



'The most exciting A-League season we've ever seen'

Fox Sports pundits Archie Thompson and Mark Bosnich gave a spirited gee-up for Australia's topflight at the A-League launch today, declaring 2018/19 a potential best ever season.

Experienced imports, the emergence of young home grown talent and a finely balanced league has the two former Socceroos excited about kick off on October 19.

Melbourne Victory legend, Thompson, believes Japan great Keisuke Honda will spearhead the Big V's charge towards back-to-back titles.

While Bosnich declared reports of the A-League's woes were overblown. The competition has been in the middle of a revolution.

Speaking on Fox Sports Thompson said: (Honda) is arguably one of the best Asian players that's ever been produced so to have him on our shores is exciting.

"But I think what's exciting about this season

it's almost been like two months out from the start of the season when we were talking about A-League players whether it be Honda, whether it be Usain Bolt trying to get contract.

"I don't think it's been heard of leading into the A-League season, speaking about A-League starts two months out. Already the build-up of excitement was there and I'm really looking forward to this year because I think the teams are quite level."

With 18 of the 23 imports having played in the world's five big leagues Fox Sports host Adam Peacock said it wouldn't be long before the next A-League great emerges.

"They're not the biggest name now but in three or four months' time we'll be talking

about them like your Bruno Fornarolis, your Thomas Broich, your Besart Berishas that have jumped out time and time again," Peacock said.

But Bosnich said it was the rise of Gen Next that showed the league had taken that next step. The former Manchester United custodian made special mention to Riley McGree's Puskas Award nomination for last season's scorpion kick scorcher.

"You spoke about some of the stars but also what I found very, very significant in the last two or three seasons is the development of young Australian players," Bosnich said. Every one of those young Australian players I've seen come and play in the A-League have never let anybody down. In fact, they've actually done really, really well. And the fact that now young players here in Australia have got that opportunity to play professionally before they want to make a move overseas or whatever is a tribute to everybody that's involved in football.

"When I left the country in 1988, although what the people did during that time was absolutely fantastic, there was not a professional league. The fact that there is a professional league and it's going to get bigger and better now is a real tribute to everybody that's involved.

"What I'm seeing is these young Australian players now coming into the A-League playing with some of these top players (and) they're more than holding their own."

Thompson added: "Each clubs recruited really really well some of the players that have been brought in are only going to help some of the youngsters. Like Honda, these guys come in – (including Aussies) Ben Halloran and Craig Goodwin who've had that experience of being overseas - so they can pass it down to the young guys coming through.

"I actually think this year is going to be the most exciting A-League season we've ever seen."

Kamasz: FFA had no vision

By Con Stamocostas

Former CEO of Football NSW Stefan Kamasz says a lack of vision by Football Federation Australia held the game back and added that football's revolution must take the game to the next level.

Kamasz has been a football administrator for close to 40 years including being a member of the implementation panel that made recommendations for the formation of the A-League

He was Sydney FC CEO from 2008-2013 and in recent times was in the middle of the FFA governance stand-off while he was acting CEO of Football NSW.

He told FTBL that the football revolution that transpired last week was due to the lack of vision that was shown by the governing body during the prolonged negotiations for control of the game.

"This congress argument has been going on for three years and I blame FFA for this," he said.

"I know for a fact that there was a lot of pressure put on state federations by Steven

Lowy not to move forward with what transpired last week.

"When I was the acting CEO for Football NSW from November 2016 to July 2017 I asked FFA for a roadmap and where they saw the congress was going to look like at the time.

"But there was no blue print or roadmap for where the congress was going."

The outcome from last week's Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) is that the make-up of the FFA's board has increased from 10 seats (that used to be nine state member federations and one seat for A-League clubs) to 29 seats. **It means** that 100 votes will be shared amongst various football administrators and stakeholders and Kamasz is adamant that the new board must take the game to the next level.

"If the second division is sustainable it has to occur, expansion has to occur because the

A-League has stagnated," he said.

"Promotion and Relegation is also important because you have to give the aspirational clubs an opportunity to get to the top level.

"The new board and the new A-League has to be able to ensure that competition does become sustainable in an expanded way and that it contains people with commercial and administrative diversity who understand the game of football."

Speaking after the outcome of last week's EGM FFA Chairman Steven Lowy said he feared for the future of the game and that stakeholders with vested interests will compete for power and resources.

However Kamasz strongly disagreed with the outgoing Chairman.

"I don't believe for one moment that the stake holders will abuse their voting rights

and nominate directors that will beholden to them," he said.

"The old board has shown that it has ignored the view of the fans and the other stakeholder for far too long

"Everyone understand the situation that football was in before the Crawford report and nobody wants that aspect of the old days.

"But to me it's important that this board recognises the responsibility that they have got."

"I suspect it will end up looking something like the English Premier where the clubs run their own affairs but the FFA has the power of veto on certain issues.

"It's up to the FFA to ensure the state bodies will be provided with the adequate resources they need at the grass roots level.

"I am more confident than Steven Lowy that the A-League clubs understand and respect that."