

HOMESICK RUDAN LOOKS SET TO EXIT PHOENIX

Wellington Phoenix coach Mark Rudan looks almost certain to be exiting the New Zealand side for a move to join new A-League side Western United – and a reunion with his family.



Rudan refused to commit to the Phoenix when quizzed at a press conference after training this morning, all but confirming his switch back to Australia next season. **The former** Sydney FC skipper has been the favourite to lead the new Melbourne side when their first season kicks off later this year. **He's turned** around Wellington's fortunes since taking over this season, leading the side out of almost inevitable oblivion to a near-guaranteed finals spot and a shot at the Championship. **While Rudan** dodged questions about his long-term plans with Phoenix, he made it clear his priorities were with his family still in Australia. **«I have** two teenage kids who need their dad around, and dad needs them around as well,» he said. **«When you're** away from your wife and your loved ones, and from your family and friends, it's never easy. If I had

thought it was going to be this hard, I probably wouldn't have taken it on. **«That's the** reality. **Listen to our chat with the Phoenix boss last week in our podcast here:** **He said** he'd already been in talks with Wellington's management about the future and his frustrations over the way things have been managed. **He warned** them: «If things that have been done in the past continue, then I won't be here. They need to improve. Everything needs to improve. **«I want** a proper project.» **He said** he had explained the situation to his players and had their backing. **«We are** together in this moment, and that is probably the most important thing right now,» said Rudan.

«As long as there is no disruption to the playing group or coaching staff, that's the platform for where we are right now. **«As long** as that continues on, everything else will take shape.» **Some of** the current Phoenix players have already been linked with a move to Western United, including English import defender Steven Taylor. **Rudan admitted:** «I have strong relationships with my players and the people at my football club and the staff as well. **«They are** going to be put on hold. There are talks going on behind closed doors.» **He added:** «First and foremost I am most honourable to my family. Simple as that – and you can take whatever you want from that... but that's the start of it and the end of it.»

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