

# MILLIGAN: WE JUST FELL SHORT...

After arriving home after Australia's early exit from Russia 2018 Socceroos defender Mark Milligan relived his World Cup rollercoaster at the launch of the Nike PhantomVSN. Finishing bottom of Group C behind France, Denmark and Peru, Australia once again exited early and disappointed.

**The first** challenge standing in the way of the Socceroos was the transition to a new coach, Bert van Marwijk.

«**The lead** up for us was very, very good,» said Milligan, 33. «We worked extremely hard with Bert, and he worked very hard to get the way he wanted to play across to us – which isn't always easy.»

«**It was** a little bit disappointing. At times we played some very good football, some quite entertaining football and I think that first game was most important for us... and we just fell a little bit short unfortunately.»

**The 33-year-old** featured in all three of Australia's 2018 World Cup games, forming the centre back partnership with Trent Sainsbury.

**Talking about** Australia's final group stage game against Peru, Milligan - currently chasing a new

club for next season – recalled the moment the reality of their impending exit kicked in.

«**We felt** the disappointment come into play once we conceded,» he said. «We gave away one chance and with the quality they had across the pitch, they took it.»

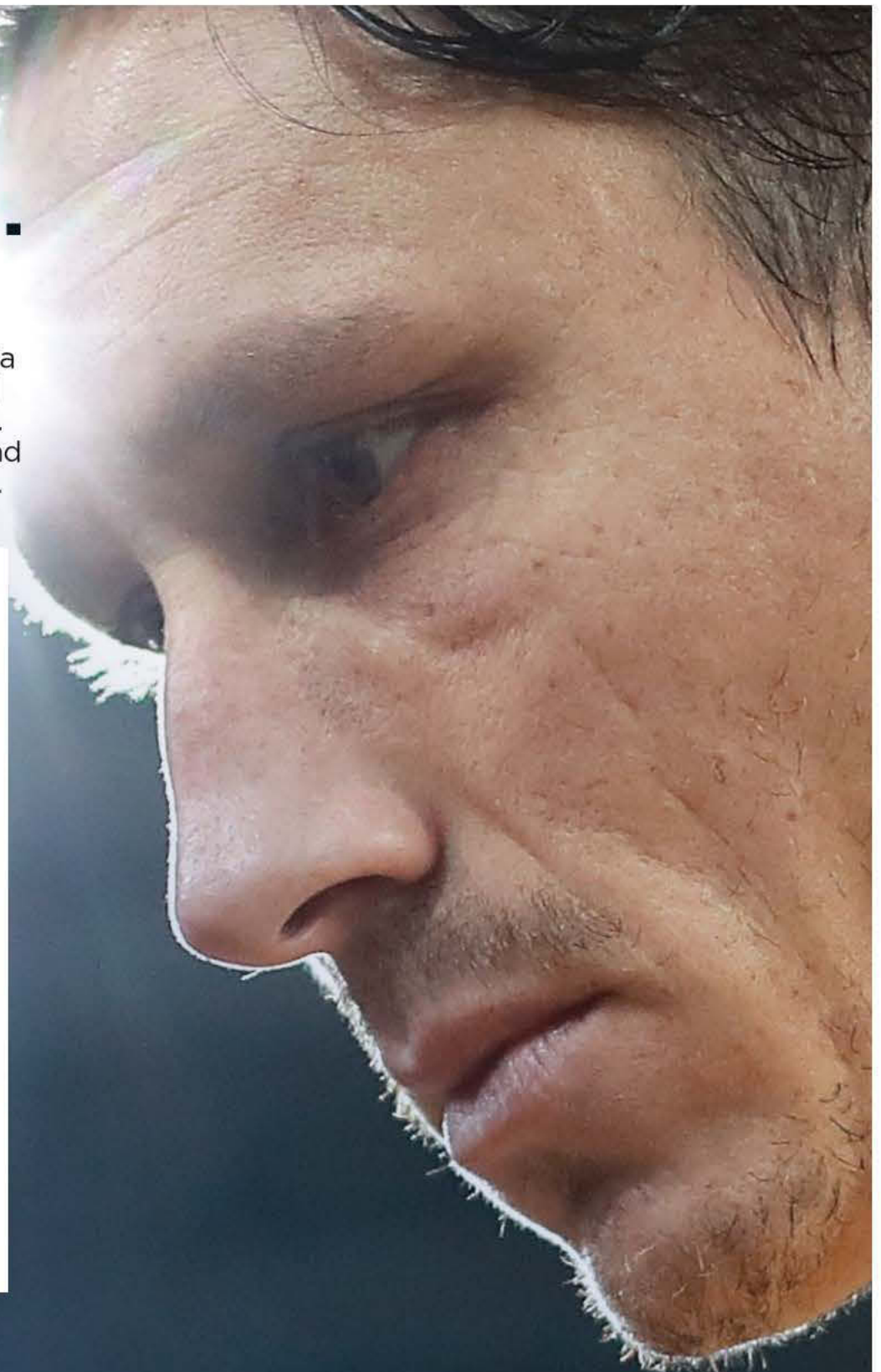
«**Obviously that** was a bit hard to take especially when you're out on the field.»

**As a** Nike athlete, the versatile midfielder will lace up in the new PhantomVSN boot.

**He added:** «It ticks a number of boxes and I think it's the first time Nike have ever brought out a boot like this.»

«**It's a** lightweight boot and it still gives me the protection I need from players standing on me!»

**If you're** in Melbourne, don't miss your chance to see the Phantom Pyramid in person. Head to Birrarung



## ARNIE'S BID TO FIND A CLUB FOR MARK MILLIGAN

New Socceroos coach Graham Arnold has joined the hunt for a new club for backline veteran Mark Milligan before the start of the new season around the world.

**Milligan left** his marquee deal with Melbourne Victory to join Saudi Arabian side Al Ahli in a \$1m deal, but was released by the club following the World Cup after just eight games.

**The axe** came as a surprise after Milligan's solid performance in defence in all three Australia games, despite being moved out of usual defensive midfield role.

**Now he** is keen to find a new club in Europe if possible. The transfer window in England closes today and later in the month elsewhere in Europe, but as Milligan is a free agent he can sign afterwards.

**And today** Graham Arnold revealed he and the FFA were trying to help Milligan in achieving his dream move to Europe.

**Milligan has** come close to big Euro clubs in the past but missed out over visa issues, and once heartbreakingly because of the Socceroos lowly FIFA ranking.

**Now though** he is better placed to make the move if he can find a club to sign him.

«**Mark is** still without a club at the moment,» said Arnold today. «And we're working with him to try and see what we can do with that.»

**Both Milligan, 33,** and skipper Mile Jedinak, 34, face uncertain futures in the Socceroos squad with Arnold looking to inject more youth talent into the side.

**Jedinak missed** out on all the Socceroos pre-World Cup warm ups and the side looked so good without him in the games against Hungary and the Czechia, there was speculation he may not start in Russia.

**However Jedinak** led out the team in all three games, and speculation that he was set to leave Aston Villa also proved unfounded.

**But Arnold** was giving nothing away about their Socceroos futures.

«**I spoke** to them straight after the World Cup and told them to have a great break and and we would be in touch in the next few week,» said Arnold today.

«**Mile is** back at Aston Villa and we're just waiting to see what happens with him.»

**He added:** «As a coach, I'm a big communicator and I'm on the phone a lot to the boys, and making sure that I'm there for them if they need me.»

«**They can** call me at any time for any advice so you know we have been in touch.»