



THOMAS MANOS PLAYING FOR KEEPS



He may only be 23 but Sydney United 58 shot stopper Thomas Manos has the big game experience of a player ten years his senior and the number one shotstopper is looking forward to this Sunday's TAFE NSW Waratah Cup Final against the Marconi Stallions.



Now in his fourth season as United's first choice goalkeeper, Manos has played in grand finals, cup finals, finals series as well as FFA Cup knockout matches.

He will add another huge moment in his career on July 14 when he lines up between the sticks for Sydney United 58 at Lily Homes Stadium as they take on Marconi Stallions in the final of the 2019 Waratah Cup.

A youth star for the Western Sydney Wanderers, Manos burst onto the scene at Edensor Park in the 2016 season as a precocious 19-year-old before making his name as one of the National Premier Leagues most exciting up and coming golvemen.

Four years on from his debut Manos reveals a wake up call in his second season at United 58 changed his approach to football and taught him a valuable lesson which has helped him get the most from his experiences in the game.

"My first year at the club we had so much success and I was playing great which had me on a massive high," he said.

"However, the next year was a struggle with the team suffering through a rocky season and it hit me really hard.

"Having achieved the highest of highs to then only a year later failing to perform at a level I knew I was capable of made me realise how important it is to make the most of every moment and always give it everything.

"While I wasn't taking things easy before that point, it was more a case of understanding what was required of me to consistently perform and become the best player I could."

As well as a change in mindset, Manos admitted his time in the league has also played a big part in the evolution of his game.

Earning a reputation as a risk taking sweeper keeper when he was first on the scene, the young shot stopper has taken a different approach in recent times which he believes has made him a better player.

"When you're a young player you are always trying to make a difference and cement your position on the team by taking more risks.

"While I had a lot of success initially, I realised I needed to find more consistency in my game which I feel I have done over the past two years.

"Once where I would've launched myself over my own defender to punch away a ball into the box, I now know to trust my teammates more and not put myself in positions which the opposition can take advantage of."

Manos will need all of his new found poise against local rivals Marconi in the Waratah Cup final.

United 58 have struggled against the Stallions in 2019 including a shocking 5-0 thrashing in April as well as a 0-0 draw against a ten-man Marconi team only a little over a week ago.

However, the one time Sydney FC player believes his team shouldn't be written off with the dream of cup glory driving United 58 ahead of the final.

"We set a target at the start of the year to reach the final 32 of the FFA Cup so now that we've achieved that we want to finish off our Waratah Cup campaign in style," Manos said.

"While it has been a bumpy few weeks in terms of league results, the team is still in the top four, in the final of one cup competition and the last few rounds of another. For most other clubs that is seen as a success but because of who we are more is always expected of us.

"This is a good team and even though we were unable to get the win against Marconi in our most recent game I think we have taken a lot of confidence from that result.

"As they always say, anything can happen in a cup final so I don't think they will have any real advantage going into the match."

Against the Stallions' high profile attacking stars Manos is ready to lead his team from the back.

"I'm really looking forward to playing in the Waratah Cup final. I've been lucky enough to play in a number of big matches and finals so I know how important it is to make the most of these opportunities," he said.

"It will be important to keep a cool head and just focus on the game as it happens in front of me instead of worrying too much about making a game changing play.

"It could be a season defining match for the club so we are determined to be the ones holding the trophy after full-time."

Away from football, Manos has been busy putting together the finishing touches to his personal clothing luxe sporting label, 'Thavy World', alongside some of his peers in the hope of getting it off the ground on a positive note.

Launching their Instagram page recently @thavyworld - Manos sees this venture as a passion of his in getting it right due to his love for sports and casual wear.

"The brand came about around mid 2018.

"I came up with this idea of trying to push myself through the sneaker game.

"As my best mate and I buy pairs of sneakers constantly, I called him and we spoke about it.

"We were both fairly excited thinking about it, but we knew it was going to be tough to find a supplier and all that.

"Fortunately enough, not long after we came up with the idea, my mate met a supplier in Melbourne, and it really kicked off at that point.

"We managed to go to a SneakerBash event in Melbourne with over 100 pairs of rare sneakers to sell.

"We came in as the new kids on the block but I'm pretty sure everyone knew who we were after that event.

"Sneakers were our main focus but we definitely knew there were other avenues we could exploit.

"The clothing idea didn't really creep into mind till we were invited to the SneakerBash event.

"We thought, the best way to not only get shoes out, but our own personal brand out is to have our logo be seen.

"Simplest way was to go through clothing.

"We did a test run for the SneakerBash and we were definitely under stocked for that even.

"Countless amount of people were wanting to buy and unfortunately we couldn't provide.

"From that point we knew clothing was definitely the next avenue for us to go through.

"It was pretty cool to get that feedback and that many people wanting our own personal logo on their chest.

"Once we were able to get the top quality materials we wanted, we started production.

"And that's now lead us to here - Saturday the 13th of July is the start of Collection One. It's all about high quality, and simplicity.

"Where to next on this venture?... is just to see how the start of Collection One sells. If it gets a great reception, then we plan on bringing out more pieces to our first collection, which will then lead us to experiment a bit more I guess.

"Experiment with types of materials, designs, and different types of clothing. We don't want to stray away from simple, but we want to add our own twist on things too."