



Ο ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗΣ ΚΟΝΕ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΥΣΤΡΑΛΙΑ, ΜΕ ΚΟΥΥΤΣ ΤΟΝ ΤΖΟΝΙ ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΑΔΗ

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Στην Αυστραλία αναμένεται να συνεχίσει την καριέρα του ο Κονέ για λογαριασμό της Γουέστερν Μέλμπουρν την οποία προπονεί ο πρώην παίκτης του ΠΑΟΚ, Τζόνι Αναστασιάδης. Αλλάζει ήπειρο ο 32χρονος Παναγιώτης Κονέ, καθώς δημοσιεύματα στην Αυστραλία τον θέλουν να τα έχει βρει σε όλα με την Γουέστερν Μέλμπουρν, ομάδα που ιδρύθηκε το 2017 και θα παίξει εφέτος στην πρώτη κατηγορία. Ο Παναγιώτης Κονέ θα είναι ο marquee player του κλαμπ, πράγμα που σημαίνει ότι ένα μέρος του συμβολαίου του θα καλυφθεί από την ποδοσφαιρική ομοσπονδία της χώρας. Στα ενδιαφέροντα αυτής της μεταγραφής είναι ότι προπονητής της Γουέστερν Μέλμπουρν είναι ο Τζόνι Αναστασιάδης, παλιά δόξα του ΠΑΟΚ, με εννιάετή καριέρα στην Ελλάδα.

Western Melbourne Group's first recruit Panagiotis Kone on why he's joining A-League

He's the first name signed to the A-League's newest club and marquee man Panagiotis Kone says that honour will drive him on to deliver for Western Melbourne come the start of the next A-League season.

The 31-year-old has signed a two-year deal and will bring a wealth of experience forged over 28 caps with the Greek national team including the 2014 World Cup as well as seven seasons in the Serie A spread over four clubs but where he starred with Udinese and Bologna.

An attacking midfielder with a reputation for an eye-catching goal, Kone was approached for the same reasons that Celtic's Scott Brown was aggressively pursued before re-signing in Scotland - Western Melbourne wanted a player that can set the foundations during the club's infancy for a successful culture and be the beating heart of the team from central midfield.

Speaking exclusively to Fox Sports from Athens, it's clear the decision to opt for him has struck a chord with Kone.

"I'm very happy and honoured that they chose me for this and to be the man to help the team both on and off the football field in its early days.

"I hope I can guide the young players to grow up and I believe the club will make very good moves for Australian football," he said.

Despite helping AEK Athens win the Greek Super League last season, Kone



has struggled for regular game time at the top level since but he's adamant he's got plenty to give the A-League's new outfit.

"I'm 31 not 36 and I have several good years left," he said.

"Football is my life, it's my passion and I'll do my best to make the Greek community proud and the people who believed in me and felt that I should be the player that they signed first.

"I have the utmost confidence in

myself and I'm sure I can help my new team in the Australian championship.

"I've seen good players like Keisuke Honda, who I played against at the World Cup (Brazil 2014), and I'll be pushing my teammates to have a good start to the season like he did."

Why **Attracting new** fans will be a fascinating challenge for the A-League's new entrants but in enticing Kone to Victoria they hope to do the same to Greek fans and get



them through the gates despite his last national team cap coming in 2015. **That was** a major catalyst for Kone in putting pen to paper.

"The talks were extremely professional so that was impressive but I've heard about the big Greek community there and Melbourne is also a fantastic city so that was a big thing for me and I want to have an experience in Australian Football as well.

"I played seven years in Italy too so that's also a very big thing for me. Italians and Greeks are crazy for football so I think it will be great to attract these people to watch our team."