

Money bags Strikers in A-League 'next season'

Former Brisbane Roar Coach Miron Bleiberg says serious money is behind Brisbane Strikers A-League bid with his experience set to have them ready in seven months.

Speaking on the World of Football program, Bleiberg said the Strikers would be a point of difference from Brisbane Roar's Dutch heritage and their home ground Perry Park would be re-developed.

The former Gold Coast United coach said the previous NSL side had the financial backing to join the A-League.

"I believe that the people behind this bid and I'm 100% sure they are serious people and there is serious money behind them," he said.

"The Brisbane Strikers have their own budget and are quite wealthy. It was run by a rich guy Clem Jones who used to be the lord mayor of Brisbane. In his inheritance, he left quite a lot of money.

"So we are still crunching the numbers and we want to be stronger and once we crunch the numbers and the

numbers stack and we go to FFA and we say we are ready."

Bleiberg said his experience with previous A-League clubs meant he would be able to get a club up and running by next season.

"We prove with the Gold Coast and we prove with the Roar that when the A-League started that in seven/eight months that we can prepare a team," he said. "So if we said next season we can be ready and if we said for more likely for the season after then we definitely be ready and don't forget that the Strikers have a successful team that is running in the NPL which finished first for a few times in the last few years."

When the A-League was first formed the Strikers lost out to the Lions and Bleiberg believes many fans in Brisbane do not support the Roar due to ethnic ties.

"I was a foundation coach which came based on one of



Former Brisbane Roar Coach Miron Bleiberg

the biggest clubs in Brisbane which was the Brisbane Lions which had Dutch heritage," he said. "Hence the orange colour of Brisbane Roar, and like every club South Melbourne or Oakleigh Cannons or whatever that have big clubs and followers there are people that don't like this club and the same applies to Brisbane Roar.

"So, there is a big chunk of the football community that still remember where the Roar started with and they don't

follow the Roar including the Strikers supporters and Brisbane City so you got the rivalry their and why the rivalry is needed."

During the FFA Cup round of 16, a crowd of 3571 flocked to Perry Park for Tim Cahill's Melbourne City debut and Bleiberg said the Strikers would redevelop the ground if they were part of the A-League.

"Another thing to remember about the strikers is that in

1997 won the Grand Final and they played in front of 40,000 people," he said.

"If only 20% of this 40,000 are still left following the club we already had a good start. Now Brisbane Strikers have the old centre of Brisbane soccer which is Perry Park, if it can be redeveloped I've already had the plans on my table that can fit up to 15,000 people and it's in the centre of the city and close to the train and whatever you need."

Antelmi flourishing at United 58

Wherever striker Patrick Antelmi goes, goals tend to follow, and Sydney United 58 are witnessing this first hand as their exciting signing finds form with his new club.

The 24-year-old is evidently adapting to life at United 58 with three goals in his last three NPL NSW Men's appearances.

His output coincides with a trio of back-to-back victories, rapidly surging United 58 up the table to brush aside a slow start to their 2018 campaign.

"The first two games the results obviously didn't go for us," said Antelmi. "When we looked at the games we were pretty much all over Marconi Stallions and Blacktown City but shot ourselves in the foot with two slip-ups.

"We were quite calm in the sense that we know what we have and that we are contenders, so we weren't too phased by it all. We just needed that first win to get us on a roll and that has shown in the last three weeks.

"Fortunately for myself in playing with such good players, it helps me do what I have to on the field and in the last three weeks has brought the goals that

I've wanted."

Former Socceroos stalwart Jason Culina brought Antelmi in from Wollongong Wolves as his first signing after taking the reins at United 58, and the flourishing striker will face his former employers this Saturday evening at Edensor Park.

Jacob Timpano's men will remember the young striker well from his 9 goals in 21 appearances for the South Coast club in 2017.

"It's always good to see those boys," smiled Antelmi.

"I made good friends down there last year with (Peter) Simonoski, (Josh) McDonald, and a few of the boys. There's certainly no bad blood there so it'll be good to see them.

"Obviously they've been doing very well this season which is good to see, and it'll be an interesting battle so I'm looking forward to this weekend." Antelmi has gone from strength to strength since returning home to



Australian soil following spells within the youth setups of Portsmouth, Leeds United, and Wigan Athletic. His time at Blacktown City featured two Championships and a Premiership before a move to Wolves saw him continue his rich vein of scoring on the South Coast.

While success has followed him in the NPL NSW Men's competition, Antelmi has his sights firmly set on the Hyundai A-League and beyond.

"My aspirations are to get into the

Hyundai A-League and then back overseas," said Antelmi.

"That's my biggest goal. For the last two years I've put work on hold to focus more of my time on football and training so that when the opportunity comes I will be well prepared to kick on into the professional environment.

"My aspirations for Hyundai A-League and overseas are very high and that's why my determination is all about football."

-By Michael Shoolman