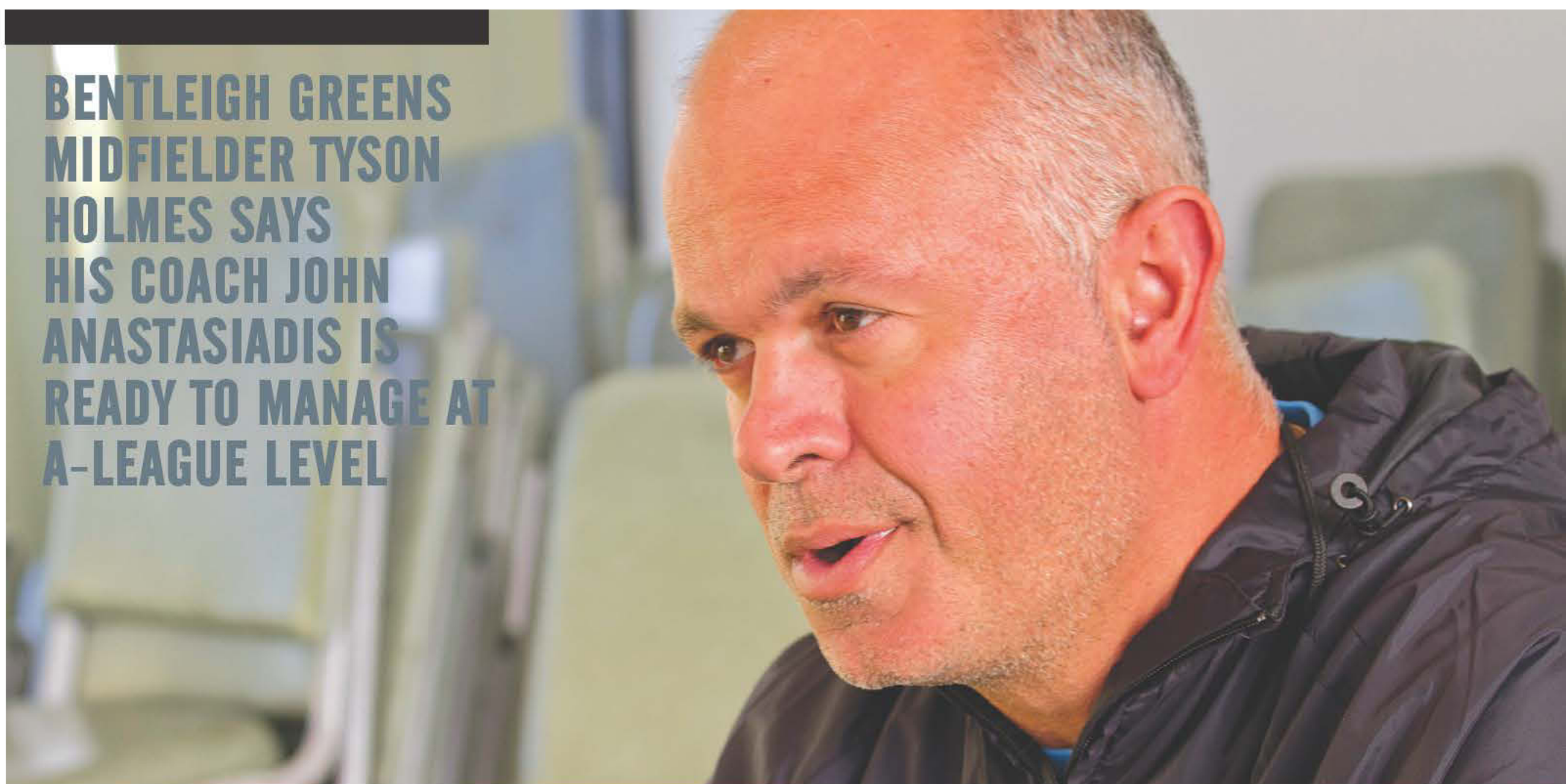


# JOHN ANASTASIADIS.. READY TO MANAGE AT A-LEAGUE LEVEL

**BENTLEIGH GREENS  
MIDFIELDER TYSON  
HOLMES SAYS  
HIS COACH JOHN  
ANASTASIADIS IS  
READY TO MANAGE AT  
A-LEAGUE LEVEL**



**T**he Pagkyprio will meet Heidelberg United in the FFA Cup quarter-final tomorrow night at home. Anastasiadis has guided Bentleigh to two NPL VIC championships in 2015 and 2017 and narrowly missed out on the Grand Final this year. His younger brother, Dean, was goalkeeper coach at Melbourne Victory and Holmes said the Bentleigh manager is ready to step into the big time.

"JA is 100% ready and I think in the last couple of years he's really started to take his coaching career to the next level," Holmes told FTBL. "From the sports science background to match reviews and analysis, he's really stepped it up which is important if he wants to get to that A-League level."

"He showed this year, we had nine players from our Grand Final winning team leave the squad and everyone in pre-season wrote us off and people told us we'd be lucky to finish mid-table."

"He turned the squad around and we've done what we've done this year, so that justifies how good of a coach he is."

"What he's done for me personally, he always challenges me and wants to get the best out of his players. He's helped me take my game to the next level, he's wants to me to improve, become better, try different things and work on things and I think that's really important with a coach."

"I'm very happy to be working with JA and I couldn't be more thankful for what he's done for me."

Holmes, who won the NPL VIC Gold Medal last week, felt the reason why Anastasiadis wasn't given a chance was because A-League clubs were risk averse.

"To be honest I think it just comes down to the similar reason as to why half the boys in the NPL haven't been given a crack," he said.

"The A-League is so fickle (and) there's only 10 teams. That's why you

see current A-League coaches recycle current A-League players because they're protecting themselves and that's why JA isn't getting a go."

"You see the same coaches and players go around, but the handful of boys that have been given a shot have proven themselves."

"I have no doubt in my mind that if JA got a chance in the A-League, the club wouldn't regret it, but it's about clubs wanting to take that risk. Unfortunately it's not the case with Football in Australia."

Holmes had opportunities to join Perth Glory and North Queensland Fury which ultimately fell through. The midfielder turns 31 this year and is currently a full-time financial planner with two kids and was focused on mentoring the younger players in Bentleigh's squad. Jack Webster, Ryan Scott and Velibor Mitrovic are among the star players for Bentleigh this year.

Holmes said the gap between foreigners in the NPL to the A-League was big, but not with the Australians. "We've got boys like Jack Webster

who lays bricks all day and then goes to training every night," he said. "If NPL players were put in an environment where they only train then I don't think the gap would be that big."

"A-League clubs just need to commit to some of them and admit they won't be ready for the first two months, but get them into a full-time environment and you'll find the gap will close." Bentleigh were knocked out of the NPL VIC semi-final after giving up a 3-1 win to Avondale in the 115th minute and were keen to make amends tomorrow night.

Holmes said they weren't hurting anymore and were focused on the goal of becoming the first NPL team in the FFA Cup Final.

"Our goal realistically is to be the first NPL club to make the actual final," Holmes added.

"To get to the semi-final is one step closer to our goal as our goal isn't the semi-final. It'll be an awesome achievement and a great effort to get to the semi, but when we get there, it's not where we want to finish."