

COULD THIS BE THE STALLIONS SEASON?



-By Nick Houghton

A high profile roster overhaul could help catapult Marconi Stallions to NPL NSW Men's success only two seasons since they were languishing in NPL 2.

It has been a busy off-season for the Peter Tsekennis coached side with the club making a myriad of moves to give the former Olympian a squad which is sure to make their opposition take notice.

Tsekennis said he was looking for players with a winning edge in 2019 and his new recruits have that in spades with six of his eight key signings winning one or more major tournaments in the past five years.

Fans would be excused for thinking Blacktown City have changed their colours when they see Marconi's squad list this season.

Zach Cairncross, Mitch Mallia, Roberto Speranza, Giorgio Speranza and Connor Evans have all made the move from Lily Homes stadium.

Joining them will be ex-Hakoah attacking dynamo Anthony Frangie and Former APIA Leichhardt defender Nathan Millgate as well as Anthony Trimboli and James Baldacchino.

There has also been an exodus from last season's squad with Peter Triantis, Mateo Poljak, Charles Mendy, Shaun Rooney, Judah Cluer, Hassan Jollah, Troy Danaskos, Theo Kofinas, Michael Beauchamp, Marc Warren and long standing captain

Christopher Nunes all departing.

Tsekennis said the recruitment spree was all about building a squad which would be a title contender.

"At some point you need to call the shots and make some serious decisions about your squad especially after being promoted to the top league from NPL 2," he said.

"I have been with the team from halfway through our last season in NPL 2 and as a result I had inherited a squad built to win promotion.

"Sometimes you have guys who can make the jump up to the higher standard and there are others who can't. This season I want to be as competitive as possible so it was important we put together a squad of proven winners at this level."

Last season in their first year back in NPL top tier, Marconi fell one game shy of securing a finals berth.

It was a frustrating end to the campaign for the Stallions but Tsekennis believes it formed a platform for future success at the club.

"Don't get me wrong it was disappointing to end the season the way we did," Tsekennis said.

"There were injuries to key players and a number of other

factors which held us back from reaching what we had set out to achieve.

"I was proud of the efforts from that team but it also helped me identify what needed to change and the type of players I wanted in my squad for the next season."

While the new signings may get all the headlines in the preseason, returning stars Mirjan Pavlovic and James Andrew could prove to be just vital to Marconi's chances.

"Mirjan was injured for most of last season so to have him back fully fit is like getting a new player in," Tsekennis said.

"He is a very dangerous player in front of goal and knows what it takes to be successful in this competition. With the calibre of player he will have alongside him this season he shouldn't find it too hard to find the back of the net.

"There is a lot of X-factor in the squad this season and that is the sort of thing needed for success at any level of the game."

Marconi open their season with a road trip to Lambert Park on March 10 for a blockbuster clash against fierce rivals APIA Leichhardt Tigers.

KEY PLAYER MOVEMENTS

Arrivals: Connor Evans, Zach Cairncross, Roberto Speranza, Giorgio Speranza, Mitch Mallia, Anthony Frangie, Nathan Millgate, James Baldacchino, Anthony Trimboli

Departures: Peter Triantis, Mateo Poljak, Charles Mendy, Shaun Rooney, Judah Cluer, Hassan Jollah, Troy Danaskos, Theo Kofinas, Michael Beauchamp, Marc Warren, Christopher Nunes

Roar snap up Sydney pair

Brisbane Roar have signed Charles Lokoli-Ngoy and Ruon Tongyik for the rest of this season, the club announced today.

Premiership-winning attacker Lokoli-Ngoy joins Brisbane from Sydney FC having made 13 Hyundai A-League appearances for the Sky Blues during his time at the New South Wales-based side.

"Brisbane Roar has a great history and is one of the biggest clubs in Australia. I want to help the team, score goals, and I'm really looking forward to the challenge," new recruit Lokoli-Ngoy said.

Lokoli-Ngoy has a keen eye for goal and boasts an impressive record at Foxtel Y-League and National Premier Leagues level.

Former Melbourne City and Western Sydney Wanderers defender Ruon Tongyik also heads north after recently departing the Wanderers.

The Australian under-23 international will bolster the Brisbane Roar backline for the remaining rounds of the Hyundai A-League 2018/19 campaign.

"I'm very excited to have signed for the Roar. I am here to create depth in our squad and I can't wait to get out onto Suncorp Stadium

and play in front of our fans," Tongyik said following today's announcement.

Interim Head Coach Darren Davies said he was delighted to add two young, exciting, and talented footballers to his Roar squad.

"On behalf of BRFC, I'd like to welcome Charles and Ruon to our football club. I can't wait to see them both out on the park representing the proud Orange jersey," Davies said.

"I'm confident that they will not only add competition for places in our squad, but make a positive contribution to our team over the coming weeks and months."



"They are both young talented Australian footballers who have the ability to excite our supporters and fans."

Having arrived in Brisbane over

the weekend, Lokoli-Ngoy and Tongyik will be available for selection for Friday night's match at Suncorp Stadium against Sydney FC.