

Around the Grounds



Kyriakos Tohouroglou along with the President and Secretary of Gladesville Ryde Magic.

Gladesville Ryde Magic recruit ex-Olympiakos keeper

State League One side Gladesville Ryde Magic have ambitiously recruited former Olympiakos, PAOK Salonika and Greek international goalkeeper Kyriakos Tohouroglou for the remainder of the season in what has been labelled as an exciting coup for the club. Tohouroglou was born and bred in Sydney and played his junior football with Gladesville United up until the age of 13 before moving off to Greece where he became a star playing UEFA Champions League and UEFA Cup football as well as winning numerous championships with Olympiakos. At 38, Tohouroglou stated that he wanted

to give something back to the club he first started out with Gladesville Ryde Magic scooping for the prized signature of the talented shot stopper. Gladesville Ryde Magic head coach George Ganiatsas was thrilled with the club's new recruit and stated to Football NSW the importance of having such an identity at the club. "It is fantastic to have a player such as Kyriakos join our ranks as he has done it all in Greece in terms of football. "He's played in a number of European Cup matches, won a number of Championships and Greek Cup finals and played for probably the most successful club in Greece.

"He will bring an enormous amount of experience to the team and will assist in nurturing our future talented goalkeepers at the club. "Kyriakos wants to give something back to his junior club and that is something of a rare commodity in modern football. He has come down-under once more for good to do this as well as establish the Olympiakos Academy along with his former teammate and ex-Socceroo Chris Kalantzis. "The club cannot wait to see him on board as not only will he benefit our team but the entire competition."

-By Mark Stavroulakis

Katz is back and raring to go

Michael Katz, the pacey right back for Sutherland Sharks, had a torrid season in 2010 only managing a couple of appearances due to a serious knee injury that he believed would only rule him out for the first half of the campaign but proved worse than first thought. "The specialists told me it would be 12-months so I figured they really meant only six but I guess they were right after all." It was a frustrating time for Katz who states: "I tried to help out as much as possible on the sidelines but it's not the same as playing and that's what you want to always be doing so I haven't really played since the Grand Final in 2009 and I expect I'll be a little rusty but I'm looking forward to the season opener against Blacktown and the games don't get much tougher first time up than to meet the reigning Champions." He also admits the past 12-months were a pretty draining experience having to go through rehab but he looks forward to re-igniting his partnership with Jimmy Bakis down the right although it will be a little while before he is completely reassured his knee will hold up: "With an injury like this it will always take time to put

your full trust into things but I'm looking forward to getting things working on the field with Jimmy (Bakis) and the rest of the team and although in pre-season we have let in a couple of soft goals to lose matches we are confident in our style of play and the players around us so if we do the right things and approach the matches with the right attitude we feel we can do very well this season." Kat also puts faith in new additions to the side especially up front where he reckons this season they have a front runner who can lead the line in much the same way Brad Boardman did and he feels is something they have been lacking in the last couple of years: "Michael Svircevic has slotted in well and is looking sharp so who knows where we can go this year but it's not about one man as the team has to perform and if we do that to the best of our abilities we should be OK. "Our slow start last year cost us dearly as we missed out on the Final's by probably just one match so we are very focussed on trying not to let that happen again this year." Katz is back and so is the humour so dismiss the knee-man at your peril!

-By Micky Brock

Petrovski returns to the pack

After a ten-year hiatus from the South Coast, Wolves' legend Sasho Petrovski has returned to familiar soil, bringing back his lethal goal scoring touch along with a decade of invaluable experience. The twice-capped former Socceroo last found the back of the net for Wolves during the 2000-01 NSL Grand Final victory over South Melbourne. In his second appearance since his return, Petrovski reopened his Wolves goal scoring account on Sunday afternoon with a thunderous equalising free kick that set his side on their way to a 2-1 victory against Parramatta Eagles. Speaking after his side's spirited victory, Petrovski was happy to be back on the goal scoring sheet at his former club. "It was probably the first free kick that we got in the game around the box so I had to be precise and deadly with it," said Petrovski. "I used it to full advantage so I'm happy with that. "You can see we definitely lifted after that; we came away with the win and that's good for the supporters," Petrovski added. Since his 2001 success, Petrovski spent two seasons plying his trade in the Danish Superliga with Viborg FF before returning for the final season of the NSL with Parramatta Power. Petrovski then became a key figure in Sydney FC, Central Coast Mariners, and Newcastle Jets during his seven seasons competing in the A-League. After years of playing at the highest of levels of Australian football, Petrovski is hoping to thrive under the weight of expectation of the South Coast's faithful fanbase whilst passing on his experience to the youthful prospects of his new team. "I know there is a lot of expectation naturally when you come back and play in these games," said Petrovski. "When you play any game there is always expectation – it doesn't matter whether it comes from the club or your team mates, coach, or supporters as well – there was a lot today that came out to see us play. "Hopefully they were happy and will come back in more numbers with friends, family, and kids to come and watch and learn something from us," Petrovski continued. "We've got a good team and it's a mix of more experienced players and a lot of young players, so it doesn't matter, if you're good enough you'll get the chance to play in a team with a good style of football." Now finding his feet in the NSW Premier League, Petrovski noted that while it obviously does not match the standard of the A-League, it does harbour a great deal of potential. "It's only been two weeks so it's hard to say," said Petrovski. "The quality is there, the passion is there, but it is different (from the A-League) – different atmosphere, different quality of the pitch. "It's a bit hard to judge but there is a big difference in fitness – the A League is far ahead because you train every day. "If they had the fitness and the surface to play on there is a lot of potential here are some good players in this league," Petrovski concluded.

-By Michael Shoolman