



By George Stavroulakis

Socceroos squad named for road to Qatar 2022

Adam Taggart returns to the Socceroos and new boy Harry Souttar is set for a national team debut as Graham Arnold today named his squad for the first stage of World Cup qualifying

Australia's next generation of football talent has been given the nod to start the Socceroos path to the 2022 World Cup.

Coach Graham Arnold has picked 12 players with 10 caps or less to their name in his 23-man squad for the opening qualifier against Kuwait on September 10.

Scottish-born defender Souttar is the only uncapped player in the squad, with Brandon Borrello, Ajdin Hrustic and goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne all boasting just one cap each. **On the** other end of the experience scale, captain Mark Milligan has ended doubts about his ongoing international career with the 34-year-old named in what will be his 80th appearance for the national team.

Fellow regulars Mat Ryan, Aaron Mooy, Mathew Leckie, Trent Sainsbury and Massimo Luongo are also included in the squad.

«I find it exciting for the Socceroos and the nation that there were so many more players in contention for this squad,» Arnold said.

«(I) am expecting healthy competition for places in the starting side for Kuwait and our upcoming qualification matches as we target a winning start on our journey to Qatar.»

Just three A-League based players have been named with Sydney FC's Rhyan Grant joining teammate Redmayne and Melbourne City striker Jamie Maclaren in the 23.

In-form striker Taggart, who leads the scoring charts in South Korea's K-League, has also been named after making his first Socceroos appearance in five years in a 1-0 friendly defeat to South Korea in Busan in June.

Newly returned Melbourne Victory duo Andrew Nabbout and Robbie Kruse have been overlooked to gain fitness ahead of the A-League season starting in October, while Tom Rogic also misses out through lack of playing time with Celtic following his recent knock.

Australia's players will gather in a training camp in the United Arab Emirates in the week before the qualifying opener against Kuwait.

Name	Club, Country	A-International Caps (Goals)
Mustafa AMINI	AGF Aarhus, Denmark	6 (0)
Aziz BEHICH	Istanbul Başakşehir, Turkey	36 (2)
Brandon BORRELLO	SC Freiburg, Germany	1 (0)
Milos DEGENEK	Red Star Belgrade, Serbia	26 (1)
Apostolos GIANNOU	AEK Larnaca, Cyprus	10 (2)
Craig GOODWIN	Al-Wehda, Saudi Arabia	4 (0)
Rhyan GRANT	Sydney FC, Australia	8 (0)
Ajdin HRUSTIC	FC Groningen, Netherlands	1 (0)
Jackson IRVINE	Hull City, England	30 (3)
James JEGGO	Austria Wien, Austria	2 (0)
Mitchell LANGERAK (Gk)	Nagoya Grampus, Japan	8 (0)
Mathew LECKIE	Hertha BSC, Germany	61 (9)
Massimo LUONGO	Sheffield Wednesday, England	43 (6)
Awer MABIL	FC Midtjylland, Denmark	10 (4)
Jamie MACLAREN	Melbourne City FC, Australia	13 (1)
Mark MILLIGAN	Southend United, England	79 (6)
Aaron MOOY	Brighton & Hove Albion, England	39 (5)
Andrew REDMAYNE (Gk)	Sydney FC, Australia	1 (0)
Mathew RYAN (Gk)	Brighton & Hove Albion, England	55 (0)
Trent SAINSBURY	Maccabi Haifa, Israel	46 (3)
Brad SMITH	Seattle Sounders FC, USA	20 (0)
Harry SOUTTAR	Fleetwood Town, England	0 (0)
Adam TAGGART	Suwon Bluewings, Korea Republic	8 (3)

The Socceroos beat Kuwait 4-0 last October in a friendly that also marked the start of Arnold's second stint in charge of the national team.

After the Kuwait game, the Socceroos will play Nepal in Canberra on October 10, Chinese Taipei in Kaohsiung on October 15, and Jordan in Jordan on November 14.

Marconi teen signs for Salford City

Australian defender Yianni Nicolaou has signed a one year deal at English League Two side Salford City, with the option to extend.

The 19 year-old has joined the newly promoted club following a successful trial. He joins fellow Australian Cameron Burgess and former Melbourne City head coach Warren Joyce at Salford.

The youngster is in good company, joining a side who have achieved promotion in four of their last five seasons and are 15th after five matches in the English fourth division. The club is famously part-owned by Manchester United's 'Class of 92' teammates Phil Neville, Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and most recently, David Beckham.

Nicolaou has played almost 30 matches for Marconi Stallions in the NSW NPL Men's competition as well as in the Round of 32 of the 2018 FFA Cup.

He has a storied upbringing in the youth systems in Australia starting out at the Football NSW Institute of Sport and Westfield Sports High before joining Marconi.

The defender represented Australia at the AFC U-16 Championships in 2016 in which Australia were knocked out at the group stage.

He is expected to be spending some time with Salford City's youth setup that also boasts 'Academy 92', a university begun by the clubs owners to offer degrees for players to build life skills outside of football.

