




By George Stavroulakis

Western Melbourne Group Signs Star Victorian Coach From NPL Ahead of Inaugural Hyundai A-League Season

Western Melbourne Group (WMG) today has signed one of the most successful Victorian NPL coaches in John Anastasiadis, who will take up an assistant coach role ahead of the club's first season in the Hyundai A-League.

He gained national fame for taking Victorian NPL side Bentleigh Greens (who he joined in 2011) to within one game of the FFA Cup Final in 2015.

In the NPL (Australia's state based second tier league underneath the Hyundai A-League), Anastasiadis has built a hugely successful CV with the Greens.

He won the Dockerty Cup in 2016, the Community Shield in 2016 and 2017 and premierships in 2016 and championships in 2015 and 2017.

In his heyday, the 50-year-old was a top striker playing at highly rated Greek club PAOK FC at just 19. He also played in the NSL with South Melbourne and Heidelberg before building his career as a coach.

"John knows Victorian football through and through, has been an advocate for the NPL and has proved himself to be a hugely successful coach at NPL level and in the FFA Cup," said Western Melbourne's Group's Football Director and former Socceroo Steve Horvat.

"This signing again shows our commitment to Victorian football and building a bridge between the NPL and Hyundai A-League. There are many great Australian coaches at the

NPL level such as John and we're delighted he joins us as an assistant coach."

"With John, we'll be able to tap into his vast knowledge of the game in this state and his huge passion for football. His ethos and track record fits with what we're building in the West."

Anastasiadis, 50, said joining a new Hyundai A-League club in his home state was a dream come true and he wasn't taking anything for granted.

"I've done the hard yards in the NPL and have been successful through hard work. I'm now grateful to Western Melbourne Group that I now have an opportunity to further my career at such an ambitious club on the national stage. **"I'm Victorian** through and through, always give 100% and want desperately to help make this club a success for the community of the West.

"And with our own stadium in Tarneit to be built and funded privately, the club truly represents the region.

"We are a club for the future, and I'm ready to roll my sleeves up and work even harder for my new club and the community of the West," added a delighted Anastasiadis.



Western Melbourne Group were one of the two successful bidders announced in December 2018 by FFA. The club will join the Hyundai A-League from the start of the 2019/20 season beginning in October of this year.

Perth Glory - Western Sydney Wanderers 4-3

Aided by some fortuitous refereeing decisions, Glory produced the comeback of the season, recovering from 3-1 down in the 77th minute to win 4-3, and maintain their six point lead at the top of the table.

The Wanderers were without star marquee Oriol Riera and Alex Baumjohann, and featured five U21 players over the course of the evening. Perhaps their inexperience told in the end, as they conceded 4 goals in the final 20 minutes.

The classy Diego Castro's halftime introduction proved decisive, as the playmaker had a hand in each of Perth's four goals.

However, questions must be raised over the performance of referee Kurt Ams, who waved away a potential offside and awarded a soft penalty to Andy Keogh.

Wanderers' fans will be bitterly disappointed with the outcome, but the game was an absolute thriller, and a terrific advertisement for the league.

As for Perth, they continue to live a charmed life, with dreams of a Premiers' Plate now a very real possibility.

W. Sydney Wanderers Player Ratings

Nick Suman - 6

The young keeper was under tremendous pressure in the second half, and it eventually told. Couldn't clamber back to his feet quickly

enough to challenge Castro for the first goal, nor keep out Franjic for Perth's second.

Tate Russell - 7

Perhaps the best of Western Sydney's back four, Russell defended his position well. Most of the Glory's inroads came down the other flank.

Tas Mourdoukoutas - 6

The youngster looked very comfortable in possession, but when Perth turned the screws, he was unable to put up with their physicality.

Brendan Hamill - 5

The captain couldn't believe Kurt Ams' decision to award a penalty against him in the 86th minute, but when he watches the footage back, he'll be annoyed with himself for giving Keogh such an easy excuse to go down.

Tarek Elrich - 4

Struggled with the pace of Ferreira in 1v1 situations in the first half. In the second it was Franjic and Castro giving him nightmares, and when his side searched for a late equaliser,

he put in two very poor crosses.

Keanu Baccus - 7.5

No great penetration with his passing, but recycled the ball well to help his side keep possession. Clipped a lovely ball over the top in the lead-up to the third goal.

Jordan O'Doherty - N/A

Came off after 15 minutes with a suspected concussion.

Bruce Kamau - 6

An ineffectual display from the winger, who was often muscled off the ball.

Nick Fitzgerald - 6.5

Forced to drop into holding midfield after O'Doherty went off. His unfamiliarity with the position was evident and Babel eventually dragged him off for Mahazi.

Roly Bonevacia - 7

Had a largely quiet game, and didn't cover himself in glory with a blatant dive in the second half. However, his unerring finish for the Wanderers' second was all class.

Kwame Yeboah - 8.5

Had two decent opportunities before bundling in his first goal in red and black from a corner. Did it come off his chest? His face? As they say, they all count.

His movement was positive and a thorn in the side of the Glory back three, and if the goal he scored was fortuitous, there was no coincidence about his two direct assists.

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Abraham Majok - 7.5

Came off the bench far earlier than expected, and had a great opportunity in the first half which he sidefooted narrowly wide. His skills came to the fore and Western Sydney played on the break in the second half, as he was involved in the build-up for the second goal, and smashed the third emphatically beyond Liam Reddy to claim his first at A-League level.

Rashid Mahazi - 5

The holding midfielder was brought on to shore up the team, but did anything but. His side conceded four times while he was on the pitch.

Jaushua Sotirio - N/A

Not given enough time to influence proceedings.