



By George Stavroulakis

→ TALAY SETS LOFTY GOALS AT PHOENIX

New Wellington coach Ufuk Talay has set his sights on retaining star Roy Krishna and finding success in his first season in charge of the A-League club.

Wellington Phoenix under Talay will have all the robustness of Sydney FC, with a cherry on top in the form of Krishna.

At least that's what the new coach is hoping for when he takes his first and most important steps as Mark Rudan's replacement at the A-League club.

Five days after helping steer Sydney FC to Grand Final glory, Talay fronted journalists in Wellington and outlined his desire to win "every trophy that's out there".

It's a grand ambition but one built on what he said are solid foundations laid by Rudan, who steered the traditional under-achievers to the finals for the first time in four seasons.

Talay has already made his mark, signing off on six players who were released last week, leaving just a shell of a squad at his disposal. Most of the seven players contracted for next year are Kiwis, with several on lower-level contracts.

"I look at it as a good thing that I can build a team the way that I want to play the game," he said. "Players need to fit in to what I believe the game looks like.

"Football is about recruitment. I think 70 per cent goes to recruitment and the other 30 per cent is actually the motivational and tactical side of things."

Talay has made it a priority to keep Johnny Warren Medal-winning striker Krishna on the club's books in the face of intense interest elsewhere, including from Sydney.



He also wants to lure skipper Andrew Durante back for a 12th season in the centre of defence. Both players are being given time to mull their futures. **Talay will** mould Phoenix around the successful methods of this year's Sky Blues.

"Similar. I believe in football if you set up defensively quite well and you're compact and you don't concede goals, you've got more chance of

winning games," he said.

"But I would love for us to play an attacking style where we do score a lot of goals and players enjoy what we do."

The homesickness that became problematic for Rudan, resulting in his two-season contract ending prematurely, won't be a problem for Talay, whose family will be based in Wellington from later this year.

AXED MILLIGAN RULES OUT A-LEAGUE RETURN

Milligan had been playing every game with the Edinburgh side and became a firm favourite with fans since his arrival last year.

But new coach Paul Heckingbottom has arrived at the club intending to bring in a new younger player to replace Milligan – and used a contract loophole to dump him.

Socceroos coach Graham Arnold revealed today that he had spent an hour on the phone to the shellshocked star in the wake of the unexpected club snub.

And he admitted that Milligan was still in his plans for the Socceroos – but that the 33 year old centtreback/defensive midfielder had ruled out a return to the A-League at this stage.



Sydney FC in talks to retain Brillante

A-League champions Sydney FC will continue talks with midfielder Josh Brillante despite his contract with the Sky Blues expiring.

Sydney FC midfielder Josh Brillante could stay with the A-League champions despite not being on the club's list of retained players.

Brillante was one of 12 players not on Sydney's retained list announced on Monday, but the Socceroo is in talks about signing a new deal with the club.

The 26-year-old nearly signed for South Korean club Pohang Steelers earlier this year, but the deal fell through and he ended up playing in Sydney's grand final win over Perth earlier this month.

Jacob Tratt and Cameron Devlin are also discussing a possible stay at Sydney but Jop van der Linden, Alex Cisak and Mitch Austin will not return next season.

The trio join retired captain Alex Brosque and Western United-bound Aaron Calver in the exit

lane for Sydney.

Young striker Chris Zuvella is out of contract but will remain at the club to continue his recovery from a knee injury before his future is determined.

Loanees Siem de Jong, Reza Ghoochannejhad, Anthony Caceres and Danny De Silva have all returned to their parent clubs, but Sydney are in negotiations with Manchester City and Central Coast about Caceres and De Silva returning next season.

"You have been so good to me and my family, we'll never forget it," Ghoochannejhad said via Twitter.

The Iranian striker's departure, as well as those of Dutch duo de Jong and van der Linden, means Sydney will have three vacant visa spots for their 2019-20 campaign.

"We have retained a large proportion of our championship winning team and I expect to recruit a number of exciting new players to add to that core," coach Steve Corica said.

