all aspects of coaching like motivation and communicating. You had a situation where I was used to Australian footballers who may have had technical differences but great work ethic. I then found myself surrounded by talented South Americans, Portuguese, German and Greek players who were technically outstanding but lacked the Australian work ethic. Language restrictions were also challenging. All in all, I felt I became a better coach.

You played at the highest level as a player. Is there a difference between being a player and now a coach?

Enormous difference. As a footballer, it is more about you the individual. You prepare yourself to be one part of the team. As a coach, you're dealing with 20 individuals and their needs.

Seven months down the track, what will you consider as a successful season for Roar FC?

I would like to believe that my plan which I put in place develops the way I want it to. Obviously, finals football is a measure of that development but for me it is also important to play a good brand of Australian football and also see the development of young players.

You have had almost 12 months now with Brisbane Roar. Who is the new Matthew Leckie, Mitch Langerak or Tommy Oar in your current squad?

As I have previously stated, I believe the playing pool is out there. It is all about creating opportunities for them to realise their potential but more importantly keep improving on that potential. It is no good for a young player to come on the stage in year 1 and not be able to reproduce or improve themselves in year 2 and 3. I look at Luke Devere and every year I see him improve. People forget he has been around for almost 3 years but he is still only 20.



South Melbourne Ange Postecoglou



Ange Postecoglou, Brisbane Roar