



By George Stavroulakis

Terry Antonis.. is confident

Terry Antonis says Melbourne Victory surpasses his former clubs Sydney FC and Western Sydney Wanderers and added Victory can go all the way in the A-League. Antonis has been back in Australia since January after his second stint in Europe saw the fringe Socceroo struggle for game time.

After moving to Greek Super League club PAOK from Sydney FC, Antonis struggled to break into the first team with seven appearances in his first season.



Next term he was sent out on loan to fellow Greek Super League side Veria FC and after playing only one match in six months, Antonis linked up with Western Sydney Wanderers.

After getting a number of matches under his belt Antonis then signed with Dutch club VVV Venlo but again struggled for regular game time.

After playing 19 games in all competitions for Melbourne Victory this season, Antonis believes his third A-League club's standing surpasses his previous two.

"For me it is a bigger club," he told..

"I've been with Western Sydney and Sydney FC and they are also big clubs as well. But for me, Melbourne Victory and their facilities, the people and how they run it makes it a massive club.

"I'm enjoying my time here. I love playing for them, we've got exciting players and a good team. We have a great coaching staff and I'm happy off the field so I'm excited being here."

Since Antonis returned to the A-League, he has shown the form that earned him a Socceroo call up with his performance in this week's Asian Champions League match against Shanghai SIPG a reminder of his talent.

And even though playing overseas hasn't worked out, Antonis still believes that he can make it in Europe's top-flight.

"If I do get an offer to go, I'm not going to say no to it," he said.

"With the Wanderers I was only there for six months but I've signed here for another two years and I believe that with Kevin Muscat as my coach, with Victory's coaching staff and the players that we have, that I can improve more and more.

"I'm enjoying my time here and I want to stay as long as I can and then we'll see what happens.

"But at the moment I'm not even concentrating about that, I'm worrying about this week's finals."

Ahead of Sunday's elimination final against Adelaide at AAMI Park, Antonis is confident Victory can defeat the Reds and go even further.

"Definitely," he said. "We are always thinking about that. "When we turn up on our day we are very difficult to beat so I believe in myself that we can go all the way and I'm sure the rest of the boys and the coaching staff do as well."



Western Sydney Wanderers have sacked coach Josep Gombau

JOSEP Gombau has been sacked by the Western Sydney Wanderers amid talk of player unrest after a disappointing season in which the outfit failed to make the A-League finals.

WANDERERS boss Josep Gombau has been fired, less than six months after succeeding Tony Popovic. The former Adelaide and Olyroos head coach has paid the price for a hugely unconvincing campaign that left his side out of the finals, a position considered untenable by the Wanderers hierarchy.

Gombau fell out with a number of players and had left others unconvinced he had the ability to lead a title challenge next year.

Club officials had also become alarmed at a noticeable decline in the squad's fitness since Gombau's appointment, as the Spaniard instigated a far more hands-off approach to player management.

Though it is accepted that the players have to bear some responsibility, the review of the season conducted over the past few days found it took far too long to identify the questions of fitness despite demonstrable statistical proof of a slump in performance in the later stages of games.

The club will now deliberate on a successor, aiming to have the new man in place before Pre-season starts in late June or early July.

Speculation will centre on Tony Popovic, who a fortnight ago ruled himself out of filling the imminent vacancy at Sydney FC, but it's thought that club board are minded towards a foreign appointment.

Whichever direction they take, the club is aware it faces a pivotal choice with the new stadium at Parramatta due to be completed in little more



Members of the Wanderers supporting group Red and Black Bloc (RBB) boycotted the final games of the season

than a year's time.

"The Western Sydney Wanderers today officially announced that Josep Gombau will leave the club, effective immediately," the club said in a brief statement.

"Following a review of the season the decision has been made to appoint a new head coach for the 2018/19 season and beyond.

"The club would like to thank Josep for his time with the Wanderers."

Gombau's exit completes the most turbulent of seasons, with the actions of the Red and Black Bloc supporters group resulting in a suspended points deduction.

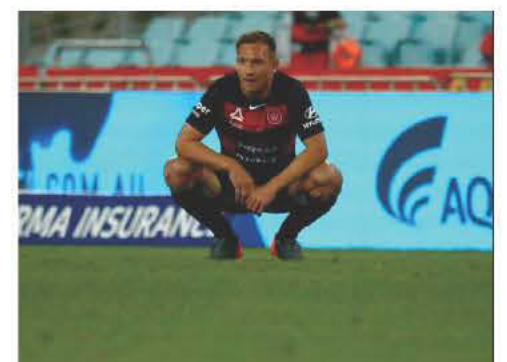
The RBB boycotted the final games of the season, while the club's major sponsor, NRMA Insurance, reacted by declining to renew its lucrative deal.

Wanderers striker Brendon Santalab foreshadowed Gombau's departure on Monday in a devastating

critique of the coach.

"There's disappointment all round because when you have a squad like that and you don't make the finals, something's not right," Santalab said after the Wanderers failed to make the A-League finals.

"What a team that is, just the names. In pre-season you'd have put us up there as title contenders. There's no excuse this year – with all the changes and everything, we still had an incredible group of players, great footballers, and we should be doing more.



Brendon Santalab was highly critical of Gombau's brief tenure at the Wanderers.