



and now 25-years-old, Halloran has been unable to break into newly promoted J-League club V-Varen Nagasaki.

#James Holland -

Holland failed to make an appearance in 2014 and has only played 14 minutes in green and gold since the tournament. Now 28-years-old, after success at one of Austria's leading clubs between 2012 and 2015, Holland is entering a sparse period of his career, unable to carve out a regular place at newly promoted club LASK Linz.

#Mitch Langerak -

It's been a sad story for Langerak, who could, and perhaps should, be pressuring Ryan for the Socceroos number one jersey alongside Brad Jones. Yet a few uncomfortable performances for the Socceroos under Postecoglou all but resigned him to third fiddle – a place he's now lost to Danny Vukovic.

It's a hard outcome for the 29-year-old, who performed admirably for Stuttgart after leaving Borussia Dortmund, only to be replaced upon promotion. In another beacon for the future, however, he is now excelling at J-League club Nagoya Grampus.

#Ryan McGowan -

McGowan had all the ingredients to become a Socceroos regular – playing each of Australia's three World Cup fixtures - but a record of moving between dubious leagues let him down.

While he stayed fit and played in a much-needed position for the Socceroos, moving regularly between China, Scotland, the United Arab Emirates and now England's League One was never going to promote him as a stable option.

#Tommy Oar -

A regular Socceroos favourite during the beginning of Postecoglou's guise, after boasting so much potential a disappointing move to Ipswich Town – where he left after six matches due to homesickness – was the beginning of a lean spell for Oar which hasn't relented.

Now 26-years-old and struggling for a regular starting position – unable to make their last Champions League qualifying

squad – with Cypriot giants APOEL, Oar hasn't appeared for the Socceroos since 2015.

Matthew Spiranovic -

After commanding the Socceroos backline in 2014, 28-year-old Spiranovic has been clubless for four months his release from Chinese second division club Hangzhou Greentown. It was his determination to play in the low-level league from 2015 onwards that drew the ire of otherwise-staunch supporter Postecoglou and signalled the end of his Socceroos career. Adam Taggart –

Is there still hope for Adam Taggart? Had a sudden precocious scoring-streak happened a few months earlier than the culmination of a poor season for Perth Glory, perhaps the 24-year-old would be on the plane to Russia.

Whether that says more about Taggart's quality, or the dearth of striking talent in the Socceroos, remains to be seen. An inability to break into Fulham following his 2014 World Cup breakthrough was dashing for Socceroos fans' high hopes for Taggart, but there's still hope for the young striker yet. James Troisi –

An unlucky loser and a stalwart of Postecoglou's reign, despite winning the 2018 A-League Grand Final, a less than impressive regular season for Victory by Troisi's high standards contributed to him missing, possibly his last, World Cup campaign. An inability to break into Juventus, before the poorly timed decision to take the plunge in Saudi Arabia and China also had their effect.

Nevertheless, Troisi has been a strong performer for the Socceroos since 2014, starring in the 2015 Asian Cup and 2017 Confederations Cup. You'd be mad to write him off yet.

#Bailey Wright -

If Troisi's exclusion was unlucky, Wright's was a hammer blow not just for the defender, but for hopeful Socceroos fans. In short, Wright couldn't have done much more than captain Bristol City to an impressive promotion push in the English Championship.

Only 21 in 2014, Wright burgeoned after his selection in the 2014 World Cup squad, despite not playing a match. Unfortunately the 25-year-old now misses out on the crucial next step, partially the fault of a somewhat undecided position.

Will he play for the Socceroos at fullback or centrally? It's something Graham Arnold's going to have to work out sooner, rather than later.

#Dario Vidosic -

Unfortunate knee problems prematurely ended Vidosic's influential spell at Swiss club Sion, but his decision to swap Europe for Asia – as it's been for so many Aussies on this list – was the hammer blow to his national team hopes.

After sitting on the bench for each 2014 World Cup match, Vidosic was never called into another squad again. Lean spells in China and South Korea stole his peak years, and although he's worked his way into form at Melbourne City, at 31-years-old it could be too little, too late.

#Ivan Franjic -

In hindsight, the Russian Premier League was too harsh a switch-up for Franjic following his breakthrough Socceroos role at the 2014 World Cup. High problems played a small role, but there's nothing like a freezing, snow-drenched experience in Moscow and a few weeks of unpaid wages to make you miss sunny afternoons in Queensland.

Injuries at Melbourne City then curtailed his A-League revival, before his inability to break into Daegu FC in South Korea nailed the coffin for Franjic's 2018 World Cup hopes.

FINAL VERDICT

While it's too harsh to judge the inability of Alex Wilkinson and Matt McKay to make the 2018 World Cup due to their age, the list of younger and youngish players that couldn't make the list is long enough.

It's always expected that the majority of youth products won't go on to sterling international careers – just look at the makeup of any Australian youth national side. However, taking into Russia just three out of a possible 14 players that were under the age of 26 in 2014 doesn't make for happy reading.

Here's hoping Graham Arnold has a lot more experience at his disposal in Qatar – assuming Australia makes it