



By George Stavroulakis

GAITATZIS BROTHERS JOIN SYDNEY OLYMPIC



Reigning National Premier Leagues NSW Men's Premiers and Champions Sydney Olympic have continued their recruitment for the 2019 season with the announcement of the Gaitatzis brothers Harris and Michael for the new year.

Harris returns to the club after spending some time with rivals Rockdale City Suns where he continued to be one of the competitions most skilful players, while Michael returns after a stint with National Premier Leagues 3 NSW Men's side Gladesville Ryde Magic where he took out both the Player of the Year and Golden Boot awards.

Blues Head Coach Abbas Saad was delighted with the signing of both brothers.

"They are quality players that will add further ammunition to our teams attacking philosophy.

"I have been impressed by how hungry both boys are to join our squad and make the most of their move back to Olympic, they will be a good fit and provide increased depth and options to our squad, it is great to have them back".

The brothers were equally as excited to re-join Olympic and be playing together again:

"Olympic has always been a club I have held close to my heart and after a few years away, I'm excited to be coming back to play some quality football, with a great group of guys, stated Harris.

"I know we are going to have a strong season and I'm very much looking forward to wearing the blue and white jersey again" he added.

Michael equally was also anticipating the new season.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to return to the club where I spent three great seasons, I am excited to build on the success the club experienced in 2018 and I look forward to achieving further success in 2019."

Sydney Olympic will commence its pre-season preparations on Monday 12th of November.

NEW FFA BOARD POISED TO DELAY A-LEAGUE EXPANSION UNTIL 2020-21 SEASON

A-League expansion is set to be delayed by the incoming Football Federation Australia board until the 2020-2021 campaign, with doubts persisting over the preparedness of the six remaining candidates.

While football's stakeholders are united in the commitment to grow the competition from 10 to 12 teams, sooner rather than later, the prevailing wisdom is that a new board - to be finalised at an FFA AGM on November 15 - will want to perform its own due diligence on the would-be entrants.

The existing board, whose chairman Steven Lowy will stand down next month, had planned to name the two successful bidders today (October 31) for entry into the league in 2019-20. **But, in** a split decision, they instead opted to pass the ball to their successors, with all indications now that aspirants Canberra, Southern Expansion, Macarthur South West Sydney, Team 11, Western Melbourne Group and South Melbourne will have to wait on the sidelines for longer than they had hoped.

"Nobody is strong enough to be nominated at this stage," said an influential source.

"It will require a different approach, a preferred bidder approach.

"Everybody wants expansion but the whole football family needs to come together to get the bids up. Nobody wants to set teams up for failure."

The expectant six clubs are hoping that if there is a delay, the new board will at least announce the two successful bidders before Christmas. But there are no guarantees that will happen either.

The ambitious Western Melbourne Group, for one, insist they are "ready to go" for next year but acknowledge they would also benefit from extra time to gear up for success.



Frontman, and former Socceroos defender, Steve Horvat said: "A delay would give everybody the opportunity to go about doing everything the right way.

"It might not be that bad of an outcome. From our point of view, we are ready to go now.

"But we are not going to walk away if it is delayed

by 12 months.

"I think the majority of the bids all have sound business cases, and I'm sure they'll also be there still knocking on the door if there is a hold up.

"Of course, it's frustrating to wait because expansion can't come quickly enough.

"But I think overall, there's a feeling of excitement and expectation out there about new teams and new colours.

"Obviously a new board is coming in and you have to give things time. While we don't like the thought of it (a delay), if there is one you will have to accept it.

"It would give new clubs more time to build a supporter base, fan engagement and community engagement and like everything in life, the more time you have to prepare the better the outcome will be."

While sharing the frustration that a hold up would bring, South West Sydney co-chairman Gino Marra said his bid wasn't going away either.

"We've already invested a significant amount of money and of course, we want a decision sooner rather than later," Marra said.

"We're committed to the area and we're committed to bringing football to the south west, so we will continue knocking on the door - whether there is a delay, whether we get knocked back - until we get a team in the area."

MILLIGAN UP FOR DERBY DAY



Mark Milligan has warned his teammates to keep their calm in Wednesday's Hibernian vs Hearts Edinburgh derby.

The two Scottish rivals will lock horns at Tynecastle overnight tonight.

Hibs sit in sixth place on the Scottish Premiership table, eight points below league leaders Hearts.

This will be Milligan's his first Edinburgh derby since joining Hibs in the off-season.

But he said his side will need to control their emotions if they are to come away with a crucial victory.

"I think the way the league is at the moment, we know this is a very important match," the Socceroo told The Edinburgh Evening News.

"The start of these games are usually intense and fiery and it is the team that settles first that usually comes out with the result. That will be our main goal.

"I think there is enough emotion to go around from all the outside influences, in the lead up and at the start of it.

"You have to win the battle early on and generally if you are able to do that and get a hold of the game, while it doesn't

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